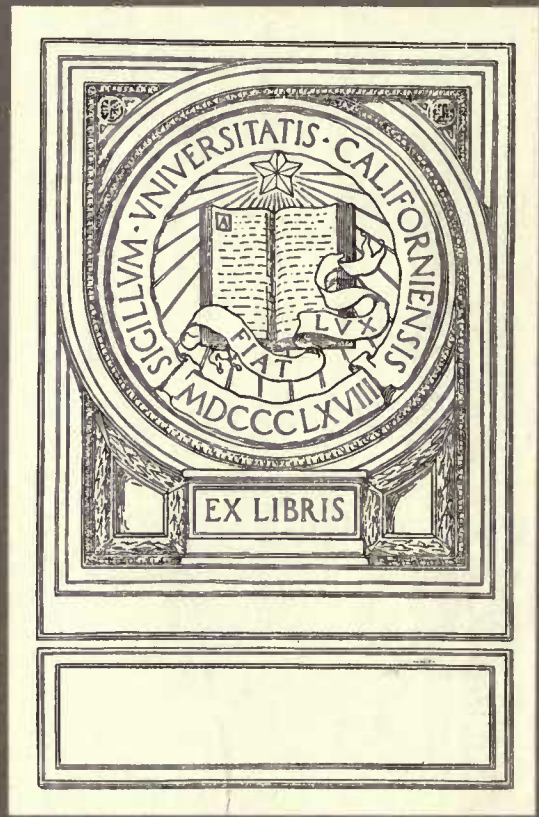


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LETTERING  
*for*  
COMMERCIAL  
PURPOSES.

PRICE \$3.00

WRITTEN BY WM. HUGH GORDON

PUBLISHED BY THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES PUBLISHING CO., CINCINNATI, OHIO

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TO WHOM  
IT MAY COME



# FOREWORD

In presenting the subject, text and illustrations of lettering in this book, an effort has been made to set forth as simply as possible the methods found most practical in the production of letters for commercial purposes, embracing show card writing and lettering posters and advertising matter for single copy jobs or process reproduction.

As the historical origin of letters has been thoroughly covered by competent authorities in many technical publications, no attempt will be made to cover that part of the subject, except in reference to classification of the illustrations from a fundamental basis.

From a literary viewpoint, the writer respectfully calls attention to the fact that the text is simple, practical "shop talk" gleaned from direct association with members of the craft during many years of actual labor in the various branches of the field and art of lettercraft.

In consequence, if the reader expects a scientific literary dissertation within these pages disappointment awaits, as the main object consists of reducing the subject to its least common multiple, both in point of technicality and production.

Unlike most publications relative to lettering, in which the illustrative matter has been gathered from indiscriminate sources, representing the best efforts and technique of numberless letter artists and craftsmen in gallery effect, the examples herein are reproductions of the personal work and conceptions of one individual, some of which are imitative, others being modifications of existing letter and type styles and models in original style. In each case the treatment and method of production is calculated from four ultimate viewpoints:

First, simplicity of form without loss of effect or basic principle.

Second, the actual production of the above with the least amount of effort in the shortest possible time.

Third, the arrangement of the whole in an effective and artistic manner.

Fourth, a selection of letter styles adaptable to and in conformity with the subject wherever possible.

In order to aid the reader to accomplish these results, using a variety of letter forms, schemes of arrangement, methods of production, etc., a series of chapters relative to the subject has been arranged herein, in each case possible; illustrative examples are shown and the methods of production explained; useless methods eliminated, or at least temporarily sidetracked for the rapidly-moving present. Ever remembering, however, that which is considered junk today may, with a few minor changes, be converted into valuable material tomorrow.

To avoid monotony, the subject has not been treated in continuity, which phase usually requires many reviews. Such explanations as may not be sufficiently lucid in one chapter will probably assume definite proportions in another when clothed with different nomenclature and accompanied by a change of illustrative matter.

In brief, the entire subject and illustrative matter is compiled with a view of eliminating the highly technical explanations and different methods of producing a class of hand lettering that possesses commercial value and artistic merit.

The examples of lettering, show cards, etc., displayed herein were made in ordinary, every-day work style, practical and possible by the methods enumerated, not carefully drafted or retouched for perfection of engraved display purposes.

—WM. HUGH GORDON.



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## CHAPTER I

# Modern Lettering

**P**RESENT day styles of lettering in the abstract represent the combined results of numberless and nameless designers of all nations covering a period of centuries of time. Each period has produced its peculiarity and phases of style and design, which, in the main, have a common or almost identical basic principle. The A B C's with which most all nations are familiar is a series of shapes or symbols representing sounds which have meaning and use, and, when properly arranged, represent the spoken word.

The first crude attempt of school kids in carving their initials on any piece of wood that is handy represents the basic principle of all letters and alphabets with which the English-speaking people are familiar. They are practically the original symbolic characters representing sounds. Printers and sign painters of today variously classify these characters as Egyptian, Block or Gothic capitals, the chief characteristic being construction by a combination of elements of even width throughout. The term Gothic, however, historically refers to the style Gothic in the arts and involves most all the texts, such as old English, German text, black letter and uncial letters.

The variety and style of letters, types and alphabets in common use today defies classification or enumeration. Many types and styles are immediately recognizable but unnameable. Many types and styles are known by the name of their designer. A memorization of the aggregate would be a useless burden to assume and would serve but little benefit except to the printer.

In order to simplify the proposition as it appears within these pages, the writer would call attention to the fact that from a common basic principle has been evolved four different styles, or

four elementary classifications, upon which are variously constructed all the alphabets in common use by letterers, printers, sign painters, designers and engravers.

These four classifications are known as Gothic, Roman, Text and Italic, capitals and small letters, which the printers term upper case and lower case, in the order named. These are represented in direct contrast as shown in Plates 100, 101, 102 and 103.

The letterer or student who decides to devise or design a certain style characteristic, based on any particular series of letter or type styles, will avoid confusion by first learning to classify any given example as being based on a certain principle, regardless of its exterior treatment or appearance.

There are numberless styles of letters and types in common use that are not generally known by name even by the expert typographer or letterer, but are easily classified as being either Gothic, Roman, Italic or Text faces, and as such they are known. As most of the work in this book applies to commercial lettering, the styles illustrative will be referred to by type classification as above noted.

All letters, either direct copies or hand-drawn modifications or types, having elementary parts composed of even width strokes are classed as Gothic. All letters, either direct copies or hand-drawn modifications of types having elementary parts composed of accented strokes are classed as Roman.

The letters based on "Text" are variously known as Old English, German, Church, and numberless other Text styles.

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES



Any or all of the above when written or drawn on a slant are known variously as Italics and classified generally as either Gothic Italic, Roman Italic, Text Italic, etc.

The true Italic, however, partakes more of the style of written forms based on script, which letters may be either joined together or written separately, as the case requires.

The above summary will be found less confusing as a whole than a memorization of the historical and traditional forms, names

and origin of the letters, styles and the periods of time in which they were originated.

To those who are interested in these style events and desire to acquaint themselves with authentic and reliable illustrative data, the writer respectfully suggests a perusal of the works of Thomas Wood Stevens, Frank Chanteau Brown, and many others, all of which are highly interesting, beautifully illustrated and written in a comprehensive manner.

## CHAPTER II

# Classification of Letters and Types

**I**F you were to ask the average reader of his home town newspaper what class of type was used in the headlines, the news section or in the leading department store ads, he would probably answer, "Oh, just ordinary printed type." If the same question were asked of a printer who was acquainted with the sheet, he would probably enumerate a few of the leading features as, "The title is seventy-two point Text; the feature headlines are forty-two point Gothic; the news section is eight point DeVinne; the sub-headings are twenty-four point Jensen; the editorials are ten point Scotch Roman; Smith's Department Store runs outline DeVinne in its ad headings; Brown uses inline Cheltenham headings; Jones, the jeweler, runs twenty point Caslon Italics."

The Blooey Auto Company runs hand-lettered ads, etc. Ask a sign painter, show card writer or a commercial letterer, nine out of ten will be unable to enumerate or name the styles of type used except possibly as Gothic, Roman, Italic or Text. This is called classification and is in most cases sufficient.

Before printing was invented, books were hand-lettered or written. Printers first fashioned their type faces after the lettering in manuscript books. At the time of the invention of typography the style of lettering was known as Gothic, Black Letter, Text and Old English. Gothic from its pointed formation and its preference by the Gothic peoples. Black Letter from its blackness on the printed page. Text from its use for the body or text matter of the printed page, and Old English from its use by the early English printers.

Text letters are still in use in Germany and on German papers

in this country, the *fraktur* being a standard type face for these purposes.

Late designs of letters indicate a gradual return to the Roman characters from which Text was evolved. Text capitals are particularly illegible and for that reason should never be used alone in a line. There are capitals devised which are a mixture, half Roman and half Text, based on the early uncial letter, which are more legible than either the German or English text.

Block letters, known as such by their plain square block appearance, are today called (misnamed) "Gothic" by printers. They are the same general shape as the Roman and are constructed of lines of uniform width throughout, while Roman is accented; in other words, composed of elementary strokes consisting of both heavy and light lines.

The Roman capitals were evolved from the Greek. The Roman scribes gave it its typical design, and the use of the reed as a medium of production settled the direction of its accent. The reed was a flat, chisel-pointed device (from which the modern stub pen was evolved). This was dipped in ink and held in a nearly vertical position. In writing the Roman capital A, for example, the first stroke was made upward from left to right with the sharp chisel edge of the reed which produced a hairline; the second stroke downward from left to right made with the wide flat point, as broad as the width of the chisel edge, produced a heavy line, called the accent; the cross bar horizontal was made with the thin edge, producing a thin or hair line.

This principle of accent is apparent throughout the entire alpha-

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

abcdefghijklmnop

Gothic Lower Case

abcdefghijklmnop

Roman Lower Case

*abcdefghijklmnop*

*Italic Lower Case*

abcdefghijklmnop

Old English Text lower case

Plate 102

bet. All upward strokes from left to right are light, except in the Z, which middle stroke was made downward from right to left with the broad edge. All downward strokes, whether vertical or drawn from left to right, are heavy, except the verticals in the N and the first vertical in the M, which are light. As originally written with the reed, these were up strokes. The first stroke of the U was made downward and accented, the second is an up stroke light, and the single down stroke of the I, J and T is heavy. The accent of a curved stroke also follows this principle. The down strokes on each side being accented, and thinnest on the top and bottom.

The addition of serifs, commonly called spurs, being horizontal in the capitals are also light hairlines which may be subsequently rounded into the verticals, if desired. Thus from the record we are told that the accent was imposed on the Roman letter by the tool with which it was originally made, and, while the modern letterer,

using flat chisel edge brushes or pens, does not make up strokes, but makes all strokes downward on Roman letters, the principle of accent remains the same.

A parallel of this fact occasions the theory that all single stroke or "written letters" assume the characteristics imposed on the elementary principles by the tool with which they are made. Therefore, the use of a tool, pen, brush or device that will semi-automatically produce the elements of a letter in a series of properly arranged single strokes would be the most logical and quickest way to arrive at the result. Why, then, have we been almost universally taught to draw the forms of letters in outline?

No doubt this primary idea is correct in so far as learning the forms of letters is concerned, but why stick to this method of production after having accomplished the primary result? Today we have pens and brushes adapted to the single stroke production of almost any style of letter, also many modifications of different style type faces. The evolution of letter styles and their arrange-

nopqrstuvwxyz

Gothic Lower Case

nopqrstuvwxyz

Roman Lower Case

*nopqrstuvwxyz*

*Italic Lower Case*

nopqrstuvwxyz

Old English Text lower case.

Plate 103



## LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

ment is mainly responsible for the record-breaking bursts of speed displayed by the show card writer.

We have of necessity devised certain styles of lower case, or small letters, that permit of greater speed in execution. These changes have occurred gradually, and, for the most part, their individuality in appearance has been caused by the mediums employed in their production. These mediums have in turn proven the possibilities of designing new letter styles or making acceptable modifications of existing styles, both of type and hand-lettered origin, at a higher rate of speed.

The letterer has no logical need to cumber the memory with trade names of type or letter styles. It is only necessary that he should be able to classify any letter or alphabet as belonging to a certain system or basic principle.

For the purpose of classification we assume that all known letter styles are primarily based on what is now universally known as Gothic, Roman, Italic and Text.

In classifying as Gothic, all sans serif letters of even width stroke we adopt a modern printer's term, as historically the style "Gothic" refers to many Uncial, Text and Black Letter forms, which is more confusing than instructive.

Some lettercrafters and designers may take exception to classifying square and round block or even width stroke letters with or without serifs as Gothic, but as we are dealing with type styles and hand-made letters that are modifications of type styles for commercial purposes, it will be better understood than delving into the dead past for historical nomenclature to fit modern lettering adapted strictly to commercial purposes.

Therefore, if a letter is formed of even width strokes throughout it is classed as Gothic. If the strokes are accented it is classed as Roman. If it is made on a slant it belongs to the Italics. The historic Gothic, Lombardic, Uncial, Half Uncial, Black Letter,

Cloister or Church Text, Old English and German are all classed "Text."

The designer of letters frequently finds use for the principles involved in these text styles as a judicious admixture with the elements of Roman frequently results in a beautiful, legible modification that is more easily and rapidly made than either of the parents immediate.

A capable workman should be able to rapidly produce a fairly good resemblance to either upper or lower case Gothic, Roman, Italic or Text by the single stroke method, with either brush or lettering pen.

The study and practice of these letter forms based on the above classification should receive careful attention, and the ability to distinguish these classifications in devising styles best adapted to certain needs is one of the prime requisites. The ability to draw the forms does not qualify one as a letterer, especially from the show card writer's viewpoint, which is "Quantity First." There are at least a dozen methods of producing letters by hand. Of these but two are worthy of consideration, namely, free-hand modeled and written.

Why the maker of show cards is called a show card "writer" is from the fact that most of his lettering is really *written*, so called because produced by the rapid single stroke method, much the same as writing, regardless of whether a brush, pen, or other device is used, or the characters are slant or vertical.

Note the Plates 100 to 103—Gothic, Roman, Italic and Text, upper and lower case—all of free-hand single stroke construction, the text illustrated in this case being Old English. Upon each classified principle numberless and nameless styles of letters and types have been and are still being designed, also countless modifications may be devised either singly or by careful admixture of the elementary principles throughout the entire alphabet in uniformity.

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

Comparative Elementary Principles of Gothic, Roman, Italic and Text.-The four classifications shown.



The "Gothic" elements consist of uniform width strokes throughout, using either brush or pen.

*Note-*The elements indicated are single brush strokes as applied to Single-stroke lettering



The "Roman" elements are accented, heavy and light lines as indicated.



*Italics*, (Like the Roman) elements are accented. Consisting of heavy and light lines as indicated.



The elements of "Text" are also accented. Historically, Text is known as Gothic. "Note explanation".

## CHAPTER III

# Some First Principles in Lettering

**S**YMBOLIC characters representing vocal sounds can be traced back through countless ages. Some of the first forms of which there are authentic records are with us today; they represent the basic principles of the early Roman and Gothic letters, from which source we derive our modern alphabets. Briefly, these elementary principles consist of parallel and horizontal lines, right and left obliques, oval, circle and the compound curve.

The above-named letters contain these elements in their most condensed form, as shown in Plates 105 and 106. Regardless of the thickness of these strokes, their various combinations, no matter how produced, give us a tangible series of principles with which to design, construct and elaborate upon any or all alphabetical characters with which the civilized races are familiar. By numbering these elements consecutively any letter may be analyzed into its component parts. Designing or constructing any letter minus these principles means meaningless hieroglyphs; an incorrect arrangement of these principles—same result.

The main object in calling attention to these principles is the numerous examples we are often called upon to criticize. To the professional eye all alphabets are primarily the same proposition under different exterior treatment. To the average beginner or amateur, and many of the semi-pros, every alphabet is a different picture, to be studied from appearance, losing sight of the foregoing facts that the principle remains unchanged throughout in every case. This will be a theme for illustration later by stripping some of our ornamental letters of their decorative trimmings and dress, leaving the basic principle of each case in practically its naked superstructure.

To begin at the beginning, take the plain Gothic upper or lower case, arranged in its most simple form (Plates 100 to 103), drawn with a fine pencil line, and, if correctly arranged, you will have the superstructure of any alphabet you wish to build. If you reverse the operation, choose any standard plain or fancy alphabet, whether printed, engraved or hand-made, with either brush, pen, pencil or engraver's tool, trace each letter over with a pencil, in a hairline Gothic letter, the result will demonstrate the above to be correct.

This idea will make the study of an alphabet a one-two-three by rule-and-principle proposition. Any time you see or hear of a "new alphabet," to learn it thoroughly simply take its clothes off, strip it down to naked principle; don't try to study or familiarize yourself with the "new alphabet" from outward appearance alone. That is a rather confusing problem somewhat similar to figuring an interest problem while not knowing simple addition, unless you happen to be a freak or genius, which amounts to the same thing.

To familiarize yourself with an alphabet classify it as either Gothic, Roman, Text or Italic. Then locate the principle; then study its most apparent modification. In what particular does it differ from any other you have tried or seen?

1. Comparative thickness of strokes and their relation each to the other throughout.
2. Treatment of curved lines: Are they circular, oval, elongated, condensed, or are angles substituted for curves in general?
3. General spacing arrangement, whether equal or unequal.
4. General slant.
5. Method of finishing strokes, whether sharp or blunt spurs, blocks, curves or compound strokes.

## LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

6. The length of extended letters above and below top and base line.

If these points are carefully determined, what tool, brush or pen lends itself most readily to the construction, whether single or double strokes or outline?

Unless you are "eye-minded" or a natural talent genius, you may as well make up your mind to go into these details in an analytical manner, get down to the ground, and come into camp by the beaten trail.

Short cuts are usually disastrous to results. Systematic study, intelligent, persistent practice, with due regard for basic principle at all times, will show good results.

It's not how many sheets of paper you cover that constitutes practice, as indiscriminate practice will land you in the great nowhere, and it is usually a case of crawl back to where you started or accept defeat.

Regarding what tools, colors, brushes, pens, etc., had best be used in this work, most every workman has his pet ideas. We will touch on that matter later, but for the present in a general way we will call attention to the method of using the tools rather than to the tools themselves.

In a previous chapter was presented a descriptive plate of elementary principles using the Gothic, Roman, Italic and Text letters to illustrate their combinations.

It will be well to use this plate for future reference in analyzing and studying the various alphabets that will appear throughout this series. The primary elements are used merely as a starting point, their modifications in constructing different letters belonging to any series of alphabets must bear a certain relation throughout. For instance, the letter "O" is an "O" whether it is round, square, oval, square cornered, even width strokes throughout, accented or formed with varying degrees of thickness. In all cases it will be well to remember that any of the above characteristics applied to any letter must be observed throughout the entire alphabet, as above stated, in their proper relation. This feature then changes

the appearance of the entire alphabet, always bearing in mind that a mixture of modifications produces a mongrel alphabet, which, from a professional or artistic point of view, will not be tolerated. Taking the ordinary plain Gothic letter without the serifs, commonly called spurs, spurs, thick and thin strokes, etc., we have rather an uninteresting subject to start with, yet it is by far one of the most difficult to execute. The very fact of its plain appearance and simplicity of mechanical construction renders defects glaringly apparent, yet this alphabet can be juggled with in more ways than any other, except Roman, providing the modifications hold together in contour and arrangement.

A rather striking argument in favor of the greater use of this letter is its forceful appearance in the so-called modern "poster ads" and hand-lettered advertisements now so popular in all departments of publicity.

What has heretofore made this series of alphabets seem commonplace was indifferent composition or layout. To be really effective it is essential that the lettering should be massed in some geometric shape or decorative manner in such a way that it becomes part of the whole design. A haphazard, catch-as-can layout or arrangement of any style lettering is worse than useless as a show card.

The modern display card writer is outgrowing the antics formerly indulged in, such as scrolls, swipes, curlycues and abortive attempts at decoration. Simplicity is now paramount. A display card must create an impression, but the main object is to catch and hold the eye, then deliver the sales message in the most concise form.

In Plates 120, 121, U and V we have four characteristic modifications of the Gothic letter, each with its own peculiarity. Generally speaking, an alphabet arranged in A B C rotation is an uninteresting, inanimate object which conveys no meaning, be it either good, bad or indifferent. Its merits or demerits are only apparent where arranged in words, sentences, paragraphs and pages.

