

Chirography

Maria Weyraugh

Part III

Helpful hints and fast track rules in writing Copperplate, Roundhand and or Engraver's Script

In our early years, as students of printing and cursive writing, the most likely rules of writing were, under the “Palmer” method. Even so, as our letters were formed and graded upon, as we copied them from examples posted around the room or over the blackboard, once we moved forward into the Intermediate and High School levels, our writing wasn't graded though it was helpful to be readable.

In this transition where our teachers forced the student to follow the boundaries of rule in writing each letter and or number, our overseeing ceased as we progressed in studies of a higher level. Having to write faster as to keep up with notes, it was easy for me and no doubt for others, to become lazy and take as little time as possible in our writing. If we were aware of our sloppy writing and wished to impress our teacher before handing in any written assignment, we were apt to be copying more slowly, form our letters more clearly as we copied from our draft.

First, the writer needs to be sitting in a comfortable position. If you are not comfortable, your writing will not be either.

Second, the writer needs to understand that the goose quill or the metal nib, even older fountain pens, will never withstand extremely harsh pressure on the tip or writing surface of the nib. Some nibs are more flexible than others. The learning process is learning from “touch” or “feel” as you write. You can have a gross of the same sized, color, shape and brand nib **but**, they will all have different personalities or “voices” if you will. This is especially true with goose and or any other wing originated quill. Like our own growth of fingernails, there will be differences in each feather quill. Metal nibs are stamped out and formed in production. At times they are stamped “with” the grain of metal or “against” the grain of metal. This affects how the nib will flex as well as how it holds the edge.

Third, there are a few “terms” that need to be identified as to start this journey into period writing.

The nib is the metal portion which is inserted into the pen holder. The very point, is identified as the “quill, the quill point, the point, the feet.” The legs are the two pieces of metal that create the spread and the “hip / shoulder” is that portion to which the split ends. The round hole is the “well/reservoir” as in a “ink well where extra ink is held.” If

military, it will make great sense later in this series, as we will treat the metal nib as the waistline on down on a soldier's body and I shall use the analogy quite often.



Here I am, at the Washington Calligraphy Guild table, assisting an interested gentleman in period writing in 2009, at the Washington Pen Show. I used copies of various bank currencies to show the "Engravers Script" or better known as "Copperplate." My professional calligrapher friend Tamara Stoneburner, taking the photograph. My "pre-Civil War re-enactor/living historian days. Published in the Washington Calligrapher Guild newsletter.

Though I would not hold the pen in such a way, this individual was comfortable in writing the way he was comfortable. Those taught "in the day" were forced to write with their right hand. Only when their writing hand/sword hand was cut off, were they accepted in writing left handed.

If the writer knows that they have a harsh hand, it is wise to go with a stiffer sprung nib. Nibs such as Hunt 22, Hunt 101, Esterbrook 355 come to mind. The most versatile nib and documented as being supplied during the American Civil War, is the Gillott brand nibs. Gillott 303 in blue steel was found by Michael A. Schaffner, to whom I consider an expert in all avenues and duties of the Civil War military clerk. Gillott 303 in blue steel is considered to be "extra fine" and "extra flexible." It is very easy to season. Gillott 404 is more of a medium fine. The exact match in Hunt Brand nibs, would be the Hunt 56. The most elastic would be the Hunt 99, to which I consider medium to bold tip nib. Those to whom like to write super fine, may be interested in using the Hunt 100, 103,

Esterbrook 304, Brause 511nibs. These are “mapping” nibs and wear much faster but their points are like writing with a sewing “straight pin.” These extra fine points require a very gentle touch and they also wear faster than the larger writing nibs.

I am not kidding when I say that with such nibs you must approach it like writing on a butterfly’s wing. They snag easily, especially on rag and fiber paper. The goal of any writer though—is light touch.

