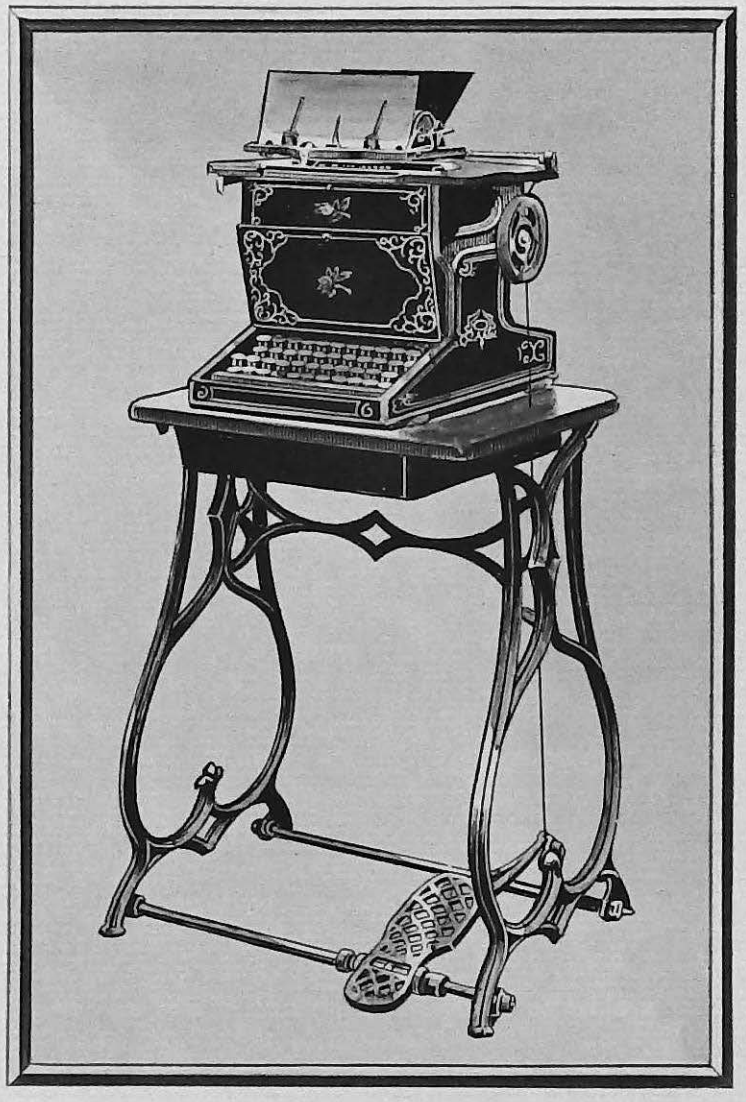


A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TYPEWRITER

The idea for a "writing machine" is not new

In 1714, when reading and writing were still the cultural attainments of the few (and, it might be added, many of these few found writing a very difficult task), an English Queen by the name of Anne granted the following patent on a "writing machine"...

"An artificial machine or method for the impressing or transcribing of letters, singly or progressively, one after another as in writing, whereby all writings whatsoever may be embossed on paper or parchment so neat and exact as not to be distinguished from print; that the said machine or method may be of great use in settlements and public records, the impression being deeper and not to be erased and counterfeited without manifest discovery."

It is by no means a reflection on the royal bearing of Queen Anne that she stepped down from the rarified air of Court and Throne to issue this patent. Unquestionably, she did so in the interest of humanity—or, to be more specific, in the interest of discouraging the political document forger whose trade thrived and whose activities caused Anne a great deal of inconvenience.

Since 1714 the "writing machine" has come a long way...and accomplished many things. Known the world over as the typewriter, it has speeded the mechanics of business management to such an extent that the functions of administration, control and recording have been able to keep pace with the ever-increasing speed of production. The typewriter has helped to emancipate women, who now share equally with men the rights and opportunities of the commercial world. It has so speeded the transition of thoughts from mind to paper that, without it, the wheels of industry would soon stop turning.