## CHAPTER IV

# Brushes and Pens for Lettering

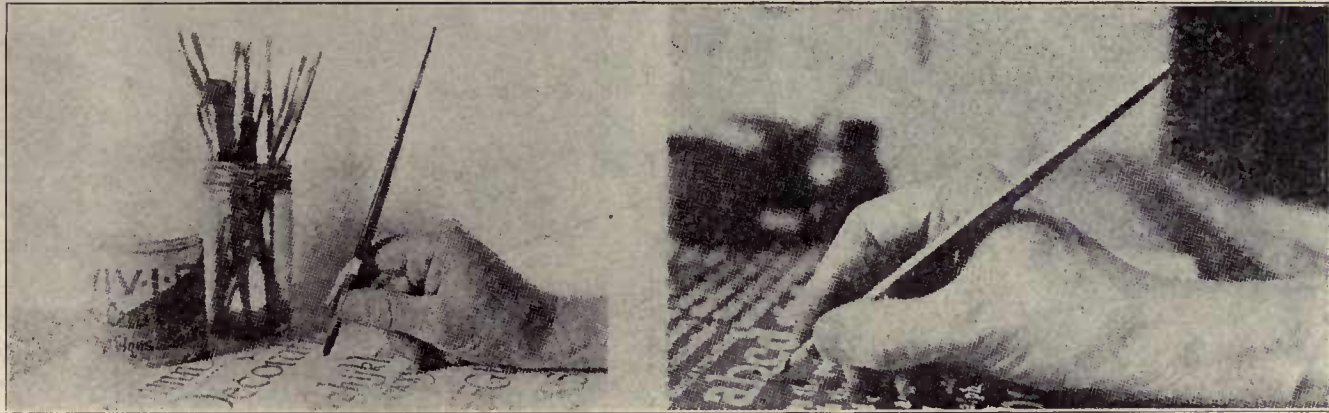


PLATE A

PLATE B

**T**HE first attempt at manipulating a lettering brush is practically certain to produce a series of discouraging results.

Unlike ordinary pens or a pencil, which requires pressure to produce any difference in width of stroke, a brush will respond to the slightest pressure, causing a varying width or unevenness of edges which necessitates subsequent patching, trimming and rounding out of elementary curves, ovals or circles. It requires considerable practice and experiment with a brush merely to determine what it will do or how it will act under varying circumstances. It is more difficult to patch up a series of badly modeled letters than to produce perfect ones made under the right circumstances with proper materials and correct manipulation in the first place.

Note, as the methods and materials employed by sign painters and show card writers are widely different, we are not considering methods and materials of sign painters in this particular instance, but those of the show card writer, commercial artist, etc.

Most beginners attempt to manipulate a brush in much the same manner as a pen or pencil, principally as regards the position of holding, i. e., using the thumb, first and second fingers, holding the brush on an angle of approximately a 45-degree slant.

This will work out satisfactorily only up to a certain point, namely, the production of vertical or horizontal straight lines. It will prove almost impossible to produce even width, single strokes in rounding curves on any oval or circular element with the brush

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

Normal positions of holding a flat marking or round-writing pen in making Single-stroke or Show-cardwriter's Roman letters and Italics ~

Vertical  
 I A C S C T L  
 Position # 1

Slant or Italic  
 U W C S C O T V C  
 Position # 2



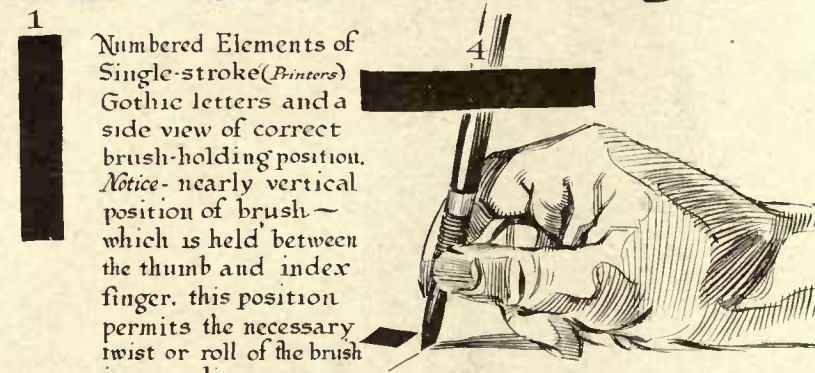
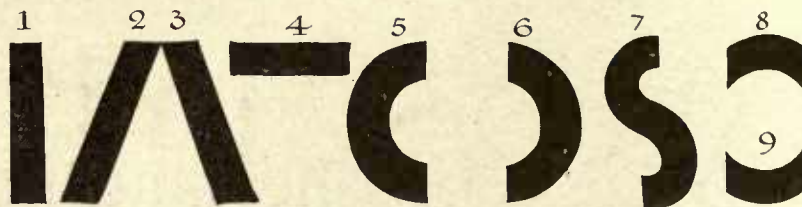
Plate 104



held on the angle of slant above noted. To overcome this difficulty the operator should accustom himself to holding the brush in a nearly vertical (straight up) position between the thumb and index finger, using the second, third and fourth fingers as a sliding brace and rest for the hand. See Plate A, also Plates 105, 106 and 107.

This position will seem rather awkward at first trial, but subsequent results will prove to be more satisfactory in that this manner of holding the brush allows better action by rolling the brush between the thumb and index finger, a uniform width stroke can be made on any part of circular or oval elements, also gives better control in adding thin line horizontals in cross lines, top and base serifs, etc. Likewise it admits of more speed, being a short hold-close down to the heel of the hair on the ferrule.

Brushes having metal ferrules usually require too much gripping power in holding, which interferes with freedom of arm and



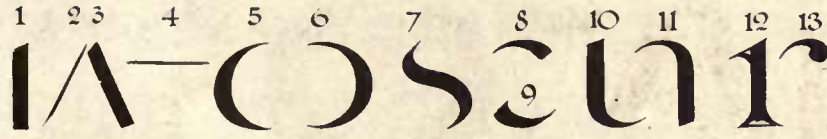
Numbered Elements of Single-stroke (Printers) Gothic letters and a side view of correct brush-holding position. Notice - nearly vertical position of brush - which is held between the thumb and index finger. this position permits the necessary twist or roll of the brush in rounding curves.

Plate 105

finger action. Such brushes should have the ferrules wrapped with waxed thread or a series of nicks filed thereon to prevent slipping between the fingers.

Lettering brushes should be of the best quality red sable, commonly called riggers. They have round ferrules, but the hair can be worked to a flat chisel edge in the color on a palette of card board before beginning actual operation. This flat chisel edge permits of drawing either broad, bold strokes on the verticals and fine lines on the horizontals and down strokes from right to left, such as are used in producing the elements of a single stroke Roman, Text or Italic character. In fact, a brush of this nature should produce identically the same elements as a flat marking, or any pen of the stub variety, in an automatic manner, the only difference being that the method of holding the brush nearly vertical permits of even width oval strokes by rolling between the thumb and index

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES



Numbered elements of Single-stroke Roman letters and a top view of hand holding the brush in correct normal position for making the strokes

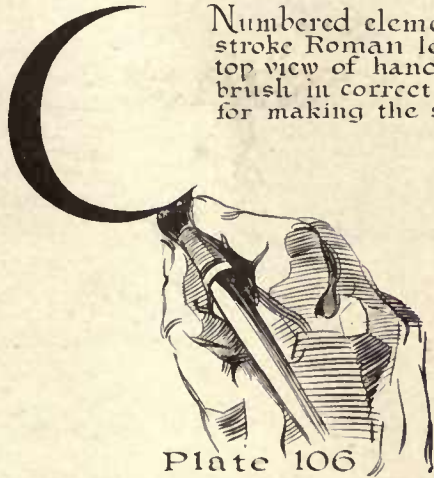
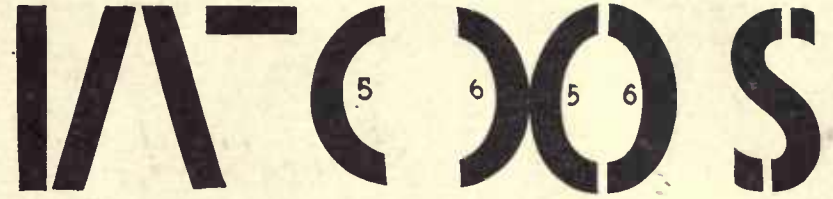


Plate 106

finger in making Gothic letters or Bold Roman styles, which is impossible to do with a chisel edge pen.

To offset this difficulty a pen, called the Speedball broad stroke, has been devised to produce an even width line of uniform thickness when drawn in any direction. These pens are furnished with a bent-up section of the tip; some are square and some round. Plates 109 and 110 illustrate the normal positions of the hand in operating the square point pens. The round points may be operated in any position, providing the bent-up section of the tip is kept in flat contact with the writing surface. The Payzant pen is also a wonderful broad stroke lettering and drawing device.

Plate 104 indicates the two normal positions of holding and operating a lettering pen of the flat marking or stub variety, of which there are several kinds of makes admirably suited to draw-



Top view of position of holding brush, as shown in side view PLATE 105. Also shows the different degrees of curve in the oval elements of Gothic letters. Fig. 5 and 6.—

PLATE 107

ing the elements of single stroke Roman, Italic, Text and round writing in a semi-automatic manner.

Of these best adapted to the purpose are Hunt's "No. 400 Line," in eleven sizes, the Sonnecken (of German manufacture) in different sizes, the automatic shading pen and several others of a like character, all devised and manufactured for the express purposes of certain styles of lettering.

The latest addition to the tools of the lettercrafter is the "Rom-italic" pens, so named as being particularly adapted to producing the elementary principles of Roman and Italic modern classic styles having graded thickness of strokes and hairline elements. Examples of the work of most all the above-mentioned tools are shown as indicated elsewhere within these pages.

In regard to the purchase of materials adapted to this work,





# Rugged Bold-face display type

... ||||| ≡ // \ \ : 11 n d b o x - T ▣ ▣ ▣ ▣

∩ \ \ // |||

## Second Position

of holding the "Style A".....

Square point  
Speedball.....  
Lettering Pen.



Plate 110

Practice on these elements with vigorous free-hand single-strokes. use a 10 Rigger brush.

I / \ — O S C  
I I S U M S  
U c a m n z x v

Plate 111 Originals 11 × 14-inch Cards

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

Showing how the different normal positions of holding a brush or lettering pen will impose different characteristics on the same letters. Starting a lower case Roman letter in position #1, insures an angular, spikey shape top on the vertical elements, Changing to position #2 produces horizontal spikey tops as well as horizontal terminal base line serifs, and cross lines are also horizontal

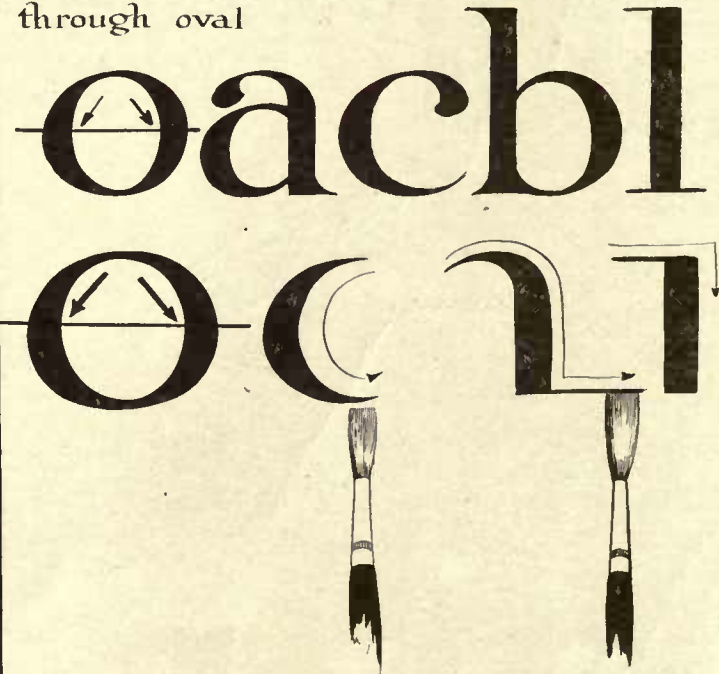
abcdefghijklmnop | abcdefghijklm

Accent appears on upper right and lower left sides of oval elements as indicated by line on angle through oval

Accent appears on horizontal center of all oval elements as indicated by line through oval



Position 1



Position 2

Plate 112

## CHAPTER V

# The Potentiality of a Show Card Writer's Brush

**T**HERE is an old saying, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Likewise you can lead a brush to a pot of paint, but you can't make it work. Your first duty to yourself when attempting a certain style of letter is to determine just what kind of a brush is best adapted to producing its elementary strokes in as nearly an automatic manner as possible.

By careful experiment you will find that a vast amount of effort is expended uselessly in struggling with a brush that is ill adapted to the particular style of letter you wish to make, especially if you are addicted to the "hairline" habit; by this is meant making large or medium size letters using a mixture of heavy strokes and hair lines with sharp spur terminals.

For the most logical reasons it is best to cure yourself of the hairline habit. If a customer does not specifically indicate that that particular style is wanted, do not use it.

First, unless it is extremely well made and carefully finished, it is not good to look at. Next, it consumes too much time in the making. Furthermore, one has to stick too closely to engraved styles, thereby displaying a lack of individuality; and lastly, it is not as readable as the various bold face styles which are becoming more popular with publicity experts.

Now, do not get the idea by the foregoing that a good single stroke Roman, made either with a pen or a brush, is belittled, for those styles are considered among the most beautiful of all alphabets for certain purposes, but when you attempt anything larger than a half sheet they do not carry enough weight; consequently the hair lines must be thicker to impart legibility and the spurs made correspondingly heavier.

The main difficulty with most letterers is in trying to make a small brush do the work of a large one. It is by far an easier stunt to work a No. 12 or No. 15 brush down to a point size of a No. 8 or No. 10 than to spread a No. 5 or No. 8 up to a larger size. The more color you can carry in a brush and still keep the point properly chiseled, the easier it is to make a clean-cut letter.

By flooding the color on heavy in quick, even strokes you will find the formation of letters much easier than spreading the color on thin, then smoothing it out carefully on the terminals. The finishing up process soon becomes automatic in action; thereby the speed is multiplied. Too much can not be said in regard to the proper holding of a brush.

As illustrated in a previous chapter, the brush should be held nearly perpendicular between thumb and index finger. Forget you have a second finger when using a brush. Hold as close down to the hair as possible, and do not use a brush with hair longer than three-fourths to seven-eighths inch. The closer your fingers are to the work the less lost motion.

Never use a bridge or rest the brush hand on the other hand. This method is for sign writing only, and no great amount of speed can be attained in that way by the card writer. If you learned that way, so did many others, but had to learn all over again before they could hold down a shop job and make money for the boss.

Do not use flat ferrule brushes. Never use fan-shaped chisel brushes. Genuine red sable hair is thick in the middle and fine at both ends. Good brushes have a belly midway between the tip and ferrule; they will hold an edge better and are not so apt to split.

Never trim a brush with scissors or knife. If it requires trim-

## Constructive Strokes of the brush in modeling letters.

Where the size of letters is too large for single-stroke construction the outline-modeled method may be used as indicated by the skeleton letters here shown.

A B C D E F G H I J K  
 L M N O P Q R S T U  
 V W X V W X Y Z &  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 \$

Plate 113

a b c d e f g h i j  
 k m n o p q r s t u  
 v w x y z & s a n  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \$

Plate 114

ming, lay the tip over the edge of a card and file the ends with emery paper.

As this subject constitutes one of the main difficulties encountered in lettering, we will go a little further into the proposition. It is usually a source of wonder to the amateur to watch a proficient workman handle a job of lettering.

If the beginner or amateur would pay a little more attention to the manipulation of the brush than to the formation of each individual letter, he might learn something that would be of more benefit.

The first thing that strikes the beginner when attempting brush strokes is the seeming unreliability of the brush. The absence of the feel of touch or contact with the marking surface is confusing. The inability to keep the tip in proper shape and width is additional trouble. All this results in a wavering uncertainty of lines, different degrees of thickness, which necessitates retouching and patching up.

The more a letter is doctored the worse it looks. The lines can be thickened up but never thinned down; consequently in patching the thinnest elements of a letter it naturally thickens up, throwing the whole composition out of shape.

The most logical way to overcome this difficulty is to use a brush that when properly filled with color will make a stroke equal in width to the thinnest element which appears in the letter or alphabet. The heavier elements can be made by doubling up the width of the strokes; meaning, two strokes side by side without imposing the second stroke on the first. (The method, of course, does not apply to outlining the letters and subsequently filling them in.) Unless on extremely large letters the outline method consumes too much time.

With the proper amount of intelligent practice it will be found much easier and faster to build up a letter than to first outline and then fill it in.

Taking the conception of the average artist for formation or drawing of any subject, it will be found that he usually models or

## LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

builds up a rough mass or diagram of the entire structure much in the same manner that a sculptor first works up a crude resemblance to the subject in its entirety as a mass composition. After the finishing touches have been completed correctly, it will be found that each component part has the proper relationship to the whole design.

The main reason the average letterer fails to get at the correct balance and pleasing appearance to the finished product lies in the fact that he tries to build each individual letter as a perfect unit in itself, regardless of its relationship to the neighboring units or letters as a word, sentence, paragraph or whole design, or part and parcel of a whole design which may include other units, either in the shape of illustrations, decorations or borders.

In Chapter 9 attention is called to general arrangement and the laws governing the same. A letterer may be able to make every alphabet known to the English-speaking people and make each and every letter perfectly according to the accepted standard as adopted by draftsmen and type experts and still have his work turned down solely through lack of finished appearance. I have repeatedly heard sign painters, show card writers, commercial artists and draftsmen criticize a piece of work by pointing out the defects in certain letters, while, as a matter of fact, for general appearance, punch, kick and attractiveness, the subject of their criticism was probably beyond their comprehension or ability.

Lettering has always been considered a minor art, particularly so by artists and art instructors. It has been taught as such in institutions of learning, principally from the viewpoint of draftsmanship. Taught in this manner, lettering never gets the student any

further than the ability to reproduce the stiff, dead draft of an inanimate object, lacking in grace, beauty and composition.

Today, however, both instructors and students are looking deeper into the subject, not from curiosity alone, but from a realization of the fact that there is a growing demand for better work along these lines. New fields of endeavor are being opened up in all departments of publicity.

That lettering plays a most important part in this scheme is evidenced by the demand for individual and characteristic styles of hand lettering in all display advertising matter.

A glance through the pages of our leading periodicals will show that where type set-ups were almost exclusively used in display ad matter in the past, hand lettering is now universally accepted as the "real big punch" as a selling factor. Why? It is not as mechanically perfect as type. It costs more, and in many instances it is not as legible. Many of the characters used are not as familiar to the eye as type faces. There must be good and sufficient reason for the preference of hand lettering or reproduction of handwork.

The subject of lettering is always interesting to letterers no matter whether they are sign or show card men, designers or daubers. One has only to study the proportions of this field to realize its magnitude. Lettering today plays one of the most important parts in the scheme of design in poster art throughout continental Europe, England and America. It is now being seriously taken up by many departments of education throughout the world, principally in vocational education, which branches are being more widely taught.

Construction

a c a b b c c d e f g g h

i j k k k l m m m n o o p

p c s s s t u u u v v v w x

w x y y v w v y y z z z

Plate 115

## CHAPTER VI

# “First Principles” in Show Card Writing

**A**BOUT the first alphabet a show card writer attempts to master is the ever-popular single stroke Roman. These letters are admirably adapted to construction with either lettering pen or brush. In various modifications Roman letters present a series of alphabets with which most readers are thoroughly familiar.

The accented (heavy) and light lines are easily made. In fact, the manipulation of flat chiseled brushes or pens of the stub variety seems to conform to the construction of the elements of Roman letters automatically—a broad down stroke and a thin lateral or side stroke, broadening out on the curves and ovals without any further effort on the part of the operator.

The addition of the serifs or spurs is the chief cause for loss of speed, especially in adding sharp spurs finish on base alignment and on tops of the hairline elements, which, to be done properly, require almost an additional operation, performed with a slight roll or twist of the pen or brush between the fingers. In consequence of this it may be noted that the closer one attempts to imitate the regulation Roman the more time is consumed, and likewise it is much more difficult to produce properly.

