

IAMPETH

Penman's Journal

Spring, 2003

www.iampeth.com

The official quarterly publication of the International Association of Master Penmen, Engrossers, and Teachers of Handwriting.



THE ART OF COPPERPLATE ENGRAVING

- R ***Learning from the Masters***
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More Nibs Reviewed!

Special Pullout Section!
Complete IAMPETH Convention Information!
Cleveland, Ohio, July 7-12, 2003

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The official quarterly publication of the
International Association of Master Penmen,
Engrossers and Teachers of Handwriting.
Formerly the IAMPETH Newsletter.

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The Newsletter of The International Association of Master Penmen, Engrossers & Teachers of Handwriting is published quarterly and is mailed to all current members. The association year dates from July 1 through June 30. Dues are \$20.00 per year. For students or those over 65 years of age, dues are \$15.00. Dues are not pro-rated. Those joining in mid-year will receive all four issues of the newsletter for that year. Checks should be made payable to IAMPETH and sent to the Treasurer at the following address: **Kathy Saunders, 1818 Kennedy Rd., Webster, New York 14580 USA.**

Items of interest such as articles, samples of work, news clippings, study guides and information concerning IAMPETH members should be sent to the Newsletter Editor: **Bob Hurford, 201 Pineville Rd., Wrightstown, PA 18940 USA, e-mail: rjhurf@aol.com.** Some back issues of the Newsletter are available for \$2.00 each. Contact the Treasurer, Kathy Saunders.

No part of this newsletter may be reproduced without the consent of the Editor.

If anyone would like to write an article for the Newsletter, or would like to see a specific topic covered in a future issue, please write or e-mail **Bob Hurford** at the above address.

ON THE COVER: An actual copper engraved printing plate that was used in the book, *Michael's Compendium of Plain & Ornamental Penmanship* by G.W. Michael, 1886. The Art of Copperplate Engraving starts on page nine.

The International Association
OF
Master Penmen, Engrossers, Teachers of Handwriting

President's Message

A NEW BEGINNING

Welcome to the FIRST EDITION of the *IAMPETH Penman's Journal*. What you hold in your hand today is a part of a long tradition with roots back to the nineteenth century. The IAMPETH Newsletter was actually an outgrowth of several publications devoted to the interests and work of penman, engrossers, and teachers of handwriting.


Your comments regarding the improvements and quality of the Newsletter prompted the IAMPETH Board to consider a name change that would emphasize the publication's status as a major educational agent and as a resource for the discussion of pen arts. In science, technology, and humanities, the term "journal" embraces the concept of research and learning. It was, therefore, logical that the new masthead would include the word "Journal". IAMPETH's heritage and mission provided the other term, "Penman's".

In conversations with the Editor, Bob Hurford, I am assured that the renaming and modernization of the title are only the first of many enhancements to be achieved in the coming months. I will, however, allow him to describe these to you in a future issue.

The 2003 IAMPETH Pen Arts Conference: Included in this edition is the REGISTRATION PACKET: the blue insert. Please review these materials carefully.

1. **The Registration Form:**
 - Use a separate registration form for each person registering.
 - Conference fees and dues are combined for attendees. A discount is given for Seniors (over 65) and full-time students. Persons not attending should pay dues in the section directly below.
 - The Reverse side of the form is critical for planning. Please check-mark your choice in each day's time blocks.
 - For your record, also circle your choice on the Master Schedule on the first page.
2. **The Schedule:**
 - To afford as much education as possible, two workshops are offered in each time block. There is a mixture of pointed and broad-edge pen instruction.
 - All workshop rooms are equipped with Dukane video cameras and lavalier microphones. Everyone will see the instructor's pen and hand movements.
 - NEW THIS YEAR is a pre-conference seminar on Monday evening. The target for this workshop is people new to or just beginning their study of penmanship.
3. **Hotel Reservations:**
 - The Special Room Rate of \$87 + 14.5 % tax will be held ONLY to June 12.
 - IAMPETH must assure the Wyndham that we will make our sleeping room quota. Please make your reservations NOW by telephone or on the hotel web site. If there is an emergency, you can cancel up to 24 hours before arrival.
4. **Avoid Airport security problems** by shipping tools to the hotel. Follow the label instructions. Return shipping and boxes are also available at the hotel.
5. **Every attendee will receive** a large blue canvas tote bag with logo and quill.
6. **Conference Registration deadline is June 20.** No refunds after that date.

The war in Iraq causes much uncertainty. More than ever, IAMPETH needs your support. To avoid economic hardships and make this conference successful, PLEASE send your registration NOW. This will give the leadership an ability to notify you and return your money in case of a cancellation due to a national crisis or lack of participation.



Learning from the Masters

For anyone attempting to improve his or her work, the study of a masterwork is one of the best ways to learn. By closely examining, dissecting and trying the strokes of the masters, one's skill can be immeasurably enhanced.

By Bob Hurford

One of the great joys of penmanship is to study the works of the past masters. IAMPETH owns quite a number of masterworks and they are on display every year at the convention. Members frequently pour over them until early hours of the morning and it is enlightening to hear their reactions.

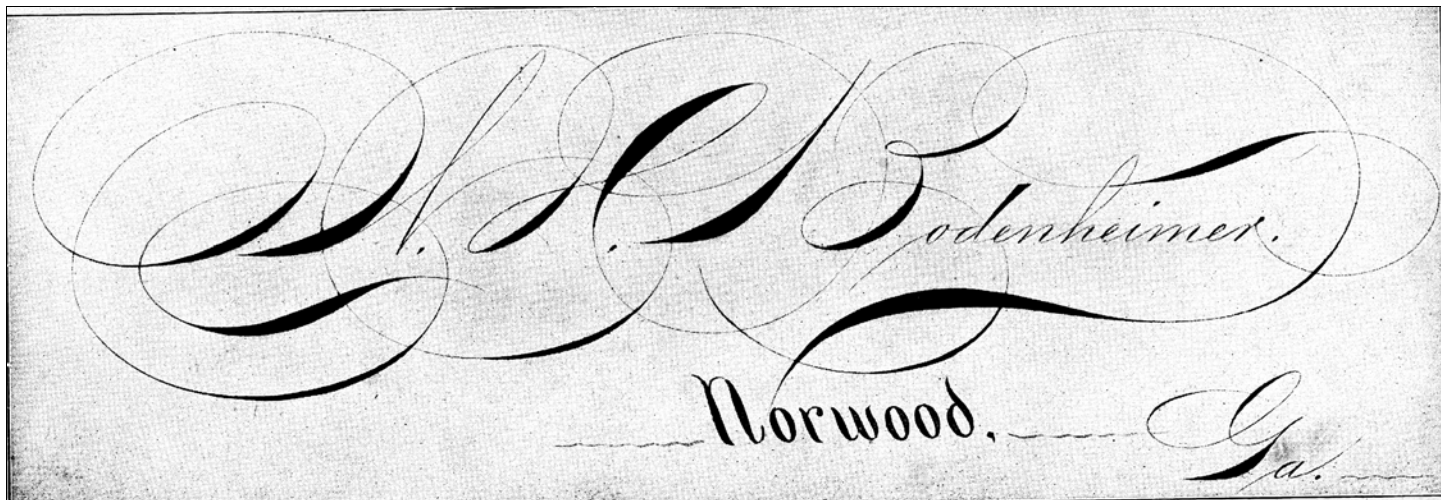
They marvel over the talent of this penman or that as they turn the pages of a century-old scrapbook. All too often, however, I hear the lamentable phrase, "I wish I could do that." There is no reason why anyone couldn't do any pen stroke they see on a page. It is a matter of examining the lines, breaking them down into their component parts and practicing. Lots of practice.

the "r" in Bodenheimer—is simple, yet elegant. There is not a jiggly line to be found anywhere.

The W, H, and the shaft of the B and all of their attendant flourishing may be written without picking up the pen.

I first saw A.D. Taylor's Bodenheimer envelope in Charles P. Zaner's *Lessons in Ornamental Penmanship*, page 91. It was reprinted in a second edition of *Lessons in Ornamental Penmanship* by Parker Zaner Bloser and Earl Lupfer on page 68. Though neither book specifically states the scale of reproduction, it appears likely that it was at or near one hundred percent.

