

# KINGS LANDING

## A LESSON ON THE PRINT SHOP

AND PRINTING WITH POTATOES



## OBJECTIVES

- Provide students with a brief history on the printing industry in New Brunswick
- Learn how printing has evolved throughout history
- Learn about Kings Landing's print shop and how it operates
- Create printed designs using potatoes or sponges

## GRADE LEVELS

- This lesson is great for kids of any age, but younger children especially will require assistance from someone older for safety as the activity requires the use of a knife.

## MATERIALS

- Paper or fabric
- Paper towels or hand towels
- Craft knife or kitchen knife
- Paint (acrylic or fabric)
- Paper Plates
- Potatoes (alternative: sponges)
- Paint Brush (optional)
- Cookie cutters (optional)
- Computer or laptop and printer (optional)
- Scissors (optional)



## LESSON

If you've ever been to Kings Landing, you most likely visited the Print Shop. It's a small "job shop" where printers create bookmarks, signs, post cards, invitations and more for the villagers and businesses in our living history museum. You may have even helped make your own bookmark using a black piece of equipment called a hand press.

Wooden hand presses were introduced to Atlantic Canada in the 1750s when they were brought in from the United States and Great Britain. In 1751, the first press started in Halifax. It printed the first newspaper in Canada in 1752 called the Halifax Gazette. The end of the American Revolution in 1755 saw more printers arrive in Atlantic Canada and by the middle of the 1780s, there were printing presses in Saint John and Charlottetown. More printing presses popped up across Canada throughout the end of the 1700s and 1800s. By 1890, New Brunswick had 38 printing companies in both large cities and in small, rural communities.

In the 1830s, people started to make iron presses like the ones you see at Kings Landing. Some presses are small like the hand press used to make bookmarks while other presses are large and require the use of your feet! Kings Landing's printers use a press like this, called a treadle platen press, to make larger items like posters and signs or when they need to make a lot of copies.

The way printers make their prints requires a lot of time and concentration. Letters, numbers, symbols or images are carved or engraved into a piece of wood or metal. This object has many names. It can be called a sort, a piece, a type or a stamp. The printer places these pieces one by one into a frame in the correct order to create words, sentences and paragraphs. This is also known as typesetting or "to set type".

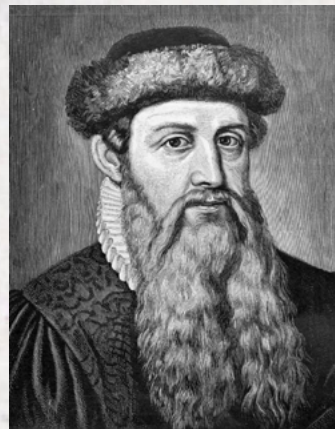
Once the whole design is put together, the pieces are locked into place with a key to make sure the pieces don't move. This frame is placed into a press, covered in ink and then pressed into a piece of fabric or paper over and over again until



*These bookmarks made at the Print Shop feature the image of a lumber camp in the woods.*



*An image of a newspaper shop around 1899 courtesy of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. Reference number P37-474-11.*



*The history of printing as we know it goes back a long time to about 1450 when a German man named Johannes Gutenberg (pictured) came up with a way to print using small, moveable metal pieces that replaced wooden blocks. This made the printing process easier and faster for its time. Similar techniques were also already used in parts of Asia. Image of Johannes Gutenberg courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.*



*A printer operates the treadle platen press to print postcards.*



the printer has as many copies as they need. The ink on the fabric or paper needs to dry before the printed items are handed off or delivered to the (hopefully happy) customer.

While this way of printing might still be used by some creative businesses and crafters, the machines and equipment used to make printed items advanced a lot during the 1900s and eventually became the electronic and scanning printers most people use today.

## PRINTERS AT KINGS LANDING

Various printers and publishers important to New Brunswick's history have been interpreted at the Print Shop at Kings Landing. Here's a quick look at some of them.

**John Magee:** Born in Saint John, NB in 1835, he published *The Bay Pilot* weekly newspaper from 1878 to 1889 in Grand Manan, NB.

**Robert Armstrong:** Born in Saint John, NB in 1858, he started working at the Globe Newspaper in Saint John in 1875 at just 17 years old as an apprentice. Robert Armstrong started his own weekly newspaper called *The Beacon* in St. Andrews, NB with its first volume published in 1915. *The Beacon* was a continuation of *The Bay Pilot* newspaper.

--> See scanned versions of *The Beacon* here: [www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.N\\_00006](http://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.N_00006).

**George Hammond:** Born in Upper Kingsclear, New Brunswick in 1817, he ran a general store for many years and worked as postmaster (known today as a post man) and also did printing.

**Martin Butler:** Born in Norton, NB in 1857, he learned to set type from George Hammond in Kingsclear, NB. Martin Butler also worked as a journalist and a poet for many years in Maine, USA and in Fredericton, NB.



