University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

The Cowell Press and Its Legacy:

1973-2004

Interviews with

Jack Stauffacher *George Kane*

Aaron Johnson *Peggy Gotthold*

Felicia Rice

Tom Killion

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Introduction

I don't recall how I first heard about Jack Stauffacher's lecture — it may have been from a poster or a professor who suggested it — but one fall afternoon in 1973 I sat in Cowell College library and heard Stauffacher discuss typography and printing history. Something in his lecture excited me and as a result I enrolled in Stauffacher's upcoming course at the Cowell Press. Little did I realize the implications of this decision. By 1976 I graduated from Cowell College with my individual major in The Art of the Book, having studied with Stauffacher and Professor Jasper Rose as well as William Everson at The Lime Kiln Press at McHenry Library. Professionally, I have since worked in printing, design management, publishing, and writing on topics of bookmaking history.

Presented with the opportunity to prepare an oral history of the Cowell Press I jumped at the chance — eager to learn what has taken place since I graduated. I moved to the Boston area after graduating and maintained only limited contact with fellow students at Cowell Press. I saw Jack Stauffacher occasionally and William Everson only twice in those years before he died in 1994. However, when I returned to California in 1995 I began to re-establish my old friendships and connect with fine bookmakers of Santa Cruz. I unexpectedly encountered Tom Killion at the Palo Alto Art & Wine Festival and saw George Kane at a Colophon Club meeting. Felicia Rice and I stay in steady contact. Then in 2002, I organized a show for McHenry Library of Cowell Press works, celebrating its thirtieth anniversary. Following this I was keen to establish a complete

history of the Press. This oral history provided the opportunity to interview George Kane, who taught at the Press from 1979 to 2004; to connect with other alumni of the Press; and to better understand the Press's role at Cowell College and on the UC Santa Cruz campus.

The Cowell Press is a legacy of the unique and experimental quality of the UC Santa Cruz campus, characterized by its early use of evaluations rather than grades, the emphasis on close teacher and student contact, and the Farm and Garden Project. The comparison with the Garden Project is particularly apt because it was a visit to the Garden Project and a meeting with its founder, Alan Chadwick, that first brought Stauffacher to the campus in 1972. Further, one can even say that the Cowell Press is tied not only to the legacy of the campus, but to the history of the Cowell Ranch on which it was built.

It is unlikely that University of California President Clark Kerr knew anything of an old platen press in an outbuilding at the Cowell Ranch when, in 1961, the 2000-acre site was chosen for a new campus in the expanding University of California system.[1] Rather, he and founding Chancellor Dean E. McHenry were concerned with large-scale issues in building the campus — working with landscape architect Thomas Church in designing the campus and in creating a human-scale university. Nonetheless, as Kerr wrote in his memoirs[2] he and McHenry had long debated the respective virtues of colleges focused on a library and active cultural life or broad learning and community.

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1. John Dizikes writes of a press being found at Cowell College in 1965 in his preface to *. . . the highest form of flattery . . .* (Cowell Press, 1982). Peter Manston says he found two. To date, however, I have not found any other documentation to verify these claims. Nonetheless, the presses were there.
2. *The Gold and The Blue: A Personal Memoir of the University of California, 1949-1967, Volume One: Academic Triumphs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 261.

Located on the rolling hills and pastures above Monterey Bay and touching at the edges of the redwood forests, the founders' intention was to establish a decidedly experimental campus that would create a large research university made up of small colleges, each with its own academic program and identity, with an overall architectural vision inspired by Aigues-Mortes in the south of France.[3] This new campus attracted a notable body of faculty possessed of a strong penchant for undergraduate teaching and — more portentously — engaged in innovative teaching experiments: student-taught seminars, and narrative class evaluations rather than letter grades. The faculty's primary affiliation was originally with a single college rather than with traditional academic departments, which fostered the building of intellectual communities and close ties between students and professors. The study of bookmaking — of how thoughts and knowledge are communicated through the vital medium of a book — fit well within the parameters of such a teaching structure and the concept of the university envisioned by Kerr and McHenry.

The study of book arts and printing history was first taught at Cowell College when Norman Strouse, former chairman of J. Walter Thompson advertising agency and a serious book collector, taught a course in the history of the book as a Regents' Professor in 1969. In 1972 student Peter Manston discovered an old platen press at Cowell and subsequently taught letterpress printing class in 1973 which marked the beginning of the Cowell Press and the practice of bookmaking on campus.

Sometime in 1972 UC Santa Cruz professor Paul Lee invited San Francisco typographer and printer Jack Stauffacher to the Garden Project founded by Alan Chadwick. Lee, who had first learned of Stauffacher when he bought a copy of his book *Albert Camus and the Men of Stone*, soon discovered their common interest in Goethe, whose botanical studies also influenced Chadwick. Jack came to the campus, met Lee and Chadwick, and printed a broadside to commemorate the occasion, *Et in Arcadia Ego*

3. Ibid., p. 274.

[Here I am in Arcadia]. In time and with some combination of influences from Professor Lee and students SB Master and Thomas Whitridge, Stauffacher was given a Regents' Professorship and first taught two seminar classes, *Typographic Workshop* and *Typography*, at Cowell Press starting in January 1974.

In addition to Strouse's book history course as an antecedent to Stauffacher's appointment, other features of Cowell College played into its interest in book history. When the campus first opened, each college had a particular academic focus, some had a course of study, and others even considered offering their own major. Cowell College had two courses of study, World Civilizations and, secondly, Arts and Crafts & Their History. This second was championed by art history professor Jasper Rose. Professor Rose was a book collector himself and had a strong interest in the British socialist and writer William Morris, who was critical to the revival of craft traditions in England in the late nineteenth century. Morris also operated the Kelmscott Press, one of England's premier private presses. It is fitting then that Professor Rose sponsored Manston's student-taught seminar (a characteristically unique aspect of UC Santa Cruz teaching) *Letterpress Printing*. Thus, when Jack Stauffacher was proposed as Regents' Professor, there was already a tradition at the College for the study of typography, printing, and book history.

Cowell College also had a role in bringing William Everson — poet, former Dominican monk, and respected handpress printer — to the campus. Everson gave a poetry reading at Cowell College in the late 1960s; then in 1971 he was appointed poet-in-residence at Kresge College. The presence of an Acorn handpress in McHenry Library's Special Collections was certainly an enticement and may have influenced his decision to come to UC Santa Cruz. With the Acorn handpress, Everson established The Lime Kiln Press and produced fine press works including *West to the Water* and *Granite and Cypress*. Students enrolled with Everson through independent studies and worked as apprentices with this master printer on his chosen projects.

Therefore, when Stauffacher began teaching at Cowell Press in 1974 something unique happened as a result of the experimental nature of UC Santa Cruz, its faculty, and college focus; the presence of individuals like Stauffacher and Everson, who were not academics but possessed strong intellectual interests; and, finally, the presence of a group of students poised to adopt typography, printing, and bookmaking as their expressive and creative medium. Felicia Rice, for example, was drawn to letterpress printing through the chance awareness of Berkeley printer David Lance Goines and by the receipt of a newspaper clipping about Stauffacher mistakenly sent to her by her mother but intended for an older sister. Thus primed, when Rice heard that Stauffacher was teaching at Cowell she came to see the Press and, immediately thereafter, transferred from Berkeley to Santa Cruz. Tom Killion, unfamiliar with letterpress printing, was intent on making serial woodcut books and adding text with his own calligraphy. Then he met fellow student Richard Bigus, who told him about Stauffacher's class which took place under the very dining hall where they first met. He enrolled and so began his career printing letterpress books incorporating his intricate woodcut illustrations.

So, with William Everson at The Lime Kiln Press and Jack Stauffacher teaching at Cowell Press, an improvisational choreography of students took place between these two presses on campus. Some began studying with Stauffacher, then got wind of Everson's activities at McHenry Library and went over to visit. Others came to investigate Cowell Press after beginning at Lime Kiln. The activities at The Lime Kiln Press were much different from those at Cowell Press. At Cowell Press an egalitarian method pervaded as Stauffacher taught typographic principles, and then allowed students considerable freedom to do their own work. At The Lime Kiln Press, Everson ran his shop like a monastery or a medieval guild; in that quiet room overlooking the courtyard apprentices assumed their assigned roles, guided by the master. Despite the

different atmospheres and styles, each teacher was a powerful influence and an energetic activity arose among these printing students.

As spontaneous cohorts many students began working together. They were inspired by Everson's printing, by Stauffacher's clean and modern typographic style, by their mentors' respective literary interests, and their own personal desires and capabilities. They produced books, broadsides, booklets, exhibition catalogues, and portfolios. Student writers collaborated with fellow student artists, students collected books from San Francisco Bay Area dealers for exhibitions, printed collections of faculty essays, and worked with other San Francisco printers to produce unusual books. Students traveled to Everson's cabin at Kingfisher Flat for gatherings or journeyed to Stauffacher's shop adjacent to North Beach and met other printers and bibliophiles in San Francisco.

Stauffacher's tenure ended after the winter quarter of 1975. A Cowell Press council was formed to find a new teacher and a Mrs. Margaret C. Sowers was influential on this Council. Mrs. Sowers was the widow of Ray Vernon Sowers, a member of the Roxburghe Club and she and her husband were important benefactors of libraries and book collections (She and her husband contributed significantly to the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, England.) The council chose Sherwood Grover to teach at Cowell Press. Grover was a former pressman at The Grabhorn Press, San Francisco and proprietor of his own Grace Hoper Press in Aptos. He did this in 1977 and 1978, but he was not very tolerant of the students and quit. George Kane, a former newspaperman from Los Gatos then living in Santa Cruz and working as a book dealer, assumed the teaching role at Cowell Press in 1978.

George Kane brought yet another perspective to fine printing at the Cowell Press. A Midwesterner, he first learned typesetting and printing as a young boy working in his father's Iowa newspaper shop, *The Anthon Herald*. During the depression Kane lived in Los Angeles where he worked as an itinerant printer with a press in his rented, single-

room lodgings. Later he settled in the Santa Clara Valley and ran newspapers – as publisher and sales manager. After he retired he devoted himself to bookselling. Kane was somewhat intimidating to students with his occasionally dismissive and brusque manner, but nonetheless inspired his students by introducing them to books of The Grabhorn Press, John Henry Nash, samples of pochoir printing, or works by wood-engraver Thomas Bewick—all from his private collection. His has been a no-nonsense approach: teaching students to print, how to set type, and directing them on projects of their own.

George Kane, over ninety-years-old, submitted his resignation to Cowell College in the fall term of 2004. Paul Ritscher, a talented letterpress and silkscreen printer and a wood engraving artist, will temporarily teach classes at the Press. Meanwhile, Cowell College is putting together a group of Press alumni and College faculty to discuss the future of the Press.

There are a number of avenues from which to approach the role and influence of Cowell Press. One that is impossible to achieve within the limits of this oral history is to consider the tremendous variety, creativity, craftsmanship, and beauty of works printed at Cowell Press and, later, by graduates of the Press. However, much of this work can be seen at Special Collections, McHenry Library which has collected much of the Press work, as well as works by Press alumni and by William Everson and Jack Stauffacher. Examples of books by those interviewed here are in this collection: Tom Killion and Quail Press, Felicia Rice and Moving Parts Press, Peggy Gotthold and Foolscap Press, and books from Yolla Bolly Press where Aaron Johnson worked.

In this introduction we can better discuss the place of Cowell Press in relation to fine printing history of the San Francisco Bay Area. From its beginnings, Cowell Press has had a vital association with the tradition of fine bookmaking in San Francisco. This link was established by Norman Strouse in 1969. Strouse was a major San Francisco book

collector and former Gleeson Library Associate at The University of San Francisco. But it was those who followed who truly placed Cowell Press in line as an inheritor of this Bay Area tradition.

Jack Stauffacher is certainly considered one of the important San Francisco printers and bookmakers. He established his Greenwood Press in 1934 and moved it to San Francisco after World War II. He soon found himself associated with writers, poets, and artists including Henry Miller and Gordon Onslow Ford. He and fellow printer Adrian Wilson were partners for a time. This was just after Wilson first came to San Francisco from a conscientious objector camp in Waldport, Oregon where he had learned printing from William Everson. Together, Stauffacher and Wilson published Eric Gill's essay *And Who Wants Peace?* Jack was certainly influenced by the craftsmanship of San Francisco printers such as the Grabhorn brothers and John Henry Nash. However, his typographic interests are particularly European in influence, especially following his Guggenheim fellowship to Italy in 1955. He has formed lifelong friendships with printers and typographers including Hermann Zapf and Alberto Tallone.

For many students at Cowell Press a visit to The Greenwood Press was an opportunity to be introduced to people in the San Francisco fine press circle. Many of Stauffacher's students were taken to meet Adrian Wilson (The Press at Tuscany Alley), Andrew Hoyem (who took over the Grabhorn Press equipment and is today Arion Press), Kathy Walkup (then at Five Trees Press), and Sandra Kirshenbaum (publisher of *Fine Print*), to name a few.

The interconnections from such introductions were often fortuitous. For example, Tom Killion collaborated with Adrian Wilson and Bill Everson and illustrated Adrian's printing and publication of *In Medias Res*, an Everson poem. Richard Bigus, another Cowell Press student, became involved with San Francisco printers and was a featured printer in an exhibition and catalogue, *5 Fine Printers*. Thomas Whitridge oversaw the production of a broadside portfolio, *A Little Rebellion Now & Then*, which commemorated

the United States bicentennial with sixteen contributors from this country and abroad, including Thomas himself, The Stinehour Press, Andrew Hoyem, Alvin Eisenman, and Katherine and Sherwood Grover.

Sherwood Grover, who taught at the Press in 1978 to 1979, was the pressman at The Grabhorn Press for many years. Whether students recognized it or not, they were working with a figure who had printed some of that Press's most spectacular books, including *The Leaves of Grass*. Further, although Sherwood Grover's tenure at Cowell Press was short-lived and his temperament least suited to this teaching environment, nonetheless he formed a close friendship with Felicia Rice who assisted him in teaching at Cowell Press. Just as Andrew Hoyem took over the equipment of the Grabhorn Press, so Felicia inherited most of Grover's type, Victoria press, and his typographic library.

Interviewee Peggy Gotthold worked for a number of years at Andrew Hoyem's Arion Press. From here she went to work for Hans Schuberth, a fine bookbinder in San Francisco who bound William Everson's spectacular *Granite and Cypress*. Since then she has bound works for Tom Killion, consulted on binding issues with Felicia Rice, and published works at Foolscap Press with her partner Lawrence Van Velzer.

Aaron Johnson worked for many years at Yolla Bolly Press with James Robertson, who was good friends with Jack Stauffacher and William Everson. Robertson provided the introduction to Stauffacher for Aaron Johnson, as well as for Peggy Gotthold.

George Kane, especially in his early teaching years, continued to keep the Press a part of the San Francisco Bay Area fine press community. He took students on field trips to Stanford Library and to Mills College, where Kathy Walkup runs the college's book arts program. He also shared his wonderful book collection with students, giving them the opportunity to handle books by such Bay Area printers as The Grabhorn Press, Arion Press, and John Henry Nash (a favorite of George's).

Although William Everson was not directly connected with Cowell Press, his influence on many of its students was significant. Further, he was another strong link

with the Bay Area fine press tradition. Having been active with the Untide Press in Waldport, Oregon as a conscientious objector, he came down to San Francisco after World War II and began printing with a handpress in Sebastopol and Berkeley. In time, Everson became a Dominican monk, where he began printing a Psalter, eventually issuing the unfinished work as *Novum Psalterium PII XII*. He left the order in 1969, started at UC Santa Cruz 1971 and began printing at The Lime Kiln Press.

The Cowell Press is also something of a cousin to The Printers' Chappel of Santa Cruz. George Kane established the Chappel in 1979-80 and many of its original members were Cowell Press alumni. However, it also became a gathering place for other bookmakers and book artists who began to work in Santa Cruz. The Chappel allowed the area's fine printers, bookbinders, book artists, and collectors to gather, share work, and exchange ideas and information. The Chappel, although much less active in the last five years, has sponsored exhibitions and been the source of important collaborations. One such collaboration is *A Canticle to the Waterbirds* (1992), a limited edition of Everson's poem of the same name, printing by Felicia Rice and Gary Young, with papermaking by Peter Thomas, illustrations by Daniel O. Stople, and binding by Maureen Carey. Today there is an active community of fine printers and bookmakers in the Santa Cruz community.

With strong influences such as Stauffacher, Everson, Kane and Cowell faculty, the experience at Cowell Press shaped the careers and creative lives of many students. At its best the Press was far more than a letterpress print shop where students could make pretty books. Rather, it was a laboratory to explore the history of tangible words — whether printed, cut in stone, or calligraphed — and to address the interrelationship of word and image. In addition, the influence of twentieth century literature and visual art on typography was considered, as well as how typography was concerned with design principles that can be applied to film, architecture, and information design. Some alumni of the Press and this environment are now bookmakers and printers, and designers.

Bookmakers like Peggy Gotthold, Tom Killion, Felicia Rice, Peter and Donna Thomas are collected internationally. Others took more divergent but related directions. SB Master went to business school and owns a naming company, where the meaning of words and their visual presentation coalesce to quickly communicate a brand or company name. Jim Faris — who received an National Endowment of the Arts grant for a year's apprenticeship with Stauffacher in 1976 — studied typography in Basel, has made films, and uses graphic design principles to address issues of organizational or business structure.

As of this writing the challenge is to determine the future of Cowell Press. Regardless of what direction the Press takes, however, it must address certain significant changes that have taken place in bookmaking since the 1970s. As discussed by Felicia Rice, the book arts field has moved in recent years in an important new direction with the practice of making artist books. These are often one-of-a-kind art pieces that employ the book form, but are not works printed in editions. Another significant development in bookmaking and graphics since the founding of Cowell Press — indeed, in all parts of our lives — is computer technology. To date Cowell Press has not incorporated the use of the computer in its teachings, an unfortunate shortcoming. Today you can use the computer to "set" type or create an image, then make a photo-polymer (rubber) plate, mount it to a metal plate to achieve type height, and print using a letterpress such as the Vandercook at Cowell Press. Typography, graphic design, bookmaking and information design have all been influenced by computer technology and Cowell Press could — and should — be a place to explore new potentials in this field while learning the historical antecedents.

Further, the Press has never been well publicized on campus and in recent years little or no effort has been made to reach out to other departments, whether in science, computer science, literature, art, or digital arts and new media. A program that studies the history of the book is vital to a university. Students have much to learn about the role

of printing and books — in western and non-western countries — to the spread of scientific knowledge, in religious and political change, and for literary and visual expression. Cowell Press, with its rich legacy that is highlighted in these following interviews, should continue and expand as a vital part of the unique teaching environment at UC Santa Cruz.

Copies of this oral history are on deposit in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; in Special Collections and the stacks at McHenry Library at the University of California, Santa Cruz; and on the Library's website. The Project is supported administratively by Christine Bunting, head of Special Collections and Archives, and Acting University Librarian, Robert White.

— Gregory Graalfs, May 2005

Jack Stauffacher

Introduction: The Beginning of Cowell Press

Graalfs: We're here with Jack Stauffacher of The Greenwood Press. Jack was one of the first teachers at Cowell Press. So, Jack, you taught at Cowell Press from winter term 1974 until winter 1975, so for a total of four quarters, right?[1]

Stauffacher: I think that's right. It began in 1974.

Graalfs: Can you tell me how you first made contact with the University of California, Santa Cruz?

Stauffacher: I believe it was Paul Lee.[2] That was what brought me to Santa Cruz. It actually started in 1972 when I met Paul. I published a book dealing with Albert Camus, *The Men of The Stone*.[3] In 1972 I sent an announcement and he was very interested and bought a copy. It was through the book of Albert Camus that we became friends and he invited me down to see him [in Santa Cruz] and we talked. At that time the Chadwick period was in full swing.[4]

Graalfs: Alan Chadwick and the Garden at UC Santa Cruz?

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1. An important reference on Jack Stauffacher's career and history is Jack's own *A Typographic Journey: The History of The Greenwood Press and Bibliography, 1934 to 2000* (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1999).
2. Paul Lee taught philosophy at UC Santa Cruz from 1966 to 1973.
3. Proix, Robert, ed., *Albert Camus and The Men of The Stone*, trans. Gregory H. Davis (San Francisco: The Greenwood Press, 1971).
4. Alan Chadwick was the master gardener at the University of California, Santa Cruz Farm and Garden Project. Chadwick came to the campus in 1967 through the influence of Professor Paul Lee. He taught organic gardening using the French Intensive and Biodynamic systems of food and flower production. Chadwick was born in England in 1909. In 1972 Jack Stauffacher came to the University and met Paul Lee and Alan Chadwick, all of whom shared an interest in Goethe. Jack printed a broadside for this occasion, *Et in Arcadia Ego*. Alan Chadwick died May 25, 1980. His students have established organic gardens all over the world.

Stauffacher: Yes. So, it was part of a spirited moment, meeting Paul and also meeting Chadwick and his students.

Graalfs: I talked to Paul a little about Cowell and you and your meeting. He said, having bought the Albert Camus book, he discovered that both of you had an interest in Goethe. I gather this was a shared interest with Alan Chadwick as well.

Stauffacher: Yes. All these different associations brought us together. We continued to share our enthusiasms for the Goethe and Chadwick vision of the world. That's that early period. Then, at a certain date at the University Library I put on the Albert Camus show.

Graalfs: Oh, you did? I didn't know about this.

Stauffacher: Yes. An exhibition. I have slides of that. That was an initial first opening of the doors for my entrance into the University. It was actually 1972.

Graalfs: Was that at the McHenry Library?

Stauffacher: Yes. I also met Jasper Rose as a social connection.[5] Possibly Paul introduced me to him and we became good friends. That was the beginning of my connection as an academic teacher there. Also, I knew several of the architects who built a few of the colleges, specifically Charlie Moore. I had this interest in the change of the environment of the Santa Cruz campus and in this experiment of small colleges scattered over the campus, each with a provost, and smaller classes. It brought a lot of interesting people, like Page Smith, to the University.

5. Jasper Rose taught art history and was provost of Cowell College from 1973 to 1976.

Graalfs: When was the first time that you came on the campus?

Stauffacher: Maybe to hear Chadwick's lectures. He gave monthly lectures.

Graalfs: Then at some point you did the broadside *Et in Arcadia Ego*?

Stauffacher: That was all part of that Goethe and Chadwick organic world.

Graalfs: Was it Paul who arranged for the exhibition of the Camus book at the library?

Stauffacher: I believe he was, but I don't remember. No doubt he did play a part because he was then a professor at Crown College.

Graalfs: In your history of The Greenwood Press you have an amusing picture of you and Paul and Page Smith. What was the occasion of that, do you recall?

Stauffacher: It was very casual and it was just a candid shot. It was 1972. That was the heady seduction of the University connection.

Again, it's a little faded, but just off the top of my head I would say that it was between 1972 and 1974. It was cultivating relationships, talking about possibilities. I think Jasper was teaching classes in the history of the book. Jasper was a real enthusiast. He had many books printed by Baskerville and he was really in love with the art of the book. In some prehistoric time there were attempts to have a Cowell press, but it was on an amateur basis — rudimentary tools given to the school, but never properly set up. And I think that Jasper, and maybe Page Smith and Paul, talked about the possibility of

creating the Cowell Press, on a whole different level. Finally, the powers that be decided they would like to have me to teach one semester.

Graalfs: Earlier you said something about there having been printing classes at Cowell, in some form, prior to your appointment.

Stauffacher: It was in the shadows. There was no evidence of what they did.

Graalfs: Peter Manston taught a student-led class, sponsored by Jasper Rose, and began Cowell Press. You never met him or had any interaction?

Stauffacher: No, I didn't. I said okay, I would teach with the promise of spending some money on good equipment. Otherwise I wouldn't come. They said fine, just tell us what you want and we'll get the money for you. That's what I did. They've got that beautiful Vandercook proof press, and a huge amount of monotype Bembo, and I brought some of my wooden type, and bought a lovely refurbished typecase. You know how nice it looked.

Graalfs: Oh yeah, I do remember, very much. I believe Tom Whitridge was involved in helping find the Vandercook press that was at Cowell. Is this correct?[6]

Stauffacher: Well, I think once we were given some monies for it, he was a great help. We were looking around and once we were given a mandate I think I might have asked him. I can't remember.

6. Thomas Whitridge wrote in an email to the interviewer dated December 22, 2003: "After Jack had been a Regent's Professor, the UC system then couldn't demote him, or reward him with a regular professorship. So I remember scrambling about a bit to get Jack hired on again . . . in some capacity . . .and my dad kicked in with a donation of $4000 which allowed Jack to extend his run somewhat at Santa Cruz."

Graalfs: So, with all this worked out, you started to teach, right?

Stauffacher: Then, I said I would come down and teach. Whether it was once or twice a week, I can't remember.

Teaching Continues Beyond Regents' Professorship

Graalfs: I think it might have been three times a week. I know you had two classes, and I have a feeling you taught Tuesdays and Thursdays, or Tuesday, Thursday for one class and another on Wednesday. How did it extend from this initial idea of one quarter to three additional quarters?

Stauffacher: I think that one semester went so fast and we were just beginning to taste the potentials of what was there. There were many students who wanted to take the course, mostly coming from the art department. They wanted to do their little projects and I was somewhat alarmed by that. I said, "We're going to start from scratch. We're just going to find out how to use the tools, set type." You went through that, right?

Graalfs: Right.

Stauffacher: Some were disappointed because I was not allowing them to use the equipment. Only my students could use the equipment. That was the particular rigor I was trying to teach then. At the same time, [William] Everson had been there much earlier, doing his projects. You happened to be on both sides.

Graalfs: I met you first and I took your class. And then there were some others — Jim Faris, Thomas Whitridge, probably SB Master — who were working with Bill, so I

heard about Bill through them. Then I went over there and worked at Lime Kiln [Press] as well. I started with you, in my case. I don't know about some of the others.

Stauffacher: The students wanted to continue, so they asked me if I would continue. I said I would. Of course, they reduced the salary. It was less time, but I said I'd keep the thing going, so hopefully we could get the backing and support of the University. We did some great projects. I brought Michael Taylor to lecture.[7] I thought we were really [going to] move towards becoming some substantial part of the University in a special way. This was the syllabus. [reads] "This syllabus was written thirty-two years ago to influence and establish the Cowell Press onto a larger intellectual stage within the overall environment of the University for years to come." We failed. [laughs]

That somehow was our thinking at that time. This is a joint manifesto. One of the students helped me write it and put it together. It was a little more elaborate. I had more illustrations and things in it.

Graalfs: What did you do with this? Was this part of the initial . . .

Stauffacher: No, this was not the initial effort. This was the last gasp to keep me on the campus, and having the powers that be to support a new program. So some of the students would go to the chancellor and knock on doors. It was . . . They had other interests than that. Once I could see there was no interest, I just left. I wanted to make sure that Cowell Press would not just become a self indulgent activity. I wanted it to be a part of the University, a vital part. It didn't work. Maybe I wasn't the guy to do it, but the potential was there.

7. According to *A Typographic Journey*, Jack first met Michael Taylor in 1967 while he was a graduate student at UC Berkeley. Michael Taylor did the translations that led to The Greenwood Press edition of Horace's *Odes*.

Graalfs: When you were teaching then — this could be a long answer, which isn't necessarily what I'm asking for — what were you trying to do with the Press? What did you see that you would teach students? As you said, you weren't interested in having a private press, per se.

Stauffacher: No, no, I wasn't. I think in this statement of intentions, it answers that question. It says, "The following is a proposal for a curriculum focused on the book: its past, future and practice. This course of study is rarely given its proper place in a University structure." The book, per se, was not really considered in this particular category. I wanted to focus on the whole level of the intellectual craft of books, their history and their making as an integral part of what we're all about. To talk about the alphabet, the structural history, the book through the ages, what is a book." I say here [reading again], "The Press, Cowell, must not become a shop for the production of mere ephemera, but must rather be a place of serious exploration of the relationship between the fine arts and the applied arts, between typography and the significance of printed matter." So this is sort of a declaration, the last gasp before I disappeared. That was never to take place.

Working with William Everson

Graalfs: What about with Bill Everson? What kind of relationship did you have with him? Did you work with him at all?

Stauffacher: I never worked with him, but was an old friend of his. I've always had respect for his work. In the early days, when we first met in the 1940s, he was one of the finest handpress printers I'd ever met. He was so meticulous with his inks and his paper. He was so careful, painstakingly careful.

Graalfs: Where did you meet him in the 1940s?

Stauffacher: At that time he was over across the bay, in Berkeley. There's a book I did with Adrian Wilson, *And Who Wants Peace?*, and Mary Fabilli did the linoleum cuts. That's how I got to know Bill.[8]

Graalfs: Did you know that he was at UC Santa Cruz when you went down there?

Stauffacher: Yes, as he was part of the small little world of craft printers.

Graalfs: Did you and Bill ever talk about some of your interests for the book on campus?

Stauffacher: My way of approaching the book is a little different than his. He approached it through the apprenticeship. He would have a project that students worked on. I'm just the opposite. We tried to discover together what a book is. We had no particular thing that we worked on together. We learned through our mistakes. Bill's was more in the traditional master/apprentice approach. You learned the craft of setting type and printing with the handpress. It's a different world from mine in that sense.