What drew me to this piece was the initial flourish leading to the "W." As I examined it further, the beauty of the connectors



The Bodenheimer envelope by A.D. Taylor. It was reproduced from a halftone from Lessons in Ornamental Penmanship by C.P. Zaner, ca. 1915.

How It Worked for Me

In my quest for better muscular and whole arm movement, I owe a huge debt to the W.H. Bodenheimer envelope pictured on this page. Rendered by the wonderfully talented A.D. Taylor, its fluid lines are about as close to perfection as possible by the human hand. There are lessons galore in just this small writing specimen.

Shades are consistent and parallel, crossing at or close to ninety degrees. Letter spacing and slant are also consistent. The grand finale—the swash up, over, and back under the name off

between upper case letters became apparent. First I had to figure out the sequence of strokes then decide on the best way to execute them with my style of writing. But one thing at a time.

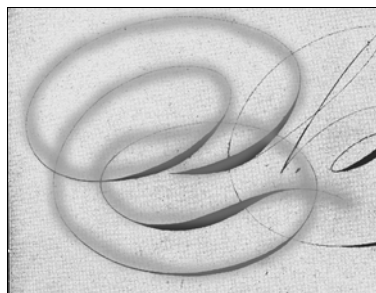
Teaching the Hand, Eye, and Brain

For my inexperienced hand to try and execute the entire sequence of strokes from the "W" to the shaft of the "B" would have been difficult, frustrating, and in the end, counterproductive to improving muscular and whole-arm movement. I had to divide it into parts and work on the strokes individually, gain some confidence, then combine them later.

For the writing, I chose a Spencerian Number Five. The ink is my homemade walnut on a yellow legal pad. Yellow pads,

available at Staples, Office Max and other such stores, are smooth without being slick, have great ink holdout for fine hairlines, and are inexpensive. At less than \$5.00 per dozen, they are the best practice paper.

I started with the initial flourish that leads to the “W.” When first trying a flourish, render it in pencil and don’t worry about the shades. The object is to orient the hand, eye, and brain to the mechanics of the stroke. Perfecting shades will come later.

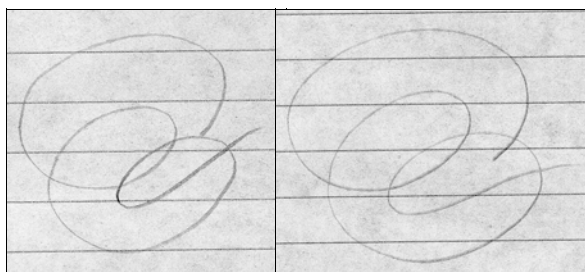


I started with the front flourish.

This flourish begins right to left for me and loops over three times before settling in a capital stem. It is important to time the capital stem to end between the shades on the first and third ovals so that none of the thick strokes collide. That would be ugly.

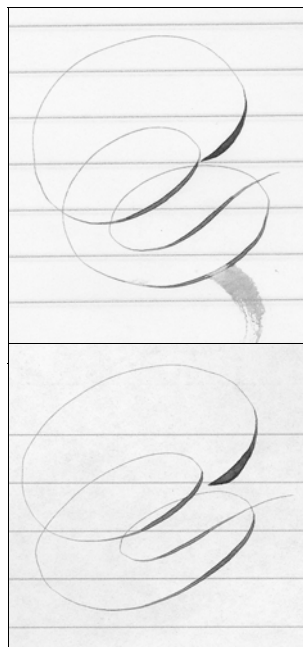
Though I was still working with an oblique pencil, it also became apparent to me that I was going to have to decide how I wanted to position the paper to comfortably execute the flourish. The first stroke ran at nearly parallel to the baseline. Swinging my right arm across my body while putting pressure on the pen to make the shade was one way to do it. The nib had to be turned counterclockwise until it faced squarely into the shade or the thick line would be jagged. I also found that I could turn the paper so that the shade strokes would become direct pull strokes. This latter method turned out to be most comfortable.

Whichever way one chooses, the trick is to angle the



At left, my first attempt at the flourish with an oblique pencil. It is shaky and the initial stroke is at too steep an angle. The end of the flourish, where the capital stem would be, has missed the baseline. The more proficient effort at right took three practice pages and many attempts, but took less than half an hour to achieve. Notice that I haven’t yet tried a shade. It is easier to do that later, once the hand, eye, and brain have been oriented to the mechanics of the flourish.

To make your own oblique pencil, see the Summer, 2002, IAM-PETH Newsletter.



When rendering the first flourish, muscular movement is essential. As the last loop leading to the capital stem is penned, the arm must leave the table or it will smear the wet ink as in the top image.

At bottom, several practice pages later, the flourish is taking shape. Still a little shaky, but the shades look OK and the capital stem is on target.

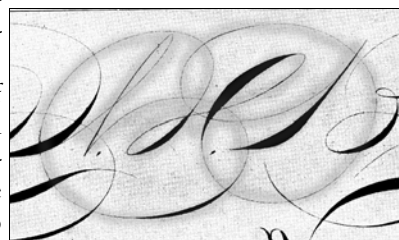
capital stem so that it would be at the proper slant to correctly form the “W” and the rest of the letters. That took some practice, but it worked. For normal writing, this can be accomplished with muscular movement. However, once the flourishes reach a certain size (depending on the length of your forearm), the arm will have to completely leave the table or the fingers will glide through the wet ink. Not good. Develop sufficient speed in order to eliminate jiggly lines.

Completing the W, H, and B

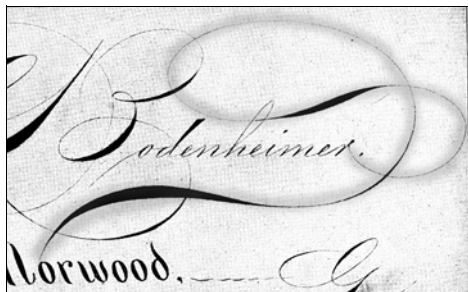
Upon completing the flourish and capital stem on the “W,” I turned the paper back to my normal writing angle to render the rest of the upper case letters. The last line of the straightforward “W” loops up, down, and over in a nearly circular pattern descending to begin the “H.”

The final stroke in the “H” curls down and up arcing counterclockwise back through the middle of “H” and up to the beginning of the capital stem in the “B.”

Notice how Taylor forms an almost perfect “x” in the crossbar of the “H.” It is all the more magnificent when one realizes that to make such



smooth, unwavering lines, the pen- Connecting flourish from the “W” through the “H” to the capital stem of the “B”.



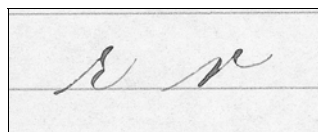
Finishing the name with a broad, sweeping finale.

man had to write at a fair rate of speed.

The shades in the flourishes are parallel at one angle while the shades within the upper case letters are parallel at another angle. This is a hallmark of good signature writing.

The first time I tried to render the entire sequence of strokes, my pen ran out of ink in the “H.” Not all nibs hold the same amount of ink. After finishing the capital stem in the “W,” I pause to re-ink. I will pause again after the capital stem in the “B,” and one more time in the “r” in Bodenheimer before making the flourish to finish the name. *Check the ink level of your pen frequently! Do not run out of ink in the middle of a stroke!* It is difficult to repair and breaks up the momentum of the pen.

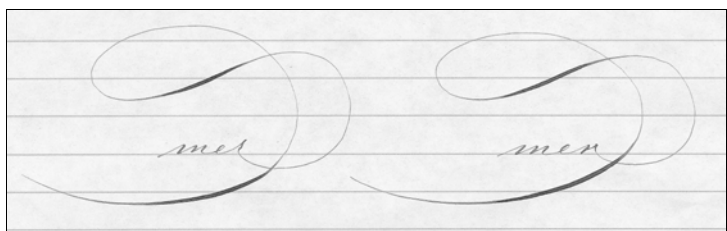
Wrapping Up the Name



French “r” at left and the English “r” on the right.

