

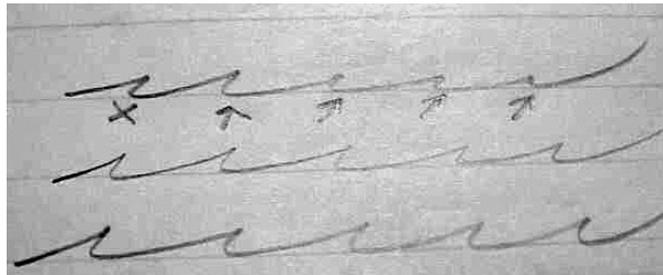
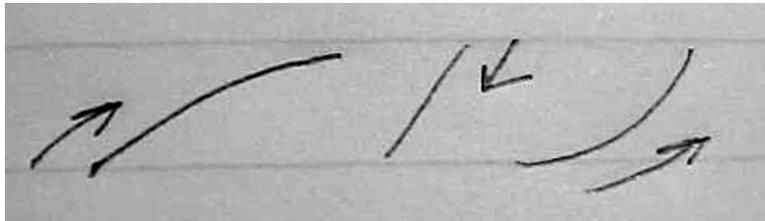
Lessons in Ornamental Penmanship

By Del Tysdal (1944-2013)

*As posted to the Ornamental Penmanship Group on Yahoo with additional commentary
by Brian Walker.*

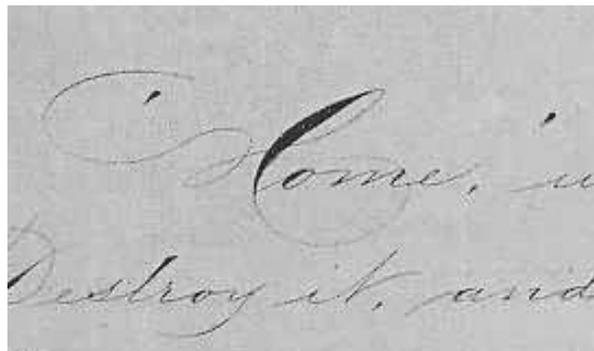
Compiled by Dr. Joseph M. Vitolo

Subject: A lesson on the 'corner curve' to practice



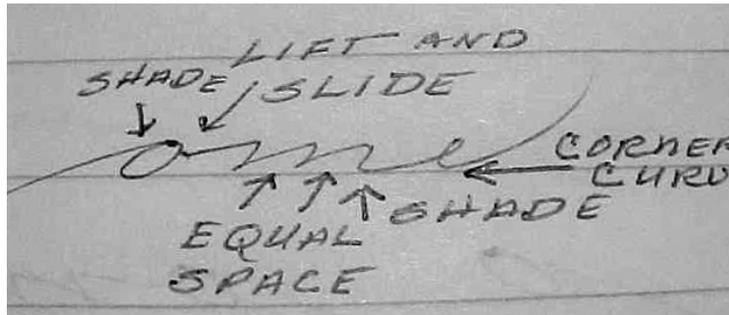
See the file I am loading. Practice this lesson on the corner curve as used on the small letter 'i'. Notice the 'x' that I put on the first letter as to the way NOT to make the curve. Notice the arrows on the other 4 letters to see the way the curve IS done.

The next lesson will refer to the Madarasz page that Nick has posted. (See image below)



Script by Madarasz

Refer to Nick's posting of Madarasz page, 'ome'



I am posting my analysis of the way that Madarasz (Maddy) wrote the word 'ome'. He probably did the 'o' in one stroke. The shade is somewhat darker than as used in other shaded letters (see the third down stroke in the small 'm'). This was an effect the penmen liked to use to even out the dark shade of the capital letter preceding and tie the first letter after that shaded letter for better visual effect. The down shade on the 'o' is wonderful. Look at it with the magnifying glass. It was slowly drawn with his forefinger, no arm movement.