Graalfs: So there weren't any discussions about opportunities for establishing something more about the history of the book on campus? You two never talked about something like that?

8. Eric Gill, *And Who Wants Peace?* (San Francisco: The Greenwood Press, 1948). Mary Fabilli is an artist and poet, whose major publication is *Poems: 1976-1981*. She also taught art at the Oakland Museum until retiring in 1977. She was friends with many of the San Francisco Beat poets. She was married to William Everson following World War II until they separated and Everson was baptized Catholic in 1949.

Stauffacher: No, he had his own special personage and presence. We talked. I was more eclectic.

Graalfs: Plus, Bill had his established position as poet-in-residence and his class, *Birth of a Poet*, and The Lime Kiln Press, so he didn't need to create something in the same way you did.

Stauffacher: Maybe such a world could exist in a larger vision of what could be done on campus. But that would have to be articulated very carefully.

Meetings with UCSC Faculty

Graalfs: When you were on campus, did you try to make contact with other professors and other disciplines? I remember being with you once when you had lunch with Jack Zajac.

Stauffacher: Zajac.[9] Norman O. Brown.[10] We became not close friends. We could talk. I was also involved with my Phaedrus project, which I was doing here [at The Greenwood Press] at the time. I had a lot of concerns with the Platonic dialogues, and Paul [Lee] was helping me, working to bring a lot of this content into some form I could bring together in a book I wanted to do.[11] So it was this kind of help that was very important.

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9. Jack Zajac, internationally recognized sculptor, taught on the faculty of UC Santa Cruz from 1974 to 1993. Zajac received the Prix-de-Rome in 1954 and studied in Rome from 1954 to 1957, developing a strong connection with Italy. This was certainly a mutual enthusiasm he shared with Stauffacher, who had received a Fulbright to study in Italy from 1955 to 1958.
10. Norman O. Brown is author of *Life Against Death*, *Love's Body*, and *Closing Time*. A philosopher, he taught at Wesleyan University, University of Rochester, and then UC Santa Cruz from 1968 to 1984. He died in Santa Cruz in October 2002.
11. Plato. *Phaedrus* (San Francisco: The Greenwood Press, 1978). This was published in an edition of one hundred and fifty copies. The publication was also accompanied by *A Search for the Typographic Form of Plato's Phaedru*s (San Francisco: The Greenwood Press, 1978).

Graalfs: Right. In meeting with some of these other people, Norman O. Brown, or Jack Zajac, or maybe Hardy Hanson . . .

Stauffacher: Hardy Hanson.[12] I wasn't too close to him, but I did meet those who I seemed to get along well with, who were interested. There was Jasper Rose who was a great supporter of the whole thing. He enlarged the vista of books and their magic.

Inability to Establish Program for the Study of Book Arts & History

Graalfs: Did you think that your ideas for the study of the book would get more support with the help of these faculty members?

Stauffacher: Well, as I was saying, after that fourth semester I knew I wasn't getting the support. So I just had to say it was a good experience and hope they would do something with it. I couldn't afford to be there unless they were going to pay me. I had to make a living. They weren't ready to make me a professor. In some ways I've been very spoiled. After I returned from Italy I went to Carnegie and talked to a dean. I became an assistant professor. Direct. I could have stayed there and become an associate professor. I had all the support in the world. We had the Alcoas; we had the big support, the Mellons. I'd been spoiled. Santa Cruz was out in nowhere compared to that.

Graalfs: In terms of endowments and financial support, that sort of thing.

Stauffacher: Yes, those ways you can get support. I knew the best people, especially the Hunts. Then I come down to Santa Cruz with all these professors holding onto their little dream.

12.Hardy Hanson was a professor of art at UC Santa Cruz from 1969 to 1994.

Graalfs: What about the University? About the time you left there were major changes in the structure of the campus; the colleges lost much of their influence and significance.

Stauffacher: I didn't know about any of that. I was too busy trying to exist and do the things I had to do. I didn't have time to ponder the complexities of their bureaucracy.

Graalfs: I am just curious if you were aware of it, and if you thought that it might have had some influence on decisions about keeping you there.

Stauffacher: I didn't really worry about it. I didn't get in a tragic mode because this couldn't go on. I had to do other things. I wasn't going to pound on doors and play all the tricks. It wasn't worth it because I knew it was finished. I did as much as I could and if someone was going to take over they were going to have to pay a living wage. But they weren't even ready for that. George Kane, he did it almost for nothing. That's why it continued. I couldn't afford that. I'm not a wealthy man.

Graalfs: George was retired.

Stauffacher: Yes, so that's a whole different dynamic. I felt there was nobody, no faculty that would support me. If you don't have faculty or kindred spirits in other departments, you're a dead duck. Dog eat dog. Academically, dog eat dog.

Graalfs: Despite the disappointing end, did you enjoy teaching at Cowell Press? Did you like the students?

Stauffacher: Oh, sure. On that score I was very contented. Disappointed only in the sense that there was a potential that could have taken off. Maybe I wasn't the man to do

it. But maybe also my criteria, the level at which I wanted us to move in, just didn't have the backing, didn't have the support. I think right up until the time I left we were doing some good things. I enjoyed the students. I think they enjoyed me. We had a great time.

Establishment of the Center for typographic language

In a sense, it was through this experience — and through my sad experience with the Art Institute — that I felt there was no safety net, no intellectual dialogue between what I was thinking about and what the University was doing, what the art schools were doing. They weren't doing anything. There was nothing. Of course, by that time I had talks with Alvin Eisenman at Yale.[13] I'd been around. I had tried to do such a structure at Carnegie. I had contacted my European colleagues because there a whole grammar, a whole level of language of the serious typographer — be it Dutch, German, French — was part of their culture. This kind of thing is elementary in Europe, but not here.

Just out of desperation, to keep my focus and interest in this cause, I had the Center for typographic language for a short time. If you look through the curriculum, you will see the particular focus on the aesthetic as well as the practical in what I was trying to convey in the school.[14] Now this material is more elementary because there are students coming out of schools who know something about this. But then, in 1979, I worked with Chuck Bigelow on this new curriculum and it's on a high level.[15] All of this fed into a lot

13. Alvin Eisenman headed the first graduate school in graphic design in the United States at Yale University. He began with a joint appointment at Yale Press and teaching in the Art School in 1950. Eventually he taught full time in the graduate program and led this school until 1990. Yale's program embraced computer technology as it emerged, emphasized drawing skills, and brought in the most talented people in design and typography, including Paul Rand, Joseph Albers, and Armin Hofman.
14. Jack started this in June 1979. He held classes at The Greenwood Press which ran for six weeks. See his *A Typographic Journey*, pp. 157-158.
15. Chuck Bigelow was an associate professor of digital typography at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California. He also designed system fonts for computer programs, notably the font family Lucida.

of the things that Bigelow and other type design researchers were part of. So, it wasn't just talking in the wilderness. It had substance, echoes. Here: [reads] "Educational systems involve typographic comments which are not yet well understood. For example, the relationship of legibility to literacy requires continuing research and education."[16] See, here we're going into other levels. We're not having students doing pretty little books.

Graalfs: So this was the goal for the Center for typographic language?

Stauffacher: This was my little creation. This was a microcosm of my frustration. I had to get it out of my system. I did have students that came. I had more students than I could handle.

Graalfs: Students came here to your studio?

Stauffacher: Right here. Well, I had this studio neat and clean then. This is the course study. I did lectures. I had slides. I gave them a very nicely printed syllabus.

Graalfs: And this followed your time at Cowell?

Stauffacher: Yes. Letterpress, of course, was disappearing quickly because technology was changing so quickly. There came a point when a whole new group, a generation of students and professors, began to work in computer typography, but they were working on the very high end. It wasn't desktop publishing. And there was a whole group of people in this who had not been educated in the history of typography. I filled in a little gap there, and they were so interested to know where Caslon came from, where

16.Quote from announcement broadside for the Center for typographic language. See *A Typographic Journey*, p. 157.

Garamond came from. There was a whole new vocabulary for them and there was no place they could learn it in an intelligent way. It was just at that particular moment in time that the desktop [computer] started to emerge and there were all these people doing things. They did some God awful stuff. It taught people from companies like Adobe to digitize type, hopefully. That was the idea. That's why I was an advisor, to make that bridge between the old metal days to this day. I think Adobe did very pioneering work, don't you?

Graalfs: Yes. You mentioned Chuck Bigelow. He was another person involved in this sort of work, digitizing?

Stauffacher: He was very involved with all this. He is my former student and he worked on all this material. He gave me some good ideas. Then, eventually he became a professor at Stanford, on digital matters.

Graalfs: In talking about your Center for typographic language you noted that you saw this as a period — in the early 1980s — where there was a major shift taking place. People were designing computer typefaces that would evolve into what we know today as desktop publishing. You saw a need to educate people about the alphabet, type, and design.

Stauffacher: Since the universities were not teaching this, yes. Yale was. Basel was. In England they were. This was part of the educational culture of certain areas. But out here it wasn't. Possibly the Art Center. I would take the focus on a balance between philosophy, the book, and type. So, it was an esoteric discipline, but broad enough to touch all of the different disciplines. I think if you read that [syllabus] carefully again

you'll see the complexity of it and its depth. A little bit of a dream, but there is the dream. How do you make this happen? How do you nourish something like that? A vision?

Graalfs: Do you feel that there's still that kind of a need today?

Stauffacher: Oh, I think just by the sheer exposure of the computer and the word "font," I think, this has created a rich curiosity about type, typography, type history. Artists and students are just thirsting after it. They have an instrument, a tool, that can do anything. But if you don't know how to really shape it and put it together properly, if you don't have the sophistication, it's useless. I think that now, in a sense, this desire to understand typography has been revived. It's not buried. We have to know. We can't ignore it. The computer has helped tremendously in doing great work, and in doing the opposite, too. But there have to be some people behind it that understand typography and its history.

Requirements of a Possible Book Arts & History Program

Graalfs: If you were invited to establish a school for book arts study, would you still include a proof press and letterpress?

Stauffacher: I would. I would because the tactile, the three dimensional-ness of it is really fundamental to understand five hundred years of technology. You just can't turn away from it and not use it. It'll give you a discipline, an understanding, an appreciation for the richness of it, and you just can't ignore it.

The San Francisco Center of the Book is doing a good job trying to show the tools and teach those who have never seen metal type and letterpress printing. They've had some rough periods, but I think they're really getting it together. Don't you think so?

Graalfs: Yes. Again, if someone said, "Jack, you can set up your lab. Tell us what you need?" What would be on your list this time?

Stauffacher: On my list would be very basic tools. I would have my Kis 12 point [type]. I've meditated on it for fifty-four years and I still love to get back to the case and set some of it.[17] I love it. That's almost a luxury now. I'd like to bring that discipline to younger people. They don't have to use Kis. There's all kinds of type. But one face to allow them to make a book all handset. Just do it. It could be a thin book, but do it with pleasure. I think they would never forget it. The other part of a curriculum is the poets, the writers, the history of the book. Travel to great libraries of the world, learn from other contemporaries. There are fine schools in London. Open yourself to wider intellectual experiences. In Alexandria, Egypt there is a library, a brand-new library. You know the great library of Alexandria. Designed by a Norwegian, Christoph Kapellar. Fantastic. You should see the lettering on that building. Modern. It's paying tribute to the ancient library.[18]

17. Jack is here referring to the Janson type he bought in 1950, the design of which he was later able to attribute to the Hungarian punch-cutter and printer, Nicholas Kis. In 1983 Jack, in association with John Howell-Books, published an English translation of György Haiman's *Nicholas Kis: A Hungarian Punch-Cutter and Printer, 1650-1702.*

18. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina, inaugurated on October 16, 2002, was designed by the Norwegian firm Snøhetta. The library houses eight million books and includes a manuscript restoration library. The building is marked architecturally by its glass-paneled roof that tilts towards the sea. The walls supporting the ceiling include alphabetic inscriptions.

George Kane

Early Life

Graalfs: Let's start by asking some questions about your background. Last year when we had a bit of a conversation together you told me that you came from a printing family and that your father owned and ran a paper in Sioux City, Iowa. Is this correct, and what was the name of it?

Kane: No, it was in a small town near Sioux City called Anthon and he ran the *Anthon Herald* from its beginning to about 1930 roughly, when we moved to Lake Andes, South Dakota. But up until that point he had the *Anthon Herald*.

Graalfs: Where were you born?

Kane: In Anthon.

Graalfs: And then as I understand it, when your father died you and your mother moved to Los Angeles. Do I have that right?

Kane: No, I was already living in Los Angeles and my mother just took over the paper from him. This was in Lake Andes and she kept running it there, running the *Lake Andes Wave*.

Graalfs: So you were the one, then, who came to California. Your mother never came out here?

Kane: No, my sister came to California much earlier than I did and she wanted me to come out and get away from the Middle West and all its severe winters. So I did and I was very happy to do that.

Graalfs: Your sister was the first in the family to come to Los Angeles.

Kane: Yes, she worked for Harold Lloyd. (laughter)

Graalfs: And who is that?

Kane: Harold Lloyd was a very famous comedian, probably the most famous comedian in the movies that the trade has ever seen.[1]

Graalfs: What about you? How old were you when you moved out to Los Angeles and what did you do when you first came here?

Job Printing & Newspapering

Kane: I was about twenty-eight or twenty-nine when I moved to Los Angeles. I worked on about, oh probably as many as twelve or thirteen little papers around there as a printer, to make a living and to see what I wanted to do. I worked around there for about five years, and I met my future wife there. Then I got an offer of a job at the *Sunnyvale Standard* and I took it. This of course was a long way from Los Angeles. But I got up here and took the job and I got married in between that time. I was married and we moved to Sunnyvale and I ran the paper there for three or four years. Then the company bought another paper, in Los Altos, and I ran that for awhile. And then they bought the Los Gatos paper and I ran the two of them. Sunnyvale was sold out to

1. Harold Lloyd started acting in silent films in 1914 when his friend Hal Roach started Rolin Film Company. His most popular comedy characters were Lonesome Luke and Glasses Character. He is in a league with his comedy contemporaries Charles Chapin, "Fatty" Arbuckle, and Buster Keaton. He died in 1971 at age 77 in Los Angeles.

another person. We didn't have Sunnyvale, but we ended up with the *Los Gatos Times Observer*. And I ran that until 1975.

Graalfs: Can we go back a little bit for a moment? Where did you learn printing and how did you learn it?

Kane: In my father's shop. I could run the linotype with the best of them. And the press. All of the mechanical aspects of the newspaper business. I was writing for it, too. I was writing the news from the high school. My father always met the morning train and I met the evening train and found out who was going where. That was done in those days. Because the train was the main article of travel. We would ask the people who were getting off the train where they were going, and the people who were getting on the train where they were going. It was for pleasure, usually, or to see relatives or something. It was not great journalism, but it was the journalism of a small, country paper.

Graalfs: How old were you when you started working for your father at the paper?

Kane: Twelve.

Graalfs: And what did you start doing?

Kane: I'd run the linotype. Well, I was not the only one. He had another tradesman there that worked with the job work and so on. But I helped after school almost every day. And I learned the printing trade very well.

Graalfs: What high school did you go to?

Kane: Lake Andes High School. My mother insisted . . . I was sixteen and she wanted me to be older than that when I went to college. That was during the Great Depression, in 1929, and I worked with my father. I was an expert pool player. (laughter) Then my sister, who lived in Los Angeles then, urged me to come out to Los Angeles. So I did that.

Graalfs: And then did you go to college after high school?

Kane: Oh yes. I went to college at South Dakota State College in Brookings. My brother worked on the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and so I would work a quarter with my brother to gain enough money to go the next quarter in South Dakota State College. I kept that up for a year and a half. And I was an unpaid teacher there, to teach the other kids how to set type by hand. I was never paid any money for it, but I was given a very good, low-priced place to stay. That was their way of paying me. But I left there and came to Los Angeles shortly after that.

Graalfs: You didn't graduate?

Kane: No. I only had roughly two years in college.

Graalfs: And were you specializing in anything in college, or was there any particular interest that you had?

Kane: No. I read all the time. Reading was my main occupation. I loved it. I read the classics and the not-classics. Intellectual life in the college was in an uproar because of the depression, and the college was having a terrible time existing because so much of the money was just shut off from the state. The enrollment dropped by more than half in

the one year. Many of the teachers were fired. They were let go because the college didn't have the money to pay them. It was sort of holding enough teachers and enough classes to say you are still a college, but it deteriorated so much in that period, just immediately, because of the depression. It came and hit like a storm.

Job Printing

Graalfs: Then you left in 1929 and came to Los Angeles?

Kane: I think it was 1930 when I came to Los Angeles.

Graalfs: Did you move in with your sister?

Kane: No, I went to work in various places around Los Angeles, in smaller cities that needed my kind of printing, to run linotype. And I got married and Mary, my wife, continued to work at the princely salary of fifteen dollars a week. I was earning twenty, and that was a lot of money. (laughter)

Graalfs: What sort of work did Mary do?

Kane: It was secretarial work.

Graalfs: When did you get married?

Kane: 1938. Two or three years after that we moved. I had this opportunity to go to northern California.

Graalfs: So you got married and you continued to live in Los Angeles for two or three years after that. Where did you settle when you came up to the Bay Area?

Kane: Sunnyvale, which is a city near San Jose.

Graalfs: What about during World War II? What did you do?

Kane: I was very patriotic and I wanted to join in some way to help the country. Finally I had to go to work at Douglas Aircraft. I worked in the motors division there for three solid years. And Mary taught school at various times. They hired her when they needed her. She didn't have a steady job.

Graalfs: She was a substitute teacher?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: Where was Douglas Aircraft?

Kane: In southern Los Angeles. We moved down there, and I worked there for three years, and we moved a couple of times. We had a child named Alexandra. And we made it. The year before the war ended, 1944, I got a job in Sunnyvale and so we moved up here. From then on we stayed up here.

Graalfs: You have two daughters, I believe?

Kane: Two daughters, yes. Sara was born later, five years later than Alexandra.

Graalfs: They both now live in Santa Cruz?

Kane: Sara does. She's an architect. She has quite a job at that [She is Senior Architect at UC Santa Cruz]. And then Alexandra works with me quite a bit. She also has a house south of Carmel and she stays down there quite a bit.

Graalfs: When you were working for the newspapers in Sunnyvale, Los Altos, and Los Gatos what kind of work did you do? Were you running presses?

Kane: Oh no, I was editor of the paper in Sunnyvale. Of course I still remembered my mechanical things and I helped out in the back shop at press time, the day of publication, if they needed me. I was also the advertising manager, as well as the editor. I had one or two persons under me, I think, in advertising and then a couple of people under me on the editorial side.

Graalfs: On the advertising side you were responsible for ads in the paper?

Kane: Yes. We created the paper every week.

The Book Business

Graalfs: When did you leave the newspaper business?

Kane: In 1977. I started in the book business specializing in Californiana. I had quite a collection. I slowly went on and was fascinated by it. I loved it and still do, but I wanted to have a better and a more varied collection of books, rather than just Californiana. So I started collecting wood engravings and the methods of printing because I had a

background in that and it worked out very well. I expanded on that and now I have something like ninety areas of books for one thing or another.

Graalfs: As far as leaving the newspaper business, you reached retirement age?

Kane: Yes, I was sixty-five. I had always wanted to be in the book business, so I went into it. And here I am.

Graalfs: You were regularly collecting books while in the newspaper business?

Kane: Yes, always. Oh, I always read in libraries but I bought a lot of books. I was quite interested in California history. So I bought a lot of those and you learn as you go along, what there is, and what the better books are and all the rest of it. And I learned that.

Graalfs: You're still very active as a bookseller today?

Kane: Yes. I sell them through the internet. It's a fantastic area of selling books, as well as selling a million other things. But the people who are interested in buying books in libraries and so on, go to the internet. I sell a lot to Europe. I sell almost as many books to Europe as I do in this country, because we're on the internet over there.

Graalfs: That's great. Is there an area of specialty that you're known for?

Kane: Well, wood engraving is one of them. You get orders on all sorts of things. Mostly . . . well, a lot of classical books, Dante's *Inferno* and that sort of thing. But a variety of things that I happen to have and it sells.

Graalfs: And is California history still an interest for you?

Kane: No, it's way down the line. I haven't sold one for a year or so. But I don't make any attempt to keep it up. It's a common area. There are far better collections of California history than I have and I'm not interested in it enough.

Graalfs: And you mentioned wood engraving or woodcut illustrations?

Kane: Yes, they are illustrated with woodcuts or wood engravings.

Graalfs: What other areas are you interested in?

Kane: Well, poetry is a very general term, but I have lots of that, particularly the poets of the 1940s and 1950s in Europe and in the United States. They became more critical and more varied in that period. And then I have collections of particular publishing houses that were famous. And, of course, in the printing area, fine presses. Unfortunately, they go in and out of existence so often because it's tough to sell them. A lot of people start to make books and have them written maybe by somebody else, and the competition's so much that they go out of business in that particular field. So it's amazing how much activity there is in the book world all the time. It isn't obvious to the average person because it's done very quietly and you have to be a book buyer in order to know it. It's quite active, very interesting.

Graalfs: What about some of the California fine printers? Is this an area that you deal in?

Kane: I've had that. I started out with that a lot. The Grabhorn Press, John Henry Nash, and several others. I still have their books and occasionally they sell. Some of them are very beautiful, particularly the Grabhorns. It was a pair of brothers that started it. They came from Ohio in 1920 and started off here in California.[2] They were probably the best known and the finest printers there have been in this state. California, there's a lot of people still interested in fine printing and they do it. It's amazing how much there is still at it.

Graalfs: Right. There is quite a lot. And related to your book business, are you involved in some of the clubs in the San Francisco area?

Kane: Oh, yes. The Roxburghe Club[3] and The Book Club of California, and oh . . . there are several of them. I don't drive anymore, so I don't get to meetings as often as I'd like to. But I still keep in touch.

Cowell Press

Graalfs: Well, why don't we turn now to talking about the Cowell Press. You mentioned that you were teaching typesetting at college, so you got a start way back then, in a sense. And of course I'm sure you were teaching people at work. When did you first start teaching at the Cowell Press?

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2. The Grabhorn Press was started by two brothers, Edwin and Robert, who moved to San Francisco 1920 from Indianapolis. By 1924 the Press was well established in the city and producing books for the Book Club of California, bookseller John Howell, and publishing book of their own. One of their most notable books is their 1930 edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, with illustrations by Valenti Angelo.
3. The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco was founded in 1928 with the purpose of advancing the members' interest in typography and book arts. It is considered one of California's "chappels" or printing societies that also includes the Zamorano Club and the Rounce and Coffin Club, both in Los Angeles, and the Moxon Chappel of Palo Alto.

Kane: I started in 1978.[4]

Graalfs: How did this come about? How did you start to teach there? Did you have a connection with the University before, in some way?

Kane: No. Well, I guess John Dizikes was aware of my work. (pause) That's an area I'll have to think about before I can reconstruct it. I was asked to teach on a trial basis when somebody didn't show up or they quit. I can't remember who it was.

Graalfs: Was that Sherwood Grover? I thought I remember hearing at one point that he taught but it didn't work out.

Kane: Yes, Sherwood Grover. In 1978 I started to teach all year and I taught the kids printing. The college was running short of money two or three times and I know for one period I did it all for nothing and then they offered me a small amount. I didn't do it for the money because I was quite happy with the book business. And I liked to do it, so I just kept doing it. And so I taught until . . . the whole year until about five years ago when they cut down to two quarters. I'm still teaching two quarters.

Graalfs: So originally you taught all three quarters and now it's two. You had an association with the Cowell Press going back to when Jack Stauffacher taught, right? Because, if I remember right, didn't he stay at your house here in town?

Kane: Yes, I let him stay in one of my houses. I had two houses and he stayed in one of them. But he didn't start anything. He just taught printing and whatever he did. And I

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4. In reviewing the Cowell College course listings, George Kane first taught at Cowell Press in winter quarter, 1979.

never went to one of his classes. I was asked to start in from that point, to have a place where we would have the Cowell Press. We didn't publish anything particularly. It was just for the students to come and learn there. So that was it.

Graalfs: You mentioned John Dizikes. Do you recall others at Cowell College who supported your work at the Press or appointment for teaching?

Kane: Yeah, there was nobody against it. (laugh) As I was introduced to teachers they were all helpful. But nobody particularly knew anything about it. So they were friendly, but John represented the class as far as the higher-ups were concerned.

Graalfs: And he was provost at that time?

Kane: He was provost.

Graalfs: Again, in reading through the preface that John wrote for the book *. . . the highest form of flattery. . .,* he mentioned Mrs. [Margaret] Sowers and that she was a member of what he referred to as the Cowell Press Council and that she was influential in your hiring?

Kane: She was. She was very helpful to me and we liked each other a lot. I would visit her on social occasions as well as for business. She was very interested in having the Press started and I was too, so it all worked out.

Graalfs: Did she live here in Santa Cruz?

Kane: Yes. She lived in a couple of places. I don't remember the address, but one was near the University and then the other one was someplace around here.

Graalfs: And did you know her and her husband previously? Roy Sowers was a member, I believe, of The Roxburghe Club and a significant book collector.

Kane: Yes. He died shortly after I got to know him. He put on an event of teaching outdoors, up in a place where they lived. It was out of Santa Cruz toward the north. If I drove around there enough I could probably figure out exactly where it was.

Graalfs: Were you aware of a Cowell Press Council to help decide on the direction of the Press or what to do with it?

Kane: Well, I think there were two or three of the faculty that went into that to make it official, but they didn't do anything about the teaching or the direction of what we taught and did. It was just sort a mechanism to make it appear, make the Cowell Press part of the University system. Also, the printing moved around from one place to another, from right under the dining hall and then to another place. We finally ended up in this little building, which was an old building, right next to the provost's house. I've taught there now for ten years, I think.

Graalfs: In starting to teach at the Press did you feel as though you were continuing something that was begun by other administrations or through Jack Stauffacher's teaching? Or did you see that as something that had begun and stopped and lost its momentum and you were starting fresh?

Kane: I wanted to make the Press have its own tradition. As far as Stauffacher went, it was a one time thing with him. He rightly covered the areas of printing and so on, but he didn't have any library of his own. He was very conceited. He wasn't somebody that you'd naturally warm up to and start to like. He lived on this sort of reputation of a great printer in San Francisco, and he was a good enough printer, but he wasn't anything out of the ordinary. But he appeared and he got paid for his quarter here, I guess. He's still around.[5]

Graalfs: Right, he still has his Greenwood Press in San Francisco. Did you know Jack previously through some of the clubs or just because of your connections with the San Francisco printing scene?

Kane: Yes, I didn't know him well. We were never friendly because he's cuts above me. (laughter) He was an old San Franciscan and I wasn't. With the San Francisco clubs that counts a lot. If it counted at all. I mean, I didn't give a damn one way or the other.

Graalfs: Do you remember anything about Sherwood Grover's teaching at the Press? I gather it probably was only one course.

Kane: He hated it. He despised it. And they gave him, not me, but the University said take at least five people. He said, "Five people! I'm not going to take five people. I'll take two." I think he took three and one of them quit because he couldn't stand him. And he ended up with two. He was amazingly conceited. I'd always sort of held him as a great printer, somebody I would love to know. But when he came here and did this I was just

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5. Jack Stauffacher taught at the Cowell Press for four quarters beginning in winter quarter 1974. Initially, he had a Regents' Professorship and then his teaching was extended through Cowell College money. As of this writing, Jack is active at The Greenwood Press in San Francisco.

amazed at his attitude. He had always been so jolly and mixed well with people. But not here. He hated the class, and his hatred, or his discontent, showed up with the students. And I think they quit early. It was the end of the quarter and they said, "Let's get the hell out of here."

Graalfs: Sherwood Grover had been a pressman for the Grabhorn brothers; am I right about that?

Kane: Yes, he was a printer. He was a compositor as well as a pressman. He was very funny and very witty and popular at the Grabhorn Press. When he came here I think he thought of it as a step down, rather than up. And somebody just playing around with printing. "What the hell do I want to have anything to do with it?" I think that was his attitude. But I was never that close to him.

Graalfs: Did he move down here for a period of time? Where did he live? Probably in San Francisco, I guess.

Kane: Well, I gave him the house, the house that we gave to our kids. Just down the street here, to live in for the quarter he was here. Because we were still living in Los Gatos and used it as a summer house. We came over occasionally and stayed over. So in the fall I gave him the house and said go ahead and live there. And so he did. When he left he gave me a box which I still have, as a present. So I still think of him because I use the box all the time. (laughter) It's painted and I think it came from abroad someplace. He was an unusual person.

Graalfs: How has the Cowell Press been supported and your salary paid until now? Is this college money?

Kane: It's become more or less standard in the past five or six years. But before that it was, "Would I teach at a lot lower price?" I did it for nothing for a couple of quarters. I think the one fellow, I can't think of his name at the moment, but he carried on and saw to it that as long as I would do it that he would keep the place going. So he deserves credit for it too.