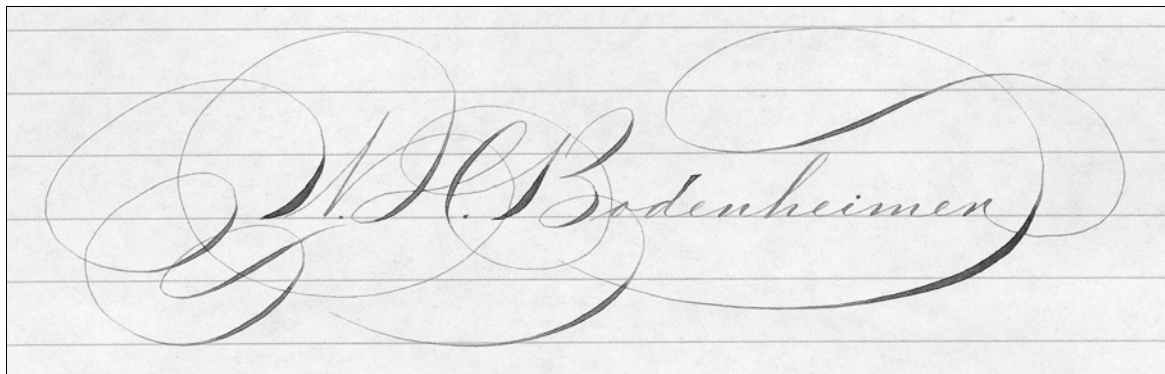
Write out “odenheimer” according to your own style. If you prefer copperplate, by all means, use it. Ornamental capitals and copperplate lower case letters make a fine combination. Pictured are examples of C.P. Zaner’s splendid use of the effect.

For the final “r,” A.D. Taylor used the so-called English style. The French “r” may be used just as easily. With either, stop at the top of the letter and check your ink supply. I also use this



Penning the end flourish off the French “r” and off the English “r”.

The elements of the Bodenheimer name are starting to come together. I still need to get rid of the jiggly lines, but I like my progress after only a few days. With the basics in hand, other flourishes will prove to be much easier.



opportunity to turn the paper because I ran into the same problem with this final flourish that I did on the first. The shade requires two cross strokes, one at the top and a finisher under the last name. I turned the paper to make both of these pull strokes.

The Lessons Aren’t Over

Sometimes a writing specimen may display a typeface that is intriguing enough so that the viewer wants to see the entire alphabet. The word “Norwood” is written in a style of backhanded



Ornamental capitals do not only look great with ornamental script. Copperplate and English Roundhand work, too. By C.P. Zaner for the 1895/1900 Zanerian Manual.

marking alphabet popular at the turn of the twentieth century. Pictured is a complete alphabet rendered by C.P. Zaner for the Zanerian Manual, 1895/1900.

The combination of this marking alphabet and ornamental penmanship is also worth noting. Not all alphabets work well together, but these do.

I also like the wavy lines on either side of “Norwood” and after “Ga.” Something I might use on a future envelope.

Speaking of “Ga.,” the “G” is not one I had used, but Taylor’s fine rendering has made me consider it.

Every writing sample yields lessons. It may be as simple as another way of making a particular letter. There may be subtle clues about a penman’s methodology such as “double stroking” to make thick shades thicker. Penmen routinely touched up letters to improve their form.

Engrossed scrolls yield myriad lessons in design, drawing and painting techniques, as well as letterforms.

When viewing a masterwork whether in a publication, on the Internet, or in a museum setting, don’t hesitate to get out a pencil and paper and work the strokes that appeal to you. A small sketch pad is handy to record what you see. Later, when you’ve moved on to pen practice, you’ll discover that once a few

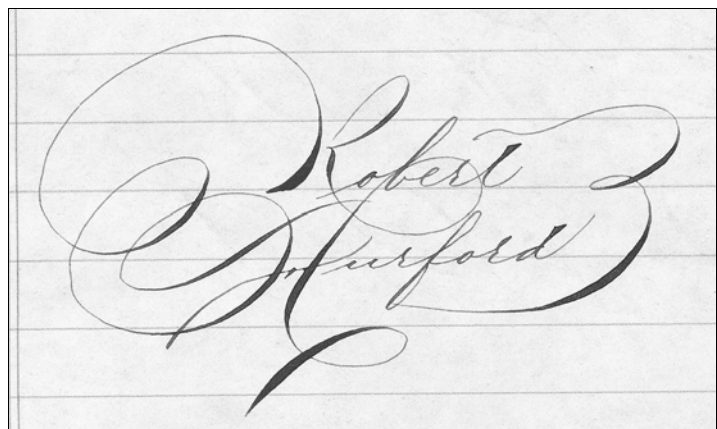


The initial flourish may be used with a number of letters. Try it with the B, H, K, M, N, P, R, U, V, W, X, and Y.

Below, the Bodenheimer flourishes applied to "Virginia."



pen strokes are truly mastered, confidence in additional strokes for other letters and flourishes will follow and you will have opened up a whole new world of penmanship.



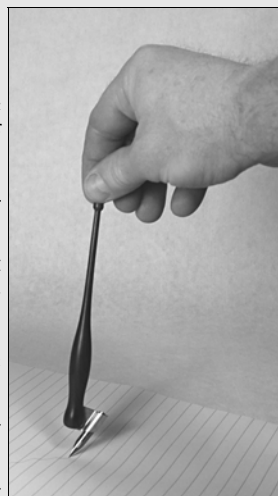
Flourishes may be applied in many ways. Here is an application that the author found handy.

Rendering Superfine Hairlines

The quest to write the finest hairlines may be summed up in two words: *Light Touch!* Holding the pen in the "death grip" tends to constrict the hand and arm leading to jiggly strokes and hairlines that are less than their best.

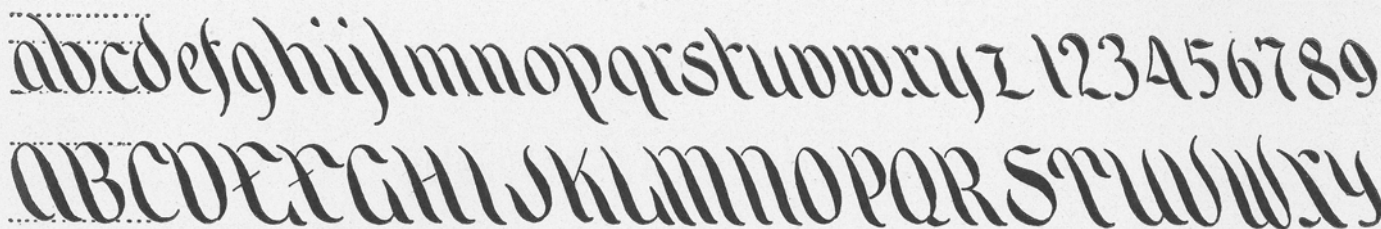
To demonstrate the light touch needed for fine hairlines, ink your nib and hold your penholder with your thumb and forefinger at the holder's rearmost point as in the photo below. Now write a line. Holding the pen so far back makes it nearly impossible to put weight on the nib, but you should be able to make a faint hairline. That is all the pressure required. You'll sense that there is a film of ink between the nib and paper by the smooth gliding action.

A cushion under the paper provides some bounce to the nib and is helpful for making hairlines. The amount of bounce is a matter of individual feel. Two or three sheets of paper will work for some. A section of newspaper also works. I like the foam sheets found in craft stores. I tape two sheets of paper over top to keep the foam from "giving" too much and allowing the nib to possibly puncture the paper. I will also use newspaper when using a really sharp, flexible nib such as a Gillott 303 or writing on heavier stock.



Practice a light touch with a quick transition to pressuring the nib for shades then releasing that pressure again for hairlines whether making flourishes or letters. Use muscular or whole-arm movement and write with sufficient speed to avoid wavy lines. No fingers and no wrist allowed. It may seem awkward at first, but you'll soon get the hang of it.

Not only will you discover that flourishes are easier to render, but the snag of the pen in the paper when coming out of a shade (particularly at the seven o'clock position in an oval or circle) will disappear as well.



A marking alphabet similar to that of "Norwood" by C.P. Zaner for the 1895/1900 Zanerian Manual.

Lessons in Engrosser's Script

by Dr. Joseph M. Vitolo

<http://www.zanerian.com>

In the fourth installment of this series we will examine the lower case Group 2 letterforms shown in Figure 1. Let us begin with the Group 2A forms. The letters in this family are composed of the two basic shapes shown with their corresponding pen strokes illustrated in Figures 2A and 2B. Remember that letters are typically formed from left to right. Therefore, you should begin with the hairline upstroke (Figure 2A). Hopefully by this point your eye will be able to pickup the remarkable similarity between these three letters.

