

## **“It’s Right the Way It Is”: Printing at Black Mountain College**

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**“It’s Right the Way It Is”  
Printing at Black Mountain College**

Philip Blocklyn

*Limited means, which are voluntarily accepted, encourage a cheerful and imaginative resourcefulness.* — M. C. Richards

**1936-1941**

*The form in which to enclose the freedom*

Josef Albers brought a font of Bodoni, his personal favorite, with him from Bauhaus on his way to Black Mountain College, where he would, among other responsibilities, begin supervising the college’s printing program. Without a press of its own, however, the college relied on the office typewriter for the first preliminary announcements and more generally on Biltmore Press, Asheville’s leading commercial job printer, for its first years’ issues of bulletins, catalogs, and educational statements. But for the purposes of his students’ education, and for the second-tier job printing of administrative forms and stationery, publicity flyers and brochures, programs and announcements for musical and dramatic presentations, Albers needed a press.<sup>1</sup>

He set Alexander (Xanti) Schawinsky on the hunt for one. Schawinsky, a faculty instructor in art for the college’s 1936-37 academic year, struck up that fall a brief correspondence with Robert Leslie, co-editor of *PM: An intimate journal for advertising production managers, art directors and their associates*. At the top of Schawinsky’s want list was the availability of a press at no or low cost for the college, specifically to allow students to “make some fundamental studies on a printing press.” Leslie, whose own business depended on donations of paper stock and highly discounted rates for typesetting and press work, offered “by freight, collect, a complete type cabinet with cases of type resurrected from the Brooklyn Ethical Culture School.” Somehow, the Washington hand press also on loan to the school had been lost, but Leslie did have on hand an alternate press, available for \$100. If the college could chip in \$40, Leslie would be good for the balance.<sup>2</sup>

Schawinsky never wrote to confirm closing on Leslie's deal for a press, admitting instead to needing some instruction on its operation as he was unfamiliar with the workings of American models. He was as well noncommittal as to whether he could come to New York or in any other way help facilitate the press's delivery to Black Mountain. He did, however, thank Leslie profusely on the type cases' arrival, describing the contents as "the Bodoni family" and "the bigger Roman and the cursive." Beyond that, the cases appeared to be anything but complete, as Schawinsky asked Leslie whether a foundry might be available to produce Bodoni capitals (missing from the cases) as well as "some parts of the smaller types."<sup>3</sup>

In any event, a press awaited Emil Willimetz who, arriving as a student at the college in 1937, found himself at work in the print shop in Lee Hall. In a 1971 interview, he remembered "an old Washington hand press...an old flat-bed hand press that you cranked the bed under it and then a big handle and it would come down. We used that for etchings. We didn't use it for printing. And we probably got that from New York. I remember that." For letterpress, he and fellow student David Jacques Way finagled a deal with Way's father, who had access to a press in Montana. For "sixty bucks ... and a hundred and some dollars to air freight in from Montana," Willimetz would receive



Figure 1. Emil Willimetz in the print shop at Lee Hall (courtesy Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina)

"an old Chandler Price foot powered thing, a foot pedal." If he could raise the money, Way in turn would help him with editorial chores on a to-be-dreamed-of college magazine. Willimetz was hazy on how the funds materialized, thinking that perhaps Stephen Forbes, "this wealthy boy from Massachusetts," might have put up the money.<sup>4</sup> In any event, the college had its presses<sup>5</sup>—and its Bodoni type.

Willimetz made no mention of Schawinsky or Leslie and may have known nothing about their deal for type. Instead, he confirmed that "Albers had one font of the Bodoni type that he brought from Germany with him. And because he thought Bodoni

was one of the best type faces. But it was only one font.”<sup>6</sup> However he remembered it, Willimetz operated the college print shop with undeniably limited resources:

*We put out our first program by printing one paragraph and then tearing it all down and putting it back in the box. And setting up the next paragraph and printing that. We printed three times this one page.*

Willimetz, who called Josef Albers “probably the world’s greatest teacher of art,” struggled as well with Albers’ criticism of his printed productions:

*I would come in with some of my printing. You know, a very complicated program, or something, that took me days of setting up in a chase, with type and lead and everything. And he would look at it and he would say, “Hmmm. Now ask me. Now ask me. Is this right? And then we would ask him if this was right. And of course it wasn’t. And then he’d say, “Mr. Willimetz, I believe in the tausends technique. The tausends technique. You do a tausend and then you can see which one is right.” And then I’d say, “Mr. Albers, that’s all right with a pencil, but with a press, you know...*

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The college’s catalogs and newsletters for this period reported on the development of the print shop. The 1936-1937 catalog accounted for one “small hand press,” while in the following year the shop operated “two hand presses, with several type fonts and complete accessories.” By 1939-1940, the shop was producing “most of the smaller publications of the college. This work affords opportunity for the study of modern typography.” The fall term’s November newsletter reported that “Emil Willimetz is the student in charge of the print shop. Other students are working with him under the guidance of Mr Albers.”<sup>8</sup>

In the summer of 1938, Willimetz and Way temporarily moved the Chandler press from Lee Hall to the nearby, college-owned Lake Eden Inn, where they set up

Grafix, a commercial, for-profit press, in the resort's gatehouse. An undated printed advertisement laid out the business's rationale:

*Under the name Grafix several members of the community of Black Mountain College are operating a print shop and bookbindery. Our primary object is further research into the graphics arts. After a thorough apprenticeship we have decided to go into the commercial field. We are now in the position to offer a distinctive service to users of printing and binding. We are careful and efficient workmen, capable of giving service on jobs ranging from calling-cards to small books completely bound. We have found that only by treating each job as a new problem can we expect to profit as we wish to from commercial work. We feel justified in saying that we often find it more difficult to satisfy our own high standards than those of our customers.*

*We believe that there can be no real beauty in the graphic arts until the functional needs of the copy have been met.*

*In printing we use clear, legible typefaces which do not deny the geometric beauty of letter forms. Special attention is given the use of space. In design, space is as important as type mass. Typography to us is an art which has not been realized to its full extent commercially.*

*In binding our interest lies in the unity of the individual book. Each book presents a problem in the relation of binding to content and typography. In order to fulfill the greater demands of this kind of binding we have gone deeply into research for new materials and processes. Out of this research we have developed successful combinations original with ourselves.*

*The Grafix printshop and bindery is not interested in competitive prices. Each job is priced with regard to regular printing and binding standards.*

*Our shops are located for the summer at Lake Eden Inn which is owned and operated by Black Mountain College.<sup>9</sup>*

Barbara Hill Steinau remembers working that summer as waitstaff and housekeeper at Lake Eden Inn. She had time as well to learn some bookbinding<sup>10</sup>, at least enough to help out Willimetz and Way, who had taken on the printing of their patron Stephen Forbes's college graduation paper. Before returning to Lee Hall for the fall 1938 term, the three of them had the thesis printed and bound.<sup>11</sup>

Otherwise, work at Lake Eden involved very typical, small-shop job printing: directional and door signage (*Do Not Disturb*), meal and bath cards, business cards, staff stationery, and menus. To supplement their income from printing, and to offset the room and board which Lake Eden charged them, Willimetz and Way subbed as waitstaff, lifeguards, and dishwashers. Accounting was sketchy, but the final (positive) balance for Grafix at summer's end amounted to \$2.50.<sup>12</sup>

During the 1940 spring term, Viennese photographer and typographer Robert Haas visited the college to conduct a "photographic study of community life and of the dramatic productions for the college." He produced as well a photographic survey of the printing and folding of programs and invitations for the college's first Visitors Week.<sup>13</sup> His work included the layout and printing of the program for the May 1940 production of *Macbeth*. As Willimetz recalled:

Emil Willimetz: He made his own paper and designed his own type.

Mary Emma Harris: Yeah. That wasn't Bodoni.

Willimetz: That was printed on firecracker red paper.

Harris: That was a handsome program.

Willimetz: That was his design.<sup>14</sup>

Willimetz corroborated the narrative of his 1971 interview, with some elaboration, in *Gingo: The Making of a Rebel*, his 2003 autobiography.<sup>15</sup> He writes that Stephen Forbes' financial support for the Chandler Price press was, as well, a "job advance" on *Musical Scales*, which Grafix printed "half a page at a time" due to limited type. He credits David Way with the college print shop's set-up and early operations. Way mounted the press, installed a ¼ horsepower motor to bypass the foot treadle, and dealt

personally with the chronic misfeeds that on one occasion snatched a bolt of hair from his head. After Way left Black Mountain College, the magazine he had envisioned “to showcase our sterling writing” failed to materialize.<sup>16</sup> Instead, the print shop, as Willimetz remembers, “became for me a haven.”

