

THE MAKING OF A REPLICA



For four years since I started the ERB Dust Jacket Reconstruction Project, I'd been asked over and over when I was going to produce a facsimile of the first edition dust jacket for *TARZAN OF THE APES*. Frankly, I held off for a couple of reasons.

First, unlike all the other dust jackets, which were printed in four-color process on a coated paper, the original jacket was printed on an uncoated stock of a particular gray-green color difficult to obtain among current paper manufacturer's options.

Second, though the ink jet printer does a great job with four-color halftone and photo reproduction, it was not good at laying solid color in large areas on uncoated paper. The print heads tended to leave lines, and the softness of an uncoated paper made the image spread and become fuzzy at the edges.

Finally I came to the conclusion that the only way to produce a worthy facsimile of this important dust jacket was to print it the same way the original had been: with metal plates on a printing press.

PREPARING THE ART

For the art, I worked with three different scans. The first scan was of an incomplete jacket with some of the spine missing. I planned to use my own original A.L. Burt jacket to fill in what was missing. Then George McWhorter let me make a scan of a complete jacket from the Burroughs

Memorial Collection. This was very exciting because I was able to actually measure the weight of the paper, and to match the color of the stock—using the inside of one of the jacket flaps—to color references. When I had almost finished cleaning up that scan I was contacted by Danton Burroughs.

Danton was glad to hear that I was finally going to produce this jacket, but he wanted to make sure that I had the cleanest copy available. He sent me a 600ppi scan of his own personal copy. Clearly, this was the best scan and, for the third time, I began to clean and separate the art.

Let me explain a little of what had to go into this reproduction. The Fred J. Arting illustration is not a painting. We know this because the jacket is printed with the application of three flat areas of color. There are no halftone dots as would be found on a reproduction of a painting or a photograph. The art was probably done as a line drawing, very likely the same drawing that is used as a title page in the book. Except for the tip of Tarzan's nose, two small lines seen through the foliage to the left of his knee, and two small variations in the application of the screens, that drawing and the jacket art are identical. The complete drawing for the jacket was probably done first and the title page was created from it. The gray tones of the foliage and the moon on the title page were applied with Ben Day screens—patterns rubbed onto the drawing, the negative, or the plate before it was etched. Since the origi-

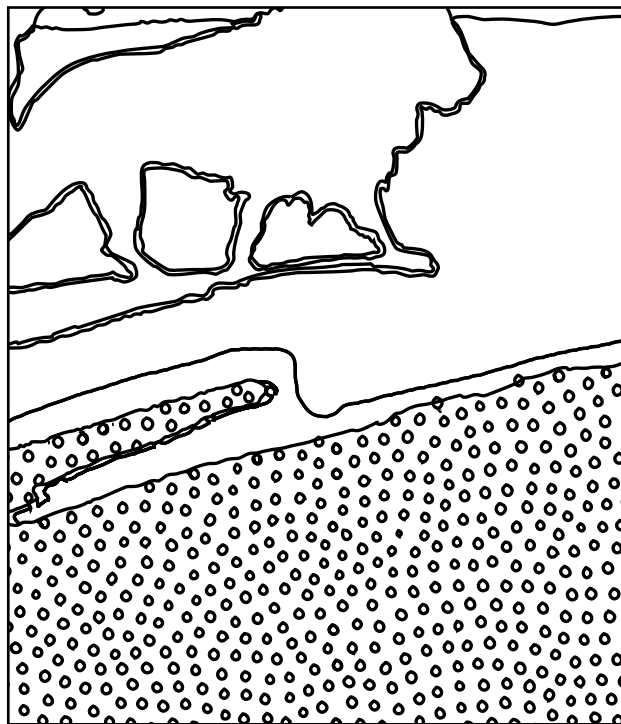
nal art was a line drawing, there was no need to produce a photomechanical separation for the printing. The negatives for each plate could be made from separate pieces of line art.

Another reason we can deduce that the separations were made by hand is that the “traps” are uneven. Because I was able to work with such high resolution scans of the printed jacket, I was able to actually see the traps (areas of the art that overlapped) on each color. On line art, traps are necessary so colors print without gaps between them—an effect seen when the printing is “off-register” because of paper shift. When hand separations are made as overlays from original art, the edges of the color area are drawn so that the areas overlap to create these traps. The jacket’s traps are clearly visible when enlarged.

To create clean separations from the scan, I had to first delete the gray paper background without disturbing the edges of the color areas. I erased around each shape with a stylus in Photoshop, then I duplicated and traced each color area separately to make sure that I included the traps. A test negative revealed that the edges in the Photoshop file were not smooth enough, because of the rasterized art, making it necessary to trace all the art using Bezier paths and control points in Adobe Illustrator to get a sharp edge. Each leaf, curve and indentation was traced by hand.



Closeup of the line work showing the traps around “of the” lettering.



Closeup of the outlined Ben Day pattern.

While tracing the art I took the opportunity to add the extra portions of the drawing, at top and bottom, which are part of the frontispiece. This was primarily for the benefit of those who might order this piece as a print to be framed. The addition to the art make this the most complete version of the Arting image ever produced.