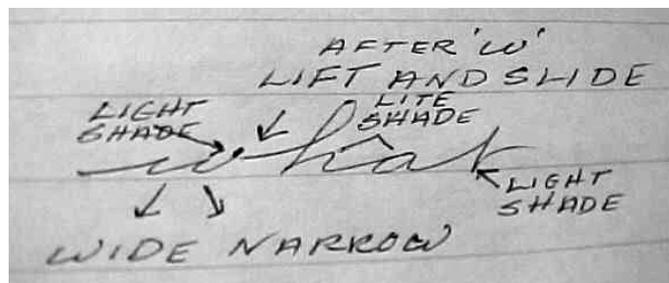
After the 'o' Maddy probably lifted the pen and slid the paper to the left to get in the right position to finish the 'm' and 'e'. Penmen lifted their pen and slid their paper often (every 3rd letter) so they would maintain the same slant of all the letters on a single line. (If the paper is not moved to the left, the arm will cause a significant change in slant from the beginning of a line to its end).

Madarasz wrote the 'm' and 'e' with no additional lifts. Notice the lighter shade on the third stroke of the 'm', the equal distance between the two portions of the 'm'.

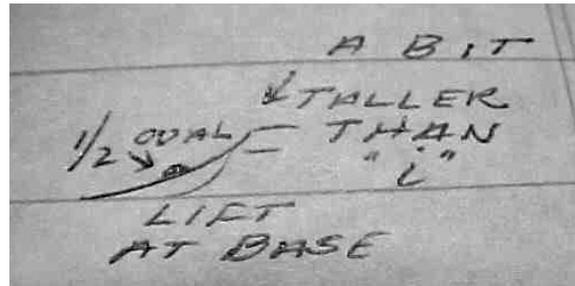
However, he blew it on the low crossing of the small 'e'. He did not get enough lift from the third stroke of the 'm' to get a good corner curve. The crossing of the 'e' at its bottom is too congested.

My attempt at this 'ome' is posted with comments. I had to write the letters 22 times before I got it right. Practice these letters and really get to know the feeling of how Madarasz wrote.

The next lesson will be the word 'what', again in detail.

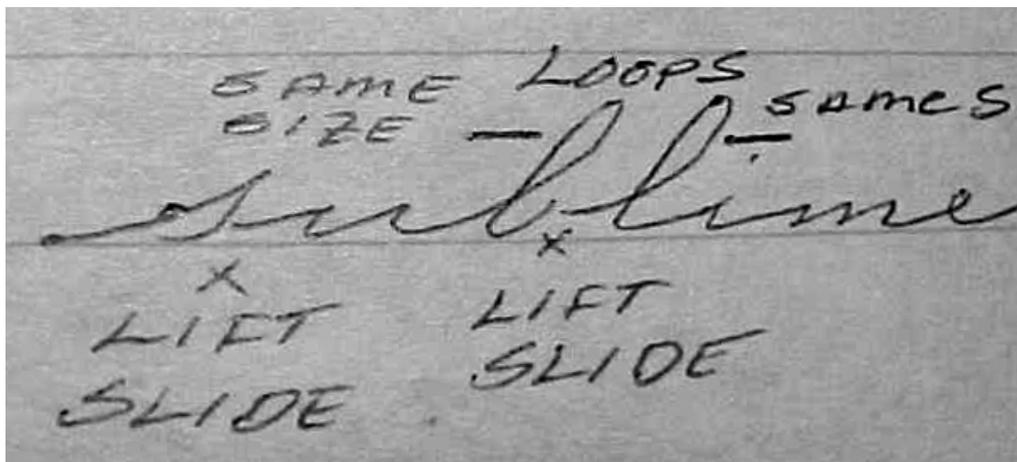


The small 's' in sublime of L Madarasz



Study this letter carefully in the Maddy letter as it is such a unique form. Maddy came up with this form much like an artistic designer would create something new. No one before him had used this lovely style of letter and most viewers would not even notice how it was made. The arm moved the pen to the top of the 's' (a bit higher than a small 'i'). He used finger motion to bring the pen down slowly and cause the down line to disappear into the base line. NOTE: he did not connect the bottom to the upstroke. The 1/2 oval is put on with the pen without a lot of heaviness, just enough to cause the illusion of a closed letter. It is a marvelous letter form.