Those to who are familiar with fountain pens, can understand best in regard to writing slower and with little pressure. Unlike the ballpoint pen and or any other modern pen, when writing with fountain pen nibs, the advantage is the Iridium on the tip. This metal on the tip retards the wear on the feet of the nib and also smoothing the nib’s points as to glide because it is more “rounded” in nature. Much like the re-enactor’s “heel plates.” The style of writing, were thick and thin lines were also on the way out—replacing beauty with speed. The dip pen nib however, is naked metal without having any protection from wear. Like the heels on shoes worn by you, if you take a look are uneven though worn on the outside. Writers will wear the nib point totally unique to that writer. This is why calligraphers do not borrow another’s pen period, as it is a tool. This wear cannot be helped nor should it be grossly altered. However, those with a lighter hand will have a longer life in their nib points.



Eagle Pencil Company’s first “cartridge” fountain pen, with feeder but—no Iridium on the tip of the nib, late 1880’s., from my personal collection..

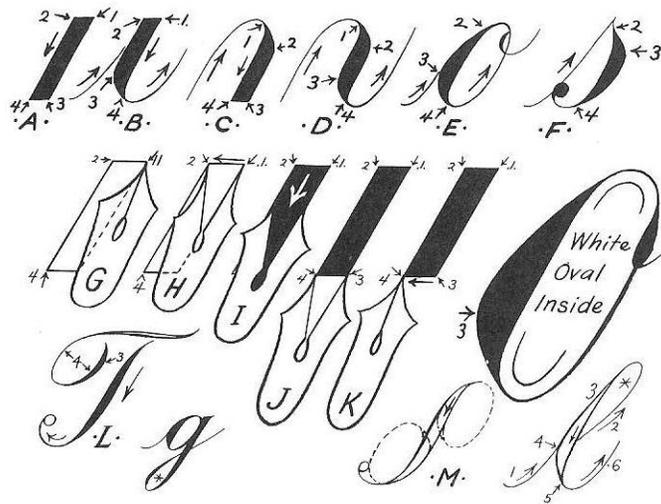
It is “very rare” for the glass tube to survive, as well as the original nib. Photo copyright reserved -M. E. Weyraugh Collection.

I urge new writers to also “listen” and train their ears to the sound of fresh nibs and this is where men have the advantage. As these metal dip pen nibs are made approximately to the same thickness and “temper” as a “safety razor” or “double-edge” razor, the “sound” of a fresh razor on whisker stubble is about the closest sound to what should be heard on paper as you write. It is about the same pressure as shaving with the manual razor. The man who shaves with an old fashioned straight razor blade, the older single razor blades will understand and perhaps share this “sound.” As the razor dulls the sound changes and rounds itself. Since the point is so fine to begin with, it is near impossible to sharpen the point on a nib. The duller nib then is assigned to rougher duties like rougher paper, or flatten out as to make a flat nib/broad edge nib, as to write Italic or Old English. In the Civil War though, nibs were turned in as to receive their replacements or, tossed.

Ink to the nib is much like the shave cream and lubricant between the man’s razor and his face. The ink is pushed and pulled, in the direction of the nib’s progress. Iron Gall powdered ink was swiftly being replaced by pre-mixed and bottled writer’s ink. For practice purposes, I highly recommend going with any fountain pen ink on the market. Though vintage Shaffer is hard to find and would be my higher recommendation to use for “good” writing, especially those who write with their left hand, as it evaporates and dries faster than calligraphy ink such as Higgins, Speedball, etc. I prefer using Noodlers brand “Bullet-proof” black ink, as it is gel based and American made, writing in all conditions. Moon Palace is a soot based ink which would be period correct. Iron Gall Ink is still available but highly corrosive and poison to humans. Please remember when mixing Iron Gall ink in powder and in pellet form, to use white vinegar and distilled water. The chemicals in today’s creek water, is totally different from the Civil War era. The delicate balance of chemicals in Iron Gall ink, go in immediate conflict with even bottled, filtered and processed water and or apple cider vinegar. The need for Iron Gall ink to “age” is also important.

Let us write!

In the following illustration, you will see strokes and nib action, illustration out of the Ziller’s manual. Although modern, the illustration of how the nib works is still as valid in the 1800’s as they are today.



Here is where those military analogies will come in extremely handy.

