Bicycles,
Babbling Brooks
& Bertham Pro

A Personal Tribute
to the Goudys
In March of 09 I encouraged my colleague Tom Rickner to finish his revival of Goudy’s Forum typeface which he dabbled with as a young punk some 20 years prior.
Back when he had more hair and a whopping 40mb hard drive.
The type he was making was to be a faithful rendering of the Forum used in this keepsake he printed while we were students at RIT.

The quality of taste revealed in the great printing of the past is, usually, the outcome of simple thinking, simplicity in form & in execution.
FORUM TITLE

Forum Title is the 1st type ever cut that actually renders the spirit of the classic Roman lapidary characters of the first centuries of the Christian era—a composite letter, original in design because not copied from any existing inscription although incorporating a number of features common to all of the classic lapidary forms evolved by stone cutters of ancient Rome.

He made some refinements after I provided some additional specimens - like this one from Goudy’s Typographica #4.
FORUM TITLE IS THE 1ST TYPE EVER CUT THAT ACTUALLY RENDERS THE SPIRIT OF THE CLASSIC ROMAN LAPIIDARY CHARACTERS OF THE FIRST CENTURIES OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA—A COMPOSITE LETTER, ORIGINAL IN DESIGN BECAUSE NOT COPIED FROM ANY EXISTING INSCRIPTION ALTHOUGH INCORPORATING A NUMBER OF FEATURES COMMON TO ALL OF THE CLASSIC LAPIIDARY FORMS EVOLVED BY STONE CUTTERS OF ANCIENT ROME.

The results were satisfying enough. But with a down economy we had some time on our hands - the first time in nearly 20 years!
Forum Title is the 1st Type Ever Cut that Actually Renders the Spirit of the Classic Roman Lapidary Characters of the First Centuries of the Christian Era — a Composite Letter Original in Design Because Not Copied from any Existing Inscription Although Incorporating a Number of Features Common to all of the Classic Lapidary Forms Evolved by Stone Cutters of Ancient Rome.

First Tom created small caps - logically. And then we got the idea of taking it quite a bit further for making inscriptional style type arrangements
As over the top and unlikely this setting is it shows some of the possibilities which can aid in precisely justifying lines of text - just as stone cutters were wont to do.
A few samples of alternatives and swashes
While I was helping Tom with ideas of what to add to Forum Pro to make it unique and technologically advanced I began digging deeper and deeper into Goudy-related ephemera which I’d acquired over the years. These items renewed my fascination with 'the old fellow' and got me intrigued with his life, his contributions to printing, design and typography. I also learned about his wife and business partner, Bertha.
NEWSTYLE

When a type design is good, it is not because each individual letter of the alphabet is perfect in form but because there is a feeling of harmony & unbroken rhythm that runs through the whole design, each letter kin to every other & to all.

F·W·G

In the process of my research I digitized his Newstyle of 1920 (one of Bruce Roger's favorites)
and worked for a bit on Goudytype released by ATF in 1921... this is a really interesting design to me, though it wasn’t much of a success. It has a liveliness to it - it is fit so tightly in some cases that it may need some re-thinking but someday may make a useful type again.
And just for good measure I made and released a version of his uncial design 'Friar'. This type has a long and interesting story and has a well preserved correspondence between Fred and the printer Howard Coggeshall regarding its development. Coggeshall wanted to work together on a Christmas keepsake - printed by him and designed by Goudy. Goudy suggested it be the first piece printed in the new type he was developing. Friar's main interest to me is that Goudy did it for kicks - at age 72. He combined several forms of uncial to create a new look - rather than try to slavishly copy a particular style. He said after the fire that burned his studio in 1939 that he would miss this typeface the most.
During all this I’d started on a much larger project of reviving his 100th type design which he called Bertham - for his devoted wife and partner Bertha M. Three weights and an openface are being released this week. All of this is sort of an on-going typographic mid-life crisis for me. Rediscovering a lot of bits about the Goudy family and all they contributed to the very early days of graphic design, printing and typography in America. Many of us may know the underlying story - how a 30 something bookkeeper discovered a passion for the graphic arts and went from lettering magazine covers to influencing an entire industry. So hopefully the following bits will give a deeper sense of who the Goudy’s were.
Many of us may know the underlying story - how a 30 something bookkeeper discovered a passion for the graphic arts and went from designing and lettering magazine covers like the Inland Printer.
to influencing an entire industry with his grasp of traditional methods and reverence for the printed word. So hopefully the following bits will give a deeper sense of who the Goudy’s were - beyond the many typefaces which remain so popular today.
I’m an avid cyclist. So when I’m not hunched over my keyboard I’m often hunched over the handlebars of a bike. Recent trials to merge these two disciplines have ended up with mixed results.

