

The Life & Works of
Charles Paxton Zaner
(1864-1918)



Thank you to Michael Sull and Tom Costello for making the above portrait image from the Zaner-Bloser Collection available to us.

Compiled by Dr. Joseph M. Vitolo, 2014
Penman and IAMPETH Historian

The following biography is used with permission from Michael Sull's Spencerian Script and Ornamental Penmanship, Volume I.

**Charles Paxton Zaner
(1864-1918)**

Charles Paxton Zaner was born on a farm near Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania on February 15, 1864. He showed a fondness for handwriting early in his youth, and after completing his common school curriculum, he went to Oberlin, Ohio in 1882 to enroll in G. W. Michael's Pen Art Hall course in penmanship. For a short time after finishing the class work in Oberlin, he traveled to Audubon, Illinois to assist his brother in a business venture. Within a short period of time (approximately one year), his desire to earn his living as a penman caused him to journey to Delaware, Ohio, becoming a teacher of penmanship in a local college. In 1888 he left Delaware and went to Columbus, Ohio as an instructor of penmanship in yet another business college. Not long afterward the school was closed, and it was then, in 1888, that C. P. Zaner decided to establish a school of his own. Originally known as the Zanerian Art College, Master Penman Lloyd Kelchner became a partner with Zaner the following year. In 1891 Elmer W. Bloser joined the partnership, but before the end of the same year, Kelchner left the business arrangement, resulting in Zaner and Bloser becoming equal partners in the Zaner-Bloser Company

For the rest of Mr. Zaner's life, he continued, with the help of Mr. Bloser, to improve the status of the Zanerian College. Zaner was instrumental in authoring the texts used at his institution, and through the medium of the Zanerian's penmanship magazine the Business Educator he published countless lessons in every branch of penmanship and pen art, involving the talents of the finest penmen, engrossers, and educators. These men and women, representing the very best in their respective fields, contributed their talents monthly to the magazine, providing penmanship specimens, information on various techniques, and advertising for all manner of supplies, equipment, and correspondence courses. Through Mr. Zaner's vision and insight into the field of Penmanship, countless thousands of people learned the method and manner of such handwriting.

His skill at wielding a pen was legendary, and he thoroughly deserved his unofficial title as "the world's best all around penman" In every standard lettering style, as well as in offhand flourishing, his flawless models were breathtaking examples of perfection in the penman's art. He was a sincere and devoted instructor who inspired his students to achieve their highest potential. In terms of the Golden Age of Ornamental Penmanship, both C. P. Zaner and E. W. Bloser were pivotal figures where student met master and new careers were launched. Many of the master penmen from the era were products of the Zanerian. Most of those who were not either contributed to the Business Educator, or taught in its classrooms. It became the Mecca for penman and penmanship, and its reputation became synonymous with the highest standards of the art.

Charles Paxton Zaner's life ended tragically on Sunday evening, December 1, 1918, when the car that he was riding in on a trip back to Columbus was struck by a train that gave no warning of its approach in the darkness. He was 54 years old and in the height of his career. His death was mourned by penmen throughout the country.

The following biography was taken from 'The Blue Book Containing Photographs And Sketches Of A Few Commercial Teachers' compiled by L.E. Stacy (1907)

CP Zaner

It is not likely that this sketch will be read by anyone who is not more or less familiar with the life and work of C. P. Zaner. He is one of three or four men who are leaving their imprint on this generation, and raising the standard of good writing through correct teaching and the ability to execute high-grade work. Hundreds of young men and women have come under his instruction, and the Zanerian Art College is the Mecca of the present day penman. Mr. Zaner was born February 15, 1864. He received a good common school education, supplemented by academic work at the Orangeville Academy. His career in life has been a progressive one. He has worked his way to the front ranks of an all round penman by indomitable and incessant industry. Today, he fills a position among the leaders of his profession. He is continually on the alert, studying mechanical, physiological and psychological principles, and utilizing them on each and every opportunity.

Mr. Zaner is one of the-progressive educators of the day, and is constantly trying new methods and experimenting in order that he may present his work in the best possible manner. He is prominent in the Federation, having been honored by the presidency of that body.