*I would save up work, especially longer print runs, for the times I was restless or depressed. The only problem was that it became known that I worked late, and all kinds of lonely, unhappy, or sleepless friends would come to join me. Frequently, on Saturday nights after dancing, there would be personal little parties in the studies, so anyone feeling left out might end up with me in the basement.*

After Willimetz left Black Mountain College, Betty Brett and Wilfred (Will) Hamlin assumed most print shop duties. In her student journal Brett describes “a week of printing, of evening occupations, and late bedtimes” for the first week of November 1940, during which she was also covering the college visit of poet and novelist May Sarton for the *Asheville Citizen*. Her Friday journal entry provides a hurried summary: “Finished the story. Newsletter meeting. Started printing. All afternoon. Evening local politics meeting.” By Sunday she was laying out a decidedly unromantic look at student labor in the Lee Hall print shop:

*Too dizzy to get breakfast and so missed lunch. Printshop standing without food and on top coughing almost whooshed until I got some proper ventilation. That horrible steam and then the cold draft only for air. Worked all day. Trotting around the back yard in my apron to get Larry’s approval. Understand what Emil [Willimetz] felt. That day when I came running down from the mountain when he had been in the shop all Sunday. Tired and dull. Yet it must be slow careful work, impossible to force. Roy’s that night with a Sarton bunch and printing after I came home to one. Thin spaces kept falling out so I couldn’t even get first run so it would be dry. Finally washed up with a sploosh and went to bed.*

*Responsibility is so funny. No matter how much I wanted to there was the discipline of not failing. But it would [be] horrible if everything were like that. I wanted not to wash off or clean up. It seemed too much. Just turn out the light and go until tomorrow. And I couldn't be what the he the hell with the thin spaces or all the type might have fallen.*

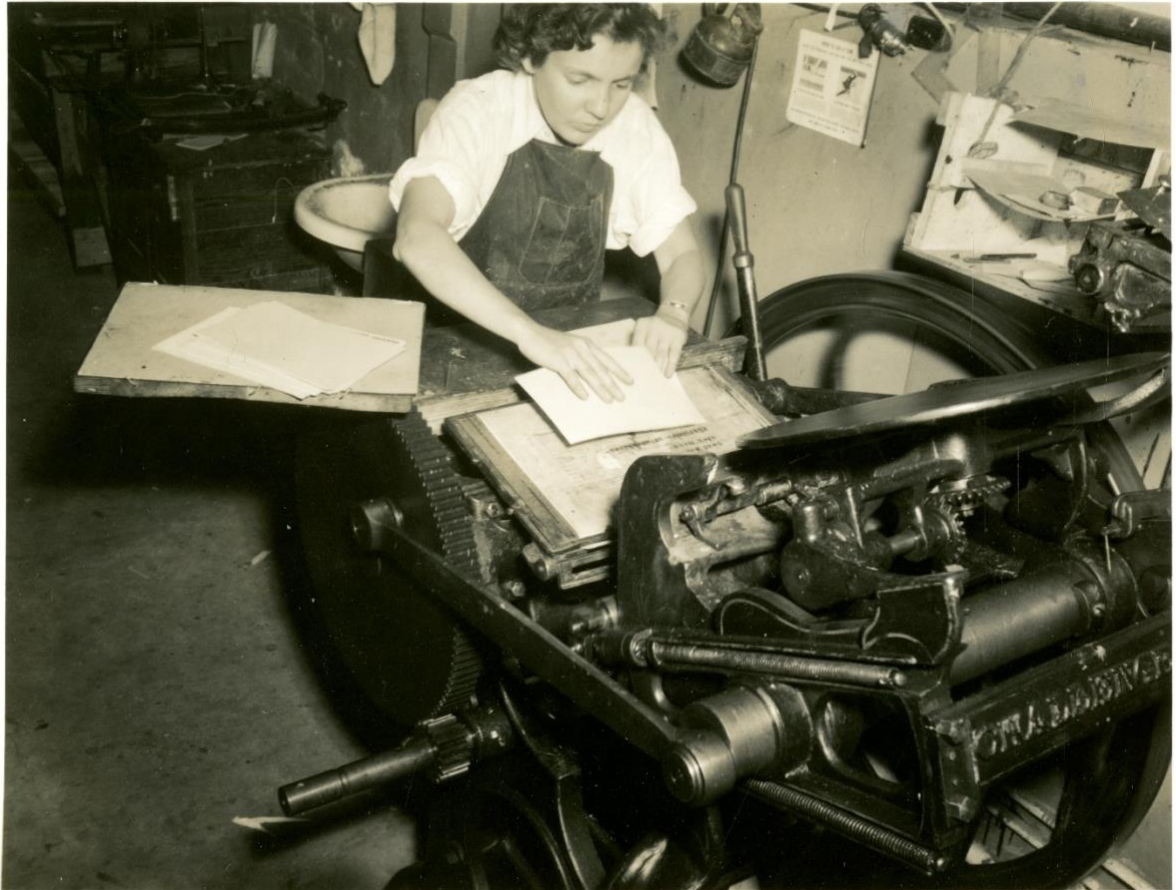


Figure 2. Betty Brett on Chandler & Price's Challenge Gordon press (courtesy Western Regional Archives)

That evening, after dealing with the “horrible ink under nails and bedraggleding of so many days,” she attended the reading of the “Sarton homage poem,” which asks Black Mountain College students to learn “the form in which to enclose the freedom and make it live.”<sup>17</sup>

The print job to which Brett devoted a week of distracted student life was a program for the college’s Saturday evening drama series. Her journal entry for November 8 reads: “The play’s tomorrow night. Outward Bound (for history’s sake) . . .



I'm so glad the programs are done." Her program appears, mostly obscured, in *Printing Exhibit*, a photograph featuring the print shop's programs for Edward Steuermann's Beethoven piano recital (November 1939); Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman* (December 1939); *Macbeth* and *Ah, Wilderness* (May 1940); a Yella Pessl harpsichord recital (April 1941); and *Let Me Have Air* (May 1941).<sup>18</sup>

Other print shop contributors at this time included Robert Sunley, who with David Way in May 1941 collaboratively printed what may well have been the last job run through the Chandler Price at Lee Hall.<sup>19</sup> The college was about to move, just when its presswork was beginning to receive some modest attention. That spring term's final newsletter represented something of a good news-bad news moment for the print shop in its announcement that "the programs for Black Mountain College plays for the last two years...won a first prize at the festival tournament of the Carolina Dramatic Association at Chapel Hill." Unfortunately, the editors noted that "much built-in equipment in Lee Hall will have to be removed, as will such cumbersome items as the looms and the printing shop presses and type cases"—all in anticipation of the college's move to its Lake Eden campus for the 1941 fall term.<sup>20</sup>

The cumbersome looms reappeared that fall by Lake Eden. The Chandler Price press, the Bodoni type cases, furniture, forms, and accessories, were not moved until the very last days of the year, when Betty Brett "rode in the Chevey [*sic*] dump truck over to Blue Ridge to get the press." The next day:

*I helped John Campbell put the big heavy parts of the press back together, cleaned the print shop so there will not be such an invidious comparison between it and the neat loom room, and held up my own in a conversation with Juppi – re print shop "rights" etc, compromise for crowdingness.*<sup>21</sup>

That was December 4, Betty Brett's last extant journal entry. When classes resumed for the spring 1942 term after United States entry into World War II, activity at the print shop did not.

## **1945-1956**

### *What have you?*

During World War II, there appears to have been no active printing program on campus. The college was consumed with finishing its Studies Building, renovating old spaces for workshops and laboratories, and constructing new ones for housing, dormitories, and farm buildings, while both enrollment and income fell off steeply. Musical and dramatic performances continued, but only a handful of programs were commercially printed. Two programs for children's performances by the college players at Asheville's Plaza Theatre were commercial letterpress jobs, and one explicitly read: "The posters and program and special make-ups were created by Carol Ostrow." Otherwise, programs from these years were typewritten mimeographs. Their production, if limited typographically, avoided the challenges of scarce sorts and strips that Willimetz and Brett endured, and in at least one case (a concert program for 22 May 1943) managed to maintain the Albersian strategies of *mise-en-page* asymmetry and tension.<sup>22</sup>

BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE CONCERT

On March 11, 1787, between the finished  
"Figaro" and the not yet begun "Don Giovanni" WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART  
(1756-1791) wrote down an unusual piece for  
piano, unusual in its content as in its  
form, the RONDO IN A MINOR FOR PIANO  
(No 511 in Ritter von Koechel's complete  
catalogue of Mozart's works)  
played by Frederic Cohen

From the tragic mood of this rondo's  
last page it is a short way to the

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) of the year 1802. Following the advice  
of his physician Dr. Schmidt to spare  
his hearing as much as possible  
Beethoven moved to the village of  
Heiligenstadt, near Vienna. Ferdinand  
Ries, his piano pupil during 1802 reports:  
"He lived much in the country whither I  
went often to take a lesson from him.  
At times, after breakfast he would say  
"Let us take a short walk." We went and  
frequently did not return till 3 or 4  
o'clock, after having made some meal in  
some village. On one of these wanderings  
Beethoven gave me the first striking  
proof of his loss of hearing, concern-  
ing which St. von Breuning had already  
spoken to me. I called his attention  
to a shepherd who was piping very agreeably  
in the woods on a flute made of a twig  
of elder. For half an hour Beethoven  
could hear nothing, and though I assured  
him that it was the same with me (which  
was not the case), he became extremely  
quiet and morose. When occasionally he  
seemed to be merry it was generally to  
the extreme of boisterousness; but this  
happened seldom."

At the end of this country stay in the  
dark hour of realization that his af-  
fliction was incurable Beethoven  
wrote his will--

read by Kenneth Kurtz

THE HEILIGENSTAEDTER TESTAMENT

Notwithstanding this deep crisis  
Beethoven composed during 1802 among  
other works his second symphony, the  
Eroica variations for piano, three  
piano sonatas op. 31 and three piano  
and violin sonatas op. 30, dedicated  
to Csar Alexander I of Russia, the  
second of which concludes this program.

Figure 3. Concert program for 22 May 1943, mimeograph (courtesy Western Regional Archives)

Along with mimeographed performance programs and announcements, another constant of the war years was the *Community Bulletin*, issued weekly (more or less), from 1942 to the close of 1946. Featuring newsy, unattributed, and serviceable information on classes, work crews, schedules, and programming, the bulletin changed little over the years—in format or content—until the very end, when M. C. Richards took on the editing (at-large) of its last three issues. She promised “something of a change from the past [to] extend the scope from news coverage to feature material. All work will be signed. These pages are open to your news reports, articles, exhortations, illustrations, creative writing, and what have you. That’s the question: what have you? M.C.R.”<sup>23</sup>

That question encouraged “certain changes in tone, treatise and typography” in the following issue—*Community Bulletin November 1946*—a 12-page mimeograph whose last page presented, in letterpress, poems by Richard Sherman, Sylvia Girsh, and M. C. Richards.<sup>24</sup> Sherman and Girsh were members of Richards’ Creative Writing Group, which recently had expressed “hopes to try to print a piece of creative work.”<sup>25</sup> Their presence in the *Community Bulletin* demonstrated a shift from the printing of programs and publicity to the publication of student literary work. The sheet of poetry, printed explicitly by students James Tite and Harry Weitzer, may represent as well the first job printed at the Lake Eden campus, although Weitzer remembers the program for the 1946 Thanksgiving intramural football game, between the Prehistoric Specimens and the Modern Neurotics, as the new print shop’s inaugural effort.<sup>26</sup> An even earlier candidate might be the program for the 15 June 1946 performance of the Brahms *Requiem*, presented *in memoriam Heinrich Jalowetz*. Tite, Weitzer, and Ann Meyer, who all played their roles in the new print shop, were members of the chorus that performed that day.



