

Fraunces by Charles@Thorn



A Variable Font Family. Available on **Google Fonts**.

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Say hello to **Fraunces**, a new typeface family by **Charles&Thorn**.

In the early summer of 2018, Google Fonts approached us with the challenge of designing a display typeface. I spent some time perusing the catalog, and was struck by a pretty big hole in the typographic voices available. There isn't a specific name for this genre, but typefaces such as Cooper Black, Windsor, and Souvenir personify it. We've played alot with this style in our lettering work, and felt this was a create opportunity to create a typeface family (*Fig. 1*).

The origin of this genre traces its roots back to the Arts & Crafts experimentations of the late 1800's—early 1900's. Golden Type by William Morris (*Fig. 2*), and the extensive lettering of the Roycroft Guild captured this romanticized idea of an "Old Style" that their contemporaries had lost touch with.

Ironically, the letters they created, and the fad of wonky "Old Style" typefaces that it spawned in subsequent decades (such as Cooper Black, Windsor, Clearface) had little-to-nothing to do with typefaces of antiquity. Morris' Golden Type was an extremely crude interpretation of the types of Nicolas Jenson, opting instead to emphasize the perceived effects of printing, rather than the calligraphic origins of the form.

Fast forward to the 1970's, when graphic designers were looking for more funky stylings, and the irreverence of these typefaces were the perfect antidote to the perceived stuffiness of traditional text faces. Ed Benguiat drew a swashy version of Bookman for ITC, an ode to Oswald Cooper's Cooper Black Italic, which has become ubiquitous with the "Thank You For Shopping With Us" grocery bags (*Fig. 3*).

Fraunces is not an Old Style typeface, but an "Old Style" typeface. That is, a genre of type that is less concerned with sensible construction of letterforms, and personality is always paramount.

Within Fraunces are 4 axes: Weight, Goofy, Wonk, and Optical Size. Type designers in the past would provide fixed instances of an axis (such as Light, Regular, Bold, Black). Variable Fonts allow granu-

lar control of each of these axes, and allows the user to access all the calculations in between.

The main axes intended for the end user to use are the Weight, Goofy, and Wonk. The Goofy axis controls the "wetness" or "goofiness" of the typeface, while the Wonk axis controls substitutions of all the leaning characters in the Roman, and the exaggerated flag characters in the italic.

—**Spencer Charles, 2019**



Fig. 1 — Lettering Samples from Charles&Thorn

ture. ¶ To some of us when we first read it, now many years ago, it seemed to point out a new road on which the world should travel. And in spite of

Fig. 2 — Golden Type by William Morris



Fig. 3 — Lettering based on ITC Bookman Swash

HONK
FOR

WONKY
FOVTS

The Goofy Axis

The Goofy axis controls the "wetness" or "goofiness" of the typeface. Although Fraunces is drawn entirely with rounded serifs, it achieves sharpness in the Goofy Min area of the design space with extremely high contrast.

It's this human

Fraunces Regular OpMax GoofyMin 96pt

It's this human

Fraunces Regular OpMax GoofyMid 96pt

It's this human

Fraunces Regular OpMax GoofyMid 96 pt

The Optical Size Axis

Optical Sizing takes certain factors to account for changes in scale. At smaller sizes, the letterspacing opens up, x-height increases, and contrast decreases to allow for easier reading. On the opposite page are examples of the Goofy Min, which changes in Optical Size at different font sizes. Most modern web browsers will automatically interpret this information. Designing for print requires a manual approach.

It's this humanizing quality that is most likely why designers in the early 1970s resurrected these three typefaces, when the techno-utopia of Star Trek was beginning to curdle into the techno-dystopia of THX 1138. If all of the room-sized IBM and Rand Corporation computers coordinating various mecha-

Fraunces Regular 9/12

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Fraunces Regular 12/16

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Fraunces Regular 18/24

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Fraunces Regular 24/32

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Fraunces Regular 36/48

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Fraunces Roman Black Optical Max

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99 Cent Store
Jim's Pizza
Coffee Break
Eli's Antiques
Spatula City
Crafts & Stuff
Squat N' Grunt

Frank's Diner
Luigi & Sons
Mister Cocoa
Copy & Print Co
Laundromat
Spencer's Meats
We Never Close
24 Hour Deli

The Weight Axis

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The Weight Axis spans a range of weights from Thin (100), Light (200), Regular (400), Semibold (600), Bold (800), and Black (1000).