He is generous, always trying to help the deserving person, and his many friends have found that they can rely upon him in time of need. He is the author of more than a dozen books on penmanship, engrossing, pen drawing, etc., and is constantly preparing resolutions and all kinds of pen work.

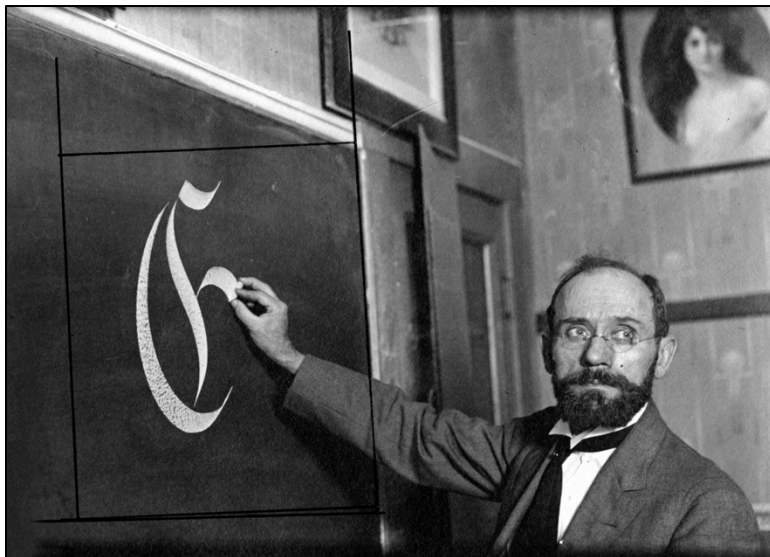
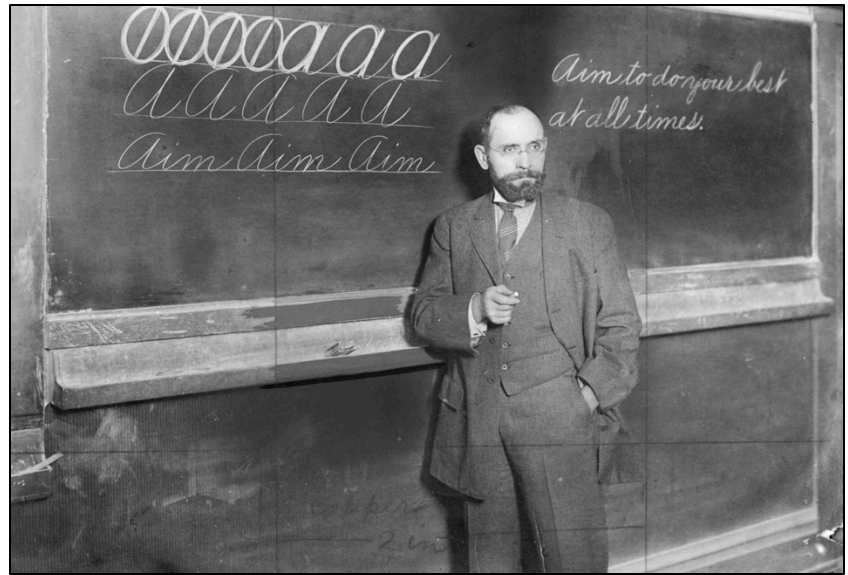
Charles Paxton Zaner in Pictures

FIGURE 4 —

Left to right:
E. W. Blosser,
C. P. Zaner,
L. M. Kelchner
Business Educator, 1929

