

History of School of Printing By Graduate

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles covering the various departments of Chowan College. Others are to include Religion, Science, Business, Physical Education, etc.

By BILL SOWELL

I am writing this because the Roy Parker School of Printing and Chowan College mean many things to me. Through training I have been able to secure a vocation which, I trust, will continue during my lifetime. It was here at Chowan that I met my wife, who was also a student in the school of printing. Through influence and guidance my whole viewpoint of life and religion has changed—all of this has come to me at Chowan College.

This, I hope, will become a record or history of my school—as students in years to come look back at old issues of The Chowanian.

It was not by coincidence that I came to Chowan College. I did not choose Chowan because of its church-related denomination, nor did I come to college just to take advantage of the G. I. Bill.

It had been seven years since I graduated from high school and I wanted to further my education. I had been employed, part time, for nine years by my home-town newspaper as a floorman and I wanted to become a Linotype operator. Through The Printing Industries of the Carolinas, at Columbia, S. C., I found out about the Roy Parker School of Printing.

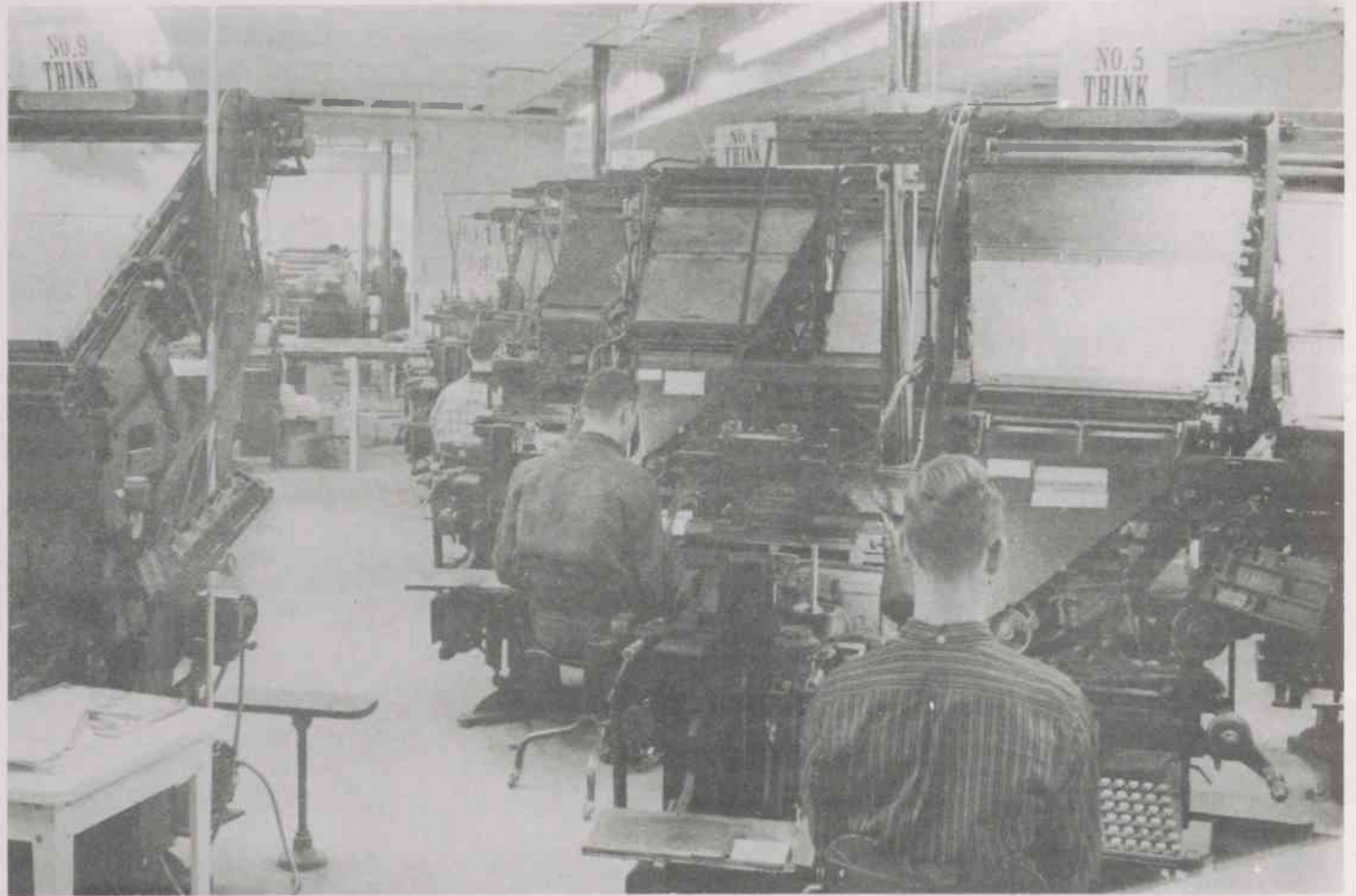
I wanted to attend a liberal arts college offering printing where I could get the related subjects, such as English, History, Religion and Math. Chowan being the only liberal arts college in the Southeastern section of the United States offering such training, so I enrolled in 1953.