Graalfs: Are you referring to Bill Ladusaw, the last provost?

Kane: Well, I was a friend with him, but he was not there in the beginning years. He was recent.

Graalfs: Okay. But to your understanding it's college money that supports the Press and pays you?

Kane: Yes. I thought it probably would be discontinued with all of the hassle this year, but no, they wanted me to keep teaching another two quarters.

Graalfs: I have mentioned a couple of times this book . . . *the highest form of flattery* . . . and I want to pursue this for a moment here. It is a quite lovely book that was produced by the Cowell Press early on. It bears the imprint of the Cowell Press and was a book that was done in collaboration, I gather, with Adrian and Joyce Wilson. Was that something that you were involved in?

Kane: Yes, I put it together. And Adrian was never in on that, as I remember. It was a woman printer here in town.

Graalfs: Felicia?

Kane: Felicia Rice. And a man . . .

Graalfs: I think that was Nick Zachreson.

Kane: Yes. And they did it for me. I asked them to do it. To print it. I didn't want to appear as the king of the road in the book. So I had it done, as it were, by them. And I wasn't . . . I can't remember how much I . . . I know I wrote several things about it. I've got one someplace here.

Graalfs: Maybe we can look at it afterwards. I guess I mentioned Joyce and Adrian Wilson because it includes a page from *The Nuremberg Chronicle*, about which Adrian wrote an extensive history.[6]

Kane: Yes, and Adrian was very kind and gave us the leaves.[7] I became acquainted with him and he was one of the best friends I've ever had. Just a delightful couple. She died first and then he died right afterwards. It was very sad.[8]

Graalfs: So, this was really a publishing effort on your part and you used the Cowell Press imprint.

Kane: Yes, and we paid the two people who did it. We couldn't pay them very much but we paid them.

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6. Adrian Wilson, assisted by Joyce Lancaster Wilson, *The Making of The Nuremberg Chronicle* (Amsterdam: Nico Israel, 1976).
7. *. . .the highest form of flattery. . .*was published in 1982, written by Adrian and Joyce Lancaster Wilson. It was designed by Adrian Wilson and was printed by Felicia Rice and Nick Zachreson at the Cowell Press.
8. In fact, Adrian Wilson died in 1983 and Joyce Lancaster Wilson died in 1996.

Graalfs: What did you do with the book when it was done? Was this something that was sold?

Kane: No, it was . . . I don't know. I can't remember how many copies we had. Maybe ten. Oh, wait a minute, yes. It was fourteen copies. And I signed all fourteen and they went to Felicia and so on. I have a copy someplace but I'll be damned if I know where it is. (laughter)

Teaching Printing at Cowell College: Kane's *Book Arts* Class

Graalfs: Let's turn to talking about teaching at the Cowell Press a bit more specifically, as opposed to some of the background and history to your beginning there. You are teaching the course this year?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: How many students do you have this year?

Kane: Ten. Nine girls and one boy. Very nice class.

Graalfs: And what is the title of the class that you teach?

Kane: I think it's titled The History of Printing, something like that.[9]

Graalfs: And this is a course offered through Cowell College, is that correct? But open to students across the campus?

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9. The course is entitled *Book Arts*.

Kane: Oh, yes, all over the campus. Hardly anybody is from Cowell. Mostly they are fourth-year students and lot of them are from art.

Graalfs: Studio art majors?

Kane: Yes, it's the biggest group of students for art in the University. And the majority of my students are from that. . .

Graalfs: Are you trying to think of a name of a college?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: Possibly you mean Porter College. So you have ten students. And you are saying they are primarily art students.

Kane: Several of them are. I can't remember what they all are. But they are mostly fourth-year students.

Graalfs: And these days you are teaching it two quarters each year. Will you teach it again in the winter or the spring?

Kane: Fall and winter.

Graalfs: Last year, in October there was a nice article about the Cowell Press and your work in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. With a nice picture of you and some of the students.

Kane: Oh, yes. They've always been very nice. Two or three times they've done this.

Graalfs: Were you appreciative of the publicity?

Kane: Very much so. I wrote them a letter.

Graalfs: Did you find that this article created any additional interest on the part of the students for the class?

Kane: No. It's so foreign in every way to any of the other classes in the University. Because of my old presses. They look at them and they say, "What the hell are they?" (laughter) And the type and so on. You've been to the building?

Graalfs: Yes, I have.

Kane: Yes. It doesn't look like a classroom. I have had up to fifteen or twenty students come. And they look at it and they'll maybe stay one or two meetings. But they think it's too much for them, or they don't want to do this kind of work. So it always comes down to about nine or ten.

Graalfs: Oh, I see. So you start out with fifteen or twenty and then many drop out?

Kane: Yes. Because it's so foreign to them, there's a lot of them that don't understand it. And some of them have worked at it one year and then come back for it again the next year, having sort of gotten the idea of what it was about.

Graalfs: Would you want to teach to twenty students? That seems like an awful lot.

Kane: No.

Graalfs: So you count on the attrition.

Kane: Yes. Even the size of the room. It would be cheek to jowl.

Graalfs: I also got the impression from the *Sentinel* article that at least one student they interviewed was a senior and he'd been trying to get into that class for a number of years. Do you find that's true, that there's a real enthusiasm?

Kane: Yes, in some cases. Now that you mention it, I was surprised at that comment too. Because I can't imagine that they had to wait for years, unless I was completely unaware of it. Because lot's of times they'd come in the fall quarter and I was full. So I'd say, "Please come in the winter quarter," and they would do it. And in the winter quarter I'd say, "Well, it's a long time until the fall quarter, but if you wish I'll put your name on a list." And sometimes they'd come through and sometimes they haven't.

Graalfs: If a student were to come and there wasn't room but they seemed really enthusiastic, you would try to hold a place for them?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: I take it then that you really still enjoy the teaching and get a pleasure out of it.

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: When we stopped yesterday we were beginning to talk about your teaching at the Cowell Press specifically. And who the students are this term, who they've been in the past, and that you're teaching this academic year, and typically teaching two

quarters in a year. So why don't we go on talking about the Cowell Press and students, and what makes up the Press and the class. As I understand it, when you came to the Cowell Press, there was a Vandercook proof press that the college had acquired, a nice wooden typecase, and Bembo type. I was wondering if these materials are still used at the Press?

Kane: Yes. We have two Vandercooks now. And we also have another press which is a press that was made for large signs and so on. It has one roller with a handle on top and then the bed of the press is flat and you ink it by hand. You'd roll the impression roller with a piece of paper or cardboard on top of it after that. It's something that was greatly in style and people wanted it in the days when there were people coming around and they just wanted five copies of a big poster or something. It was for that and somebody had developed it. As a matter of fact, for the students it's just a delight to have something where they can print something that's large and flamboyant and may be silly or not.

Graalfs: And you also said that you got another Vandercook, in addition to the one that was there originally. Was that something that you acquired?

Kane: Yeah, somebody called up and said, "Do you want my press?" It was great.

Graalfs: Is this one a smaller one than the . . .

Kane: No, I think it's a larger one.

Graalfs: And I think that when I was meeting with you last year and we went up to the Press, you also have a job press, what I always called a platen press, but you don't use that, you said.

Kane: No, I don't use that for the students. If they get their hand caught . . . It's a matter where you put something in the press and take it out and put another one in with this hand. So many people when they first start out do get their hand caught in the press. They forget that this press is coming together. And we have no use for something that is made for an output.

Graalfs: It's more of a production press.[10]

Kane: It's a production press. It's a very good one and it's not used much anymore because [now there is] automatic feed on everything. But some of the older printers still use them because they can make very beautiful copies of whatever it is that they want.

Graalfs: Right. And I think those are a little bit more efficient too for smaller pieces, right? Because the Vandercooks with that cylinder . . .

Kane: And they have a motor on them so it gives you speed. You can go from about two or three a minute [on a Vandercook] to eighteen or twenty a minute [on the motor-driven platen].

Graalfs: And how did you get that one?

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10. This press is a Chandler & Price with an 11″ x 14″ chase.

Kane: It was given to the Press early on. I didn't know much about it and they told me, "Well, here it is." That's when we were in the other building under the dining hall. I had to take it with me when we moved. I don't use it. I'd like to sell it or give it to somebody who could really use it.

Graalfs: And what about type? Have you added to the typefaces?

Kane: Yes, I added to them a great deal because I have a lot of friends in the newspaper business. In the 1960s to 1975, everybody started printing using the cheaper method of offset. They are done with those presses [letterpresses] and done with that type [metal, handset]. I knew a lot of them, and at one of the meetings I said, "I could take some of your type if you'd like to give it to me. You can take a deduction for it for giving it to the University." So they gave me a lot of type and a lot of it I probably shouldn't have taken. But it's different kinds of type and so I have a huge variety of old printer's type. And it's all in good shape. And all in good typecases.

Graalfs: So you've gotten more cases as well.

Kane: Yes. Actually the students get sort of . . . When they first come in they get sort of flabbergasted at all of this type, but we work it out.

Graalfs: Flabbergasted. How?

Kane: "All this type. I've got to see it all?" They thought that they had to do something about it. They don't.

Graalfs: Do you have any of the old wooden type?

Kane: Yes. I have some brand-new fonts with the letters this large.

Graalfs: About ten inches tall?

Kane: Huge. You can't use it for anything except for the press I mentioned that was intended for signs and such. That's where that kind of type is used. In the old days.

Graalfs: That's great. So it sounds like you've managed to add quite a lot.

Kane: Yes, I think we're the best equipped in type and so on of any school, because of all of these gifts.

Graalfs: Have you visited any of the other schools that have book arts or printing programs?

Kane: I don't know of any that do this sort of thing.

Graalfs: Mills College has a program, for example.

Kane: Yes, I think they do. But they don't use it. They just have it as sort of a . . . I've been there years ago and the same woman is running it, but she doesn't set type and print. She just has it.[11]

Graalfs: Certainly not as much as you have.

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11. In fact, Kane has brought his classes to Mills College. According to Associate Professor and Director of the Book Arts Program, Kathy Walkup, they have two Vandercook proof presses, a platen press, a handpress and a broad selection of handset type.

Kane: No. Well, she doesn't use it. At least she didn't used to.

Graalfs: So, in terms of the class itself and the students, what do you think attracts students to your course?

Kane: Something that's unknown. It's something that's a complete mystery to them. I have had some who had some experience or had at least seen a press. It was from both, but mostly it's from curiosity — what in the world is this? What's it about and what do printers do? When the class starts there're always fifteen or up to eighteen people. I don't know what it is. They come to see what that class is about. Most of them after they see it, or many of them, say, "Well, I'd like to do that next year, but I've got to do some other work this year, finish up." Some of them come back but most don't.

Graalfs: For those that stay or come back, once they are there and working, what do they find fascinating about it? Is it the connection with books, or is it the pleasure of making something?

Kane: Well, the first part of the experience is to handle type, to learn to set type. Women are by far the best students, because they'll take the time to put these little things together. With men, it takes too damn long. But the women like it. Some of the men do too, but for a lot of them it's too detailed. That's the only word I can think of to express what they . . . because then they have to put it down, or they have to lock it up and they have to justify each line so that it's tight, so that it doesn't wobble. They sometimes get very impatient with it.

Graalfs: There's a kind of meticulousness required that they don't like? When you started teaching desktop computers weren't so prevalent. As people have gotten used to doing things on the computer do you think that's made them more impatient with it?

Kane: There hasn't been any difference in the number of students between now and then. It's . . . I don't think they are more informed about the computer now than they were ten years ago. I mean, some of them are and some of them were then. But most of them are not.

Graalfs: Do you have to do anything to advertise the course or attract students? Or do they all come through word-of-mouth?

Kane: Oh, no. I don't have to do anything. There's no way to advertise it in the first place. It's just when school opens they come at one o'clock on the first Monday or Wednesday that rolls around. I take them around and show them everything in the classroom, show them type and give them an idea of what they are in for. And some of them like it, love it, love the idea of learning it. But others aren't interested.

Graalfs: Do you have the sense that there's any kind of word-of-mouth going around about the class? A student comes and says, "My friend took this."

Kane: Some of them have. Some of them have had friends who had taken it and told them about it. But that's a minority.

Graalfs: What is the structure of the class? What are some of the first lessons?

Kane: Well, I give them all a case of type, which is heavy and it's got all of the type in it. It's fourteen point, which is type about . . . your typeface is about that size.

Graalfs: My notes here.

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: A standard text size.

Kane: It's a book size. And then I ask them to find a quotation or something that they like that interests them, and come and set it in type. I show them that you set it from left to right just as we write. But for you it's upside down. And you'll see after you print once how the negative letter turns into the positive letter. I show them how to justify each line and how to take the type in and out of their composing stick and put it on the galley tray.

Graalfs: Tie it up.

Kane: I show them this just once or twice in the first two days and it goes on from there. As I say, again, mostly women and some men like it very much. I take them around and encourage them to look in the typecases for what the type is, and they can pick it up and see the shape of the letter and so on. This interests a lot of them. And the ones who are interested, they stay and go ahead and take the class.

Graalfs: And again, from last year working with you and doing a exhibition at McHenry Library celebrating the Cowell Press [I know that] you have the students do a broadside and they also do a little four-page booklet. Are these the typical assignments?

Kane: Well, that's the first assignment, the four-page booklet. This is my third week; almost all of them are coming to the end of that. Several of them have printed. Then, after that they know about type and know how to handle it and they distribute the type that they have. And then I give them ideas for the next project to print a poster or a broadside, or I'll talk with them about what they are interested in setting. During every class I show them books that I have, many of them large books with fine printing in them, books with unusual illustrations, miniature books. Over there on the shelf, I take a lot of those that are the original wood engravings. [George goes over to shelf] This is a hand-cut block. That is the result.

Graalfs: Oh, I see. You have quite a few of these.

Kane: Yes, I have a lot of them.

Graalfs: You bring these in to class?

Kane: Yes, I show them those to learn how illustrations were made. And we talk about the past. In the fifteenth century they were doing this sort of thing. And that's part of what they are shown that I don't think they would get any other place.

Graalfs: Do you encourage the students, when they move on to the second project that sounds like it's a little bit more personal, do you encourage them to try to illustrate it?

Kane: Yes. I ask that they must illustrate it. They can do that with very small and not very difficult things, or they can learn how to cut it out with a little set of knives that we have for cutting out linoleum blocks.

Graalfs: You have those tools at the shop as well?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: Also, I think yesterday you were saying that many of the students are art students. Do they apply some of these skills in your class?

Kane: I hope so. (laughs) Most of the students, the great variety of them catch on and learn it and their art [referring here, most likely, to their printing skill] may not be bad, but it's sufficient. And a very few just have no idea how to do it and they can't imagine how to turn the negative into the positive.

Graalfs: Okay. And what if the student was an art student and had some familiarity with other printmaking processes, engraving or lithography? Have you had occasions where they might take their work and print the illustration in some of the art studios and then bring it back to the Press?

Kane: Yes, some of them have decided to take the course so that they could do that. Without me knowing it. They don't tell me about it but they just do it and then it's obvious after they start and they tell me what they want to do, that they've known about it before they even enrolled in the class. That's all right. That's fine.

Graalfs: What about collaborations between the students in the class? Do you encourage that or does that happen?

Kane: No, it's all single. I mean, some of them are familiar with each other and they change things or something, but that's rare. Most of them stick to their own thing.

Graalfs: You were just mentioning that you bring books as well as engravings that you have from your collection into class. At one point you told me that in the first class you always show them a book of John Henry Nash's.

Kane: Yes, or somebody like that. To show them fine printing. To show them something that they've never seen before, of that kind of printing. I frankly use it to show them some very beautiful things so that they get an idea of what they're going to be doing. They are not going to equal that or anything, but it opens up a whole new horizon to them, of fine printing, that they never were aware of. Ninety-nine percent of the kids that come have never seen beyond an ordinary textbook or an average novel that comes out of the library. They've never seen a beautiful book, or a different kind of a book, or a book that was printed a long time ago and was the forerunner of the books that are printed today.

Graalfs: What kinds of reactions do you get?

Kane: Oh, very good. Very interesting. It's a new country to them. "My gosh, I ain't never seen anything like that!" (laughter)

Pochoir

Kane: I have a lot of books in French. I have some books in Hebrew. I don't think I've shown them that. Because the books are not particularly interesting. It's just they are in another language. But I have some very beautiful French books, because they are illustrated with pochoir and I've made a specialty of getting that kind of book.

Graalfs: You take those in and show students as well? Can you describe the process a little bit? You mentioned it involves stencilling.

Kane: Well, most printing illustration is done with a four color process, where you have the three colors and black, and that's the way that ninety-nine percent, that all of the books with colored illustrations are printed, with those four colors. With pochoir they decide on the — and I'm not positive about the subtleties of this sometimes — the general idea is that they make a figure and decide where the colors will go and they'll paint it in . . . it's a hand-done process with each picture. But it isn't necessary that the same colors will go into an illustration in every copy of a book. They can be different because they'll put in different colors. It's a hand-done process.

Graalfs: So, an illustration might be a little different from one book to the next.

Kane: Right. And they are.

Graalfs: It's individualized?

Kane: Right. And it's all hand-done. It's fascinating. And it was done only in France.

Graalfs: What's the history of the process?

Kane: Well, the history I have heard about it was that it was done mainly, to a great extent, during World War II in France when it was occupied.[12] The Germans had conquered it. A lot of the artists went ahead and did pochoir books, I think hoping in the end to be able to sell them when France was liberated. Again, women played a large

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12.Pochoir is a unique application of stencilling practiced largely in France and England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For more on this subject see: Elizabeth M. Harris, *The Art of Pochoir* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1977); Burr Wallen, *Pochoir: Flowering of the Hand-Color Process in Prints & Illustrated Books, 1910-1935* (Santa Barbara: University of Santa Barbara Art Museum, 1977).

part in it because they had no way of making money. They would work with the pochoir artist in copying a lot of the colors, copying the colors of maybe five or six or up to eighteen or nineteen different colors that would be in the illustrations. The women would do these by hand for the publication of books which might be a thousand books. Usually the print runs were much smaller. They were usually two or three hundred books that were printed at a time using pochoir, because it was such a difficult way to make the illustration. But it's so beautifully done. It's almost an artist's work for every illustration, when you look at how beautifully done they are.

Graalfs: Let's go back to Cowell Press, if you don't mind. You've been teaching now up at the Press for more than twenty-five years, I think.

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: What do you find exciting about it through all of that time? What stimulates you?

Kane: Well, every class is a new experience. That's true. Who likes it and who doesn't like it. It's not anything you can bet on from one quarter to another. (laughter)

Graalfs: Do you enjoy staying in touch with the students?

Kane: Oh sure.

Graalfs: Are there students that you continue to stay in contact with?

Kane: Some of them, yes. Two or three years later they'll write me a letter or a note, show me something. They'll remember the class. There's quite a few of them.

William Everson & The Lime Kiln Press

Graalfs: I wanted to go back just a little bit in time, so to speak, to when you were first beginning. I was curious to talk a little bit about William Everson, who also taught printing on the campus. I think his time teaching overlapped with when you began. Bill retired in 1982. Did you know Bill Everson?

Kane: Yes, I was never stricken with him. He wasn't a teacher at all. He wanted to make all these books that he made. He was interested only in those. And in the period of time I knew him he was too feeble to do his own printing, or at least he didn't do it.[13] He had other people do the hard stuff. The lithography [probably means printing] he did was difficult to do because he always had big illustrations and it took a lot of manpower to run the press, because it wasn't a mechanical press.

Graalfs: He worked on a handpress.

Kane: And so in his younger years he had to do it himself. But that was way beyond what I saw in the class at the University.

Graalfs: Did you know of Bill before starting at the Cowell Press, as you were a book collector and he was a California fine printer?

13.William Everson suffered from Parkinson's disease and died in June 1994.

Kane: In the period, the two or three years he was there, all the hard work was done by my students. He asked them and asked me if I could have them learn something by doing the hard work of doing the press work. And they did it.

Graalfs: So some of your students at Cowell Press would work with Bill?

Kane: Some of them.

Graalfs: Do you remember who some of them might have been? I think, for example, Peter Thomas worked with you and Bill as well.

Kane: Yes. I never cared about him particularly. I didn't dislike him or anything, it was just that he did his work and I did mine. (laughter)

Graalfs: Did he ever come over to the Cowell Press when you were there?

Kane: Yes. Once in a while. He was a very self-centered man, completely self-centered. And if you weren't interested in him he wasn't interested in you.

Graalfs: Was Ruth McGurk a student of yours?

Kane: Sure.

Graalfs: And did she work with Bill?

Kane: I think she worked for a little while with him, but not very long. I don't know exactly. But she was a very good student.

Graalfs: When I studied with Bill, one of the projects we worked on was *Granite and Cypress.* Do you recall that book?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: What did you think of it?

Kane: It was a beautiful book. An elegant book. I think I bought a copy or two. I'm sure I did.

Thoughts on Fine Printing

Graalfs: Talking about printing just generally, what do you love about printing or letterpress printing particularly? Do you have a fondness for that over other kinds of printing?

Kane: Oh sure. Because I can do it and I did all my life, most of it. And it comes as second nature to me. I don't disparage any other methods of printing, but all of the new methods are for efficiency and getting it out and doing it cheaply, so that more people can have it. So that's fine. But it's not the letterpress printing. It isn't capable of doing what they can do now with the faster methods and cheaper, very much cheaper.

Graalfs: Do you keep up in any way with developments in printing, say through some of your friends in the newspaper business?

Kane: Oh, I know about them. But I'm not interested in them, in doing anything there or learning more about it. It's gone. (laughter)

Graalfs: Since retirement and with your book collecting interest and interest in fine printing, have you ever had a press of your own and printed books?

Kane: Oh, sure. I established my own little printing office two or three times. During the depression was the first one. And after about six or eight months of doing it (this was in Los Angeles), I still hadn't paid for the press. I couldn't pay for the press. I had to eat and have a place to sleep myself at the same time. So they took back the press and that was the end of that period. (laughter) As time went on I can't remember that I did that again, that I had a press, where I bought a press and went into printing. Because you see the kind of printing that I did was, "Do you want to have some envelopes and calling cards printed?"

Graalfs: Real job printing.

Kane: Yes. I wasn't interested in that. After that little experience I went on to other things.

Graalfs: Working in the newspapers?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: Since retiring, your outlet for the letterpress printing has been at the Cowell Press?

Kane: Yes, that's right.

Graalfs: What about polymer plates? Have you had any occasion to use those?

Kane: No, I don't know anything about those. They are sort of after my period of being in printing.

Graalfs: And what about computer technology and desktop publishing? Have you had any interest, or do the students express any interest, in trying to mix letterpress with something done on a computer?

Kane: No. Because I don't have that to offer them. All I can offer is you set the type and you print it here. And that's it. And the computer, I wouldn't know what the hell to do with it.

Former Students at Cowell Press

Graalfs: I was interested in some of the students that you've had, people who have continued on. We've mentioned a couple. Perhaps we can go back and talk about them a little more. Peter Thomas and his wife Donna, who have a press and are here in Santa Cruz. I think Peter worked with Bill Everson. Did he also work with you at some point?[14]

Kane: No. I just know him as a printer. I've never worked with him. They never went to college when I was there. I don't know when they did or if they did.

Graalfs: We were talking earlier about Ruth McGurk. Was she a student with you?

14.Peter Thomas audited a class at the Cowell Press with Sherwood Grover, worked with William Everson and graduated in 1978.

Kane: Yes, she was a good student. I see her now. She's still printing. It's a Duke's Mixture of printing that she has. She has a house all to herself and she fills it with printing and all the rest of the things she likes. She's a lot of fun.[15]

Graalfs: So at some point she was working with you at the Cowell Press. Now, what about Peggy Gotthold?

Kane: She was my student.

Graalfs: Do you remember when?

Kane: No, not the year. In the middle of my teaching there, thereabouts.[16] She was one of several students who went on in it, and defined it more, and became a veteran. She's running a fine press now, she and her husband.

Graalfs: Foolscap Press, right?

Kane: Yes, and they do excellent work.

Graalfs: She came to the class with a real interest?

Kane: Well I don't know if she was interested before, but she ended up with a great interest. No, she came as a complete novice and fell in love with what she did.

15.Ruth McGurk graduated in 1980 from UC Santa Cruz with a B.A. in Book Arts. She got her masters degree in Book Arts from Mills College. She lives in Santa Cruz and her press is Peripatetic Press.

16.Peggy Gotthold studied at Cowell Press through the Extension program in 1983-84.

Graalfs: Your students have ready access to the press?

Kane: Well, yeah. They don't know how to run it yet this quarter. But in the past by the middle of the quarter they've got an idea of how it works.

Graalfs: Can they come in and work on their own time? Do you allow that?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: I think another student who studied with you was Aaron Johnson, who then went on and worked at The Yolla Bolly Press. Do you remember him?

Kane: Yes, I remember him, and he was a good student. But then he went away and I wasn't aware of him until he came back. But he was never as close as the other two of them were.

Graalfs: Ruth and Peggy?

Kane: Yes, Peggy gives me a ride up here [to the University campus] every Wednesday.

Graalfs: Oh, she takes you up to the campus? Great. Are there any other students that you can recall who have gone on and maintained an interest in letterpress printing?

Kane: Yes, there have been several. Well, if you mean students who actually went into the business, not more than just two or three, like Peggy and the other ones. But I've had a lot of students just be interested still and keep talking to me and talking about old times. But the number of students who went on into the actual practice of printing were

only those like Peggy and Ruth and a couple more that went back East for awhile, but I can't remember their names.

Graalfs: Are you aware of any students who have taken the class and changed their course of study as a result of it? I mean, for example, come in as history majors and decided they wanted to do something with printing, or books, or book history?

Kane: Well, I think most of the students who went on came in looking for something to hang onto, and that interested them more than anything else. But not who were already in another discipline. They didn't. Not that I was aware of.

Graalfs: Have you been aware of students who have developed an independent major for bookmaking or book arts while you've been at Cowell?

Kane: No, not that I know of. One like Ruth McGurk, she knows more of the students who went on than I do and she's mentioned it once or twice. But I just don't remember the details.

The History & Significance of Printing

Graalfs: Do you think of printing, movable type, the Gutenberg invention as a revolutionary event in history?

Kane: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. My God, it was . . . By the year 1500 there were more than 80,000 books that had been printed on letterpress [since Gutenberg's *Bible* in 1450]. In fifty years it just swept the people of that time, in Germany particularly, and France to a degree, and England came in later. They were civilized about fifty years later. (laughter) When you look back at the kind of civilization in which early printing arose there was

little commerce between cities, except for gold, and very high classes; there wasn't commerce or communication particularly between the various cities of those countries until printing came in. I've heard stories told about printers, where as soon as the Catholic Church was aware of what they were doing, and that they were printing things that hadn't been okayed, the Church started to close them down. Many printers in many cases fled to Switzerland, or to another place, to continue printing, to get out from under the discipline of the Catholic Church. Those years up until 1500, when the overwhelming of the Catholic Church was stopped, or at least was slowed down, meant a lot to them, because they had overseen everything that anybody dared print, or even talk about — they okayed or didn't okay. And that was the beginning of reducing the Church to just another church, instead of running the countries. It took longer than 1500 to do it but it was done.

Graalfs: Do you think of printing as a democratizing tool?

Kane: Oh, completely. Just that knowledge of what happened after Gutenberg, in those fifty years, was the explosion of knowledge. It made knowledge available to the people. They came out of being in the horrible desecration of complete ignorance where nobody read and wrote. It was the greatest move to freedom that had ever been made. And it was eventually the freedom that we came by.

Graalfs: "We," meaning here in the United States?

Kane: Yes. The beginning of our country.

Graalfs: What place do you see for books today in our society? What with changes that are going on, there are always discussions that the book will be replaced by the

computer, or the printed book will be replaced by hand-held electronic books. Do these things interest you? Do you see the book losing its place?

Kane: No. The book business is thriving. It's probably over-thriving. There're more people in the business than can make a living at it. But look at the books that are sold every year. I admit those other things. They are there and some people may want them. But to equal how cheap it is to make a book anymore, with offset printing, and the very simple way of binding a book. Not with the old sewing of the book as we used to, but with glue.

Graalfs: Perfect binding.

Kane: Books are cheap and so they are read all over the place. There're more and more of them. These other things are just puffs in the air as far I'm concerned. I don't think they make any difference. They haven't cut down the sales of books.

Graalfs: What about letterpress books, in particular, or fine press books?

Kane: They're still coming out. They're still being done. I'm amazed at how many of them do come, and they die, most of them, because it is so difficult to sell them. So many people who learn about printing think, "Well, I'll go in and I'll make these beautiful books and everybody will buy them." And they don't have the access to all of the people who might buy them without spending a lot of money. A lot of people don't care, probably, about what they consider their opus, whatever area it is. But it doesn't hurt the complete generation of books all the time, good books, bad books, stupid books.

Graalfs: Are there any fine presses that you are particularly interested in these days?

Kane: Oh, sure. There are several in England that have existed longer than they have in this country, several companies, and they've had the same experience. I mean, so many of them have a very short life because it doesn't live up to the financial income that they had expected that they would get. But there're still a lot of them.