These drawbacks have often prompted letterers to adopt modifications of the standard Roman letters that can be executed with greater rapidity. In attempting anything like this, it is well to remember that by changing any basic element or principle on any one letter this characteristic should be followed throughout the entire alphabet, in order to preserve the general appearance. In other words, it will not do to have a rounded spur or round finish base on one letter and a straight base spur on its neighbor. Such a treatment becomes more apparent in the finished production and the general appearance of the work suffers thereby.

There are probably about a score of alphabets (known by their

trade names) that are nothing more or less than Roman letters. The apparent difference is only a technical difference of treatment preserved in harmony throughout. The same applies to the Gothic, the various Italics, and the Texts, such as Old English, German, etc. Therefore, when you see an alphabet that looks good, reads well, and you are desirous of learning it, do not pick up a brush or pen and start practicing on it, for, unless you are a genius the result will be far from satisfactory.

First determine to what series of alphabets it belongs—Roman, Gothic, Text or Italic. In what particular does it differ from that with which you are familiar? Is it the general thickness of strokes, the alternate degree of thick and thin lines, the smoothness or roughness of edges, the character of the finish or construction of serifs, the height of extension? Are the letters all condensed or extended? Are the ovals of regular or irregular form?

Compare any one letter with one which you know how to make, then determine with just what kind of a brush or pen the elementary strokes and finishes can be most easily made, always remembering that in hand lettering the chief characteristics of a letter are occasioned by the tool with which it is made. That is, if the letter is of any value to the letterer commercially. By this is meant, can it be produced fast enough to be of any value in your day's work?

The chief drawback to the letterer is struggling with impractical letters made with the wrong tools. There are dozens of beautiful alphabets, type faces, artistic conceptions by individual artists that are utterly worthless from the point of view of one who has large quantities of work to turn out in a given length of time, and more especially if the attempt at reproduction is made with a tool not adapted to either the construction or finishing process.

Single Stroke Roman  
abcdefghijklmnop  
qrstuvwxyz&xuyz a

abcdefghijklmnopno  
pqrstuvwxyz.

Plate 116



## CHAPTER VII

# Colors and Their Preparation

THE question of Colors, their preparation and use, has ever been a perplexing problem, even to the initiated. As a matter of fact, in these days there are so many prepared colors on the market it hardly pays to bother with mixing, but it may be added that the best of ready colors require careful attention to keep them in good working order. They will evaporate rapidly and the constituents become separated if not thoroughly stirred up at least once a day. The pigment will settle, leaving a watery, non-covering fluid on top. When evaporation takes place they become gummy.

A formula for a white that will work well in both brush and pen is often sought. It can not be done satisfactorily, although the same constituents are used in both cases. Any white that will cover well from a brush is usually too heavy for pen work, especially those of the broad stroke variety, and white that is of a sufficient fluidity to flow and cover in a pen is too thin to hold a brush together and cover opaque in one stroke.

Usually if brush white is thinned to proper consistency for pen use there is bound to be insufficient pigment body to cover opaque; therefore, it dries out streaky and transparent in spots. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult at the present time to get a first-class quality of white, either lead, zinc or flake, at any price. This is also true of many of the colors, principally reds, owing to the scarcity of dyes used in their preparation.

I have used an imported dry English flake white with better all-around results than any mixture prepared in this country. This is extremely gritty and requires much grinding, but when all the lumps and grit are reduced and properly mixed with the binder, it

is certainly "some white" for either brush or pen. It covers well even when thin. It is very heavy in pigment and must be kept well stirred at frequent intervals or it will settle.

When mentioning being well ground up, this does not mean simply stirred up in a can or jar with a stick. It might be stirred for a month and still be sandy and gritty.

If you have no paint mill take about a cupful of dry color, add about a tablespoon of Sanford's Royal Crown mucilage and sufficient water to make a thick paste, add one-half teaspoon of glycerine; get a slab of marble or plate glass, and grind this mass on the slab with a spatula, or long flexible table knife blade, adding a few drops of water occasionally when it gets too heavy to grind. If you exercise your muscles on this dope for a couple of hours it will be smooth as cream. Put about one-fourth of it in a receptacle for pen use; simply thin with water and a few drops of alcohol to the proper consistency, and your pen white troubles will be few, if this preparation is kept well stirred.

The remaining three-fourths put in another jar for your brush work. Use it a little thicker.

If you can not get the imported flake white, mix best quality dry lead, one-half pound, Green Seal or American zinc, one pound. Treat this in the manner above mentioned. If it rubs up after drying, add a few drops of mucilage, carefully, as too much will render it transparent. Any other dry colors may be mixed in the same way.

Blacks are another question. There are various brands of drop black, ivory black, lamp black, and blacks that are simply dyes. Blacks that contain dyes make the best ink, as they cover better.

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Lamp black is the finest and is free from grit, but it has a grayish tone. If you can procure water-soluble nigrosine dye, dissolve it in water to thin your lamp black, add glycerine and mucilage as in the white, and you will have a good covering, free-flowing black for either pen or brush in the proper consistencies. Or, mix lamp black and Letterine; this is also good in a pinch. But, as stated before, any of these mixtures will soon go out of commission unless they are kept moist and well stirred up.

The addition of glycerine helps to keep colors moist and gives a good pull; but remember, they dry slower, and too much of it spells disaster to the covering and drying quality. The antidote for water color that dries too slowly is alcohol.

Remember all these mixtures require personal experiment, reason and attention, much the same as any chemical research. Many think that simply throwing the ingredients together any old way ought to come out all right and do the work. If it doesn't, well, there is something the matter with the formula or the ingredients. All I have got to say for them is, I'd hate to eat their cooking.

In buying dry colors it is best to specify that "C. P." (chemically pure) colors are wanted. Even though the first cost is higher they are cheapest and best for all purposes in the long run.

Everything pertaining to the tools of the craft, the material in the cards, the inks and colors, should be studied for cause and effect. Never condemn anything that fails to meet with your expectations at first trial. What may seem an impossibility today may be ridiculously easy tomorrow under different circumstances. There are seventeen hundred and six little trouble dodgers and time

savers in this work. Here is the key to every question—personal experiment.

### **Air Brush Colors**

If you are not satisfied with the prepared or ready-to-use air brush colors, and have the time to prepare your own mixtures, with the proper materials and some personal experiments a selection of tints and color blends, either waterproof or ordinary, can be made that will be superior in every way to the average ready-to-use article. However, at the time this is written it is difficult to procure dyes of reliable quality and the cost is excessive.

Ad-el-ite dyes (Adams & Elting's), either water or spirit soluble, make excellent mediums and are extremely strong in coloring matter. For black, use nigrosine dye.

For waterproof air brush inks, dissolve sufficient spirit soluble dye (of any desired color) to make desired shade, in a pint of denatured alcohol. (Wood alcohol is not desirable as it dries too quickly, leaving a dust of color in the air or on the card.) Strain this through a wad of absorbent cotton in a funnel into another bottle, and add two ounces orange shellac. Shake well before using.

To clean after using, blow clear denatured alcohol through the brush, otherwise the shellac will gum up and cause trouble.

For ordinary air brush ink (not waterproof) use water soluble dye in the above proportion and in the same way. Add one ounce Sanford's Royal Crown mucilage to each pint of dye.

If one desires to letter in white or tints over an air-brushed surface it will be necessary to use waterproofed ink, otherwise the dye comes through the color used.

# PLAIN SINGLE STROKE GOTHIC CAPS

ABC DEF GHI JKL MNO PR  
QRS STU VXY ZW& THIN LINE

————— LIGHT AND HEAVY FACE —————

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**  
**OPQ RST UVW XYZ**  
**123 456 789 \$**

PLATE 117

Gothic Lower Case

abcd • light-face • efgh

ijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

**abcd • heavy-face • fgh**

**ijklmnopqrstuvwxyz**

PLATE 118

Alphabets related to the "Gothic" letters, having elementary principles consisting of uniform width strokes throughout, to which may be added various different sets of finishing touches, Spurs, Plugs or other trimmings, spacings, etc. which may serve to change the general appearance without altering the basic principles. ▯



PLATE 119

“UNIQUE” *from the* GOTHIC SERIES

abcdefghijklmnopqrs

tuvw *Commonly called "Spurred Gothic"* xyz &

ABCDEFGHIJ

KLMN OPQR STUV WXYZ

PLATE 120

## CHAPTER VIII

# Some Ideas for the Amateur in Show Card Writing

THE "course of instructions" usually prescribed by teachers of lettering as particularly applied to show card writing during the past decade has proven a stumbling block to the beginner as well as a perplexing proposition to the amateur, principally due to the fact that it has not applied solely to show card writing as it should be as an individual art, but to sign painting and lettering collectively.

Let it be understood thoroughly that in no sense is sign painting allied with show card writing. The basic principles of production are totally unlike. The methods are entirely different, otherwise than both trades or arts make use of the same reading characters most easily read by the people of any nation or community.

This does not associate the two trades or arts any more closely than that of the copper or steel plate engraver with the lithographer or printer, otherwise than they both make use of the same characters and alphabets.

One would not directly associate a locomotive driver with a marine engineer. One may be unable to perform the duties of the other. The same idea prevails even more strongly that a sign painter must of necessity be a show card writer or *vice versa*, and that the ability to letter produces a combination of the two trades. Consequently the average course of instructions embodies just enough invaluable information, rules, whys and wherefores that apply in a general way to the formation of letters, the tools to be used, the methods of reproduction, etc., tending to the idea that a show card writer must or should be a happy combination of all-around letterer in every trade that makes use of A B C's.

The usual result is an unhappy combination of ability that is, in fact, neither one or the other so far as being able to successfully fill the position or do the work of either a show card writer or sign painter.

The average sign painter is rarely able to make a good show card. The methods are widely different. The card made by a sign artist is usually a sign card. It looks like a sign. The lettering and layout have the general appearance of a sign and that's what it is. On the other hand, there are few show card men that could hold down a job in a commercial sign shop.

Unless a person is endowed with natural talent and versatility it is a waste of energy to try to cover the entire field involving lettercraft. If you intend to become a finished workman in any particular field apply all your energy to that one branch and stick to it. Forget that big idea of knowing it all. Sidetrack everything pertaining to generalities. Get a correct idea of just exactly what end you are working for, what you have to produce, reproduce, and how to get at it and finish in the best possible manner with the least degree of effort. The generalizing of ideas is a bog hole that should be given a wide berth. Don't get the idea that perfect lettering constitutes the main feature of what is generally conceded to be first-class work.

There are many good letterers amongst the fraternity whose work lacks the general appearance in the finished production of their less fortunate co-worker, so far as analysis of letters is concerned. Their work is too good. It always looks the same whether the card pertains to fresh pork chops or blue white diamonds. The

*Full Round Ovals. Condensed Verticals. (Gothic Variation.)*

ABCDEF GHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ &  
abcdefghijklmno  
pqrstuvwxyz &



## LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

minute you spy the card you see the ear-marks of the fellow who made it. It lacks the "kick" which really constitutes the value of any display advertising, illustrated or otherwise.

Moral: Put the punch in the arrangement, not in the lettering.

Cultivate a certain individuality in your work, but remember that even if you are partial to a certain style of layout or make of alphabet it may not fit the subject as well as something different in displaying the varied articles that require the use of special effort in salesmanship to get the other fellow's money. This subject requires considerable study and thought. Much valuable information may be obtained by observing and studying the more modern styles and display methods shown in magazine and newspaper advertising, movie slides, car cards, etc.

I would suggest that for practice in layout you take the copies of ads such as appear in the high-class periodicals, and select such matter therefrom as will make a good reader. Try a pencil layout of the same wording in different forms of arrangement. Study which reads the most readily and conveys the same message in a pleasing and interesting manner. Familiarize yourself with the proper way to divide up the main points, the heading, the paragraphs, the sentences and the price.

Get away from that old cut and dried idea that "big lettering" is what the people want. The majority of people think only as the other fellow thinks.

Lettering is only as big as you can make it look, and if you fill up the card with big lettering there will be no contrasty effect. Contrast is really what constitutes size in appearance. A big man looks larger when in small company. The smaller the company, the bigger he looks. The same with lettering.

Now, regarding lettering, naturally the first thing a beginner thinks of is alphabets. Something very mysterious about the alphabets. To the one who has not taken the time to consider basic principles, every alphabet is a different proposition because it looks different. Never in the wide, wide world can one become a letterer until he first thoroughly understands that all alphabets used by the

English-speaking people are based on one identical principle which has been in use for ages. It has never changed and probably never will change.

With slight modifications you can trace this basic principle through every alphabet ever designed. The only difference is in the classification and the different treatments, embellishments, shadings, difference in width of certain strokes, spacings, etc. Anyone who fails to get these first principles thoroughly fixed in his mind has the wrong start. Different styles of alphabets that are accepted as correct are not the result of brainstorm like many of the illustrations we see today.

Many of the most popular alphabets we are familiar with are the result of careful study of design. They may represent the work of years to bring to perfection. They are thoroughbreds; every stroke bears the proper relation to its neighbor, and the finished production has to bear the stamp of approval not only of the artist and draftsman, but of the type founder, the printer, the engraver, and of the English-speaking people, who, by the way, are very critical.

Almost any schoolboy can instantly detect a letter that is wrong in a page of reading matter belonging to any particular series of letters. He may not be able to tell what is wrong, but it is not right. It throws the word out of joint to the sight, much the same as a discord shocks the hearing. We can all detect an upper case letter amongst lower. It does not belong in the middle of a word. Likewise the printer can detect a mixture of type faces by the feel of it.

I would advise all beginners, amateurs (and many of the professionals) to go to the public libraries and peruse some of the authorities on lettering, ancient and modern. Forget alphabets for awhile, at least until you have formulated some idea of what you are really aiming at by classification. This may give you a start in the right direction, for, from the appearance of some of the work we have been offered for criticism, the producer must be working without any definite object in view.

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES



Plate I

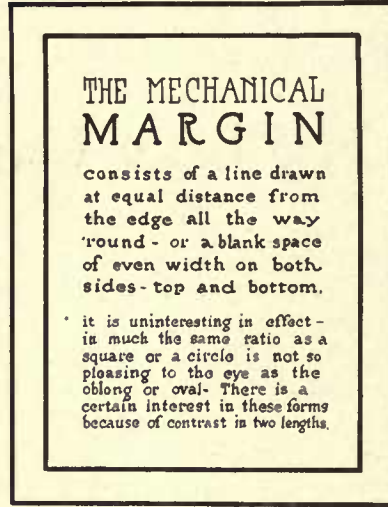


Plate II

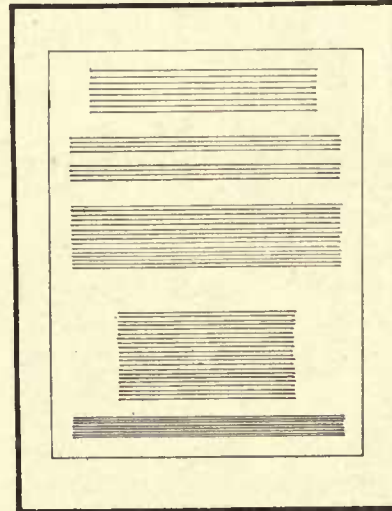


Plate III

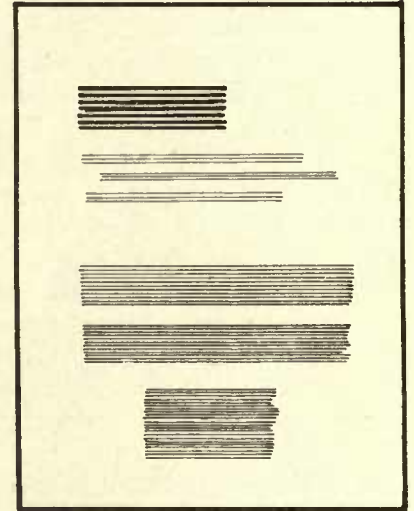


Plate IV

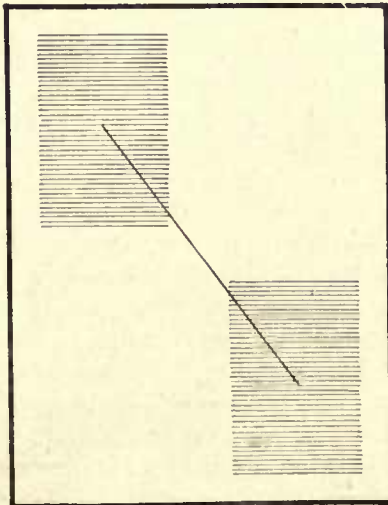


Plate V

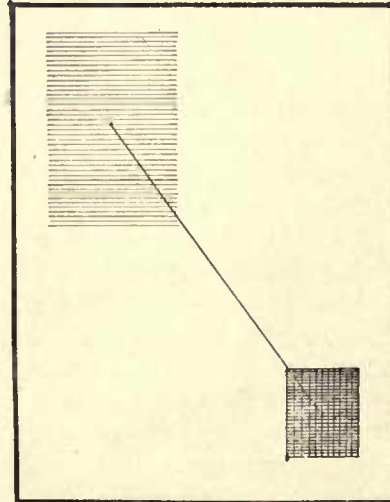


Plate VI

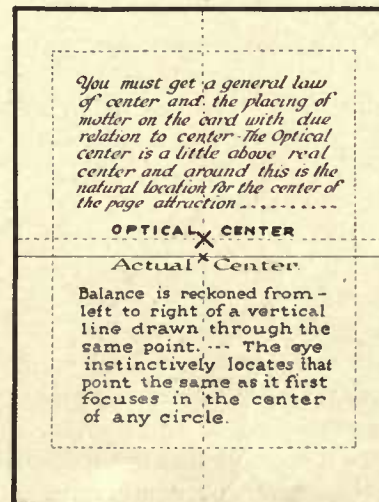


Plate VII

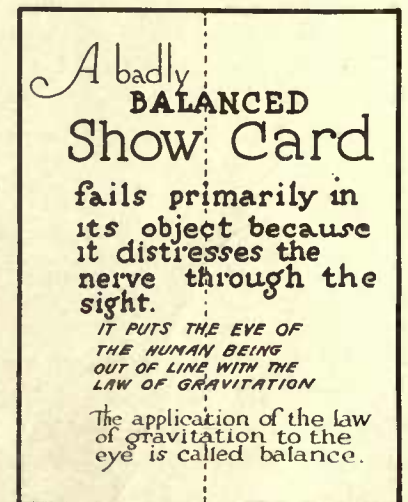


Plate VIII

## CHAPTER IX

# Arrangement and Balance in Show Card Lettering

THE practical end of this most important branch of the work may be called a science or an art; in fact, properly speaking, it must be a happy combination of both to be effective, pleasing and artistic. Unlike the printer's art of composition, the arrangement and spacing of hand lettering is not hampered by uniformity of certain letter widths; therefore, within certain limits the composition of hand lettering can be more artistically and effectively arranged. Therein lies the true value of the hand-lettered advertisement, and not in the mechanical likeness to type faces, as is most generally supposed by the beginner and by many professional letterers.

As these chapters apply mainly to show cards, the occasional implication to hand-lettered ads may be taken literally, for a show card is a hand-lettered ad. A wide selection might be made from the examples of today that would be far superior to many of the high-priced ads displayed in our newspapers, magazines and periodicals. The perpetrators of many of these so-called works of art get real money for their productions, while if the same proposition were to be put out as a show card, the artist (?) would be lucky to draw down six bits for the effort.

Up to the present we have not touched the subject of arrangement, commonly called layout. This is in reality a most important feature of the work, and it may be said that outside of a few cut and dried, hackneyed, old-time layouts, very little attention is given this subject.

Therein lies the one big reason why the average show card man never gets any further than the time-clock and Saturday envelope.

His lettering may be excellent, but his best efforts have the tiresome sameness as last year's work.

Let me suggest something: If you would forget that everlasting (and in most cases, hopeless) struggling effort to perfect the individual letter faces and pay more attention to effective arrangement, you may begin to find out something about lettering that has been overlooked for as long as you have been in the business. The different adaptations of the quick, easy styles will automatically adjust themselves to much better advantage and general appearance with less labor and at a great time saving.

Most letterers realize the fact, or should, that certain letters or alphabets are impractical for handwork, either with brush or pen. This being the case, we adopt certain modifications of these letters that become practical because their production is semi-automatic, not particularly with any pen or brush that happens to be handy, but with certain special brushes or pens that produce strokes which constitute elements of the finished product.

