

Monti Sans

Eric Li

The origins of the typeface we know today as Monti Sans can be traced back to America's first successful type foundry, established in Philadelphia by Archibald Binny and James Ronaldson in 1796. Among the most enduring American types ever designed, it has now nearly realized a proverbial nine lives. Its first three iterations took the form of hand-set type and spanned more than a century. Its fourth incarnation, an arduous conversion to Linotype, was undertaken in the 1940s by C.H. Griffith at the Mergenthaler Company with the aid of Princeton University Press's P.J. Conkwright. It was this revival, intended to provide a historically appropriate face for the publication of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, that gave the font its modern name. The advent of computerized typesetting systems in the 1980s led to the creation of two intermediate, and unsatisfactory, digital renditions of Monticello. The accumulated defects were finally rectified by Matthew Carter's masterful reinterpretation in 2003. At about the same time, a digital version tailored to produce photopolymer plates for letterpress printing was created for Andrew Hoyem's Arion Press in San Francisco. Though it carries a different name, this was Monticello's eighth life and a kind of return to the past. With the pace of technological and societal change showing no sign of abating, a ninth life is now realized in the newly released—and for the first time ever as a sans serif—Monti Sans.

Mahlon Lovett joined Princeton in 1977 first in the Princeton University Press as a book designer under P.J. Conkwright and later as the first graphic designer of the communications department. Up until that point, printed ephemera existed in a

state of unified chaos except for one effort by Aaron Marcus and his wife, who at that point had returned as a graphic design teacher in the School of Architecture and his wife who was in the publications department, to create a system for designing booklets for several of the administration departments of Princeton including the registrar, office of development, and admissions.

It wasn't until the mid 90s, after the idea of graphic identity and design programs had trickled down from the corporate world that the University began consider the development of an identity. It was at this point that Mahlon Lovett and Laurel Cantor pushed for Justin Harmon, the then Director of Communications, to strongly consider creating an identity for the University. The decision to create a style guide and cohesive identity was proposed to Nassau Hall and accepted. Following the decision to go forward with the University's first branding attempt, several firms were asked to present to a panel of key stakeholders of the University including people from athletics, the office of development, the office of communications, and more. Of those firms presenting, the bid ultimately went to Drenttel Doyle Partners.

Through a back and forth process in which different designs were proposed and then critiqued by the stakeholders, the University finally settled on its first identity in 1996: 'Princeton' typeset in New Baskerville Bold, a contemporary reissue of John Baskerville's famous Baskerville transitional serif font, and 'University' typeset in Univers 65, a bold version of the neo grotesque sans-serif typeface designed by Adrian Frutiger. What was so striking about this typesetting was how much of a

departure it was from those of its peer institutions in terms of the usage of a sans serif *gasp* font.

In fact, through the years that it was used, there was significant push back from different stakeholders on campus, particularly the office of development, as being “too adventurous” for an institution like Princeton. As a result, this identity only managed to exist for a period of 11 years. In the early 2000s, the athletics department had hired Pentagram to do some design work of their own. This initial collaboration with designer Michael Bierut lead to further conversations and in 2007, Pentagram was hired to redesign the Princeton identity for the second time in less than 20 years. This time round, because Pentagram had already done work with the University, while there was still a set of stakeholders, there was much less back and forth. Pentagram came back after an initial presentation with a new logo and font choice for the identity: Monticello.

The year is now 2018 and the time has come for a new descendent of Monticello. In fall of 2017, Eric Li began at work Princeton University researching the history and the usage of Monticello as the University font. Through numerous visits to the University archives as well as interviews, this text functions as both an introduction of Monti Sans and a historical synopsis of Monticello and its relationship to the University.

Designed in direct response to this research, Monti Sans is a sans serif font created by literally chopping off the serifs of Monticello. Each letterform was printed out and with the slash of a blade, had its serif caps removed. These new

forms, clean of their historic baggage, were then digitized and turned into Monti Sans. While this blunt removal of Monticello's characteristic serifs breathe new light into this centuries old font. Whether or not people recognize these two fonts as related is neither here nor there. Monticello was the past. Monti Sans is the now *and* the future.