It was quite a remarkable coincidence that upon opening for the first time a book written by Fred Goudy as a tribute after Bertha’s death in 1935
that the pages fell right open to a story about Fred and Bertha's habit of riding bicycles along the Chicago lakefront. Fred was about 26 at the time and he and Bertha were courting. He writes that soon after he left his bookkeeping job for a Mr. Alden, "her parents removed to the 'South Side' and I did not see her often, but occasionally we would arrange to meet early on a Sunday morning and go bicycle riding, which was just then becoming the popular sport.
I had an early 'safety' bicycle made in England, but what the make of her machine was I do not remember. I would get up around 5:30 a.m. (I was living on the 'West Side') and ride down to her Champlain Avenue home, arriving around 6:30 or 7, and she would have breakfast ready. We would then start out for a day's outing, sometimes covering fifty miles or more during the day.
I remember one Sunday early in '91 when we rode south near the Lake over the ground that was the site of the great Columbian Exposition of 1893. I remember well her quick anger on one trip when I laughed because she had run her bicycle into a stump concealed by tall grass and she had gone head first over the handlebars, landing in a heap.
My costume in those days for our trips was dark blue jersey 'shorts' (though they weren't called shorts then), long ribbed stockings and a grey sweater; hers included a divided skirt – I do not recall that she ever wore the baggy 'bloomers' so many of the women bicyclists affected then. She preferred a bike like mine instead of the drop frame that women usually rode.
He concludes by saying: "...She was a good bicyclist."

I read that passage and was just floored by this connection of typography and cycling. This little peek into his personal life - a moment which was obviously vivid enough for him to write about 40 years later. The 2nd thing I’m struck by is ‘wow - what a woman’... 50 miles – in a skirt no less!
Bertha worked by Fred’s side and taught herself everything from binding and printing to matrix cutting. She was most noted for her hand composition (Bruce Rogers thought her the fastest he’d ever known and the best). Fred states that ‘whatever she put her hand to she did well’. An early partner of the Goudy’s, Will Ransom who had some experience printing and binding books gave Bertha her only real training. He wrote that ‘her instinctive grasp of details outruns instruction before the lesson is finished’.

