

Challenge Machinery Co.

Jobbing press

Gordon-style platen

Late 19th century



“Winston”

**I first encountered this press** shortly before Christmas 2023 in Austin, Texas at the home of James Hill while on a visit to check out a Washington style hand press that he had for sale. I visited with James and his son Geren who arranged the visit and told them of my dream to establish a place at the Baylor Libraries where people could learn about experience letterpress printing. He must have seen me eyeing this unassuming little platen press sitting quietly next to the imposing hand press I'd come to see, and noted, “I'm also interested in selling this one as well,” and I immediately fell in love!

Sadly, James passed away before his two presses came to Baylor in the spring of 2024, but he was the spark that launched the initiative that his son Geren Hill graciously made a reality.

-Sha Towers, Director of the Book Arts & Letterpress Lab.

## LETTERPRESS LAB @ BAYLOR.EDU

# LETTERPRESS LAB

## BOOK ARTS & LETTERPRESS



This style of press, known as a platen or jobbing press was extremely popular from the mid 1800s and afforded a much higher volume of printing than its hand press predecessors. Considered the father of the platen press design, George Phineas Gordon received his first patent in 1850 and submitted over 50 more in his lifetime. Gordon's invention was “one of the first truly American contributions to printing technology.” (Museum of Printing, Haverhill, MA [museumofprinting.org](http://museumofprinting.org)).



“Press” letterpress communications.com)  
History of the Platen  
creation in the early 1800s  
Stephen Ruggles with its  
job press, but later credited  
mechanism of the Platen  
revealed to him the  
Benjamin Franklin, who  
visited in a dream by  
Gordon claims to have been  
stream) and by motor.  
treable (or on larger models,  
operation, first by foot  
rollers and powered  
inkings rollers and automated  
processes include odd  
ments of these types odd  
technological advance-  
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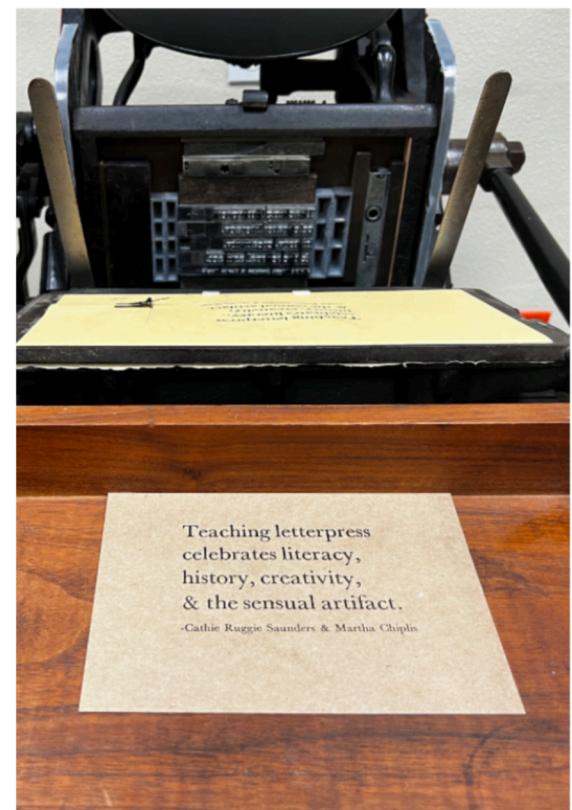
Winston's home in Austin before coming to Baylor



Winston's big rig journey to Waco (with big sister Betty) in the spring of 2024. She was a fairly easy delivery, being a relatively petite platen press (Betty's was much more complicated and drama filled!)



Lock up & print job on Winston



The first test run of Winston with Max and Sha Towers.

The movement & sounds of this press are pure magic!