It naturally follows that the work takes on the characteristic imposed by the individual strokes of the tools employed; the different appearance displayed in these instances by different workmen using the same identical implements is mostly effected by their individual technique much the same as a class of students in penmanship under the same instructor, using the same kind of pens. At the end of a certain period of time each student has developed, or will eventually develop, an individuality or style of writing that is peculiar to himself, although based on the one system. This is also true in lettering if one is left to his own devices or natural



adaptability, and in many cases each in his own particular style develops into a crackerjack along certain lines.

But the real trouble begins for him that fails to let this individuality have a fair chance and allows himself to imitate some other person's style of work. He becomes a copyist. He may eventually equal his ideal, but seldom excels, unless, by some freak of nature, he is endowed with what is known as "versatility," in which case he is able to reproduce a fairly creditable copy of any style of work that happens to strike his fancy; but such cases are very rare.

However, no matter what your individual capabilities are as a letterer, if your arrangement is clever the work will instantly command attention where good lettering, indifferently arranged, will be passed by without comment.

There are certain well-defined laws of arrangement based on

balance, gravity and area. Lettering show cards is in effect the same as designing a printed set-up.

First, the matter should be related to the shape and size of the space in which it goes. It should harmonize with that space according to these laws. It should have around it margins or plain spaces.

The Greek law of area says: "If you have a ratio between three widths, or three sizes, which is approximately as five is to seven and to eleven, you will have nearly the most comfortable abstract proportions."

It makes a difference in catching the eye what the margin is. The most effective margin is widest at the bottom, top next, and the two sides less and alike (see Plate 1). The relation of these widths should be in the ratio of eleven units to seven and to five, which is the first application of the Greek law to the margined card.

In Plate 2 the mechanical margin consists of a line drawn at equal distance from the edge all the way round, or a blank space of equal width.

Regardless of marginal line, either real or imaginary, the reading matter or decorations must be kept in balance, either if in one mass of lettering or in several groups of masses, such as separating the headings, the descriptive matter and prices into different groups, as shown in Plate 3.

A badly balanced group of masses representing either decorations, illustrations or reading matter, is shown in Plate 4. One of the fundamental principles of arrangement is balance, and is reckoned from a vertical line drawn through center from top to bottom.

Attractions which are equal in size, shape, color, etc., balance at equal distances from their center (Plate 5). Unequal attractions balance at distances from their centers in inverse ratio to their powers of attraction (Plate 6).

This is due to the law of gravitation, which, applied to the eye, is called balance, and is the chief element of criticism in any form of design.

## LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

Consistently related shapes are controlled by the law of proportion, that which attracts attention by perfect balance of a variety of shapes in a common group. Therefore, consistently related shapes as applied to groups or masses of lettering or decorations constitute the first principle in the arrangement of a show card.

For instance, if we have a copy consisting of a heading or catch line, then a mass of descriptive matter and price mark, the placing of these groups on the card must, to be effective, be controlled by these laws. If not, and the result is still pleasing, it is an accident and not likely to occur in any other instance where different copy or decorations are used. This is one reason why sometimes an effective card is produced without any apparent reason.

For variety of common shapes we have the square, circle, oblong, triangle and ellipse. The limit of contrast is the square and circle. They are likewise the most monotonous. There is more interest in the oblong or ellipse, because of their two lengths.

If you have a copy separated into the heading, a price and a paragraph of descriptive matter, the most inharmonious method of arrangement that could be devised would be to square the headlines, put the price in a circle and the descriptive matter in an oblong panel below. Therein lies the consistent variety of shapes.

If your copy contains a headline and two or three paragraphs of reading matter, a price and probably the firm name, the masses should bear the proper size relation in a consistent variety of shapes, and the whole properly balanced somewhat like the masses shown in Plate 3. In the first place, the heading should be of the size and length suggested by its value in the copy and not be spaced to make a full length line. Where the longest line is also the heaviest line, it should be above the center of the composition.

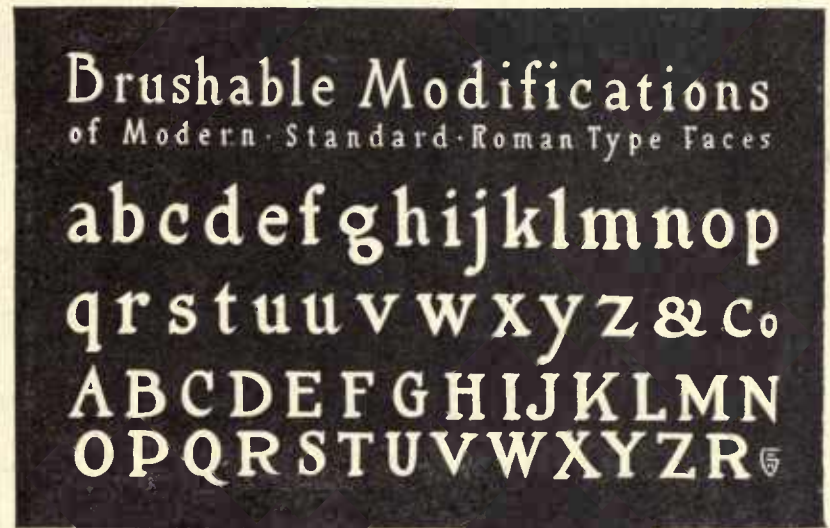


PLATE 1-O

It is always advisable to make a pencil layout of copy with which you are not familiar. It saves time and adds value to the appearance of the finished product. You may be a good space guesser, but not infallible in all cases, and crowding a line is more disastrous to appearance than wide spacing.

Plate 7 shows diagram of correct border, actual and optical center and line of balance. Plate 8 speaks for itself, while Plate 9 shows a geometric form of arrangement that is extremely popular at the present time, and is also very appropriate for the lettering of moving picture subtitles or page matter of any description.

ANCIENT ROMAN

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

Brushable modifications based on—  
— ANCIENT ROMAN —

abcdefghijklmnopno  
pqrstuvwxyz·hn

Letters of this character should be either  
of single-stroke or modeled construction  
**NOTE** illustrative instruction- Plate 123

# BOLD ROMAN CAPITALS

Stumped with a blunt brush

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 X & Z  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \$

Plate 124



**abcdefghijkl  
mnopqrstuv**

**w  
y**

-letters of this character are most easily made by stumping methods, using a short, blunt, brush well flooded with medium thick or heavy color.

**x  
z**

Note-Triangular Serifs

abcdefghijklmno

pqrstuvwxyz 11111

ABCDEFGHIJKLM

NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Plate 126

# Text Poster- Single Stroke

abcdefghijklmnopq

rstuw - speed - wxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLM

NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Poster Style-with a blunt brush.

abcdefghijkl  
mnopqrstuv  
wxyz & Oenm

Condensed Arrangement 123.

Plate 128

## CHAPTER X

# Diagrammatical Analysis of Letters

**T**HE architectural draft of a complete structure is seldom given much thought or attention by the casual observer. All that is seen of the subject in its finished state is the general appearance. An illustration of the human figure, either nude or draped in ordinary or fancy apparel, may be either good or bad. The treatment of the drapery, the coloring and general arrangement may be in itself excellent, but if the structural figure is badly drawn or posed the pleasing effect is lost.

Obviously, an artist must be familiar with the anatomy of a figure before he is able to reproduce it in a manner calculated to excite the admiration of the beholder.

To this end, if properly taught, he is given a thorough course of instruction in anatomy; he must familiarize himself with bone structure and muscular tissue of the human figure. Mere outlines will not give one the insight required to become a successful figure painter or portrait artist.

Many of the best illustrators proceed to sketch a draped study by first making a deliberate outline sketch of the nude in any desired pose, after which the dress, drapery or clothing is systematically drawn, arranged over the figure. If the first draft is correct it naturally follows that the drawing of the clothing or draperies on the figure is more liable to assume correct and graceful proportions than if drawn in a haphazard manner by one not thoroughly familiar with the anatomical proportions and life-like poses of the subject.

We have all noted the absurd and unlife-like appearance of clothed or draped window display dummies or wax figures. No matter how elegant the gown or correct the finish, cut and style of

garment displayed on a badly proportioned or ill-stuffed dummy, it loses its value in appearance anatomically.

The foregoing is simply presented as a comparison of correct and incorrect formation of letters. If one is thoroughly familiar with what may be aptly termed the correct anatomical formation of a letter or alphabet, its actual production then becomes a matter of intelligent and persistent practice, using the tools best adapted to producing the elementary parts in proper combination, using a series of regular movements of the arm, hand and fingers best calculated to become semi-automatic and rhythmical in action by continued repetition.

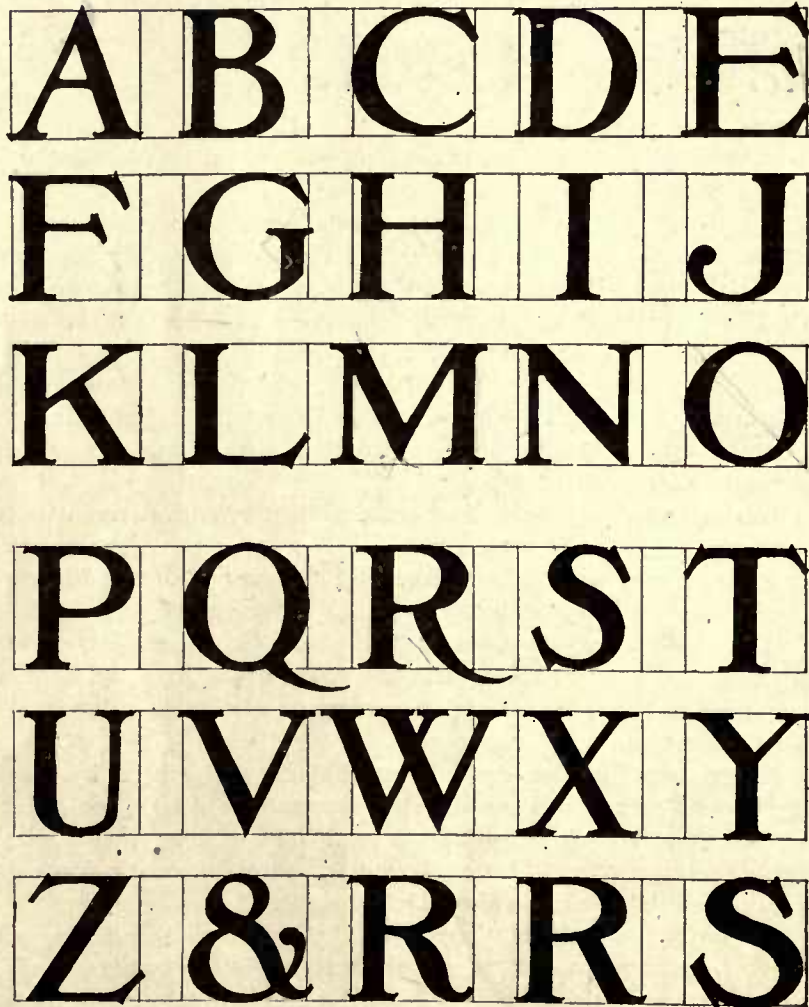
Too much can not be said of the excellent results derived from the exercises prescribed by teachers of penmanship. Practically the same results will occur in freehand lettering if one persists in certain rhythmical movement exercises of the arm and fingers.

What is familiarly known as "the swing" is absolutely necessary to do graceful lettering. But the swing of the arm and fingers in manipulating a pencil, brush or pen must also include "control" both on slow and rapid movements.

Having acquired the combination of swing and control by practice on certain exercises based on the elements of letters, consisting of circles, ovals, vertical and horizontal lines, strokes and angles, then actual formation of letters becomes a semi-automatic proposition directed by the brain through the sight.

Primarily the sight is directed by the brain. Simply seeing an object denotes sight, but to see it as it really is requires study, either much or little, depending largely on individual qualifications along certain lines.

PLATE - A



To reproduce an object as one actually sees it, or imagines it to be, depends largely on natural ability. All arguments to the contrary are theoretical. However, any person possessed of average mental faculties and not physically disabled will be able to improve in any line of endeavor if aided by proper instruction. To accomplish even this, however, one must be given the correct start, the fundamental principles.

All labor, study, practice and effort must be properly directed or the result is either failure or near failure. Any part of the endeavor that is misdirected has a tendency to retard the progress of the entire proceeding. Unfortunately, there are many who are grinding and plugging away at the various crafts, and, having begun in the middle, the missing link to connect with success has been inadvertently left behind.

As applied to the subject of lettering, the link may be any one of many items—principle, form, material, tools, movement, control, speed, attention, observation, instruction, the sense of sight principally as applied to the mind's eye, colors, imagination, inspiration, etc.

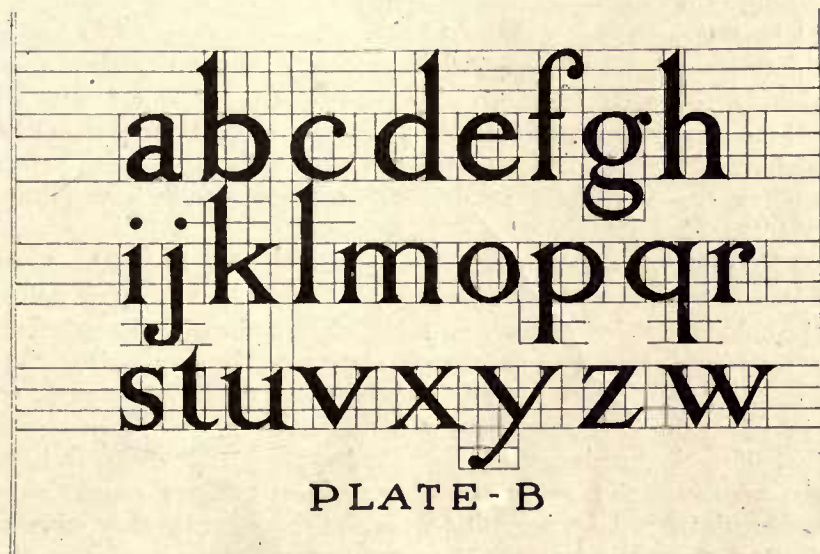
Without the ability to criticize one's own efforts, a continuation along the same lines without apparent good results is sufficient proof that there is something radically wrong. A self-analysis then becomes necessary. First determine just what particular element is lacking in your physical or mental make-up.

If you are working with your own imagination as to form or method of production, just why are you so doing?

Are you trying to copy any certain style or grade of work, and, if so, are you using the identical mediums employed in their production?

Do you think it possible to engrave a watch case with a pickaxe? Have you that particular ability or technique to reproduce all the various styles of work displayed along your main street with the same tools you ordinarily use? If not, is there any particular style you admire sufficiently to direct all your energy toward reproducing

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES



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 & &

abcde fghijklm;  
opqrstuvwxyz!  
bdhijklmnp rucs  
adhknmuz nmhq;

PLATE C

## LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

it? Can you make any particular alphabet better, faster and cleaner than another?

It is necessary that you should have the correct structural formation of each letter firmly imprinted in the mind's eye. Otherwise your preliminary practice on drafting, formation or the movements necessary to successful lettering is misdirected.

Speaking of lettering from a draftsman's viewpoint, it is first necessary to become familiar with the fundamental principles of lettering in order to get the proper idea fixed in your mind's eye. This far and no further should you go according to the applied rules of drafting.

Plates A and B show the capitals and small letters of the Roman alphabet in the proportionate size and space relationship as diagrammatically laid out by accepted authorities. Mathematically they may be wrong by a small fraction, but for all practical purposes in hand lettering they are about as close as you will find use for.

It may be noted that Roman originally consisted of the capitals only. Small letters were designed and adopted only after the art of printing came into use. You will notice that each small letter occupies a space dimension of nearly a square, which has been divided into nine parts. The space occupied by each letter in the square is defined by these sections of the square in nearly the correct shape. The extended letters above the line may occupy either two-thirds the height of the letter or extended to the third square above, making them the exact height above the line as the height of the letter.

The letters extending below the line are two-thirds only. The capitals occupy a certain well-defined space within each square. Note the relative widths. These letters will serve as a base upon which to devise your individual conceptions of the Roman alphabet.

Plate C represents the structural formation of Roman letters, the relation of oval and circular elements to the horizontal and vertical. This plate is not intended as a method of construction, but simply a preliminary imaginative nude sketch of constructive formation upon which to arrange the clothing; meaning, in other words, a mental sketch to be thoroughly fixed in the mind's eye—a visionary superstructure invisible in the finished production, but always apparent by indication of correct form in the finished letter, much in the same manner as a stylish, well-fitted gown or suit may be observed draping a correctly formed human figure. The actual figure is unseen, but the structure is visibly apparent. One can not think of a squirrel and draw it correctly if unfamiliar with its anatomical proportions. Yet it is known that some misguided individuals have worked on certain propositions for years before tumbling to the fact that all previous efforts have been misapplied.

Note Plates Nos. 1-O and 126, original 14 x 22. The two top lines, Plate 1-O, made with a Daily brush worked down to a fine point; the bold face alphabet made with No. 15 Daily brush. Note absence of hair lines; also note peculiar formation of the spur finish. This is a single stroke letter, very fast; the spurs are three-cornered on the base; they are formed by a continuation of the down stroke by pulling the brush to the left on the base line, and without raising the point from the card or changing position, pull to the right, then lift brush from the paper; this gives the three-corner spur without further effort or trim-up. The top spurs are sharp angles on the perpendiculars, of b-d-h-i-j-l-m-n-q-r-u, and a side drag three-corner spur on tops of v-w-x and y, and the same in all capital spurs. A wide spacing gives this letter a unique effect, as shown in the small letters of second line (of Plate No. 1-O); they may be effectively condensed also.



Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs.  
alphabetical sentences

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzand-co.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOSTUV

WX 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 YZ

Plate 129

SOME *Quick* NUMERALS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 ¢ \$

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 75

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 \$ 35

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0.

Plate 130

## CHAPTER XI

# Rapid Single and Double Stroke Numerals

**G**OOD figures or numerals are even more essential than good lettering. To be able to "knock 'em out" in a rush is nine points in your favor. A neat numeral adds a large percentage to the value of a display card, and as for price tickets, many stores use thousands per week.

The numerals on a window full of tickets should be all of the same character. Mixing the styles of numerals on tickets appearing in the same window is poor judgment.

In many department stores single stroke figures are used exclusively, as time will not permit outlined Roman styles. Other stores will not stand for a single stroke Egyptian or Gothic figure. A fairly good Roman figure for small work can be made by the single stroke method with either a Soennecken or Hunt's 400 pen or brush, but it requires considerable practice to acquire the requisite speed which imparts the appearance of freedom and graceful, swingy strokes.

Did you ever notice a professional penman make a combination of two or more capital letters? The method he employs would serve as an excellent object lesson for the show card writer, especially in making single-stroke Italic numerals or letters. It is almost impossible to draw a graceful letter or numeral. The very fact that it is drawn precludes the possibility of imparting the "swing."

A naturally good penman or a person who has acquired the ability to write gracefully will find it much easier to acquire a distinctive, characteristic style of lettering than one who has to draw the characters. A penman who resorts to drawing his script is really not considered a penman. He may be able to execute a beautiful

style of engraver's script, copperplate effects, etc., but his efforts show in the work, and a mechanic of that particular school would do better by being an engraver.

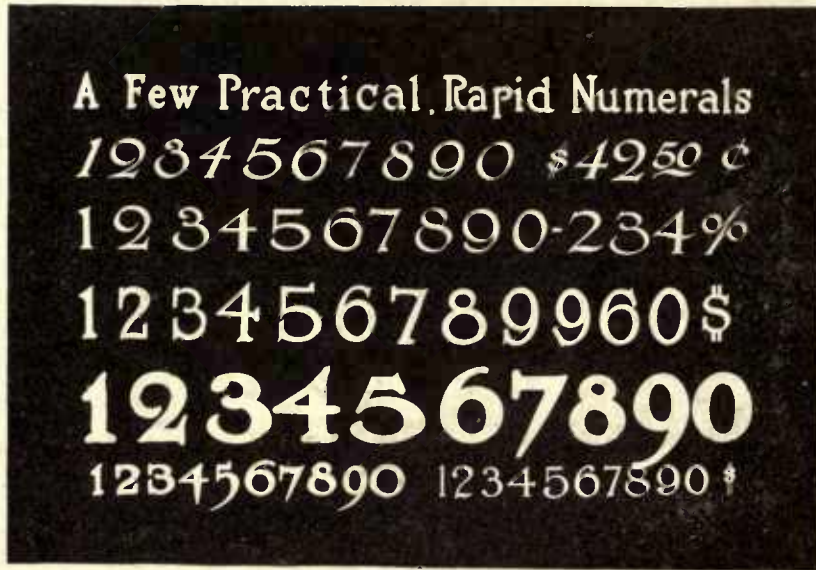
There are many cardwriters who would likewise double their earning capacity in the field of commercial art, lettering for reproduction purposes. The amount of labor, time, effort and skill devoted to producing a single show card is often worthy of a higher object.