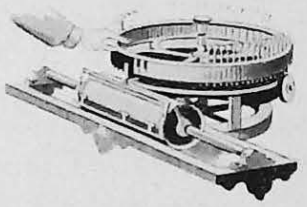
It can hardly be imagined that Queen Anne foresaw what would happen to the "writing machine." Yet, her patent serves to prove that a writing machine had long been thought of and desired by mankind. It remained for Americans to translate that thought and desire into a practical machine which could be manufactured in volume and sold at prices that were reasonable in the eyes of business and professional people all over the world.

This is the story of how the "writing machine" became the typewriter

America's first typewriter patent was granted by President Andrew Jackson. "Old Hickory" ok'd the patent application of William Burt of Detroit, Michigan, in July of 1829.

Burt's table-size machine got a lot of publicity. Although Burt called it a TYPOGRAPHER, one New York newspaper suggested that it be named "Burt's Family Letter Press." Just how many families would either have had room or practical use for such a machine (or, for that matter, could have afforded one) is open to doubt. Anyway, the TYPOGRAPHER never got into production.

The Burt Machine



The Thurber Machine

Sholes' early model

In 1843 Charles Thurber of Worcester, Mass., patented his machine. Thurber's typewriter, although it embodied the first application of the roller-platen used today, was never produced.

Development of the first *practical* typewriter began in 1866, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Christopher Latham Sholes, editor, printer, inventor and political scientist, is the man to whom personal credit for this great invention must go. Sholes and two friends, Samuel W. Soulé and Carlos Glidden spent 7 years building model after model, altering, improving and refining until, at last, they had a practical working model.

Sholes' only fear was that his beloved typewriter would enjoy a brief period of popularity and then "like any other novelty... be thrown aside." Happily, before he died in 1890, Sholes knew otherwise. In speaking of it he said "...I builded wiser than I knew, and the world has benefit of it."

In 1873, Christopher Sholes and his oilman backer, James Densmore, realized that much more work of an exacting, technical nature had yet to be done on the machine. They sought a manufacturer familiar with the problems of making a product comprised of many small, intricate parts. Their search ended with E. Remington & Sons, the famous Mohawk Valley, N. Y., manufacturer. Here was the logical firm to put the typewriter into production.