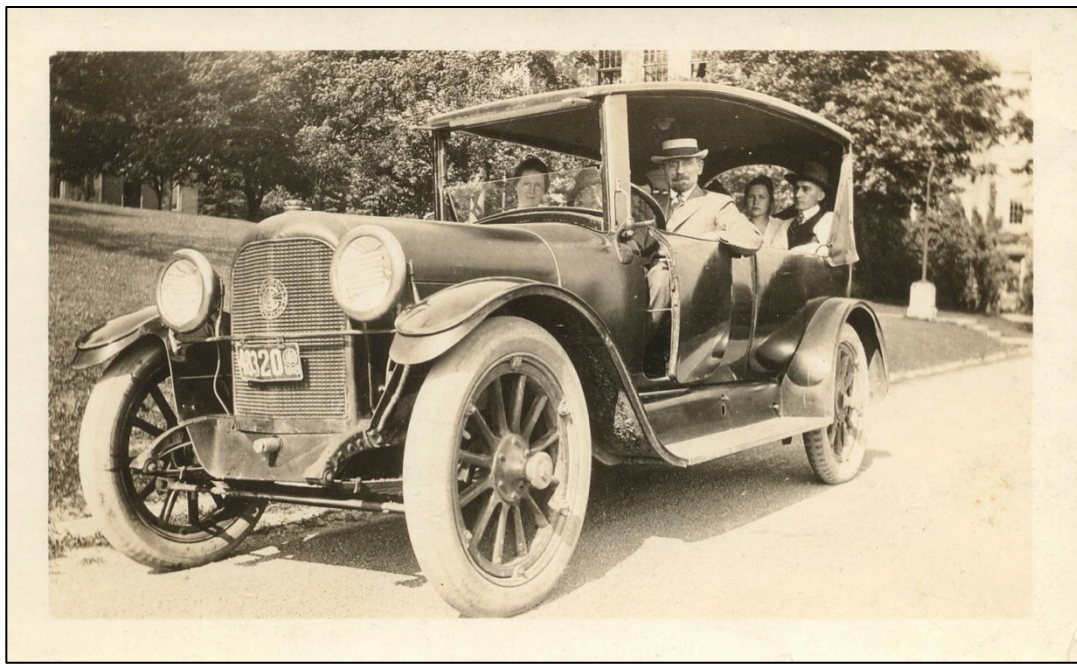


This was taken from Michael Sull's Spencerian Script and Ornamental Penmanship, Volume I.





The Zanerian Art College Class of 1912



Zaner shown here behind the wheel of the car he would lose his life in when it was struck by a train in 1918.

The Pen Work of Charles Paxton Zaner

*A special thank you to Nick D'Aquanno, Bob Hurford,
Evan Lindquist, Michael Sull and the IAMPETH Archives
for contributing to the images on the following pages.*

Zanerian's;

I am trying to increase in girth as well as in skill.

I like the Hawkeye State but the Buckeye is the one I soon shall see.

In the meantime see that Luffer does not use too much whole arm movement.

It would be well, too, to see that Miller does not advocate the same except to primary pupils under nine years.

C. Zaner, 1st.

Mr. C.A.
Laffer;

Jan. 14, '09.

Specimen
of good hardy penmanship.

C.P. Allen

Columbus, O., 2, 21, '57.

Friend S,

Your nicely written
letter ^{with} pretty flourish, at hand, many
thanks for same.

I send you one of mine
in return, hoping it will meet your
expectations, I remain,

Yours Flourishingly,

C. S. Jones.

C. P. Janer.

E. W. Blosser.

THE
Janerian Art College.
Penmanship
AND
Drawing.

Columbus, Ohio 95

Friend Salmer:

Within and
under separate cover I send you
the second article on Simplified
Penmanship.