Some of the show cards that are turned out in the big shops are marvels of grace and accuracy. As a matter of fact, they are actually too good for the purpose intended. Their sameness year in and year out becomes monotonous.

To my notion they frequently resemble memorials, stock stuff. One single stereotyped design is made to cover all purposes for advertising "Spring styles now ready for your inspection" to "Xmas greeting," which you all too frequently see in the tailor shops, shoe shops, hat shops, and all other shops that deal in wearables for men, women and children regardless of age, race, sex, size or color.

The merchants have been fed upon this stuff so long and so plentifully that it has become a habit. The next-door dealer may have the same stunt in his window for a certain occasion. Maybe he has dug it out of a year's hiding place in the safe to serve the same purpose as on a former occasion. His standard of excellence in display card publicity is based on what his competitor used year before last with seeming good results.

I note particularly that in various trade papers and periodicals there appear with a well-defined regularity articles pertaining to



show card writing, with illustrations. The only difference apparent is in the wording. The cards, the lettering, the layout and general effect might lead the average observer to believe that all show card writers learned their trade under one tutelage.

Therein, to my notion, lies the chief difficulty in getting money for the work. If there is but one standard or style of workmanship that is acceptable by the consumer, 90 per cent. of us better direct our efforts in some other direction. For the element of competition resolves itself into only one consideration—a cut in price to get business—and that spells disaster to all concerned except the customer, and in 90 per cent. of such cases the work suffers. That is the only way a price-cutter can break anywhere near even.

There are three different angles of the show card writer's work—the department store, the show card shop, and the window decorator, who makes his own cards.



The department store artist is usually a well-appearing sort of chap, just about six jumps behind the clock all the time. If ever he sees an empty order hook he doesn't believe it. He begins to worry about the rush he knows is on the way up.

No man need envy the decorator's job that carries the additional labor of writing cards. True, the envelope is heavier, but it's certainly worth it.

The shop man must be an all-round hustler. To be successful he must not only be a versatile workman; he must be also a business man, an ad writer, having a never-failing fund of suggestions, stunts, color harmonies, new ideas or old ones reclothed. He must be able to think of six different things while doing three others, but, after all, there is a certain diversification in shop work that precludes much monotony. Even if it is "all work," he's the man that usually sets the pace for the other fellow.

ABCDEFGHIJK  
LMNMQNOPQRS  
TUVWXYZ Z &  
SAN FRANCISCO → TO  
NEW BRUNSWICK

PLATE 131

abcdef  
ghijklm  
nopqrs  
tuvwxyz  
123456  
7890\$

Alphabets are original only so far as individual treatment and technic alters the appearance without change of basic principle

Characteristic  
Bold Display  
Adapted  
from Roman

Plate 132

## CHAPTER XII

# Economy of Motion as an Aid to Speed

**N**OWADAYS 'tis "speed," and to this end every element of drag, lost motion, useless movement and obsolete method in lettering must be eliminated if one expects to accomplish the quantity of work that the present-day craftsman is called upon to produce in a day's time.

After having determined, by careful experiment, just what brushes and pens are best adapted to your individual requirements, and having carefully studied and familiarized yourself with the forms and principles of certain alphabets suitable to your line of work, then, and not until then, will you be able to develop something that resembles individual style and character.

It has been aptly said by some of the most able craftsmen that lettering should be as individual in style as is handwriting.

Aside from professional penmen and teachers of writing (who usually abide by certain well-defined principles and systems), you will hardly find two in ten thousand adults who write alike. This fact has been proven by experts. Every individual who has any considerable amount of writing to do will naturally drift into a short-cut system entirely original with himself, regardless of the system under which he was primarily taught or instructed. Some never develop into good writers, but the average business man of today can produce a page of writing that is fairly good to look upon and in many instances is artistic to the eye of the professional penman. If the artistic element is properly cultivated the writing would be more pleasing in appearance, still retaining the individual character. This is not theory; it is certain, and, as applied to hand lettering, the same result will sooner or later become apparent.

However, the student of lettering has a greater latitude to work

in owing to the diversified styles of alphabets in common use. The ordinary mistake in devising an alphabet lies in using a mixed series of basic principles. For instance, in taking two alphabets based on Roman, like the Caslon and DeVinne, a careful study of the elements involved in their construction shows a wide departure each from the other.

One should study these differences from type books and not from hand lettering to thoroughly understand this theory, as hand lettering will always deviate from its origin to a certain extent, regardless of the skill of the operator. This fact is the result of individuality and is what makes hand lettering an art in itself. If replicas of type faces constitute perfection, hand lettering would probably cease to exist as an applied art in all but the most extraordinary cases, owing to commercialism.

Plate 23 represents the Caslon Old Style, as modeled with a No. 6 Rigger brush (size of original, 12 x 15), which resembles the type of that name as closely as the average letterer will attempt with any degree of speed, which, as a matter of fact, is too slow, for this type does not readily respond to rapid treatment with a brush and it is practically impossible to "single stroke" this letter with a pen.

There are various modifications of this style letter that, when properly reduced and arranged, present a very attractive and artistic appearance. Plates 24 and 133 are fair representations.

The Italics and their modifications, based on this series, are among the most beautiful of all types of that nature, some of which may be very rapidly executed when their chief peculiarities are rendered brushable by the single stroke method.

*Caslon Old Style Italic*  
*abcdefghijklmnopqrstu*  
*v wxyz*

*Rapid Brushable modifications*  
*abcdefghijklmnopqr*  
*stuv-single stroke-wxyz*



Caslon Old Style  
in brush modeling.  
abcdefghijklmnop  
pqrstuvwxyz &  
ABCDEFGHIJK  
LMNOPRSTUVY

DERIVED FROM CASLON ----

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

SINGLE STROKE  
CAPITALS &

\$ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

PLATE 133

I do not wish to discourage the efforts of those who make letters by the outline method or by the methodical labors of the draftsman. But in comparison with the work as it is rendered by the modern, successful commercial letterer of today with that which has been done in the past by other methods of the "old school," we

Single Stroke Letter  
Derived from Caslon

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 œ &

Brushable Adaptations of  
Standard Alphabets.

PLATE 24

have only to look at the results. Bear in mind that I am not speaking of the engraver, the lithographer, or the draftsman, or of their methods. I am referring to the work of the commercial letterer, the newspaper artist, the show card writer, etc., who of necessity are compelled to produce large quantities of work in a rush.

## CHAPTER XIII

# Modifications of Type Faces Adapted to Brush Work

THE standard alphabets based on Roman upper and lower case are known by various type terms, some of which bear the name of the designer. Prominent among these are Caslon and DeVenne. While each of these two types is distinctively of Roman origin and principle, they are widely different in construction and appearance. For various reasons the Caslon type is extremely difficult to produce with a pen or brush; very few letterers have been successful in producing anything in close resemblance to this type with any degree of speed, consequently it has met with little favor by the average letterer.

The DeVenne style, of which two alphabets are herewith illustrated—Regular and Italic—is one of the easiest types of Romans to make with a brush or pen using either the single stroke or two-stroke modeled construction.

The constructive elementary strokes bear a well-defined regularity throughout that is particularly adapted to production with a flat-chiseled brush or pens of the Soennecken or Hunt 400 variety.

I want you to realize that good lettering in proper arrangement is by far more important than decorative stunts. A good income in this business may be derived from the ability to letter plain cards rapidly, but poorly lettered cards with amateur decorations have no commercial value to the live advertising manager.

Learn to letter first. Then learn the artistic during leisure moments without interfering with your earning capacity.

About 75 to 80 per cent. of the hand-made display cards used are simply plain black and white, or red and black, or white with a marginal line; if the lettering is fairly well done and attractively arranged, the work gets the money, particularly if of good arrange-

ment. The average beginner or amateur card writer makes his biggest mistake in attempting the decorative before being able to correctly dot an "i."

The advertising business man is too well educated along these lines to pay for inferior lettering disguised with a bunch of amateurish decorative effects, most of which are plastered on and around the lettered matter to hide the defects in lettering, spacing and arrangement.

It is a fact that the making of many a good workman is badly hampered by the inclination to attempt the ornamental prema-



Show Card Style De Vinne  
          abcdefghijkl  
          klmnopqr  
Y          stuvwxyz~      W  
ABCDEFGHIJK  
LMNOPQRSTUVX

De Vinne Italics  
abcdefghijklmnop  
qrstu          vwxyz&  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ?  
123456789.

turely, thereby forgetting or overlooking the fundamental necessities that are lacking in a critical examination of their efforts in an ornamental direction.

If one is able to make one good alphabet, either Roman or

Gothic, one good pen alphabet, and a good set of figures, and do all this fast enough in proper arrangement, he can hold down the average department store job.

For all around shop work the requirements are greater.

a Show Card Characteristic

abcdefgh

ijklmnopqr

stuv&wzxy

Note close packed spacing

full round ovals, condensed uprights.

Plate 134

ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

PLATE 135

## CHAPTER XIV

# Italics for Speed Lettering

**F**OR various mechanical reasons, due probably to motions or actions that respond most easily to natural muscular movement, letters which have an angular slant are easier to make and can be produced with greater rapidity than perpendicular characters. It may be also due to the fact that our earlier training in the practice of penmanship has something to do with this. The uniformity of slant is easier to maintain on an angle than straight up. The careful attention required to keep the balance in perpendicular letters is reduced in the production of Italics.

Did it ever occur to you that real quality appearance of perpendicular letters, or, in fact, anything that stands upright on its own base without having the appearance of being propped up, is due to the *law of balance*? Not only should each individual letter have this appearance, but the entire mass or body of lettering should be so arranged that its appearance as a design or as a whole should either be as if suspended from a balance center, like a plumb bob, or else to stand firmly on its own foundation without real or imaginary props. Balance, then, to my notion, plays the most important part as one of the chief fundamental principles of any design; in this respect we may designate any single letter or group of letters as a design. Irrespective of whether it is made on a slant or perpendicular, the general appearance must still maintain the effect of being balanced.

If it has a tippy effect, either to right or left, it is improperly constructed. Therefore, in the Italic characters, if an individual letter has a tippy look, or appears to be standing on edge, it is out of balance; if an entire mass of lettering looks "skewed" the arrangement is faulty.

Some of the cards seen on display have been really excellent examples of good workmanship, so far as the lettering and layout were concerned, but for some reason there appeared to be a lack of security in foundation, whereby the effect of stability was lost. Did you ever note the effect produced by a picture hung out of balance? It doesn't matter how good the picture may be or what the subject is, to one who has any natural sense of balance the effect is uncomfortable. The impelling impulse is to first straighten up or balance the picture in order to view the perspective from a well-balanced angle or point of view.

Subconsciously every act or effort we perform in life is governed by the laws of gravity and balance. It naturally follows that every structure, design, mass or object is controlled by these same laws. Dealing, then, with letters, either singly or in groups, their arrangement into reading matter, or masses, such as paragraphs or pages, or in certain defined space limits, the law of balance should first be considered.

Personally, I am unable to give a reliable, scientific dissertation on the laws of balance or gravity, but the application of the principles is supposed to be generally understood in a manner sufficient by the individual possessed with the average amount of intelligence with whom I am supposed to be passing opinions regarding the subject of lettering. So any further enlightenment on the said laws will have to be dug up through the proper authorities by the individual desiring such knowledge, for I feel that I am getting in over my head.

It may be sufficient to explain that in the arrangement of letters in reading matter on a card, balance is defined from a line drawn

*Sho-Card Script Italics.*

*abcdefghijklmnop.*

*nopqrstuvwxyz.*

*ABCDEFGHIJ  
KLMNOPQRST  
UVWXYZ & Co.*

*A Fast, Easy modification  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstu  
vwxyz all continuous and  
runninghand curves.....*

PLATE I.

*Text Italics*

*Based on a combination of Roman  
and Old English Text. Very effective  
for Ornamental Headings or large  
masses of reading matter. but if  
improperly spaced-in indifferent or  
sprawly arrangement it becomes  
too illegible for commercial purposes.*

*aabcdefghijklmnop  
pqrstuvwxyz*

*Diversified Capitals.*

*AABCDEFGHIJK  
LMNOPQR  
STUVWXYZ*

PLATE II.



*Half-script Italics*  
abcdefghijklmnop  
qrstuvwxyz & 45.

*"Semi Decorative"*

ABCDEFGHIJK  
LMNOP  
QRSTUVWXYZ  
X Y Z *Very Stylish 2.*

PLATE III

*Uniform broad-strokes.....*  
**The Bold Display Italics**

abcdefghijklmnop  
qrstuvwxyz & a

*this class of work to  
be effective requires  
particular attention  
to condensed spacing  
and arrangement in  
some geometric form  
rather than formation  
of letters - Don't sprawl  
all over the card.*

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ &

PLATE IV

# Showcardwriter's Script

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz &

A B C D E F G H    A B C D E F G H I J K

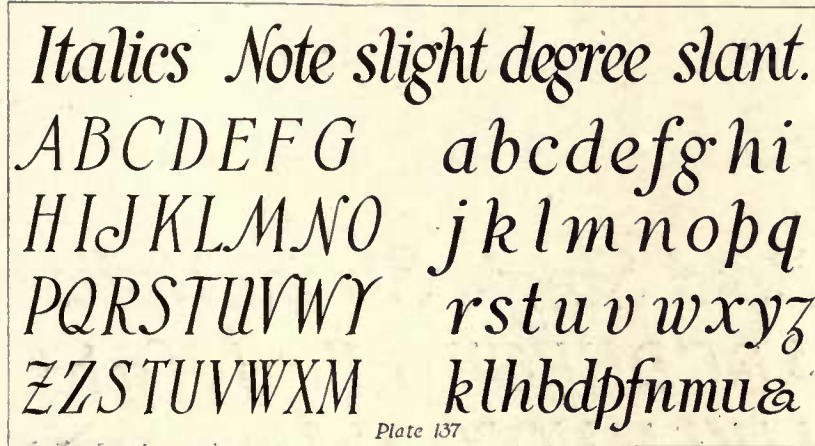
I J K L M N O P    L M N M N O P Q R

Q R S T U V W X Y    S T U V W X Y W V &

Z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 \$    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 0 ¢ \$\$\$

Plate 136

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perpendicularly through center from top to bottom. Naturally if the matter is evenly distributed on both sides of this line it may be considered well balanced. If, however, we have various groups of masses to arrange, such as groups of lettering, decorations or illustrations, the question of balance then becomes more complicated. It is insufficient to balance each mass individually without due regard for the relative effect of the other larger or smaller masses, applying to the whole design, within the given space limit.

For instance, if we have a mass of lettering situated well up in the left-hand corner, and a smaller mass to balance this on the right-hand side of center, it must be far enough away from the larger mass or of a *heavier* appearance to *denote* balance. To get this result we have to determine the power of attraction of different size groups of masses.

Attractions which are equal in size, shape, color, etc., balance at equal distance from their centers. Unequal attractions balance at distances from their center in inverse ratio to their powers of attraction. See Chapter 9, Plates V and VI.

Returning to the Italics, Plate 1 is the regulation single stroke Roman Italic with some slight modifications for rapid execution. Note the serifs or spurs on tops of the lower case letters above are all on a right angle slant instead of horizontal. Likewise with the capitals. The modification below is constructed with curves throughout, both styles lettered with Hunt's 400 No. 1 pen.

Plate 2 is somewhat similar in principle, but an element of Old English is used in place of Roman serifs, which gives it an entirely different characteristic appearance. Originals are upright quarter sheets lettered with Hunt's No. 400 pens, Nos. 1 and 2.

Plate 3 is an effective derivative of Roman Italic and Script; its characteristic is principally effected by the pen with which it is made—the "Romitalic" No. 1.

Plate 4 in its fundamental construction is the same proposition as Plate 1, the Roman Italic, but in place of the round writing pen a Style A Speedball No. 1 and 2 B was used, which strokes impart the heavy face display type appearance.

Many merchants and department store managers do not advocate the use of Italics, but wherever it is possible to use them it is done at a great time saving on the part of the card writer, especially where excess copy jobs have to be turned out in a limited time. If Italics were properly made and attractively arranged, the objection to their use would not be so pronounced. Generally, however, when a card writer resorts to Italics, for speed or knockout purposes, he simply neglects the lettering; hence the objection.

*Single-stroke Italic*

*unfinished elements*

||||| uuu mmm ((( ))) sss zzz

abcdefghijklmnop

qrstuvwxyz

*Finished - "Angular Spur"*

abcdefghijklmnop

qrstuvwxyz

***Bold Single Stroke Italic***

***ABCDEFGHIH abcdefghi***

***IJKLMNOPQ jklmnopqr***

***RSTUVWXYZ stuvwxyz&***

*Practice Strokes on the Elements*

||||| uuu mmm ((( ))) sss zzz

cial'hncct sscbk:

## CHAPTER XV

# Graceful Swing Vs. Laborious Draft in Lettering

**I**T has been truthfully stated and proven by many of the foremost lettercrafters that "there are no set rules covering the art of lettering." The above sounds like a paradox in that fundamentally all letters must be made on a well-defined set of principles to be accepted as correct by those who are supposed to be able to pass expert judgment. The given principles must be apparent in all reading characters, otherwise the work has little or no commercial or artistic value.

In the manner of actual production of hand-lettered reading matter, the various degrees of artistic merit shown must then be governed by the technique of the individual.

An analysis of form, governed by basic principles, is a simple matter, but an analysis of technique is almost impossible unless one is thoroughly familiar with all the mediums employed, meaning, just what brush or pen is used in each instance, the exact condition of the colors employed and the surface worked upon. Also to get a logical insight into the ways and means utilized in the production of a certain piece of work one should be in a position to observe the actual operation.

Given all these opportunities one is more liable to derive the correct impression of how to proceed. In other words, the inspiration will have received a logical foundation upon which to build.

In personal observation of actual efforts of many workmen, the greatest impression received has been the vast amount of mis-directed effort. This, to the observer, is an education in itself. By this is not meant looking at the finished production after it has left the hands of the operator, but by watching the work as it is being done and noting with what it is being done and the conditions

under which it is being done, meanwhile making a mental note of all the difficulties encountered and figuring out all possible ways of eliminating these difficulties.

Figuring conditions, we have noted that many of the best productions are made while the operator is in a rush. Therefore, we deduct that anything made under a given rate of speed is liable to be either cramped or laborious in appearance, or too stiff to be graceful. This does not apply to sign writing as much as to show card writing, for there are certain classes of sign work that do not admit of so much speed as the making of cards. However, falling below a certain speed limit is disastrous to the appearance of any lettering unless one is possessed of nerves of steel and unlimited muscular control, combined with extraordinary ocular ability.

On several previous occasions particular attention has been called to the methods employed by professional penmen, or to those who have the ability to write gracefully.

In these cases it may be noticed that the easy swing and action of the arm, hand and fingers are all governed by a semi-automatic movement of a combined set of muscles rather than by a definite act of drawing the characters, such as may be classed as draftsmanship, or hand engraving. Arriving at the conclusions as to the merits of the different methods of the production of letters, one can't help being impressed by the easy grace with which a well-trained set of muscles performs any given set of movements, almost independent of the vision. The eye only sees. The muscles act, and if they are not trained to act rhythmically the most correct conception of form will be lost in the reproduction thereof.

Did you ever notice with what absolute certainty the profes-

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sional acrobat, skater or swimmer performs his stunts? Can you imagine any one of these performances accomplished by being merely familiar with the figures, shapes, or diagrams of the various forms of action? Dancing is called the poetry of motion. One might be thoroughly familiar with all the steps and figures involved in the action of any or all the dances, but without the necessary muscular training he would only succeed in making a monkey out of himself.

The above applies as a comparison to the efforts of many letterers. Familiarity with the correct forms of letters is not limited to the formation thereof. That is only the starting point. The correct and graceful formation of letters can only be acquired by training the muscles of the arm, hand and fingers to act in automatic unison directed by the eye in a subconscious manner as directed by the brain.

