

Patterns and the Molding of Cast Iron Banks

Supplement No. 6: Pattern Lettering*

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A. INTRODUCTION

In the article: "Patterns and the Molding of Cast Iron Still Banks"¹ it was explained that the raised lettering seen on iron banks (as well some other design details) are the result of details being applied to the patterns. That is, they were not integral to the patterns. The lettering on cast iron banks including incuse lettering also has been discussed in the proposals for identifying variations of cast iron still and mechanical banks.^{2,3,4} The current paper provides additional information on this subject.

B. OPTIONS FOR APPLICATION OF LETTERING

There are four ways in which letters or numbers on a cast iron bank could have originated. The first two ways result in the lettering being embossed (resting on the surface):

- Stock letters were applied, one letter at a time, to the wood or metal master patterns or metal working patterns.
- Messages were embossed onto metal tape that then was fastened to the metal patterns.

The other two ways cause the lettering to be incuse (cut into the surface).

- The letters were engraved, one letter at a time, into the wood or metal master patterns or metal working patterns.
- The letters were stamped, one letter at a time, into the metal patterns.

C. PATTERN LETTERS

"Pattern Letters" were (and still are) available from foundry supply companies. Figure 1 is an example of an old supply house catalog page. Lettering made of white metal or brass was available in sizes from 1/8" to 1 1/2" high, and in several type faces (including reversed type).

SPECIAL LETTERING STYLES⁵

"We can supply special styles or combination letters, monograms, trademarks; for pattern. Send a sketch of your idea with quantity and size wanted and we will submit samples and price."

The letters in white metal were used with wood patterns (and probably also with lead patterns). Since white metal is relatively soft, the letters could easily be made to conform to an uneven

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surface of a pattern without straining the pattern. The letters were glued to a wood pattern. The brass letters were soldered to brass or bronze patterns.

THE E. J. WOODISON COMPANY :: *Pattern Shop Equipment*

PATTERN LETTERS—White Metal and Brass
FULL SIZE ILLUSTRATIONS AND FACE MEASUREMENTS

Roman, A Standard and Favorite Style.

A₁ B₂ C 4 D 6 E F G

1/8 in. 3c 3-16 in. 3c 1/4 in. 3c | 5-16 in. 3c | 3/8 in. 3c 7-16 in. 3c 1/2 in. 3c

5/8 4c, 3/4 5c, 7/8 6c, 1 in. 7c, 1 1/4 in. 10c, 1 1/2 in. 15c, 1 3/4 in. 20c, 2 in. 30c, 2 1/2 in. 40c, 3 in. 50c, 4 in. 60c. Also Thin Roman, 1/4, 5/16, 3/8, 1/2, 5/8, 3/4, inch, about one-half standard thickness.

SHARP FACE GOTHIC.

E E E E E E E

1/8 3-16 1/4 5-16 3/8 1/2 5/8 in.
 3c 3c 3c 3c 3c 3c 4c

The Sharp Gothic are all draft, beveling from the outside to the centers. All sizes to 4 inch inclusive. Sharp Gothic REVERSED in all sizes, for impressions in Cement Work, Babbitt Molds, etc. Same prices as given for the Roman Style.

FLATTENED FACE GOTHIC.

E E E E E

In addition to the sizes illustrated, we can furnish all the sizes listed under the Roman style, and at the same prices.

1/8 3-16 1/4 5-16 3/8
 3c 3c 3c 3c 3c

HAIR LINE GOTHIC.

E E E E E E

For Hollow Ware and Stove Manufacturers. They are a very light letter, but will show sharp and clean on the Castings.

3-32 1/8 3-16 1/4 5-16 3/8 7/16, 1/2, 9/16, 5/8, 3/4, 1 in. Same prices as for the Roman Style.

<p style="text-align: center;">ANTIQUE.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">T</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1/2 in. 3c.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3/8 3c 1/2 3c.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5/8 4c, 3/4 5c, 1 in. 7c, 1 1/4 10c.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONDENSED ROMAN.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3/8 in. 3c 1/2 in. 3c</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A Thin Letter.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5/8 4c, 7/8 6c, 1 1/2 in. 15c, 2 in. 30c, 2 1/2 in. 40c.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GOTHIC BRANDING IRON PATTERNS.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">R</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5/16 inch deep. For making Cast Iron and Copper Branding Irons.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1/2 8c, 5/8 9c, 3/4 10c, 1 in. 11c, 1 1/4 12c.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3/8 in. 6c. Roman Brands in the same sizes, and at the same prices.</p>
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Send for Complete List Showing a Larger Variety of Sizes and Styles.

BRASS PATTERN LETTERS AND FIGURES
 For Use On Metal Patterns.