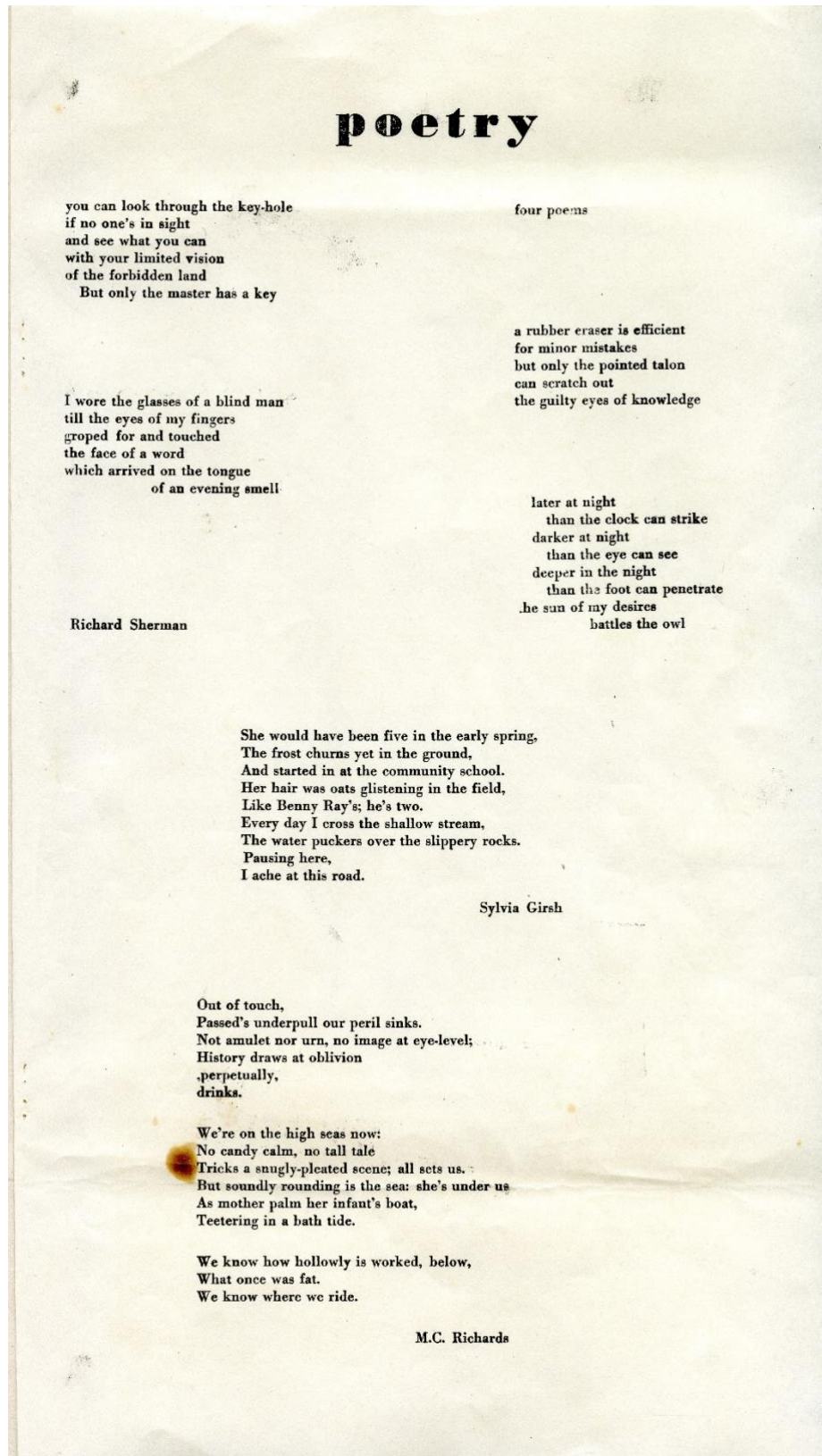


Figure 4. Community Bulletin, November 1946, page 12 (courtesy Western Regional Archives)

The print shop was back because James Tite, enrolling at Black Mountain College for the fall 1945 term on the GI Bill, found type cases and printing accessories in storage in a back room of Mary Gregory's woodworking shop. Leaning against a shop wall was Willimetz and Way's Chandler Price press, which Tite identified as a Challenge Gordon (the original model that Chandler and Price reissued): "a squat, cast-iron, hand-fed, foot-pedal-operated printing press, an antique even in 1945." Harry Weitzer remembers that "all the type was Bodoni, which was part of the Albers mystique." With the approval of Theodore Rondthaler and Bill Levi, and the assistance of Weitzer and Ann Mayer, Tite put the print shop back online, working to clean the shop, distribute type, oil the press, replace its platen bearings, and at some later point install a motor from "a defunct faculty Kelvinator." He also made several trips to Asheville, "to stand admiringly behind a local job printer, peppering him with questions while he worked." Weitzer, Tite's "excellent co-teacher, graduating from the ranks of my first class," joined Tite for the pre-Kelvinator days, when "we printed programs for concerts and plays, all in Bodoni Bold, hand feeding and foot pumping the press. We learned a lot about printing, self-taught, the Black Mountain way."<sup>27</sup>

At this point, Tite approached Rondthaler and Levi again, this time to start up "a course in the Practice of Printing...with me as co-teacher with Ann." Tite worked as a student-teacher in the print shop from spring term 1947 through summer session 1948, supervising classes with as many as twelve students, "all of us working toward the goal of providing all of the College's printing needs to save money." He soon wrangled "a handsome Kluge platen press" unused as government surplus from Asheville's VA hospital. Around the same time, he received as a gift from Robert Haas a complete font of Futura type. By the 1947 fall term the shop had expanded by enclosing a neighboring open-air lumber shed "for the growing interest in typesetting and bookmaking." The shop under Tite, Weitzer, and Mayer began producing letterheads, bulletins, concert programs, "you name it."<sup>28</sup>

The Kluge press must have very quickly replaced the Chandler & Price. William Treichler, one of Tite's early students, provides a beginner's snapshot description of job printing on the federal government's castoff:

*Printing class was another activity that I enjoyed. Frank Rice and Jim Tite had fixed up a print shop where we could learn to set and justify type. We practiced picking pieces of type from a case and placing each one in a composing stick which holds the type pieces in alignment. Thin strips of copper or brass were placed between letters and word spacers to make each line equal in length. From the composing stick we learned to slide the type carefully onto a flat stone. When we had enough set for the job we placed a chase around it and locked the type tightly in place so all could be mounted in the press.*

*Jim and Frank showed us how to ink the rollers of the Kluge press and how to stand erect before the press and safely reach into the open press to remove the printed paper and place a fresh sheet against the clips before the press closed against the type bed. Jim Tite spent a lot of time in the shop printing brochures and forms for the college. The print shop used only two type faces: Bodoni, a serified type, and Futura, a non-serified type family.<sup>29</sup>*

The print shop saw a number of students working as shop supervisors, including Harry Weitzer (spring 1947), Harry Holl (1947-1948), and Warren (Pete) Jennerjahn (summer 1949), all of whom either had some previous experience in printing or learned the craft at the college.<sup>30</sup> Frank Rice, who had studied with Albers as a Black Mountain student and had worked as an advertising typographer, served as the faculty supervisor from fall 1947 through fall 1948. He came to the college primarily to teach German literature and (very grudgingly) to assist his mother Nell Rice in reorganizing the library during and after its move to new quarters in a WPA-funded building.<sup>31</sup> During his tenure, he insisted that the operation change its name from *print shop* to *printing shop*, claiming that “a print shop is where they sell prints.” But this never caught on.<sup>32</sup>

The students were able to print college bulletins and catalogs as well as administrative forms such as envelopes, questionnaires, course cards, postcard mailers, letterhead stationery, transcript forms, and programs for concerts and drama

productions. The various printings were charged to different department budgets, to show that the print shop was paying its way.<sup>33</sup> At least one college visitor, however, saw a greater potential for the shop:

*Anaïs Nin was particularly interested in the print shop, since she and her husband hand-set all of her works for years before they were sought by a commercial publisher. She believes that the influence upon writing would be for the best if every writer had to print some of his own works.*<sup>34</sup>

M.C. Richards recalled Nin's visit in a rather shorthand memory:

*We found a stash of type in an old building and gradually unscrambled and cleaned it. Anaïs Nin, who was printing her own books in NYC, came to help us set up our print shop and to talk to writing students.*<sup>35</sup>

One of those writing students was Sylvia Girsh, whose work, (as noted above) had earlier appeared with a Richards poem in the college *Community Bulletin*:

*For me, most intriguing of visitors was Anaïs Nin, on the scandalous side even then, a reputation enhanced by her relationship with the more notorious Henry Miller. What impressed me about Anaïs was her make-up: I had never seen anyone with such a painted face, not even on canvas. All pinks and lavenders with bold dark lines, it had the exaggeration of ballet stage make-up—not that I'd ever seen a ballet. In fact, I'd never heard of Anaïs Nin. As for Mr. Miller, forget it. I'm sure Wikipedia could tell you who portrayed Anaïs in the film *Henry and June*.*<sup>36</sup>