A New Venture

It was early in 1952 when a few interested people talked of starting a school of printing at Chowan. The late Dr. F. O. Mixon, President; Mr. Roy Parker, Sr., President of Parker Brothers, Inc.; and Rev. Oscar Creech, associate to the president, began contacting publishers who might be interested. It was at this time that the News and Observer loaned the school its first Linotype machine. One small job press was added and the school was officially started.

John McSweeney, then employed by Parker Brothers of Ahoskie, was contacted by Dr. Mixon about becoming printing instructor. Mr. McSweeney, knowing the importance of a school of this type in this area, accepted a position as part-time instructor. He came to the college in Sept. 1952.

When the school first opened its doors, with no student solicitation, Mr. McSweeney had 14 students. Classes were held two hours a week. The school was then housed in a small wood-frame building, 12x20, with the one linotype machine and small job press. Most of these students were boys who were looking for a "crip" course and were not actually interested in printing. McSweeney did the best he could with what equipment he had. By the end of the school term



This picture shows some of the Linotypes in the School of Printing.

in May of 1953 many more people had become interested in this department.

School Named

In recognition for the untiring effort he gave towards the promotion of the school of printing, the Board of Trustees named the school for Mr. J. Roy Parker of Ahoskie, and today it is known, not only in North Carolina but throughout most of the United States as the Roy Parker School of Printing at Chowan College.

Let me say here that all of us who knew him have missed Mr. Parker since his death last May. Under a large picture of him in the composing room of the school a card reads, "A Friend of Ours."

In the summer of 1953 Mr. McSweeney began soliciting students and contacting publishers of North Carolina for more equipment. At the beginning of the school term Mr. McSweeney, with the help of the administration, had raised enough money to erect a 40x70 foot block building, costing an estimated \$10,000.

Mr. McSweeney, a printing and newspaper man of long experience, including the Deanship of a Philadelphia school of printing for nine years, was employed in 1953 as a full-time instructor. With a new building, Mr. McSweeney began the

school term with three Linotypes, two job presses, foundry type, type stands, etc., and 35 students solicited during the summer months. Under superior guidance and instruction at the end of the school year of 1955 many had been placed on jobs in North Carolina. I, being a graduate of this class, accepted a position as an instructor at the school. We completed the year with five Linotype machines, five presses and other equipment, most of which had been loaned to the school by publishers of North Carolina.

New Addition

Mr. McSweeney, who had not once stopped working to secure equipment and money for the department, again started contacting newspaper men of North Carolina for an addition to the original building. After several months of publicity and personal contacts, emphasizing the importance of an addition, members of the Eastern North Carolina Press Association agreed to contribute the money for a 40x60 foot extension. Forty-three publishers of North Carolina contributed about \$8,000 for the building.

Members of the Eastern North Carolina Press Association and North Carolina Press Association have recognized the quality of stu-

dents the school placed in their plants and they have continued supporting and praising it highly. Such letters as the one quoted below from the Herald Printing House in Ahoskie, concerning a booklet, "Career Opportunities", designed and printed by the students of the school, have been numerous:

"It is a highly creditable piece of work, excellent in conception and design, and certainly, considering the equipment available and the experience of the student-craftsmen employed in the work, it is well printed."

"Such work should merit the appreciation of all connected with and interested in Chowan College as an institution, as well as those directly interested in the work of the Graphic Arts Department. Printing of the character of this booklet, produced by students, surely will convey an impression of quality and character equal to the best influence of the printed word, when presented in such good form as this booklet illustrates, can and will carry the prestige of Chowan College to levels higher than, and to places inaccessible to, the performances of any other student group."

"Horne Building"

Upon completion of the new addition the Graphic Arts building officially given the name, The Josh L. Horne Building, in honor of a man who has given much money and much of his time to the school, because of his belief, that every young man and woman who so desires should have the opportunity of entering the printing field.