Graalfs: The ones in England — which ones are you thinking of?

Kane: I would have to go back and look at some of them. I can't tell you right offhand. [moves to shelf]

Graalfs: When I was asking the question I was just thinking in terms of fine presses, of people that are actively working. Are there any that pop to mind that you like, or favor, or buy their books?

Kane: I don't buy most of their books, frankly, because I put my money into the books that sell and books that are wanted by various of my customers. And most of them [fine presses] are doing reprints, many of them are. They don't have something new, but they'll reprint an excellent little set of poems by some excellent poet. But it's a reprint. And for my uses I want the original one. That is the one that will sell. It's the one that I can revolve without too much chance, put my money into to have for sale to customers.

Graalfs: Do you make a distinction between fine press books and what some people nowadays call artist books, or one-of-a-kind books?

Kane: Well, those are two different categories. The fine press books come and go down the years. The works in most cases were bought and loved and continue to stay in people's libraries, and in the libraries of the big universities. But the person who is

printing a book with a lot of illustrations in it for the first time, or something like that, that's an exercise for that person, and his art, to either be liked or accepted or not be accepted, particularly. So they are different. It's two different areas, as I see it.

Graalfs: So, you just turned ninety, I believe, within the last month?

Kane: Yes, October 6.

Graalfs: You were born in what year?

Kane: 1913.

Graalfs: Do you have any thoughts about retiring from teaching at the Cowell Press?

Kane: No, not as long as I'm able to do it.

Graalfs: You're going to do it. That's great.

Kane: Oh yeah. I wouldn't give up anything like that. Or give up my books. Become a retired person? Retire from what?

Graalfs: Would you like to see Cowell College continue to maintain the Press and keep that going?

Kane: I hope they do. Oh yes.

Graalfs: Have you talked to anyone there about doing that, making sure that the Press stays a viable, working enterprise?

Kane: There's a new bunch of executives at the University in the last two or three years, and I don't know them. But it wouldn't stop me from telling them that I hope that they do it whenever the occasion will come. I'm always amazed every year that they want me to continue to teach up there. Because it's a small class and my pay is the cheapest kind. I'm not a permanent member of the faculty. I'm a fly-by-night. (laughter)

Graalfs: What title do you have? Are you a lecturer?

Kane: Lecturer. Which is way down there. But I could care less.

Some Illustrated Books from the Kane Collection

In this final interview I asked George Kane to select and discuss some of the books and examples of fine printing in his collection—Greg Graalfs.

Graalfs: What are we looking at here? Is this a broadside or a page out of a book?

Kane: It's entitled *Another Independence Day.* When prohibition was repealed in 1933.

Graalfs: This was in San Francisco?

Kane: It was John Henry Nash who printed this.[17]

17.Full title is *Another Independence Day. December Six, Nineteen Thirty-three. Brings to the City of Saint Francis: The Opening of Our Retail Store. 550 Sacramento Street., SF. The Pioneer Liquor Store.* John Henry Nash, printer.

Graalfs: The illustration on this is by whom?

Kane: I don't know who did the illustration, but it is a very nice one. Relaxed. People having a glass of wine.

Graalfs: We see two gentlemen sitting at a table with their glasses of wine.

Kane: (laughter) Independence Day.

Graalfs: All right. So we're going to look at some books today from areas in which you like to collect. Do you want to pick one, or a topic we want to start with?

Kane: Let's start with the fore-edges.

Graalfs: These are fore-edge paintings, examples of fore-edge painting. Is that right?

Kane: Well, any book almost can take these. It was a little sort of a cute trick back in the 1800s to have one of these, where the book seemed to be an ordinary book and then when it was fanned out, here was a picture! Sometimes the picture was of something related to the book or to the author. But it was being cute because you can't tell when you look at it that it has this picture on it.[18]

Graalfs: Right. I mean the picture is really invisible when the book is in its regular position.

18.Nicholas A. Basbanes, *Among The Gently Mad: Perspectives and Strategies for the Book Hunter in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: A John Macrae, Owl Book, Henry Holt and Company, 2002), pp. 108-109.

Kane: Yes, it is. Because it is printed just on the edge of the pages. And it could have a double fore-edge, which is one picture here and you turn it over and it's another picture here.

Graalfs: Fan out the pages the opposite way and then it's a different picture.

Kane: Because again the picture is on the edge of the paper, on the flat part of the paper, not the edge.

Graalfs: That's why we're calling it fore-edge, because it's not really the edge. Is that it?

Kane: Well this is the fore-edge of any book. But it was a surprise, particularly in the 1900s. And, of course, they say that even before that, in the 1600s, they would have the title on the edge of the page, where they didn't have it on the spine. This pertained, supposedly, to large books that were not particularly tightly bound, and so they would write on the fore-edge, because they'd be stacked.

Graalfs: Horizontally on a shelf.

Kane: But these are still being done. They are tricky and cute, sort of, some people think. And then others can express the kind of book that they have, the title. The fore-edge would reflect the book itself.

Graalfs: Right, the subject matter of the book.

Kane: Right, the subject matter, unusual things.

Graalfs: Now you said earlier that it was printed. But is it really printed?

Kane: No, no. It's painted. It's a watercolor painting. It can't be oil [meaning ink].

Graalfs: And what countries tended to do this most?

Kane: England.

Graalfs: The two that you have are British?[19]

Kane: I have both American and British. But the British did them. And the French did them, too. But not to the extent that the British did.

Graalfs: And is there any credit given in the books to the illustrator and the painter?

Kane: Oh, yes. Here it is: "The fore-edge painting is by Kenwood, the seat of the Earl of Mansfield." (laughter)

Graalfs: But that's just written into one of the flyleaves.

Kane: Yes, but that's true of all of them. And this is the *Seasons of a Ship at Sea*.

Graalfs: Would these fore-edge paintings have been done at the time the book was issued, or would people do it later?

19.James Thomson, *The Seasons* (London, 1811) and James Thomson, *The Seasons* (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1842).

Kane: At the time. In fact, a book that has thin pages is best so that the picture can have detail in it.

Graalfs: So, fine paper, you seem to be indicating, with a tight binding and, probably, books that are thicker.

Kane: And they only did it to more expensive books at the time that they did them.

Graalfs: Who would make arrangements, so to speak, for doing the fore-edge painting? Would the person who bought the book be interested in it? Or would the printer have done this?

Kane: No, no. It would be somebody who could find the right physical properties of the book. And he'd do it to make money. That's what they do now, the fewer that are done just offhand now, these fore-edges.

Graalfs: Who would make the money?

Kane: The artist. Or I'm sure that they probably hired artists when the thing was at its height. They would hire artists to do the pictures and then they would set the price and collect it.

Graalfs: Are there certain artists who are known and recognized and particularly collected for this?

Kane: No. Most of the fore-edges are done by people to make money. I had a contact, the last one I had was years ago, twenty-five years ago, or something like that. He lived in

New York and he painted. He would paint to order. If you liked a ship at sea, or a girl on a horse, or whatever, he would paint that on a fore-edge, and then that was for you.

Graalfs: So there are two [examples] we're looking at on the table. One of them is *The Seasons* by James Thomson. This was printed in London in 1811, but the fore-edge painting on it may have been done sometime after the book.

Kane: Oh, I'm sure it was.

Graalfs: Does this one indicate . . . We don't know who was the painter?

Kane: No. I don't think I've ever seen a fore-edge where the painter is mentioned. I'd have to go through all of them to find out, but I don't think so. There are no famous fore-edge painters.

Graalfs: And actually the other book that you have out is the same book, *The Seasons*, except this one is printed in 1842, both in London. One has a scene of what appears to be an estate in England, a kind of landscape scene with a couple of people in front of a large house.

Kane: And *The Seasons* was the one book that had probably more fore-edges than any other, simply because you could relate *The Seasons* to anything.

Graalfs: Right. So it was a good topic.

Kane: It was a book that talked about the beauty of the four seasons in England.

Graalfs: How did you first hear of fore-edge painting, and what attracted you to collecting these?

Kane: I don't know. I don't remember. I probably saw the first one when I was starting in the book business, and I'd go to a book fair and somebody would have one. Yes, that was the way it was done. I'd make a little press to hold it all day on my counter, to show people. But a lot of them just had a sign at this time: "See our fore-edge paintings." And then they would have a big one in a very fancy press that would show a picture, and everybody would go, "Oh my God, I ain't never seen anything like that before." (laughter) And then I think I was offered some fore-edges and I took them. I bought them. I was very attracted by them, and so when I was attracted I attracted other people to the same feeling. They always sold. I sold a lot of them.

Graalfs: So your enthusiasm for them kind of transferred to other people. And you still collect these?

Kane: Not avidly. But if I see a good one, or one I like.

Graalfs: Okay, well those are fantastic. Should we move on to the pochoir?

Kane: Sure.

Graalfs: I think you particularly like collecting these. Is that right?

Kane: Yes, because the images in them that illustrate the book are so beautifully done and with such color. Not like the fore-edge paintings, certain artists were famous for

their work, especially in Britain and in France. In France to a greater extent than Britain even.

Graalfs: Are those the two countries where pochoir was practiced, mostly?

Kane: Probably more in France than any other country. And copied in England, to a large extent.

Graalfs: So what is the book we are looking at here?[20]

Kane: It's a novel. *La Guerre des Boutons*. I'm completely ignorant of the French language. I have a huge number of French books and it's simply the illustrations.

Graalfs: These are kind of amusing illustrations, in a way.

Kane: For this book, yes. But they took great pride in wrapping the type around the pictures.

Graalfs: Here's one where the type is actually surrounded by the illustration itself.

Kane: They make the change in the style of the type to fit the picture.

Graalfs: And you have another one here, another pochoir.

20.Louis Pergaud, *La Guerre des Boutons*, illustrations by André Collot (Paris: Editions Rombaldi, 1942).

Kane: I selected this one to show you because it's such a large number of beautiful pictures, and they are shaped in many cases to fit the subject of the painting and never mind the text that goes around them. The text was made to fit the pictures, rather than the reverse.[21]

Graalfs: These are really finer, more delicate illustrations than the book we were looking at earlier.

Kane: This man Brunelleschi was the top of the list in those days.[22]

Graalfs: Are you familiar with names of other pochoir artists who are . . .

Kane: I'd have to go through the list, because I am not, and most people are not, in any country except France, aware of the artists of any period that were top flight. This is 1931, number 233. There are thirty-five pictures, and there were 170 with Japon Impérial, special paper, and 895 of the ordinary books.

Graalfs: With Rives paper.

Kane: This was one of the 895. But the 175 were probably better paper and better binding. But the illustrations would be the same.

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21. Alphonse de Lamartine, *Graziella*, illustrations by Umberto Brunelleschi (Paris: L'Edition d'Art H. Piazza, 1931).
22. Umberto Brunelleschi (1879-1949), an Italian, had an active and successful career as a painter, illustrator, and theatrical costume and set designer. His work as a book illustrator began with *Contes du Temps Jadis* (1912) and *La Nuit Venitience* (1913). *Graziella* is a book he illustrated at the peak of his career. See Guiliano Ercoli, *Art Deco Prints,* translated by Linda Fairbairn (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1989), pp.26-32.

Graalfs: Although as you were saying, one of the things that's so unique about this process is that because they were colored by hand with those stencils, each illustration in every book could be a little bit different.

Kane: Slightly. But they had pride in it. Maybe they would have a larger paper size and a finer paper which might come through better. But as far as the artwork goes, I can't believe that they would be better on the other. Because they had a pride in doing this.

Graalfs: Do you collect the pochoir mostly for yourself, or are there people who are particularly interested in collecting them, buying them from you?

Kane: (laughter) A very few. I frankly have never cared whether I sold them or not. So I have them. I am a collector and I'm interested in collecting. I go ahead and collect it and then I still have them. It's all right. I've still got them. My family, my daughters make fun of me because I have a large collection of sterling spoons from many countries. "What are you going to do with those, Dad?" I say "Well, if you stick around and are sweet enough to me you'll have them." But that's the way it is. I sell a pochoir every once in a while.

Graalfs: Do people know that you are a collector of pochoir and then come to you?

Kane: Well, people who are interested in them would find my name [George Robert Kane Fine Books] and maybe one or two other book dealers' names and they would go there to buy it. All of my business now is on the internet. I sell every kind of book that . . . I'm selling as much abroad as locally.

Graalfs: And when you say that your work is on the internet, is it that you have a website and people come to you that way?

Kane: I don't have a single website, but I use another one where all my books are described.

Graalfs: And what site is that?

Kane: I'm on about three. I'm on ABAA, which is Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America. And I'm on about three others. I can't remember the names of them right offhand. But they are big companies that have millions of books on their sites and it's all on the computer. So, I'm up there with everybody else.

Graalfs: Then what happens? Somebody looking at the ABAA site, they may see a book of yours they are interested in. Then do they contact you directly? Is that how it works?

Kane: Yes, because I have my name and telephone number listed there. And they are used to that. And a lot of times if they are dealers they'll ask for a discount. Dealers discount to each other.

Graalfs: So you'll negotiate that kind of thing.

Kane: Yes. If they buy a lot of books they get more. (laughter)

Graalfs: And how was it done before the internet? Did you have a catalog that you would mail out to people?

Kane: It would be catalogs, yes. Without the internet, for me to have all these books and not have them downtown or someplace, would be death. I would have the books but I would never sell any of them. But this way, since the internet has come into being and so on, it makes me just as . . . the proof of this is that the number of booksellers downtown has diminished by a huge percentage, because they can make just as much at home as they did downtown, and they don't have all those scruffy people coming in and wanting to handle the books, and have to be open from eight to five. It's enlivened the average book business by a huge amount, and it's made it so much easier and cheaper to be a book dealer.

Graalfs: I was reading somewhere recently that in terms of sales of books that the used book business is a growing area and contributes significantly to the number of books sold in a year, and perhaps this is a piece of it, what you are describing.

Kane: Yes, that would be the only way that it could increase. Because the number of booksellers on the streets of San Francisco or New York or any big city has diminished.

Wood Engraving

Graalfs: Well, let's look at a couple of the other books that we have out here. You said you were quite fond of wood engravings. We have a couple of examples here.

Kane: This was a Lynd Ward book, *Gods' Man*, a story told completely through pictures. And these are wood engravings in this case.

Graalfs: What do you know about Lynd Ward?

Kane: Well, he was very successful. He died maybe five years ago.[23] I can't keep his books in stock.

Graalfs: The books are very popular?

Kane: There're not popular to the general public, but to anybody who is interested in this. He also illustrated for other artists, other authors, who would have the English language as well as the pictures.

Graalfs: But his unique contribution was doing these picture novels.

Kane: He did some Rockwell Kent books, which used to be very popular. And he illustrated some of them. That's the main one that he worked for, Rockwell Kent. But he generally did his own.[24]

Graalfs: I actually met Lynd Ward at one point.

Kane: You did!

Graalfs: Somewhere about 1978. You were mentioning earlier that there are some people who took after his work and that you also collected some of their work. I met him through Michael McCurdy. He had a press, Penmaen Press, in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

23.Lynd Ward lived from 1905 until 1985.

24.If Kane is implying that Ward illustrated books written by Kent, no documentation of this exists. The two artists certainly shared a style, both were wood engravers, and they shared political philosophies. It is unlikely that Ward did illustrations for Kent, however. — Editor.

Kane: I know of him, yes.

Graalfs: Michael is a wood engraver and illustrator and, at one point, as I say, he had a press, but he quit doing that and concentrated more on illustration and having his books published by New York publishers. Michael greatly admired Ward's work and there was a similarity in style that you could see. And he wanted to do something, a collaborative work with Allen Ginsberg and Lynd Ward. Because Lynd Ward, as I understood it, was a socialist, and I think these books often tell a tale of a man against the system, the oppression of industrialism and such. And Allen Ginsberg's family was of a socialist background as well. Because of that history, Michael McCurdy thought that such a collaboration would be an interesting marriage, to have the two work together. Eventually, after this meeting in New York, they did do a broadside with a part of the poem *Howl* that Lynd Ward illustrated. I've always been fascinated by these picture novels. They're quite moving and it's interesting to be able to tell a story all through pictures as he did.

Kane: And as I say, it's hard to keep the originals in stock. I have two or three. *Gods' Man* was printed later, not from the blocks, but from reproductions of the blocks. When people see them in a book fair they buy them. But most people are not aware of doing a novel with nothing but pictures.

Graalfs: How did you get to know about Lynd Ward? You obviously have an interest in collecting woodcuts.

Kane: Oh, yes. I've collected them for years. When I was very young I became aware of him. I had to get to be 65 before I could buy books to sell. It took a long time to get there.

Graalfs: Do you remember the circumstances of first learning about Lynd Ward?

Kane: No, except that every time I could it was going to bookstores and you'd see the books. Well, in my youth there weren't very many. I came from the Middle West and they didn't have bookstores much, but the department stores were booksellers. They were the biggest ones. My first experience with where books were sold, was in Davidson's Department Store in Sioux City, Iowa. Every time I could I'd get my parents to take me to Davidson's, because I loved it. And that's just grown ever since. I learned that there were bookstores too, in more sophisticated cities.

Graalfs: When you came to Los Angeles did you go out, soon after being there, looking for bookstores?

Kane: Oh, there were several old-time bookstores that had been there for years. When I came to Los Angeles I didn't have the money to buy books. I had to go and be a printer. I was a printer and I went out and would fill in for two or three days at various print shops where they had a big bunch of orders and so on. But I had no central place of either livelihood or just living. It was during the deep depression. But it didn't bother me. I kept doing it and I finally . . . well, I opened a little shop myself. I did printing for other people; I had a one-room job shop.

Graalfs: When you were working for others it sounds like you were an itinerant printer, so to speak, moving from job to job.

Kane: I was.

Graalfs: What role did you have? Were you typesetting or printing?

Kane: Well, the main thing was I could run a linotype, and I was good at it. Then I'd print on the various presses, including those big cylinder presses which is all they had at that time to print books. To get a permanent job was next to impossible, but I finally did, and it was with a man who invented what we call cross rules. In those days if you had a little shop, no matter what you were, you would have a [financial] statement that you would send out at the end of the month to people, and it would have cross rules. They would print the [horizontal] cross rules on the press and then they would print the [vertical] down rules on the press. It took two press runs to print those things. And this man figured out how to get the rules this way and then he would cut the bottom of his down rules and the top of his cross rules and put them together so that he could print the whole statement in one run.

Graalfs: He would interconnect the horizontal and vertical.

Kane: He was the first guy to do this. It was a little shop in Los Angeles, and printers would come in and say, "Oh my God. I ain't never seen nothing like that before." I worked for him and I could turn them out as fast as he could, or faster.

Graalfs: How long did you work for him?

Kane: Oh, for a couple of years. He raised my salary from eighteen, and I finally got up to twenty-five a week, which was pretty good.

Graalfs: Twenty-five dollars a week.

Kane: And he finally cut down Saturdays. Because I always had to work Saturday mornings. That was the way most businesses were then. That went out of style after times got better.

Graalfs: Where was this in Los Angeles?

Kane: Downtown. The old downtown.

Graalfs: When you said — prior to getting that job which was more permanent — that you were moving around, was it always within the Los Angeles area, or did you go out of Los Angeles to San Diego or somewhere?

Kane: Oh, yes, not as far as San Diego, but as far as fifteen or twenty miles, or thirty even. And you didn't charge mileage even. You got there and you just went to work. But you got used to that.

Graalfs: These were all job shops or newspapers.

Kane: Well, you'd run into everything. You'd run into big companies as well as little places. In fact, you ran into more of the big companies because they were the ones who would have an increase in sales and they needed extra help right away. You'd go and you'd get the running wage, which was fifty cents an hour then. If you asked for sixty cents an hour you probably wouldn't get it. Because there were other people who would work for fifty cents who could do the same thing as you could. It was . . . (laughter)

Graalfs: And it sounds like you might move from place to place?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: Would you rent a room or stay in hotels, whatever was convenient?

Kane: Well, I didn't stay in hotels. That was too expensive. I rented a room, which was just a room. It had a toilet down the hall. I put a little job press in there, in the room. They didn't care. It was the third floor. I bought it for something down and . . . So I'd do my printing up there and then go out and sell on the street, go down the street and see if the people who had businesses had any printing to do. And I went all over Los Angeles until I'd finally get some customers.

Graalfs: Do you remember what kind of press you had or where you bought it?

Kane: Oh yes, a little nine by twelve Chandler and Price. And I had a certain amount of type. I had a larger twenty-four point reasonable looking type, sort of ordinary. And the smaller type, so I could set the name of the place and what they did and anything else they wanted to add. I didn't need much type. I had probably ten cases of it.

Graalfs: You would do typical job work for a business, maybe business cards or stationery, that sort of thing.

Kane: Yes. I'd do anything.

Graalfs: And did you do this while you working for other places too, so it was all sort of mixed together, whatever you could do or . . .

Kane: I had my own motto. If I could get three jobs a day, I could do all that in half a day. Then I'd go to the library and spend my time reading what I wanted to read. I liked my leisure, and my leisure was reading.

Graalfs: Interesting. So were you pretty successful in doing that, keeping three jobs a day going consistently enough?

Kane: Yes, I had girlfriends, and then I had my sister who was living in Pasadena, who was happily married. Her husband was a teacher and so was she. And I'd go over and visit them on weekends sometimes. As you went on you got to have other friends, a social life of some kind.

Graalfs: We started out talking about Los Angeles in this period, just when we were talking about bookstores. Although I know you said you didn't have a lot of money to spend, but did you frequent certain bookstores?

Kane: Oh yes.

Graalfs: Just looking.

Kane: Dawson's was the big king of the road there. It still is, I think. It was a huge bookstore for those days. I would come in there several times a week probably, if I could, and buy some.

Graalfs: You were earning enough money for yourself so you could buy books?

Kane: Yes, modestly. And then there were other smaller ones around that you got to know. Los Angeles was here, and then out towards the coast, different cities I can't remember. Some good bookstores out there that I used to go to. They were a little more expensive than downtown, but they had a better class of stuff.

Graalfs: Should we go back to the woodcuts and wood engravings? All of that was great. I really enjoyed hearing all of that. But we have another book here.

Kane: The wood engraving of Robert Gibbings, who was an Englishman.[25]

Graalfs: This is a catalog of his work. Can you tell us a little bit about the artist?

Kane: Well, he was extremely famous for the time. For a better class of work, and for illustrated. I mean, obviously illustration was his only thing. I never came close to meeting him or anything, because he was an Englishman and he was doing work before I was there. But you can see from this, it's like a catalog, the fantastic amount of work he did.[26]

Graalfs: Do you have any books with his original work in them?

25.Patience Empson, editor, *The Wood Engravings of Robert Gibbings*, introduction by Thomas Balston (Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1959).

26.Robert John Gibbings (1889-1958) was a wood engraver as well as an author. His career as a wood engraver began after World War I and he was a founding member of the Society of Wood-Engravers in 1920. He was director of The Golden Cockerel Press from 1924 to 1933. He also wrote and illustrated travel books, including *Noontime in Italy* (1932). In addition to the book discussed above with Kane, also see Martin J. Andrews, *The Life and Work of Robert Gibbings* (Bicester: Primrose Hill Press, 2003).

Kane: Yes, I think I do. I'd have to go out and look them up, but I have two huge cases of English printing. He would be in that. This kind of a book for a wood engraver is unusual. There never was a book put out on Lynd Ward of the mass of his stuff, nor do I know of any other artist . . .[27] Gibbings became very famous, particularly in England. Not here as much.

Graalfs: So this catalog that you have that we're looking at, do you use it as a reference with any kind of regularity? Or you got it because you like Gibbings' work?

Kane: Yes, it's close to my bosom. (laughter)

Graalfs: Well, I just wondered if you used it on a regular basis as a reference?

Kane: Well, all of the books that he did the engravings for were novels of the time and they are not particularly collected still for their literary qualities. If they are collected it would be for the illustrations. And it was mainly English. He almost one hundred percent worked with English publishers.

And this is *The English Spy*, with illustrations by Robert Cruikshank.[28] It was unusual. A number of books that he did were unusual. They were inventing illustrations for books, really, in that period. Because England in those early years was fascinated at all kinds of wood engravings, because wood engraving became very common, and more and more people did it because it was the best way to illustrate anything.

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27. A monograph on Lynd Ward does exist: *Lynd Ward, Storyteller Without Words* (New York, Abrams, 1974).
28. Bernard Blackmantle, *The English Spy: An Original Work*, illustrations by Robert Cruikshank (London: Sherwood, Jones, & Co., 1825).

Graalfs: So there was a lot of experimentation. Is that what you are saying?

Kane: Yes. In fact I have quite a few books that are nothing but wood engravings.

Graalfs: Another famous British wood engraver is Thomas Bewick, right?

Kane: Yes.

Graalfs: And that's a similar time period, isn't it?[29]

Kane: Yes, you ought to see some of his work. Here's the *History of Quadrupeds*. He did the whole darn thing. Look at the horses. Every one of them. And this is *The History of Birds*. Fantastic work that he did. He's still famous.[30]

Graalfs: Are they popular books? Are people interested in buying them?

Kane: No, most people don't know anything about them. (laughter)

The Printer's Chappel of Santa Cruz

Graalfs: Well, we've largely gotten through all the books that you pulled out for discussion today. This has been wonderful, getting a chance to see what you collect, and hearing about how your interests developed.

29.Robert Cruikshank lived from 1789 to 1856, Thomas Bewick from 1753 to 1828.

30.The three books for which Thomas Bewick is most recognized are: *General History of Quadrupeds* (1790), *History of British Birds* (1797), and *Fables of Aesop* (1818). He began a work on British fish, but never completed it.

I was going to ask you one other thing. I was just reading an article in the UCSC alumni magazine from 1992 about *A Canticle to the Waterbirds*, the book that Felicia Rice and others worked on. There were a couple of sidebar stories, and one of them discussed the Printers' Chappel and mentioned that you started that. I was curious to hear a little bit more about that. I know of the Chappel and some of the members, but I didn't realize that you were the instigator. I was curious to hear about what inspired you to start that and how it came about.

Kane: Well, I was delighted because there were so many printers. Of course, I was teaching printing up there at the time, as I still do. But several of them were above the average student who just took it, and they wanted to do a lot of printing and learn styles that were more difficult to do than the average style. So we had a little group and we'd get together, usually at somebody's house at night, and gossip and have wine, and things were carefully done because we didn't have very much money. If they had a wife or a girlfriend they'd bring them too. It was just a social organization, really.

Graalfs: But you would try to exchange information, helping each other too, for part of it?

Kane: Oh, yes. Usually where we'd meet was various people's houses, and we'd see what kind of printing they did, and their equipment. And we'd talk about it. We'd trade certain things back and forth or buy smaller parts, and talk about the printing trade. There's still an organization that goes on like that right now that includes people from all over this part of California.

Graalfs: Tell me about the name Chappel. I gather there's something unique about it.

Kane: Yes, in medieval England it was a union, the same thing as a union. And their aim was the same as the union, to get better treatment and better prices and better living conditions and better everything for the trade. And they called it the Chappel. It worked fine.[31]

Graalfs: Do you remember who some of the original members were? I assume some of these people are still here.

Kane: Of the ones here?

Graalfs: Yes, the Printer's Chappel of Santa Cruz.

Kane: Oh God, I've forgotten their names. My age has really cut down on my memory. I'm amazed at it, saddened. There are two or three around.

Graalfs: I think Felicia Rice was one.

Kane: Yes, Felica would remember more.

Graalfs: Tom Killion.

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31. The *Oxford Universal English Dictionary* defines chapel as "a printing office; an association of the journeymen in a printing office. Hence to hold a chapel, to have a meeting of the association." This particular usage dates back to at least 1688, and there are several strains of speculation as to its origins. One posits that the first presses in Europe were used to print bibles, and were set up in the chapels (smaller side rooms or recesses) of churches, formally used for the worship of saints, prayer, or meditation. Another is that printing houses were designated as chapels by printers in order to circumnavigate prohibitions against work on the Sabbath, or public meetings for reasons other than worship.

Kane: Yes, Tom Killion.

Graalfs: Was Maureen Carey part of it?

Kane: Yes, she didn't come to meetings particularly, but she was interested in printing and she would work to do anything somebody wanted her to do. But yes, it was a nice group of people.

Graalfs: Do you happen to remember where the first meeting was held?

Kane: Probably at our house.

Graalfs: So you might have had people over here.

Kane: Yes, I had a lot of them. Then at other people's places. It was a nice group.

Aaron Johnson

Introduction: Working at Yolla Bolly Press

Graalfs: I'm here with Aaron Johnson to continue discussions about the Cowell Press with another student who worked with George Kane at the Press. Let's start with where are you from, Aaron?

Johnson: Primarily California. I was born up in the state of Washington, but went to school in San Diego. Northern California always seems like my home. Santa Cruz to me was the logical place to go to college. Actually it was the only university I applied to, so that's how I ended up there.

Graalfs: My understanding is that prior to living here in Freedom, California — where we are today — you were working at Yolla Bolly Press in Covelo in Mendocino County. Is that right?

Johnson: That's right.

Graalfs: Also, I understand that James Robertson — co-founder along with his wife, Carolyn, of Yolla Bolly Press — died in 2001. You came here following his death? It must have been a shock for everyone there, no?