Weitzer remembered one job in particular about the time of the Nin visit:

*I was setting type for a small book of M.C. Richards' poetry, and realized that I didn't understand what she had written. The line went ...the way a*



man eats is political. *I set it aside and when I saw M.C. at lunch, I mentioned that there was some kind of typo in what she had given me. She cocked her head to port and with a smile said, "it's right the way it is."*<sup>37</sup>

Weitzer here refers to *Poems by Mary Caroline Richards*, which the Black Mountain College Print Shop printed in Futura types on onion paper and issued in December 1947 as an accordion fold in card covers sewn in the Japanese style. It was Richards' first book, in an edition of fifty copies.<sup>38</sup>

Jimmie Tite featured the print shop revival in "Experiment in education," *Bulletin Newsletter* 6, 4 (May 1948):

*The resurrection of the print shop, its recent expansion, and its new press are probably old news to most of you, but its original goals have not been forgotten. The people in the course are learning the printing processes so that they will be able to help with the college work as well as to see some of their own creative writing in print. The interest in such a course was so great at the beginning of the term, that we had to divide the class into two sections. Frank Rice meets with four people twice a week, and I have the Tuesday and Friday group. My own knowledge and interest in printing developed while here on the campus. In the beginning, there were only a few of us, and we started from scratch; we made a lot of mistakes, not serious ones, fortunately, but with patience and study we learned to avoid those mistakes, and I hope that we can help others avoid the same mistakes. Each new job, whether it's a concert program, letterhead, or bulletin, presents a different problem, and we go to work trying to solve it. It's pretty exciting to see the first sheet come off the press. It also teaches a person a lot about coordination and manual dexterity. I hope that eventually the shop will possess a Linotype machine.*<sup>39</sup>

From the 1947 spring term through the summer of 1949, the print shop assumed responsibility for printing much of the college's publication workload—particularly programs, bulletins, and bulletin supplements—with, in the case of M.C. Richards' writing class, forays into literary publication. Even then, there were exceptions, as some programs for the college's concert and summer film series were mimeographs, as was the final *Community Bulletin*, which insisted that

*THIS IS NOT A COMMUNITY BULLETIN. Any resemblance to a community bulletin, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. Furthermore, this is NOT Bodoni type.*<sup>40</sup>

Otherwise, printing at the college was now thoroughly rejuvenated, for the most part under student operation and limited faculty supervision. The college's 1948-1949 announcements bulletin described the strategy as "printing under the direction of student teachers":

*It is a part of the life here for people who are interested to get together... to experiment with printing at the college print shop... These things are not provided in advance; when they happen it is because the individuals who are here create them.*<sup>41</sup>

Pete Jennerjahn saw himself as one of these individuals when he took on the 1949 summer session workshop in printing. Jennerjahn, who learned to compose type and run a press as a sophomore at Milwaukee's Boys Technology and Trade School, remembered one meeting at the college:

*...it was said, you know, we, we need people to do these different jobs and we haven't had anyone to do printing for a long time. Is there anyone here who could handle a print shop? So I sat quietly waiting to see if any hands were raised and there weren't any. So I said, well—. I said, I've had printing as a sophomore in high school and I will do what I can. But*

*anyway, I got up there and, you know, checked out their type supply, which was meager and jumbled as you can expect. And that's what they call pie in the printing trade when you have to go and re-sort everything, redistribute. And the rollers they were, they were gelatin. And the mice had eaten. There were great big gouges on those rollers. So it took a little doing finally to get another couple fonts of type and get some fresh rollers and so forth.*<sup>42</sup>

The interview took place over fifty years after the events Jennerjahn described. He may have been thinking of the old Chandler Price, still at the print shop, rather than the more than serviceable Kluge. The print shop had not in fact been dormant for any appreciable period of time after 1946. In any event, he continued:

Jennerjahn: And so then while I was there I did all their, all the programs.

George Hofmann: Now were students studying

Jennerjahn: Students then studied with me to learn how to set type and, and, and I had students doing programs, printing up programs.

Hofmann: But, but, in, — in an artistic way.

Jennerjahn: Well, we used all the best knowledge we could. I mean we looked at good printing work, hand printing work of different people and were interested in spacing and general type design kinds of things. And then

Hofmann: So it was a part of their art training.

Jennerjahn: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And we did, we did a modest study of typefaces and so forth. So they were able to recognize different ones and call on different ones because of a certain mood that was required and that kind of thing.

Printing instruction at Black Mountain College, when not following Albers' *tausend* technique—you do a tausend and then you see which one is right—might have had as much in common with the tactics of a *kluge*: literally a cleverness, or using *all the best knowledge we could*.

Following Jennerjahn's summer session, John McCandless arrived in the fall of 1949 as shop superintendent and faculty instructor in printing through the 1950 fall term. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate in English from Franklin & Marshall College, McCandless had scraped together work as a reporter and rewrite editor for the *Chester [PA] Times*, contributed essays to *Politics*, *Pacifica Views*, *Approach*, and *Compass* magazines, and pursued some noncredit graduate work in the publications office at Pendle Hill, the Quaker study center near Swarthmore College. He had two years' experience in printing, most recently with the Libertarian Press, "a cooperative printing organization specializing in book and pamphlet work, where he work[ed] at planning, layout, composition, job prep, and press—that is, pretty much everything, including bookkeeping and clerical paperwork."<sup>43</sup> His professional references expressed as much bafflement with him as admiration. A job printer from Trenton wrote that he "would recommend him to anyone for any position in the printing industry because that seems to be his forte."<sup>44</sup> His city desk editor recognized that McCandless had "recently mastered the printing trade at some sacrifice to himself" and so was "exceptionally well qualified for your type of institution."<sup>45</sup>

At best McCandless had hoped for a part-time appointment, with other time available for farm work or teaching English composition and literature. Instead, he received a formal acceptance for a full year at \$130 a month (\$60 teaching stipend with allowances of \$20, \$40 and \$10 for household, spouse, and child, all in addition to room and board.) His friend Ray Trayer, the college farm manager, relayed the seemingly good news: "In a way, things still seem precarious; it's a long chance, but it will be good to have you."<sup>46</sup>

That spring, while still at the Libertarian Press and while still in the process of applying to the faculty, McCandless visited the college and prepared a *Report on the Printing Facilities of Black Mountain College*,<sup>47</sup> a four-page typescript survey of the print shop's building, equipment, and potential economic capacity. He describes a shop that

could accommodate three students and an instructor who could provide individual supervision. Of the shop's two presses, one—presumably the Kluge—was in excellent working condition, while the other—most likely the Chandler Price—remained unexamined and “standing in a corner, unused.” Type selection appeared to McCandless in need of “evaluation and weeding.” There was unsurprisingly plenty of Bodoni along with some Baskerville which he hopefully termed “quite similar,” although he did in fact suggest that it and other standard serif styles be returned for credit. “Type buying,” he decided, “would be immediately beneficial” in order to fill out Bodoni in the 8-10-12 point ranges, with additions as well in light, bold, and italic emphasis fonts. He recommended retention of the sans serif Futura and Vogue, and noted the “dire shortage of leads and slugs in standard sizes,” as well as a need for extra press rollers on hand, and a dry place to store them in a building whose rear wall lay against an earthen bank.

In all, McCandless saw a print shop whose perennial goal of self-sufficiency was not entirely unattainable. The latest college *Bulletin*,<sup>48</sup> which he rated a poor piece of commercial work, could have been printed in-house at considerable savings. The shop could buy its own linotype machine (as James Tite had suggested) and paper (provided there was a dry place to store it), or could dispense with linotype entirely by purchasing foundry type and promoting hand composition as an instructional activity. As for stepping from subsistence printing to commercial expansion:

*Present equipment and the addition of \$50-\$200 worth of purchases is enough for college printing and instruction. A great deal of capital expense would be indicated if the college looked to make the print shop viable as a commercial enterprise attracting outside work in order to defray college financial expenses. Ordinary job printing locally would then not be out of the question but would be a public relations issue vis-à-vis local printers. Needed would be greater type selection and better paper storage. However, expansion into the academic market of pamphlet and book work, would require a capital fund of several thousand dollars for an automatic press, paper cutter, power saw, folder and stitcher.*

From the start, McCandless wanted to set up an accounting system for the print shop. “You see I have learned from my past experiences!” he told Trayer before leaving for Black Mountain. “Otherwise, there is liable to be all kinds of waste.”<sup>49</sup> In the spring of 1950, for instance, McCandless undertook a cost report of the 1950-1951 college catalog, itemizing paper, cover stock, linotype, printing, and stapling for a total of \$259.23. “I believe this compares with a cost of \$300 to Biltmore press last year,” referring the 1949-1950 catalog which he had already described as a poor and costly piece of commercial work. He provided costs as well for the Summer Session Bulletin Supplement (\$49) and for “envelopes for mailing publicity pieces” that included announcements and Hazel Larsen’s *View Book* (printed commercially but distributed by mail from the college).<sup>50</sup> Even after the close of his last term in fall 1950, McCandless provided a final accounting of the shop’s not always dry paper cabinet stocks for text, cards, and envelopes, indicating that the shop paid for all stocks on hand not otherwise donated or funded by the college’s publicity committee.<sup>51</sup>

Although actively involved in the operation of the print shop, McCandless left a light mark on jobs the print shop produced. His only explicitly attributed work may be the program for a 4 June 1950 performance of *The Death of Cuchulain*, directed by M. C. Richards.<sup>52</sup> Fielding Dawson remembered McCandless simply as “the printer” and acknowledged his work as faculty instructor in the print shop:

*...he taught me how to set type, by hand, and to print—I’d learned at home but John taught me so I could do it on my own—those little pamphlets I did there, of my own poems, in 1950 and ’51, that sell for over a hundred dollars each, and were done in that little print shop, and as I write, I’m standing beside John McCandless, tall, too thin man (angry and anxious about being ignored), and we gaze along the reverse side of the page, looking for too deep an impression, from the bite of the small rows of 10 point Futura, locked into their frame, in the handpress.*<sup>53</sup>

The college's important publications of his tenure appear to have gone on without him. Hazel Larsen's *Photographic Viewbook* (1950), designed by Larsen and Ruth Asawa in promotion of the Black Mountain campus, courses of study, community, and work, was printed commercially, most likely by Asheville's Biltmore Press. It was left to McCandless to print the mailing envelopes. Larsen and her photography class collaborated on a second publication, *Five Photographers* (1950), incorporating the photographs and accompanying artist statements of Larsen, Nick Cernovich, Andrew Oates, Vernon Phillips, and Stan VanDerBeek. Although printed in McCandless's shop, the text was not handset but linotyped (again probably at Biltmore Press) and the cover lettered by hand. The photographs were original prints, although Larsen wrote that "we wish to explore the processes of reproduction in the hope of finding a fine reproductive method."<sup>54</sup> Larsen's third collaboration involved her work with Alex Kemeny and lead editor M. C. Richards on *The Black Mountain College Review*, with contributions from Nick Cernovich, Fielding Dawson, Russell Edson, Mary Fitton, and Natasha Goldowski. The *Review*, printed and issued at the end of the 1951 spring term, finally fulfilled the college's hopes of publishing a literary journal, an ambition first raised in the days of Willimetz and Way.<sup>55</sup> By then, McCandless had already left the college.

Hazel Larsen and M. C. Richards both looked toward developing the print shop's capacity to produce in synthesis collections of original student and faculty work printed at Black Mountain College, with the intent to publish serially if not periodically. Richards was the first instructor to bring her poems and the poems of her students onto the same page, "to try to print a piece of creative work." What began with a very small step in the November 1946 *Community Bulletin* appeared in full form as the *Black Mountain College Review* of June 1951. Larsen in turn saw *Five Photographers* as a first-person plural magazine advocating for photography's position in the college's regular curriculum and issued with the intention to pursue a topical series of her students' photographic concerns.

*We hope this magazine will grow not by our asking you to contribute an article or a photograph but by your desire to do so. We hope that you will see enough in the magazine that you will want to do so.*

*This issue has been devoted to the photography done at Black Mountain College; it is our starting point and the photography to which we are the closest. It is the work of four students and the photography instructor. The articles are not great essays but the result of trying to put our thoughts in order. Among ourselves we still disagree on some of the viewpoints and broad statements represented; if you do not agree with us we welcome your attempt to convince us otherwise.*

*Our aims and desires are as simple as that. Perhaps we are walking in shoes too big for our feet, but we believe it is a step in the right direction.<sup>56</sup>*

Neither series progressed beyond the first issue. Richards may have assembled the manuscripts for a second issue and perhaps even set their texts in type. Yet, after the 1951 summer session, she took a leave of absence and never returned as an instructor.<sup>57</sup> Larsen remained for a couple more years, but may never have put together the funds to continue. Linotype at Biltmore Press was a luxury, given the college budget, and photographic reproduction lay beyond the capacity of the college press.<sup>58</sup>

After McCandless's departure, the college invited Joseph Blumenthal of New York's Spiral Press to visit for a look at the print shop's capacities and potentialities. He apparently wasn't impressed, dismissing the work of "students who were satisfied with seeing their work in print and not really interested in the systematic study of papers and inks necessary to learn fine printing." He advised the college to offer "a modest but carefully articulated Graphic Arts program,"<sup>59</sup> which sounded not much like Black Mountain College but which Wesley Huss tried to make the most of as he summarized Blumenthal's visit:



*...our advantage lay in a unification of the book-bindery, the silk screen and linoleum block shop, and the print shop—and as much or more the hand press there, and the opportunity of working slowly and purposefully on fine paper and with choice of inks, rather than on the machine presses, So we shall move out this way...*<sup>60</sup>

Working slowly and purposefully on fine paper with choice of inks suited the mission of the Spiral Press, which in 1951 provided fine press work for the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Avalon Foundation, the Typophiles, Freedom House, the Pierpont Morgan Library, Steuben Glass, and the Royal Egyptian Embassy.<sup>61</sup> But printing at Black Mountain College took a different turn. Beginning as early as 1949, the print shop was breaking into a small constellation of student presses printing the poetry and art of the college community primarily in broadside and single-fold formats. These included the variously named Black Mountain College Print Shop (Fielding Dawson), Black Mountain College Press (Larry Hatt and Ed Dorn), Black Mountain College Music Press (Carroll Williams), Black Mountain Graphics Workshop (Nick Cernovich), Black Cat Press (Carroll Williams), Grapnel [or Terrified] Press (Tommy Jackson), and Sad Devil Press (Joel Oppenheimer). Stan VanDerBeek set his poetry with a typewriter on the letterpress stationery of his One Thumb Press.<sup>62</sup>

The output of these personal presses was not entirely without collaboration. Larry Hatt and Ed Dorn worked together to print Charles Olson's *Apollonius of Tyana* (1951), a dance-drama designed for Nick Cernovich, with a color lithograph map of dance movements by Stan VanDerBeek. The two worked as well on Olson's *Letter to Melville* (1951) printed for the Melville Society's centenary at Williams College. Joel Oppenheimer printed, at least in part, the three issues of Jonathan Williams' *Jargon* series produced at the college, which included drawings by Robert Rauschenberg in *The Dancer* (1951), Paul Ellsworth in *Red/Gray* (1952), and Dan Rice in *The Double-Backed Beast* (1952). Nick Cernovich contributed photographs and an artist's statement to Hazel Larsen's *Five Photographers* (1949-1950) before setting out on a very short series of folio broadsides, including a printing of Robert Duncan's *The Song of the*

*Border Guard* (1952) that featured a Cy Twombly woodcut. Carroll Williams designed and printed for publisher Lou Harrison the only published work of the Black Mountain College Music Press: a setting for the score of John Cage's *Haiku* (1952), funded by Charles Ives.

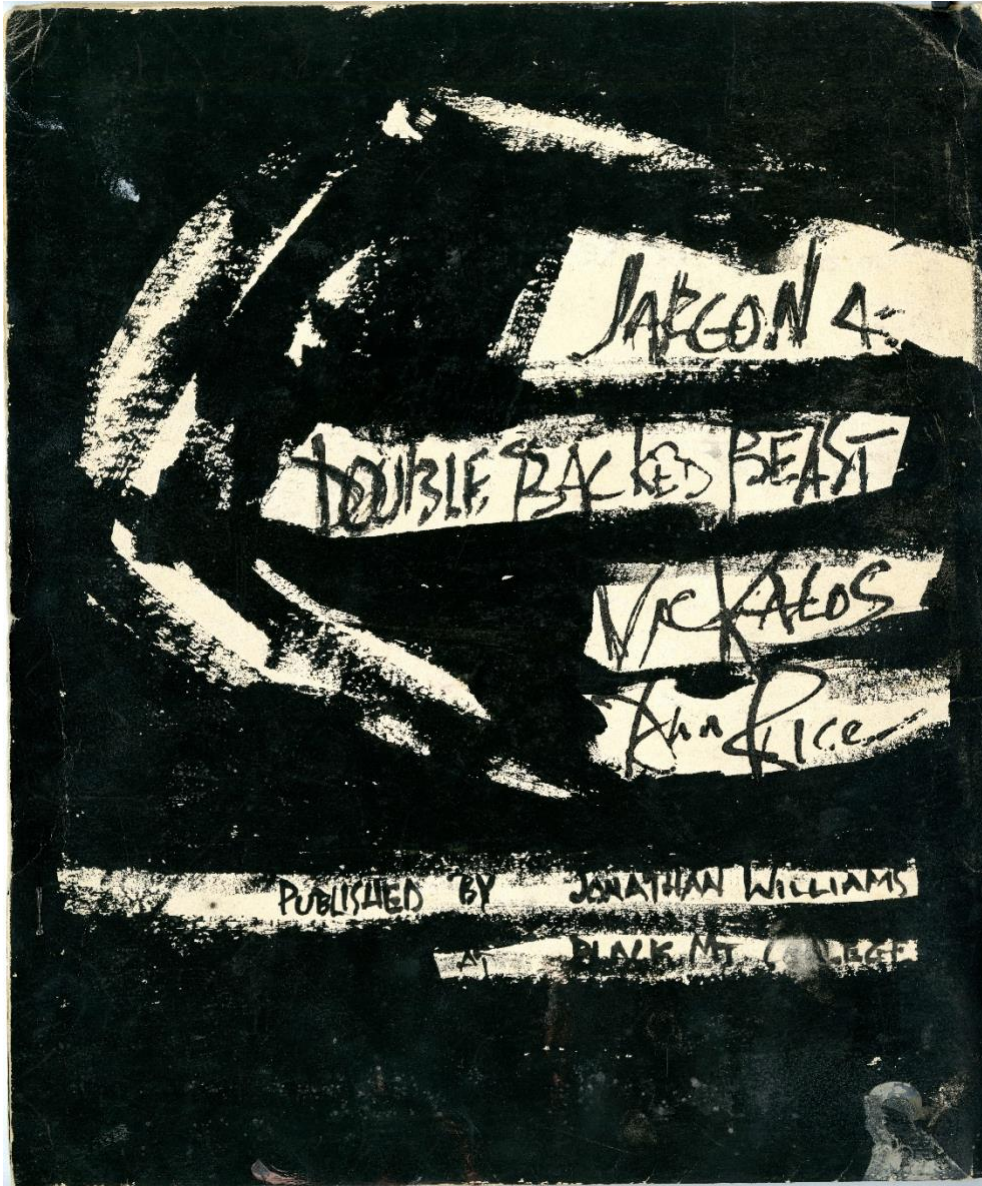


Figure 5. Victor Kalos and Dan Rice, *The Double-Backed Beast*: the last of the three *Jargon* issues printed at Black Mountain College (courtesy Western Regional Archives)