The 'i' can be viewed as the fundamental stroke. I form the stem of the 'i' in one stroke as indicated by the arrows in Figure 2B. To finish the 'i' we must now consider the dot. As a general rule, the dot should be made by first drawing a small circle of

two 'i' strokes, minus the dots of course. Finally, the letter 'w' is formed by fully extending the hairline exit stroke of the 'u' upwards. Finish with a small half dot as shown. To form this half dot first trace the shape and fill in with ink (Figure 1 Inset A). When time is a consideration, this half dot may be formed in one step by applying pressure to the nib on the down stroke of forming the connector hairline. Notice also that the curvature of the connector off the half dot is identical to the curvature at the base of the letter. Understanding these similarities will permit the scriptwriter to produce letters of wonderful grace and symmetry.

Group 2B Letterforms

Next, we will examine the Group 2B letterforms in Figure 1. Let-

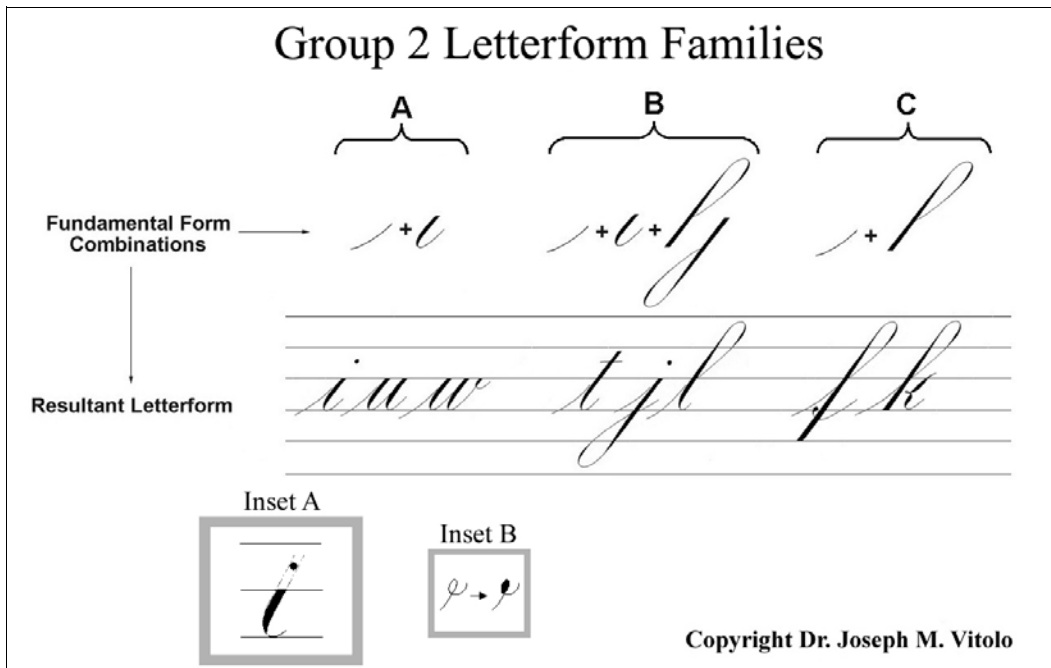


Figure 1.

equal width with respect to the vertical shade of the 'i' (Figure 1 Inset A). The dot should be located in the center of the first ascender space. Then simply fill in the circle with ink to complete the dot. Avoid making the dot wider than the width of the vertical shade of the 'i'. Such large dots will tend to distract the eye.

Continuing on, the letter 'u' is formed by simply connecting

ters in this family are created by combinations of the forms illustrated in Figures 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D. In my view of letterforms, I consider the 't' as a transitional form between the 'i' and the ascender stem loop. Therefore, I consider the 't' as sort of an ascending 'i' that starts with a pen stroke just below the top of the first ascender space and continues downwards towards the baseline exactly as the letter 'i'. Finish the 't' by carefully crossing the stem with a hairline in the middle of the first ascender space as shown. Be sure the 't-cross' is parallel to the baseline.

Next, we have two stem loop letters 'j' and 'l'. The loop portions of these letters can be thought of as inverted mirror images. Please note that the strokes used to form the ascender and descender stem loops, indicated by the arrows in

Figures 2C and 2D, represent my personal approach to forming stem loops. Let us consider Figure 2C, the descending stem loop of the letter 'j'. I would first form the main wedge shaped shade with a down stroke, stop at the point indicated by the dotted line. I will then lift my pen off the paper. Next, I 'invert' the paper 180 degrees and finish the loop by going 'up and over the top'. Notice

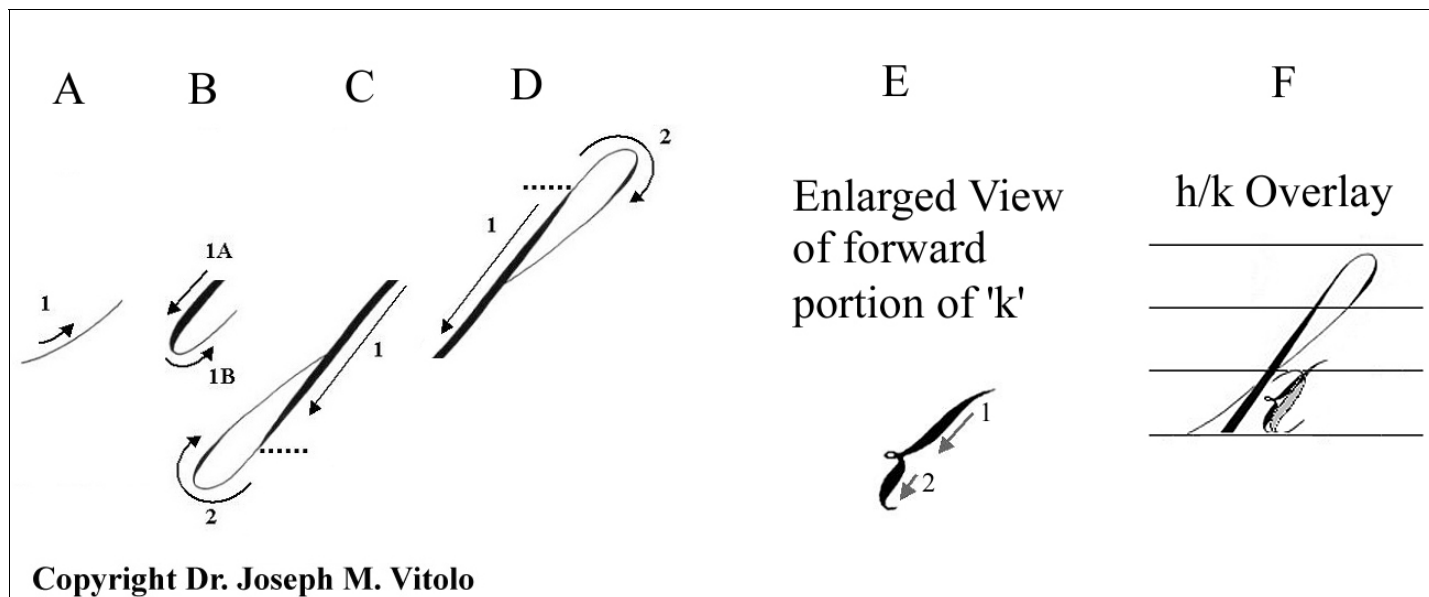


Figure 2.

that I place a slight shade on the forward portion of the loop. This is done by placing a slight amount of pressure to the down stroke. Remember, the paper has been turned upside down to finish this letter. This is a modification of one approach given in *The Zanerian Manual*.

Try it my way at first but feel free to experiment to find what works best for you. The 'j' is finished with a dot in the same way as the letter 'i'. I keep the dots of letters like 'i' and 'j' and the 't'-cross discussed above at the same relative height, i.e. at the mid point of the first ascender space. Be careful not to let the loop of the 'stem loop' get too wide or too narrow, consistency is the key. See the Winter, 2003, issue to see the previous Letterform Analysis article of mine that delves into great detail on stem loops. In addition, my current Letterform Analysis article in this issue examines the baseline crossing of the descender stem loop.