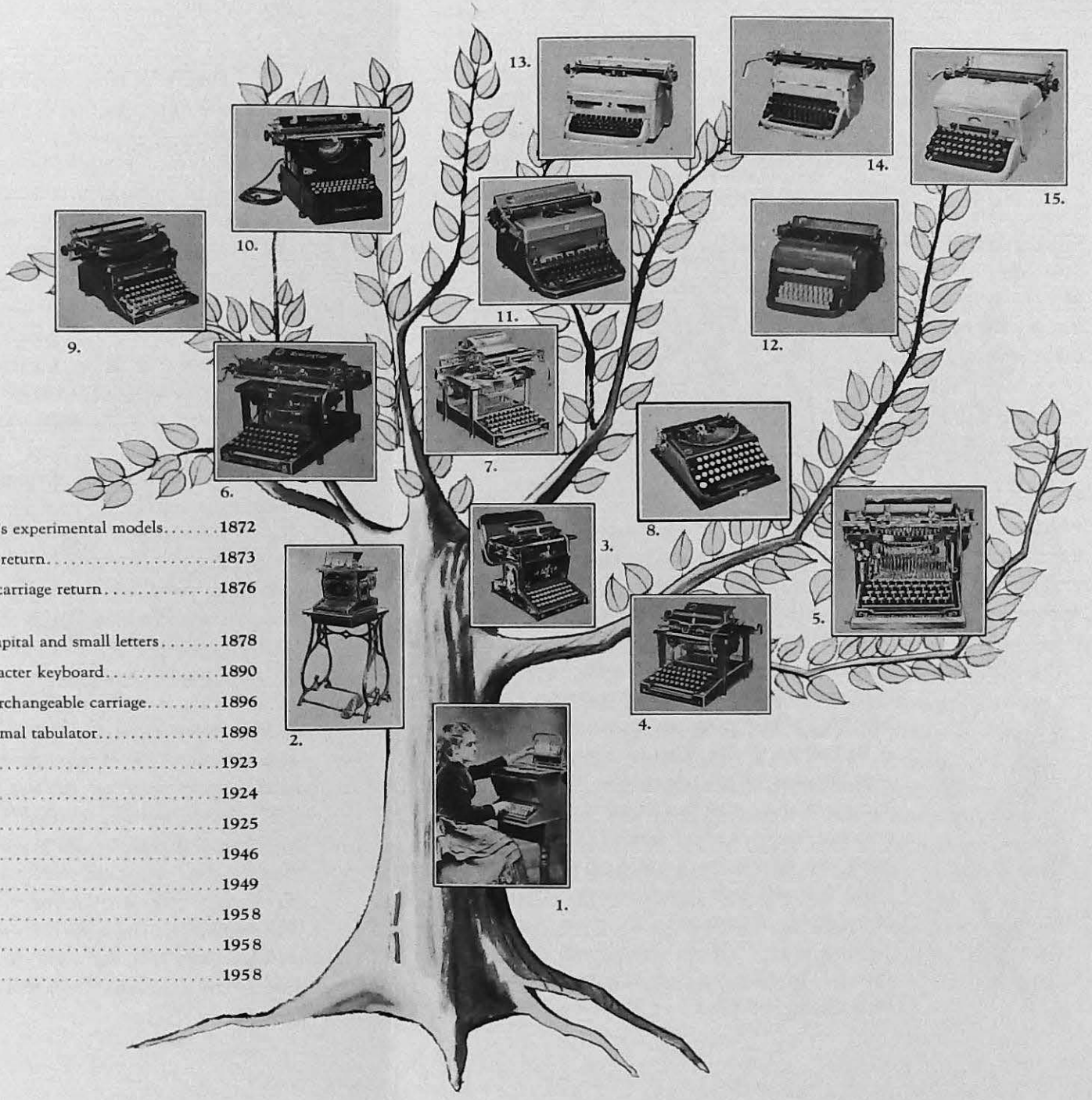
After the Civil War, E. Remington & Sons had turned to the manufacture of sewing machines and agricultural implements. Eliphalet Remington, its founder, died in 1861 and the company passed on to his three sons. It was to his son Philo Remington that James Densmore and a persuasive salesman by the name of G. N. Yost presented Sholes' machine.

Philo Remington put a trained team of experienced mechanics, led by William K. Jenne, to work on the machine and it developed quickly. One thorny problem was the keyboard. At first it was decided to arrange the keys in alphabetical order. But with that arrangement, the most often used letters were not necessarily the most accessible and the type bars collided frequently.

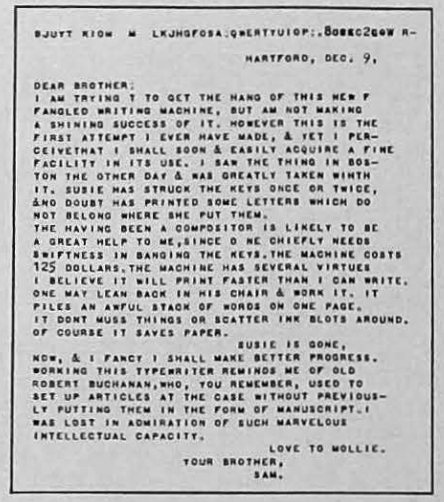
These men, working together, finally rearranged the typewriter keyboard in the spirit of the printer's type case in which the pieces were assorted according to convenience and not according to the alphabet—which remains virtually unchanged to this day. The first commercial typewriter, the REMINGTON No. 1, was made in September, 1873 and from then on the parade of REMINGTON leaders has continued down through the years.