The bottom half of the jacket has a stipple pattern known as a Ben Day screen. When First Edition Library created their version of this jacket, they didn’t bother to put the screen in at all. In fact, it is an important element of the art. This is the area of the jacket that is most likely to rub off or wear out. On the Burroughs, Inc. jacket the stipple is still very visible, except along the folds and the bottom edge. Still, it would have been very difficult to reproduce without making a small circle path and then duplicating and placing each dot by hand. I managed to find a copy of the same stipple pattern and, by scanning it at 1200dpi, was able to trace it in Photoshop with the “make paths” command. I then combined it with the rest of the art for the yellow plate. After making all the paths in Photoshop, I copied them into Adobe Illustrator to make the final art file.

That was 57 hours on this version, not counting the 60 or so hours on the other two versions. I’d say that I got to know this particular piece of art pretty well.

THE PRINT RUN

To find the paper, I wrote to 11 paper manufacturers asking for samples of a greenish-gray stock. Only one mill, Cascades Fine Papers Group, in Canada, was able to supply me with anything close. When I got the sample of Rolland Motif, Warm Green I compared it to the Court Grey color swatch in Maerz and Paul's *Dictionary of Color* (1930). It was a perfect match. The original jacket is printed on a heavy cover stock, and the Rolland Warm Green is available in 80lb cover. So this reproduction has the same stiff feel as the original. Though the paper is lightly embossed with a screen pattern on one side, the reverse is smooth and makes a splendid printing surface.

I ordered the plates from Owasso Graphic Arts, Inc., America's largest copper and magnesium photoengraver. In business for over 50 years, Owasso is the major supplier of dies and metal plates for hot stamping, foil stamping, debossing, printing and rubber stamp masters. Working with the advice of their tech support, I ordered the 16-gauge, wood-mounted dies for the jacket and the bookmark. I was able to send the art files electronically which made for quick turnaround and I got the plates delivered to the printer within a week.



The Miehle Vertical press.



John sets up the plates in the chase, the frame which holds them in place on the press.



The black plates in position on the press. The dust jacket and bookmark were printed at the same time.

The first printer I went to was very enthusiastic about the project. His business was mainly in embossing and foil printing, but he had several old Heidelberg "Windmill" presses that he kept clean and used for a number of letterpress jobs. I had delivered all the art files to him before the 2003 Dum-Dum in Louisville, and expected that the job would be finished within a month or so. The paper had been ordered and delivered, plates were ordered and everything was ready to go. When I got back from Louisville, after taking a number of advance orders, I found that printing had not even started. When I asked about it, saying that I'd already taken orders based on his promise, the printer told me that he was having problems getting the yellow to print correctly. It was coming out too dark on the gray-green paper and he was working on various solutions. This turned into a major delay of over four months. Every week I would call him to see what progress had been made and he would put me off with one excuse or another and promises that he would have a proof for me the next week. I was concerned that I would not be able to find another commercial letterpress printer in Denver and so I felt that I was pretty

much at a dead end. But after four months, and nothing to show for it, I finally had to go to his shop and pull the job.

Through friends who are small press enthusiasts I discovered The Pressworks of Denver, Colorado. Though primarily an offset printer, their equipment included both a Heidelberg



John Swatzai starts printing, keeping an eye on the sheets as they come off the press.

flatbed and a Miehle vertical rotary cylinder press used mainly for stamping and die cutting. As a member of the Amalgamated Printer's Association, the owner, Lonnie Smith is an avid aficionado of letterpress printing and a collector of antique presses. He was interested in the project though his shop had never tried doing a multicolor letterpress job before. We first thought we would need to do it on the Heidelberg, but one of the pressmen, John Swatzai, had been trained on the Miehle 54 years earlier and was sure he could handle it on that.

Inks were mixed to match both the notes taken from the Louisville source jacket and the FEL dust jacket. The green and black were relatively easy to match, but the yellow did tend to go much darker when laid on the gray-green stock. John and his ink-man, Mike Krosky, knew what they were doing, however, and the yellow-gold of the original was successfully matched and proofs were approved.

Printing was accomplished over three days, allowing a full day for drying on each color. The bookmarks and jackets were printed together and trimmed out later. As it turned out, the press run was made in June, 2004, 90 years after the release of the McClurg first edition in June, 1914. Consequently, I dubbed this the 90th Anniversary Replica Dust Jacket.

Danton Burroughs had agreed to stamp 90 of the jackets with Ed's signature stamp—the same one he used to endorse his checks. As soon as the jackets were ready, I packed them up and sent them off to ERB, Inc.. Danton told me that he was going to have his secretary stamp them because she was much more meticulous about



Plate proofs for each of the three colors.

these things. She made a photocopy of the jacket flap and experimented with various positions and angles of stamping. After the exchange of some faxes, we finalized the look and she started on them. I got the package back in about a week. Fast work, I thought.

I kept 100 of the printed sheets aside to use as framable prints, should anyone want to have the entire, untrimmed artwork. Bob Topp, owner of The Hermitage Bookshop, bought one, had it framed and proudly hung it in his "gallery."

This jacket was quite an ordeal to get done, but I'm happy with the final product. I've sold them to book dealers and to collectors, and every couple of months someone finds me on the internet and orders one. Danton is very pleased with it and George McWhorter pronounced it "Perfect!" Overall I can feel pretty satisfied that I've contributed a little bit of quality to ERB collecting around the world.



—Phil Normand

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