Letterforms in the 2C Group

The final letters we will discuss are the Group 2C letterforms in Figure 1. Letters in this family are formed by the combination of the strokes shown in Figures 2A and 2D. Before continuing, I would like to pose a question: "Does anything strike you about the letters 'f' and 'k'?" The answer should be, *absolutely!*

Specifically, the stem loops are identical save for the descender portion of the 'f' stem. My approach to forming ascender stem loops is shown in Figure 2D. The wedge shaped shaded down stroke is formed first by starting at the point indicated by the dotted line and stopping at the baseline. The square cutoff is formed by a quick leftward flick of the pen. If done correctly, the base of the stroke should be squared off. Please refer to *The Zanerian Manual* for more on the 'cutoff'.

In the case of the 'f', continue the down stroke below the baseline through the first descender space as indicated. Care must be taken since the overall length of the 'f' makes it deceptively difficult to form this letter correctly. After lifting my pen, I start at the point indicated by the dotted line proceeding 'up and over the top' to form the loop. Try to keep the loop smoothly curving un-

til it intersects the main shade. As discussed above, I place a slight shade on the loop as indicated in the figure. The bottom front portion of the 'k' is formed last by starting just above the header line using sequential strokes as indicated by the arrows in Figure 2E.

The first stroke indicated by arrow #1 is basically a short compound curve that enters into a loop structure and should be on the main slant angle of the letter. Keep the tiny loop open and horizontal to the baseline. The second stroke indicated by arrow #2 is akin to a squat 'v' shaped shade. This stroke should also be on the main slant angle and parallel to the main stem loop shade. I form both strokes and the loop without lifting my pen from the paper. Do not allow the letter get too wide at the base. A good rule of thumb is to keep the width of the lower half of the 'k' slightly narrower than that of the lower half of the letter 'h'. Figure 2F illustrates this concept by superimposing the forward portions of the 'k' and 'h'. Note that the base of the 'k' is contained within the area of the base of the 'h'. *The Zanerian Manual* contains a beautifully illustrated example of this concept on page four.

Just A Reminder!

I invite anyone interested to join my
Ornamental Penmanship Group on Yahoo.

It is free and can be accessed at:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Ornamental_Penmanship

The Art of Copperplate Engraving

You know copperplate as a script, but it is also why the letterforms and flourishes in old books are absolutely perfect. Don't be frustrated if you can't match them!

By Bob Hurford



The copper printing plate at left printed page 127 of Michael's *Compendium of Plain & Ornamental Penmanship*, 1886. It is .18" thick and weighs nearly four pounds.

of the hand as the sculpsit painstakingly chiseled away the metal while reproducing a penman's work. A single plate required hours, if not days, to complete.

Because copperplate engraving was used to reproduce script lettering, its name became synonymous with English Roundhand.

Copperplate As A Printing Process

Copperplate engraving and printing originated around 1450, about the time of Johann Gutenberg's system of movable wooden type. The Breakfast Dish fish pictured here and on the cover is a fantastic example of a copper engraved printing plate and shows the engraver's skill in all its glory. As you can see, a

When one looks at masterworks of penmen reproduced in books like George Bickham's *The Universal Penman*, it is easy to marvel at the absolutely perfect letterforms and flawless flourishes. Pen artists, particularly beginners, may become frustrated at their inability to render such unbelievable lines. What they don't understand is that the penman had a ringer—the engraver, who could repair inaccurate letterforms and make jiggly lines go away. In many respects, engravers were as talented, or more so, than the penman.

Engravers, sometimes referred to as "sculpsit," could make any penman look terrific. Engravers hand carved printing plates, generally on sheets of copper. Copper was the metal of choice because it was soft and could produce excellent hairlines.

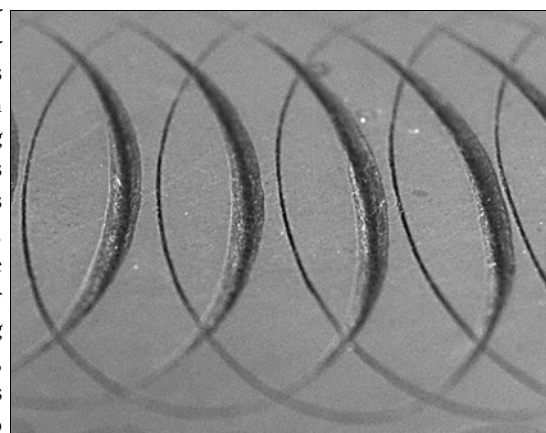
An engraver carved into the copper with a tool called a burin, sometimes referred to as a graver. It was a sharp steel chisel with various tips and lengths designed for different cuts with a large wooden or cork knob for a handle. The knob rested in the palm

copper printing plate was engraved backwards!

Normally, copper plates are used in a printing process known as *intaglio*, from the Italian for "cutting in." Thick, pasty ink is forced into the grooves.

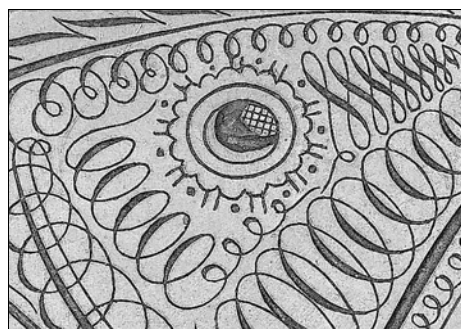
On the printing press, the plate is laid onto dampened paper and with considerable pressure, the ink is forced off the plate and onto the sheet. After the thick layer of ink dries, one can actually feel the raised nature of the lines.

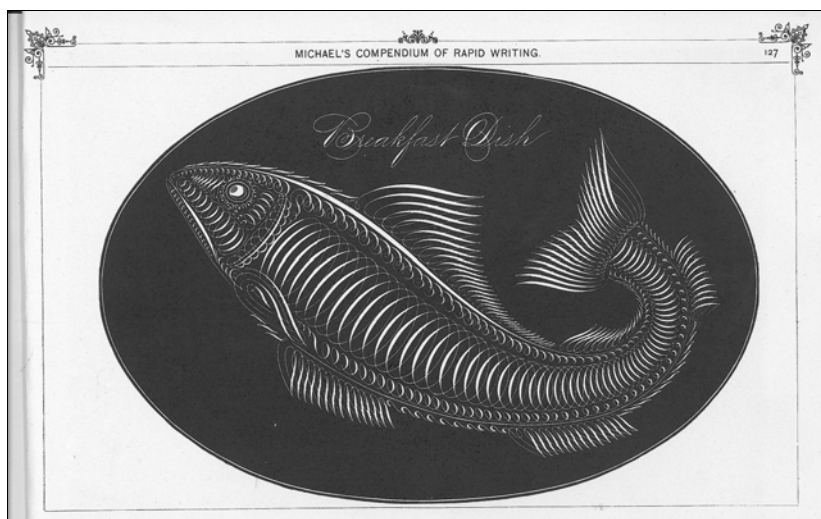
The Breakfast Dish fish appeared on page 127 of Michael's *Compendium of Plain & Ornamental Penmanship*, by G.W. (George Washington) Michael, 1886. Mr. Michael (1844-1932) was founder and president of the Na-



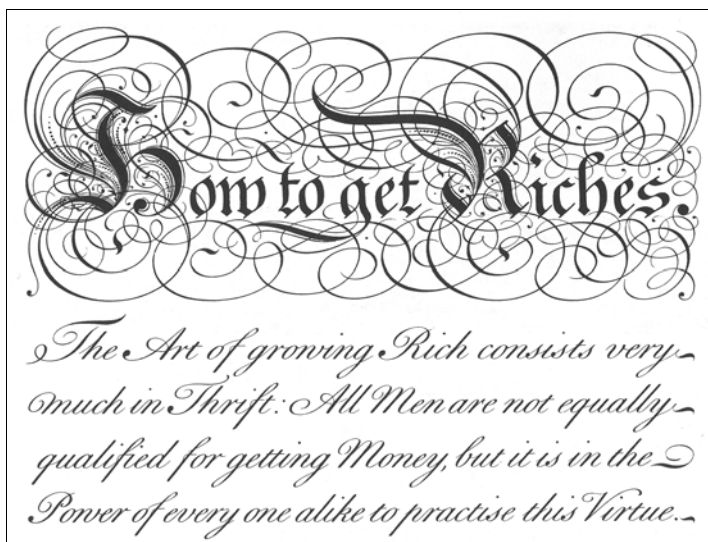
Engravers owned a number of burins with different points for different effects. The thick strokes of the fish's midsection are very deep cuts, about 1/16". There is ink residue in the grooves suggesting that the plate might have also been used for *intaglio* printing.