This addition would house all the presses and contained a darkroom 15x20 feet. We occupied the building at the beginning of the 1956 school term. With all the presses, two Chief 22 offset presses, an ATF copying camera, folding machines, stitchers, paper cutter and other equipment moved in the building was ready for use.

The building and all the equipment which has been loaned to the school has an estimated value of \$150,000.

In September of 1954 Harold Brown, of Hamlet, came to Chowan College as a student in the school of printing. He had had some previous experience in a newspaper plant and, just as I did, he wanted to learn the Linotype machine.

Graduating in June of 1956, Harold accepted a position as instructor in the school, starting work in September of that year.

Now, even with three staff members, there is much work to be done and anyone thinking printing is a "crip course" can be easily shown by visiting the plant any day.

Students of the school of printing spend longer hours per day, per week or per semester than any others, and they pay more to study printing because of the high cost of materials and equipment, and consequently their lab fee.

Since establishing the school in 1952 about 100 students have been trained and placed in publishers' plants, mostly in North Carolina. Many of these young men and women would have never entered the trade had it not been for this school, and the printing trade ranks second among all industries in salaries paid.

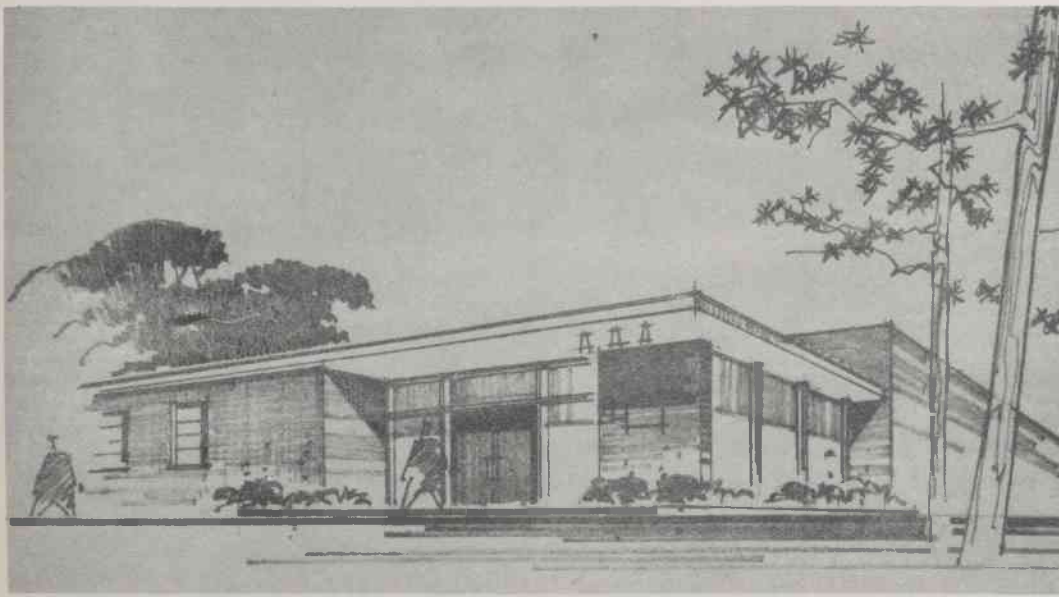
Mr. McSweeney has served the industry and students in matters of personnel placement, having always had jobs for every graduate. In fact the demand for graduates has always been greater than the supply.

Maximum Enrollment

With the present equipment, maximum enrollment should be limited to 40 students, but 47 started classes for the second semester. Enrollment would increase to 60 or more if the school had an addition and more than its present eight linotypes. With the demand for our graduates becoming greater each year, it would be dreadful to turn down applications due to lack of space and equipment. It is very important for us to raise enough money to build an extension to our present building, and to add more linotype machines. Mr. McSweeney and others are working to make these things possible.

The Graphic Arts Department is a credit to Chowan College. We are proud of the students who are now employed and earning a good living. Many of our students have met their mates here on this beautiful campus, some are now in business for themselves; some have started new newspapers and some have bought their own commercial job shops. The printing school saves the College more than \$10,000 each year by printing all the forms, booklets, catalogues, etc., used by the college.

With our faith in God, it is our belief an extension will be added to the present building and more equipment acquired so no applications will have to be turned down from students who are interested in this trade.



Architect's drawing of proposed addition to Graphic Arts building.