I have noted some workmen whose hands trembled as though afflicted with the palsy, pick up a brush and start a stroke and end it up with a precision that was wonderful to behold. There is only one answer to this phenomenon and that is, well-trained muscles which are under perfect control "*while in action.*" If such a condition of nerves existed in an otherwise normal arm and an attempt made to draw a letter by sight, you can readily imagine the result. One could as reasonably expect a bicycle or top to stand upright without motion.

Therefore, the logical theory of graceful lettering involves not only a reasonably correct conception of form, but in *formation by correct motion* or motive form of "the hand behind the brush."

Repetition of certain acts becomes more natural and easy, after continued practice intelligently directed; for example, make a dozen straight lines on a 45-degree slant, then make a dozen more, then make a dozen with your eyes shut. Try the same operation with any of the single elements of any letter. Keep on repeating this dose until confidence in your arm action improves. Make circles, perpendicular and horizontal straight lines, single letters, then words, with your eyes shut. They will not be pleasant to look at,

but there is a wonderful stock of subconscious intelligence in your muscles if you take the trouble to develop it.

The accompanying plate demonstrates the easiest way to learn how to preserve a uniform degree of slant. The legibility and artistic effort of all Italics depends largely on uniformity of slant.

With a T square, draw light pencil guide lines on any desired degree of slant and make all your down strokes as nearly as possible conform to this degree.

Practice the elements of the letters as prescribed above, a dozen or two of each, with increasing speed every time. Then try them with the eyes closed. Train the arm to act automatically. Do not *draw* the letters, but make them with a free, swingy movement.

I want to slip a prescription to some of you fellows whose arm feels groggy; in other words, if you are drawing your lettering like you would draw the picture of a stone wall, go and take a short course in penmanship exercises from some good modern instructor and then try it out with a brush, using the same method of construction as taught in penmanship. This will put a "kick" in your lettering that can be derived from no other source, and after you have acquired the freedom of arm action so necessary to the production of letters, you will find it easier to "knock 'em out" with a punch.

For the present you will find a few exercises illustrated in Plate A, which was produced in less than five minutes, size 14 x 19.

This is my favorite prescription for "brush arm" that works like a concrete mixer. It will cure most cases of muscle-bound lettering and in all cases prove beneficial.

It seems that every doctor has a favorite prescription for certain ailments. Every teacher has likewise a favorite method of instruction. All trainers or coaches in athletic pursuits have definite rules and regulations that apply to the various stunts to be performed by the teams or individual members thereof.

Naturally these treatments, teachings and training stunts have been pretty well tried out, tested and improved upon from time to time as suggested by the requirements of the subjects and the results shown by the effect of the same.

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Prescribing for one's ailments without a correct diagnosis is usually taking chances on getting results.

Instructing for the masses may be beneficial in a certain degree, but only a small percentage derive the full benefit owing to differences in mentality or physical make-ups.

Training a baseball team as a team, may make a good team, but putting each individual member through the same physical exercises may result in disaster for some member who is deficient in physique.

These inferences may be applied to the art of lettercraft. The various contributors of articles instructive can go no further than present the subject to the readers as a class, trusting that a certain

percentage will be benefited by following certain methods that have proven beneficial to others.

The human being is one of the most wonderful pieces of mechanism imaginable, and, while we are all put together on the same plan, no two are alike, either as regards mentality or physical capability, consequently each individual has to work out his own salvation in which every line of endeavor is pursued.

A natural mechanic may make an indifferent artist, even though his desires may be for that line of work.

With the proper training and instruction he may become sufficiently proficient to pass as the average, but never rise above mediocrity. Localities and associations have a weighty bearing on the class of work an individual may produce. There are various reasons for this. First, being the competitive spirit; second, the constant contact of sight with certain objects or forms, which causes a mental imprint that is easier to reproduce than a vague impression. Seeing an act performed or an object constructed renders a better and clearer idea of just how to proceed. Thus it will be noticed that in certain localities there will be certain lines of endeavor performed that are, as a class, far superior to similar lines in less favored localities. This is due to the imitative instinct of humanity. The same may be said of the lower forms of life.

For example, take the habitant of any large city who comes in daily contact with any given line of work; his endeavors will progress more rapidly than if he were struggling single-handed in some locality where lack of inspiration hampers the best efforts ever attempted. Even though he be the "best in the business" in his home town the handicap is too heavy to overcome.

Ambition is the greatest of all things. If it be strong enough, hampered ambition is worse than the drug habit; it puts a kink in the mentality that results in the "rut," and the man or woman who is in a rut might better be doing time for the state.

*Individual Style Italics*

*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 z &*

*And a series of different style Capitals—*

*A A B C C D E F G H I J K L M N*

*M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z Z*

*The f g h n e f a w y p the.*

*Plate 138*



## CHAPTER XVI

# Speed Limit in Lettering Show Cards

**I**N close observation of the work of many card writers, one can not fail to see that lost motion is the primary cause of slow work. In constructing a letter by the single stroke method every individual stroke of the brush or pen should count as a finished element of that letter. Every time a stroke requires re-tracing or patching up, 50 per cent. of time is lost. A haphazard burst of occasional speed, with the consequent result of doctoring up the mistakes in formation or altering the ill-appearance of the finished job, usually costs more time than the job is worth, and a patched-up job always looks the part.

Regardless of what tool you are working with you must be reasonably sure of its limitation. By this is meant what manner or style of letter will any certain brush or pen make with the least amount of effort on the part of the workman.

Any make, style or size brush will be found useful for making some particular style of lettering if you are familiar with that style. If not, right there is where you begin to lose time in construction.

Any capable workman can pick up any old stump with whiskers and in a few trial strokes will determine just what particular style letter can be most easily made with it, and in all probability will turn out something characteristic; but it's a safe bet he will not attempt a style composed of elementary strokes that the brush will not produce naturally.

Every individual brush has its own particular working limitation. It may produce a certain style of letter with automatic precision and be almost useless for making other styles having a different characteristic finish. It requires considerable study and experiment to determine what brush or pen is best adapted to the various styles

of lettering, especially to choose a tool best calculated to save time on certain classes of work. Then, again, the amount of color carried in a brush often changes the style of the letter. If you start a line of lettering with a brush full of color, the brush must be kept full by frequent dipping or the lines will gradually thin out as the work progresses, resulting in a changed appearance of the line.

If the line is started with a brush well chiseled out, it should be kept in the same condition throughout to maintain similarity.

These details will become apparent after continued experiment because they are secondary as compared to the first principles of production, of which particular mention was made previously, namely, the automatic production power of the arm, hand and fingers, which can only be successfully attained by cultivating a freedom of movement through a series of drill exercises, such as has been so ably demonstrated and proven by our modern instructors in penmanship.

Something on this order is presented in Plate G. In this particular instance, a 14 x 22 card is suitably ruled and a No. 12 Rigger brush is used, carefully chiseled out to widest proportion, in medium heavy color.

The strokes produced by the brush held in the proper position are practically automatic and characteristic of the brush used. They can be made at a fairly good rate of speed, which should be gradually increased.

A few spare moments each day may be devoted to these exercises, and it will soon be noticed that a decided confidence is acquired in your ability to produce a clean-cut, rapid stroke.

Plate H represents an Italic alphabet based on the same series

*Speed movement exercises*  
 mmm-lllll mmm llssll  
 uuu a oooo m) @llllllllll  
 ssssss 8 m 8 88 888 8888  
 oooo 1234567890 \$\$\$

*Plate G.*

*Wide Spaced Italics*  
 abcdefghijklmnop  
 qrstuvwxyz aaw  
 and demonstrating the condensed form  
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 2500

**abcdefghijklmn**  
**opqrstuvwxyz**  
***The* CAPITALS**  
**ABCDEFGHIJ**  
**KLMNOPQRS**  
**TUVWXYZ &**

of elementary strokes showing both wide and condensed spacing. The finished product more often obtains its characteristics from the tools used than from the operator. There is a pen or brush particularly adapted to the making of every known alphabet, in that the particular pen or brush produces the elements automatically if properly used in the right quality of color. Considerable has been mentioned in previous chapters regard-

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

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 z

A style Characteristic of free-  
-hand Brush Manipulation =)

Plate 139

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

*Plate 140*

ing Italics and slant letters. In this instance, attention is called to the difference between the so-called slant letters and true Italics.

All Italics are based primarily on script, while slant letters may be compiled from any alphabet—Roman, Gothic or the Text faces—by simply making them on any degree of slant, preserved in unity throughout the copy.

There is no exact rule regarding angle or slope. In extreme

styles, 30 to 35 degrees from the vertical may be attempted, but 10 to 20 degrees is a normal range.

Slant or Italics are not as legible as vertical letters, but in certain instances where emphasis is required they serve the purpose admirably, more perhaps by direct contrast than by actual legibility.

The Italics being immediately derived from script or writing, adapt themselves to production with the lettering pens or the so-

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 &

# Half Script Capitals

*Plate 141.*

called single stroke brushes as used almost exclusively by show card and sign writers.

Many commercial artists and letterers have yet to acquaint themselves with the labor and time-saving facilities of these particular implements of the craft.

Lettering, as taught by "Old School" methods and instructors,

was, and still is for that matter, largely a matter of draftsmanship based on the accepted forms of the letters. The student is taught to draw the letters according to rule, much the same as drawing the front elevation of any inanimate object in two dimensions; namely, height and width.

First: "You have only to learn the forms and then draw them."

*Pabst Italic*

**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 \$**  
**B D G M N P R T Q.**

PLATE 142

*Pabst Italic lower case*  
*abcdefghijklmnop*

*opqrstuvwxyz&*

*Note high ascenders and the low  
 decenders in this style of letter.*

PLATE 143

Having done this little thing, the student is left to his own devices regarding materials, modern tools of the successful present-day craftsman and methods of production and arrangement. Be it said here that unless a person is naturally adapted to this class of work, inventive in overcoming the difficulties presented in handling the materials prescribed, in the production of commercially acceptable lettering, that person has chosen one of the most unsatisfactory and unremunerative methods of turning his labor into coin of the realm that could be imagined, without taking a "shot in the arm."

Be not mistaken in the foregoing that the study of individual forms of letters is to be overlooked. This is primarily paramount.

One must have a logical insight into what he is trying to accomplish. To this end the study of lettering in its various combinations and forms is of the utmost importance and should not be overlooked.

In the production of letters and lettering, however, there has been a wide departure from the "Old School" teachings to the methods of the present day.

Many concede that the methods of the modern show card and sign writer have done more to bring the standard of lettering up to its present state of excellence in general appearance, and, considering the length of time consumed in the production thereof as compared with the old school methods, let us consider all arguments to the contrary eliminated, at least for the present.

# Script Capitals

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 A C E G I

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*a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p*

*q r s u v w x y z & er*

*Regulation Script*

*\$ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 ¢*

SCRIPT LOWER CASE



*Mixed Roman Text Italics*

*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 &*

*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*

*Plate 144.*

Quick Single-stroke Modification of  
Jensen Old Style Type

abcdefghijklmnopqr  
stuvu wxyz&

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ 

FROM FORUM *Type*

A B C D E F G H I J K

L M N O P Q R S T U

V W X MODIFIED Y Z &

RAPID BRUSHABLE VARIANT

# UNIQUE VARIATION

ABCDEFGHI  
JKLMNOP  
QRSTUVWXYZ  
Y 1234567890Z

abcdefghijklmnop  
qrstuv & wxy Z

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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 V

PLATE 148.

abcdefghijklmnop ABCDEF  
hijklmno GHIJKL  
pqrstuv MNOPQ  
wxyzw& RSTUVY

Plate 149

Semi-Decorative Single-stroke

abcdefghijklmnop

qrstuvwxyz

v w x y z v w y z

ABCDEFGHIJKLM

NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Plate 150

abcdefghijklmnop

nopqrstuvwxyz

a few quick  
alternates

esvwxyz&

abcdefghijklmnopno

pqrstuvwxyz&

Plate 151



Improvised Letter Formation for body copy- paragraph or page arrangement. Use full round Ovals;- condense the vertical elements- and a slightly - broken alignment adds to the unique appearance of the entire production

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz&  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuwwxyz

Plate 152

**A B C A D E F G**  
**H I J K L M N O**  
**P Q R S T U W**  
**V X O G Y Z**

**Squatty Capitals - Plate 153**

# Squat-Lower Case

pack my box  
with five dozen  
liquor juqs-5

an extreme letter =  
to fit in small space

---

extended  
with unique spur

Plate 154

Unique Squat

a b c d e

f g h i j k l

m o n p r f

q s t u v y

w x & z

Swash Spur Effects

Plate 155

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M**

C O M P A R I S O N

N O P Q 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 x Unique Roman y z &

Plate 156

Adapted to Single-stroke Brushwork

abcdefghijklmnopqrs

123 tuvwxyz& 456

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO

7890PQRSTUVWXYZ&

*abcdefghijklm* Plate 157 *nopqrstuvwxyz&*

## CHAPTER XVII

# Fundamentals of Speed Work

**I**F we still copied the earliest efforts of lettercrafters it would require the services of eleven men and several helpers to accomplish in a week's work what one average show card writer turns out in a few hours. Put the same average present-day show card writer on the same class of work required of the old-timer and the situation would be reversed in the order above mentioned.

The evolution of reading characters (letters) is mainly responsible for the record-breaking burst of speed in lettering of the present day. Whereas, our predecessors used carefully modeled upper case letters in most all their copy, we of today have, by necessity, devised certain alphabets that permit of greater speed in execution. The changes have occurred gradually, caused principally by necessity.

The fundamental principles of letters have remained unchanged throughout all time of which we have record. Modernisms are simply the evolution of old-time forms devised with a view of accomplishing the same or better results with less effort in less time.

Where books were all lettered by hand, long before the art of printing was thought of, the scribes devised contractions of the Roman characters in order to speed up. This was the beginning of various styles of script, upon which our present systems of penmanship are primarily based.

Small letters are abbreviated contractions of capitals, and were only brought into general use after the art of printing was devised. The evolution of the various styles of small letters may be directly traced back to script, penmanship, the art of writing. All Italics are based on script; all vertical small letters bear a close resemblance to vertical script, "roundhand." By eliminating the connecting

lines and loops of the extended letters, which appear in round writing, we have a very close resemblance to lower case Roman. Individual designers of new letters and alphabets have kept this basic principle intact, regardless of all the curlycues added as embellishment.

Today we are all sawing back and forth, devising reading characters from fixed principles ages old. Those who associate the principles with their work succeed more or less according to their individual qualifications. Those who depart from the fixed principles contribute largely to the waste paper supply.

Naturally, by eliminating as many useless lines as possible, we save time in the production, but if we strip an alphabet of all its

*Regular Single Stroke Roundhand*  
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 z  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz connected

Plate 1

embellishments, we are right back to the bare skeleton principles of upper and lower case Egyptian, Gothic or the Roman, minus serifs, either of which will not answer the present-day requirements. The question of just how much chopping an alphabet will

Commercial modifications of Oldstyle - German Roundhand that are specially adapted for speedy production by the Showcard-writers brush or lettering pen

by eliminating loops and connecting lines - spacing is more condensed and regular - The addition of serifs or spurs will demonstrate the evolution of many of our more modern conceptions of artistic alphabets, which are easily and rapidly made by those who work and practice on certain definite rules governed by fundamental principles.

Plate 2

Originals of these plates, 22 inches wide, lettered with a No. 12 Red Sable Rigger.

stand without losing its identity or its attractiveness is a problem. In very many cases this chopping out process, as a time-saving expedient, necessitates the substitution of some additional trimmings, and unless these changes are accomplished on a time-saving basis without sacrificing the general appearance, your effort has been wasted; furthermore, it must be understood that while certain additions may be made on some individual letters, the same treatment on the other members of the same family would be disastrous to the appearance of the entire alphabet. Herein lies the chief difficulty of the designer.

There are some alphabets that respond readily to a change of appearance without losing their family resemblance. For instance, many beautiful styles of Italics may be derived from the principles of penmanship, the main point of observation being a uniform degree of slant. If this point is lost the entire production is thrown out of joint; then there is the gradation of thickness of lines to be considered. The position of holding the brush or pen on the mark-

Three different types of lettering based on round-writing, particularly adapted for Speedwork

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz etc.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

abcdefghijklmnopq  
rstuvw & xyz&

Plate 3

ing surface is responsible for these effects. If the broad point of the pen or brush is held at right angles with the card, the heaviest part of the letter will naturally be midway of the height of the oval or circular elements. If the pen or brush be held with the broad point toward the upper left hand corner of the card, the heaviest line will be on rounding the curves on the lower left-hand and upper right-hand points of the oval or circle; consequently, in making any alphabet, to preserve uniformity throughout, the brush or pen must be manipulated in exactly the same position on every single element and letter, otherwise you are not taking advantage of the potentialities of the tool with which you are working. This fact will be thoroughly demonstrated and illustrated in additional plates.

In the present instance we take the old style German round-script, Plate 1, which in itself is a very beautiful style. It partakes its character from the implement with which it was originally made, namely, a broad, flat pen, probably fashioned from a reed or quill; later, a steel pen, modeled somewhat similar, like the



## LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

modern Soennecken or Hunt's No. 400, or others of a like character. The chisel-edge brush of the modern show card writer answers the same purpose on a larger scale, if desired. A close observation of the elements of this letter shows that in its production the broad point of the brush or pen points to the upper left-hand corner of the card, which is at right angles with the desk, or table.

A stroke directly downward is slightly less than the width of the pen. In rounding curves it is broadest on upper right and lower left of the circle or oval. An up stroke to the right is naturally a thin line, automatically, if the brush is held correctly. Note Plate 104, showing these positions.

There are several alphabets which are easily and rapidly made, using the same principles applied to the round-hand. The connecting lines, which require wide spacing, are eliminated; loops are left out, as in lower section of Plate 2, and in Plate 3 are shown three simple alphabets devised from the round-hand principles.

First is condensed, has rounded terminals, except on extended or loop letters; these are left sharp without loops, which may be added if desired and time permits.

Second, condensed spacing; angular spurs are added wherever possible.

Third, extended spacing and round effect letters, more like the original round-hand, slightly curved tops added, with just a suspicion of a rounded spur on the base tips. This letter is very graceful when properly grouped and spaced in reading form. It also has the added value of being adapted to very rapid work.

Observation shows where this letter may be converted into true lower case Roman with the addition of the slight changes required.

This will demonstrate how we are working back and forth, from one alphabet to another, without change of basic principle, by simply rearranging the elements in different combinations, and the addition or subtraction of exterior embellishments.

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**abcdefghijklmn**

**opqrstuvwxyz&**

-this letter is most effective in appearance when arranged in condensed form

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**

**OPQRSTUVWXYZ &**

Plate 158

## CHAPTER XVIII

# “Poster Styles” of Lettering for the Card Writer

FOR want of a better name, the various characteristic styles of lettering in vogue with poster artists are usually dubbed “poster style.” As a matter of fact, every one of them, numbered by the dozens, is based on some particular standard alphabet of recognized commercial and artistic merit.

They are original only so far as individual treatment and technical twist or pleasing peculiarity is concerned. Anyone familiar with that style immediately recognizes and thereafter associates with the individual who produced it, called it the Joe Whosus or Solly Somone’s alphabet and thereafter that’s its name. Along

comes someone else, puts another kick in it and its identity is again changed.

We are largely indebted to continental Europe for strikingly attractive styles of lettering, particularly to France and Germany. The German artists have a decided penchant for the bold, black-face types, based on Gothic styles, very loose and sketchy adaptations, yet extremely strong and rugged in general appearance, with very few hairlines, consequently largely in demand for display advertising, particularly where strength and weight lend value to the subject.





PLATE X

CONSTRUCTIVE STROKES OF *The* POPULAR  
POSTER LETTERING

---



You will particularly note that the spurs or serifs on these letters are not intended to be straight on the base or top lines. They are blunt and of a compound curve formation which, with a little intelligent study and persistent practice, may soon be executed in an automatic manner with greater rapidity than if carefully drawn out and the color smoothed over and spread evenly.

This is essentially a knock-out speed letter. You will find that by spending a little more time on sketching an attractive layout with a piece of charcoal or pencil, and a little less time on the laborious drafting of each letter, that the general speed average of a day's work will amount to considerably more than anticipated.

# Posterresque

abcd  
ijklm  
rstuv  
akhn

Construction of which requires a blunt brush-full of medium heavy color - which - if allowed to flood freely from the brush; will help the formation of letters without extra retouching.

efghi  
nopq  
wxyz  
eo&

PLATE-Y-

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES



PLATE · Z ·

abcde fghijk  
lmnopq  
rstu& vwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrs  
t u v w x y z &  
abcdefghijklmn opqrstuvwxyz &&  
Plate 159

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  
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.

