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these recountings is to create an impression that the L.C. Smith typewriter was the starting place for a number of fine typewriter characteristics. While this machine did have these features, they were not exactly fresh-from-the-oven by the time the L.C. Smith got to the market.

The L.C. Smith's story begins, like the Remington's, with firearms. Lyman Smith was making the L.C. Smith line of guns when, in the mid 1880s, he was approached by A.T. Brown with a design for a new typewriter, which Lyman and his brothers manufactured as the Smith Premier. This machine became one of the several in the Remington-dominated Union Typewriter Company (which most authorities insist was a Trust existing in closely-guarded secrecy, notwithstanding Oliver and Fox typewriter advertising boasting that those machines were "not in the Trust"). In 1903 the Smith brothers resigned from the Smith Premier company to found a new firm to manufacture Carl Gabrielson's more modern frontstrike typewriter as the L.C. Smith & Bros.

The story as commonly reported suggests that the Smiths tried to convince Union that the Trust should "go visible," and that Union, guided by archaic minds, refused. So, continues the narrative, the Smiths, with their gaze focused sharply upon the future, abandoned the dullards at Union and set themselves up all over again.

The exact discussions between the Smiths and Union are not available for playback, but certainly the story as popularly perpetuated sets the stage nicely for an image of progressive men forsaking the outmoded; and what better background is there for spinning a yarn that culminates in a supposedly innovative typewriter?

The only problem with the tale is that 1903—the year that the Smiths resigned from Union—is the year that the Condensed History tells us the Monarch typewriter was first displayed, apparently as a working product. The Monarch was a Union (and later Remington) product. It was a visible-writing frontstrike typewriter. Both the Monarch and the L.C. Smith typewriters went on sale in 1904. It is not recorded whether one preceeded the other by days, weeks, or months. But given the length of time it takes to design, test, tool, and manufacture something as complex as a typewriter, the embryonic stages of the two machines had to have been concurrent. This casts doubt upon the archaic outlook attributed to Union management. If the L.C. Smith typewriter did indeed come out earlier in 1904 than the Monarch did, it more easily could have been because of railroad delivery schedules than because of the progressive vision of the Smiths.

The Condensed History—and modern Smith-Corona pamphlets—trumpet that "Probably the most revolutionary of these (exclusive modern features of the L.C. Smith) was the shifting of the type segment instead of shifting the carriage" for printing capital letters. The basket-shift is preferable to the carriage-shift, because the typebasket is lighter and therefore takes less effort to shift than the carriage. All typebar typewriters eventually conformed to the basket-shift, so it is no wonder that the Smith interests would like to claim precedence for the idea. Only problem is, the Monarch also was a basket-shift machine.

All right, so maybe the L.C. Smith did come out so many weeks, days, or hours before the Monarch. If this is what causes authorities to state that the L.C. Smith was the first basket-shift typewriter, they have never pressed the shiftkey of the oblique-frontstrike Ideal. This machine was first manufactured in Germany in 1900, from a design attributed to American inventors in 1897. Although none of the major references bother to mention it, the Ideal shifts *both* the carriage and the typebasket, the latter rising while the former drops.

Ah, but since the Ideal shifts the carriage as well as they typebasket, perhaps the L.C. Smith becomes the first *true* basket-shift machine. But then there was the Remington-Sholes (also known as the Rem-Sho and Fay-Sho) of c. 1896. It is noted—in the Condensed History and elsewhere—as the only upstrike typewriter that shifted the typebasket instead of carriage or platen.

Well then, since the Remington-Sholes was a blind writer, perhaps the argument of the L.C. Smith advocates is that theirs was the first full frontstrike visible with basket shift. But this obliges us to ignore the Daugherty, the 1890 machine first manufactured with a frontstrike basket. It and its descendants were all basket-shift typewriters.

If the Monarch or the Ideal or the Ren-Sho or the Daugherty were experimental, unsuccessful, or obscure typewriters, some understanding could be lent to the erroneous claim for the L.C. Smith's shifting basket. But the Monarch survived about another 20 years; the Ideal was not replaced by a new model for nearly 15; the Remington-Sholes was involved in litigation that took it to the Supreme Court; and the Daugherty and its descendants stayed on the market until about 1920. Thus the basket shift was present in famous typewriters concurrent with, or ahead of the L.C. Smith by four, eight, or 14 years.

And at least two other typewriters, though not basket-shift designs in the customary sense, supplied an interesting variation on the theme. Lucian Crandall's 1889 International typewriter combined certain aspects typical of both shiftkey and double-keyboard machines: the four-bank keyboard which, through the shiftkey, operated separate typebars for each character. A letter key pressed alone caused one typebar to print, while that same key pressed simultaneously with the shiftkey caused another typebar to print. The posterior-topstrike Waverly, produced in England that same year, is reported to have achieved change of case by a similar method. This hybrid in change of case supplied the compact keyboard necessary for touch-typing, in combination with the structural rigidity boasted by double-keyboard machines. Shifting by this means was also light and easy, regardless of carriage weight. All this 15 years ahead of the L.C. Smith's "introduction" of basket shift.