With well wishes,
Yours fraternally,

C. P. Janer.

The American

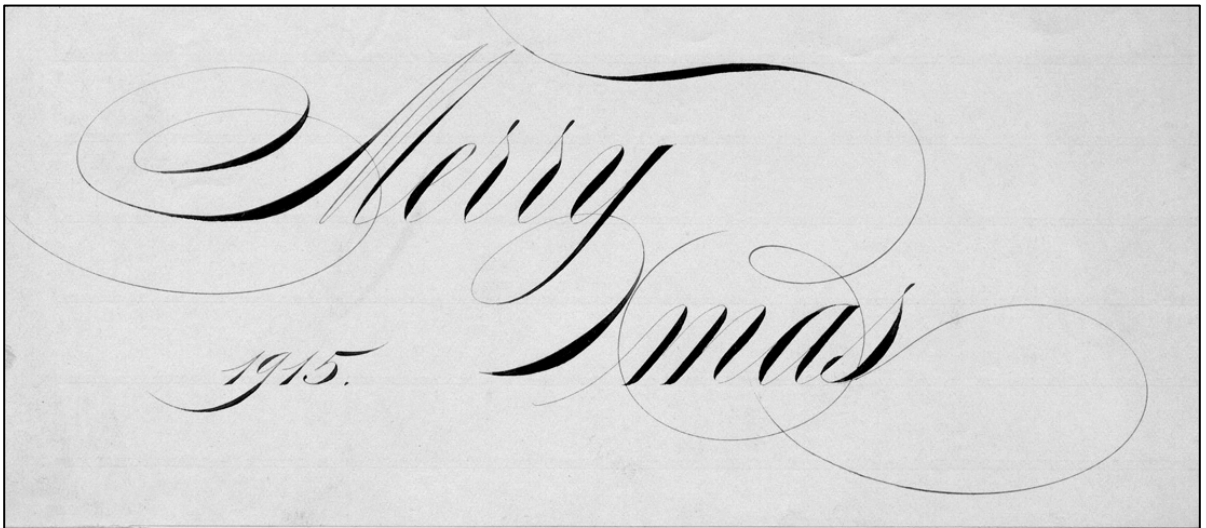
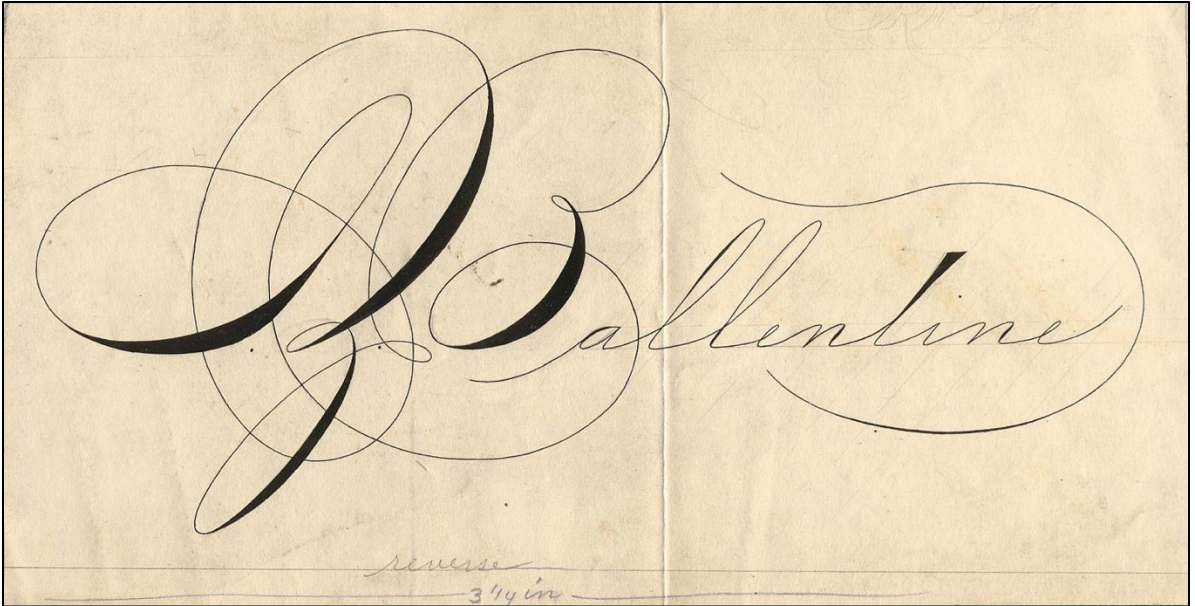
American College