SALESMANSHIP

Fraunces Thin OpMid

Simon & Garfunkel

Fraunces Italic Light OpMid

LAUNDROMAT

Fraunces Regular OpMin

SIGN of the TIMES

Fraunces Italic Semibold OpMax

The Beach Boys

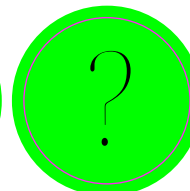
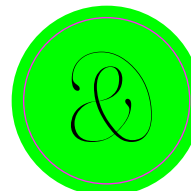
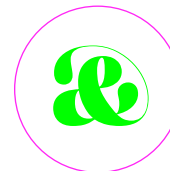
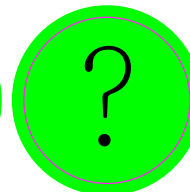
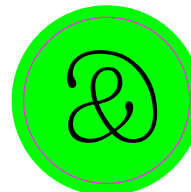
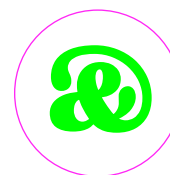
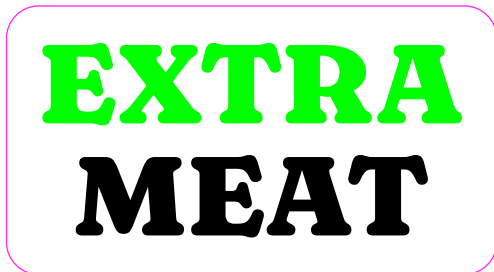
Fraunces Bold OpMid

Emphatically!

Fraunces Italic Black OpMin

We
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Your
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The Wonk Axis

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hnms&

Wonk Substitutions in Roman

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bdhklvw&

Wonk Substitutions in Italic

The Wonk Axis controls the substitution of “wonky” characters. These substitutions *automatically* switch at smaller sizes (**18 pt. and below**), but can be toggled manually at larger optical sizes.

The leaning h/n/m is a major characteristic borrowed from Windsor. In addition to the leaning characters, the Italic contains flagged characters with ball terminals. Historically, type designers introduced the horizontally squished lowercase f and j as a way to avoid the need for ligatures. This logic places an emphasis on economy. In the Italic, this logic is extended to the flagged characters of the d/l.

Fanciest Fanciest

Fraunces Thin OpMid

Billings Billings

Fraunces Italic Light OpMid

Limons Limons

Fraunces Regular OpMin

Clovers Clovers

Fraunces Italic Semibold OpMax

minster minster

Fraunces Bold OpMid

knives knives

Fraunces Italic Black OpMin

Dreaming of fine-looking hams is a good omen; but if they are wormy or in any way blemished, it spoils all the luck, and shows that you will be unfortunate. To dream of eating fine-tasting hams is a sign that you will do something noted that will

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

If, in your dream, you imagine you are eating oysters, it denotes that you will have difficulties relative to money matters: but to rake them out of the water is a sign of money-getting: to dream of opening nice fat oysters for other people to eat is

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

For a girl to dream of baking pancakes, is a sign that some gentleman is in love with her; and if a married woman has such a dream, she may be sure that some man, other than her husband, admires her; to dream of eating pancakes, is

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream of simply treeing a raccoon, is a good omen, for you will probably either gain a sum of money, or have it left to you as a legacy: if you imagine that you shoot the animal, and he falls to the ground, this will spoil the

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream you lose your teeth, denotes the loss of friends, troubles, and misfortunes; to the lover it shows the loss of your sweetheart's affection: to dream you cut a new tooth, denotes the birth of a child who will marry

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

For a girl to dream of accidentally sticking a thorn into her finger is a sign she will have a ring presented to her, probably a wedding ring: if a married woman dreams this, some outsider will make love to her but

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FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream of ripe cherries foretells that you will hear good news, or that some one will do you a favor. After such a dream you can easily borrow money if you wish to. If the cherries are green or mixed, your news will be a mixture of good and bad. 14, 54.

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

If you dream of riding well and easily on the back of this noble animal, your fortune is sure to advance in the world: but if you imagine you are thrown from a horse, it is a sign of disgrace. To dream of swapping horses shows that some one will cheat you in a

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream of dropping or breaking a lighted lamp, denotes disappointment. If, in your dream, you see the bright light of a lamp at a distance from you in the distance and you approach it, it shows that you will either have good luck, or will be in

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream of approaching beautiful smooth-looking mountains, dressed in verdure, denotes thrift and happiness, and that you will rise in the world: if the mountains look steep, rugged and rocky, it foreshadows difficulties and

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream you eat mushrooms is a sign you will live to a good old age, but to dream you see them grow, or gather them, is a sign you will get rich by splendid speculation, and then get poor as suddenly as you got wealthy.

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

If you dream you have a new pair of pantaloons, it is a sign you will be prosperous; if they do not fit, and are too tight, it is a sign you will be pinched in money matters; if they are dark, it is a sign of long life, but

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Playful
Malik

Pleasure
Malik

The Big Three by Andy Sturdevant

This article was originally published in The Smudge, Issue No. 17, and is republished here for your enjoyment & edification.

It's the waning years of the twentieth century, sometime between 1970 and 1995. You find yourself in a position where the responsibility of managing the graphic design identity of a small company or organization has fallen to you, though no one's calling it "managing the graphic design identity." Your job, basically, is to pick the typefaces out of the type catalog that the printer is going to use in making some external signage. This type will also go on the side of the one truck the small company or organization owns.

Your boss, who is also your uncle, has instructed you to find typefaces that are "approachable and unique, with a touch of the eccentric" (his words, not mine). You can tell by the way he says it, though, that he doesn't want you to get too experimental with it. His idea of "eccentric" does not extend to crazy, fat-bottomed letters dripping psychedelic ooze. Fine, whatever, it's just a summer job.

