

THESIS

on

A COURSE OF PENMANSHIP FOR OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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Approved 

Department of 

## T H E S I S.

### A COURSE OF PENMANSHIP FOR OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

As we become more highly educated we leave the study of individuals and take up the study of classes, races, and nations. In making a study of any nation we first turn to its history; and the key to any nation's history is its language. Every nation has its vernacular. This is as necessary to national existence as is the food to the nourishing of her people. Not only must a nation have a means of verbal expression, but of as great importance is their means of expressing their thoughts in writing.

One of the earliest means of translating thought into intelligent forms, was installed by the Egyptians many centuries before Christ. This method was called hieroglyphics, and consisted of a carved representation in wood or stone. This was really only a chain of crude drawings necessary to represent the desired expression of a thought.

As civilization left the countries of the East and began to focalize around the Mediterranean Sea, new ideas found their way into the further advancement of the language. It was found that thought could be expressed by an alphabet composed of letters, each representing the sounds involved in the enunciation of the words of the language. This was a fertile idea, and proved successful. For a while, however, its progress was somewhat

retarded but on being improved, gained rapidly.

Those were days when the typewriter was undreamed of, and in order to meet the demand for a more rapid and economical hand, the script alphabet was formed. Everyone did not wish to print his manuscript, theme, or sermon. That would have been too slow and irksome. Thus, by supplying the "missing link", as it were, the foundation of penmanship was laid. Penmanship being merely a systematized study and practice of the script writing.

In our own country the handwriting as it is often called, has been improved until it has reached a higher stage of development than that of any other land. This is perhaps due to the untiring efforts of our Colonial penman, Prof. Spencer. Beyond all doubt, his influence on America's future, regarding penmanship has been great. No less a man than he styled our present system of writing, -Spencerian, which although it has been in the heated conflict with all comers, seems still to stand lofty and supreme over all. The Spencerian System is certainly the only great system worthy of mention at this time. Established and promulgated as it was early in the nation's history, it has been long-lived, and therefore has stood the test of time. No other system is so applauded by commercial men; its grace and rapidity win it admirers everywhere.

In this thesis I will outline a course in the Spencerian System of penmanship, and will illustrate my teachings with samples of my own hand, which on of

their imperfection will probably be more useful than ornamental. Therefore, if perchance, my readers are perusing this in expectation of finding a feast for their eyes in the inspiring flourishes of a great penman, they will have misunderstood the mission of this little work. These lessons have been written primarily for the purpose of instruction.

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The paramount consideration in penmanship is the material to be used by the student, such as; pens, paper ink, etc. A penman, like a carpenter, cannot expect to do the best work with poor tools. Remember, many a student has quietly laid aside his pen, saying, "I am not talented like Mr. Brown", just because he was trying to use a pen with which perhaps a professional could not have done anything. Paper of good quality is needed. The idea of using an inferior grade is sheer waste of time---only the best will do. In selecting good writing paper, judge the quality by the rattle, the better the rattle, the better the grade of paper. Linen is best, as it possesses the necessary toughness because of its hard texture. Only the best quality of ink can be used with good results. The "Higgins Eternal" brand is a very good black ink, while Carter's Fluid is a good business ink. Both meet all of the necessary requirements, having a smooth flow, a rich color, and fast drying properties. As regards penpoints, we have many minds of many tastes. For common business writing

believe that the Gillott 604 is without a peer, while others prefer the Spencerian No. 1, claiming also, that for every-day-needs, it is the best in the market. Every student of penmanship must learn for himself what pen he likes best, but the beginner must remember that the fine pointed pen should be shunned in the early stages of practice. When dexterous with a coarse point, the student can take up one with a finer point. I would advise the student to become accustomed to the use of a fine point as soon as practicable. A pen of that nature off a less amount of ink, and consequently a neater manuscript. All great penman use as little ink as possible on their letters. Too much ink makes the strokes clumsy and unpleasing to the eye. It is not economy to use one point for several days,--that is extravagance. When a pen point becomes corroded between the split, and is held apart by foreign matter, it should be discarded and a new one taken.