Business Educator

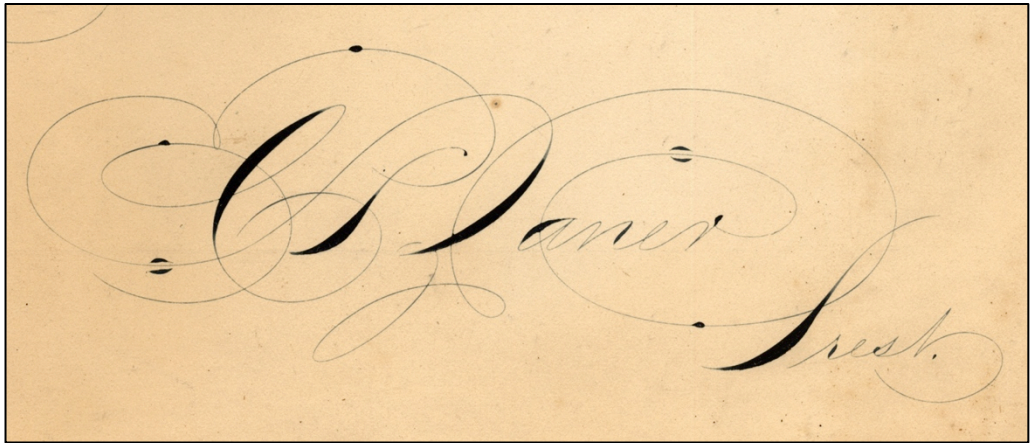
J. J. Cameron & P. P. Plosser

J. J. Cameron
& P. P. Plosser.

The
J. J. Cameron



The above specimen was provided by Evan Lindquist

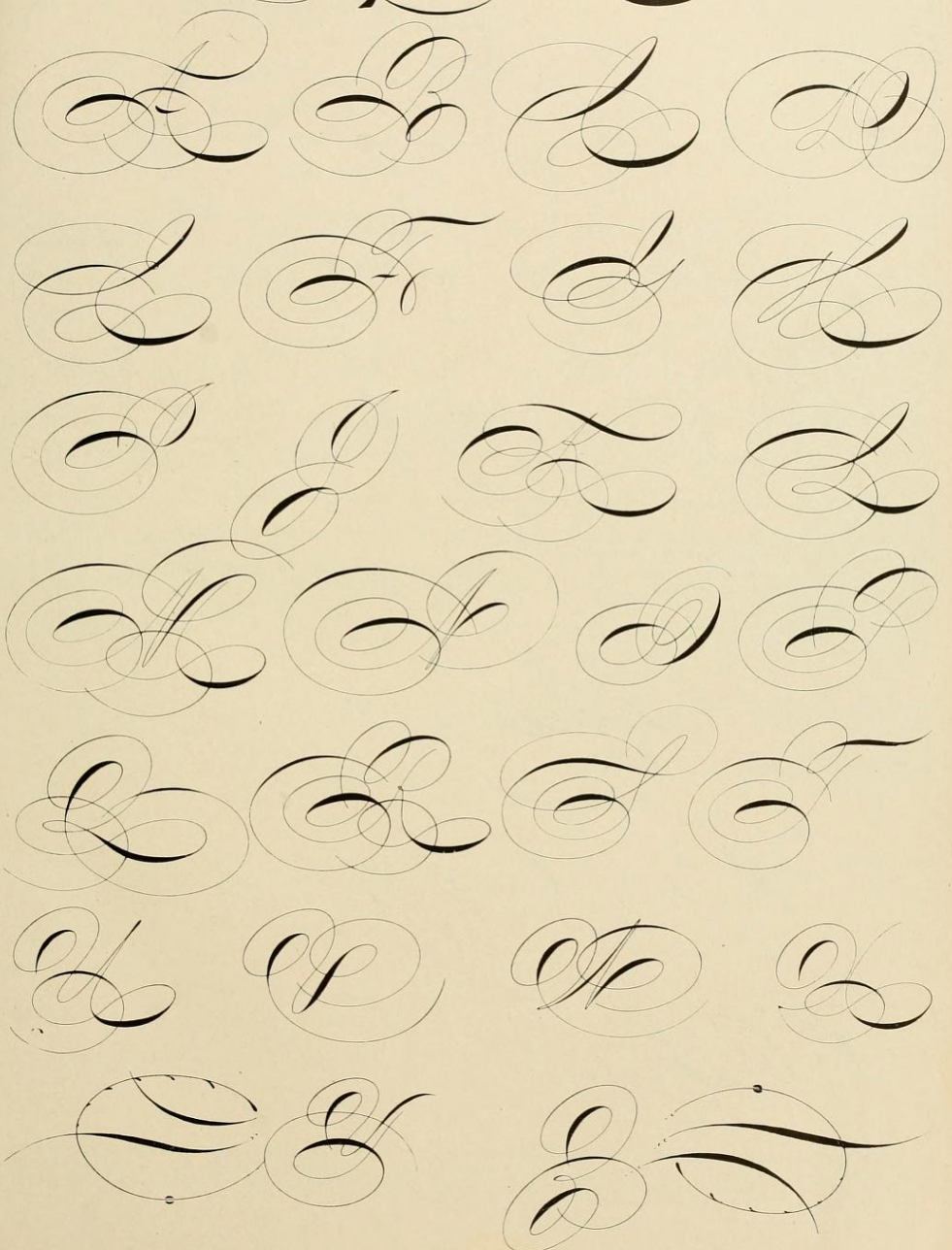


Zaner signature on Clinton C. Canan's (1873-1904) Zanerian Certificate

FLOURISHED.

ITALIAN.

Script Letters



Married,

Mr. Charles Paxton Zaner,

Miss Eliza Ainslie Pitson,

Wednesday, June seventh,

1893.

At Home

after July first,

68 Ohio Ave.,

Columbus.

A B C C C D E

F G H H I I I J

K K L M N O P

Q R S T U V W

X Y Z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

a b c d e f g h i j k

l m n o p q r r s
r s t u v w x y z.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w

James P. Loser

1904
A
Prosperous
New Year
TO YOU -
FROM -
Geo. S. Wagner,
County Clerk.

Mr. Garrison!

who say, Garrison is of the

Last Days.

Printed at the
New York
Office of the
New York

Inspiration
AND
Enthusiasm
ARE
NOT
Caught

BY C. P. ZANER. MAY 30, 1916.

The Progress of Penmanship History

The Art of Script Writing is 500 Years Old.

About 1500 the Scribes discovered that Static, print-like writing was becoming too slow.

They evolved the style known as Roundhand, which continued in use until 1600.

From that time until 1830 the Angular Hand and growing practice and popularity

about 1830, the Semi-angular. Spencerian was evolved.

A generation later the Unshaded hand gradually grew.

During the World's Fair, Vertical was introduced in U.S.

The latest evolution - Simplified - appeared in 1894.

Philosophy

Writing is the complement of speech. Letters are symbols of sounds. Instructive, bounds you attend, in writing, they are needed. Writing is the art of expressing and recording thought by means of characters called letters. These letters when in script form are called penmanship. One writes to convey the expression that by characters. Penmanship is essential in executing script.

ART

Art is all Arts are Fine and Mechanical. The former are Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Poetry, Music, Oratory. The latter are Agriculture, Manufacture, Mining, Transportation, Carpentry.

Fine Arts

appeal to the imagination, and express the beautiful, the grand, the true, the noble, the inspiring, the useful, the practical.