Figures

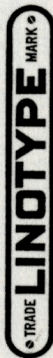
1. Archibald Binney and James Ronaldson, Binney and Ronaldson's Type used in *The Columbiad*, Philadelphia, 1807. Image scanned from *Printing Types, Their History Forms and Use Volume II* by D.B. Updike
2. Mergenthaler Linotype Company, Linotype's Proof No. 1, 1944. Image scanned from *Monticello: The History of a Typeface* by Charles Creesy
3. Eric Li, Installation of Type by Association, 2017
4. P.J. Conkwright, 1949 Broadside Specimen Poster of Monticello, 1949. Image scanned from *Monticello: The History of a Typeface* by Charles Creesy
5. Matthew Carter, Overlay of 'n' from Linotype Monticello over Digital Monticello, 2003. Image scanned from *Monticello: The History of a Typeface* by Charles Creesy
6. Princeton University Office of Communications, Princeton University Graphic Identity Project, 1993.
7. Various Princeton University Identities. (top) William Drenttel, Drenttel Doyle Partners, 1996 (middle) Michael Bierut, Pentagram, 2007 (bottom) Eric Li, 2017
- 8, 9. Eric Li, Comparison of Princeton Monticello and Monti Sans Typefaces, 2017 (back) Eric Li, Overlay of 'n' from Monti Sans over Princeton Monticello, 2017

COLUMBIAD.

Who raised an opening scroll, where proudly shone
Burgoyne and vengeance from the British throne. 280

Champlain receives the congregated host,
And his husht waves beneath the sails are lost;
Ticonderoga rears his rocks in vain,
Nor Edward's walls the weighty shock sustain;
Deep George's loaded lake reluctant guides
Their bounding barges o'er his sacred tides.
State after state the splendid pomp appals,
Each town surrenders, every fortress falls;
Sinclair retires; and with his feeble train,
In slow retreat o'er many a fatal plain, 290