A closeup of the head of the Breakfast Dish Fish, above. Note the fine detail of the engraver's lines. Ink was laid on the light areas to create the white-on-black effect pictured on the following page.





Page 127 of Michael's Compendium of Plain & Ornamental Penmanship. The printing press laid down the image of the fish then a second pass was required to add type and graphic borders.

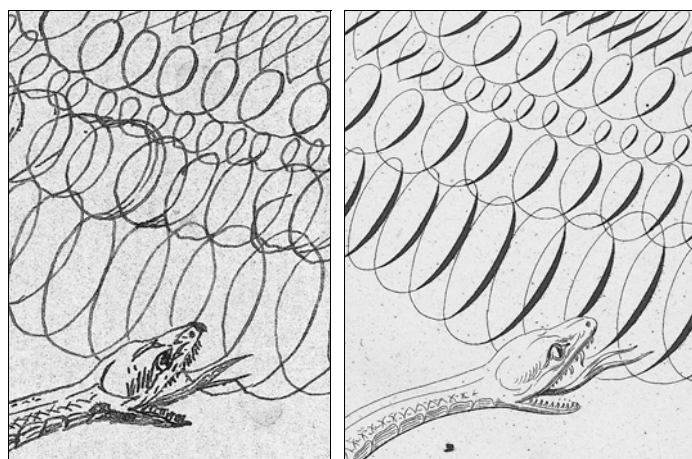


Through copperplate engraving, a publisher was able to bring script and flourish to the public, particularly students, as they were impossible to produce as type. From George Bickham's *The Universal Penman*, published in segments from 1735-1743.

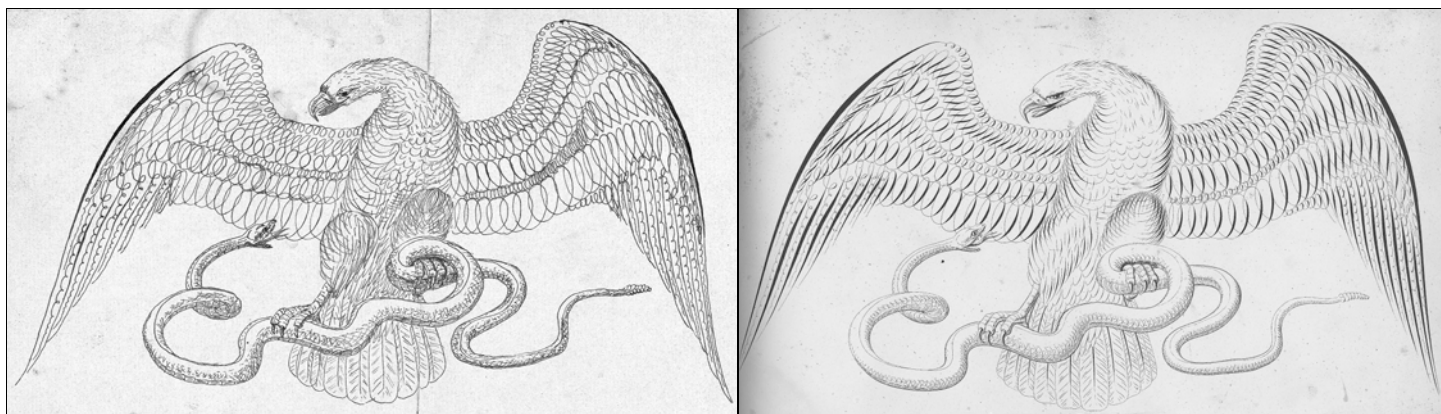
tional Pen Art Hall of Delaware, Ohio, and teacher of Charles Zaner, Elmer Bloser, and Louis Kelchner. Sadly, he does not identify his engraver as other authors tended to do.

The page from the book is reproduced here. Mr. Michael's printer cleverly used the intaglio plate as a relief plate meaning that the ink rested on the highest surfaces of the plate rather than being forced into the grooves. This allowed for the "reverse" image, white on black. With intaglio printing, the image would have been black on white. Numbers, type and other graphics added to the page required a second pass through the press. The printed reproduction is outstanding considering the technology of the time. Heavy black ink coverage is solid while maintaining the fine hairlines.

By 1886, printers were already discovering photolithography whereby a printing plate could be made directly from photographic film. Printing from this process showed work exactly as it was, warts and all. The best penmen were undeterred by this. Publications such as *The Business Educator* were printed via photo-lithography and work reproduced there was first rate, reflecting the superb talent of the penman.



Quality engravers had skill to match any penman. Above: A detail from the *Eagle and Snake* below. Note the remarkable contrast from the drawing at left to the finished engraving. The engraving is from Williams & Packard's *Gems of Penmanship*, 1867. The drawing is from an unknown artist of the same period.



The Descender Stem Loop and The Baseline Crossing

By Dr. Joseph M. Vitolo, <http://www.zanerian.com>

In this installment, I will examine the baseline crossing on descender stem loops. For the remainder of this article, anytime I use the term 'stem loop', I will be referring specifically to the descender stem loop found in letters such as 'g', 'j', 'y' and 'z'. Figure 1A, illustrates a typical descender stem loop in Engrosser's script. However, before I continue I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for indulging my 'rants' on letterform analysis. It is my hope that this series has been helpful to the reader/student of this beautiful art form.

To set up this discussion we need to direct some thought to letters immediately following such stem loops in a given word. These letters should have their hairline connector stroke emerging from the baseline on the right side of the stem loop. Consider the letter combination 'yo' written in script. The lead in stroke of the 'o' should emerge from the baseline and extends upwards from the 'y'. The importance of this will be made clear later in this article. I will refer to this stroke as the 'Exit Stroke' with respect to the stem loop. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 1C.

The question I want to address in this article is 'what should

occur on the left side of the stem loop to facilitate proper transition through the baseline?' Specifically, where should the hairline of the loop meet the stem shade? I will refer to this stroke as the 'Entry Stroke', also shown in Figure 1C.

In Figure 1B, the entry stroke intersects the shade exactly at the baseline (indicated by the gray dotted line). This means the for the exit stroke to emerge from its proper position on the baseline, the imaginary line connecting both strokes would have to bend quite a bit (Figure 1C). In fact, it would be nearly horizontal to the baseline. Keep in mind that the crossing is meant to look like a continuous smoothly curving line to the mind's eye. I will readily admit that the example in Figures 1B and 1C does not look way off and might be acceptable to some. However, masters such as Lupfer and Baird had a more refined and graceful look to their best script.