Size,	3/32	1/8	3/16	1/4	5/16	3/8	1/2	5/8	3/4	7/8	1	1 1/4	1 1/2	2	2 1/2	3	4
Price,	5c	4c	4c	4c	4c	5c	5c	6c	7c	8c	9c	12c	18c	30c	40c	50c	60c

Figure 1. Illustration from The E. J. Woodison Co. catalog.⁶ A similar page from the S. Obermayer Co. catalog⁷ claimed: "Over 1,700 different styles and sizes of alphabets and sets of figures kept in stock."

For example:

- The gluing of white metal letters to a wood master pattern was used to apply the "GOP" to the "Art Deco Elephant with 'GOP'" bank. It also was used to apply lettering and rivet head detail to the "Tank Bank 1918."²
- Brass letters were soldered, one letter at a time, to the brass working patterns to apply the message to the "Give Me A Penny" still bank, and is believed to have been used to apply the advertising message to the "Pump and Bucket" mechanical bank.⁸
- In theory, white metal letters could be soldered to a lead pattern by using a solder with a low melting temperature. But we don't know of a specific example where this was done.

Use of these stock letters saved the Pattern Maker considerable time and also allowed him much greater flexibility. The position of the lettering on the pattern could be tested before the lettering was fastened in place, and even after the lettering was applied it was easily removed or repositioned. For example, "Patent Pending" could be replaced by "Patented" and a patent date by popping the lettering from a wood pattern or de-soldering it from a brass pattern.

D. LETTERING ON EMBOSSED TAPE

Machines for embossing lettering onto metal tape were (and still are) another option. See Figure 2. Letter sizes ranged from 1/8" to 3/8", and tape sizes from 3/8" to 7/8". The tape was zinc, brass, or aluminum. (It appears that the modern "Dymo Tape" embosser is derived from these machines.)



Figure 2. Illustration from The S. Obermayer Co. catalog. p. 212.

The "Mulligan" still banks with advertising were created by embossing the advertising message onto metal tape, and then soldering the message to one or more working patterns.⁴ (The use of

the tape accounts for the raised area around the lettering.) This system made it relatively simple to use the same working patterns with several different advertising messages.

E. ENGRAVED OR INSCRIBED LETTERING

When the lettering was inscribed or engraved into the master pattern it appears on the pattern and the cast iron bank in the incuse style. For example, the "General Butler" cast iron still bank and the "Billy Goat Bank" cast iron mechanical bank display incuse lettering. In the case of the "General Butler" bank the wood master pattern was inscribed. In the case of the "Billy Goat Bank" it seems more likely that the metal master pattern was changed since the bank was first produced without the name.



Figure 3. Close-up of the right arm of the wood pattern for the "General Butler" bank, which is inscribed with the words: "Bonds and Yachts for Me."

F. STAMPED LETTERING

Patterns could be stamped using ordinary machinist's stamps. (Cast iron cannot be stamped in this way; it is too hard.) This method seems to have been restricted to cases where the markings end up inside the assembled bank (or other object), where numbers or a combination of letters and numbers were used in order to identify the components of pattern sets.⁹

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References

- ¹ Fritz Kokesh, "Patterns and the Molding of Cast Iron Banks, Seminar by Bill Robison," *Penny Bank Post*, April 2003, p.5.
- ² Fritz Kokesh, "Proposal for Identifying Variations of Cast Iron Still Banks," *Penny Bank Post*, December 2003, p.18. Supplements to this article have been posted at: www.toybanks.info.
- ³ Fritz Kokesh, "Proposal for Identifying Variations of Cast Iron Still Banks. Supplement No. 1, Modified Working Patterns: 'Prancing Horse on Oval Base (Beauty)' Bank," privately published, 2003. Available at: www.toybanks.info.
- ⁴ Fritz Kokesh, "Proposal for Identifying Variations of Cast Iron Still Banks. Supplement No. 2, Modified Working Patterns: Give Me a Penny (screw)' Bank," privately published, 2003. Available at: www.toybanks.info.
- ⁵ The S. Obermayer Co., "Manufacturers, Everything You Need in Your Foundry," General Catalog No. 51, undated, 1924 or later (on p. 13 is a Dec 2, 1924 patent date), p. 85.
- ⁶ The E. J. Woodison Company, "A complete Catalog of Foundry, Platers' and Polishers' Supplies and Equipment, Fire Brick and Refractory Materials," 1912 or later (photo of Seattle branch office on p. 9 shows 48-star U.S. flag displayed), p. 319.
- ⁷ Obermayer, p. 85.
- ⁸ Fritz Kokesh and William Robison, "Variations of Cast Iron Mechanical Banks," 2004, unpublished.
- ⁹ Louis H. Hertz, "The Toy Collector," Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1969, p. 179.