Johnson: It was a tremendous shock. He was still in his prime, still working the day before he died, and he had a stroke that took him very suddenly. That was at about the twenty-year mark for me, from when I first worked at Yolla Bolly. I actually began in the summers while I was still in school at UCSC. I took George's class at about the same time, and after school, I traveled for a year, but then I came back to Covelo, where I worked for the Robertsons about half-time until about a year after Jim's death. We were

very lucky that last year. I had been engaged to Anne Cappiello, whom I now live with here in Freedom. That was in August, and Jim died in November, so we had already started making the plans to train my replacement, who is a man named Michael Mills. Now Michael works with Carolyn Robertson to keep the Press going, at a slower pace than it used to, but it's still alive, alive and well.

Graalfs: Can you tell us briefly what you're now doing here in Freedom?

Johnson: When I moved back here to Santa Cruz County, I set up a painting studio. Painting is my primary focus now. I do spend maybe a quarter of my time working on woodcut prints. That tends to take me up to Yolla Bolly again when I'm ready to pull the edition. I do the carving and the planning and most of the preliminary work here in my studio, but I love getting back into the print shop from time to time. Painting's the main emphasis, but I want to keep the printing alive, too.

Graalfs: What did you do immediately after graduating?

Johnson: After college and after traveling for a year I worked at Yolla Bolly Press full time for two years, and then in the late 1980s, 1987 and 1988, I came back and did the fifth-year art program at UC Santa Cruz. Then I went back to Covelo and printed, about half-time. I tended to be the one that would print their limited edition books. Jim Robertson would handle more of the job work that came through, the wine label design, stationery and brochures, the continuous flow of little projects that were coming through, and stayed busy with all the business side of it. I had more concentrated time to work on presswork for the limited editions.

Graalfs: You also spent time studying graphic art in Florence?

Johnson: Right after I graduated I went to Il Bisonte, a studio that had operated in Florence for quite a few years doing edition prints for artists. When I went there they were changing it from a studio into an art school. So then it was all college-age art students, studying mostly etching and lithography. I realized there that we're lucky in California to have the printmaking and art programs that we do. In Florence the schools were much more crowded. The students who had attended other schools in Florence were really happy at Il Bisonte. I was almost the opposite. It seemed really crowded to me, and the hours were short. You couldn't work in the evenings or at night, and I got much less work done there than I did in California. Mainly, I enjoyed it for the Italian life, seeing the way things worked in Italy. In Italy I ended up not completing the full school year but instead just traveled. My Dad had a Fulbright Scholarship to teach in Liberia that year and I went to visit him in West Africa at Christmas. I spent a couple months there and then went on to India for a couple of months. When I came back I needed a job, and I worked at Yolla Bolly for two years. George would probably be happy to know that letterpress printing paid the rent for two years and allowed me to save enough to come back for the fifth-year art program at UC Santa Cruz. I set up a small painting studio on Granite Creek Road in Santa Cruz and worked some of the time there and some of the time in the studios on campus.

Study With George Kane at Cowell Press

Graalfs: My primary reason for talking to you today is to get some more information about Cowell Press and your experience there. Can you tell me how long you studied at Cowell Press?

Johnson: I was a studio art major and, actually, a Stevenson College student. Earlier on, I had tried to get into George's class, but I knew very few art majors that took the course at that point. I'm not sure where his students came from. I hadn't met him before. Actually, the first time I tried I didn't get into his course. He limited it to twelve students. I took a couple of quarters off in 1981 and that was when I first worked at Yolla Bolly Press, just doing odd jobs. I remember one task was transferring type from one case to another, cleaning it up a little, getting the dust out of the compartments in the type case. I can't remember if I set any type, but at least I learned the job case, and then the next time I talked to George he was a little more interested. Then I got into the course. That would have been in the spring of 1982. I let him down a little bit because it's always supposed to be a two-quarter course. When I came back in the fall a couple of the courses I needed for my studio art major conflicted with his book arts course, so I never took the second half of the course. In the meantime, though, I'd been working again at Yolla Bolly. Over the course of the summer I set just about all the type for their first limited edition book on the poet Robinson Jeffers. In a way, I just diverged from George's course at that point, but kept up with the letterpress apprenticeship. (laughter)

Graalfs: That's really interesting, because so far no one has told me that George's course was intended as a two-quarter course.

Johnson: He made people swear that they would take the second quarter if they took the first quarter. I intended to. It was just scheduling conflicts that didn't allow it. He was probably grumpy with me for a while. (laughter)

Graalfs: Probably. What I understand about the structure of the course is that students print a four-page piece and then do a broadside.

Johnson: I did do that project, the four-page, almost the beginning of a book. It was just like a booklet that had a title on the front and then text in the inner section. I think I did a couple of poems by [Rainer Maria] Rilke for that assignment. That was good because I hadn't done anything with book design at all and I assume that was true for a lot of his students. Just the idea of how the type is placed on the page and what the margins are, just some basics like that, we learned. Then a couple of broadsides, too.

Graalfs: Did you try to do all of that in one quarter?

Johnson: Yes. They were fairly short projects. The four-page assignment was probably just two weeks or so, maybe three weeks, as we were getting used to the job case and pulling proofs. We didn't do large editions of anything. There were a couple of cylinder proofing presses that we used. We were free to print as many images as we wanted, but printing them one at a time we tended to print only ten or fifteen for the various assignments.

Graalfs: How did you hear about George, then?

Johnson: I think I just saw the course listed in the course catalog.

Graalfs: You also said that you had done some printing at Yolla Bolly.

Johnson: I was just starting at the same time, so in a way I was learning half from George and half from Jim up at Yolla Bolly. The other thing I was doing was taking a lot of printmaking courses through the art department at Santa Cruz. I probably took about five different etching courses, mostly with Kay Metz. A couple of quarters of

lithography, so I had quite a bit of printmaking, but nothing with metal type or letterpress until George's class.

Graalfs: We're bouncing around between your work and studies at Yolla Bolly Press and those at Cowell Press.

Johnson: I guess that's what I did. (laughter)

Graalfs: You studied at the Cowell Press for only one quarter?

Johnson: Right.

George Kane: Teaching Style and Course Structure

Graalfs: You said that you didn't know too much about George beforehand. What are some of your strongest memories of George from taking the course? Or the funniest.

Johnson: George was always a friendly character and he was very accessible to the students. I realize now that I should have pumped him for a lot more information. The students tended to work independently. When you're setting type, it's quiet in the room. You can't talk and set type at the same time. For a good part of the time it was like a workshop. He was always available to students, and some, I think, were probably better at asking questions. He would bring books in for us to look at and I remember that he even offered to take students out on his sailboat. I never went on any of those trips. I wish I had. The only thing I remember was when people came back they said, "Whoa! We just barely made it back into the harbor!" It kind of added to George's bumbling, good-natured quality that I think his students look back on fondly.

Graalfs: You described him as a character initially there. Why?

Johnson: I think he was different from a lot of the people who are at UCSC. It may have been his newspaper days, and his working as a printer in a different way than coming at it from, say, fine arts or literary publishing, or other directions. A lot of it, too, is just he has an open personality. He had many years of experience and always had something to share.

Graalfs: Did you find him to be a taskmaster? Was he demanding in terms of quality?

Johnson: He wasn't as meticulous as a lot of the letterpress printers I've known. That's maybe because I know more who come from fine book printing rather than George's route. One of the stories that I tend to share when I meet someone else who's taken George's classes is about his demonstrations. Some of the demonstrations that he would give were clear and he was good at showing us just how to do things. But then he was always just on the edge of having it all fall apart too. (laughter) One time he showed us how to tie up type. None of us had tied up a form of type yet, so we were learning how to hook the string on one corner and wrap it around the type and carefully keep everything square, and how to snug the string up and tuck it under the corner. That all went fine; he showed us that. Then he was going to show us how to untie it. If you tuck the string under the corner just right, the end of it is available and you just tug on it to unloosen the string. So George, he's showing us how to just tug on the string to loosen it, but instead of just giving it a little tug, he gives it a full . . . he pulls the string a full arm's length to untie the whole thing with one big tug. When he did that, the type scattered all over the place. George pied the type. There wasn't a lot of type, probably five or six lines, but it was all over the room. It was great! (laughter) It was a perfect demonstration

because none of us pied any type after that. (laughter) We knew what the consequences were.

Graalfs: That's a great story. I had a question about what's the most valuable lesson, so maybe that's it.

Johnson: Actually, the most important thing I learned in George's class was about proofreading. This is just from the practical experience of working in a print shop, because when you first start off you really don't think about carefully reading it or having a second person read it. After you've set something, it's almost impossible to catch all of your own mistakes. Having a second person proofread it is very important. I had a typo in every single project I did the first quarter. It's almost a fact of setting type and printing that there'll be something wrong with it. So you need a second person to proofread.

I think it was basic things like that. How to lay out a page in that four-page assignment. To a certain extent combining type with images. He encouraged us to illustrate the broadsides he had us do. He was also happy one time when I brought a print over that I had done in the printmaking studio, and left room on the page for a poem to be printed next to it. He didn't really guide us in a specific direction, but he was always enthusiastic if you brought some new thing into the process. It was a good starting point.

Graalfs: What about other students in the class. Did you interact with them in any way, or did people work on their own more?

Johnson: Not a lot. I didn't know any of the students beforehand. I don't know if some were art majors or not, if they were, they weren't ones I had bumped into yet. Like a lot

of studio courses, you're often working independently on your own projects, so I didn't have a close tie with the other students in that class.

Graalfs: George told me that when some students first came to his course they were overwhelmed. It wasn't clear what he meant exactly, overwhelmed by the fact that it was just so different from anything else they did at the University, or the amount of different materials that were there. Did you feel this way yourself?

Johnson: I didn't feel that way, but I did have just a little introduction to it up at Yolla Bolly, although not pulling proofs. I learned the job case, that was about it. I handled the type just a little. I suppose the students took to it at different rates. It does take a little while to understand how to handle the type. But I don't remember anyone being overwhelmed by it. George was just right for an introductory course. He didn't overwhelm us with too much information. He gave us an initial demonstration and then very shortly after that turned us over to our case of Bembo. The assignments were accessible. I don't remember anyone struggling to complete the assignment. It seemed the level of complexity was just right for an introduction.

Graalfs: What about the curriculum materials that George used? Did he have handouts? Peggy Gotthold mentioned that he had some things, but she couldn't remember what they were exactly.

Johnson: He had some handouts. I also have only vague memories of exactly what they were. I think in some ways with setting type and learning letterpress printing, you have to just do it physically. The descriptions he gave were enough to get us started, and then most of the learning happened in the process of working on a project. The shop was set

up differently than most of the art studios. It was just George. We didn't have a studio technician or any monitors. So the students would. . . half the time they'd leave the ink out at night, and the next morning you may not feel like cleaning it up, so they rolled a little fresh ink on top of the old ink and it'd get a bit gummy. Some of the dried ink would stick in the type and the letters would plug up. It had a little bit of disorder that would be frustrating if you were working at a very advanced level, but it was fine for learning all the basics.

Graalfs: How many presses were there at Cowell Press when you were working there?

Johnson: I am trying to remember exactly. I think there were two proofing presses, hand cylinder presses that were probably Vandercooks, but I'm not even sure about that. Then there was a platen press, perhaps a C & P [Chandler & Price] which we didn't use in the beginning course. I think some of his second-quarter students may have used it a little.

Graalfs: Were there many different typefaces? You talked about getting a case of Bembo. Was that the one face?

Johnson: I forget what other faces there were besides Bembo. In addition to the fourteen point that all the students had, there were many other sizes too, to do a title or. . . . There was a complete set of Bembo for all purposes. I assume there was italic and other things we needed. I forget what other faces there were. I don't think there was a complete set of anything else, but there were quite a few type cases.

Graalfs: The Bembo, as I understand it, was bought when Jack Stauffacher first taught. That was his choice; he wanted to have a classic book face and got a complete set.

Johnson: It was wonderful to have Bembo. It is a very useful face.

Graalfs: It was brand-new when I started using it at Cowell in 1973.

Johnson: By the time I got there it was worse for wear. I saw George recently and asked him, "Do you still have that old Bembo?" He said, "We still use it." I asked Peggy once and she thought it had been replaced a time or two. I hope so. George made it sound like it was still the original from Jack Stauffacher's class.

Graalfs: Where was it?

Johnson: It was located at Cowell. It was underneath the Cowell cafeteria. I liked that. It was like a little cave down under there. It was in a quiet location. There weren't people wandering through. So it was a good place to work. Cave-like, but it also had plenty of windows, so it wasn't dark.

Graalfs: You had a terrific view out over the ocean if you went out the door a bit.

Johnson: That's true. One of the students that lived in the dorm with me at Stevenson had these very romantic notions of this little print shop hidden under the dining hall. He was studying politics and Russian history and he could just imagine us printing a treatise for the masses in this little print shop down there. (laughter) Reality was a little bit more pedestrian.

Fellow Students

Graalfs: Were you aware of any other students that stayed involved in printing because of this class?

Johnson: I didn't stay in touch with the ones that were in that particular class. But there were a couple that took it at other times, who then came up to Yolla Bolly Press. The first of those was Peggy Gotthold. She was the second apprentice that we ever had at the Yolla Bolly Press. The apprentices overall at the Press were amazing. They came from all over the place. That was when I first met Peggy. I knew that she had taken George's course too, but I hadn't met her until she came up to Yolla Bolly Press. Of course, we have stayed in contact with her over the years, and often the Yolla Bolly Press would send only our most special bookbinding assignments to Peggy because she would do the handwork that was required for deluxe editions. Sometimes she'd do a special portfolio box, or some element of a binding for ten or twelve copies. Another student of George's was Joel Benson, who probably took George's class in the mid-1980s and came to Yolla Bolly Press in, maybe, the late 1980s. After doing an apprenticeship at the Press, he went to San Francisco for years. We [Aaron and his wife, Anne] have seen him quite a bit recently. Actually, Joel just opened his own print shop in San Francisco this past year. He calls it Dependable Letterpress. He's taking on job work and whatever printing work he can get. George would probably be happy to know that. I went back to visit George every once in a while; he always seemed very happy to see me again. He'd always introduce me to his class and mention how I was actually earning my living as a letterpress printer. I think he wanted to give them hope. He seemed happy to see his ex-students. Often I'd bring a book or two from Yolla Bolly to share with his class. He was always very welcoming to have that happen.

Graalfs: Following up on what you were saying in terms of George being happy to see you, and saying that you were making your living in letterpress, did he talk in class at all

about career options or anything along those lines? Did he put it in context with something bigger or different?

Johnson: I don't remember him doing that specifically. In my own experience, I don't always understand why people are drawn to letterpress, but it seems to be a fairly diverse group of people. Like I mentioned, with George's class it wasn't all art majors. Also up at Yolla Bolly it seemed that maybe a quarter of the apprentices were art majors. A lot came because of an interest in poetry or literature. We had a couple that were architecture majors. Exactly what drew them to letterpress, I wasn't always sure. It was an interesting group of people. I think they probably used it for different purposes. I tend to incorporate it more with visual images. Others came at it because of literature and, perhaps wanted to do small editions of poetry. There were a variety of people in there, and I think George just figured we'd be making different uses of it.

Exposure to Fine Books

Graalfs: Did he take you to any events or exhibits or other schools?

Johnson: I can't remember. Let's see. I went on a couple of field trips from UCSC and I can't remember if they were with George or not. One time, I think, we went up to the University of San Francisco which has a big special collections department and looked at their collection.[1] That must have been with George's class. They were very generous about bringing the books out and letting us thumb through them. There was a copy of the *Nuremberg Chronicles* sitting on the table, all these amazing books.

1. This is the Donohue Rare Book Room, located in the Gleeson Library on the campus of the University of San Francisco.

Graalfs: I saw Kathy Walkup recently, who runs the book arts program at Mills College in Oakland, and she seemed to indicate that George had brought his class up there on some occasions. Do you think you went to Mills?

Johnson: We didn't go there.

Graalfs: I also gather that George would bring his own books into class. Do you remember that?

Johnson: He had a little office there under the Cowell dining hall. It wasn't very large, but his bookshelf was always stocked, just probably one bookshelf of various books. Once in a while he'd bring one out to present to the whole class, but just as often it would be a student asking a question and he'd think of something to share and pull it off his shelf. I remember he loved the pochoir posters and technique. I didn't even know what it was yet, so I was getting an introduction to some of it.

Graalfs: The same happened to me when I was interviewing him. I knew a little about pochoir but had never seen any examples.

Johnson: I'm sure the only place I've heard about it is from George. He would mention it a lot, more than he actually showed us the work. Again, if I had just asked him more questions he was always ready to bring out more materials.

Graalfs: I think one of his other interests is wood engravings and woodcuts. Did you ask about these?

Johnson: Again, I should have asked more questions. I'm sure he had good stuff for me to see that I missed because I didn't pester him a bit. (laughter) I was a bit too shy and quiet. I was probably over in the corner minding my Ps and Qs.

Graalfs: Or trying to sort them out.

Johnson: (laughter) Oh yeah.

Graalfs: Thinking about that, are there certain book illustrators that you like now and learned of through George?

Johnson: More, I think, it's probably just certain eras. I have one book of woodcut artists. I think it was put out around 1930. It was published in England, but it has woodcutters from different countries. That was back when they used more woodcuts as book illustrations. That's an era that I enjoy a lot. That's a more traditional era. There are certainly a lot of contemporary uses of the woodcut that are interesting too. I haven't done a systematic study of it. I keep my eyes open.

Graalfs: I just wondered. When I interviewed George, I had him bring out some favorite books at our last meeting and we looked at them. In terms of wood-engravers we looked at Thomas Bewick, of course, and Lynd Ward, and Robert Gibbings.

Johnson: I wasn't aware of Lynd Ward until several years after knowing George. A friend of mine had a copy of *Gods' Man* and I was just amazed that there was this whole novel entirely of woodcut images. That was probably that earlier era, too.

Role of Other Fine Bookmaking Teachers at UC Santa Cruz

Graalfs: What about Bill Everson and any relationship with the Cowell Press?

Johnson: I didn't have any printing connection with Everson, but I did take his *Birth of a Poet* class and I enjoyed that a lot. He didn't call it a lecture class; he called it meditations and they were very autobiographical. That was good for someone starting in the arts — to hear the poet's journey. He still was doing some printing and I know some of the printers in Santa Cruz who worked with him.

Graalfs: Do you know Jack Stauffacher at all? Have you ever had any meetings?

Johnson: I didn't meet Jack until the late 1990s. I'd heard about him over the years, mostly from Jim Robertson, because Jim definitely considered him as a mentor. In a way it's surprising that Jim was as close to Jack Stauffacher as he was and that I didn't met him until the late 1990s. He came up to the Yolla Bolly Press for a visit. Actually, that was surprising too, because apparently he had never come up for a visit earlier. He was always close to Jim but just hadn't made it up there for a visit. Since then I've bumped into him here or there; he was at your Cowell Press exhibit opening at McHenry Library.

Graalfs: Did you know Sherwood Grover?

Johnson: No, I didn't.

Graalfs: He taught at Cowell Press for a little bit. Are you aware of that?

Johnson: I didn't even know about that.

Graalfs: What about Felicia Rice? Do you know her?

Johnson: I saw her most frequently in the late 1980s when I went back for that fifth year program. By that point she was running a small seminar course for advanced printing students. I would assume that most of them had taken George's class. In a way, that was when I had the most connection with letterpress around Santa Cruz — while Felicia ran that program.

Support for Fine Bookmaking Programs & the Future of Cowell Press

Graalfs: Did you have any knowledge of how the Cowell Press was supported financially?

Johnson: I never knew exactly how it was supported. I assumed it wasn't through the art board. Was it through Cowell College that it got its funding?

Graalfs: Are you aware of any other schools or programs in book arts?

Johnson: Only via the apprentices we had up at Yolla Bolly Press. I think a couple of them went through one in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. One of our apprentices went off to Iowa, where she managed to combine book arts with a writer's workshop they have there. She had to craft her own program, but that worked out well for her. I don't know too much about the different book arts schools. Does Mills still offer anything?

Graalfs: They do have a program. You can minor in book arts and you can get a major by basically doing an independent study.

Johnson: I guess it works that way at some other schools too. We had at least one person at Yolla Bolly who went to Pomona College and then through Scripps Press and did an art major with a emphasis in letterpress.

Graalfs: What do you think about letterpress and fine bookmaking in terms of its place in the world of books and publishing?

Johnson: I think it will retain an important place as a foundation. When you work with words on paper using letterpress it slows you down and you spend more time thinking about each individual character. I've noticed that for quite a few people — when they get their first computer and they have all these typefaces and all they do is click on the typeface — their first design project has too many different typefaces on one page. Then, maybe, they add some drop shadows here and there and it looks like a big mess. There's a certain value to going at it slowly and understanding its roots. I'm glad that as much of the letterpress terminology is carried over, the system of measurement in points and picas. I think that working slowly is important to appreciating what's really involved with setting type. Think of kerning type: when you have two letters in metal type that don't fit together well because the type simply can't be brought closer together — not unless you file or cut the shoulder of the piece of type. On the computer you can click, click, click and just nudge them closer together. If you've experienced this in metal, then it carries over into computer typesetting, too. It's also a different quality. I think there will always be limited edition books, a small number printed very carefully. Using beautiful paper and printing letterpress isn't the only method, but it retains more of the touch of the hand and of the materials.

Graalfs: The last question I have is around Cowell Press and its future. I'm wondering if you've thought about what happens when George isn't teaching there any longer? Is this a concern to you?

Johnson: Well, I hope they keep it funded and keep it open. The facility is great. As long as there is student interest, I think it should be kept alive, if possible. Santa Cruz is lucky to have quite a few people that would be capable of taking over for George. If there's a future for it, I'd certainly be interested in participating in something related to Cowell Press.

Graalfs: Do you have any thoughts or suggestions in terms of expanding it in any way?

Johnson: I think that would somewhat depend on student interest and how many want to take it. I think it will have to remain a fairly small program. One thing that would be necessary is periodic maintenance of the equipment and replacing the Bembo type. Also, the rollers on the two Vandercooks are in definite need of recasting. It will take steady funding to maintain the equipment for doing fine printing. It will take quite an investment to expand it into a more advanced workshop.

Peggy Gotthold

Introduction: Foolscap Press

Graalfs: Peggy, you are one of two people at The Foolscap Press; the other is Lawrence G. Van Velzer. I want to talk with you about your experiences at the Cowell Press, but first, can you briefly describe your work here at Foolscap?

Gotthold: Larry and I print, publish, and bind our own limited edition books. We also print and bind books for other publishers, usually in limited editions. We also just bind books for other publishers or printers, and we do a lot of one-of-a-kind [portfolio] boxes for people. Also, we do edition box work for photographers and others who are publishing sets of things.

Graalfs: I think I remember one of the times I first met you, you were working on a book that was related to the 9-11 tragedy. What was that?

Gotthold: We did a one-of-a-kind binding for the City of San Francisco. First, we made a mock-up of the book for people to see what it would look like once completed. Then on the anniversary of 9-11, in 2002, we provided eighteen by twenty-four inch pre-printed sheets on site for anybody who came into City Hall in San Francisco. If interested they could sign the sheets. When those were all signed, we bound them into a book that went to New York [City] as a gift from the City of San Francisco. It was a really large, elaborate book and we put it in a box. A friend of ours, Christopher Stinehour, who is a stonecutter, carved a black slate plaque for the box cover. I have photographs of it I can show you.

Originally, they were hoping that hundreds of thousands of people would come in and sign it, but they only had it available to be signed on 9-11 of 2002. Although many, many

people signed it, it wasn't as large a number as anticipated, or that we had pre-printed sheets for. We had thought it would be two or three volumes. Still, it is big.

Graalfs: In terms of some of your own publishing projects, I am particularly familiar with one of your books, *Tower of the Winds*.

Gotthold: That's our latest book. You also know *Phisicke Against Fortune*, which is now on exhibit at the New York Public Library in their "Ninety for the Nineties" show. This is really great; we're really happy to have it there. They [the New York Public Library] acquired four thousand books in Special Collections in the decade of the 1990s and, then, they picked ninety books for the show.

Graalfs: That's great. When I was looking at some of your books at the McHenry Library I noticed one about the desert that was written by your partner, Larry.

Gotthold: Larry wrote a book called *Desert Dreams* and I did illustrations for it. It's a story about three interesting characters: a tumbleweed, a dust devil, and a crow. They have a series of adventures.

Graalfs: That was done a little while ago, right?

Gotthold: That was 1997.

Graalfs: What about now? What activities are you . . .

Gotthold: We're printing a book right now, Cyrano de Bergerac's *Journey to the Moon*, which will be kind of an elaborate production this time. It will have eight etchings by

Leslie Lerner, who's an artist that we really admire. He's been working on a series for twenty years called "My Life in France," although he's never been to France. A lot of the themes he's been working with parallel some of the elements in Cyrano's story. We've been working with the translator, who originally published through Oxford University Press in 1965, and has re-worked the translation for us and re-written the introduction for this edition. A lot of things were taken out in the original publication because they were considered blasphemous. Remember, we're talking about the time of Galileo. So, the fact that the earth rotates around the sun is already a problem, let alone that the moon could have inhabitants. (laughter) It's filled with philosophical digressions and we've made it have really eccentric page openings that will make it a challenge to print. It's like a puzzle to read. The story is a puzzle to read because of the content, and the complicated, puzzle-like page openings reinforce this. It should be fun.

Graalfs: This, then, is something you're doing as a publisher and a printer.

Gotthold: And binder, right. That's a Foolscap Press book.

Meeting George Kane & Beginning at Cowell Press

Graalfs: That's interesting. We want to talk, then, about your experiences with the Cowell Press. I am interested in talking to you because you were a student of George Kane's. When were you a student at Cowell Press? You came at it from [University of California] Extension, right?

Gotthold: I was at Cowell Press in the fall of 1984 and winter quarter of 1985, so those two quarters. I did take it through [UC] Extension; I was never a student at UCSC, except

with George. I met George as a bookseller, and that's how I ended up studying with him or going to Cowell Press.

Graalfs: From his role as a bookseller?

Gotthold: Yes, he sold me a book. I went and visited him here in Santa Cruz and he told me about Cowell Press. Or we talked about printing. I'm sure we must have talked about the Press. I expressed enough interest that we talked about how it would be possible for me to attend. He suggested Extension. I wrote a long proposal and sent it through Extension and signed up that way. He accepted me as a student. I remember writing it out in calligraphy just to influence the judges.

Graalfs: You already had experience with printing?

Gotthold: I had a press at that time. I had already bought a small printing press and some type from an artist that I knew. At that time I was working in a gallery in San Francisco and this artist that I knew had equipment sitting around unused, so I bought it from her. So I was already involved in printing some, but not yet in a knowledgeable way.

Graalfs: When talking with George that time, what interested you enough to take the course with him? You were still learning about letterpress printing, I guess.

Gotthold: Yes. I didn't have that much background in printing, exactly. The hands-on experience with someone who seemed to know more than I knew was very attractive. Also the discipline of taking a class seemed like a good idea.

Graalfs: What was the book you bought or intended to buy from George?

Gotthold: At that time I was collecting books of illustrators from the early part of the 1900s, so I bought a Charles Robinson book from him.[1] I don't know if you know him.

Graalfs: No, I don't.

Gotthold: He was in that same group with Kay Nielsen and Arthur Rackham.[2] It's that sort of tradition.

Graalfs: How did you find out that he had the book?

Gotthold: I think I was just interested in the fact that he was an antiquarian book dealer and found something in his stock.

Graalfs: And here was a dealer right here in Santa Cruz?

Gotthold: He had lots of great things and was enthusiastic about showing them to me.

Graalfs: As far as schooling, you weren't a student then at UC Santa Cruz. Did you go somewhere else?

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1. Charles Robinson (1870 – 1937) was a British artist and illustrator of children's books, including *Beauty and the Beast* and *Sleeping Beauty.*
2. Kay Nielsen (1886-1957) was a Danish artist, illustrator, costume designer, set designer, and muralist. He did The Bald Mountain sequence for Disney's *Fantasia*. Arthur Rackham (1867-1939) was another British artist who, like Robinson, illustrated many children's stories.

Gotthold: I have a B.A. from San Francisco State in English, which I got before I started my career. What do you do with a B.A. in English? (laughter) You're a carpenter. You work in a gallery.

Projects & Course Structure at Cowell Press

Graalfs: Right. So you were at the Cowell Press for two quarters. What are your strongest memories of the class?

Gotthold: One of the wonderful things about the class was that you're given a full case of type. From that you work on your projects, whatever they might be. That seems like an enormous amount of riches, to be able to assemble something. The mechanics of setting type is a wonderful process. There are all those meditative, meticulous bits that go into setting type. It's an expansive opportunity. Sitting in a class where you have a full case of type and you need to set four pages for a project, there's something about that that seems like it will work. You have that sense of being able to accomplish something. Suddenly things open up.

Graalfs: As I understand the assignments for class, the first one was a four-page piece, and then once you'd done that, you did a broadside. This was pretty demanding, doing these two in the nine weeks.