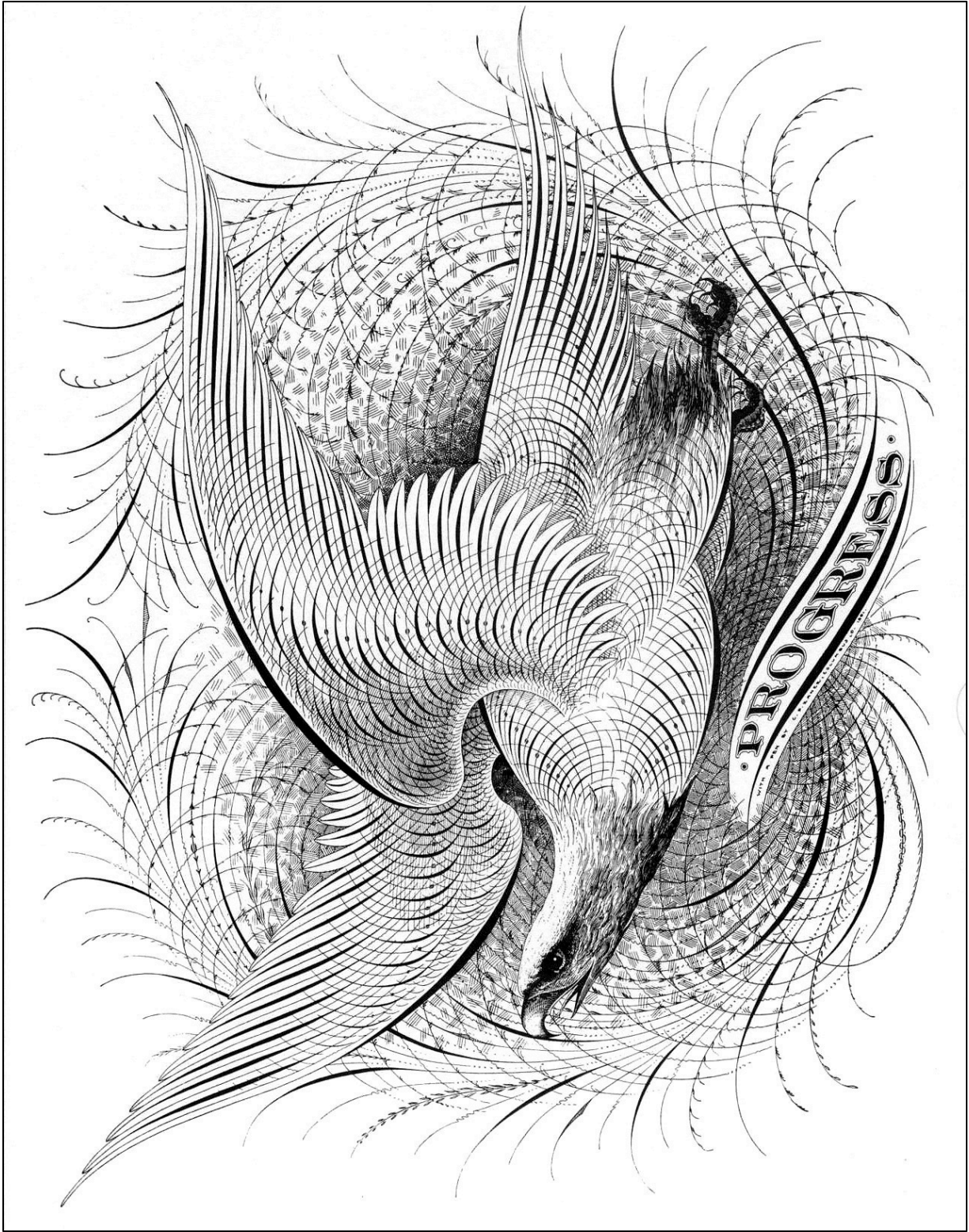
Mechanical Arts

is both a Fine and a Mechanical art as it serves beauty & business. The Essentials of Good Penmanship are Firm, which gives legibility and beauty; and Movement, which gives grace, ease, and speed.

No Other Art has so preserved the Past and connected it with the Present as Writing. It has therefore been very appropriately called

The Art Preservation





The following images are a series of Zanerian Certificates penned by CP Zaner as 'models' for his students to follow when penning their own Zanerian Certificates required for Graduation.

American College,

Columbus, O.

This certifies that A. Student, having passed the
required examination in Roundhand or Engrossing Script,
is entitled to this Certificate of Merit, awarded by him.

Signed and Sealed by the Principal of the De-
partment this eighth day of May, 1903.



W. B. Bond

Zanerian College

This Certificate That
Artistic Writer,

having completed the prescribed course of study and practice in
Ornamental Penmanship,

is awarded this Certificate executed by him.

Signed and sealed by the principal of the department this thir-
teenth day of May, nineteen hundred and three, Columbus, Ohio.



C. P. Jones.

Zaner-Bloser College

Columbus, O.

This Certifies That
BACH

having completed the prescribed course of practice in
Business Writing
is awarded this Certificate issued by him



Signed and sealed by the principal of the department
this second day of August nineteen hundred and ten.

C. P. Zaner.

Franerian College
DIPLOMA

This certifies that **J. H. Bach** Having completed the
prescribed course of study and practice in
Penmanship and Methods
is Worthy of Graduation.

Signed and sealed at Columbus, Ohio this sixth day
of Sept. nineteen hundred and ten.

W. Rosen



C. Franer