She was no doubt one of the world’s most patient spouses as they seldom had any money, particularly in the early days, and they moved no less than five times together.
Their last move together was in 1927 - Fred was 62 - to a house and water mill in Marlborough on Hudson NY which they named Deepdene after the street they lived on in Long Island.
Long Island had become too built up and they longed for the quiet and open space of the country. In reading a bit of prose Fred wrote called “Evening at Deepdene” it’s not hard to understand the attraction of the setting. Their love for and connection to natural surroundings is clear... "Glad indeed that here, at last, we find a place so blest - a place of peace, and work, and rest". One of our posters in the TypeCon gallery shows the entire piece - give it a read if you have a chance.
Contrary to the relaxed image in this photo outside the workshop - Deepdene was a whirlwind of typographic activity. The Village Press and Type Foundry completed about 50 of his typefaces and published about 50 books, journals, broadsides, keepsakes and greeting cards from this location - their son Fred Truesdell Goudy, working alongside them.
The Goudy's surrounded themselves with a menagerie wherever they moved. At Deepdene Bruce Rogers wrote of 2 parrots, 29 other birds (they had built an aviary), two Newfoundlands, a small black terrier a horse, a cow and thousands of cats - or maybe 4".
There’s no question Fred had a good sense of humor. In my copy of his book Ands and Ampersands there is an errata stuck into the middle. It rephrases a paragraph on the facing page and has a little note at the bottom which reads: Will the recipient of this volume kindly see that this errata page is placed to face page 32. I hope, too, that in writing this correction I have not inadvertently made another erratum in it. It would be too much, almost, to expect that no other slips of pen will be found; this correction may divert the critic’s attention from more serous blunders elsewhere. FWG
Twelve years after moving in - in January 1939 - the mill burned consuming much of his and Bertha’s life’s work. Drawings, matrices and 3 floors of equipment either burned or fell down into the creek below. He understandably called it a body blow...
but then went on to write books, such as his Typologia, lecture all over the country and, oh, complete 1/2 dozen more typefaces before his death in 1947.
I began work on Bertham purely out of curiosity. I simply wanted to see how the design worked. But the story of the typeface also resonated with me.
His client simply asked if Goudy could write something for the Inland Printer magazine about his 100th typeface. Goudy hadn't even started on it when he was asked this. According to him 98 and 99 (called Atlantis and Millvale) weren't even close to completion. Yet in just 16 days he drew, cut and cast the type - an astounding rate of production even by today's standards. While the drawings and matrices were lost in the Deepdene fire there are a few beautiful examples of it in use.
As it happens the book which I quoted from earlier uses Bertham and was my principle reference for completing the project. It is a gorgeous piece of printing.
Almost her first “job,” and probably it was not long after she had completed her course in stenography at some commercial school.

Our work brought us into more or less intimate office relations, which soon developed into relations of real friendship. I occasionally spent an evening either in her own home on the “North Side” not far from Lincoln Park, or more infrequently with her at the theatre, since my stipend was ridiculously small for one with such a high-sounding title as “Private Secretary.” I had become acquainted with Mr. Alden by correspondence. He had acted as agent for my father and me in the disposition of Dakota farm mortgages: we were in the Real Estate business in Dakota Territory where I had gone soon after graduating from High School in the early ’80s.

The type is very distinctive and gives a sense of character and craftsmanship missing from so much that is produced in our day. Several resources state that he regretted not getting back to it to smooth out some of the issues that crop up in a hurried project like this. Still - not bad for a rush job.
Like many of Goudy’s types there was no italic companion - the book uses Village 2 italic for a nice complementary look. I decided to take on the creation of a harmonized italic and bold for my endeavor. I looked carefully at several of his italics including Scripps, Californian, Deepdene and Truesdell to imagine a letter which complements the roman.
Goudy had a certain fondness for swash letters and so I figured this family needed them too.
One of his earliest and most successful families - Kennerly Old Style - had an openface so naturally I thought it'd be fitting to have that too.
The family ends up looking something like this.
ALDUS  Baskerville  Caxton  Didot  Estienne  Fournier  Gutenberg  Hamilton  Italian  JENSON  Krimpen  Lanston  Manutius  Nordzij  PEIGNOT  Quill  Ratdolt  Schoeffer  Tschichold  Umlaut  Veljović  WALBAUM  Yeats

and in the italic...
ONE day early in 1890 I first met Bertha M. Sprinks. I was private secretary to Richard Coe Alden, a financial broker in Chicago. She came to the same office as stenographer. It must have been almost her first “job,” and probably it was not long after she had completed her course in stenography at some commercial school.