'sublime' from Madarasz page



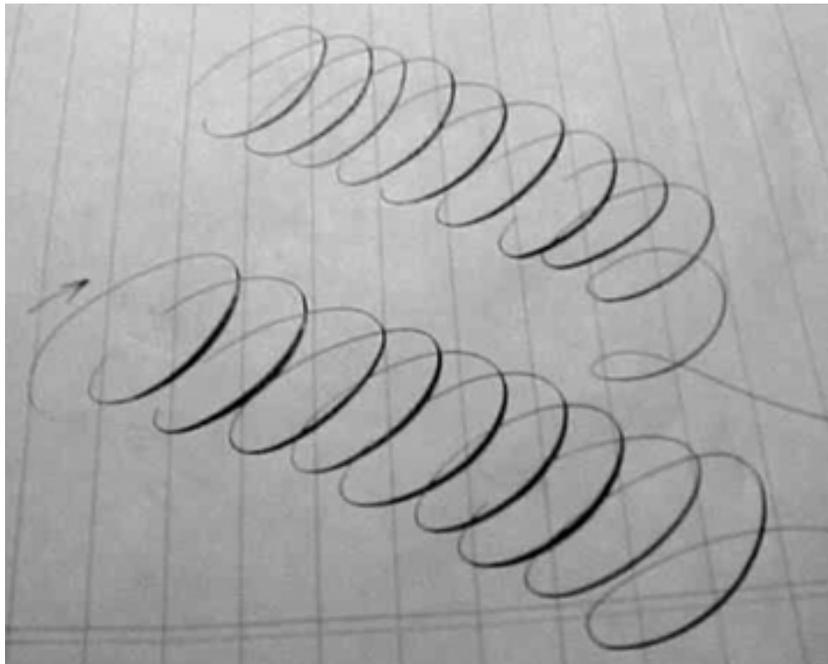
On this word Madarasz lifted his pen 3 times: after the 's', after the second part of the 'b' and also above the cross line of the 'l'. The pen lifts were to preserve slant and accuracy. He used a lot of arm movement between letters but in letters there was precise finger motion.

