Richard M. Hoe Biography

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Biography

Born in New York City on September 12, 1812, Hoe was the son of Robert Hoe (1784-1833), a British-born printer who improved the cylinder press developed by David Napier. In 1827, at the age of fifteen, Hoe left school to join his father's printing firm, R. Hoe & Company; fifteen years later, he assumed total control of it. Hoe was among the first to realize that to increase printing speed, some alternative had to be invented. He began experimenting in 1829 with the Napier flatbed and cylinder press. In 1846, he created a new press in which he discarded the traditional flatbed and attached the type to a central cylinder, around which revolved four to ten impression cylinders. This became known as the rotary press--the first in the world. Also referred to as the "lightning press," Hoe's invention was first introduced to the printing industry in 1847 in the offices of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*. The resulting eight thousand papers per hour revolutionized newspaper printing. Although this new speed- printing made huge daily editions possible, publishers were still limited to single sheet printing. Hoe continued to add improvements to his press and by 1871 devised a rotary web perfecting press which was fed by continuous rolls of paper, or webs, and printed on both sides in one move. The *New York Tribune* was the first newspaper printed with this process. Hoe's subsequent additions and various updates of high-speed folding apparatus virtually completed the modern newspaper press by 1875. Hoe presses were manufactured for newspapers around the globe by branch plants in Boston and London, and in New York City Hoe opened an apprentice training school for press operators. He died on June 7, 1886, while vacationing in Italy.