Gotthold: It felt like you had to move right along with what you were doing. I remember that George assigned the four-page piece and a poster, a paper on something book-related, and then he expected you to work on a more ambitious project of your own choosing. One quarter I wrote a paper on Turkish marbling and my more ambitious project was the alphabet book. What I did for that first four-page assignment was a poem

by Robert Graves. I couldn't find a copy to show you, but I remember it. Then I also did an alphabet book, *Alliterate Beasts for Children*. I did one half of it in the first quarter and the rest of it in the second quarter.

Graalfs: So each student was given one case of type with which to work?

Gotthold: That was your case of type, right.

Graalfs: In terms of the four-page assignment, how did you handle things in terms of different hierarchies, the titles, and so forth?

Gotthold: There're also lots of cases of display type at the Press.

Graalfs: You weren't strictly limited to the one case of type?

Gotthold: No. But the body of the text, whatever you wanted to do, there's enough type in the cases to actually do something substantial. You didn't have to say, "Well, I'm going to do a haiku because that's all I have type for." You could actually set something that's got some content, and I think that really made a difference. There's also lots of display type that you can use.

Graalfs: Did George give you — the students — any kind of guidance around that, in terms of discussions about page design, or looking from his collection at other books? Did you get ideas that way, or did you just go at it?

Gotthold: You didn't just go at it, no. (laughter) There is more structure there, or there was when I was there. He handed out things relating to page design and other information. He gave us some basic grounding in things.

Graalfs: You were saying that there were some things that he handed out that were more instructional. Can you talk about what those were?

Gotthold: The one thing I do remember is that classic drawing of how you divide up the page with the divisions.[3] I remember handouts with that kind of information, as well as information on font size, paper size, terms. They were handouts, xeroxes. So, it wasn't like one particular author's take on things. It was a conglomeration of information to make use of. George was always there anyway, answering questions, and talking about things, and helping out with questions you had or things that you were confused about. He always brought in books at the beginning of class and we would look at these books. He would lecture or do a demonstration. He might have brought in a stack of books that had one feature one week and another time it would be something else.

Graalfs: One time it would be a number of Grabhorn books, or the next time he might bring in a number of books with wood engravings?

Gotthold: Exactly. By taking a couple of quarters of that, you had a pretty broad exposure to a lot of different ideas or different aspects of bookmaking.

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3. Peggy Gotthold is most likely referring here to what typographer Jan Tschichold called the Golden Section, a "framework of ideal proportions." See Jan Tschichold, *The Form of the Book: Essays on the Morality of Good Design*, trans. Hajo Hadeler (Washington, D.C.: Hartley& Marks Publishers, Inc., 1991), p. 43.

Graalfs: You took the course for two quarters, but you didn't find that there was a lot of repetitive information?

Gotthold: Not for me, no. It seemed like there were an infinite number of books to look at, always. There was always something new, and something interesting. Besides, there is something repetitious about the discipline of printing. It is a long-term process. It's not something you absorb in a couple of weeks. Even dividing up my alphabet book into two quarters was necessary. I couldn't finish it in time. It's a lot of blocks to cut. It's a lot of pages to print.

Graalfs: When you started the second quarter you were already working on this project — *Alliterate Beasts* — and you just continued on this, as opposed to going back and starting with a the four-page assignment again?

Gotthold: I can't really remember that distinctly. I started another four-page project when I was in there and printed it. It was going to be part of a larger thing, but I never finished. I may have done some of the assignments in a different way, or continued on with other ideas, adapting the assignment into something else I wanted to do. That's my sense of what I did.

Graalfs: Did you have a key to the Press? Did you have ready access? Or were you working only during class time?

Gotthold: It seems like there was a key that was accessible if you made arrangements. When I was there, the Press was underneath the cafeteria up at Cowell.

Graalfs: It was still there in 1984.

Gotthold: Right. The practice rooms used by Tom Lehrer were in back of the Press.[4] That was fun. It seemed like you could go at other times, occasionally. That was useful when you were to the point where you were actually printing something, because there was a Vandercook, I remember, and there was a C & P, but to get everyone's project printed was a little tricky to coordinate. I do remember being there once when it didn't seem like there was anyone else there, and I was trying to finish something.

Graalfs: Did you use the C & P? Or did others use it much?

Gotthold: I didn't. No one did that quarter, or the couple quarters, when I was there.

Graalfs: George said that he tends not to have people use this press just because it's a little tricky to learn how to run it.

Gotthold: It's a little bit more of a learning curve.

Graalfs: Do you have any memories of the reaction of some of the other students to the class? Particularly, George said that he sometimes felt students were overwhelmed. I think that was his word for it. It wasn't quite clear to me what he meant by that. Obviously, except for someone in your position, the whole thing would have been completely new. I just wondered if you had any sense of that, and if you didn't, just what kind of reaction you might remember from other students in the class?

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4. Tom Lehrer taught math and musical theater at UC Santa Cruz. He also had a career as a satirical songwriter and political folk musician in late 1950s and the 1960s. He had a popular and successful record, *That Was the Year That Was*, in 1965, but returned to teaching shortly after, when he came to UC Santa Cruz.

Gotthold: I don't remember being overwhelmed, but I do remember thinking that there wasn't a lot of time to accomplish what you needed to do. You did think, "Well, when am I going to be able print this? I can't print it until I have it all set." I do remember that kind of scurrying of activity among students. I remember a lot of people trying to get what they were doing done in the quarter.

Graalfs: Would George do a demonstration for the whole class around how to set type and then how to print?

Gotthold: I think things flowed pretty continuously. I do remember demonstrations. You certainly had to proof some things. There's an extremely simple proof press in the shop. You just set the galley down and ink it up and roll the roller over it. Once you've done that several times, you get the feel of — there's a little bit of magic connected with this. From there, putting it in the bed of the Vandercook, figuring out how to lock it up. I do remember demonstrations of that, but I think it was more connected with when, say, the first person had their poster ready to print, then that was part of the demonstration, rather than something separate from the work in the classroom. It's a small group of people. There aren't that many people in there. You are interacting some, because it's a small space. I don't remember having people raise their hand, saying, "I'm done." (laughter) It was clear that you were next, or you could weasel your way in and be next, or whatever was necessary.

Graalfs: How many students were there?

Gotthold: I think there were eight or ten. I'm not sure. When you were asking me about certain students, I don't really remember the people I was with, except for a couple of people, and only from their projects. I sort of have a visual image of what they were

doing and I sort of have a face attached to it. I don't know if any of them went on to do anything with printing, that were with me. I don't know them now, but I also wasn't a student there. So I wouldn't have run into them any other place.

Graalfs: At least in your experience then, you weren't collaborating with other people in the class, is that right?

Gotthold: There wasn't really time for that. If you were going to pull together something like that, you're talking about something that's much more ambitious than you really had time for. Other people may have done that, but in my own experience, I was making linoleum blocks for my own book so I didn't really want to collaborate with anyone. I could probably do the work faster.

Graalfs: What were the backgrounds of the other students?

Gotthold: I have a sense of them coming from different places. I can't be sure of that.

George Kane's Influence

Graalfs: What was the most valuable lesson you learned or thing that George taught regarding books? Do you have anything more you want to add to that?

Gotthold: What I took away from that experience, beside some practical knowledge, was an enthusiasm for books, for looking at books, and who George is, more than what he taught me. Further, I took away the experience of studying the books he brought in. He brought in lots of Grabhorn and Nash. Because he's a bookseller he has things that he keeps, but he also has things that come and go. The opportunity to look at really

beautiful books and really well-made books . . . over a period of time you do absorb it. Looking at other people's books is a great learning experience. Seeing how people design things or solve design problems, it's inspirational many times.

Graalfs: We all read lots of stories about printers going back and looking at other people's work. There's a whole tradition of people working with one press and learning there, then going on to develop their own style, while incorporating what they've learned earlier.

Gotthold: There is nothing really new. You put things together in different combinations from things you've seen. If you're going to do that anyway, you may as well look at the masters in the past, not take from the paperbacks that you might be reading too. (laughter) His collection and his enthusiasm for his collection . . . that's such a wonderful experience to have someone showing you things and pointing out what really is marvelous about them. It's infectious and it's inspiring, too. Because of the breadth of the books he has you see some wonderful things, where someone else might not be able to do that. Even a lot of special collections libraries don't always have the kinds of books that George owns.

Graalfs: His collection is terrific. Some of the things that George showed me and for which he clearly had a strong enthusiasm were wood engravings and pochoir. Did he bring examples of these particular kinds of illustrations into class? Pochoir, especially, has been new for me. I didn't know too much about it, and I've been doing a bit of reading, but I find them stunning. Did he bring any of these in, and what were the reactions of other students?

Gotthold: They really are amazing. He had wonderful books. I guess the valuable thing as a student in seeing those books is you realize that it's something you can do, that it's technology that's perfectly accessible. You don't feel a barrier. You can experiment with those techniques. Not so much with engraving, but woodcuts.

Graalfs: Right. Was pochoir something you were familiar with?

Gotthold: I didn't know about it before. I don't think we really tried it in George's class.

Graalfs: One book, *Graziella*, is considered one of the best works of the Italian artist Umberto Brunelleschi. I don't know if it's just George's memory or if it's just his personality — he doesn't brag about things much — but I had no sense of the significance of that book when he showed it to me. I wasn't familiar with Brunelleschi at the time. Later, I was doing some background reading and I thought, "Oh my gosh!" when I realized what that book was.

Gotthold: That's an important point with George; he shows you things that are in that continuum of great books, and maybe they're near the apex. But he's ego-less about what he tells you about them. He doesn't rank things in order of their importance that way in the world or the art world. He allows you to look at everything and form some of your own opinions. It's sort of refreshing. I remember looking at a book as a student that used pochoir and I've asked him about that book since. He can't remember which book I was talking about. But there are so many things he has, or has looked at, that he has an encyclopedic amount of information. It doesn't always get retrieved correctly. It's true there are books that are seminal in the history of art, and he just shows them to you and allows you to form your own opinion from that.

Early Interest in Bookmaking

Graalfs: You came to the Cowell Press with some background in books and printing. You had your own press and some type. You were in George's class, and were working at the gallery. It sounds as though in taking the class with George you were at the beginnings of a larger interest in making books. Why did you originally buy that press before taking George's class?

Gotthold: I had an interest in making books from a very young age. It's another stepping-stone. George's class was a stepping-stone along my process.

Graalfs: You said you had an interest from early on, making books. So, even before college?

Gotthold: Yes. I took bookbinding lessons in San Francisco, with Bob Lucas, during the time I was in junior college.[5]

Graalfs: Was that where you got involved in the process of physically making books?

Gotthold: Probably. Those things are harder to tease out of your own background because things are interwoven. My mother was a librarian. I always made things, always have been interested in the actual physical construction of things. I worked as a carpenter a long time. Being able to make things, construct things. I took printmaking, was an English major and an art minor. So all of those parts hook together in my mind.

5. Bob Lucas ran the Institute for the Preservation of Printed Matter and taught at Mills College.

Bookmaking Following Cowell Press

Graalfs: What happened then, after you studied those two quarters at Cowell Press? I've read that you worked at Andrew Hoyem's Arion Press and Yolla Bolly Press. Where do those fit in chronologically?

Gotthold: Actually, I worked for Felicia Rice of Moving Parts Press after I took George's class, and through George I heard about Yolla Bolly Press. I was at Yolla Bolly for four months. I also worked for Jonathan Clark at Artichoke Press [in Mountain View, California] and I worked at Schuberth Bookbindery [in San Francisco]. Then I went to Arion Press. I worked there for twelve years. A long time. Larry also worked there for twelve years. We overlapped for a while, but we weren't there completely at the same time.[6]

Graalfs: And with Felicia, this was when she was…

Gotthold: On Walnut Street, downtown [Santa Cruz].

Graalfs: You worked with her without any kind of student association or anything. This was just you learning more about printing?

Gotthold: Yes, basically.

Graalfs: I know that some UC students did take independent studies and worked with her when she was off campus.

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6. Arion Press is run by Andrew Hoyem and is now located in The Presidio in San Francisco. Andrew established his press following his partnership with Robert Grabhorn at Grabhorn/ Hoyem Press.

Gotthold: This was independent of that.

Graalfs: When did you go to Yolla Bolly Press? You started working with Felicia after George's class, and then what happened?

Gotthold: I went to Yolla Bolly and then I went to Schuberth Bindery in San Francisco and Artichoke Press, Jonathan Clark, in Mountain View. I worked at both of them — Schuberth and Artichoke — during the same period.

Graalfs: Schuberth and Artichoke were together, one of your split scenarios.

Gotthold: Concurrently, yes. I worked at Schuberth's for a couple of years. That was a regular commercial bindery, which is a great experience. I think that's one of the things I've been lucky with in my own life, is that I've worked in production shops. There's nothing like it. If you want to learn something, that's the way to do it. If I'd stayed working, say, for Felicia or Jonathan, it's such a small volume of work that goes through. Yes, you learn things, but over a much longer period of time. When you work in a production shop, everything is different. The pace, what you're required to do, how you're required to be meticulous — it's completely different. It's really a valuable experience. It wakes you up. It wakes you out of that preciousness, I guess. You're not allowed that. Really, some of the projects that came through there . . . that was a time when Hans Schuberth did a lot of limited edition books for people, really wonderful books. I worked on a lot of wonderful things. One of the books, *The Winged Life*, that I had worked on at Yolla Bolly was at Schuberth's when I started there. The sequence happened perfectly so that I got all of that one, which was fun.

Graalfs: Schuberth bound *Granite and Cypress*, William Everson's Lime Kiln Press book. I went up once or twice with Bill to see some aspects of that and met Mr. Schuberth.

Gotthold: That's another thing that was wonderful about working at Schuberth's. He had copies of a lot of things and I think he may have had a copy of *Granite and Cypress*. I'm not sure.

Graalfs: I've also noticed that you've done some binding projects with other printers who studied at Cowell Press. You worked with Tom Killion on. . .

Gotthold: His *High Sierra* book.

Graalfs: Any comments about this? Why did Tom choose you?

Gotthold: You'd have to ask Tom more specifically. I think Tom was probably more interested in having us work on his project because of having worked at Schuberth's. Schuberth bound his *Views of Mount Tamalpais* or *The Coast of California* and he wanted *The High Sierra* to look the same.

Influence of William Everson & Jack Stauffacher

Graalfs: I have some questions about Bill Everson. He retired from the University in 1983. Did you have any contact with Bill directly, or were you aware of him because some in the Chappel were printing books of his work?

Gotthold: I was certainly aware of him. You can't be in the community and be interested in books without being aware of him. Certainly I knew about him from Schuberth's as

well, and other places. I never had any personal interaction with him, never worked on anything particular of his.

Graalfs: What about Jack Stauffacher? Do you know Jack? Have you had any experiences with him, worked with him, or done anything with him in some way?

Gotthold: When I left Yolla Bolly, Jim Robertson gave me two letters. He said, "You need to go talk to Jack and you need to go talk to Schuberth." So I went to both of those places. I was basically doing informational interviews. And from that Hans Schuberth offered me a job.

Graalfs: I am struck by the degree to which you worked alone at Cowell Press. What I remember when I was there — in Jack or Bill's class — was that many of the students became good friends. Of course, I was a full-time student, while you were an Extension student, probably older, and not on campus as much.

Gotthold: I think that's a big part of it, a really big part of it. I didn't want to insinuate myself in that college community, either, because I felt like I didn't really belong. It wasn't my milieu, particularly. I was there to learn something specific. You were asking about Jack, and I met him after working at Yolla Bolly. Of course, you can't help but admire what he does. We bound a book for him, *The Beams of Montaigne's Library*, the one that he worked on with his friend, the photographer, Dennis Letbetter.

The Printer's Chappel of Santa Cruz

Graalfs: Let's go to the Printer's Chappel of Santa Cruz for a minute. You've been a member of that, right?

Gotthold: Soon after Yolla Bolly, actually. They took me on, because I've always lived here in Santa Cruz part time until the last, I guess, six or seven years when we moved here full time. So they've always been a little leery of me. However, we've had presses here that whole time.

Graalfs: So you qualify to be a member?

Gotthold: Sort of. I think I joined soon after Yolla Bolly because I put in two broadsides that I did at Yolla Bolly in one of the shows organized by the Chappel.

Graalfs: Now, George started the Printer's Chappel, right?

Gotthold: Yes.

Graalfs: Do you know what got the organization together in the first place?

Gotthold: I don't know what motivated George to start it, particularly. I do have the sense of things being more vibrant, focused on having shows and catalogues, trying to accomplish certain things, rather than now, where it seems that people only get together to talk to each other and to find out what you're doing when there's a meeting. I think Ruth [McGurk] is going to have a meeting soon, because someone's visiting that she wants the Chappel members to meet.

Support & Future of Cowell Press

Graalfs: On a slightly different note, did you have any sense of how the Press was supported, how Cowell Press fit into Cowell College or into the University?

Gotthold: When I was taking the class I assumed it was more connected with the college than I subsequently have felt. Because it was in a Cowell building, I felt it was just another class. But it seems to me it's just been run more on the generosity of George — as far as equipment and supplies and anything else — than funded by the University. Of course, I've talked to George since and he recounted the time when he said, "Don't pay me, because there's no money." I can't imagine anyone else doing that. I know there's always been a shortage of things, getting money together for ink or new type. It seems mostly George's ability to get donations or his own generosity, although I know he's paid as a lecturer.

Graalfs: Have you had any discussions with George about the future of Cowell Press? Is it something you've thought about in any way?

Gotthold: It's a concern to me, because I think it exists a lot now because of George. And his commitment to it is just amazing. His generosity over many years is amazing really, when you consider all that he's put into it. I don't know what the University's position is about it. I have a friend who works at the [UCSC] arboretum and they're always struggling for funding. They're connected with a much bigger piece of land there, and yet there's still a struggle. I know that funding is always a problem, especially now, with budgetary cutbacks. I think any of these programs would be wonderful if they could continue, but I don't know in what form or how it's possible. I don't really know how the University views Cowell Press, what they see. It's really a shame. I always think that this is the height of stupidity in places like that. You have resources in art and printmaking. You have resources in the English department. You have Special Collections. You have Lime Kiln Press in Special Collections and then you have Cowell Press. You could put together a program that had a digital aspect, a printmaking aspect, a history aspect. There are a lot of things you could bring together very easily and have a

wonderful program, but you'd have to incorporate many different people's energy in that, who may or may not be interested. It could be a really vibrant, wonderful program.

Graalfs: I agree with you very much. I'd love to see something like that happen.

Gotthold: In the past, with Everson — a famous poet with a huge name — this was how Lime Kiln worked. But without him there's nothing. Which seems a disservice in many ways. That's also what's happened with Cowell Press. It's held on because of George. Either you do something with many people, and you have such a large group of people who are committed that you keep it going, or you have someone who is as miraculous as those two men. Even Jack, who's a wonderful man, was only briefly at Cowell Press. It's the longevity, it's the continuum that makes these things work.

Graalfs: Some sort of breadth, too, as you were saying; being able to pull in these other things, which hasn't happened, really.

Gotthold: It's a shame, because there're a huge amount of resources, a huge number of people who are talented in printing in this community. It's just a huge pool.

Role of Letterpress & Fine Bookmaking

Graalfs: I wanted to close with this question about letterpress and fine bookmaking. Where do you see that it fits in with publishing today?

Gotthold: In the big world? Well, it's definitely a niche.

Graalfs: What does it allow you to do that you might not otherwise be able to do?

Gotthold: Make a living. (laughter) The question of making a living at fine printing and bookmaking is always going to be an issue. It's not an easy thing to do. You do have to find ways to make it all work, and you have to do a lot of different things. We do a lot of job work, both printing and binding, for other people in order to make our own books, which we sell some of, and I'd like to sell more. (laughter) There's a real balance that you must keep striving for. But doing the work we do allows us to do a certain quality of work and not have to compromise on that, and that's pretty important to us. By working for a lot of different people, we're able to do that. By making boxes for photographers, by making one-of-a-kind boxes for collectors, by doing the job printing and job binding.

Graalfs: I guess the simple way to put the question is: what's the passion? What do you love about it?

Gotthold: I love the process. I love being able to make things that are really beautiful and not having to compromise on that. That really is a lot of the motivation.

Graalfs: You obviously like ideas and words, right?

Gotthold: Certainly. Putting the whole package together for our own books, for example. To be able to take a text that we think is really wonderful, do the design work, and develop an interesting structure that works for it, and go through the whole process. When you said something about it happening fairly quickly, I take issue, because many of these projects, they're long term. We're talking two or three years on many of them. It doesn't happen quickly. Even the edition work we do, it's not quick. It's slow and meticulous.

Felicia Rice

Introduction: Discovery of Cowell Press

Graalfs: I am here with Felicia Rice of Moving Parts Press, discussing the history of Cowell Press. Let's set the stage in terms of time periods. When were you a student at Cowell Press?

Rice: I came in the fall of 1973, when Jack [Stauffacher] was a Regents' Professor. He came for three quarters and I came the second quarter. I wasn't an official student at that time, so I audited his class. I enrolled as a student in January, winter quarter, of 1974. I was in his class that quarter and then I continued to work at the Cowell Press after he was gone — with other students who had access to it. I later assisted the subsequent instructors, Sherwood Grover and George Kane.

Graalfs: One of the interesting things in talking to you is that you have worked with Sherwood Grover and George Kane. I'm not sure anyone else has done that. But we'll come back to that. Prior to coming to UCSC you were studying in the Oakland area, right? Can you tell me more about this, what you were doing prior to enrolling at UC Santa Cruz?

Rice: I was living in the East Bay, and I was very interested in fine press printing. I'd become aware of it through . . . I lived around the corner from David Lance Goines' studio.[1] I would walk by and see his press in the window of his shop. It was fascinating to me. My parents were both artists and I was exposed to all kinds of media. Printing was something that I was exposed to as a child, but it wasn't their thing at all. With it I found a niche that could be my own, that was related to the arts,

1. David Lance Goines is an artist, author, and printer living in Berkeley, California. He is possibly best known for his posters which he has been designing and printing since 1968. Well known among these are posters for Alice Waters' restaurant, Chez Panisse. His press is Hieronymus Press.

but not one that was already claimed by my parents. Also, my mother had accidentally sent me an article from the Sunday *Chronicle Magazine* about fine printers in the Bay Area. She had intended to send it to my older sister. Jack Stauffacher and Adrian Wilson were mentioned. I may still have the article somewhere. I thought, "This is it! This is very, very interesting. How do I get started?"

Then I went to Laney College in Oakland and took their printing class. We set type by hand and worked with a Ludlow caster.[2] I took the semester-long class and it convinced me that I was on the right track, that this was really the right thing for me. But I realized I needed to move out of the Bay Area. It was getting very busy. I had been a student at UC Berkeley and that was overwhelming for me. I came from a smaller community and Berkeley was just a little too much. So I was looking for an education near the Bay Area, not too far from San Francisco, but focused on fine printing. I went to Sonoma State and looked there, and there was nothing there. I was also exploring printmaking. I went to Oregon and took a two-week printmaking workshop. I lived and worked on the premises. I explored printmaking, but that really wasn't it. I was interested in type and typography, and the world of letters and books. Then I came down to Santa Cruz with a friend and she had a friend who was a student at Cowell College. Her friend, Judy Rothchild, said, "There's a press underneath the dining hall at Cowell College. You can go visit it." That set me off in the right direction. I didn't know what I'd find. I walked in one afternoon and, as I remember it, Jim Faris and SB Master were printing their book, *Chamber Music* by James Joyce.

Graalfs: You walked in one afternoon prior to enrolling, when you were just visiting?

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2. The Ludlow caster was developed by the Ludlow Typograph Company and is named after its inventor, Washington I. Ludlow. This was a semi-mechanical typecasting machine in which the matrices for casting type are set by hand in a composing stick, allowing for hand spacing and adjustment before being cast in lead, as a solid line — known as a slug.

Rice: Yes. There they were, doing this fabulous and fascinating book. Exactly what I was interested in. And there was the Cowell Press, with equipment and students and a gorgeous view of the bay. I went, My God! I think this is absolutely the right place for me. It turned out that Jack Stauffacher was teaching and it was just a matter of applying to the school and making the move to Santa Cruz and getting started.

Graalfs: You're talking about Jim Faris and SB Master, who were early students of the Cowell Press. They were printing *Chamber Music* at the time?[3]

Rice: That is my memory of it. She wasn't alone in the press and it was definitely SB. I think it was Jim who was with her.

Graalfs: I ask because the book which I know they printed together was a collection of Jasper Rose's essays, *Evicting Household Gods.*

Rice: It could have been Jasper Rose's essays. You know, that could be right. They were working on Jasper's essays.

Graalfs: In essence, then, you discovered the Cowell Press, it fit your needs, and you moved and became a student at UC Santa Cruz. Were you a Cowell student?

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3. Jim Faris graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1974 with a B.A. in History of the Book. He studied with Jack Stauffacher at Cowell Press, later worked for the printer Grant Dahlstrom in Pasadena, then worked for Jack again at The Greenwood Press in San Francisco, funded by an NEA grant. Later, he attended design school in Basel, Switzerland. Jim lives and works in Santa Cruz and is a graphic designer. SB Master graduated from UC Santa Cruz in 1975 with triple-major honors. She received her MBA from Harvard Business School in 1980 and then founded Master-McNeil, Inc. in 1988, a naming and branding company located in Berkeley, California.

Rice: Yes.

Studying with Jack Stauffacher at Cowell Press

Graalfs: Did you know much about Jack when you came? You said you'd seen an article, the one in the Sunday *Chronicle Magazine*.

Rice: I didn't know anything about him other than what I read in the article. There are people one meets — teachers — who make perfect sense to you. I knew exactly what Jack was talking about. Still, he lectured and he discussed some things that went over my head. I remember his discussion of type design, of how it is designed on a fifty-four-unit grid. I still don't know if that's the standard grid and if it is still in use today with the digital type design. There are things that he is very conversant with in in terms of type design that go over my head. But I remember he brought in a fellow, Michael Taylor, a poet and writer, and we did some work with his writing.

Graalfs: Yes, *Mind, Tongue and Hand*, a portfolio of student broadsides. Included in the portfolio box is a copy of an essay of Michael Taylor's.

Rice: I remember working at the Press, working one-on-one with Jack. Working with other students. Sitting outside. Always food was important and beautiful women. (laughs)

Graalfs: What do you think it was about Jack when you say that he was one of these teachers who made perfect sense?

Rice: He was talking about design and the book world and the world of typography, in particular. It really rang true for me. I don't know if at some other time I'd been

exposed to some of these concepts, that they came back and Jack reinforced what I already knew, but I really think most of what he was talking about was new. Still, it just seemed very true.

Graalfs: I was asking partly because I had the same experience. What I liked about Jack was that here was a person who was not an academic, who was making a career for himself in the "working world," but was able to do that with books, with literature. He was doing catalogs for art exhibitions. Also, as we were doing letterpress, there was a hands-on aspect that I liked. Jack seemed to have a career working with ideas, but also had a way of making it tactile. That was a perfect combination of things for me at the time.

Rice: I had the same feelings. I was very interested in literature and writing.

Graalfs: Do you have other early, first impressions of Jack and the Cowell Press?

Rice: I remember that Jack had close friends in Santa Cruz. They were instrumental in bringing him in as a Regents' Professor. One of them was Paul Lee. Paul was always in the background. Either Jack was on his way to Paul's to spend the night before he went back to San Francisco or whatever. Paul had a restaurant. Do you remember the restaurant downstairs in the Cooper House? It had a drawing of a lavender bush. I can't remember the name of the restaurant.

Graalfs: I'd forgotten all about that, but it sounds familiar.

Rice: Some of the stuff didn't quite fit for me because I was becoming more and more interested in feminism, the feminist movement, and the women's movement. Some of

Jack's attractions to beautiful women, wine, women and song . . . It was just very European and international. It is a part of who Jack is, but it didn't really fit for me. He was not closed to women being at the Press, or restrictive of women's activities like Bill Everson at The Lime Kiln Press. For Bill, women didn't do this job, they only did this other job. Jack had no problems with women doing all the different tasks that are required to produce a book.

Graalfs: Whereas Bill was more rigid in what a woman's role could be at a press?

Rice: Yes. There was something going on, some way that Jack inspired students to really excel. There was a little competition within this small group of students. I felt I had come late, even though it was only the second quarter that Jack was on campus. But I felt late to the scene, that a lot had been worked out, the hierarchy and pecking order. There were some very brilliant students who were attracted to him and to the work. It made for a bit of an edge, an edge of competition that was actually pretty neat in terms of pulling the best out of people. I'm not sure if people were trying to impress him. Really, it was just people who had a certain amount of drive and were taking advantage of their time at the University to get the most that they possibly could. You've seen it play out, too, in terms of where these individuals have gone with their careers. Jack's assignments and the way that he conducted the class really set up in my mind how a class like this should be taught. It became a model for my own teaching. Like the *Mind, Tongue and Hand* broadside portfolio, when I taught I gave each student the same size sheet of paper. Maybe there'd be a theme. You see how the same size sheet of paper can be utilized entirely differently, with effective results.