301. Binney & Ronaldson's Type used in *The Columbiad*, Philadelphia, 1807

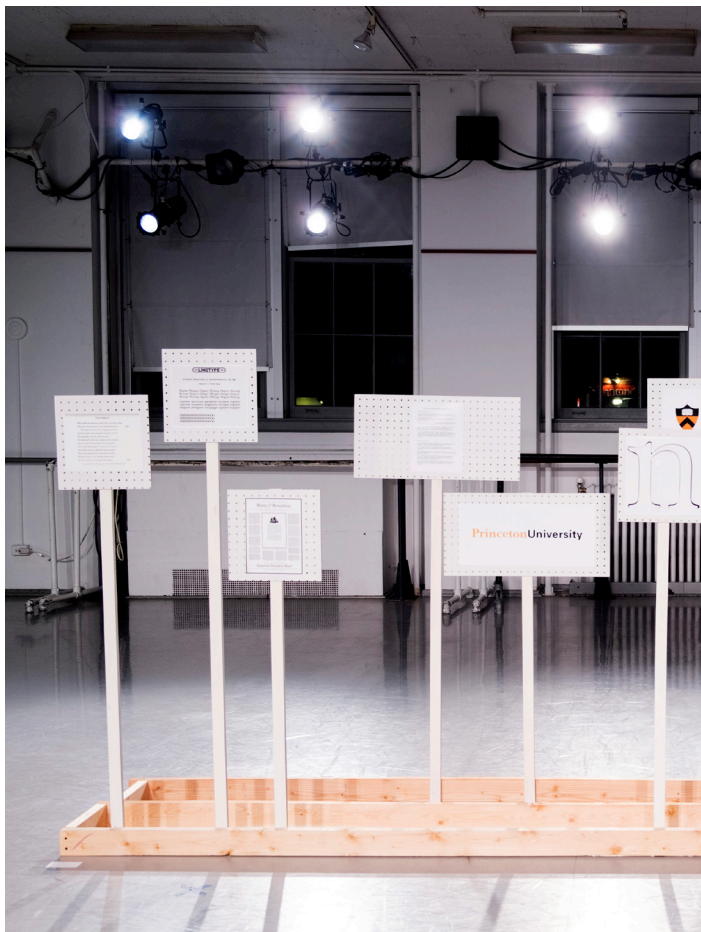


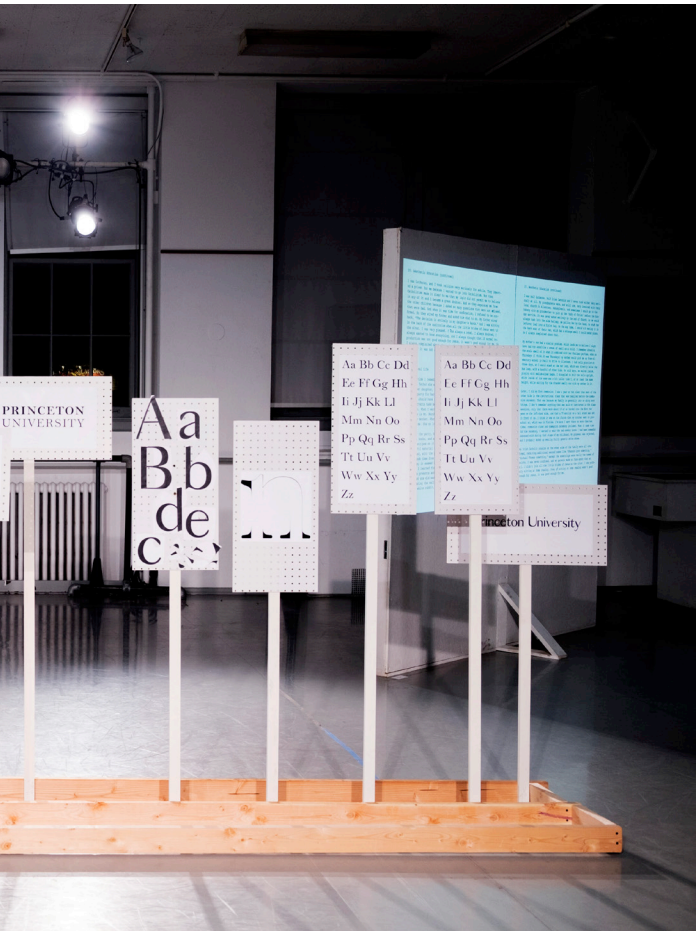
10 POINT MONTICELLO EXPERIMENTAL NO. 285

Casts on 11 Point Slug

Hcgnoy Mncgoy Oognicy Mynocg Ongcoy Hoycng
Hoycgn Mogcyn Oongyc Myognc Onygoc Hogync
Hyocgn Myonc g Ogyonc Monyg Ocgy no Honcys
cygnooc ogccnyyon ggcoyy nno coycgynn oygcnoy
cogyconn oyongoncy goggcynon yoccyg nnn yogyocn
nocgoycn yonogyonc noycgoggn cygoyn cn noygoc

HHHHHHMMMMMOOOOO
HHHHHHMMMMMOOOOO
HHHHHHMMMMMOOOOO





Binny & Ronaldson

JAMES ROSSIGNOL, a canny young man from Edinburgh, came to Philadelphia in 1794. He was then twenty-six years old, endowed with the customary frugal habits and shrewd sense of his countrymen. The business of taking bails seemed to offer opportunity, so he opened a small shop. Apparently he was successful at it, because even after a disastrous fire in 1796 which destroyed his establishment, he still had money. The fire was no doubt a grievous blow to him at the time, but providentially for printing it compelled him to find another job. The new work he found was selling type, probably the last thing he alone would ever have thought of doing. But shortly after the fire he met a fellow Scotsman, Archibald Binny, who had been

a priest as a rather skillful punch artist in the old country. Heavy preachers the younger Ronalds that the time was just right in this vigorous young city to establish a bandy that would supply American primary with type, ornaments, and other materials, which heretofore had principally been available only from England. They formed a partnership. Heavy's engraving tools, casting molds, and other paraphernalia were valued at \$388.88, and presumably J. Ronalds put up a like amount in cash. Their plant was opened "on a corner of Cedar Street adjacent Ninth and Tenth Streets" and a sign was hung on a frame house occupying that address: HENRY & RONALDSON, TYPE FOUNDRIES. Their equipment was expanded numer-

FICA ITALIC, NO. 1

what during the first year of operation, when Adam Mappa, an unsuccessful but talented type founder from New York, joined them as a workman and added both his skill and tools to the new enterprise. Later they acquired the tools and materials that were manufactured by P. S. Fournier for the B. F. Baché foundry, which Benjamin Franklin had so hopefully established for his grandson in 1786. These tools were extremely helpful to Blumy, and he acknowledged that he received many valuable suggestions from them. It's even possible they suggested an ingenious type caster which Blumy contrived. This new caster operated with a spring lever attached to the mold, giving it a quick return movement, which greatly increased the speed of output type.