Madarasz way of adjusting the flange of an oblique

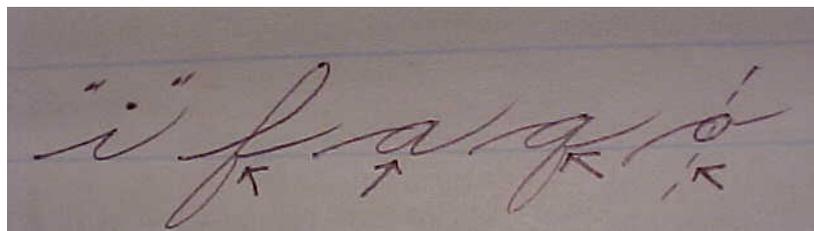
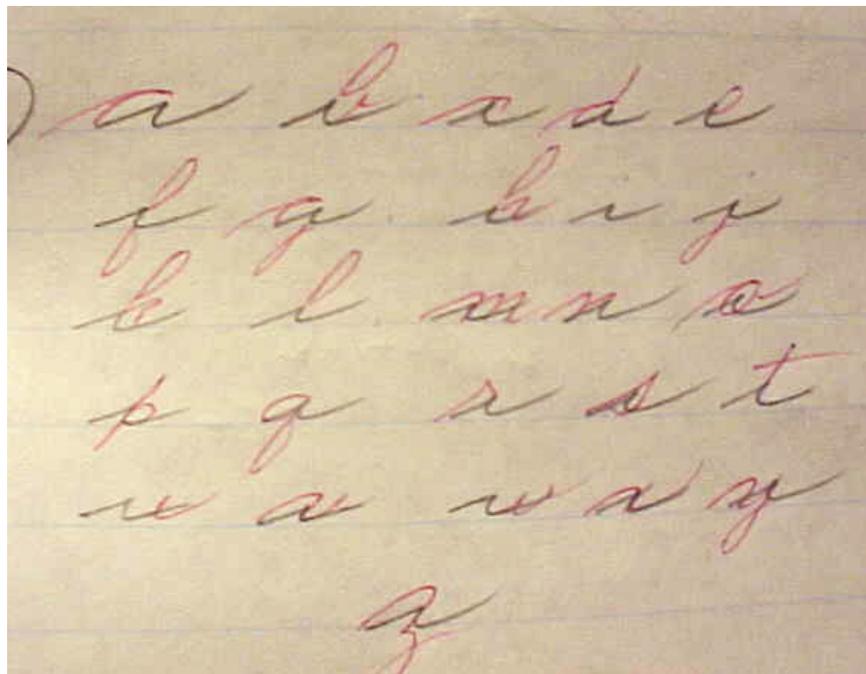
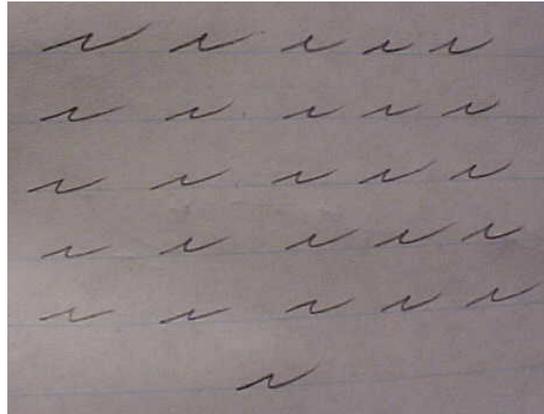


Put the holder in your hand with the right thumb on top. With the left fingers as shown, push up with the lower index finger and down with thumb to bring the oblique up. This will help the nib 'skate' on the surface of the paper rather than dig in. Photo shown in files.

Ornamental Penmanship exercise ala Madarasz



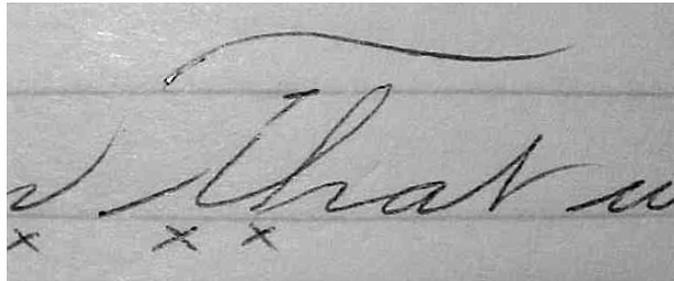
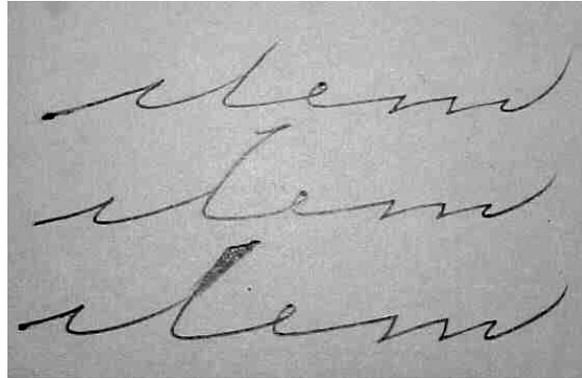
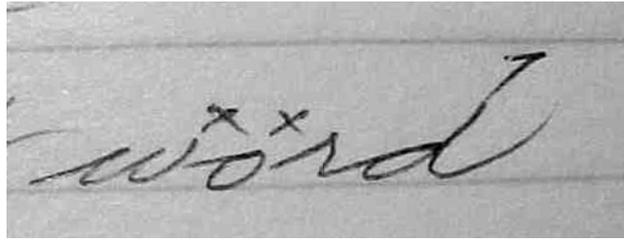
Just made a post for practice: sublimity