Examining Specimens from Past Penmen

At this point I should state that I recently re-evaluated my own approach. I will now share with you the result of this study. After reviewing MANY specimens from stellar script penmen of the past, I discovered that their entry strokes insert into the shade slightly below the baseline (Figure 1D). The result is a baseline crossing that is smoothly continuous as illustrated in the magnified image in Figure 1E. This is devoid of any acute imaginary bends, as per Figures 1B and 1C. The proof and effectiveness of this approach can be seen in the remarkable specimen of the words 'Hoping you' from the pen of W.A. Baird (Figure 2). Notice how the entry strokes of both the 'g' and the 'y' are slightly below the baseline and the exit strokes emerge from the baseline. This brings us back to a point I mentioned above about letters following these stem loops. Notice how the exit stroke of the 'y' in the word 'you' emerges from the baseline to form

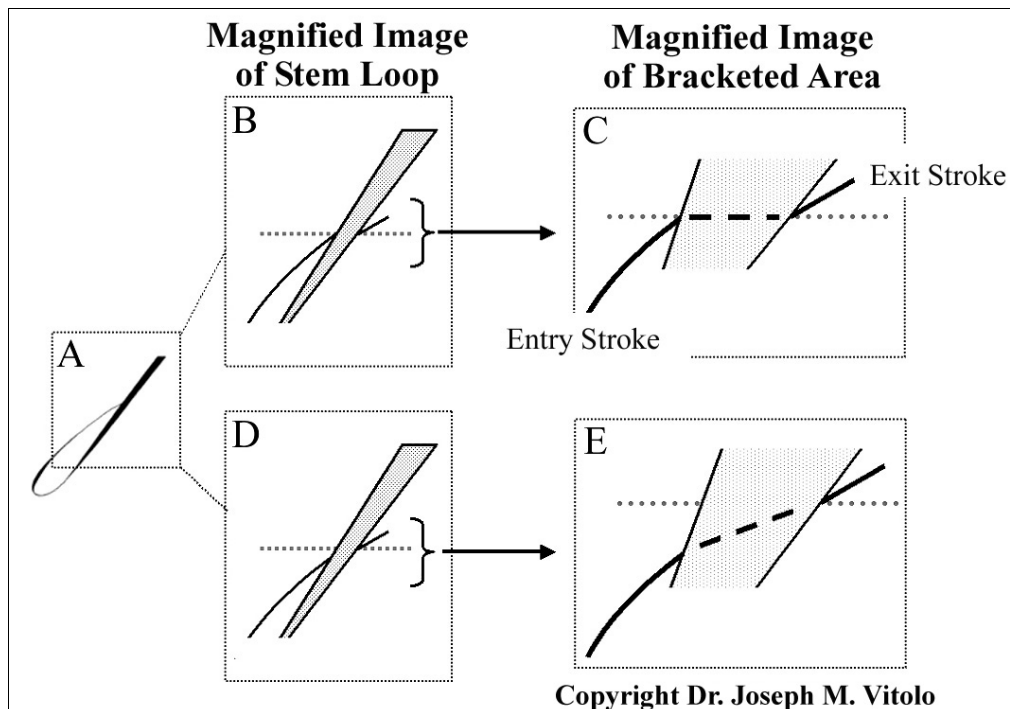
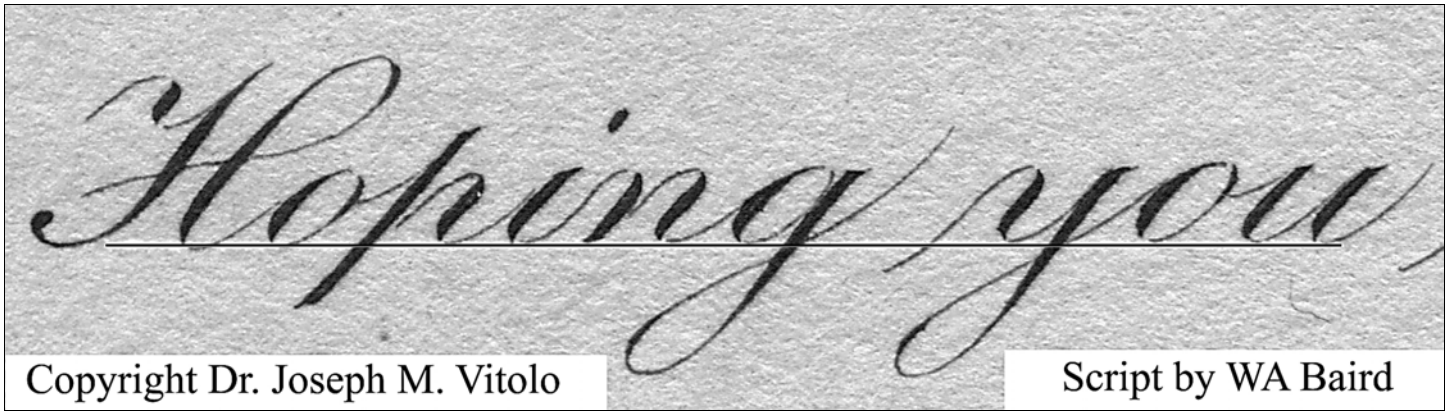


Figure 1

Copyright Dr. Joseph M. Vitolo



the lead in hairline for the 'o'. Both entry and exit strokes are harmoniously continuous without any acute angles.

These types of insights come from careful analysis and study of specimens from past masters. I would highly recommend you read Bob Hurford's article on page three that deals with 'how to

learn' from such specimens.

In the next installment, I will examine the difficult task of keeping certain capital letters, such as 'E', on the proper slant angle.



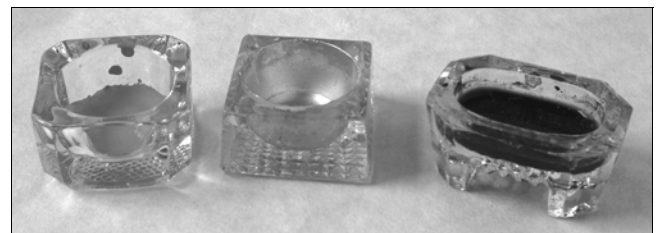
A fine example of engrosser's script by Dr. Joseph Vitolo.

Open Salt Becomes Open Paint

By Bob Hurford

Victorian-era diners did not use salt shakers as we know them, but open-salt containers with a tiny spoon for spreading. They were popular in America, too, well into the 1930s. Antique stores want a lot of money (\$3-5 each) for an open salt, but I have seen them by the hundreds in flea markets for as little as fifty cents.

Open salts are great for mixing inks and paints. Being glass, they are also very easy to clean with an old toothbrush.



Three styles of open-salts containing paint and, at far right, black ink. Flakes of mica were added to the black ink. In the open salt, an entire bottle of ink did not have to be contaminated with mica.

A Look At Fine and Not-So-Flexible Nibs

Nibs surveyed here are flexible, but not nearly as flexible as the fine and flexible penpoints we looked at in the last issue.

By Bob Hurford

We continue our survey of nibs with pens that are not nearly as flexible as those surveyed in the spring issue. Nibs reviewed there could make shades wide and wider. Pens examined here will make shades 1/32 to 1/16 of an inch at best. The majority of them were aimed at the large and lucrative school market.



Gillott 1068A Rigid and the Leonardt Hiro #41.

This is a huge category. Nibs selected are small enough to be used in an oblique penholder. With few exceptions, schools used straight holders. Moreover, IAMPETH members stand a decent chance of finding nibs from this group at a reasonable price. I also left out pens with turned-up points. These are very rigid and more suited to business penmanship. That will be the subject of next issue's survey.

Fine and Not-So-Flexible nibs are great for delicate, finely shaded writing that can be very elegant. Since these pens are so similar, they will be reviewed by manufacturer.

Gillott 1068A & Leonardt Hiro 41

In the winter survey of Fine and Flexible Nibs, nibs still made today were highlighted in bold type. This time, bold type won't be needed. Of all the pens surveyed here, only the **Gillott 1068A**

Rigid and **Leonardt Hiro 41** are still made. The **1068A** is not as stiff as the name implies and is roughly the same flex as the **Hiro 41**. They are the benchmark for flexibility since each is so easy to find.

The Leonardt nib stands alone among the company's nib line for this survey, but there are other Gillott pens to be considered. Look for the Number 41 and Number 81 School Series pens. Another is the 1066 Registry Pen, which has an extra fine point. All are excellent

pens.

Esterbrook Steel Pen Company

Every pen in this group is typical of Esterbrook's terrific quality. One of the company's best sellers was the 556 School Medium Firm, a great nib that never seems to wear out. Similar with a slightly finer point is the 782 Natural Slant.

The #1000 School Pen (also marketed as the Free Hand Pen) is another excellent nib as is the 761 Natural Slant.

The 702 School Pen is wider with a point that is not as fine as others listed here. Still, it is a superb writer and very durable.

Another to look for is the 1170 Ladies Pen, a nib very similar to the Gillott 1066 Registry Pen. It is smaller and has a super fine point.



Nibs from the Esterbrook Steel Pen Company. Left to right: #556 School Pen; #1170 Ladies Pen; #782 Natural Slant; #1000 Freehand Pen (also marketed as the #1000 School Fine Firm); #671 Natural Slant; #702 School Pen (also marketed as the #702 Modified Slant).