Graalfs: You're talking about things that you've done when teaching?

Rice: Yes, I've done those same kind of projects with students. You can work with a small group of people and each can do something unique, meanwhile learning the techniques of typesetting and printing. Jack was very exacting about the quality of the type itself; it shouldn't be broken or damaged. He bought good type for the Press as part of his position there. The quality of the impression, the inking, the papers that we used were important. We were learning the principles of fine printing.

Graalfs: I think part of what you're saying, in terms of the *Mind, Tongue and Hand* project, was that Jack always liked to work within limits. That's always something I remember him talking about. Setting up parameters and everybody had to do it with the same sheet size or using not more than two typefaces. That was a key part of the way he taught. Even in his own work, he often talks about the fact that he likes having limits and seeing what he can do within those limits.

Rice: He modeled that. In my subsequent experience with other artists, and when artists talk about their work, this is really a standard approach to creating a body of work — creating limits and working within them. Exploring and understanding what these limits require. A papermaker I met once, Chuck Hilger, who became the director of the Santa Cruz Art and History Museum for many years, told me, "I work with white only. I work with the edge and maybe one other thing." Jack articulated that in a way I hadn't heard before; later others reinforced it. I've used it in my own work as well.

Graalfs: I think that Jack taught a lab class and a seminar. Do you remember it that way, and did you take both?

Rice: I remember that I was sitting in on the seminar in the fall. That's the one that I

audited.

Fellow Students & Projects at Cowell Press

Graalfs: Who were some of the other students in class with you? Who are some of the people you're referring to now?

Rice: Well, there was you, Greg. There was Maureen Carey.

Graalfs: Who works at the UC Santa Cruz McHenry Library today, right?[4]

Rice: Yes, and I still work closely with her on my projects. She provides a tremendous amount of support and is very discerning and understanding of the book. She was more of a presence at The Lime Kiln Press, and I'm including her in this group, but I'm not really remembering her as a class member. Did she participate in *Mind, Tongue and Hand*?

Graalfs: Yes.

Rice: Well, then she was there setting type and doing all that, too. There are other people who weren't quite as . . . well, Tom Killion was working at the Cowell Press. Really, you just have to go to that broadside portfolio, *Mind, Tongue and Hand,* to see the names, to know who were the people. Some stuck around and worked in the Press later on and I got to know them more. Some I hardly knew at all. Hope Kingsley. Tom Whitridge, a really important figure at the time. He was light years ahead of everybody. He already had a press of his own, Didymus Press in San Francisco.

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4. Maureen Carey is Archivist and Head of UC Santa Cruz's Online Archive of California Unit.

Graalfs: You printed one of the broadsides in *Mind, Tongue and Hand.* What was the broadside that you did, do you remember?

Rice: According to the book I read, it was an excerpt of writing from the first native American Utopian. His name was Josiah Warren; he was part of the Utopian movement in the late nineteenth century. This interest spun out of my studies at UC Berkeley and a political science class. Utopianism was one of the interests of my professor. It fit really well with the whole back-to-the-land movement and the hippie theme that I had grown up around. So I was looking into the history of that and of those who attempted to establish Utopian societies. I remember working with Jack on it, over the press. He guided my design. It's a very Jack-like design. It was a really good experience for me to understand how he worked and how he thought. He was modeling how he would go about designing a page, with two sizes of the same font and very simple, flush left and ragged right design approach. It was sort of an extensive project. There was no imagery in the piece. In fact, all the work I did with Jack was purely typographic. That was really what he inspired in me and what I got from him. We didn't mess around with printmaking techniques particularly. That wasn't his thing.

Graalfs: What other pieces did you print at Cowell Press?

Rice: I did a piece from the classics by Aeschylus. Again, inspired by Jack. Jack introduced students to the typefaces of Bembo and Univers. One a classic font and one a contemporary, sans serif font. My piece by Aeschylus, from *The Frogs*, was a combination of Univers used in bold and large, to bring out certain phrases or words, and fourteen point Bembo for the rest.

Graalfs: Did you find yourself collaborating with other students at Cowell Press? You were talking earlier about a sense of a hierarchy, who had experience and who didn't. Did you find yourself working with others, or did you work by yourself?

Rice: Well, I later did. While Jack was there I just worked on assignments. I didn't take on larger projects. But after he left and the students were allowed to continue working at the Press, then I got involved in projects that included other students. I remember working with Tom Whitridge on *River-Root* by William Everson.[5] I set the type for that book one summer, all summer long in this little building on Tom's property on Western Drive in Santa Cruz. It was over that summer, setting that poem letter by letter, that I decided that I didn't want to work with Bill Everson any longer.

Graalfs: (laughs) But then you did.

Rice: No, I didn't. I worked with him for a year and then I stopped. It was really because of his attitude towards women. I just couldn't do it anymore. Have you read that poem? I read it the other night at the reception for your show at the San Francisco Center for the Book.[6] Another woman was standing next to me, and I said to her, "Are you reading this? Did you read this, what he's saying?" It's all about his view of fornication, couched in metaphoric terms — the thrusting and the this-ing and the that-ing. It wasn't my experience of sex. He might have been an interesting person to make love with, but he was sixty-five years old and it just didn't ring any bells for me at all. After that summer setting *River Root*, I just couldn't work with Bill anymore.

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5. William Everson, *River-Root: A Syzygy for the Bicentennial of These States* (Berkeley, California: Oyez, 1976).

6. Exhibition: *Fateful Attractions: Fine Printing and Bookmaking in Santa Cruz.* March 5, 2004 to June 4, 2004 at the San Francisco Center for the Book.

Graalfs: What was your major?

Rice: Ultimately, I did an independent major at the University. I called it "Fine Printing in the 1970s." I had advisors.

Graalfs: Who were your advisors?

Rice: Hardy Hanson, Jasper Rose, and Sherwood Grover, I think. I was assisting for Sherwood, helping him in the classroom. Teaching was part of my major, particularly in my final year. It was really Jack's model. With Bill Everson, we would print a bigger project together, something that was not a personal statement from each student. With Bill, students worked together as a team to create a larger project, an edition of a published book. That was Bill's model. We didn't go that far with Jack. So between the two of them, I picked up a lot of what I later used as an instructor.

Location of Cowell Press

Graalfs: During the time that you were a student the Press was located under the dining hall at Cowell College, looking out over the field and Monterey Bay. Where else has the Press been located? Today it's housed in a studio next to the Cowell College Provost's house. At one point I thought it was in an A-frame somewhere.

Rice: That's my memory, too. But I wasn't on campus at that time; I wasn't associated with the Press then.

Graalfs: When you taught for Sherwood Grover and George Kane, it was still under the dining hall?

Rice: Sherwood Grover was under the dining hall. George probably started out under the dining hall, but I think he moved pretty quickly. They wanted that space for administrative offices. Then they moved George down to the Cowell College provost's garage, a beautiful little room. They put in a bathroom and running water, and brought it up to speed for housing a Press. At that time there was some investment in the Press.

Studying & Teaching with Sherwood Grover

Graalfs: Eventually, following Jack, Sherwood Grover came to the Press. Tell us, please, who was Sherwood Grover, and what do you know about how he came to Cowell Press?

Rice: There was a woman named Margaret Sowers, and her husband Roy, an important book collector in San Francisco. In the late 1970s she was a widow and lived here in Santa Cruz and knew Sherwood. Did George talk about her at all? I think she was also instrumental in his being hired. Anyway, Sherwood somehow got elected to do this and he was willing to try it out. He was retired. He was the former pressman for the Grabhorn Press in San Francisco, for thirty years, and had retired to his second home at Seacliff Beach. He had a press in his basement there. I met him because I got credit for assisting him. I don't remember his projects being really any different from Jack's. I remember helping him figure out his projects, even leading classes, because he'd never taught before and I had Jack's and Bill's classes as models. Sherwood wasn't happy as a teacher. It wasn't part of his nature. He was a very retiring, unprepossessing person, and a wonderful man. When he died, I inherited his shop. A large portion of my shop and my typographic library is my inheritance from Sherwood.

Graalfs: How long did Sherwood teach?

Rice: A year.

Graalfs: A year, so three quarters? Somehow I had the impression that he only taught for a quarter.

Rice: I think it was a full year. He had standards of craft and expectations of students and of their level of dedication. I don't think he was getting the response from the students that he wanted, the level of commitment to do things well and distribute the type correctly. I think he was just frustrated, which I can relate to. I've had those experiences, too.

Contact with The Lime Kiln Press

Graalfs: What kind of exchange, if any, went on between The Lime Kiln Press and Cowell Press?

Rice: I don't think there was a big exchange between the two presses when Jack and Bill were teaching. The students went back and forth, but I don't think there was a big meeting of the minds between Bill and Jack so much. Jack was gone so soon. Bill stayed on and influenced the students who worked at Cowell independently of an instructor there. He also had a very strong influence on the students who worked on his projects. That's where I got my experience of working as a team on a larger book.

Graalfs: When Sherwood Grover was there, was there any exchange? Did he and Bill ever meet or talk?

Rice: They probably did, but I don't remember it making a big impression on either of them. I knew Sherwood for years afterward, and he didn't particularly talk about Bill. Bill never talked about Sherwood as far as I can recall.

Working with George Kane

Graalfs: George Kane took over after that. You also taught for George. Is that right?

Rice: I assisted with him. I volunteered to assist him, and he paid me out of his salary.

Graalfs: Had you graduated by this point?

Rice: Yes. I wasn't teaching out of my own press yet, but I came up to the campus and assisted George. I helped him set up his own curriculum, providing some of the handouts and other course materials. Also, helping George figure out the projects. You can go into Cowell Press today and my handwriting is all over the place, dating from then.

Graalfs: You said you volunteered. Why?

Rice: To teach. I really enjoyed teaching. Also, the income was welcome. I was just starting my own business and trying to be self-employed as both a letterpress printer and teacher. It was natural.

Graalfs: How long did you teach for George?

Rice: Two or three years. Then he was fine on his own and didn't need me, really. And I needed to move on.

Graalfs: Do you recall any of the students that you had with George?

Rice: Leslie Murray, who teaches for me now, in the graphic design program for UCSC Extension.[7] Her first exposure to type and presses and printing was with George, and she remembers me. I remember this other young student, this young guy with blond hair, coming into class the first day and pulling out a type case to start setting type and just pulling it all the way out! The type went all over the floor! (laughter) That was his first experience. Pied the whole case.

Graalfs: Oh, no!

Rice: When I was there, I tried to maintain very high standards of craft, combing over the work, pulling out broken letters, anything that was worn. As the years have gone by the type has been used and re-used; it's no longer the type that it was when Jack bought it. But it's the same type. George has brought in some other type, but primarily the students are working with type that is over twenty years old. So it is more and more of an exacting process to get a really clean copy printed. One project we did while I was there was a poster for a show at the Eloise Pickard Smith Gallery at Cowell College of student work from George's class. I think it was his twenty-fifth anniversary of teaching. They included this broadside that I did for a hayride. A hayride was organized from the Farm on campus one fall on a full moon. What's funny is that I remember the poster and making it better than I remember the hayride. As printing students we organized the ride.

Graalfs: Was it a hayride just for the students in the class?

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7. Felicia's position at UC Santa Cruz Extension was eliminated as of June 30, 2004. Felicia is now Program Manager, Digital Arts and New Media, MFA Program.

Rice: I think pretty much, but we had a big poster for it. It was a part of my sense of community, how we could do things together and use such tools to pull people together and pull others into what was going on at the Press. I always envisioned that there could be a lot more of that at Cowell Press.

Graalfs: In terms of working with other disciplines?

Envisioning A Role for Cowell Press

Rice: Yes. One of the beautiful things about the Press is that it draws literature students, writing students, art history students, art students, etc. They each have strengths, and when you do work together as a group those strengths come out. They complement one another. Or you can partner up students and they can work together and interesting things happen. The dynamic of all that multi-disciplinary activity can be really exciting. You get your proofreaders when you get your writers in there, and you get your visual artists who can create interesting imagery or experiment with printmaking and typography. You can expand out from there to reach into their disciplines, as well as to draw on the work of professors — as with *Evicting Household Gods*, the book of Jasper Rose's essays — and publish their work. It was just this seed for something bigger, a UCSC publishing entity. There was the potential for that, starting small and hands-on, with Cowell Press and moving to something larger.

I had a vision for the potential of the Press. It was fueled, in part, by the magnitude of the projects that Bill Everson was taking on at The Lime Kiln Press with *Granite and Cypress*. That was one of the really important things about Jack and Bill, their level of professionalism. There are certain standards and you need to learn the basics. You need to learn the skills. That is something that I've always tried to impress upon my students. This is real work. We're really going to publish a book. People are really

going to buy it. We're not just exploring our internal process here. We're taking it out into the world, whatever we do. We may have an internal process about it, but it's going out into the world and there are certain expectations.

Graalfs: Right.

Rice: That's what distinguishes Bill and Jack's teaching. I have been having some email correspondence with Richard Bigus[8] and he says, "Isn't it amazing how many students of Bill's and Jack's went on and were so impressed by their teaching. I've been teaching for twenty-four years and I don't feel that I've had that impression on that number of students in all this time, while they were only teaching for a few years."

I think part of it was that they were real. Like you said, they weren't from the academy. They weren't academics. Bill was a real poet and he worked at making beautiful books for much of his adult life. With Jack, he knew the world of typography and type and design and bookmaking and literature and classics, the classics. I grew up with these two parents as artists who I accepted as my teachers. It was very hard to accept other people as teachers. These two men, Jack and Bill, I was able to accept them as teachers. Everson was harder and took longer. It was maybe fifteen years later that I realized what he'd been talking about. You know, you have your "aha!" moment. It might happen at the time or it might happen later. It was later that Everson really joined me in spirit in my studio, and I understood some of what he was struggling with when he was printing. I was struggling with the same things. He would pray over the press and I found myself, not praying over the press, but going through that same internal struggle with the technical issues, the struggle for this perfectly printed page. He and

8. Richard L. Bigus graduated from UC Santa Cruz in 1974 with a B.A. in Poetry and Typography. He went on to get his MFA in Graphic Design from Yale University. He now teaches in the art department at the University of Hawaii, Manoa.

Jack both became real voices in my head. I could draw upon them for support.

Graalfs: You're kind of implying that George Kane didn't do this for you, yes?

Rice: I wasn't his student, for one thing.

Graalfs: Right, but you taught with him, so you were around him. I'm just curious. I'm hearing that somehow George didn't have the same drive to enforce high standards of quality.

Rice: Well, George had been a printer maybe when he was quite young, but really his entire career was spent as a newspaper editor, then as a book collector and dealer. I think that in the world of collecting and dealing he's a master. He has a wonderful library that he shares with his students each quarter. He used to take the class on field trips to San Francisco, to the Special Collections at Berkeley, or wherever. He had lots of contacts in the book world. But the level of craft that I was trained to look for in my own work, he wasn't particularly interested in that. He was never a designer or fine printer.

Graalfs: He had been a printer as a young man.

Rice: I don't think his soul was in it, not like it was with Bill, or is still with Jack. He was interested in contemporary bookmaking, but some of what he liked didn't interest me. I came from a classic typographic approach to the page, while George likes whimsy in some of the books that he collected. I am more serious. I'm a pretty serious

kind of person.

After Graduating

Graalfs: When you graduated you started your own press, Moving Parts Press. You were working downtown. Then you were approached by Hardy Hanson, professor in the art department, to teach for the art board. Later you taught for Porter College. Why did Hardy Hanson approach you to teach for the art board when Cowell Press was there and present on campus?

Rice: Let me just backtrack. I started my press in 1977 and I graduated in 1978. I started Moving Parts Press with Maureen Carey. It was a collaboration of ours. We found a space downtown. It required a lot of work, this old garage, to get it into shape, to insulate it. One of my presses today was one Maureen brought to the partnership. We were together for two years and then we parted ways. I stayed in the same space. Originally, she took her press and I got another one. Later, she sold it to someone and I bought it from them. It was originally Tom Whitridge's press. I started teaching workshops in the community. All I needed was, maybe, four students and we'd have Wednesday night meetings from seven to ten. We had five class meetings and each person would do their own broadside. I did this for several years. Hardy knew that I was teaching already and he came down one day. He also was the one who got me my first printing commission. It was at a gallery downtown, Cedar Street Gallery, that showed the work of a lot of faculty members and graduates, as well as local artists. It brought work from the campus down into the community. They also had a little restaurant. He got me the job of printing all their show announcements. Hardy had done the original design and I adapted it. Each time they changed a show, I would change the color of the paper and the ink, but use his basic design. He has always had a lot of interest in visual communication, dating back to his days at Yale and an interest

in presses. He was always supportive of the students who were interested in printing. He had been one of my advisors when I was a student with an independent major. So one day he came to me and said, "Would you like to teach a class for the art board? Students could come here to your studio. We could do a class over the course of a year, come on Saturday mornings for a year." I think that's how we started. No, we started with a quarter-long class.

Graalfs: So this was held at your studio?

Rice: At my studio. One of my first students was Joel Benson, who went on to become the pressman for Julie Holcomb in San Francisco. Joel worked for her for a number of years and now has his own press. I had a small group of students from campus come down, and we did a concertina-fold piece on the subject of Spring. It was spring quarter and that was the first piece we did together. Each person contributed a couple of spreads for this long piece. I was interested in exploring printmaking techniques then. There was more color and a little more experimentation, not purely typographic. I'm not sure why Hardy came to me to do this in addition to what was going on at Cowell Press. But I know that he felt he had students who were really interested in printing and bookmaking and typography. He didn't feel they were getting enough at Cowell, probably. There must have been some money available. He would hand-pick his best students and send them to me. I had this wonderful group of students each quarter. One group I had for a year. We did a number of projects and a book together, poems by Lucille Clifton.[9] This is what got me started working with campus writers and artists. Like the Everson model, the students and I worked together and produced a series of broadsides. I liked working in this concentrated way, where students came

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9. Lucille Sayles Clifton is a poet whose first book of poems, *Good Times*, was published in 1969. In 1970 she published two books of children's verse and also wrote *Good Woman: Poems and a Memoir* (1987).

on Tuesday and Thursday or Friday and Saturday. I could focus on what we were doing. Then they would go away and I could get back to my own work. Some of them became my apprentices and worked on other projects with me. I had a lot of independent study students. I probably could have independent study students now if there was an interest on campus. But Hardy has since retired; he was a tremendous advocate of mine on campus. Then I became associated with Porter College, which is the visual arts college. They took over my class and budgets shifted, too. I was paid by Porter College and was no longer associated with the art board.

Graalfs: I have heard that you taught for fourteen years. Is that right?

Rice: Yes. Total. When I finally stopped teaching on campus it was enforced by the fact that I got sick. It seemed to me that it was all about the fact that I was spread too thin. And I had greater and greater expectations. I wanted to see some of those things happen across campus that brought people from different disciplines together. I wanted to see projects and experiments with book structures. I wanted to be incorporating a whole lot of things. And I only had three months and I had a job. I had my own business and I worked for UCSC Extension, directing the design program. I was going in too many directions and the thing I had to stop was the teaching. I tried to take my students back up onto campus to Cowell Press. That was my final quarter teaching at Cowell Press with George's agreement.

Graalfs: When was this?

Rice: 1999.

Graalfs: Again, these were students that were coming to you from Porter?

Rice: It was a Porter class, advertised in the catalog. That was the end of my teaching on campus. That was the last time I taught.

Graalfs: The last time you taught was 1999?

Rice: Yes.

Graalfs: That was back at Cowell Press? So you went full circle.

Rice: It was a quarter when George wasn't teaching. He'd started teaching only two out of the three quarters per year. I thought my Porter class would keep the Press active.

Future for Cowell Press

Graalfs: I'd like to conclude with a couple of questions about the Cowell Press and its position on campus, its potential. Do you believe that there's a strong interest on the part of Cowell College, or the campus, to keep Cowell Press going after George's retirement?

Rice: It depends so much on the provost of Cowell, whether he's [or she's] willing to support the Press or not, whether there's funding in these difficult times. I think there were years when George taught without being paid. He just kept it going out of his own commitment. I don't know whether there's anyone else like George who's willing or able to work without pay. It really hinges tremendously on the current provost and what the budget will allow. It still has all the potential it always had to influence students. It'll always be a matter of whether there are students who come along who really get it, get excited and want to go on and work further. The work that's been done

at Cowell Press over these years is strong work and there have been some strong students.

Graalfs: Did you find in your teaching that the things that excited you about printing were the same for your students?

Rice: It's a different world with the computer available, and all that can be done digitally with type and typography. I've done laser-printed editions of poetry chapbooks. If I was starting out today I probably wouldn't touch letterpress. I probably would go off into this whole digital world. However, I think students should be exposed to how things were done historically, and understand the foundations of terminology. The term "leading" comes from the fact that it was actual lead. You can wave it around in the air. These are good experiences for any future designer or publisher or writer. If I were in a decision-making role at Cowell Press I would include a computer in the lab and expose people to that as well. The world of the book has changed so much. There's the tradition of fine printing and the fine book, and then there's the "artist's book," which is really dominating.

Graalfs: What's the difference?

Rice: The fine book has a tradition that dates back through the craft of printing, and is not necessarily identified with the arts. Jack Stauffacher doesn't think of himself as an artist. He says, "I am a printer." Fine artists, who have become involved in the book as a form, have taken this structure and exploded it. They have applied the form theoretically, conceptually, to pieces that look nothing like a book with a spine and a fore-edge and pages that turn. Also, in a lot of work the content is very personal.

Whereas in the fine printing world there is the role of the printer, the role of the binder, the role of the writer, the role of the artist-illustrator. It was always collaborative, always. Even Everson, the poet, how often did he publish his own poetry? He was publishing his mentor's poetry.

Graalfs: In fact he found it hard to do his own, as I recall.

Rice: Yes, and let it go. So this fine book world is one thing and the artist's book is another. That's where the energy is right now. It's not that the fine book world isn't growing. There's an interesting bridge between the two at Arion Press with Andrew Hoyem in San Francisco. There are other presses, Trillium Press in Brisbane, working with artists and poets and writers to produce limited editions of luxurious deluxe books. That's basically what I'm working on right now, bridging these worlds between the history of the book and then the exploration of the book beyond. The French in the twentieth century were moving along further than the Americans in working with artists, specifically with their *livres d'artiste*. They had very simple limitations on how these books were presented, however, though they went on to explore and make wooden covers with nails and this kind of thing. That exploration of the book structure is what the artist's book is primarily about. My sticking point is that I want there to be content. The content is critical. I want to work with type. I want type to be part of the book. It doesn't have to be traditional typesetting. It can be wacky and wild, but there's some content.

Graalfs: Meaning a text.

Rice: A text, yes. There's a text. Then the imagery and the book structure that works around, that is really, really critical. But I find myself still lagging in terms of exploring

bookbinding and structures and altered books. Star books and tunnel books and pop-up books, this kind of thing. Some of us, you know, as this was beginning to happen, were resentful when seeing the book form appropriated by the fine arts, basically becoming a sculptural form. Getting all this attention and buzz. If Cowell Press continues, I think it can have an important influence in what's going on in the visual arts, in that area, in terms of artist's books. It also would probably need to incorporate this more. Ideally, there would be a couple of other companion courses, not just Letterpress, but also Book Structure. Then apply some of this to a serious publishing project that would go on over the course of a year, the way that Everson's projects did, and allow students to work on something with certain standards. Then there's the potential for the Press to bring in people from other disciplines, or reach out to other disciplines to help them in their basic promotion of their events. You can do posters and broadsides and invitations and announcements — all kinds of wonderful pieces that would circulate widely throughout the campus and really bring attention to Cowell College and to the Press itself. Wouldn't it be great if the art department could teach book structures, and Cowell Press provided text and text handling, bringing these two together in publishing projects. It could be a whole program that hasn't been there in thirty years, since Jack first started. The closest it ever came was the combination of Cowell Press and Lime Kiln Press when students could work on their own, or have very intense direction from Bill Everson on a large project.

Graalfs: So it's really a different world you're now describing. When we got involved, letterpress printing was what was available to you if you wanted to make a book yourself. Today you can easily do it on a computer. Meanwhile, you have this whole other thing going on, what you've described in terms of artist's books.

Rice: A good model, in terms of navigating these waters, I think, is the program at

Mills College, an undergraduate program that's devoted to book arts; you get your degree in it. What Kathy Walkup has done there at Mills College, over time, is maintain standards of craft and yet incorporate new ideas and give people an opportunity to work on their own projects. I think it is really a good model for what can be done. On campuses across the country, design schools, or just university art departments, or art schools, you'll find book arts in some form practically everywhere. At Rhode Island School of Design one of the women who teaches book arts is Jane Parillo. She's a former UCSC student, a student of Hardy Hanson's. She's in the library. She teaches artist's book classes. She's been there for years.

Graalfs: Well, Lime Kiln Press was in the library, so there is another model of being in a library setting. At Wellesley College their book arts program works out of the library.

Rice: UC Berkeley has a press in the library. Peter Koch and Les Ferriss have been teaching there for years. If the library at UCSC wanted to take this on, it's a perfect fit. A campus without it at all is missing the boat. Books are part of campus life in most colleges.

Graalfs: So there are different ways to approach it. The question is to initiate some thinking on the part of Cowell about that. Or the campus, if they're interested.

Rice: One thing that Cowell Press could do, if the equipment and type were in better shape, would be to rent the Press to UCSC Extension to teach classes. It wouldn't be a lot of classes, but it could be done. It's just that the press and type are currently in such bad shape, it's not somewhere that you'd want to take someone for their first printing experience.

Graalfs: Interesting idea.

Rice: In fact, my first experience teaching for Extension was doing exactly that, teaching a letterpress printing class in 1981 at Cowell Press. That was my first association with Extension.

Graalfs: Very interesting ideas. Well, we should wrap up. This has been great, thank you very much.

Rice: Thank you.

Tom Killion

Introduction: Parallel Interests in History Studies & Serial Printmaking

Graalfs: I'm interviewing Tom Killion here in Inverness, California.

Killion: Well, we're on the border. Inverness Park. It's in the Point Reyes zip code. But Inverness has a little more *cachet*. It depends. But if you want to be salt of the earth, it's Point Reyes. Point Reyes has the smell of the cow shit.

Graalfs: (laughter)

Killion: Inverness has the *cachet* of the second-homers.

Graalfs: Talking about Cowell Press, let's start at the beginning. What period were you a student at Cowell Press and Cowell College?

Killion: I was a student at Cowell College from 1971 to 1975. One of the only people that actually graduated in four years out of everybody I knew there.

Graalfs: I did it in four years.

Killion: Oh, okay, so we belong together here, Greg. One way I did it was by taking *Yoga Meditation* for credit and *Birth of a Poet*. (laughter). Actually, the Cowell Press… I was taking a class in celestial navigation, because I thought that when I finished college I wanted to find a sailboat and sail across the Pacific. I ran into somebody named Richard Bigus in that celestial navigation class, and we got to be friends. He liked my artwork, and I told him about this project I had in mind about printing pictures of Mount Tamalpais together with maybe some haiku poems I'd written. He said, "Why don't you

learn how to print? There's a press right underneath here." We were sitting in the Cowell dining hall for celestial navigation. I didn't know this. I think he must have taken Jack Stauffacher's course one semester before I did, maybe the first semester Jack taught. And I started the second semester. I'm not sure. Maybe it was the first semester Jack taught there, but I have the feeling that Richard and SB Master and a couple of other people were already involved. Maybe you were already involved? I don't remember really. I'd have to look at my transcripts to remember. But I started it more or less when everybody else did.

Graalfs: Graduating in 1975, did you major in book arts?

Killion: No, I was a history major, and I was really interested in Third World history. I should have been a Merrill student, not a Cowell student.

Graalfs: Well, except they had that whole Western Civilization program.

Killion: I took that and I loved it, but at the time I don't think I appreciated how great it really was, because I was a freshman. I thought of myself as a Marxist revolutionary, you know, for a while. So I wanted to do Third World studies. I wrote an honors thesis comparing the Algerian revolution with the Vietnam War under the French and the Americans. I got honors in history because of that. That's how I got to go to Stanford for grad school and got my Ph.D. in African history. I really didn't see myself as a professional printmaker or fine book printer, although it was always my love and my interest and I've done it all my life, just like studying history. But printing was really my profession, and history was more my hobby, despite teaching history and all the rest. In the end, my real métier was printing. I certainly did more with it that was of interest to people out there in the broader world.

Graalfs: Had you wanted to learn bookmaking when you met Richard Bigus? Or were you more of a printmaker and the book was a handy format?

Killion: I thought in terms of art as serial images, images that were all on a theme. That certainly is something that comes out of books. And it comes from our childhood. I'm just speculating, but I imagine that for a lot of people that are interested in fine printing or book illustration, this interest comes from their childhood experience with beautiful children's books. Because children's books tell a story — images that all relate to each other. There's not too much in the way of words, so it's not overwhelmingly bookish, and yet it's in the book form. What I wanted to do was an adult version of that with my favorite place at the time — near to where I'd grown up, Mill Valley — the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais. The inspiration for my Mount Tam project was the Japanese series, Katsushika Hokusai's series, *36 Views of Mt. Fuji*. Also Hiroshige's *Stations of the Tokaido Road*. Then I'd read some Basho, and I loved the haikus about traveling some of these routes in pre-modern Japan. So I had a concept in my mind, and it was a picture book concept with very little writing. It came out very nicely.