The typewriter family tree

1. Miss Lillian Sholes at one of her father's experimental models.....1872
2. Remington #1, with foot-pedal carriage return.....1873
3. Remington #1, improved with manual carriage return.....1876
4. Remington Standard #2, the first typewriter to write in both capital and small letters.....1878
5. Remington Model #5 with first 84 character keyboard.....1890
6. Remington Standard #8 with first interchangeable carriage.....1896
7. Remington Standard #7 with first decimal tabulator.....1898
8. Remington Portable #1.....1923
9. Remington Noiseless.....1924
10. Remington Electric #1.....1925
11. Remington KMC.....1946
12. Remington Electric Deluxe.....1949
13. Remington Electric.....1958
14. Remington Standard.....1958
15. Remington Noiseless.....1958



The history of the typewriter is also filled with humor and with those "signes of the times" which indicate first reactions to the machine. For example, the first American novelist to turn out a manuscript on the typewriter was Mark Twain. His experiences with the "curiosity-breeding little joker" are still good for a hearty laugh—as is the first typed book "Life On the Mississippi." His first letter, shown here, reflects the trials of someone who owns the first of anything.



BJUYT KIOM M LKJHGFOSA:QWERTYUIOP:.8OBEC2GOW R-

HARTFORD, DEC. 9,

DEAR BROTHER:
I AM TRYING T TO GET THE HANG OF THIS NEW F
FANGLED WRITING MACHINE, BUT AM NOT MAKING
A SHINING SUCCESS OF IT. HOWEVER THIS IS THE
FIRST ATTEMPT I EVER HAVE MADE, & YET I PER-
CEIVETHAT I SHALL SOON & EASILY ACQUIRE A FINE
FACILITY IN ITS USE. I SAW THE THING IN BOS-
TON THE OTHER DAY & WAS GREATLY TAKEN WINTH
IT. SUSIE HAS STRUCK THE KEYS ONCE OR TWICE,
&NO DOUBT HAS PRINTED SOME LETTERS WHICH DO
NOT BELONG WHERE SHE PUT THEM.
THE HAVING BEEN A COMPOSITOR IS LIKELY TO BE
A GREAT HELP TO ME,SINCE O NE CHIEFLY NEEDS
SWIFTNESS IN BANGING THE KEYS.THE MACHINE COSTS
125 DOLLARS.THE MACHINE HAS SEVERAL VIRTUES
I BELIEVE IT WILL PRINT FASTER THAN I CAN WRITE.
ONE MAY LEAN BACK IN HIS CHAIR & WORK IT. IT
PILES AN AWFUL STACK OF WORDS ON ONE PAGE.
IT DONT MUSS THINGS OR SCATTER INK BLOTS AROUND.
OF COURSE IT SAVES PAPER.
SUSIE IS GONE,
NOW, & I FANCY I SHALL MAKE BETTER PROGRESS.
WORKING THIS TYPEWRITER REMINDS ME OF OLD
ROBERT BUCHANAN,WHO, YOU REMEMBER, USED TO
SET UP ARTICLES AT THE CASE WITHOUT PREVIOUS-
LY PUTTING THEM IN THE FORM OF MANUSCRIPT.I
WAS LOST IN ADMIRATION OF SUCH MARVELOUS
INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY.
LOVE TO MOLLIE.
YOUR BROTHER,
SAM.

The classic story to survive the typewriter's early struggle is that of the Kentucky mountaineer who returned a typewritten letter he had received with the following indignant note: "You don't need to print no letters for me. I kin read writin." Others mistook typed letters for printed circulars.

One of the greatest barriers to the immediate popularity of the typewriter was a lack of trained operators. The New York YWCA pioneered typing instruction at its Ballard School. This plan was immediately branded "an obvious error in judgement" and the managers of the school called "well-meaning, but misguided ladies." The female mind and constitution were considered "too frail" to survive a six months course in typing! However, six REMINGTON typewriters and six "strong women" made short work of that theory. The girls, in spite of having proved their mettle, still faced formidable opposition.