Hunt Manufacturing Company

Hunt made the #21 Companion Pen with a fine point that rivaled the Esterbrook 1170 and Gillott's 1066.

Three other nibs to look for are the #59 University Pen, #67 Sixty-Seven Round Pointed Pen and the #5 Droop Point. All might be considered medium point, but are good writers.



Gillott Pens. Left to right: No. 41 and No. 81 School Series and No. 1066 Registry Pen.



Eagle Pencil Company nibs. Left to right: E710 Transcript Pen; E840 Modern Writing Pen; E790 Scholastic Pen; E870 Muscular Pen.

Eagle Pencil Company

Eagle, a New York City company that made some excellent nibs, were strong in the school market. Their E870 Muscular Pen, E840 Modern Writing Pen and E760 Scholastic Pen are fine pens.

One more to consider is the E710 Transcript Pen. This nib is very similar to the Esterbrook 702 in that it is wide with a medium point.

A.N. Palmer Company

The A.N. Palmer Company of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, marketed a



Palmer Method Pens of the A.N. Palmer Company. Left to right: Nos. 2, 3, 7 & 9.

sizable line of nibs to complement its Palmer Method writing programs. Gillott-made quality nibs, Palmer Method pens were excellent writers.

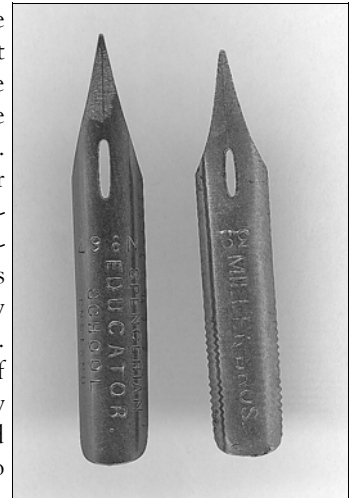
The #2 and #3 are virtual twins with little no difference in size or flex. The #7 and #9 are larger and are nearly twins. The #9 might be slightly more flexible.

All will make a very fine hairline.

Miscellaneous Pens

Miller Brothers of Meridian, Connecticut, #39 is a fine pen. The Spencerian Pen Company #67 School Series is also a superb nib.

C. Brandauer & Company of Birmingham, England, made many great nibs. The #134 Post Pen is a good writer. Two more pens worthy of consideration are larger than the others mentioned. The Globe Pen, #536, is a smaller version of the bowl-pointed design and works in an oblique penholder. A medium point, it has good flex. Brandauer's Review Pen, #183, is a gold plated pen. Brandauer made much use of gold for their nibs. The Review Pen also has a medium point and its length makes it more suited to larger oblique holders.



Spencerian #67 Educator Pen and the Miller Brothers #39.

This is a decent sampling of a very large category of nibs. No doubt, some have been overlooked and members are invited to let me know about pens they use that aren't covered. I have tried to select nibs that appear from time to time on Ebay and are more likely to appear in flea markets or antique stores.

Next issue:

Surveying Nibs for Business Penmanship

**Includes pens for the oblique holder
and the straight penholder
plus continual updates of previous surveys.**

**IAMPETH Members: Please send any nibs from any survey
that have been overlooked for examination. Our nib database
can only work with your help. See page two for address of
Bob Hurford.**

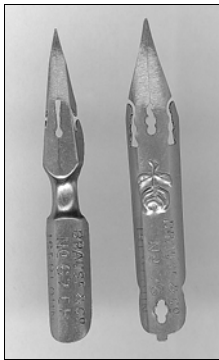
Choosing the Right Nib

Update: Fine and Flexible Nibs

By Bob Hurford

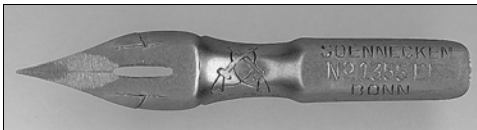
When the Fine and Flexible Nib survey was published in the Winter, 2003, issue, I noted that there were thousands of pen makes and models and covering all of them was impossible. Updates were promised whenever another nib became known and members sent in penpoints for me to examine. We will provide updates as long as there are nibs to find. That should take a long time.

Jim Chin of Lemont, Illinois, for sending some Brause 67EFs and 76s. These are fantastic nibs!!! The 67 is an arrow nib like the **Brause 66EF** reviewed previously, but larger. With an extra fine point, it has the flexibility of the Gillott 604EF class. The 76 isn't quite as fine, but just as flexible. Each nib is quite long at 1 7/16" for the 67 and 1 1/2" for the 76. They work well in large holders such as the Turn-of-the-Century. Both pens are great writers, but neither is made any longer. I encourage Brause to think about re-issuing these terrific nibs.



Brause & Company's #67EF and #76.

Kay Purcell of Carbondale, Illinois, sent



Soennecken 1355EF

along a Soennecken 1355EF. This is a very long nib—1 3/4 inches. However, the length of the nib is not as important as the amount of

the pen that protrudes from the flange of the penholder and whether the nib's point may be centered on the pen staff. I was able to use the 1355EF on a Turn-of-the-Century holder and it was very good. It is very fine and quite flexible. I found it great for offhand flourishing as it can make a very thick shade.

Nibs and Clones

One of the nicest nibs I have found is the Gillott 601EF Magnum Quill. Though long,

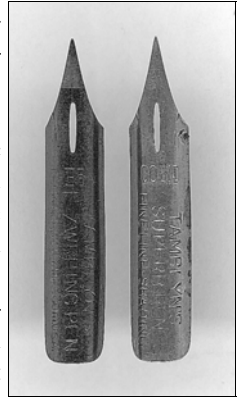
Gillott 601EF Magnum Quill and two clones: Peirce School #2 and Palmer Method #5.



1 7/16", it is extremely fine and very flexible. It can make a shade to rival the Gillott Principality.

I have discovered two clones spawned from the Magnum Quill. Gillott made pens for the A.N. Palmer Company and the Peirce School of Philadelphia. The Palmer Method #5 and the Peirce School #2 are identical to the Gillott 601EF.

Gillott also made pens for the Frederick W. Tamblyn School of Penmanship in Kansas City, Missouri. When you look at the photo of Tamblyn's #00 Superb Pen and the E-Z Writing Pen, they appear to be identical. Indeed they are except that the E-Z Writing Pen is bronze in color. Both



Two Tamblyn clones of the Gillott 303: Tamblyn E-Z Writing Pen and #00 Superb Pen.



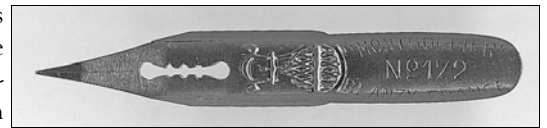
Esterbrook 453 Business & College Pen.

pens are clones of the oldest style of the Gillott 303. As such, they have extremely fine points and are quite flexible.

They are also comfortable with smaller penholders.

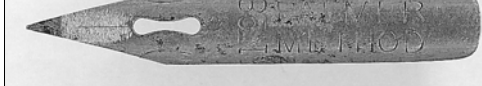
More Fine and Flexible Nibs

The Esterbrook Steel Pen Company had a terrific nib with its #453 Business and College Pen. It is similar in design and style to the Gillott 601EF, but is not quite



Blanzý-Conté-Gilbert No. 172F Montgolfier.

as flexible. Still, it is a great pen and is a nib that seems to appear on Ebay from time to time.



Palmer Method #8.

Another great writer is the Blanzý-Conté-Gilbert No. 172F Montgolfier. It is

a long nib at 1 9/16", but works well in large penholders.

A pen that is comfortable in a smaller penholder is the Palmer Method #8. Though very flexible, its point is not as fine as others in this update.

New Members

Armando Anguiano -
Haywood, CA
Gary Crumrine - Glendale, CA
James Ivey - Dallas, TX
Kathleen Joss - Stow, MA
Eva Kokoris - Hicksville, NY
Ginger Meidel - St. Petersburg, FL
Janice Newman -
Nepean, Ont. Canada
Anna Piccolo - Arlington, MA
Fred Reckker - Sarasota, FL



This signature from "Pen Wizard" Francis Bernard Courtney has much to teach the modern penman. Not only are the "B" and "C" completed in a single stroke, they also finish the top of the "F." For more, see "Learning from the Masters," starting on page three.

IAMPETH

Penman's Journal

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