PLATE 161

abcdefg ABCDE  
FGHIJK hijklmnop  
qrstuvwxyz LMNOM  
PQRSTUVWXYZ  
xy 123456789z&

Plate 160

Every Individual Brush  
has its own peculiar working limitation. It may produce a certain style of letter with automatic precision and be almost useless for making other styles having a different characteristic finish.

PLATE 1



LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

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

PLATE 162

abcdefghi  
jklmnopqr  
stuvwxyz &  
stuvwxyz

PLATE 163.

ALPHABETS Single and double stroke "Speedball"

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dogs. →  
Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs 42¢  
John quickly extemporized five tow bags *and the same No 3 pen turned over on its back* Right  
pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs. \*  
*And mile-a-minute marking bold face Italics \$ 265.00*  
Outline LETTERS *all styles*  
Modern STANDARD Unique-Freak or  
ANTIQUE Show Card style Roman &  
Old English and many others 1234567890.

You men and young men who like a *Spirited Individuality* in your clothing will find your wants well expressed in these garments. *There's a distinctive harmony* of clever designing and good taste that appeals to men who *Dress Knowingly.*

Plate 164

Mechanical Perfection

is *not* the basic principle of art in hand-craft lettering. -----  
--- if criticism consisted of individual letter analysis according to type, or the standard alphabets, *Hand Lettercraft* would cease to exist as an applied art. --- Its individuality would be lost—thereby its real value, both from an artistic and commercial viewpoint. *However*, this does not imply, that basic principle should be sacrificed for *Art* or *Brainstorm individuality.*

Safety First—  
be Neutral!

An Individual Mixed-Roman Text  
Single Brush Strokes

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz &

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

Plate 165

Practical alphabets derived from the  
Old English Text

Combined with the more legible elements of the Roman

n: n o s s i t r a a e o x z s u n

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

t u v w v w v w x x y y z y z

- a semi decorative letter that admits rapidity of execution  
with either chisel-edge brusk or flat lettering pens —

Plate 166

Excessive Ornamentation Decreases Legibility.

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 &

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 u v w x y z

Personal Modification Text.

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

Plate 168

Capitals in Variation.

A A B B C C D D E E

F F F G G H H I I J J

K K L L M M N N O O

P P Q Q R R

S S S T T U U V V W W X X Y Y Z

Plate 167

Alphabets derived from Old English Text.

Elementary Principles.

III IIII W W U U Z Z S S T T S W O J S III

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

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

The more rounded elements being characteristic of The German Texts.

Plate 169

Chief characteristic of this letter is imposed by the manner of holding and manipulating a flat chiseled brush or flat lettering pen - as illustrated in plates Nos 104. Position 2.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz aabb

The above is lettered throughout without changing position of holding the pen, which accounts for the angular serifs both on top and base of letters...

### Alternative Capital Letters.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N  
O P Q R R S T T Q U V W X Y  
Z B D F G E R B Q U Q U S Y W

it is impossible to impart uniformity to Capitals derived from mixed sources including "Texts."

Plate 170

# Plain-Rapid Romitalic Letters

*Particularly adapted for fast, legible Show Card Writing  
in either Vertical Roman or Roman Italic Lettering*

abcdefghijklmnopqrs  
tuvwxyz &

abcdefghijklmnopq  
rstuvwxyz

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy& in condensed form

Plate 171.

Single Stroke Romitalic Pen Swash Initial Caps  
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 & A B C D  
E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V

Capitals of this nature are suitable for initials only,  
or the first letter of a sentence or paragraph.  
They are not legible in continuous matter. ~

Plate 172



Romitalic Series Pen Letters

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

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

Single or double-stroke Construction

An Artistic Element

abcdefghijklmnop  
pqrstuvwxyyz&

Romitalic Pen Letters

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ

Plate 174

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz & agy.

---

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz & a.m.n.h

---

**abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz &**

---

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz-square

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ &**

---

**ABCDEFGHIJKLM LNOP**

**QRRSTUVWXYZ OW LI**

PLATE 175

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz & gy  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

---

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz-ygα  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ.

---

*abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz v w x y.*  
*ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ.*

---

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz and Co.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz abk fgh

---

PLATE 176

## CHAPTER XIX

# New Alphabets Versus Old

**N**EW alphabets are simply old ones re clothed. Take, for example, the Roman letter. For two thousand years it has been selected and preferred by the wisest readers and letterers. It has been used as a base by so-called designers to build upon, tear apart, reconstruct and devise new trimmings, fancied improvements, rechristened with many high-sounding trade names.

The great DeVinne says: "No single designer nor the aggregate influence of all the generations have been able to alter the form, add to the legibility or improve the proportions of any single letter of the Roman alphabet." (Designers, commercial artists, show card, and sign writers, please take notice.)

We can and do adopt certain modifications, sometimes purely as a matter of simplifying the construction and shortening the time of production with certain tools at our command, but so far as designing a new letter is concerned, it can not be done.

Design implies invention, and no one can invent that which already exists. Letters do exist as the accepted medium of intellectual exchange. So that by designing (?) a new alphabet we simply burlesque the original. One might as well attempt to invent

a new language as to design or invent a new alphabet in the true sense of the word.

However, we are permitted to go as far as we like, providing we can collect for our efforts in this direction. If we devise some new alphabet that appeals to the taste of the publicity experts, and can produce it at a rate of speed consistent with the remuneration thereof, it naturally follows the recompense will repay the effort.

Take any ordinary light or heavy face Roman letter and trim it all the way through with different serifs (commonly called spurs), and you have another alphabet, providing the same characteristic serif is observed in proper relation and position on each and every letter throughout the entire alphabet.

Plate 2 shows a Roman letter with compound curve spurs, made with one of Hunt's new No. 400 lettering pens, which is considered a great little tool for the card writer.

Plate 177 is identically the same proposition so far as formation is concerned, only it belongs to the "bold display type," of almost uniform line thickness throughout, and can be best and most easily and rapidly made with a Style B Speedball pen.


"Serif" One of the fine lines of a letter especially one of the fine cross lines at the top or bottom. As of "I." Webster.

Examples

H h h h h  
 H H H h H h n  
 H h H h i l l n H h  
 m m m m m  
 m m m m m  
 Others..... by the Score 1/1 1/1

Plate No. 1.

Roman- Constructed- Finished  
 with compound-curve serifs ~

	abcdefghijklmnopqr stuvwxyz Company.	Regular <b>R</b>
	The vertical elements may be started with curved serif in place of compound curves if greater speed is desired ~ Thus! h n b l k d r i u	Modified <b>r</b>

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPPQR  
 STUUVWXYZZ & E

Plate No. 2.

Built for Exceeding the Speed limit

abcdefghijklmnopqrst  
 uvwxyz --- "Watch your step"

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPP  
 QRSTUUVWXYZZ & -Go.

And the Italics- abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPPQRSTUVWXYZ &

# Roman-Bold Display Style.

compound curve serifs-

abcdefghijkl  
mnopqrstvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ

may be made with either single  
or double down stroke of the pen

PLATE 177

For a Quick Knockout

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
OPQRSTUVWXYZ&

abcdefghijklmnopq  
rstuvwxyz-Finish-10

Plate · 178



A Comparison of Display Values

<b>abcdef</b>	abcdef
<b>ghijklm</b>	ghijklm
<b>nopqrs</b>	nopqrs
<b>tuvwxyz</b>	tuvwxyz
<b>Z &amp; W &amp; 1</b>	Z & W & 1

Plate 179

Another comparison of display values

<sup>1</sup> <b>abcdefg</b>	<sup>2</sup> abcdefg
<b>hijklmn</b>	hijklmn
<b>opqrstu</b>	opqrstu
<b>vwxYZ&amp;</b>	vwxYZ&

The same alphabet shown in two styles No 1 in  
Bold-face display - No 2 Hair-line finish serifs ---

Plate 180

Illustrating a Series of alternates  
or variations in letter-styles of one  
alphabet—The scheme being to  
improvise letters of like character  
in harmonious arrangement with  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz & space  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz y u w

Plate 181

He is the best workman, who produces that which is best suited to its purpose with the least expenditure of time, money and physical effort. The kind of work that arouses the best sentiment in those who behold it. ~ ~ ~ This block of letters illustrative of alphabet shown in Plate 158

Plate 182

Improvised alternates and variations continued  
aaabcbadcefe fghijklmnopqrstuvwzxyau

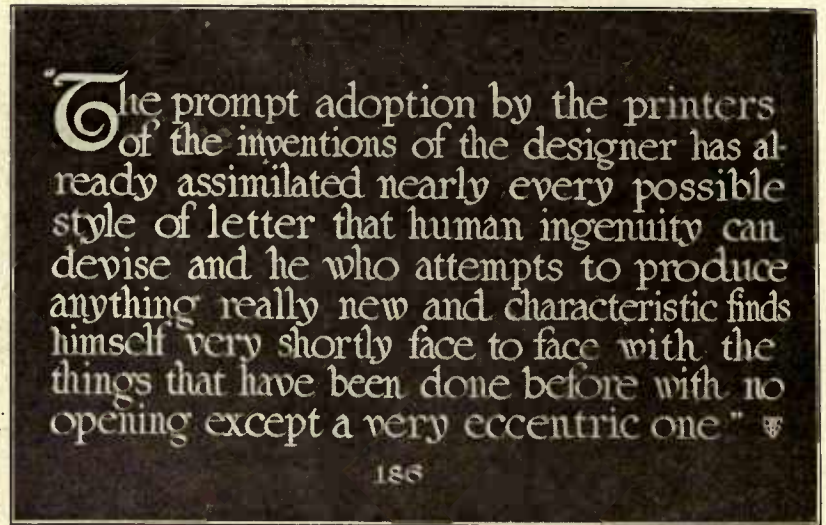
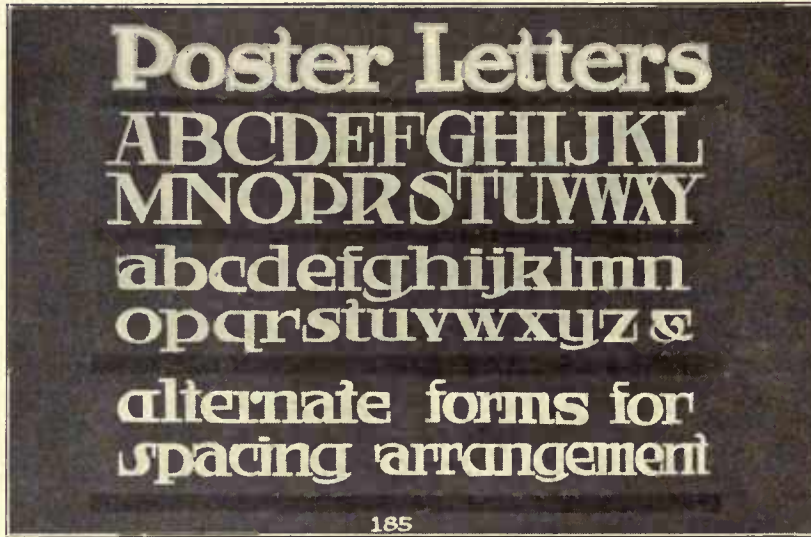
abcd efghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz- condensed mass formation abc.

Open Swash Lines

aaabbbccddeeffghihjgkka glmnopqr rs  
attuvewxyyzg and by preserving a certain  
uniformity the text has a pleasing appearance

Plate 183

*"The first function of advertising  
is to introduce what you have to sell  
to those who can use it to advantage  
in such a way that they will fall  
in love at first sight" x x x x x*



*abcdefghijklmnopqrstu  
 vwxyz a semi-script*

*Swash line Italics with a Romitalic Pen*

*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  
 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 &*

Plate 187

**A Rugged, Bold, Display Letter—  
 Extremely Characteristic and  
 ❖ P O S T E R E S Q U E ❖  
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
 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·&·  
 The possibility of condensed spacing**

Plate 188

*National*  
"HIGHWAY" 12

\$1990 Double-Header Power-  
With Pullman Comfort

Plate 189

# Velie Six

Detachable Winter Top

Gives Sedan Luxury  
at Touring Car Price

**\$1065**

The top is put on in a few  
minutes, making the car  
an enclosed type of sedan  
effect for cold, stormy days.

Plate 190



## CHAPTER XX

# The Show Card and the Show Card Man

**A**S a trade, profession or occupation, show card writing has practically three different fields to cover, and each one is widely separated from the other, not only in the class of work one is called upon to do, but how it is done.

First, the average department store show card writer is essentially a "quantity first" proposition. The vast amount of work he is called upon to do in a limited time does not permit of much display of "class" either in lettering or decorative effect. His main object in life seems to be a feverish anxiety to keep his "rush order" file empty. If he ever has a few moments to spare during working hours he generally rests up a little by putting forth an extra effort to put a "kick" in the window cards, something that will make the "old man" sit up and take notice, or the "other fellow" feel the pangs of professional envy. If he can pull a mysterious stunt that will keep the other fellow guessing for a minute, that's his recreation and a part of the game.

### **Short Cuts That Increase the Bank Roll**

He welcomes with open arms any little thing that will enable him to shorten his labor, thereby giving him more time to do better work. Every thirty seconds saved on a quarter card means that much longer to live, thereby being able to do more work in less time. That's his only hope of ever being able to increase his income.

He is never at a loss for something to do, even if his file is temporarily empty. There is always a sale or special occasion event staring him in the face. While he is waiting for that there is a door or trunk to letter, some delayed or sidetracked inside permanent signs to finish which some department manager has been crying about for a week.

Then when the bell rings for quitting time and everyone else (but the window trimmer and himself) can go home, he is ready to finish up a bunch of window tickets and get his sale table cards out for the morning rush. That is, unless he would rather come back after supper and finish up "temporarily." Tomorrow he will be stuck again.

Any time a department store show card man is idle he is out of a job. The writer had fifteen years of it, off and on, and knows whereof he speaks.

### **The "Combination" Man**

The window trimmer who writes his own cards has a rather hit-or-miss proposition on his hands. His shop is usually tucked away in some corner that could not possibly be used for anything else. The time he utilizes for making his cards is generally sandwiched in between breathing spaces. Any old time will do, just so he gets them done.

Under such circumstances one can not expect him to waste any time on art-for-art's-sake production, and yet the work some of these boys turn out on short notice will make many a department store or shop man take off his hat and also wonder how he can do it, considering the amount of other work he has to do.

However, the remuneration for a combination trimmer and card writer is usually twice or three times that of the department store man, which, in the main, repays one for the extra effort and uncertain hours.

### **The Shop Man's Liberties**

The shop man, as a rule, can derive a little more satisfaction and amusement out of his daily labors from the fact that he can occa-

## LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

sionally give his imagination a little more play. He is not tied down to any one certain style or class of work, or the sameness which usually characterizes the department store style.

In the majority of cases he is allowed to use his own judgment in filling his orders, such as color schemes, layouts, alphabets, decorative stunts, etc., and thereby can use his imagination or exercise his versatility without much fear of comment, and his productions sometimes become a pleasurable source of recreation, depending in a measure upon the price he can get. If it brings his shop any advertising through the merit of the work he is doubly repaid.

However, he can not afford to do his best and also make the price concessions necessary to successful competition these days. With all other branches of commercial art, show card writing has been brought down to the last degree of perfection by modern methods and also reduced in cost to the smallest margin of profit consistent with the wage scale in operation among first-class workmen. So now, the eternal question that confronts the worker is, "Not how good, but how quick can I do it good enough for the amount I am paid?"

Once upon a time, if a workman finished a couple of full sheets and a half dozen small cards, his day's income amounted to five or six dollars. Both customer and himself were satisfied as far as value received was concerned. If he were to get the same price per card these days he could turn out forty dollars' worth of work every eight working hours. The work is still here, the hours are still sixty minutes long, but the price is—oh, well, that's different! The question is, How fast can you turn out the work?

To be sure, we have better brushes, better colors, better pens and better cardboard; the air brush and many other labor-saving devices, such as the old-timer never dreamed of.

### **Show Card a Sales Medium**

The humble show card is given a place in the mercantile world second to none as a direct sales medium. The price, quality and quantity are brought directly before the individual, in many cases

actually on the article offered for sale. How much further could any medium go? A verbal demonstration does not carry the sales message so well. That admits of an argument, and one can not argue with a show card.

If its general appearance is pleasing to the eye and the price is within the reach of the purchaser, it immediately conveys a mental resolution to choose that article if a purchase is intended.

The reverse impression is created if poorly executed, cheap-looking cards are used. One would hardly credit the veracity of any concern that would label a fifty dollar overcoat with the top of a collar box marked in blue pencil or marking brush, or use other equally unbusiness-like salesmanship.

Cheap looking, poorly executed cards convey just the same idea they represent. They make a fifty dollar article look like \$4.98.

It is not my purpose to give a dissertation on the value of a card, but to enlarge on the possibilities of producing good appearing cards in the shortest possible time.

With the advent of modern lettering pens and the rigger, or so-called one stroke brush, the show card has moved into a class by itself. It was no longer a "card sign"—it became a display card, cheaper in cost on account of the increased rapidity with which it could be made.

### **Speed is Essential**

In turn, it created a new trade or profession, and today it furnishes employment for thousands of well-paid men and women according to their individual qualifications, the first essential being speed.

About the first question a man is asked when he presents his samples is, "How about your speed?"

A beautiful bunch of samples may get you a position, but you won't hold it long on that qualification alone.

Art is one beautiful thing to behold, but commercial art is all that its name implies. Commerce is moving so fast nowadays that it requires top speed to even stay in the race and be an "also ran."

*The Jeffery  
Sedan*

A handsome, high-grade, beautifully finished-luxuriously easy-riding enclosed coach. The Sedan body is easily removed---- giving you an open touring car including summer top for warm weather touring.---

191



Series 17  
40H.P.

7 passenger  
FOUR

\$845

192

PHOTOGRAPHY  
ABCDEFGHIJKL  
abcdefghijklmnop  
qrstuvwxyz & co \$  
MNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
MNXYZY OGQRCT

## LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

We can't all be topnotchers, but it would be well to remember there will always be a market for mediocre work. Therefore, the workman who finds himself handicapped by nature, environment, or lack of proper training, should remember that the premium on "speed" is often in excess of "quality." If you can't get \$6.00 for a piece of work that requires superior skill, train yourself down to running weight and do two jobs at \$3.00 in the same length of time. The bank roll will show the "big six" just the same.

While you are not busy, study, think, practice. This business is an art, and before entering the field you may as well understand that there is no cash value in art to one who has no native skill or no strength of character to put forth indefatigable effort to perfect that skill. Art is a rocky road to travel, and he who is minus on talent had better keep out of it. The employers are constantly besieged by applicants who have neither the ability nor the speed.

The air brush has done a great deal to further the interest of the show card man. The tendency, however, is to overdo and to cover up deficiencies in lettering, layout, etc. The choice of colors should be carefully studied, and let harmony rather than sharp contrast be the rule.

Shaded letters, if they be large enough, are good, but background stunts are faster, more effective and admit of many more changes in appearance and design.

Sometimes I use a frame slightly larger than the card, drive brads in both outside ends about one-eighth inch apart, then string it with waxed linen thread or thin rubber bands, which forms a screen. Lay this on the card so that the threads fit tightly along the surface, shoot the air on in the same direction the strings lie, and

You have got to deliver something—either quality or quantity.

There is no royal road to financial success in this business. Study yourself; determine your potential abilities. It is the "eye-minded" who make the best workmen in any branch of the applied arts, those who have a strong sense of form and a talent for work with their hands, and who learn better from what they see than from what they read or hear.

If you happen to be "ear-minded" and learn better from what you read or hear, the chances are favorable that your best efforts will be rather disappointing in this field. There is many a good salesman, lawyer or literary genius making as high as \$12.00 per week as a show card writer, merely as a matter of preference of employment. To him nothing can be said that carries any weight, but we may be able to tell him what not to do, which may ultimately be of benefit to the other fellow as well as himself.

## The Air Brush

it gives a beautiful striped effect which is now so popular. Further effects can be obtained by laying different shaped cut-outs or mats on top of the screen.

Color variation can be obtained by shooting from top to bottom of card after screen has been removed.

"Spatter work" backgrounds can be obtained by shooting the air through fine wire screening held at about three to four inches from the nozzle of the brush.