Another "exclusive feature" touted for the L.C. Smith by the Condensed History and its Smith-Corona followers is the interchangeable platen. An interchangeable platen can be removed swiftly from a typewriter without the use of tools, so that it can be recovered swiftly from a typewriter without the use of tools, so that it can be recovered easily when worn or substituted by another of a different hardness for different kinds of typewriting work. Since the interchangeable platen did become a universal feature, it is again understandable that the Smith interests would want to claim precedence for it. Their claim can be honored, however, only if we overlook the Yost machines from 1887 onward, the Smith Premiers from 1889, the Caligraphs from 1890, the Densmores from 1891, the Bar-Locks at least from the mid 90s and maybe from the late 80s onward, the Remington-Sholes from about 1896, the Fox from c. 1898, and the No. 8 model of the Remington from 1898; for all had platens that could be removed by turning a thumbscrew at the most complex, or by throwing a couple of catches.

There may have been other interchangeable-platen typewriters that predated the L.C. Smith; these eight are the first to come to mind. It is fascinating that five of the eight were products of the Union Typewriter Company, the alleged stick-in-the-mud conservatives from which the visionary Smiths, we are told, rebelled in such a huff; and that one of these interchangeable-platen typewriters was the very instrument by which the Smiths entered the typewriter business. Certainly, then, the Smith brothers themselves could not have forgotten that the L.C. Smith typewriter was, at best, the ninth to provide an interchangeable platen. How anybody else could forget is a question whose possible answers might be provocative indeed.

The L.C. Smith & Bros. typewriter was a fine instrument with a long future ahead of it. Its manufacturer would merge with Corona, a manufacturer of portables, in 1927, and sew the seeds of a company that today gives us everything from computers to salad dressings. When the L.C. Smith typewriter first came out (amusingly the No. 2 model apparently preceded the No. 1 by several months) it combined all the features that its manufacturer's 14 years' experience proved valuable, including typebasket shift and inter-

changeable platens. This is a rather bland description, one must admit, hardly as dramatic as the recorded and perpetuated version that has the L.C. Smith introducing the wonders of the modern age. Alas, our bland description is, by a long shot, the accurate one.

It is tempting to surmise that the bulk of advertising for L.C. Smith carried in the Condensed History contributed to the way it revised history. But then, that publication carried no advertising for the then-defunct Fox typewriter, yet it perpetuated the fancy that

THE FOX TYPEWRITER INNOVATED ANYTHING

For a number of years there was a perfectly adequate typewriter known as the Fox. Upon introduction the Fox line consisted of upstrike "blind" writers, then, in 1906, the frontstrike Fox Visibles appeared. In both blind and visible configurations, the Fox machines were well made and sturdy, and they were thoroughly up to date with the modern typewriters of their day. This is generally about as much as can be said about the Fox product.

Yet, for reasons that are never made clear, the authors of reference books glorify the Fox beyond its due. The Milwaukee catalog, for example, tells us that "an advantage (of the Fox) over the early blind writers (was that) instead of lifting up the carriage to see the work, a quarter turn thereof brought the work into view." It is true that the Fox's platen slid around to reveal the typing, rather than having to be lifted for inspection. It is also true that some people thought the Fox method to be an advantage. The designers of the Densmore typewriter thought so, for they put the same feature in their machine at least seven years before the Fox appeared. So did the designers of the Smith Premier, which was on the market at least nine years before the Fox.

Most authorities, by the way, date the Fox at 1902, which would have been a late date to introduce a blind writer to the market. However, the Fox is listed in a typewriter catalog published by F.S. Webster & Co. in 1898. In that year an upstrike typewriter would not have been so obviously doomed as in 1902.

The 1923 Condensed History tells us that the blind Fox departed from "the carriage shift or basket shift in arrival at capital letter printing through shifting of the platen only." Shifting the platen within a framework composed of the carriage—rather than shifting the entire carriage itself—could have presented some improvements over shifting the whole carriage. It might have been to the Fox's credit to have innovated the idea. Again, though, the credit belongs to an earlier typewriter. In this case, the credit goes all the way back to the first shifting typewriter, the Perfected Type Writer No. 2 and the Remington Standard No. 2. The carriage of the No. 2 (and, more particularly, the carriage of the Remington No. 4, which was the same machine fitted only with capitals and no shift) was almost identical to the carriage of late Sholes & Glidden models. Sholes & Glidden eschewed small letters in their builders' belief that the expected main clientele for typewriters, telegraphers and court reporters, would have no use for the lower case. Thus the carriage itself was rigid on its rails. Modifying this design for shifting was easier when the platen assembly alone traversed the carriage frame, rather than trying to get the entire carriage assembly to shift. Remington did not produce a carriage-shift typewriter until they came out with an entirely new model, their No. 6 of 1894. Thus, depending upon whether the Fox blind writers first came out in 1898 or 1902, the platen shift was on the market in the 1880's biggest-selling typewriter 20 to 24 years before it appeared as a "departure" in the Fox.

It is a simple matter to sit in judgement of a published work decades after it was produced, and pick out one after another its flaws. The hard work was the original job of compilation, and the authors of the works taken to task in this article might justifiably ask this writer, as Fred Allen is quoted as having asked a critical sponsor of his radio show years ago, "Where were you when the page was blank?" The creator of the original matter always takes the big risk, because it is he who subjects his ideas and conclusions to scrutiny; the critic merely