Graalfs: What do you think would have happened to that idea if you hadn't bumped into Richard? Would you have ended up doing it anyway?

Killion: I would have ended up printing the prints by hand. I was already doing that. I'd already done one independent study with Professor Jim Houston where I hand-printed prints with crummy water-based Speedball inks. I would color them, actually, by hand on the block with different colors and then print them by rubbing them by hand. And I had this nice italic dip pen that I always used in those days. For years I did a lot of journals and things that had a very finished look. I would have done it as a handmade book. I hadn't even thought of printing it on a press, really.

Graalfs: Interesting.

Introduction to Richard Bigus, Cowell Press, & Jack Stauffacher

Killion: So Richard Bigus connected me to printing through that celestial navigation class, which was off on a whole other trip. Richard was a surfer and he wanted to go sailing around the South Seas to surf. I had several friends who had this romantic notion of sailing around the world. It turned out that once I was done with college — actually, right after I finished the Mt. Tam book — I traveled all over Europe and Africa, hitchhiking instead of sailing.

Graalfs: (laughter) So what happened when you met Jack Stauffacher?

Killion: Jack was the kind of guy (laughs). . . Jack was the sort of figure who was really inspirational. He was a little distant and extremely charming and well-mannered. Some people might see that distance as arrogance, but I think it's good in a teacher to have a bit of distance. Students look up to them. Jack was exactly the kind of bohemian intellectual that Santa Cruz students would be attracted to — like Richard and everybody else in the class. People would go down to the beach with him. Jack seemed incredibly old to us in those days, but he was probably younger than I am now. (laughter) He was in his forties. He looked so healthy. He had this big head of black hair and he was always tan and he attributed it [his health] to eating raw garlic and jumping in the cold ocean every morning. So we'd go down to the ocean and jump in with him. I realized later that he had been the inventor of bicycle polo, which people played at Tamalpais High School.

He was really inspiring in his love of type, of course. I never got into the intricacies of type design, but was inspired by his love of typefaces and being shown a lot of them. His sense of what was good in a typeface, of letter spacing and the rest of it, rubbed off. He

certainly didn't teach by demonstrating exactly how to do anything. It was purely by giving you some basics and giving you a lot of inspiration about the art of it all, of type design, spacing, and page setup.

A Student at Cowell Press

Graalfs: Do you remember working on the portfolio *Mind, Tongue and Hand*?

Killion: Oh, sure. The one where each of us contributed one piece? Yeah. I did a two-paneled woodcut of Mendocino Bay and included a bit of poetry. I was really excited about it at first because I thought everyone in that class was very talented. It was my first try at printing one of my woodcuts with a poem. In a way it was a dry run for this project I had in mind, so I enjoyed it very much for the sake of the Mt. Tam project. But I was a little disappointed that it didn't hold together as a whole; everyone did their own thing and then we just stuck it together. It was a sum of the individual pieces.

Graalfs: My piece was a broadside with an excerpt from a T. S. Eliot poem, as I recall. And, as you say, everyone did something different and of their own.

Killion: It might have been yours that got me reading more T. S. Eliot. A lot of things I learned at Santa Cruz I didn't learn in class. I learned them from other students.

Graalfs: Yes, I also found that true. Did you ever take any art classes?

Killion: No. I came close to taking a printmaking class with Kay Metz, but it conflicted with some Middle East history class I wanted to take, so I never took it. I've never taken formal art classes. I taught myself. And I mostly learned printing from Richard Bigus.

Jack certainly didn't really teach you how to use a press. As a result, it took me a long time to figure out how to do multi-colored prints. It wasn't until the mid-1980s that I started trying to do them. I read a book about Japanese hand-printing techniques and adapted these. I think it's good to reinvent the wheel sometimes, because in the process, you come up with something a little bit different. I have my own techniques that often came from mistakes and trying to solve problems in some stupid, bass-ackwards way. But they end up adding to your individual style.

Graalfs: There were many art students who became involved with Jack and Cowell Press. Also, Professor Hardy Hanson was a supporter of the Press, particularly supporting Felicia Rice.

Killion: Well, you know, Felicia knew more about art because her father is a great artist. But I never thought of art as something I wanted to study in college, because I was pretty intellectual. I was fascinated with history, literature, and anthropology. I wanted to read books. That's what I was mostly interested in. Art was something I could do myself; I knew what I wanted to do. I wasn't interested in the breadth of art — unfortunately for me, for I would have learned a lot.

Graalfs: You've certainly accomplished a lot, however.

Killion: Yeah, but in a very limited… In some ways, if you want to get really good at something, stick to just one thing.

Graalfs: Earlier you said that you never got into the intricacies of type, but some of what you learned, particularly about type, must have come into play when you designed and printed *High Sierra*.

Killion: Yeah. I can't say I learned any of it from Jack. I learned by playing with designs and type and talking it over with my fellow students. Later, my fellow students transformed into the core group in the Printer's Chappel of Santa Cruz. I would talk it through with them, and I'd get a lot of great ideas. In fact, I had one whole title page printed for one book, and after some comments by my friend Peter Thomas, I ended up throwing it out. It was a folio, so two pages were lost. I re-designed the whole book. Jack inspired people to think, and then we spent a lot of time looking at beautiful books.

First Meeting with William Everson & The Lime Kiln Press

Graalfs: In terms of Bill Everson's connection with Cowell, if he had any, he sponsored an independent study for you to print a book, right?

Killion: Yes. I never took a class from Bill [Everson] other than *Birth of a Poet*, but I did an independent study with him for this book I was working on. He very kindly signed me off so I could get credit for it. But it really didn't . . . He was very solicitous, as Bill always was. Very pleasant, but he didn't really work with me all that much. In fact, Jim Houston worked more with me on it. He had been my creative writing teacher.

Graalfs: So the project that Bill sponsored, you printed at Cowell Press?

Killion: I was just working on it during the school year, but then in the summer after I graduated — the summer of 1975 — I printed it on the Vandercook proof press at Cowell Press. I went over to Lime Kiln Press and watched these people, who I knew from Jack's class, working on *Granite and Cypress*. More than Jack talking about Hermann Zapf, it was looking at the design and watching the printing of *Granite and Cypress* that inspired me more than anything. Although I didn't get any formal instruction from Bill,

seeing that project was incredibly inspiring. When it was done *Granite and Cypress* was one of the most beautiful things. I had already discovered Robinson Jeffers maybe two years before. I was crazy about his poetry. And then to see this book being printed was — I'm just realizing it now — perhaps the real transforming moment for me. Absolutely falling in love with fine book printing. You don't need instruction when you have something like *Granite and Cypress* in front of you. I think it's one of the most beautifully printed books. Just think, you guys all got to work on it.

Graalfs: Yes.

Killion: (laughter) At the time I was . . . I'm very much a loner in the way I do things. And difficult. I like people, but I'm very standoffish. I was being my typical self. I just wanted to do my own thing. In retrospect, I wish I'd signed up to work on *Granite and Cypress*. I'm sure I could have. I just wanted to do my own thing. Also, I was deep into writing my honors thesis, all that kind of stuff that seniors do, which took up all my time.

Turning Point: Summer of 1975

The other thing that really affected me, besides Jack's class or Bill's *Granite and Cypress*, was my bicycle accident. I was having so much fun in the summer of 1975. I was working at a pizza place at night as a waiter, and I was working on my book in the Cowell Press in the daytime. I was having so much fun, I don't know if I would ever have finished the book, or even gotten halfway through it. Then I was coming down the hill one evening after taking a bike ride on Empire Grade. I was going pretty fast, probably twenty-five or thirty miles-an-hour when somebody turned left into me

without signaling. I went flying over the hood of the car, nearly breaking my head open on the curb. My leg was shattered in a couple places. I had a cast from my foot to my hip for about four months. I couldn't go do any of those things I had been doing, bike riding, surfing, and all these fun activities. So I spent a lot more time at the Press. I hopped along on my one good foot and printed that whole darn book with a cast all the way up to my hip.

Felicia Rice was working on something else in there. SB Master was in there finishing up her *Chamber Music*, I think. A beautiful thing. She turned me on to hosho, Japanese handmade paper, which I ended up using as the paper for this project. She pointed out several important things, like Schuberth Bookbindery and the importer that had hosho paper — who's long since gone. Yasutomo, I think it was, in San Francisco.

Book Projects with William Everson

Graalfs: You also worked on some projects with Bill Everson after graduating, is that right?

Killion: I worked with Richard Bigus and Lester Farris on a project. It was Richard's idea, but he got Lester involved. He really got Lester started in printing. You know Lester, right?

Graalfs: I don't. I know who he is and I've met him once or twice, but I never . . .

Killion: He teaches with Peter Koch over at Berkeley. He's a very good printer.

Graalfs: Felicia knows him.

Killion: He's a great guy. His younger sister was my girlfriend's best friend at the time. I've known Lester since I started at UC Santa Cruz. We were all in the same dorms. Richard got Lester deep into printing, I think, through these projects that we did in the late 1970s. Richard did a book with Kenneth Rexroth and got this guy — a dorm supervisor — to do the illustrations, a crazy hippie guy, Daniel, who was an early casualty of the AIDS epidemic. Daniel had once done these large-scale woodcut prints and used to get us to jump up and down on pieces of plywood to print them, out in the dorm parking lot.

With Richard and Lester we did *Eastward the Armies* and I did the illustrations. It was Bill's anti-war war poetry, coming out of his conscientious objector years. That was a fun book. It was beautifully printed, but Richard had an idea for the binding that I didn't think worked very well. My illustration is a fold-out with a kind of crucifixion scene. It refers to Everson's faith and the importance of it in his life.

Richard knew what he was doing. He knew how to hustle and get things going. He worked with Sam Francis, who had a place up here in Point Reyes. He met him through Jack. Richard was very charming, handsome, a surfer, and a very self-confident guy. He got to know Jack quite well. Jack liked him a lot. I'm sure Jack thought I was kind of a weed. (laughter) Richard was very mature for his age. He was brash and he'd go right in there. He taught printing to prisoners at that sort of low-security prison where… Page Smith had that group with Paul Lee; he had that thing working with prisoners, what was that called? [The Prison Arts Project — editor]

That was the first project I worked on with Bill. Then I went up and helped him on some things he was doing at his Kingfisher Flat Press at his cabin in Bonny Doon. Then when Adrian Wilson got his MacArthur grant, it turned out that Bill was the likely other guy in the running. Adrian somehow learned this. They had been buddies at conscientious objector camp in Waldport, Oregon during World War II. The first thing Adrian did with the money was buy a Heidelberg press and ask Bill if he could publish his latest work. Bill had this autobiographical poem that dealt with a lot of psychological issues concerning his childhood and early manhood. That was the last thing Bill was working on right up until his death. Adrian printed the first poem from this series, *In Medias Res*, and I illustrated it.

Graduate Studies & Travels

Graalfs: My sense is that you were away from the printing and bookmaking for a while.

Killion: Yes. I printed that Mount Tam book, and I actually sold some of them. That, plus the money I got from the insurance from the car accident (laughter), allowed me to wander the world for fourteen months. I hitchhiked across the U.S., and then all around Europe, and then, eventually, across Africa. Then I came back to the U.S. and hitchhiked home. And after steam cleaning carpets a bit, I realized I should do something better with my life. I bought a printing press and printed a book that came out of a high school project on the history of the coast artillery fortifications of Marin County. It was a great subject for woodcut prints, because you had these concrete bunkers that went back to the 1880s, juxtaposed with this incredible coastline around the Golden Gate. Looking at *Fortress Marin*, the typography is uninspired — set in narrow columns like a newspaper. I'm not a very good typographer. The reason I fall back on classical design is that it's the

only thing I understood. I'm more of an artist. When I mix the type with the art it works really well. That's the key — mixing it together.

Graalfs: I guess the question I was trying to get at, and maybe I have this wrong, but I had a sense that when you were pursuing academics more, you weren't as involved in the printing as much. I was wondering what brought you back to it.

Killion: There were several periods in my life where my work on African history displaced printmaking as my primary focus, but for the most part I was able to somehow integrate these two different interests, and even produced one hand-printed travel book, *Walls*, that actually merged them in an artistic whole. The first period was during my graduate studies at Stanford University, from 1978 through 1985. Initially I did a lot of art work and in some ways used my graduate stipend (I had a full scholarship) to subsidize my art, but I would say I really supported myself with printmaking and fine printing during this period, particularly after I completed *The Coast of California* folio book in 1979. My research trips to Europe and Africa went into my travel book *Walls*, and after I finished my Ph.D. on Ethiopian labor history in 1985, I spent a year learning how to do multi-color key-block prints, with many of the experiments eventually ending up in *Walls*. One period when I did almost no art or printing was when I worked in a refugee camp in Sudan during 1987 to 1988. Another was when I taught African history at Bowdoin College and Asmara University during 1991 to 1995. But once I was back in Santa Cruz in 1996, I realized my real heart was in printmaking and fine printing. I started a big project on *The High Sierra of California* that year, and after I got Gary Snyder involved I became more and more engrossed in it. I had come back to California with a part-time teaching job at San Francisco State University as my main source of income, but I found I couldn't support my family with that, and I also got more and more excited about the new multi-color prints I was making,

challenging myself technically and maturing my style. So by 1998 I had reduced my teaching and concentrated almost entirely on my art.

During this entire period, from the late 1970s through the 1990s, I always kept my press in a studio in Santa Cruz, set-up with work tables and everything, so I was always able to return and print, even during the summers when I had teaching jobs back East. At first I had my press in one room of a two-room converted garage down a dirt lane behind Pleasure Point. Then around 1980 I inherited Richard Bigus's studio in a funky old carriage house in Capitola Village, where we had worked together on *Eastward the Armies*. I still have that studio today. It's amazing it is still standing. It went through the Loma Prieta eathquake. In 1989, my press was knocked over and all the type-cases were dumped on the floor. It is probably only held-together at this point by termite secretions! And the plastic sheeting Richard put up on the ceiling, and even two of his old posters are still tacked to the wall from the mid-1970s. It's almost a museum.

George Kane & The Printer's Chappel of Santa Cruz

Graalfs: I wanted to ask about a couple more things. First, how much do you know about the continuation of Cowell Press after our time period, and, secondly, any comments you might have about that?

Killion: Well, remember I lived in Santa Cruz. I made it my home. Certainly I was away doing history research and working, and teaching back East, but Santa Cruz was my home for that whole period, up until two years ago. It's still a place… I'm there every two weeks and I keep my studio there. I was very much in touch with what was going on at Cowell Press, in the sense that I knew George [Kane] had taken it over and I met some of his students. The ones that were really interested would come to our Printer's

Chappel meetings. The Chappel was a pretty vibrant organization in the 1980s and into the early 1990s.

Graalfs: Vibrant in what way?

Killion: Well, we would meet every other month and we had specific projects we were interested in doing, including several Chappel-sponsored shows. Together we would attend different printer-related things up in the Bay Area. I went a number of times to the shows that George organized of student work at the gallery at Cowell. I was pretty in touch with it.

The early Printers' Chappel in many ways revolved around George Kane, and if I remember correctly it may even have been his idea. He is our "Dear Father," almost forty years older than any of us (he is in his nineties now), and a serious book dealer and collector of fine printing with a great knowledge of the field. Our first meetings were held in his lovely library, behind the yacht harbor. George was a newspaper man, with that salt-of-the-earth humor and style. But George was not an accomplished fine printer in his own right, and his tastes are eclectic. His program at the Cowell Press was geared to teaching students the nuts-and-bolts of letterpress printing — on increasingly dilapidated equipment. Compared to Jack Stauffacher and Bill Everson, George has a different personality, a different character. He's probably a more accessible person than either Jack or Bill, but he didn't have the same inspirational quality for students, because he himself was not engaged in producing hand-printed books of unsurpassing beauty. As I said before, Jack didn't really teach you how to print, but he was inspiring. He and Bill both had an artistic temperament; they taught printing as a fine art.

I think that the congruence of Jack and Bill Everson at that moment in time was just… it was at a moment in time when there was a blooming of the art of letterpress, as opposed to the technical use of the letterpress. It was the end, the sunset, of the letterpress age. Printing companies were selling off all the equipment. I bought my printing press for $350. It was probably $1500 new ten years before. So it was a great time, and consequently it was *the* time that letterpress as an art form really took off. It happened that these two guys, who were so different, were both incredibly devoted to the art of letterpress printing, of fine printing, and were at UC Santa Cruz at that time. Very, very tasteful in what they did; really understood the beauty of letterpress as an art. That was an incredibly fortuitous event to have these two at Santa Cruz at that time. I just happened to be lucky to be there at that moment, and to find out about it in time to use it as a springboard to the essence of what I wanted artistically. I didn't know I needed to learn this particular technique. But it was all going around in the back of my head because of those beautiful 1950s children's books that I, and probably everybody else that is interested in book arts, got inspiration from.

Killion's Present Work & Ideas for the Future of Cowell Press

Graalfs: What do you plan to print next?

Killion: Actually, it's just come to me, what I'm really involved in right now. It takes a while after you finish a big project. It's always taken me a while to find the next big project. The next project is a book on the trees of California in their landscape context. Not just individual, isolated trees. I have no idea what kind of text it's going to include, but I know it will make a beautiful letterpress book. When I finished the *The High Sierra*, I said, I don't think I'm going to do another letterpress book. But now I'm already

imagining this book on trees as a letterpress book. Maybe a vertical format, which works with trees. I think that's going to take the next ten years; it's a big series.

Graalfs: Lastly, concerning the continuation of Cowell Press, what do you think should be done there? How might it be structured?

Killion: Many good book arts programs have been developed in different parts of the country. Most of them eventually sputter out. They always seem to revolve around one person, and when that person moves, retires, or dies the program ends. Keeping that in mind, I think it would be wonderful if the Cowell Press didn't rely on one person for its inspiration. This would be experimental, and I think the days of experimentalism at UCSC are over, so it's probably not going to happen. The bureaucracy is pretty much a juggernaut there now. But if you could separate the Press from individuals wanting to control it . . . establish a committee of people from the outside who aren't academics. Rely on the Santa Cruz-based fine printers, for example the Printer's Chappel, in order to organize it as a very experimental thing. Maybe have one salary position assigned that is split between the people who teach. Have the oversight committee made up of one-third non-university people, one-third academics and professors, and one-third students who had already taken, say, a year of printing courses, who would rotate and be on the committee. The students could be lab assistants and the outside people — I'm thinking of the Printer's Chappel of Santa Cruz — would teach. Also, people could be brought in. There are a lot of people in the United States and Europe who would love to come and lecture if there was some kind of budget for lectures and accommodations. The program under George Kane hasn't changed in thirty years. It's not good enough for anybody to want it. The materials and equipment are old. It doesn't have a budget and it's lost between the cracks. George has kept it going, bless his heart. As long as he's there it's just going to stay that way. At least it still continues to function. But it's not a great

institution. Consequently it's not on a par with Mills College, or the University of Iowa, or some of the great book arts programs. The University of Utah has a strong program. And Cowell is certainly not like what Gabriel Rummonds was trying to do in Tuscaloosa twenty years ago. I think the programs that do persist do so because there's an institutional commitment to it as a major. Mills, where I've taught, works well. It also works because Kathy Walkup is just the right person to do it. She's very energetic, very involved, but she doesn't totally control it. She's a generous-spirited person.

Graalfs: Thank you.

Appendices

Historical Chronology of Cowell Press & Related Events

1965
Cowell College founded

1969
William Everson, poet and handpress printer, reads at Cowell College
Norman Strouse teaches history of the book

1973
Peter Manston teaches Letterpress Printing

1974
Jack Stauffacher begins teaching at Cowell Press

1975
*Mind, Tongue, and Han*d printed
Jack Stauffacher's last quarter
Granite and Cypress published. Printed at The Lime Kiln Press, worked on by many Cowell Press students

1977
Sherwood Grover begins teaching at Cowell Press

1978
Sherwood Grover's final quarter at Cowell Press

1979
George Kane begins teaching

1983
. . .the highest form of flattery. . . printed at Cowell Press

1986
Sherwood Grover dies July 30, Aptos, California
Exhibition of Cowell Press work at Eloise Pickard Smith Gallery, Cowell College

1994
William Everson dies June 2, 1994

1998 & 1999
Felicia Rice teaches for Porter College at Cowell Press

1999
Exhibition of printing from Cowell Press at Eloise Pickard Smith Gallery: *Cowell Press Broadsides Through the Years*

2002
Interpreting the Words: 30 Years of Work from the Cowell Press, exhibition held at McHenry Library, October 1 to December 20, 2002

2004
Fateful Attractions: Fine Printing and Bookmaking in Santa Cruz, exhibition including works from Cowell Press and alumni of the Press, as well as other printers from Santa Cruz shown at The San Francisco Center for the Book, March 5 to June 4, 2004
George Kane retires from teaching at Cowell Press
Paul Ritscher begins teaching at Cowell Press

Selected Bibliography of Cowell Press, 1974 to 2002

Letter to a Reader
Written by Thomas Carlyle
Printed by Joylene K. Harvey
The Cowell Press, 1974

A Movement
Excerpts from Joseph Conrad
Printed by Gregory Graalfs
The Cowell Press, 1974

Exhibition Catalogue: Bulmer & Bensley
Written and Printed by Jim Faris
Senior Thesis Project
The Cowell Press, 1974

Seven Watermelon Suns
Selected Poems by Richard Brautigan
Printed and Illustrated by Ellen Meske
The Cowell Press, 1974

A Dispersal
Written by William Carlos Williams
Printed by Thomas Whitridge
The Cowell Press, 1974

Evicting the Household Gods & Other Essays
Written by Jasper Rose
Illustrated by Jean Rose
Printed by SB Master & Jim Faris
The Cowell Press, 1974

Stage Exits
Written and Printed by Richard Bigus
The Cowell Press, 1974

Alliterate Beasts for Children
Written, Illustrated, and Printed by Peggy Gotthold
The Cowell Press, 1974

Evicting the Household Gods & Other Essays
Essays by Jasper Rose
Illustration by Jean Rose
Designed and printed by SB Master and Jim Faris
The Cowell Press, 1974

Chamber Music
Written by James Joyce
Designed and Printed by SB Master
The Cowell Press, 1975

Meditations on Michelangelo
Photography by Matthew Foley
Written and Printed by Matthew Foley
The Cowell Press, 1975

Exhibition Catalogue: Aristide Maillol
Written and Printed by Gregory Graalfs
Senior Thesis Project
The Cowell Press, 1976

Mind, Tongue, and Hand.
Pieces Printed by:
Victoria Brown
Maureen Carey
Pamela Erbe
Gregory Graalfs
Melinda Hodges
Thomas Killion
Hope W. Kingsley
SB Master
Everett Proctor
Felicia Rice
Massie Tice
Donald Webber
The Cowell Press, 1975

The Dwarf: A Short History of a Short Man
Written and Printed by Peter Thomas
The Cowell Press, 1976

The Sea: Ten broadsides of literature detailing experiences of the sea
Report to Greco by Nikos Kazantzakis
Designed and printed by Gregory Graalfs
Cowell Press, 1976

Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking
Poems of Walt Whitman
Designed and printed by Richard Bigus
Labyrinth Editions (printed at The Cowell Press), 1978

Electra
Written by Sophocles
Printed by Ruth McGurk
The Cowell Press, 1979

Exhibition Catalogue: A Short History of Book Illustration
Written and Printed by Ruth McGurk
Senior Thesis Project
The Cowell Press, 1980

A Chorus Line
Printed by Teri Klonsky, 1980

Eloise the Aviatrix Visits the Alumverts
Written and Printed by Ruth McGurk
The Cowell Press, 1980

… the highest form of flattery…
Designed by Adrian Wilson
Written by Adrian Wilson and Joyce Lancaster Wilson
Printed by Felicia Rice with Nick Zacherson
The Cowell Press, 1982

Tao Te Ching: Chapter 8
Illustrated and Printed by Aaron Johnson
The Cowell Press, 1982

The Dream of the Open Box
Printed by Samuel Amico, 1982

lennon & mccartney revisited
Printed by Dave Barber, 1983

Meat (La carne)
Written by Virgilio Pinera
Translated and Printed by Jess Grant
Pooder Press (at The Cowell Press), 1984

Temptation
Printed by Christian Stralton, 1989

The Flood
Printed by Julia Machotka, 1990

The Sugar Water Way
Printed by Patizio Pellouchond, 1991

The Broken Places Autoneurotica
Printed by Callie Janoff, 1992

Ain't I a Woman
Printed Desire Delara, 1993

Easter
Printed and Illustrated by Elin Christopherson, 1995

Cozy Fear
Printed by Genevieve Munsey, 1995

Shoes
Written and Printed by Kim O'Keefe, 1996

Wapanand
Printed by Little Pearl, 1996

Cannibal Ants
Written, Printed, and Illustrated by Ruth McGurk
The Cowell Press, 1996

Dune
Printed by Jessica Curtaz, 1997

Myth of Sisyphus
Printed by Amy-Geene Williamson, 1998

World of Music
Printed by David McAllester, 1998

Manners for Women
Printed by Mia Michelle Cardinell, 1999

Mad Song
Printed by Lauri Chen, 1999

Elemental Particles
Printed by Asia Seltzer, 2002

Selected Works of The Lime Kiln Press

West to the Water: Six Poets: A Santa Cruz Portfolio
The Lime Kiln Press, 1972

Granite and Cypress
Poems by Robinson Jeffers
Designed by William Everson
Printed by William Everson and his students
The Lime Kiln Press, 1975

American Bard
Preface to the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman
Designed by William Everson
Printed by William Everson and his students
The Lime Kiln Press, 1981

Selected Bibliography of Former Students Interviewed

Group:
A Canticle to the Waterbirds
Poem by William Everson
Designed and printed by Felicia Rice and Gary Young
Illustration by Daniel O. Stolpe
Paper by Peter Thomas
Binding by Maureen Carey
Alcatraz Editions, 1992

Aaron Johnson:

The Tree
Written by John Fowles
Printed and Illustrated by Aaron Johnson
Yolla Bolly Press, 1995

Tom Killion:

Fortress Marin : An Aesthetic and Historical Description of the Coastal Fortifications of Southern Marin County
Quail Press, 1977.

The Coast of California : Point Reyes to Point Sur
Quail Press, 1979.

Walls: A Journey Across Three Continents
Quail Press, 1990.

The High Sierra of California
With excerpts from the Sierra Journals of Gary Snyder and John Muir
Edited by Tom Killion
Quail Press, 2000

Felicia Rice:

De Amor Oscuro (Of Dark Love)
Poem by Francisco X. Alarcón
Illustration by Ray Rice
Moving Parts Press, 1991

Meidosems: poems and lithographs by Henri Michaux; translation by Elizabeth R. Jackson.
Moving Parts Press, 1992.

Tallos de Luna = Moon Shoots
by Elba Rosario Sánchez and drawings by Robert Chiarito
Moving Parts Press, 1992.

7 of VII: A Typographic Response to Performance
To the Gamelan Dance Drama, The Eight-Sided Diamond Case, directed by Kathy Foley
Produced and conceived by Jennifer Hanks and Mike Camponovo
Work lead by printer Felicia Rice
Moving Parts Press, 1993

Lenguas Sueltas: Poemas
by Elba Rosario Sánchez y otras
Moving Parts Press, 1994

Codex Espangliensis: from Columbus to the Border Patrol
Poems and text by Guillermo Gómez-Peña
Illustrations by Enrique Chagoya
Arranged and printed by Felicia Rice
Moving Parts Press, 1998

Foolscap:

Phisicke Against Fortune
Translated by Thomas Twyne
Illustrated by Hans Weiditz

Introduction by Lewis W. Spitz
Essay by William M. Ivins, Jr.
Foolscap Press, 1993

Desert Dreams
by Lawrence G. Van Velzer and illustrated by Peggy Gotthold
Foolscap Press, 1997

The Tower of the Winds
Text by Lawrence G. Van Velzer & Peggy Gotthold
Foolscap Press, 2002

Index

Gregory Graalfs, who conducted these interviews and was the primary editor of this volume, is presently the West Coast sales representative for a Michigan-based book manufacturing company. Throughout his career he has worked in print production, design, and design management. He has taught typography and book history at Massachusetts College of Art and for UCSC Extension. In addition, he has written several articles on the book arts. In 2002 he curated an anniversary exhibition of Cowell Press work for the McHenry Library, UC Santa Cruz and, following, *Fateful Attractions: Fine Printing & Bookmaking in Santa Cruz* at the San Francisco Center for the Book in the spring of 2004. He is currently developing ideas for a history of bookmaking and fine printers of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Irene Reti, who co-edited this volume, was born in Los Angeles and moved to Santa Cruz in 1978. She received her B.A. in Environmental Studies from UCSC in 1982, and her M.A. in History from UCSC in 2004. She is also a writer and the publisher of HerBooks feminist press. She had the pleasure of studying letterpress printing briefly with Felicia Rice in the 1980s. Reti has worked for the Regional History Project since 1989 and is now the Project's director.

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