A person should be very discreet in the selection of a good practice place. Of course when the work is done in the school-room, things must often be taken as they present themselves. But at your home it is a very easy matter to arrange a place where your table will be away from the noise. You will notice that your work will always look better when you do it in a quiet place. Carlyle, the great English writer, padded the wall of his study room to shut out all the noise. He succeeded,

making his hours worth while. So I would say, avoid all noise if possible, and your work will show it by the improvement you make. As a student be careful about your eyes, seeking at all times to be equipped with the best of lighting facilities.

The next thing of importance is the taking and maintaining of the proper position while writing. This is essential to every beginner, as a good beginning is half of the battle. First of all the body should be held erect, not rigidly erect, but in an easy position so as to throw all weight off the right arm, thereby allowing it free movement. The feet should be flat on the floor so as to steady the writer. The paper should be so placed on the table that the penman has plenty of room for his forearm. Keep the left hand flat on the table so as partly to support yourself, also using it to keep the paper in position. The penholder should be held in the right hand between the thumb and first finger, the tip of the latter being about one inch from the point of the pen. The holder should cross the second joint of the first finger, and point to the direction of the right shoulder. Never grip the holder firmly, but allow the hand and fingers to be loose and easy. Always keep your mind on this feature, for it is so natural to grip the holder, and to tighten the grip as your hand nears the right-hand-side of the page. Such defects can be remedied if the student practices running movements, as: "N's"

"M's", "O's", and "U's" as given in figure 13, 14, and 15 of the illustrations. Practice with care, running from the extreme left to the extreme right of the page, and at all times moving freely. Every writer using the muscular movement has this defect to contend with, but it can be remedied by this drill.

After the proper selection of material and the adjustment of equipment the only thing that stands between you and success is PRACTICE: but upon the significance of that word depends your success. Talent has very little to do with success, --you must have enough determination to practice, and that faithfully and regularly. Not once a day in a reckless perfunctory way, but every time you find a spare moment, and in good earnest. Throw into the work the patience of a pain-taker. The work will then be of a fruitful nature. This is one of the essential qualities that go to make up a good or successful penman. In some occupations the qualities of perserverance must be cultivated to a certain extent, penmanship is one.

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I have spent time and space to show how the present system of writing has come before the people: have told of Spencer and his great production; stated why it is necessary to accomplish proficient work in the art; shown what is necessary to make a good penman; and now I wish to give a few simple instructions in the

forking of the strokes and letters.

1. Before anyone can hope to make a writer of himself, that is, a writer of muscular movement, it is absolutely necessary to have given a **great** deal of time to the practice of the "ovals", as shown in figure No.1. The student should make the ovals rather large in the beginning of the course; as he becomes more dexterous in the use of the pen, he can gradually diminish them until the desired size is reached. This is usually regulated by the size of your writing, and depends wholly on the height of tall letters. Another important feature in this practice is that the "ovals" be made in both directions, both right and left. This will make results more promising, as you will learn to execute letters that move either to the right or left. Practice this exercise daily, and before beginning other pen-work. It gives a loose action to the muscles of the forearm, that must be free in order to do good work.

2. Number two resembles the former figure, and should be practiced in the same way. In this figure, learn to guide the action of your arm in such a way as to group the ovals in divisions, with the distance between as nearly uniform as possible. Then after making the groups strive to connect them with an oblong oval. This should also be made in both directions, so as to give a balance to swinging arm-movements.

3. The third exercise of this page shows the "retro-

grading ovals!" They are essential to the student who is desirous of gaining uniformity, both of capitals and of small letters. Begin as shown in the figure and move down to a point making a cone-shaped mass of circles. This is to vary the range of the penman, so that he may be able to use the same good movement in capitals as in the smaller letters. This exercise must be practiced rapidly before accuracy can be attained. It is necessary also to practice in both directions, for reasons mentioned in number one.

4. On looking at the fourth exercise on chart No.1. we notice just a series of diagonal lines, stacked together, as it were. The beginner might wonder of what use that exercise would be to a beginner. It is very essential. One of the things first noticed by any person, whether critic or student, is that of uniformity in slant. There is only one way to gain this. That is by practicing this the fourth exercise. Give a great deal of time to his exercise, and in a short time you will notice that your letters will look more harmonious and pleasing to the reader as well as to yourself. Nothing is more pleasing to a penman than to notice even slant, and all letters in a harmonious arrangement. Such writing always looks neat. Make this practice a part of your daily routine, at the same time bearing in mind that the slant should be about 60 degrees.