Given the array of decentralized and individualized presses, it would be hard to miss the countervailing gravity of Charles Olson. Unlike Richards and Larsen, Olson did not directly involve himself in the mechanics of presswork, but he did like to talk about it, and in the distinctly Blumenthalian terms of the Spiral Press, envisioning the print shop's

potential both to solve a small press's publishing difficulties and to take part in the revival of the small press movement in America. Writing to Robert Duncan about Nick Cernovich's Black Mountain College Workshop and his broadside poetry series, Olson explained:

*The point of these broadsides is to design, not in the sense of an illustration; but in the sense of the whole thing, from the poem out to the paper, type face, shape and size of paper, what painting, woodblock, whatever, to the finished job—and each one done for itself, wholly.*<sup>63</sup>

It sounded supportive, but the Cernovich workshop was the only press Olson and the college officially sanctioned. Tommy Jackson's Grapnel Press drew somewhat less encouragement. Jackson designed, printed, and bound *Ceremonies in Bachelor Space*,

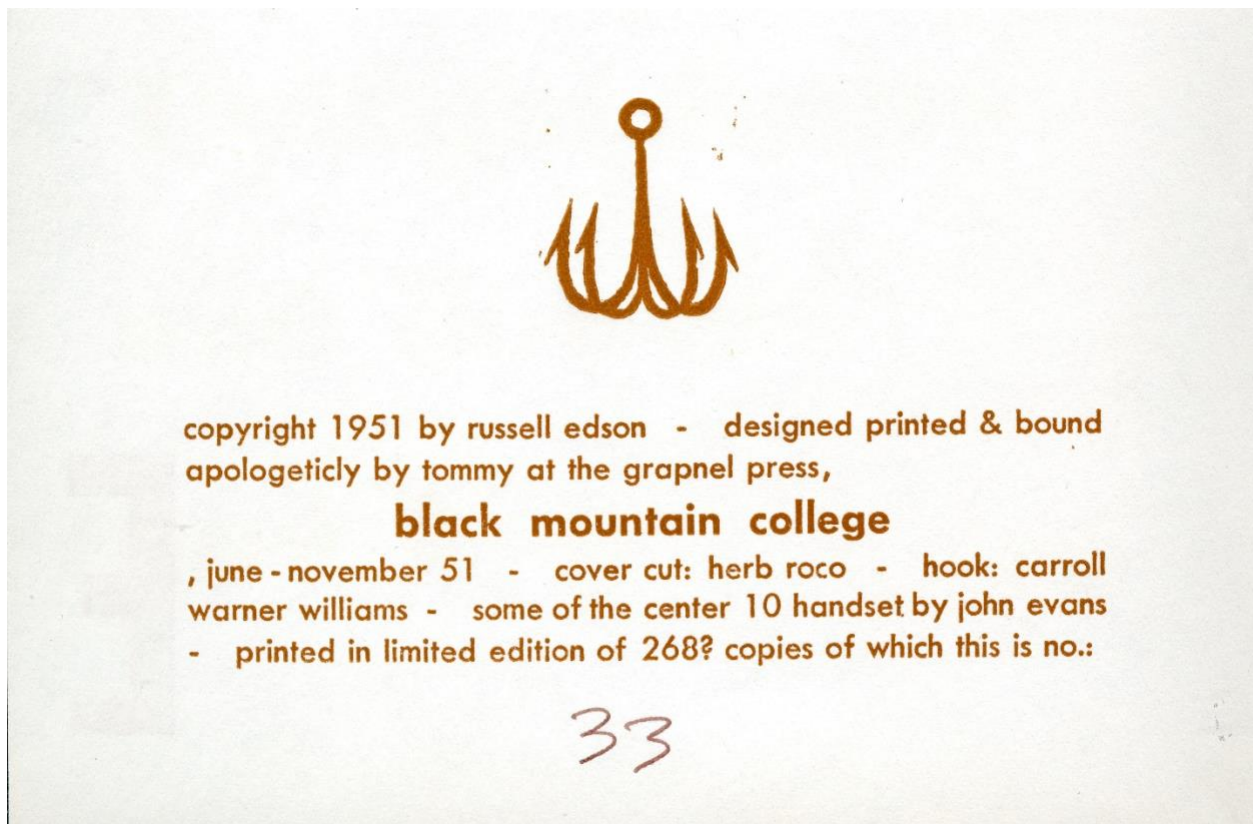


Figure 6. Colophon for Russell Edson's *Ceremonies in Bachelor Space* (copy number 33, courtesy Western Regional Archives). James Jaffe, in his 2019 catalog *Black Mountain College: A Collection*, felt it was "inconceivable" that 268 copies were produced, although a copy in Yale University's Beinecke Library demonstrates that the press run reached at least 89 (if colophons can be believed)

a 28-leaf collection of Russell Edson's poems and short fiction in wrappers decorated by Herb Roco—all of which enraged Charles Olson to the point that Jackson renamed his shop The Terrified Press.<sup>64</sup> For his last two years as a student, Jackson concentrated on small-format work in very small editions—primarily poetry and musical recital programs printed on “scrappapers,” card stock, and cigarette papers (rolled around tobacco)—printed on his own press brought to the Black Mountain Studies Building from his home in New England. For his own poetry, he resorted to exchanging one-line verses by postcard with Andy Warhol.<sup>65</sup>

For the 1952-1953 term, the college settled on Carroll Williams as the faculty's official (and, as it turned out, its last) student apprentice in printing, charged with enabling his students “to carry out the art and craft of printing in the small job shop.” Coursework included the “study of type faces, hand setting, lock-up, platen-press operation, and print design,” while providing for the “opportunity for creative work in layout and typography.” Under his supervision, the print shop was described as containing “two job presses with thirty type cases and complete accessories. Equipment is sufficient for printing most of the smaller publications of the College and serves, also, in publishing many individual works of students and faculty.”<sup>66</sup>

By this time, however, Black Mountain College had already decided that the little clutch of presses had to identify their output explicitly as “personal efforts.”<sup>67</sup> No one, apparently, paid this any mind, but it must have had its chilling effect in any event. Only a few weeks after Tommy Jackson printed his last program for the 1953 summer session, the college reverted to mimeograph for the August recital.<sup>68</sup> When Cernovich left the college in 1953, no one picked up on his broadside series of poems. Jonathan Williams, who had brought his nascent *Jargon* series from David Ruff's press in San Francisco, printed only three issues at the college before leaving for military service overseas. *Jargon* continued in Stuttgart, on German presses, and never returned to the college. When the faculty offered Williams a position as college printer, Williams declined, foreseeing the difficulties of dealing with inevitable interference from Olson, whom he admired, and from Robert Creeley, for that matter. Creeley, as editor of the “new” *Black Mountain Review*, had his series printed in Mallorca. By the time Williams finally did accept the post of college publisher, in the winter of 1956, the college was



about to close.<sup>69</sup> The print shop had already been leased that summer to John Pike Grady,<sup>70</sup> a former student, as a commercial venture that at this late date never became operational. Printing at Black Mountain College was over.

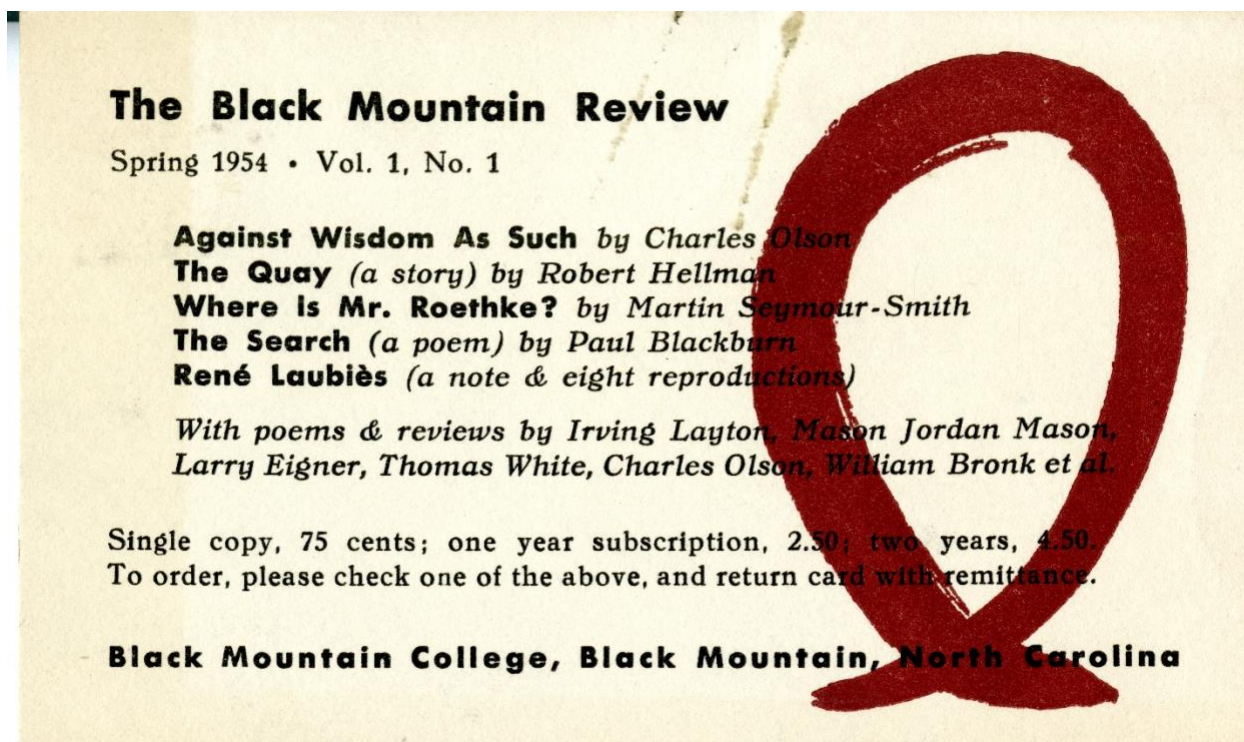


Figure 7. Postcard notice for *The Black Mountain Review* (courtesy Western Regional Archives). Robert Creeley's journal was printed in Isla de Mallorca and distributed from Hoboken, New Jersey. The college print shop issued the postcards aimed at prospective subscribers. The card shown arrived at the home of Stephen Forbes, whose \$160 brought a Chandler Price press to Black Mountain College seventeen years earlier.