The small 's' is higher than the 'i' form; each time Maddy lifted his pen he also slid the paper to the left. Notice the 7 to make the shade on the 't'. He used the curved end on the 'y' as it was easier than making a precise loop which had to cross exactly on the base line. And the curved end 'y' is just a bit of eye candy.

The top of the 't' is just fun.

3 Madarasz postings



I have made 3 files for Madarasz writing as to how he finished the first line of the full page. Notice the 'x' I used to show where he lifted the pen and also slid the paper to the left. Notice the small 't' and 'd': he often would write to the height of the 'i' in each of those letters, lift the pen, and come down from the top. Note the right side of a figure '7' which is the way he would shade the top: filling the form.

Brian Walker's Observations:

On January 11th Del wrote:

After the 'o' Maddy probably lifted the pen and slid the paper to the left to get in the right position to finish the 'm and e'. Penmen lifted their pen and slid their paper often (every 3rd letter) so they would maintain the same slant of all the letters on a single line. (If the paper is not moved to the left, the arm will cause a significant change in slant from the beginning of a line to its end).

Brian Walker's Observations (continued)

Unfortunately I've been having trouble getting on to the OP site this week to look at the files Del is referring to and to compare the images with Del's comments. However, following up on the above comment about master penmen moving the paper after every third letter this set me thinking along my own investigation and analysis. I may be wrong as like most other people I've had a lot of help, but no formal instruction in ornamental penmanship, but from what I do know I believe this lift of the pen and move of the paper after every third letter (or so) is more complex than it sounds.

Out of curiosity therefore I selected a lovely specimen of A W Kimpson's ornamental writing (August 1911) where he'd written out the now familiar four line quote "Count that day lost..."

I started my analysis by measuring the main slant of his writing. It varied marginally between 39 degrees and 42 degrees from the horizontal (or 48 and 51 degrees from the vertical - whichever you prefer) with the most consistent slant being 42 degrees. This was the angle of writing I concentrated on. At 42 degrees therefore this writing had quite a forward slope to it. Much more than Copperplate (usually 54 degrees) and more than the 52 degrees originally advocated by Spencer or the 50 degree slant advocated by Zaner and P Z Blosler.

Now, if as in Copperplate the direction of the nib tines are placed roughly in line with the slant of the writing, then Kimpson's paper MUST have also been slanting to the left (top left corner pulled down to the left) and in fact with this in mind I found that the bottom edge of the paper was at an angle of 48 degrees from the horizontal edge of the table. 48 degrees and 42 degrees add up to 90 degrees. Is that opposite angles or adjacent angles adding up to 90 degrees? I can't remember exactly - it's 50 years since I did geometry at school.

So, with a paper slant of 48 degrees from the horizontal and writing slanting on its writing line at 42 degrees, basically Kimpson must have been writing UPHILL - away from himself and not straight across from left to right, and if Kimpson WAS writing uphill as I suspect he was and also other master penmen too, then it's inevitable that he would have to regularly move his paper DOWNHILL towards himself after every third letter or so in order to (a) avoid stretching awkwardly upwards and (b) maintain a consistent arm position. This is what I found when I tried to write in the same vein. Three letters and the need to lift the pen and adjust.

Theory - the paper moves not the arm.