5. Everyone knows the alphabet, and most of us think

We know how every letter is formed, but if the truth were known, only about one out of every hundred has a correct idea of each letter. It is necessary that every student of penmanship make a careful study of the different letters, and form a mental picture of their curves. It is a good idea, although it may be rather trite, to keep a copy before you to aid you in this work. After having a mental picture of the copy, strive to attain perfection. This can only be reached by sacrifice. That sacrifice is practice. Do not practice for beauty at first, but for simple, correct outlines. After having become a master of simple or business writing, you can go on to something more fanciful.

6.7. 8. The business capitals should be free of any of the unnecessary flourishes that usually accompany the writing of a beginner. Some students have an idea that the more flourish the better the appearance; this is an erroneous statement or idea. Business writing should be plain. That will add to its legibility, and in so doing will win praise for the writer. By the student who pays strict attention to the capitals, it will be noticed that the "ovals" are very necessary in the making of capitals. Consequently the student should bear in mind the need of such practice. I find it always best to group the letters in classes that resemble each other, as for instance, P, T, F, or H, K, M, N, and W. In this way you can find certain principles that resemble one another, thus making

the practice much more effective. It is always best for the beginner to select a good copy of Business Capitals and keep them before him whenever practicing penmanship. This will prove a great help, as it will tend to create an exact image of the letter in the student's mind.

In NO.9 and 10 and 11 you will notice that I take up the small alphabet again. This time, as you will notice by the chart, I enter into the minute details of each letter. Before making the minute study, you will notice I divide the letters in groups, each having letters with like principles. You should make a similar arrangement of the letters of the alphabet, and strive to reach as high a degree of perfection in their formation as possible. Study this carefully and notice the similarity of the letters.

12. In figure 12 I have given the principles. These are the fundamental principles on which the Spencerian system is founded. It might be well to practice the making of them. They are as follows: the capital stem, the loop, the direct curve, the indirect curve, and the straight line.

13,14,15, and 16, are known as the "running movements". They are very important in the forming of a perfectly dexterous hand. They give ease to the writing and impart the power of endurance. In the first, second, third, and fourth practice try to gain rapidity in making of

of exercise, but in the speed do not slight the letters. In the third and fourth, write the word "run" and "oac" in three groups, with three words each, then reverse the paper and write the same letters cross-wise. This forms an excellent space drill, and can be used with any word. 17, 18, 19, and 20 are merely sentences that I have selected for practice. After you have gained considerable knowledge of the letters, and have control of a fairly accurate hand, it is best to take up a systematic practice in the writing of sentences. You cannot learn to write by forgetting theory, and by concentrating your attention to sentences now you will put all of the movement drills and principles into practice. IN this work, strive to make the words evenly, that is, small letters, as: m, n, o, v, and the like must, in order to look pleasing, be even in their adjustment, while such tall letters as; l, h, k, etc. should be of the same height and slant. Work for neatness and accuracy in this study.

