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Fig. 1. Dard Hunter at Roycroft by Clara Ragna Johnson, circa 1906.

Fig. 2. Manhattan. Designed by Dard Hunter. Printed by the Roycrofters, 1910.



## Dard Hunter — A Life in Paper Bernard Vinzani

Dard Hunter (fig. 1) was one of the prolific graphic designers for Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft shop at the beginning of the last century. While he was there he honed his design skills and eventually oversaw the production of numerous Roycroft titles where he designed title pages, texts and entire books (fig. 2). Hunter was a curious learner and developed an eye for fine printing and the design elements that made those books a pleasurable reading experience. Handmade paper was used for many of the books and that left a lasting impression

in Hunter's aesthetic development.

Wishing to learn more about the "international" style of design, Hunter left the Roycroft shops in 1908 to study abroad in Austria and England. While in England he worked at the Norfolk Studio in London as a graphic designer, and he also worked as an apprentice at the firm of T.J. Marshall, maker of the papermaking moulds and dandy rolls for the Crown Printing Office (fig. 3).

In the basement of that factory Hunter made his first paper by hand and became acquainted with the various papermaking wires, moulds and dandy roll coverings used in the hand and machine papermaking industry.

When Hunter returned to the United States, he settled in Marlborough-on-Hudson, New York where he purchased the 18th century Gomez House, and he built a small paper mill where he experimented making handmade paper. It was here that Hunter made his first book entirely by his own hand (fig. 4), where he cut the punches for the type, cast the type, made the paper, *cont. on page 39.*



Fig. 3. Combination line and light-and-shade watermark by Hunter sewed to a mould frame made by T.J. Marshall. Mould is 9 1/2" x 12 1/4".

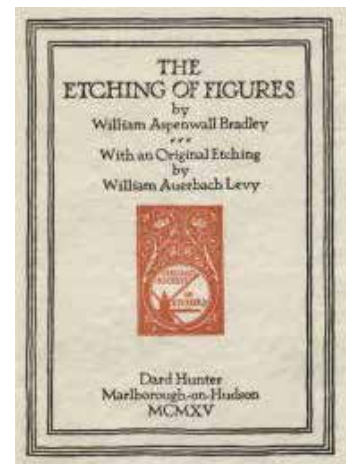


Fig. 4. Title page from The Etching of Figures.

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printed, and bound the book edition of *The Etching of Figures* for the Chicago Society of Etchers. This experience and a later book for the Society contributed to Hunter's lifelong study to learn all he could about the papermaking craft and the cultural uses of paper. Hunter went on to write many articles, including those for the American Philatelic Congress, and books, including *Old Papermaking*, *Primitive Papermaking*, *Papermaking in India*, and *Papermaking, The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft*.

In his research travels to understand the development of papermaking, Hunter collected books, paper samples, paper tools, and machinery. He eventually established a paper museum at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1939, then later at the Institute of Paper Chemistry in Appleton, Wisconsin. In the early 1980's the Friends of Dard Hunter was formed to find a permanent home for his massive collection of papermaking artifacts, and eventually those became the predominant collection of the American Museum of Paper located on the Georgia Tech campus in Atlanta. As a charter member of the Friends, I was aware of the numerous references to philately in his writings,<sup>1</sup> and I had started my own collection of philatelic watermarks, maker's marks, and errors when I worked as a papermaker at Twinrocker Paper in Indiana.

Curious to know more about Hunter's involvement with philately, I started to make inquiries about Hunter's interest in stamp collecting. During a Friends of Dard Hunter annual meeting in Chillicothe, Ohio, Hunter's home town, I discovered that his son Dard Hunter II was an APS member and a collector of U.S. essays and proofs of the 1851-57 three-cent stamp. It was at this meeting that his son Dard Hunter III asked me to look over a stash of papers that his grandfather had collected. In the Mountain House pressroom where Hunter hand-printed some of his later limited edition books, including the well known *Papermaking by Hand in America*, I laid out a number of sheets from a large portfolio. I immediately recognized the sheets were rubbings of the philatelic watermarks of Great Britain and the colonies (figs. 5&6) from the dandy rolls and hand moulds in the inventory of T.J. Marshall where Hunter worked in 1911. *cont. on next page.*