Pick up the pen and let the round portion of the nib be on top, letting the pen holder rest in the web of skin between the thumb and index/pointing finger. Let the nib rest on the paper before you and then gently close your hand as to grasp the holder. The desire is to have both of the feet of the point of the nib to touch the paper like a floor/ground evenly. This will be the “attention” position for the military feet are together and the legs are not parted. In making the first downward stroke with any width, pressure from the index finger must be applied so that the pressure feeds down to the legs and into the feet of the nib, as to slide them apart at a “modern military parade rest.” This done even before the nib moves from the present position and travels downward. [Note G and H, in the Ziller illustration.] This spread should feel cooperative by the nib. When it resists against the pressure the flexibility has approached it’s maximum width. Much like extending beyond the point of the shoulders in “parade rest” it is uncomfortable for the torque in the nib as it would be for the soldier to stand at “parade rest” with his feet well past the shoulder. The wider the spread the faster the ink reservoir will empty, as gravity will cause the ink to fill the gap, thus making the thick line. If you see railroad tracks (lines where the feet travel with no ink in the middle, it merely is caused by the lack of ink. Dip, then retrace or fill in.) At the end of a broad stroke, with the nib kept in the “military parade rest,” to end the stroke you stop, move a bit over back on top of the path made and then pause, allowing the nib to slide the feet back together from a “military parade rest” to “attention” then lift the pen nib up.

The “connecting” lines, which are those fine lines which connects the letters to one another, are often made on the up stroke, much like a check mark. The nib actually traveling backwards without the flex and the more fine they are done the better.

Shadows or what you see in the curves within the letter, such as illustrated above in the “T” and the “o” and “s” are the pressure applied in degrees in measure as to go thin to thick and back to thin. Much like driving, the finger pressing on the nib holder/nib, gives the gas or lets up on the gas, per se as to lay down the thickness of the stroke as desired by the writer.

Engravers' Script
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy&
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 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 Script ! ?

Probably the easiest style to start with is the Engraver’s script. However, the small “r” can be made with a scripted “r” like taught in the “Palmer” style of writing.

There will be fonts on the computer that will be similar in appearance to this. Regardless of the name on the font, the “markers” per se will be the shadowing, the ultra fine lines connecting the letters, and what looks like “periods” that dress the letter. These “periods or dots” on the letters, such as illustrated in the capital letters, are called “comma-dots” in the calligraphy world. These are often added as a finish or “icing” on the letter. It is possible to make the “comma-dot” in the very beginning by making an ultra circle in the direction of the stroke to follow.

The “M” for example, would start with my nib moving in a tiny counter-clockwise position, depart slightly down in the gutter then climb the up stroke with an ultra fine stroke, no pressure on the nib and reach the peak at its sharpest point, then increase the gas per se, applying pressure to the nib on the way down. Pausing at the peak of the bottom stroke of the “M” and then raise the nib with the lightest drag on it and repeating the same all over again, until hitting the bottom and not stopping, raise the nib like a flick in a checkmark stroke lifting it off the paper.

The “down stroke” of the majority of letters will be your foundation stroke to many of the letters formed. The oval will be the second most important stroke. Be it fully done or in portions, like the “O” the thick and thin in the shadowing can be seen in the lead in