I checked the slant of Kimpson's writing (and that of Madarasz) against my own ornamental penmanship to date and found my own writing was more upright at 48 to 50 degrees from the horizontal - the recommended angle. It's like what Donald Jackson once said to us (reported in a previous email) "Why does this writing look like it does?" In

Brian Walker's Observations (continued)

other words, "Why does my writing look different to Kimpson's?" Simply because for a start, the slant of my writing is different to that of Kimpson's so visually it automatically it has a different visual appearance. So to get my writing looking more like Kimpson's I needed to make some adjustments.

I therefore ruled up a sheet of guidelines with half inch spacing (the same inter-linear spacing as Kimpson's) and then added some 42 degree right slanting lines over the top. I then tilted the top left corner of the paper downwards to the left until the paper sloped at 48 degrees and the nib was pointing directly up the 42 degree slant lines. I then slid the paper over just a little to the right side of me to a more comfortable writing position so I wasn't writing exactly in front of me and Bingo! I was not only able to write at the same main slant as Kimpson, but I found a need to pull the paper a little towards me about every third letter. More to the point though, those dastardly difficult ornamental capitals and their rather intriguingly shaped shaded strokes became much easier to do all in one smooth gliding movement. Additionally, looped ascenders seemed to take on a more accurate form, arched letters were improved and inter-letter spacing was also greatly improved. The whole looked more akin to the original Kimpson style. Finally, I found that both my arms were coming into the writing position at an even 60 degrees on each side. A nice balanced equilateral triangle.

It would be interesting to find out from Del whether this kind of thinking is on the right track or not. Anyone else given this a try?

Regards

Brian

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EARLIER I WROTE

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Brian Walker's Observations (continued)***CORRECTION***

What I should have said is - slightly DOWNHILL and to the left

I ALSO WROTE

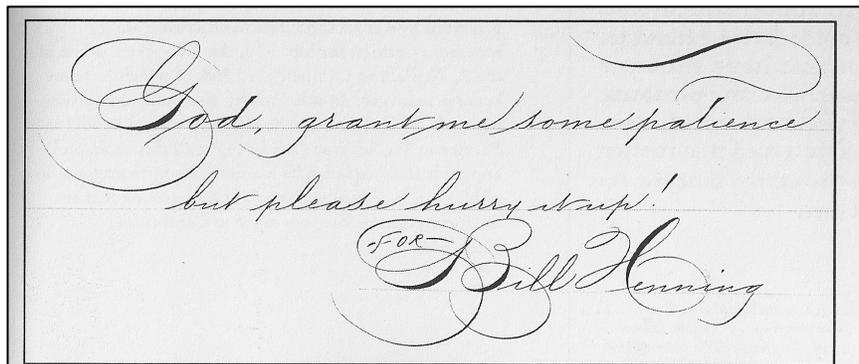
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CORRECTION

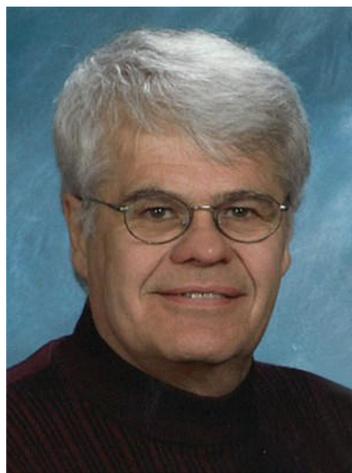
Again I should have said (for more clarity) - pull the paper slightly downhill and to the left.

Regards

Brian



7.93. Delbert Tysdal. Ornamental Penmanship. Delbert Tysdal's interest in penmanship was aroused at the Dakota Business Institute in Fargo, North Dakota. Tysdal, born in 1945, later became one of the last pupils of W. C. Brownfield, who in turn was one of the last to study under Louis Madarasz in 1910.



Delbert D. Tysdal (1944-2013)

The specimen of Del's Ornamental Penmanship was taken from the book 'An Elegant Hand' by William E. Henning and Edited by Paul Melzer.

Image composite by Dr. Joseph M. Vitolo