### Postscript in Place of a Great Summation

*These things are not provided in advance; when they happen it is because the individuals who are here create them.*

The college print shop operated as a succession of start-up enterprises that did not progress or even continue as much as they took place. Nothing provided in advance, each printer who entered the shop over its short, noncontinuous span of operation had to answer M. C. Richards' question all over again: *What have you?* The shop wasn't necessarily designed to build on or create a legacy. Most of the print shop's output was, at least by genre—programs

and broadsides—unitary by tradition: “each one,” as Olson had wanted, “done for itself, wholly.” It was in its operation educational, and if it ever had an overarching mission for its printers, it was as Jimmie Tite said: *to help with the college work as well as to see some of their own creative writing in print.*

As students and teachers, the printers at Black Mountain College shared an enterprise in spirit with Anaïs Nin, whose diaries document her own work as private printer just a few years before her visit to the college. In the winter of 1941 she had \$75 for a treadle-operated platen press and \$100 for type and trays when she opened her private press in the attic of a wood-frame house at 144 Macdougall Street in Greenwich Village:

*You pit your faculties against concrete problems. The victories are concrete, definable, touchable. A page of perfect printing. You can touch the page you wrote. We exult in what we master and discover. Instead of using one's energy in a void, against frustrations, in anger against publishers, I use it on the press, type, paper, a source of energy. Solving problems, technical, mechanical problems. Which can be solved.*<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1987), 28.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Schawinsky to Robert Leslie, 23 October 1936, Series 3: Faculty Files, Box 6, Folder: Xanti [Alexander] Schawinsky, Black Mountain College Records 506, Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.

Robert Lincoln Leslie (1885-1987) with Sol Cantor founded The Composing Room in 1927, a business which he described as “a shop where type is set intelligently for intelligent clients. Also promptly, reasonably, and with true professional enthusiasm. An outfit that plays up the art in every particular, and doesn’t miss the fun in fundamentals either.” Seven years later, he brought on Percy Seitlin as editor of *PM*. Appearing first as a monthly before moving to bimonthly publications, *PM* operated as a nonprofit cooperative under the sponsorship of the Composing Room until its final issue in spring 1942. See Erin K. Malone, *Dr. Leslie and the Composing Room, 1934-1942: An Important Time in the Development of American Graphic Design* (MFA thesis, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1994). Accessed 20 May 2020, <http://www.drleslie.com/index.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> Schawinsky to Leslie, 4 December 1936, Faculty Files, Black Mountain College Records.

<sup>4</sup> Emil Willmetz and Suzanne Noble Gordon interview by Mary Emma Harris, 17 April 1971 [transcript], Series 4: Released Interviews, Box 40, North Carolina Museum of Art, Black Mountain College Research Project, Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.

Stephen Hathaway Forbes (1910-2003) was a student with Willmetz and Way and remained involved with the college as an adviser and financial supporter. See Stephen H. Forbes Papers, PC 1885, Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.

David Jacques Way and Bertram Clarke, under the supervision of Bruce Rogers, formed the Thistle Press in 1949, where they completed the final nine volumes of *The Frick Collection: An Illustrated Catalogue of the Works of Art in the Collection of Henry Clay Frick* (NY: Frick Art Reference Library, 1949-1956).

<sup>5</sup> Willimetz's two presses owed their lives to George Phineas Gordon, the New York printer who developed the jobbing platen presses that dominated the American market in the last half of the nineteenth century. When his patent ran out at the turn of the century, Chandler and Price, Inc., bought his works and his name and continued production. As James Moran describes them in his *Printing Presses: History and Development from the Fifteenth Century to Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973):

*By 1894 no less than eleven firms were manufacturing Gordon presses, and it has been calculated that during the century 1840-1940 no less than 123 different kinds of treadle-driven jobbers were made in the United States alone, bearing such names as Baltimore, Washington, Favorite, Peerless, Leader, and Star. (150)*

<sup>6</sup> Willimetz, interview.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> *Black Mountain College Catalog* (1936-1937), 35; *Black Mountain College Catalog* (1937-1938), 20; *Black Mountain College Catalog* (1938-1939), 21; *Black Mountain College Newsletter* 2, 6 (November 1939): 4

<sup>9</sup> Grafix advertisement, Series 3: College Publications, Programs, Publicity Flyers, and Brochures, Box 12, Martin Duberman Collection PC1678.12, Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.

<sup>10</sup> "Barbara Hill Steinau," in Biographies, Black Mountain College Project, accessed 14 May 2020 <https://www.blackmountaincollegeproject.org/Biographies/SteinauBarbara/STEINAUbarbaraBIO.htm>.

The 1937-1938 college catalog indicates that "a small bookbindery is operated in conjunction with the college," primarily for the library at a time when Isabel Mangold served as librarian. The *Black Mountain College Newsletter* 2, 6 (November 1939):4 reported that "Barbara Hill Steinau has charge of the college bindery this year." That term Johanna Jalowetz began teaching her workshop in bookbinding, an appointment that continued until she left Black Mountain in 1953.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Hathaway Forbes, *Musical Scales*. (Black Mountain N. C.: Grafix, 1939?), 62 p. ill., music, fold. 23 cm. ML3812.F67 M9. <https://lccn.loc.gov/40032741> (Library of Congress catalog record, accessed 10 September 2020).

<sup>12</sup> Series 6, Treasurer's Files, Box 6, Folder 14, Grafix 1938, Black Mountain College Records 506, Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.

<sup>13</sup> Series 9: Photographs. Box 14, Courses of Study, Printing. Folders 266.1-5. Black Mountain College Records 506, Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.

<sup>14</sup> Willimetz, interview. Haas's design is in fact lettered.

<sup>15</sup> Emil Willimetz, *Grimo: The Making of a Rebel*. Portsmouth NH: Peter E. Randall, 2003; 171-176.

<sup>16</sup> Willimetz did contribute a short prose piece to an undated collection of student work, . . . . . *toward a projected College magazine*. The cover carried a brief introduction in letterpress on card stock, but the twelve pages of literary contributions were mimeographs. See Series 2: General Files, Box 6, Folder: Creative Writing of Students. Black Mountain College Records 506, Western Regional Archives.

<sup>17</sup> Betty Brett, Unpublished journal, 1940-1941. Collection of Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center, Asheville NC. Her entry for Wednesday 6 November 1940 recounts the events of Friday 1 November through Tuesday 5 November.

The "Sarton homage poem" appears as "A Letter to the Students of Black Mountain College" in Sarton, *The House by the Sea: A Journal* (NY: W.W. Norton, 1977), 113-120.

<sup>18</sup> Series 9: Photographs. Box 14, Courses of Study, Printing. Folder 266.6. Black Mountain College Records 506, Western Regional Archives. The photograph is undated; its negative sleeve is titled *Printing Exhibit*. A copy of an *Outward Bound* program for a 30 November 1940 performance appears in Series 3, Box 12 of the Duberman Collection, PC1678.12, Western Regional Archives.

<sup>19</sup> William McCleery and John Evarts, *Let Me Have Air*, performed 21 May 1941.

<sup>20</sup> *Black Mountain College Newsletter* 2, no. 13 (May 1941): [7-8].

<sup>21</sup> Brett journal, entries for 3 December and 4 December 1941.



<sup>22</sup> Black Mountain College Concert, 6 *Bagatelles, Opus 126 for Piano by Ludwig van Beethoven played by Frederic Cohen, and Sonata for Piano and Violin in C Minor, Opus 30 No. 2 by Ludwig van Beethoven played by Trudi Straus and Frederic Cohen*. 22 May 1943. Black Mountain College Research Project Series 6, Box 76, folder 17. Western Regional Archives. Accessed 20 September 2020:

<https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p249901coll44/id/595/rec/196>

<sup>23</sup> *Community Bulletin*, College Year 14, issue no. 2, (November 1, 1946): 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Black Mountain College Community Bulletin* (November 1946): 12.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>26</sup> See Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 117, for Weitzer's recollection of the Thanksgiving day program. Jean Markoff's fanciful report on the game appears in the *Black Mountain College Community Bulletin* (November 1946): 8-9. See also Harry Weitzer, "My Experience of Black Mountain College," accessed 14 May 2020 <http://www.blackmountaincollege.org/my-experience-of-black-mountain-college-by-harry-weitzer/>

The 6 December 1946 program for a Friday Student Concert bears the first post-war "BMC Print Shop" imprint.

<sup>27</sup> See James Tite, *The Black Mountain Press, Fall 1945-Spring 1948*, 4-page typescript in "James Tite Correspondence," *Mervyn Lane Manuscripts*, PC1790.11, Western Regional Archives. Tite corresponded with Lane during the latter's compilation of *Black Mountain College: Sprouted Seeds: An Anthology of Personal Accounts*, ed. Mervyn Lane (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990).

Eunice Hord Allen of Asheville's Biltmore Press recalled that, even on jobs the college outsourced to her, people from Black Mountain College "were willing to come over and live with you in order to get it exactly like they wanted." Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 28.

See also "Harry Weitzer Correspondence," *Mervyn Lane Manuscripts*, PC1790.11, Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina.

<sup>28</sup> "Tite Correspondence," *Mervyn Lane Manuscripts*, Western Regional Archives.