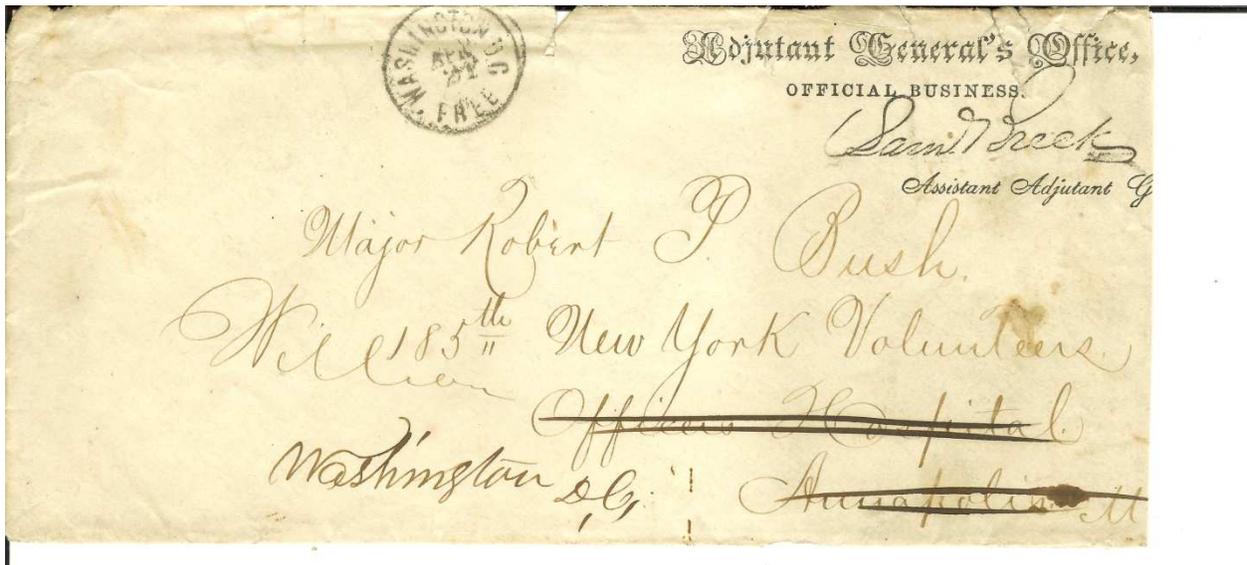
to the “B, C, D, E and so on strokes.” The “squiggle” can be viewed as an extended uncrossed “x” or the Spanish character ~.

But, what is beautiful about writing in this period in history, during the American Civil War, was that those who learned to write did so prior to 1861. Placing the actual style from the 1840’s and forward into the late 1700’s, as teachers influenced the style of writing onto their students. The use of the metal nib wasn’t the rule but, an exception.

Unlike “professional” calligraphy quality and level of uniformed exactness, to which until having the document in hand or, having the document written before typeset printing presses and engraver’s plates, The re-enactor/Civil War Historian can be free of the shackles of “march step, precision and discipline required imposed on professional calligraphers. Freedom of expression, placing a personal stamp on the style of writing was done then as it today—if the person was taught how to write longhand. I hope this throws off the fears of imperfection. Writing was personal. Many documents viewed with signature was recognized or considered a fraud, being familiar with certain signatures.

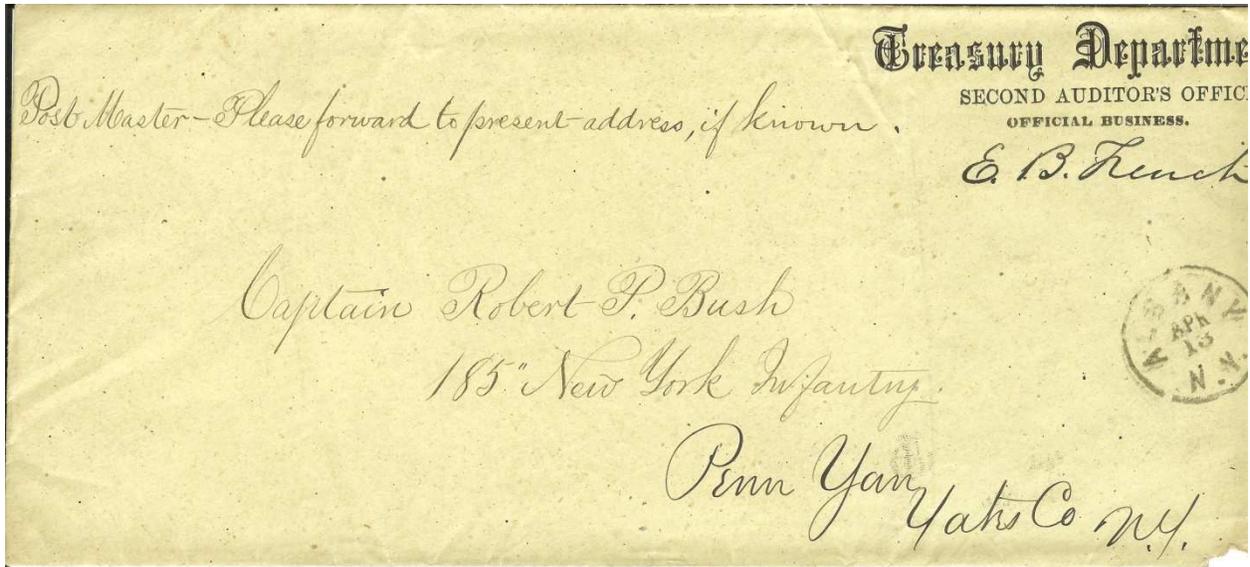
Let us look at the “freedom” of expression in this period envelope.

