

= Oliver Typewriter Company =

The Oliver Typewriter Company was an American typewriter manufacturer headquartered in Chicago , Illinois . The Oliver Typewriter was the first effective " visible print " typewriter , meaning text was visible to the typist as it was entered . It was however preceded by the Daugherty typewriter , which was also an effective visible typewriter . Oliver typewriters were marketed heavily for home use , utilizing local distributors and sales on credit . Oliver produced more than one million machines between 1895 and 1928 and licensed its designs to several international firms .

Competitive pressure and financial troubles resulted in the company 's liquidation in 1928 . The company 's assets were purchased by investors who formed The British Oliver Typewriter Company , which manufactured and licensed the machines until its own closure in the late 1950s . The last Oliver typewriter was produced in 1959 .

= = History = =

= = = Thomas Oliver = = =

Thomas Oliver was born in Woodstock , Ontario , Canada , on August 1 , 1852 . Having become interested in religion , Oliver moved to Monticello , Iowa , after the death of his mother , to serve as a Methodist minister . In 1888 , Oliver began to develop his first typewriter , made from strips of tin cans , as a means of producing more legible sermons . He was awarded his first typewriter patent , US Patent No. 450 @, @ 107 , on April 7 , 1891 . After four years of development , a " crude working model " composed of 500 parts had been produced . Oliver resigned his ministry and moved to Epworth , Iowa , where he found investors willing to provide \$ 15 @, @ 000 (\$ 427 @, @ 000 in 2016) of capital , and leased a building in which to manufacture his machines .

While visiting Chicago to promote the machine , Oliver encountered businessman Delavan Smith , who became interested in the typewriter and bought the stock held by the Iowa investors . Oliver was given a 65 % interest in the company and retained to continue development of the typewriter , at an annual salary of \$ 3 @, @ 000 (\$ 85 @, @ 000 per year in 2016) . Oliver died suddenly of heart disease on February 9 , 1909 , aged 56 .

= = = Illinois years = = =

The Oliver Typewriter Company had begun operating in 1895 , with its headquarters on the ninth floor of a building on the corner of Clark and Randolph Street in Chicago . In 1896 , manufacturing moved from Iowa to Woodstock , Illinois , when the City of Woodstock donated a vacant factory once used by the Wheeler and Tappan Company on the condition that the Oliver Typewriter Company remain there at least five years . Manufacturing was divided into six departments : type bar , carriage , assembly , tabulators and adjustment , inspection , and an aligning room . The company 's headquarters moved to the Oliver Building , now a Chicago landmark on the National Register of Historic Places , when it was completed in 1907 .

Starting in 1899 , the company established sales networks by encouraging customers to become local distributors . This method of marketing relied on word of mouth and emphasized sales made directly to neighbors (door @-@ to @-@ door) and , after 1905 , sales on credit . In response to increased competition in the late 1910s , however , the company eliminated its network of local salesman and used the resulting savings in commissions to reduce the typewriter 's \$ 100 (\$ 1 @, @ 400 in 2016) price by half . Sales increased and , at its peak , the company 's labor force of 875 was producing 375 machines daily .

In addition to its offices in Illinois , the company had branch offices in Baltimore , Buffalo , Cleveland , Kansas City , Minneapolis , New York City , Omaha , St. Louis , San Francisco and Seattle , all of which closed when Oliver shifted to mail order sales in March 1917 . A minor recession in 1921 ? 22 caused a large number of customers to default on their payments , resulting in the repossession of

their typewriters . The company opted not to borrow money and , in 1926 , the board of directors voted to liquidate the company . Only one employee , Chester Nelson , was retained to oversee the company 's liquidation .

== British Oliver Typewriter Company ==

In 1928 , the Oliver Typewriter Company was sold to investors who formed the British Oliver Typewriter Company in Croydon , England . Production of Oliver 's original , three @-@ rowed keyboard design was discontinued in 1931 when the company began to produce a rebranded model of the " Fortuna " typewriter , a four @-@ rowed German design . In 1935 , the company began to produce the Halda @-@ Norden standard typewriter , another licensed design , as model No. 20 . The company , however , had to retool its machines and return to the original Oliver design when the British government placed large orders for the three @-@ rowed No. 15 at the outbreak of World War II .

Production of the No. 20 resumed around 1947 , at which time the company began to license the Oliver name to several European manufacturing companies . The standard desktop machine was eventually discontinued in favor of portable models ; the company began to sell a German design , the Siemag Standard , as the Oliver standard . In 1958 , Oliver purchased the Byron Typewriter Company , previously the Barlock Typewriter Company , of Nottingham . The licensing ventures were ultimately unsuccessful , and the company 's machine tools were transferred to a factory in Germany . Production of all Oliver typewriters ended in May 1959 .

== Typewriters ==

== Design ==

The general design of Oliver typewriters remained mostly unchanged throughout the company 's history . The Olivers are " down strike " typewriters , meaning the typebars strike the platen (also known as the roller) from above , rather than from below (" up strike ") or from the front (" front strike ") . Unlike the " up strike " method , which prints text out of sight on the underside of the platen , the " down strike " is a " visible print " design , meaning the full page is visible to the typist as the text is being entered . The relatively greater striking power of the " down strike " design led Olivers to be preferred for specialty uses such as stencil cutting or " manifolding " (copying using carbon paper) . The " front strike " method , a competing " visible print " design , was patented around the same time (1889 ? 91) , but an effective machine that did not interfere with the typist 's line of sight was not available until 1897 when , roughly three years after the introduction of the Oliver No. 1 , the Underwood No. 1 appeared on the market .

The Oliver 's typebars are bent in a bow (forming an inverted " U " shape) and rest in " towers " on the sides of the typewriter . This design limited the machine to a three @-@ row QWERTY keyboard as the typebars were stacked such that they grew progressively larger as more were added . The size and usability implications of adding additional keys and thus , more typebars , precluded the addition of a fourth keyboard row dedicated to numbers . Although a four @-@ row prototype was designed in 1922 , it was shelved due to the company 's financial troubles at that time . The No. 20 , No. 21 and portable models produced by the British Oliver Typewriter Company had four @-@ row keyboards .

== Color ==

Oliver typewriters were finished with olive green paint or nickel @-@ plating and white or black keyboards , depending on customer preference . Beginning with model No. 3 , machines were painted green except some variants to be exported to warm or damp regions , which were chrome @-@ plated . The color was changed from green to black on the introduction of model No. 11 .

Oliver typewriters made for the British war effort were supplied with a " war finish " .

= = = Models = = =

= = = = United States = = = =

The following models were produced in the United States between 1894 and 1928 :

With the exception of model No. 2 , even @-@ numbered models were produced with extra keys (32 versus 28 keys) for sale in countries with accented languages .

= = = = United Kingdom = = = =

The following models were produced by the British Oliver Typewriter Company between 1930 and 1942 :

= = = = International = = = =

Oliver typewriter designs were licensed for production in several countries . Variants of model No. 3 were produced by The Linotype Company of Montreal and A. Greger & Co. of Vienna . Models produced by licensees were marketed under various names including " Courier " (Austria) , " Fiver " (Germany) , " Stolzenberg " (continental Europe) and " Revilo " (Argentina) . The Argentinian licensee used Revilo , Oliver backwards , to avoid royalty payments on the Oliver name , which had already been registered in Argentina .