The business world was a man's world. It was peopled by men and furnished for men. In it men spoke unexpurgated, male language; smoked strong, male cigars; and blissfully ignored the niceties. In a word, the men didn't want their comfortable male world abandoned to the delicate requirements of the women.

Early typewriter ads indicate that court reporters were considered the principal market for typewriters. Next in order were lawyers, editors, authors and clergymen . . . no mention was made of businessmen!

During the early years of REMINGTON Typewriter history, competitive advertising exceeded all reasonable limits in offering "speed." "Unequalled for Speed," "Most Rapid" and "London Award for Speed" were familiar phrases to readers of these ads. Annoyed by such misleading and unfounded claims, the Remington Typewriter Co. publicly challenged any other writing machine manufacturer in the world to prove that it made a faster machine than the REMINGTON. As added inducements, the Remington Co. allowed its competitors three months to prepare, permitted them to select the judges and, in addition, offered to pay all contest expenses! This challenge went unanswered, but it succeeded in cooling off the "hot speed" claims, and typewriter advertising became more realistic and informative.

1925—
Remington Rand introduces The First Electric Typewriter

After more than eighty years of typewriter development, it is unmistakably evident that the future of the industry lies with Electric Typewriters. They will soon be found in every office.

In 1925, Remington Rand pioneered the marketing of the Electric Typewriter. From then until 1949, however, the electric "typewriter" was actually a special application of the typewriter principle, far more suitable to the preparation of invoices and to the work of billing and accounting, than to the job of preparing top-notch correspondence.

It was not until 1949 that Remington Rand developed a truly all-purpose electric typewriter. Gone was the flat, trigger-happy keyboard; the limited usefulness; the need for incessant servicing. The REMINGTON Electric was not only faster and more practical, but it offered handsome, legible printwork.

Today we marvel at the tremendous, electronic computing machines which do everything but think (and, in some instances, seem to do even that)! Interestingly enough, many of these machines, in order to produce their results in black and white, include electric typewriters as an integral part of their complex machinery.

Regardless of application, the versatile electric typewriter is the industry's newest horizon. The trend from manually operated to electrically operated machines is well under way and still growing. However, there will be many offices and homes in which the STANDARD, NOISELESS, or Portable will still be preferred. Electric or manually operated, REMINGTON RAND typewriters will continue to lead the field in design and performance.

1958—

REMINGTON® STATESMAN ELECTRIC TYPEWRITER TRADEMARK turns out proportionally-spaced correspondence as crisp and representative as a calling card. Its *twenty* exclusive features make it the most adaptable, fully functional proportional-spacing *electric* typewriter available today.

REMINGTON® Electric Typewriter— This perfect-printing Electric turns out handsome correspondence and reports faster and with far less effort. Its swift electric action increases typing production as much as 50%.

REMINGTON STANDARD® Typewriter— for faster, easier, better *manual* typing. Tested Tempo Touch provides more responsive action. Perfect Positioning Scale assures fast, accurate margins. Exclusive FOLD-A-MATIC construction plus many other outstanding features make this the finest manual typewriter available today.

REMINGTON NOISELESS® Typewriter— The precision-built machine that provides typing perfection with quiet! Noiseless typebars silently p-r-e-s-s against the paper to give sharp, clear printwork without annoying clatter.

REMINGTON QUIET-RITER® ELEVEN Portable—Years ahead... the newest portable typewriter on the market. Features include 11-inch carriage, Super-Strength Frame for years of dependable service, and MIRACLE TAB for neat, accurate columns of names or figures. It is perfect for home use.

Again this year—throughout the world—
people are buying more **Remington**
Typewriters than any other brand.

Remington Rand
DIVISION OF SPERRY RAND CORPORATION
315 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.

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