Using the Major Robert P. Bush envelopes from the last series on Chirography, it is obvious that there are two different writers. However, it is has a third, if you include the engraved signature in the stationary from the Adjutant General’s Office – Samuel Beck, Assistant-Adjutant-General. E. B. Linch in the Treasury Department’s envelope.



Note the writer starts his “M” in Major and pretty much maintains the same pressure throughout the letter “M.” In “Robert” you will see the writer make a “1 (one)” and then lifts the pen to create the separate stroke as to create the “R”. Note how this writer

treats the “B.” He strokes boldly down, doesn’t lift the pen but carries it around on top of the stroke and makes the loop around the shaft of the “B” and ends the stroke inside of the larger loop. The “beginning loops” or “leading in flourishing” in the “M” is not the same as the “R”, the “P” or the “Y.” Yet “N” and “V” are tightly sprung as the “M.” The “W” is in a class all of its own as well as the writer’s “H”. A totally different writer writes in “Washington, D.C.” And, he too has his own style of expression in his “W” and the “D” stroke connects without interruption into the “C” to add to the imperfection, the “comma” is used rather than a period to separate the “D” and “C.”



In this envelope, the “Engraver’s Script” is illustrated in a pleasing manner yet, even this individual wouldn’t be considered a professional but, indeed this person had schooling in more advanced writing, such as “business school.” Note how this writer has kept all his small alphabets connected with the fine connecting lines. This is what is desired. Note how splendidly straight the lines are without “lines” to keep the writer straight and a very fine soft hand. Another writer wrote Penn Yan; Yates Co. N.Y. In this writer’s style you can see the shadowing very crisp.

Now that we have looked at authentic documents, it is time for re-enactors/living historians to take up the pen and try their best in writing a legible document.

Having met several gentlemen in the course of interactions with calligraphy classes, some have beautiful writing and some can use tons of correcting as to replace old bad habits with newer ones. In my own personal journey, my own writing improves fifteen minutes after I start. Most professional calligraphers use this time as a warm up before they start their commissioned work. Customers pay for the quality as much as the time it takes to make perfect letters into words. Most have started as “engineers” and “draw” letters rather than write. This is where I depart from the term “professional,” as I write—not draw my letters. Our younger generations following, have been robbed of learning how to write longhand or cursive writing. The computer, the E-mail, the texting over phones, have made writing nearly obsolete. But, there are those young people who wish to learn calligraphy so it isn’t dead yet!

I earnestly suggest that you, the reader to whom starts their journey into mastering the dip pen, will approach this as “self improvement” of writing already familiar and entrenched. It will require the dedication and discipline of a sincere soldier, learning their lessons in the “School of the Soldier.” Because I know how much visitors want to see soldiers and officers alike to write something, from as simple as a signature on a pass or, a complete after action report, a written order, such as a “General Orders” for their group, entering the muster-roll into the books, the idea is to place all excuses why one cannot write well on the shelf and know that I have confidence in you the writer, that you can replace old habits with new. People want to see soldiers write! Not me! (Grins)

Start with setting up your work space. It can be the kitchen table, a desk, a table. I highly suggest in the beginning not to write around carpet areas. If this can’t be helped, place a drop cloth, plastic table cloth, old shower curtain around and under your chair. Should you spill ink, drop the dip pen loaded with ink, an inkwell tips—you will save your carpet.