The previous average speed before Bunsen's invention has been calculated at about thirteen types a minute. This new raster almost doubled that production. The business grew steadily. The account books of the firm show \$2011.57 paid in wages during the ten months period—June, 1798, to August, 1799. The rent of their house, which began at \$17.33 in 1796, was increased to \$40 four years later. To avoid this exorbitance and provide more fitting quarters, they build a house costing \$2500. After the turn of the century their operations

increased rapidly. By 1869 they had in their employ more than thirty men and boys. In that year they were facing a severe drought of sympathy. They couldn't get it in America, and because of strained relations with England and the power of her navy it was even difficult to obtain from the continent. In this emergency they sought the aid of Thomas Jefferson, and made this appealing letter: "Our efforts to procure sympathy from men across within the United States have failed, and we are now of it having obliged us in part with upwards of thirty journeymen and boys, we are under the necessity of making an extraordinary effort to procure the material to

THE OUTSTANDING MILL-BRAND PAPER IN THE ECONOMY-GROUP, EASTERN'S MANIFEST BOND IS EXCELLENT FOR MANY KINDS OF BUSINESS FORMS AND BILLHEADS. USE EASTERN'S MANIFEST BOND IN WHITE OR SIX DISTINCTIVE COLORS FOR BEST RESULTS FROM THE LEAST AMOUNT OF MONEY.

Proofs from master pattern plates of Linotype MONTICELLO were used in preparing copy for the two display lines; the line plates were reduced a little more than one-half. The vignette above was taken from the title-page of Henry & Donaldson's 1808 specimen book.

necessary in making printing types, indeed without supply we will be obliged soon to reduce the number of our workmen still more. We have concluded on James Russell's march with the consent of Esau to prevent a supply of such make arms from being regularly transported with it in France. For this purpose he is to go to Hamburg and thence to France where it is abundant; but it being the policy of France to embarrass the manufacturers of Britain as much as possible, and as this article with the same is scarce and dear, we are much afraid the French will not be much disposed to permit its shipment to the United States, fearing it will through this channel reach England. We solicit your assistance, and request an introduction to some persons in Hamburg, Paris etc to whose representations the French would

attach credit in order that we might be permitted to export enough for our own consumption in the United States." Jefferson sent them a long letter of introduction to Pierre S. DuPont, an able French statesman and publisher, and one of his closest friends in Paris. (This DuPont was the father of the two young men who established the now famous DuPont Company in America.) In this letter Jefferson wrote: "Among the arts which have the greatest progress among us is that of printing. Heretofore we imported your books, and with them much political principle from England. We now print a great deal, and shall soon supply ourselves with most of the books of considerable demand. But the foundations of printing you know, is the type-foundry, and a material essential to that is Antimony. Unfortunately

that miners not among those as yet found in the United States, and the difficulty and dearth of getting it from England, will force us to discontinue our type-foundries, and resort to you again for our books, unless some new source of supply can be found. The bearer, Mr Ronaldson, is of the concerns of Binney and Ronaldson, type-founders of Philadelphia. He goes to France for the purpose of opening some new source of supply, where we learn that this article is abundant. The bearer, I am persuaded, will readily give any assurances which may be required for this object, and will also certify that the type-founders here are sufficient pledge that our type-foundry here are supplied with the best quality of type that can be supplied them. I do not know that there will be any obstacle to his bringing from France any quantity of Antiquary he may have occasion for; but let

there abundant, I have taken the liberty of recommending him to your patronage. I know your enlightened and liberal views on subjects of this kind, and the friendly interest you take in whatever concerns our welfare. I place my Romanism therefore in your hands, and pray you to advise him, and patronize the object which carries him to Europe, and is so interesting to him and to our country." Romanism's mission, in considerable part, was to stir up the interest of the public in the cause of the Roman Catholic Church, and to make it more successful. In this aim, the 1809 issue of *Romanism* was successful. Romanism issued their first specimen book. It is likely that *broadsides*, or *foldiers*, were printed previously, but as yet none of them have been unearthed. The 1809 specimen is a slim pamphlet of twenty-four pages and two double-spreads in

MONTICELLO, 18 PT. ITALIC

series, showing 102 metal ornaments for sale. Some of these were engraved by Alexander Andriam, the god New York doctor who abandoned his profession to become the father of American wood engraving. The first specimen showing their type faces was printed in 1812, and lists sixty-eight different fonts. Among these are seven and a part of another that have survived to this day. Six are here used in this specimen. They were the first types used by Archibald Binny, and were probably in use by 1797. For thirty years they were popular in the United States, and were widely used in book and newspaper printing. These popular taste came to prefer faster and much less distinguished faces. The old No. 1 series but for

