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Johannes Gutenberg

By the middle of the 15th century, Movable Type had been invented in Europe. The German inventor/printer, **Johannes Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg**, first demonstrated his invention in 1448.

By 1462, Gutenberg's invention became accepted and the use of it spread throughout Europe rapidly. Movable type is also called Foundry Type or Hot Type. In foundry type, each piece of type was cast into a precise size from alloy metal that was a combination of lead, tin, and antimony. Each piece contained a raised image of a single letter, number, or other character. The block of metal that carried the raised image was called the body. The raised image that was inked for printing was called the face -- from this we get the term "typeface". A paragraph, or a page, consists of a number of lines of a fixed width made up of tall rectangular blocks of metal.

This page is made up on a "turtle" -- a smooth-topped table of metal or marble -- and the sides surrounded by a metal frame called a "chase". The space between the page and the chase walls is filled with wooden or metal "furniture" which is lower than "type height" so as not to pick up any ink. The final spaces are filled with expandable "quoins" which, when tightened, lock all the type and furniture safely within the chase, (now called a "forme") and able to be carried to the press.