Use scrap paper. Use envelopes you receive from bills, even open up the envelope and use the blank space inside the envelope, paper that doesn’t pass the review of the final paperwork sent out, use recycled copy paper, use the back that isn’t printed upon.

I highly recommend placing a section of newspaper under your practice paper. Or, you can place approximately six to 10 sheets of scrap paper under the practice sheet. This will act as a cushion and actually enhances the flex of the dip pen as well as add life to the feet (point) of the nib. When you the writer are further along in your experiences, you can replace the newspaper with clean sheets of paper under your top sheet that you write on. For those of you who are writing with actual quills from birds, you will need to have a “30 degree angle” always! Otherwise, you’ll have ink running or blobbing onto

the paper. This is where the writing slope/lap desk was extremely important beyond the American Civil War into the 1930's.

What does a writing slope/lap desk look like?



From the M. E. Weyraugh Collection –photograph is copyright protected, all rights reserved.

This is a 1820 “Georgian Period” writing slope in my collection. Majority of military campaign slopes will have brass on the edges which stabilizes the wood as it is knocked about in hard military life. Often made on the side by carriage makers, coffin makers and furniture makers, this provided extra income as well as provide a very necessary service to all traveling writers. Note the handles are flush and recessed into the box.



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Open, the “office” is exposed and the writing surface is 30 degrees angle and thus the “slope” is required. The surface on this particular writing slope is leather, gilded in gold leaf. The most wear on the leather is at the fold which is exposed to weather and often separates. On the top portion of the office, there are sections, as to hold the inkwell, pen tray, stamp tray with lid and another inkwell spot for a bottle of red ink or, it could hold a ponce sander—which is an absorbing powder that predates blotter paper. Styles in slopes have not changed much but the strength of hinges diminishes over time as their use diminished.



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Under the “office” or “business” section, space is provided for sheets of paper, envelopes, storage of other stationary supplies. The lock, if you notice is on top is a “Brama Lock” which slides teeth sideways as to lock the box in place.

Flipping the other portion of the business/office portion of the writing slope, which in the below photograph, would be nearest to the writer, holds more space in addition to holding envelopes. Please be reminded that paper dimensions were not the same as today’s modern stationary.

Note there is a little toggle near the lock-plate. This slides down as to prevent the office surface flopping open without the writer’s control.



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Now, I do want to caution my readers, not to invest in “India” knock offs of a front slope “writing slope. I have seen them for sale on E-Bay, Re-enactor supply shops, and even fancy fountain pen stores. They are cheap and fall apart and are not worth the \$124.00 to \$130.00 price tag. This is what they are attempting to copy.



1845 Rosewood writing slope



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The above front face slope, is an original condition, 1845 Rosewood slope with original felt office.



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Unlike the 1820 Writing slope, this particular slope is much smaller in stature, as there is only one portion that holds stationary supplies. Compared to the India made “knock off,” this authentic slope has much more room and a wider writing space. How do I know? -- I bought one -- it broke as I opened it up, at the 2010 Washington Pen Show’s “Copperplate class” as I did not want to risk my authentic pieces.



In a closed position, it locks and ready to travel.

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Here in the above photograph, is a 1812 “Lectern” writing slope. This operates much like the Georgian writing slope in my collection however, this box was required during the quill age of penmanship. Note the drawer on this side of the handle. Very close to Thomas Jefferson’s invention of his writing slope.



The M.E. Weyraugh Collection – Photograph copyright, all rights reserved.

Because the drawer takes room and functions as an office desk drawer, it has the ability to hold envelopes, paper and quills.

Note the pin resting on the drawer's corner. This is inserted into the hole in the office, which penetrates through the side of the writing slope and into the hole right above the handle. This locked the drawer in place. Often these pins are lost so, it is wonderful if you get a box that has its original pin.



The M. E. Weyraugh Collection – photograph copyright, all rights reserved.