You spend some time with the type catalog, and conclude that you really only have three choices for a type that is equal parts approachable and eccentric in the specific way your employer has mandated: Windsor, Souvenir and Cooper Black. Today, these three typefaces are typically associated with the 1970s. I think of them as the big three of that era, graphic signifiers of the Watergate years that, even if you don't know them by name, you recognize the vibe.

ABCabc123 *Cooper Black*

ABCabc123 *ITC Souvenir*

ABCabc123 *Windsor URW*

They're much older than the seventies. Each of them dates from the early twentieth century, designed by lone individuals working for major foundries in industrial centers. Windsor was designed in Sheffield in the United Kingdom in 1905, then a hotbed of steel

production and labor militancy. Souvenir came from the industrial hinterlands of central New Jersey in 1914, from the drafting table of the head of the design department for America's largest type foundry. Cooper Black, the bubbly iron-on alphabet immortalized on ten million customized T-shirts, was created in Chicago in 1922.

They were created at a time when, in those industrial settings, there were individuals referencing a hand-made, more artistic sensibility in a time of rapid mechanization for the printing industry, and for the world generally. Souvenir was influenced by Middle European Art Nouveau, a movement that emphasized careful craftsmanship and organic forms as a means of humanizing industrial production. Windsor and Cooper Black were designed expressly as display fonts-declarative lines of text, meant to draw attention in forms of print media dominated by grim, heavy serif typefaces. All three are bold statements, but none of them bang you over the head.

It's this humanizing quality that is most likely why designers in the early 1970s resurrected these three typefaces, when the techno-utopia of Star Trek was beginning to curdle into the techno-dystopia of THX 1138. If all of the room-sized IBM and Rand Corporation computers coordinating various mechanized atrocities across the globe had a chilly, efficient Swiss typeface like Helvetica slapped on the side of them, those warmer, more handmade typefaces seem like both a respite and a quiet protest. In any era marked by political and social turmoil, there's often an effort to call back to the more humane (and certainly the idealized) aspects of an earlier era. Each of them, in an oblique way, called to mind the fantastical egalitarianism of the Belle Epoque, when strains of mysticism, industrialism and socialism intermingled in the public imagination. Designing an underground publication or radical flyer in 1970, alluding to that era was a type of resistance against the modernity as it had been practiced: faceless, efficient and brutal. Windsor, Souvenir and Co-



A typical use of Windsor

per Black, goopy as they may be, are none of those things.

To some extent, all of these typefaces all fell out of favor in the intervening forty years, as far as everyday use was concerned. When these things vanish from the world of high design, they migrate into marginal pockets of the commercial world. Most often when you see Windsor or Souvenir or Cooper Black in the world today, they tend not to be used in a self-consciously tasteful way. They always look a little assertive and individualistic and a little out of place. They tend to be used by independent liquor stores , health food emporiums, formerly fashionable nightclubs and ancient auto body shops , or maybe barbeque restaurants in dying strip malls and landscaping businesses with a lone Chevy Silverado. Whatever those typefaces may say, they don't suggest efficiency and facelessness. You want efficiency and facelessness, go down to the chain muffler place near the interstate exit.

Extended Language Support

The Wonk Axis controls the substitution of “wonky” characters. These substitutions *automatically* switch at smaller sizes (**18 pt. and below**), but can be toggled manually at larger optical sizes.

FREE
SALE

SALE
SALE

Colophon

Fraunces was made possible with the generous support of Google Fonts. Thank you to Dave Crossland, Damien Correll, etc.

Fraunces was designed by Spencer Charles and Flavia Zimbardi in 2019.

The type specimen you hold in your hands was designed by Charles@Thorn, with contributions from Douglas Hayes. Thank you to Risolve Printing in Philadelphia for their exceptional riso printing.

Thank you to the contributions from the following (in no particular order): Andy Clymer, Stephen Nixon, Douglas Hayes.

Fraunces is available for download as a Variable Font under the Open Font License on Github at:

www.github.com/undercasetype/Fraunces

Bibliography

DeLittle's Wood Type Specimens provided courtesy of David Wolske.
www.david-wolske.com



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Our dog
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Need extra cash
and other gene
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Like Fonts?
Try the new
Google Fonts.
a through z

ALPACA PETTING FARM

Come @ behold our majestic Alpacas. We've got Huacaya and Suri Alpacas. *Please tell your children to keep their hands away from the Alpaca mouths.* Bring your own hand soap for after the petting.



CAT WALKER?

Hey, ever wonder about how
get your cat to lose a couple
pounds and become one of t
slim cats you see in all the **b**
cat magazines? Well guess
what, I have the answer, the
secret is **walking** and I can
your cat and deliver back to
the best looking cat you've e
seen in your lifetime.

GUARANTEED!!

**Tony's
Ranch
'N Ramble**



**Looking for
workhorses**

My horses can do it a

- ☐ Heavy Lifting
- ☐ Show Pony
- ☐ Horsing Around
- ☐ Pony Play

*Trot on down to my ranch
I'll introduce you to all o
many gorgeous horse*



Charles&Thorn