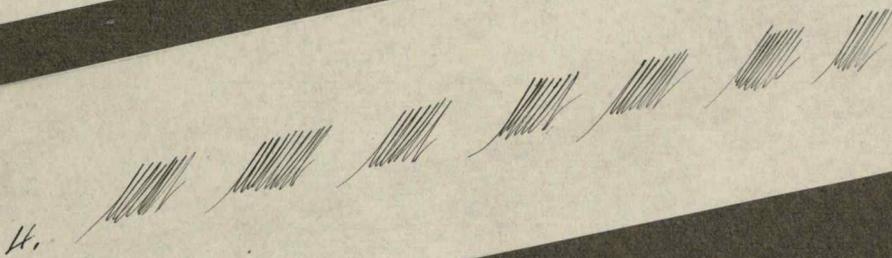
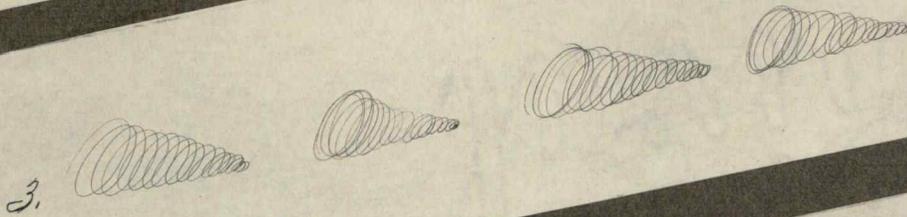
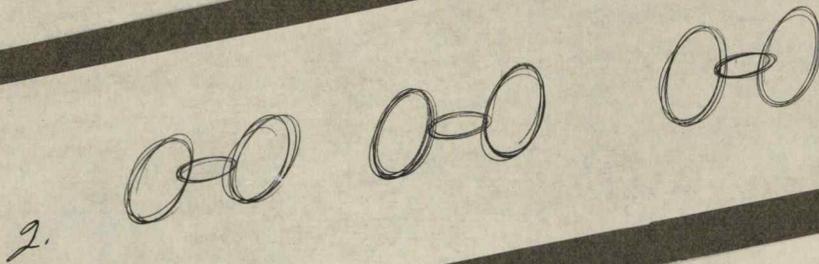
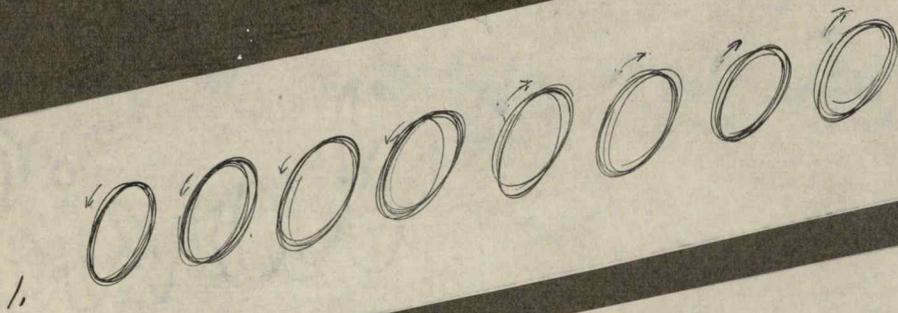
21, 22, 23, and 24. There are always some that are interested in the making of Flourishes in studying of penmanship, and for those of this nature I added an additional chart of illustrations. These, as the author well knows, are not free from imperfections, but they will serve for purposes of illustration. The student, if industrious, can, with little but well-directed work and considerable study of famous flourishers and pen-

artists, become quite proficient in this fascinating line of work. It is much more interesting than the study of the simple letters, and the student will, beyond all doubt, make greater progress. I will, however, not enter into outlining a regular course in this work as I wished only to touch it in a very light way.

Although this course is brief and limited on account of time and space, it will, I hope, be of some benefit to the student who shows willingness and perseverance.

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C.E.Williamson.



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

6. A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I. J.

7. K. L. M. N. O. P. Q. R. S. T. U. V.

8. W. X. Y. Z. ——— 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0.

a d g o # o a d g o  
9. b h k l f q # f l h l f #

e e i r s t t r # i i i i i  
10. j p y z # j j j

m n u # m m m m m m m  
11. v w i # u u u u u u u

The principles:  
12. I O / / / .

13. This block contains two lines of cursive handwriting practice for the letter 'n'. The top line consists of a continuous, wavy line of connected 'n' characters. The bottom line is similar but includes a small number '13.' at the beginning.

14. This block contains two lines of cursive handwriting practice for the letter 'o'. The top line is a continuous, wavy line of connected 'o' characters. The bottom line is similar but includes a small number '14.' at the beginning.

15. This block contains three columns of cursive handwriting practice for the letter 'p'. Each column shows three rows of the letter, with arrows indicating the direction of the pen strokes. The first column has three 'p's, the second has three 'p's, and the third has three 'p's.

16. This block contains three columns of cursive handwriting practice for the letter 'd'. Each column shows three rows of the letter, with arrows indicating the direction of the pen strokes. The first column has three 'd's, the second has three 'd's, and the third has three 'd's.

17.

Nine men in a mine

18.

Many men of many minds

19.

Success does not come  
on snowy wings of ease.

20.

Work, and do your best

21. R. R. Waines

22. E. R. Woods

23. Lora Hansell. '08.

24. C. J. Chambers #09