Opened in its “Lectern” mode, you can see the delicate prop of brass that fits into a series of holes on the side, which props the top of the slope open to a degree which is comfortable for the reader. It is not meant to be writing on in this position but, merely to prop a book, documents upon for the pleasure of the writer. On a personal note, when I purchased this box, a pair of authentic 1812-1830’s circa eyeglasses were found. I wear these glasses to reenactment events having replaced the lenses for current prescription needs. In the office area, there is a tab that lifts the portion, as to access storage area. This box was restored at one point, incorrectly I might add but, according to my fellow collector and authority on writing slopes, it was done in the late 1800’s and the veneer replaced, which covered the original holes required for a removable bar

which held the book/papers in the slant of the “lectern” position. That said, it still functions for the writer, the necessary 30 degree angle required for quills. Modern calligraphers using “art boards” are cheated out of the real experience and qualities of authentic slopes. I drove this home with a professional calligrapher to whom was conducting a “workshop” for Guild members. I brought this slope and two others that could be used under my supervision. I invited the instructor to write with an authentic quill on this authentic slope – he learned his lesson that many of his assumptions were wrong. American writing history has been lost and calligraphy guilds haven’t been the best to go back to historical roots and evolve as to learn on actual tools. Living Historians and Re-enactors though, understand this all too well and why I appreciate this mentality.

Ok. No writing slope at your disposal. For home or practice purposes, you can go the school supply section and get a three-ring notebook. It is a natural slope but the end covers aren’t meant for heavy use, so I recommend stuffing the gap with rags as to support the cardboard which create the notebook’s ends.

The beauty of the metal nib though, removed the necessity of an angle requirement as needed on natural “bird” quills. This is why it evolved information as boxes weren’t required at an angle to write. So, an officer could write on top of his campaign desk, table, a rifle crate, ordnance box, in his dispatch book or any other flat surface.

If your impression is that of an commanding officer, sure you can improve the impression with a authentic writing slope. But, most times the common soldier wrote with a dip pen, a traveling inkwell in a “kit.”





The M. E. Weyraugh Collection –all pictures copyright protected, all rights reserved.

Although this particular writing kit, is rather fancy, the kit which has a traveling inkwell that stands on its own and acts as a cap, an “eraser” which is the knife looking item, and the dip pen; the tube has space enough for two small envelopes and writing note paper.

There are those vendors that do sell reproduction writing kits. If one buys a kit, please test the seal on the inkwells with ink and put it on its side as to stress the seal. It is better to spill ink in a controlled setting rather than ruining your uniform and equipment.

Here are some other writing tips:

Odds and ends

Abbreviations

Gen! Gen.l. = General

Feb. 4 = months; with "y," are often lifted above

C^o. = Company

Obt serv.^t = Obedient servant.

Special Orders }
No. 123 } can appear as:

Special Orders } or }
Number: 123 } or } or }

Does not matter what kind of "orders" or circular - if it has a number it will have a bracket.

What I have found

"d" there have been these used: d, d, D and d

"f" there have been these used: f, f, F, f, f, f

"G" used thus far: G, G, G, G, G

"H" used thus far: H, H, H, H, H, H, H
H, H, H, H

"J" there have been these used: J, J, J, J
J, J, J, J

"K" seen used: K, K, K, K, K
K, K, K, K, K

"M" seen used: M, M, M, M, M, M, M
M, M, M, M, M, M

"N" seen such: N, N, N, N, N, N, N

"O" various seen: O, O, O, O, O

"P" seen as: P, P, P, P, P, P, P

"Q" seen/used: Q, Q, Q, Q

"R" seen in use: R, R, R, R, R, R

R, R - r, r, r, r, r

"S" seen/used thus: S, S, S, S, S

"T" and F consistant but different flourish

"t" seen: t, t, t, t, t, t and t (no idea other than use in a word like "little")

"U" seen written like these: U, U, U, U

U, U, U, U

"V" seen like U, V - V, V, V, V, V

"Y" seen like these Y, Y, Y, Y

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I highly encourage those who write rather small, have cramped or barely readable letters within their words, to use line paper and write very, very large at first. Touching the top of the line to the bottom of the line for the small alphabets, hopefully will help you self “police” your size and shapes into a more uniformed and legible shape. Use those lines above or below this “base line” to touch the highest point of ascending strokes or the lowest descending stroke. Capital letters use two lines. Be generous with your stroke space in practice. Enlarged, as we learned our letters in elementary school, there is absolutely no shame in returning to that time and tools used to reshape our letters and step out of bad habits gained when using a ballpoint pen and write as fast as a racecar.