Jimmie Tite's course title recalls Ralph W. Polk's *The Practice of Printing* (Peoria: The Manual Arts Press, 1926), a common mid-century instructional resource for "the basic operation of the trade." Polk set over 300 pages of text by hand in foundry type "as a guide and example to the young compositor."

<sup>29</sup> "Bill Treichler Remembers Black Mountain College," *Memoirs*, Black Mountain College Project, accessed 26 April 2020,

<https://www.blackmountaincollegeproject.org/MEMOIRS/TREICHLERwilliamMEMOIR.htm> . Forty years later, Treichler founded the *Crooked Lake Review*, covering the natural, agricultural, and social history of Steuben County, New York.

<sup>30</sup> Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 117.

<sup>31</sup> See correspondence between Frank Rice and Theodore Dreier, 27 March – 17 August 1947, Series 3: Faculty Files, Box 5, Folder: Frank A. Rice," Black Mountain College Records 506, Western Regional Archives.

<sup>32</sup> Tite Correspondence," *Mervyn Lane Manuscripts*, Western Regional Archives.

<sup>33</sup> Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 116

<sup>34</sup> *Black Mountain College Bulletin* 5, no. 7 (November 1947): [3]

<sup>35</sup> M. C. Richards, "Excerpts from *Black Mountain College: A Golden Seed*," in *Black Mountain College: Sprouted Seeds: An Anthology of Personal Accounts*, ed. Mervyn Lane (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 172. For an account of Nin's letterpress work, see Emily Larned, "The Intimate Books of Anaïs Nin: Diarist as Letterpress Printer," *Openings: Studies in Book Art* 2, no. 1 (2015): 32-48.

<sup>36</sup> Sylvia [Girsh] Ashby, "What I Did Last Summer: Black Mountain College, 1948." October 2012, accessed 7 September 2020. <http://www.anderbo.com/anderbo1/andermemoir-01/andermemoir-01.html>. She remembers that "our beloved literature teacher M. C. Richards . . . looked kindly on the few scraps of poetry I'd managed to turn out. Attending a conference at the university in Greensboro [NC], she showed my collected works to poet Randall Jarrell. He said I was operating under the influence of e. e. cummings. Bingo! If she'd shown him my prose, he would have said I was under the spell of Gertrude Stein, also true: I had just learned to discard all punctuation marks. Capital letters, I decided, were a bourgeois hindrance. But, as you can see, those determined little marks have crept back in."

<sup>37</sup> Weitzer Correspondence, *Mervyn Lane Manuscripts*, Western Regional Archives.

<sup>38</sup> Description from catalog entry 44, *Black Mountain College: A Collection* (Deep River CT: James S. Jaffe Rare Books, 2019), 47.



<sup>39</sup> Jimmie Tite, "Experiment in Education," *Black Mountain College Bulletin Newsletter* 6, no. 4 (May 1948).

<sup>40</sup> *Community Bulletin* (January 1947).

<sup>41</sup> *Black Mountain College Bulletin* 6, no. 3 (April 1948): 6.

<sup>42</sup> Pete Jennerjahn, "Warren Paul Jennerjahn," interview with George Hofmann, Artists Research Group Oral History Project, Department of Art and Art History, Hunter College, City University of New York, 10 July 2002. Transcript accessed 29 April 2020. <https://huntercollegeart.org/artists-research-group/warren-paul-jennerjahn/>

<sup>43</sup> McCandless to Black Mountain College Board of Fellows, 28 April 1949. Series 3: Faculty Files, Box 5, Folder: John McCandless. Black Mountain College Records 506, Western Regional Archives. This two-page typescript represents his application for director of the college print shop beginning September 1949.

Mary Emma Harris notes the Libertarian Press printed Robert Duncan's *Poems 1948-1949* (1949). Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 191.

<sup>44</sup> Chester L. Jenne (Hamilton Press of Trenton NJ) to [John McCandless], undated. McCandless Faculty File, Black Mountain College Records. Jenne directed his letter of reference "to whom it may concern" and McCandless forwarded it to Black Mountain on 11 May 1949.

<sup>45</sup> Alfred G. Hill to Ray Trayer [Black Mountain College Fellow], 25 May 1949. McCandless Faculty File, Black Mountain College Records.

<sup>46</sup> [Ray Trayer] to John [McCandless], 3 June 1949. McCandless Faculty File, Black Mountain College Records.

<sup>47</sup> John McCandless, "Report on the Printing Facilities of Black Mountain College," McCandless Faculty Files, Black Mountain College Records.

<sup>48</sup> *Black Mountain College Bulletin* 7, 1 (March 1949)

<sup>49</sup> John McCandless to Ray Trayer, 7 August 1949, McCandless Faculty Files, Black Mountain College Records.

<sup>50</sup> J. H. McCandless "Memo on Publicity Costs," circulated to Warrington and [M. C.] Richards 29 April 1950. Series 2: General Files, Personnel—Publications, Articles, Box 25, Folder: Print Shop. Black Mountain College Records 506, Western Regional Archives.

<sup>51</sup> "Inventory: Paper Stock in Print Shop, Priced by JHM, 31 January 1951, *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> "According to entry 192 of the checklist for *The Arts at Black Mountain College 1953-1957* exhibition at Bard College in 1987, the program was printed at the Black Mountain College Printshop by John McCandless." See Jaffe, 48.

<sup>53</sup> Fielding Dawson, "The Finger," in *The Black Mountain College Book: A New Edition* (Rocky Mount NC: North Carolina Wesleyan College Press, 1991), 106-107.

<sup>54</sup> Larsen's preface appears in "David Vaughan, "Motion Studies," in *Hazel Larsen Archer: Black Mountain College Photographer*. (Asheville NC: Black Mountain College Museum + Art Center, 2006), 14-15

<sup>55</sup> "For some time the publication of artistic and literary material produced by members of the community, including past teachers and alumni as well as the present College group, has been considered of interest for preservation outside the College. This year a group of students and teachers have been active in collecting this work and organizing a magazine-type publication that would contain photography, both as artistic expression and as a means of reproducing artwork, as well as fiction, poetry and articles." *Black Mountain College Newsletter* 7 (March 1940): [1-2]. The magazine, scheduled for issue in May, had no ongoing production schedule or funding and did not appear.

<sup>56</sup> Larsen, "Preface," *Five Photographers*.

<sup>57</sup> James Jaffe determined that "a second [issue] got set in type, but there was simply no money for printing it" (Jaffe, 6). Mary Emma Harris noted that "the manuscripts for a second issue, for which a postcard flyer was mailed, were burned in a fire that destroyed Black Dwarf" (Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 283). Harris confuses Black Dwarf (which did not burn) with the house across the lane (which did).

<sup>58</sup> "They hoped to publish future issues, but these were never realized, likely due to a lack of available funds." Julie J. Thomson, *Begin to See: The Photographers of Black Mountain College* (Asheville NC: Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center, 2017), 73.

<sup>59</sup> Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 200.

<sup>60</sup> Wesley Huss to Joseph Blumenthal, 28 November 1951, General Files, Box 25, Folder: Print Shop, Black Mountain College Records, Western Regional Archives.

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<sup>61</sup> *The Spiral Press [1926-1971]: A Bibliographical Checklist Compiled by Philip N. Cronenwett* (West New York NJ: Mark Batty, 2002), 58-61.

<sup>62</sup> Stan VanDerBeek, "Untitled" (I Throw Out Myself), 1949, typescript on One Thumb Press letterhead. VanDerBeek resorted to letterpress on occasion. See "Untitled" (No mans land / these merciless puppets), 1950. The press's output was small but palpable.

<sup>63</sup> Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 197.

<sup>64</sup> The Board of Fellows addressed the issue in a 22 February 1952 meeting, specifically in a letter from Paul Williams read before those attending. Unfortunately, that text is not attached to the meeting's minutes, leaving the specific source of Olson's anger unclear.

<sup>65</sup> Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 234.

See Reva Wolf, *Andy Warhol, Poetry, and Gossip in the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 10: "On one postcard Jackson wrote simply *it's snowing, it's snowing*. On another postcard, Warhol wrote to Jackson *he brings me one rose and I bring him three*."

<sup>66</sup> *Black Mountain College Bulletin* 10, no. 4 (November 1952): 11. Adequate fonts, as in the beginning, must still have been an issue, as Tommy Jackson was substituting w for v when he ran short of sorts.

<sup>67</sup> Harris, *Arts at Black Mountain College*, 197.

<sup>68</sup> [Concert] *Performed by Josef Marx, Abraham Mishkind, and Irma Wolpe*, 29 August 1953. Black Mountain College Research Project, Series 6, Box 76, Folder 29. Western Regional Archives.

<sup>69</sup> By this time, Williams was well on his way to establishing his *Jargon* series as a literary force. One notably bitter detractor was Walter Hamady, whose Perishable Press published Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, and Joel Oppenheimer in the 1960s. Hamady described Williams as "always whining and chiseling and begging for money" and denied that he had ever served in the military: "He could never pick up a backpack, let alone shoot a gun!" See "Walter Hamady" [interview], in Alastair M. Johnston, *Hanging Quotes: Talking Book Arts, Poetry & Typography* (Victoria TX: Cuneiform Press, 2011), 78, 90.

<sup>70</sup> Grady returned to his hometown of Eastport ME to publish the local newspaper and operate a bookstore described as a front for his buying trips to secondhand bookstores. See "Causes: John Pike Grady," *SALT* 6, nos. 1-2 (December 1983): 32-41. Accessed 26 April 2020  
<https://www.saltstoryarchive.com/articleview.php?id=2058>

<sup>71</sup> For an account of Nin's letterpress work, see Emily Larned, "The Intimate Books of Anaïs Nin: Diarist as Letterpress Printer," *Openings: Studies in Book Art* 2, no. 1 (2015): 32-48. The Nin quote closing this paper appears on page 36.