*Visitors to Kings Landing make a bookmark using the Kelsey Excelsior hand press with help from a friendly printer.*



*The Print Shop at Kings Landing shows the original equipment and artifacts from the Beacon Press Print Shop managed by Robert Armstrong, including the front doors. The building itself was never an actual print shop; it started as a blacksmith shop. It was an entrance building at Kings Landing until 1987 when it was transformed into the Print Shop as it is today.*



*Sorts, types or pieces can be any shape or form necessary to create a printed item like a poster, bookmark, post card, sign, invitation, envelope, calling card... the list goes on!*



## ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITY

If you would like to meet our printers, make a bookmark and see how the different types or presses work, plan a trip to visit us! Kings Landing is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays to Sundays from June 9 to October 10, 2021. Visit our website [by clicking here](#) for more information.

We hope to see you this season!



*An example of a postcard made at the Print Shop featuring the Grant Store.*



*Printers must examine their work to make sure there are no mistakes!*



*Have you ever heard someone say they feel "out of sorts?" It means someone feels unwell or not as good as they usually do. Some believe this term comes from the printing industry. "Sorts" refers to the small pieces or types that are used to create the words and lines on a printed page. Printers stored these sorts in compartments and if some of the sorts were in the wrong place or missing, the printer would be "out of sorts," which isn't a good thing. In this image, you can see the compartments where the printer gets the sorts.*



## ACTIVITY

Create your own prints using fabric or paper and a potato or a sponge. We've provided letters, numbers and shapes for you to cut out and use that are on the next few pages. Don't worry, they are backwards for a reason! Letters, numbers and images must be carved in reverse in order for it to appear the correct way when pressed into the fabric or paper. You can also come up with something on your own! Don't forget to trace or carve it in reverse if it includes letters or numbers!

### Materials

- Paper or fabric
- Paper towels or hand towels
- Craft knife or kitchen knife
- Paint (acrylic or fabric)
- Paper Plates
- Potatoes (alternative: sponges)
- Paint Brush (optional)
- Cookie cutters (optional)
- Computer or laptop and printer (optional)
- Scissors (optional)

### Directions

1. Cut the potato in half and pat dry using paper towels or a hand towel. Trace the letters, numbers or shapes on the potatoes with the knife to outline the stamp.  
**Tip:** If you're using a cookie cutter, push it into the potato and carve out the shape you're going to use by slicing around the cookie cutter and removing the outside top layer.
2. Cut around the shape and remove the pieces you aren't going to use. If you aren't used to carving, ask an adult for help – safety is important!
3. Pour paint into paper plates. Dip the potato stamp into the paint and press it onto the paper or fabric for a few seconds. You can use the paintbrush to apply the paint to the potato if dipping is too messy.
4. Continue dipping potatoes into paint and placing on the paper to form the words or design you want to create. Make sure to use a different stamp for each colour so they don't mix, unless you want to make a new colour!
5. Allow your design to dry for several hours or overnight.
6. Display your artwork and share it with us! Send us an [email by clicking here](#) or tag us on social media using @KingsLandingNB.

**Sponge alternative:** If you prefer to use sponges, you can follow these same steps. We would recommend only using a knife because a cookie cutter might not do the trick. Remember to think safety first!

Lesson adapted from [Easy Crafts For Kids 8 | Potato Stamps and Potato Prints \(fun-stuff-to-do.com\)](http://fun-stuff-to-do.com)



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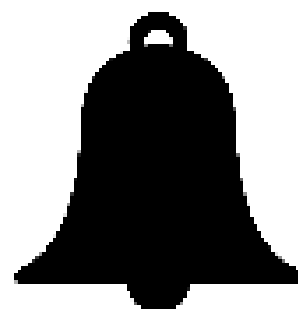
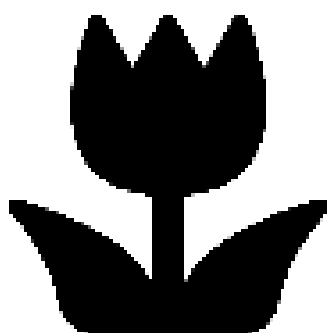
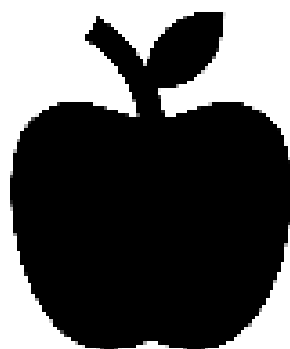
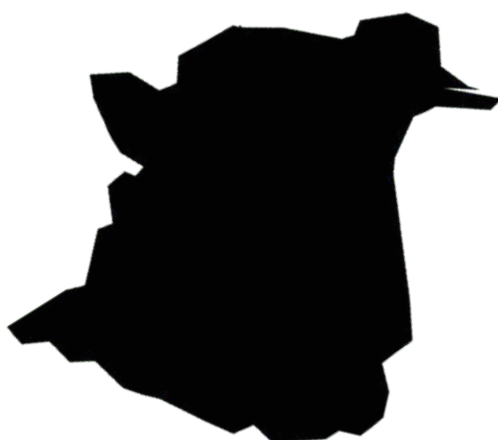
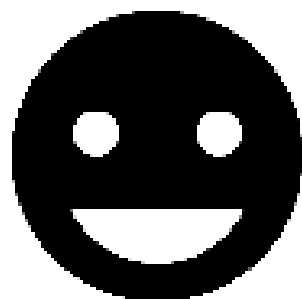
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## SOURCES

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*Information about the Print Shop was gathered from internal Kings Landing Corporation research files.*