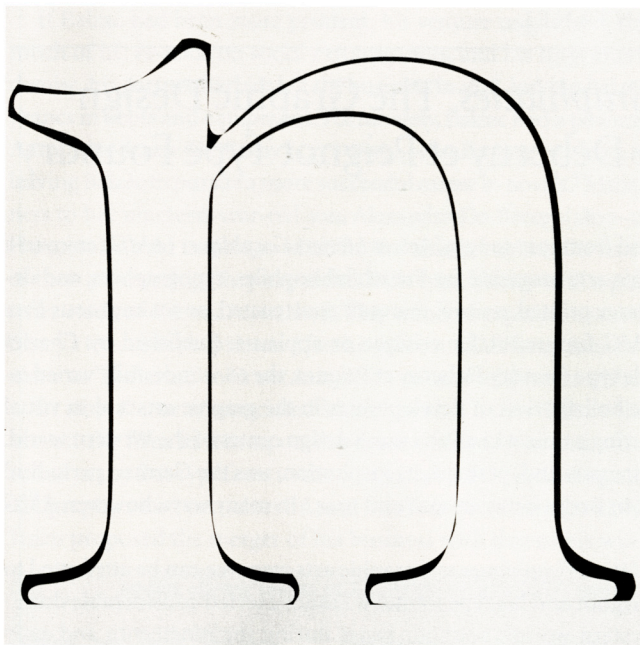
vir and gradually died. For nearly seventy years he remained buried and unknown, but the merities themselves, by some fortunate chance, were preserved. In 1892 they were rediscovered by Dr. H. G. Wells, of the University of California. A notice about the discovery was printed, and the type was reprinted. Several printers, notably Daniel B. Updike, Bruce Rogers, Fred Antonson, and the Grishams, have used it with great skill and effectiveness. The possibility of reviving the face for Linotype was considered even during the 1920's, but it was not until 1945 with announcements of plans for publishing a fifty-volume work of the complete Papers of Thomas Jefferson that the type was again revived for the project. Linotype suggested to Princeton University Press, MORFON, R. L. O. T. R. N. R. O. N. A. N.

the publisher of the *Papers*, that a version of the *Story of Emancipation* type would be historically most appropriate, since the prominent pages of Jefferson's life coincided almost exactly with that of the type—from 1796-1826. The suggestion was enthusiastically received by the people at Princeton, and very shortly, even during war handprints, the casting began. This Linotype version is called *MONTEITHALL*, for somewhat obvious reasons. Its first public appearance in book composition will be in Volume 1 of the *Papers*, which is scheduled for publication in the fall of 1846. At this time three more have been cast: 10, 9, and 7 point, and we have

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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY GRAPHIC IDENTITY PROJECT

Conceptual Goals:

- 1) to reinforce perceptions consistent with Princeton's mission as an institution committed to both scholarship and teaching of the highest quality
- 2) to acknowledge Princeton's history of service to broad educational purposes and suggest that the institution will provide continuing leadership
- 3) to suggest Princeton's appreciation of its human dimension and the ways it fosters exchange among its talented and diverse students and faculty
- 4) to avoid reinforcing stereotypes of Princeton University that could be seen as hostile to key constituencies, particularly members of underrepresented minority groups, women, and persons from less-than-affluent backgrounds
- 5) to find a graphic "voice" that is consistently and identifiably Princeton's, but which speaks with eloquence to audiences that range widely, from prospective applicants for undergraduate admission, to alumni and friends of the university, to graduate students and faculty, to the public at large

Functional Goals:

- 1) to define and refine the graphic elements common to most Princeton University publications: logotype and symbols, typefaces, color palette, and photography
- 2) to create protocols for linking University identity elements with those of academic units requiring their own identities
- 3) to create comprehensive layouts of stationery, newsletters and other publications to illustrate the application of these identity elements
- 4) to produce a resource book that articulates appropriate use of the identity elements, provides specifications for official stationery, and offers templates to facilitate desktop production of publications
- 5) to establish a framework for the design of publications associated with the upcoming celebration of Princeton's 250th anniversary celebration and the anticipated fund-raising campaign

PrincetonUniversity



PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY

Princeton University

Aa Bb Cc Dd

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