

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Lester Beall

A Significant American Corporate Identity Program

LESTER BEALL (1903–1969) was as influential a figure as Paul Rand in the development of trademark design and comprehensive corporate identity programs throughout the early 1950s until the mid- to late 1960s. Along with American and European contemporaries Herbert Bayer, Will Burtin, William Golden, Alvin Lustig, Herbert Matter, Ladislav Sutnar, and others, Beall advanced the development of corporate identity in the United States. In 1952 he officially opened his Dumbarton Farms office in rural Brookfield Center, Connecticut (He closed his New York City office in 1955.) There, Beall and his staff designed trade exhibits, publications, packaging, trademarks, and identity programs for well-respected corporate clients including Caterpillar Tractor, Connecticut General Life Insurance, Emhart Manufacturing, International Paper, Labatt Breweries of Canada, Martin Aircraft, New York Hilton, Rohm & Haas, Stanley Works, Titleflex, and Torrington Manufacturing, to name just a few.

His work for Connecticut General (CG) includes an early example of what we would now describe as a corporate identity standards manual. Assembled in 1958, the *Connecticut General Style Book [and Some Notes on Typographic Design]*, which Beall designed in conjunction with a new trademark (1956) and corporate identity program, is a landmark document, a guide from an era before such things became ossified. It sets forth the usual corporate visual language policies such as trademark, typeface, and color identification, but is of interest for establishing a general graphic design approach via loose standards and limited formal rules. It was not a detailed style manual. Instead, it presented Beall's creative design theory and embrace of typography as 'the designer's best friend,' particularly the wide range of specifications and recommendations for serified typefaces in company usage.¹

The history of modern corporate identity can be traced as far back as 1905 when F.G. Cooper (1883–1962), a letterer, poster designer, and illustrator for the New York Edison

Back cover, *The Connecticut General Style Book* (detail), (1958).

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