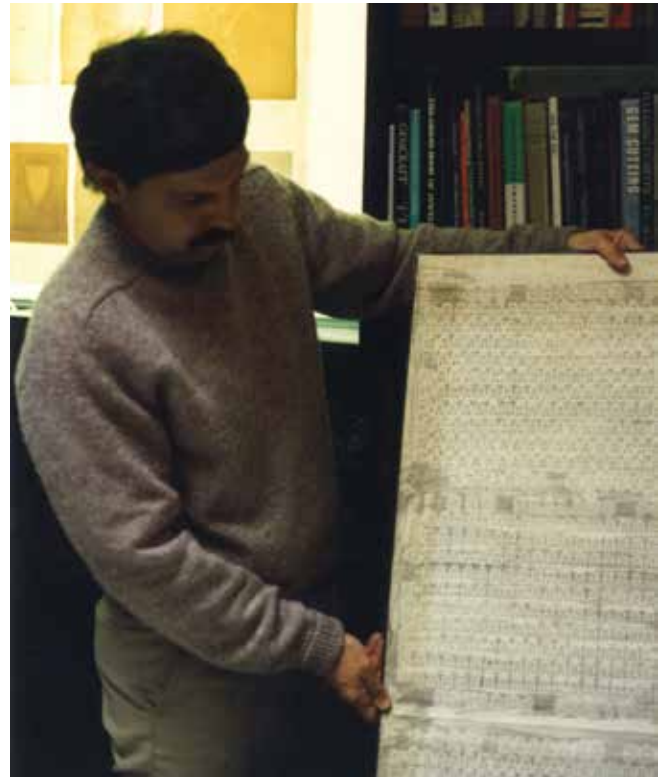


Fig. 5. The author in Dard Hunter's press room, Mountain House, Chillicothe, Ohio, holding the dandy roll rubbings of the New Zealand watermark NZ with star.



Fig. 6. Rubbings included the India Stamp Office sheet watermark (above), the Crown Agents CA with crown, the New South Wales NSW with crown, and the King George V watermark GVR with crown.



Above. Watermark from 1913 designed by Dard Hunter.

Left, 1928 watermark used at Hunter's Mill in Connecticut.

Right. Dard Hunter, circa 1920s.



In his autobiography, *My Life with Paper*, Hunter wrote “After the death of King Edward, the ‘dandy-roll’ that had been used for watermarking the British stamps was adapted to the reign of the new sovereign, George V. In the watermarking of postage stamps the ‘dandy-roll’ was almost completely covered with small letters formed in wire, each individual mark impressing the paper in the location where the stamp would eventually be printed. The stamps during the period of Edward VII had been watermarked especially for his reign, and these wires had to be removed and the wire lettering ‘G R’ substituted. The long brass roll was transferred from the government paper mill to the workshop in Stoke Newington, and as I was a part-time apprentice, I assisted with the work of making the necessary changes on the roll. I was proud that I was having at least a minor part in the making of the stamps for the new reign.”<sup>2</sup>

Marshall’s supplied the moulds Hunter saw in a paper exhibit at the Natural History Museum during his first few weeks in London. After that visit to the museum and wanting to know more about the papermaking process, he convinced the management at T.J. Marshall to hire him on as an apprentice dandy roll maker.

It is of interest to read Hunter’s article in Book 12, 1946, of the American Philatelic Congress, “Some Notes

on Papermaking.” He begins by saying: “When asked if I would compile a short article for the Congress, I consented to do so with considerable trepidation. I make no claim of possessing rare or expert philatelic knowledge, nor have I collected stamps, not even as an unskilled amateur. I have long been interested in papermaking, however, and without paper there would be no postage stamps.”

<sup>1</sup> Vinzani, B. (1994). “Dard Hunter, Philatelic References in his Published Works on Papermaking.” *Philateli-Graphics*, January, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Hunter, Dard. *My Life with Paper*. New York: Knopf. 1958. pp 54-55.

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Shorter, Alfred. *Papermaking in the British Isles*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1971.

**Author’s Note:** I used the English spelling of “mould” instead of mold as that is the preferred spelling in most papermaking and paper history literature.

**Editor’s Note:** Thanks to Dard Hunter III and the Dard Hunter Studios for providing some of the imagery and descriptive text used in this article.