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Here it is in comparison to the original in a mockup. Bertham is actually inspired by a type used in a book printed in 1482 by Leinhart Holle in Ulm. Ptolemy’s Cosmographia is an amazing achievement in printing - an atlas full of charts and text describing places on the maps. Much of Goudy’s education in books, book design and typography came from time spent at the Newberry Library in Chicago. Tom Rickner and I were in Chicago and decided we should head down town and see if the Cosmographia was there...
in almost Blues Brothers fashion we headed downtown 'on a mission from Goudy'. The main difference being we drove in Tom's Prius which has significantly less horsepower than the Blues Mobile 440 cubic inch powerplant.
The Newberry library has an incredible collection of Goudy ephemera - unfinished drawings of what is only recorded as Design 31-a
He was never quite happy with this one - even after revisiting it several times.
The Newberry also has a complete set of Ars Typographica. A journal he started in 1918 to discuss the state of printing and graphic design.
It was sort of Goudy’s bully pulpit from which he preached the importance of tradition in creating good printing. He edited many of the issues and designed many of the pages.
And, finally, they did have the Cosmographia - or a reprint anyway. Maybe they didn’t trust a middle aged type geek with a camera with the real deal. This is an amazing book for its day. Wood cut illustrations and initial letters mixed with a rich angular text.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segadunum</td>
<td>17 $\frac{2}{4}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contigui monti pireneo sunt Cotueni quem cimitas</td>
<td>43 $\frac{1}{2}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lugdunum colonia</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lugdunensis situs</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atera gallie lugdunensis qui contigua sunt agtanie dicta sunt ex reliquis quo occasum spectat se oceano allui tur sic descritur Post</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ligiris &amp; ostia</td>
<td>17 $\frac{3}{2}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brivatus portus</td>
<td>48 $\frac{1}{4}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eri &amp; ostia</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vidana portus</td>
<td>49 $\frac{1}{4}$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gabenum promontorium</td>
<td>16 $\frac{1}{2}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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*tabular setting of fractions*
and, of course, amazing maps. So I was excited to be able to close the loop on this bit of research. Though some critics would say this type has little to do with Bertham it’s plain to see that many letters in Holle’s type can be identified as direct ancestors of Bertham.
While not direct copies the spirit of many of the letters exist in Goudy’s design. The very small serifs on i and l, and asymmetrical serifs on r, m and others certainly depart from the direction that Goudy took. But there is definitely some recognizable DNA here.
Goudy wrote in his essay Type What is It: “We should study the early types in order to know them, to increase the material for our future use, or even copy them if we do not allow our copies to become the end desired, instead of the means to an end. We should study them, not merely to revive or imitate them because of indiscriminating admiration, but study them to enable us to re-knit the broken threads of tradition, there intact, and finally to adapt them to our increased mechanical facilities and thus create for them a wider (use) currency. Only an inventor knows how to borrow.”
The distinctive lowercase z... brings me to my last note about this adventure in type. My colleagues at Ascender have a deep reverence for the Goudy’s work. We decided to create a website - Goudyfonts.com - with which to help preserve their interesting story.
From this site we will host a blog, a gallery of type specimens and photos, links to Goudy-related information, reprinted articles and of course a way to purchase the best digital versions of Goudy designs from their respective foundries. This talk barely scratches the surface in what the Goudy's contributed to our profession. Much of what they've done has been forgotten due to the broad influence of post WW2 design movements and the radical changes they brought - for better and worse. We hope to bring to light more of their achievements through this website and hope to make it a good resource for students and professionals alike.

We produced a letter press keepsake with this announcement that my lovely assistant will distribute from the table in the back.
THERE WAS A GREAT SUM of accomplishment in this practical artist. He was a designer and a philosopher, a writer and a craftsman, a printer, who preached of beauty in utility. In his time he won vast acclaim and once it was said that half of the display lines in a national magazine were set in Goudy type. His was a truly great body of work, much of it of a high order, free of freaks and frills. Only time will tell how his type faces endure, but he gave a vast impetus to the art of printing. The entire reading public is in Mr. Goudy’s debt.

—New York Herald Tribune, May 13, 1947
In Evening at Deepdene Fred writes: "A leaf comes eddying down, borne on a tiny steed of air - its work is done, reminding us that we, as well, must work and strive to do our part before we reach the change that life's Autumn brings." Thanks Fred and Bertha for doing your parts.