The best teacher I have ever had in this beautiful era of writing, have been the nibs itself. Play, explore, dabble, test and learn its limits and its abilities. I had fairly decent handwriting to begin with. But, I was challenged to conform to the nib instead of forcing the nib to conform to me. I had to learn how to stop racing through my letters and slow down a lot. Thinking my letters through, I learned to write the word I am writing immediately before me and not worry about the letters to follow and or the words and the rest of the composition. I learned to stop when my hand started to hurt. Having had such a very long absence from writing anything of length, the most a check as to pay bills, a note or two—I suffered terrible hand cramps as I got so “into” this exciting new writing skill. Stop. Get up and walk about. Return and pick up the pen and practice. But, never let writing “hurt” you. So intense was I on forming each alphabet in my beginnings, my grip on the pen holder was so tight, I could have strangled it. As I gained more confidence my grip relaxed and boy, did the nib “sing” and my thin strokes became even finer and could add the wisps of flourishes. It is impossible to impose on a person the demand for relaxation. The student writer must find it on their own.

If something isn’t working out entirely correct, don’t immediately blame yourself. Even nibs have duds in the lot, as these machines making them can easily misalign and produce duds. Calibrations have to be done to the finest degree of measure. Some papers repel ink or bleed. Not your fault—just paper designed more for modern pens not paper that can handle live flow ink from a dip pen or fountain pen. Look for different paper. Multi-use copy paper is good, and I have found Staple’s “Ivory” to be color close to my authentic aged patina on my documents in my collection, other’s collections and museums. Paper made from sugar-cane, has excited me. Eco-friendly, good price, they have the texture and transparency found in many of the documents, especially in the Confederacy when resources were constricted. Rag paper was like gold, cloth rare, any kind of paper was valued so but, didn’t hold up well.

I cannot express more, that this type of writing requires practice. The more practice you do, the longer the amount of practice done, your abilities to master the penmanship will come. Sure, it will look a mess as you begin as it is no different from learning new ways

of being a soldier from modern to historical. But once you are comfortable, the stress is so much less and then it can be enjoyable and not a struggle.

This style of writing can also serve outside the re-enactment application. Invitations, a letter to a favored friend, achievement awards when printers often don't align well. White ink on black envelopes. Gouache water-color inks for color as well as for those who portray topographical engineers and map makers, can dress up an envelope. To dress up open-faced fonts by coloring the inside of the borders, with gold watercolor, or any color.

My favorite sources of supplies are: Paper and Ink Arts at: www.paperinkarts.com Handles Iron Gall ink premixed perfectly to Old World standards, Moon Palace ink (soot based ink), Gouache, straight wood handles. (Oblique handles came way later), goose quills cut by the famous Dennis Ruud, vellum, all sorts of papers and in different sizes and shapes. Brenda Broadbent the owner is a leading authority worldwide on paper.

TANCO, in Forest, Virginia –Sells straight wood pen handles, antique nibs, quality quills with the sharp point and not the “Italics” point Dennis Ruud puts on his quills. He frequently has things listed in E-bay.

Pendemonium at www.Pendemonium.com which handles many dip pen nibs.

If you need help—please do contact me at ACWCalligraphy@aol.com, as you can scan/photograph where you have problems and I can respond back with tips or possible solutions. Though I would much rather sit next to you and guide you, reality does force other measures. If you wish to write to me—I would be so, so very honored if you would. If you do not have my contact information, E-mail me and I shall give it to you and write to me. Practice to me and with me. I need practice also.

And, most of all—thank you all for being so gracious and inviting into the amazing world of “Civil War Living History” and “reenactments.” Thank you to the military members, to whom often take time to offer assistance in carrying my many items, the kindness in loaning their writing desks and or chairs at the many gatherings in many places. All of you have been such chivalrous gentlemen. God bless you for being so kind in a giving way.

This ends the series on Chirography.