You can also get very pretty tones on ripple surface boards by shooting the air, not directly at, but across the surface, having previously decorated the surface with some snappy design or scroll in a thin wash of color, which gives a different tone after the air has been applied.

-from the present-day printers and letterers art we have a medly of type faces and alphabets that simply defies classification or enumeration.

194

*It is more difficult to design a good page of lettering than to fill the same page with a good picture. This makes the designers problem still more difficult, although not hopeless*

195

Men that are not familiar with a certain style will not use it, hence the lack of variety

Text book styles have no doubt fitly met the requirements of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but since that time energy and endeavor to express thoughts and ideas in letters have taken other wider channels

196

*The*  
HAND-LETTERED AD.  
MAY BE CHARACTERISED AS  
PUBLICITY IN  
EVENING CLOTHES

*The*  
HAND-LETTERED  
**Show Card**  
occupies  
a similar  
distinction

197

from the  
Year Book

The ability to draw  
beautifully  
is an accomplishment  
**IN ITSELF.**

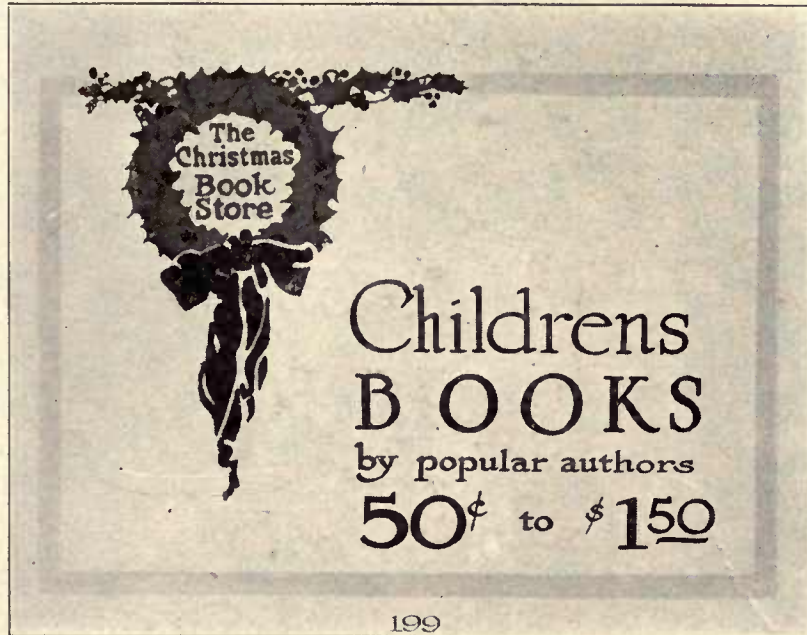
"The ability to draw  
plain, simple letters  
is also an accomplishment  
**in itself,**  
but of little use  
without the skill  
to compose them  
effectively."

1908



Gorgeous  
Colorings  
in  
Summer  
Neckwear  
\$3.00





The  
Christmas  
Book  
Store

Childrens  
B O O K S  
by popular authors  
50¢ to \$150

199



Elgin or Waltham  
Watches  
Guaranteed 20 Year Cases.  
\$12<sup>50</sup> & \$15<sup>00</sup>

- 200 -



The quick brown fox  
jumped over the  
lazy dogs

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 &

201

*The*  
Suit-  
Clearance

\$ 18<sup>50</sup><sub>-</sub>

*Second Floor*

FREDERICK & NELSON

202




TROUT  
SEASON

Opens May 1<sup>st</sup>

Everything for  
the Sportsman

Tufts-Lyon Arms Co.

203



The Relation  
of Quality  
and Price

is what constitutes  
either Economy  
or Extravagance

Burns Shoe Co.  
Los Angeles, Cal.

204

NEW FURS  
in the  
*Fall Fashion Show*

STRIKING the  
keynote  
styles that will  
lead fashion in its  
showing of the  
new fall furs and  
demonstrating in  
fur styles ~ all  
that is new. Few  
women will miss  
a close study of  
the very exceptional  
pieces we are now  
putting on display.


205

The  
Dominant  
National  
Thought.

Style without-  
-extravagance

THE EMPORIUM.

206



OUTING  
FOOTWEAR

*for Men and  
Women*

\$3.50 to \$10.

207

THE RICHNESS  
& REFINEMENT

Which these  
fabrics  
radiate  
proclaim  
**YOU**  
altogether  
the better  
dressed  
**MAN**

208



ART DEPARTMENT  
MEZZANINE FLOOR

Nathan Dohrmann Co.

209



**M**ODERN  
DECORATIVE  
IN UPPER-CASE

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 &

abcd fghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz & etc.

Gordon

210

To Usher in the  
Gift Buying Season

MONGOLIANS

In cooperation with other leading  
Jewelry Stores of San Francisco  
Will hold open house to the public

Monday November 26<sup>th</sup>

From 2 until 5 in the Afternoon.

As has always been our custom it is  
our desire that no merchandise be  
sold during opening hours in this  
establishment on this occasion.....

An Unique Series

of alphabets based on the principles  
of Roman Letters. The salient feature  
being compound curve serifs which  
can be made with greater ease and  
rapidity than straight-line spur finish.

Note the difference in finish between Roman & Unique

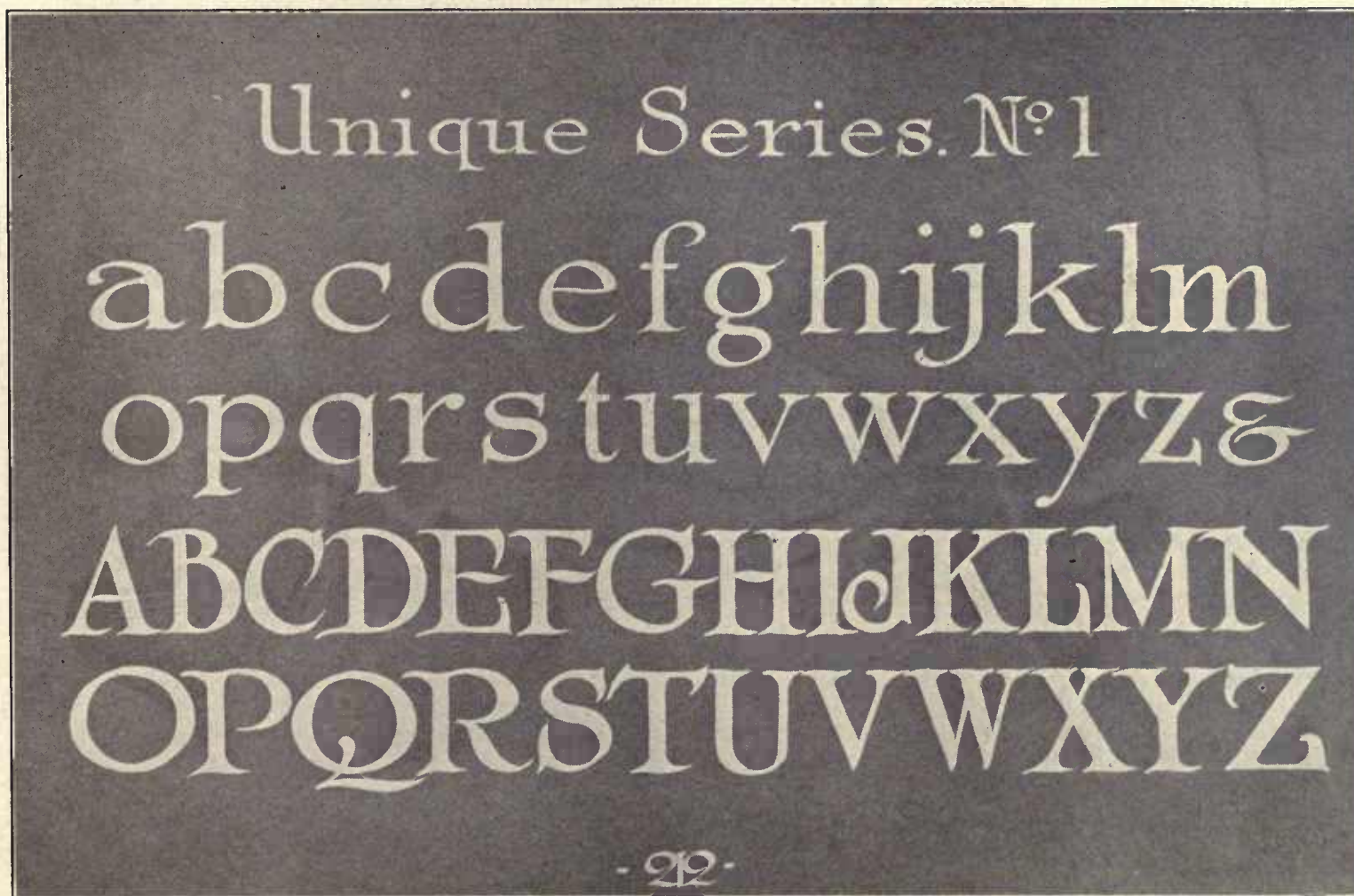
Roman Letters — Unique Series

mr sun mr sun

Gordon

211.





You are trying so hard to accomplish a certain thing that you thwart your own purpose ~ When you put too much thought and effort to the determination you have to master the thing in hand, your brain is working on the enforcement of your mental decision ~ not on the subject to be mastered. You tighten-up; your muscles are not responsive, You work under too great a strain, over-anxious to accomplish by force of mental energy that which the untrained muscles refuse to perform or the eye to visually comprehend.



## CHAPTER XXI

# Illustrative Stunts for Show Cards

**W**E are continually confronted with the question of illustrated or decorative matter for the show card. Nine out of ten show card writers are "stuck" when called upon to furnish illustrated matter, and nine times out of ten the reason for being "stuck" is not, as supposed, the inability to draw, but the attempt to overdraw and the departure from simplicity.

The choice of a subject is usually one that would be a sticker for an accomplished artist or portrait painter.

Many art students and others who are capable of producing very creditable "sketches," imagine that they would be valuable in a card shop. As a matter of fact, the shops are continually besieged by embryonic artists (?), who, while sometimes are able to produce very creditable pictures, are worse than useless in shop work for the very simple reason that the average sketch or picture has no commercial value when applied to the show card or sign business.

First, because they require too much time in the production for the amount usually paid for this work.

Second, art and commercial art are two different things.

Pictures and posters are even more widely separated.

The man who can fake up a little decorative stunt in snappy colors and do it quickly, in flat poster style, can always find plenty to do in card shops. It doesn't make a particle of difference how he gets it done, so long as it is effective. The boss doesn't care whether you are a student of Rembrandt or a scrap book pirate with a pantograph and a roll of tracing paper up your sleeve, so long as he can deliver on time and collect for your efforts. A card or sign shop has no time for the discussion of handling, technique,

linear or circular perspective, atmosphere, etc., etc., all based on the hearsay gabfest usually peddled back and forth between those who infest the art centers, or the ragged edges thereof, which is oftentimes referred to as that "dear Bohemia." Mostly "Bushwa" by those who know.

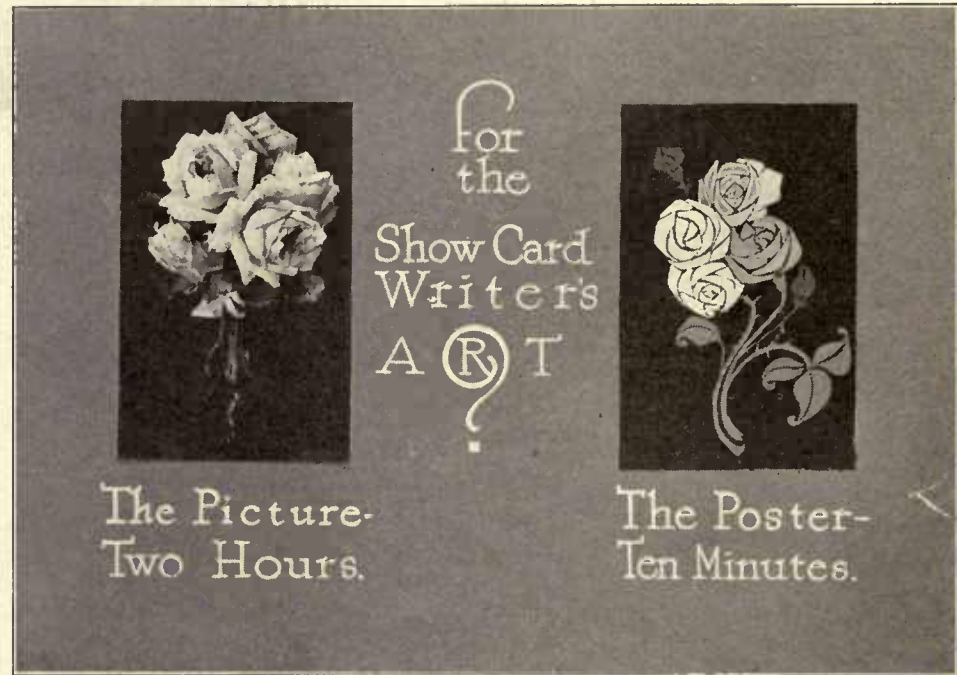
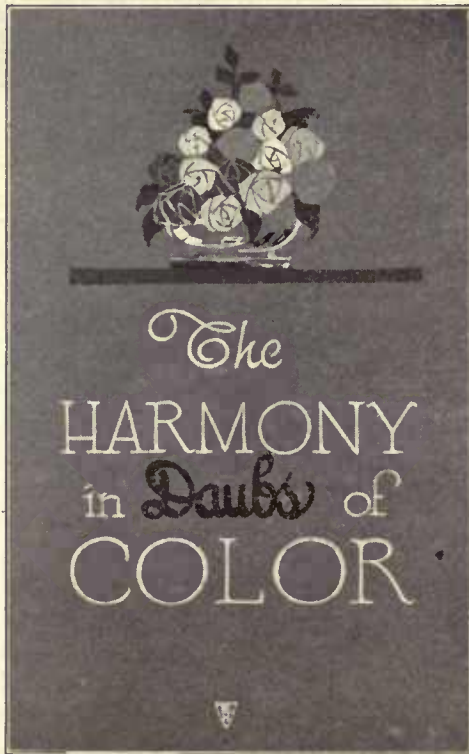
The man who can take a pot each of black, white, red, yellow and blue, and lay them over a sketch in flats and with never a blend depict the tones in lights and shadows, can get more money for his work these days than a dozen artists who will struggle for detail blends, tones, hues and atmospherical effects that are lost to nine out of ten observers.

A poster is a picture, but a picture is not a poster.

For a simple example by way of illustration, take for the motif a pot of roses, one of the hardest floral subjects to paint when handled in natural blends of colors. Make a simple **outline** sketch or **tracing** of the subject, and instead of reproducing it as it naturally looks, block each section of the flower in solid masses, separated by thin lines of the background or outlined with a black line or any other harmonious color. Thus, we get the poster rose. A black mass of shadow behind the subject produced intensifies the effect. This may or may not be art, as the word is defined, but it is not bad to look at from a decorative viewpoint, and it may be done very quickly which is the most desirable accomplishment from a commercial standpoint.

There are very few subjects that cannot be treated in practically the same manner. We see wonderful resemblances to the originals even in portraiture handled in poster style. That branch, however, requires considerable talent, or patient practice.

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES



Animals, birds, trees, flowers, landscapes, mechanical devices, buildings, human figures, etc., done in poster style, have a greater commercial value than finished pictures when applied to the art of

illustrated publicity, such as furnishes a market for the productions of the show card and sign fraternity and many branches of the commercial art worker's field.

## CHAPTER XXII

# Motion Picture Titles and Their Preparation

**A** NOTICEABLE feature of the moving picture theatres that run productions by the leading film companies is the artistic titles and sub-titles used. Not only are the background designs works of art, but the lettering is of a style and character that commands admiration no matter whether the spectator is interested in lettering or not.

The "old-time" announcement lantern slide as projected on a screen was, as a class, the most abominable grade of work that could be imagined; in fact, many of the present-day announcement slides as shown in our most modern moving picture palaces are of a make-shift nature, poorly lettered, patched-up cutouts, badly arranged and colored with shrieking reds, yellows and greens, which appeal only to the most primitive tastes.

The live director of a modern film company realizes that a discerning public appreciates the value of artistic titles as well as good pictures, and today every company of any prominence has its own title department under the direct management of a capable artist, who thoroughly understands the preparation of tone values in drawings for successful moving photography, as these titles are not shot "still." They are filmed by the foot depending on the length of the title or reading matter.

Small film companies or specialty feature concerns do not operate individual art or title departments. They find it cheaper to contract the work with some of the local card shops, of which there are several in Los Angeles that have competent letterers and facilities for turning out this class of work in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.

Appropriate subjects for title backgrounds are selected by the

artist from the features of the picture, depending on where the title cuts into the film. These may be either selected from the "stills" or sketched on the location of the scene taken, and finished up in proper tones at the studio. A section is either cut out for a black background insert of the white lettered title matter or darkened to furnish sufficient contrast to show the white lettering to be clean cut and sharp. In some cases where art backgrounds are used which are of a tone that does not admit of white lettering directly on the subject, the title matter is lettered on a separate black card of the same dimensions, and, by a double exposure system, the lettering shows white, clear and distinct, even over very light grey half-tone backgrounds. Also the fade-away titles, or those which gradually appear and disappear while the actual scenes of the story are being projected on the screen, are prepared by a system of double exposures. The art backgrounds are either made in black and white half-tone effect with water colors or in pastel, or black and white chalk blended into delicate grey tones, the latter showing most effectively because of the extreme hazy velvetone which is very difficult, if not impossible, to produce in water colors. The lettering itself must be absolutely opaque, otherwise when projected on the screen it will present a streaky or mottled appearance, uneven in tone, merging into grey, if transparent. Semi-bold face letters of Roman character are used mostly.

Eccentrics are permissible if artistic in general arrangement; regulation Roman letters, which contain pronounced accent, and hair lines are seldom used principally from the fact that the hair lines lose out in comparison in photography and still further lose in the projection on the screen, rendering the production illegible.



Close observation of some of the titles used by certain film companies whose letter artists effect the style Roman with sharp spurs and hair lines will show whiter spots at the junction of the spurs and also where the lines join together, while the fine lines and extreme tips of the spurs are a greyish tone.

This is caused by the overlay of white in joining the spurs and junctions of hair lines with the heavier elements, the overlay of color, of course, being more opaque than the single strokes of the hair lines. This may not be apparent to the eye in the original, but the camera discovers and discloses details that the sharpest vision overlooks. A zinc etching of a drawing of this description may come out pure white and black in the printing, but a film is transparent, and, unless the white is opaque (solid), it will come out in half-tone grey when projected on the screen. Consequently, the most successful title letterers effect a style minus fine hair lines and sharp terminals which are termed "Monotone letters" either in

regulation forms or eccentric. It is a well-known fact that unless a workman is exceptionally efficient it is hard to retrace a hair line stroke to make it opaque. It is also somewhat of a stunt to make a clean cut hair line with a brush. The paint must be *exactly right*, the brush exceptionally good. The working surface cuts considerable figure in the operation and the operator's nerve must not border on a condition of "the morning after."

Aside from the letter styles the most important feature of title work is the general arrangement, or layout. The spacing usually requires careful consideration in order to completely utilize the space allotment and only in extreme cases is it permissible to split a word at the end of a line.

A system of press work, printing in white on black cardboard is sometimes used in the preparation of a cheaper grade of picture titles, which, of course, can not be compared with hand lettering for artistic effectiveness. An attempt has been made to cast a series of type faces from some of the eccentric styles effected by letter artists. Unless numberless styles of each and every letter are cast, to fit the innumerable combinations effected by the hand letterer in his impromptu style of spacing and arrangement, the attempt will be a failure, for all type faces run by measurement, while hand lettering, of the better grades, is simply a matter of individual artistic spacing and arrangement, regardless of given measurements, except as to area or space dimensions allowed for a specified amount of copy.

After a picture has been filmed and developed, it is taken to the projecting or try-out room and projected on a screen. The director determines where the titles should appear. The film is cut and the specified number of feet of title film, either subsequently prepared or immediately arranged for, is joined in the cut. Frequently changes are found necessary in the titles. This means rush work for the art department at all hours, night or day, as the release dates are probably advertised weeks in advance.

Los Angeles is the moving picture center of the world. All the

### LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

big companies have studios in and around here; many of them are practically cities in themselves. Some are at the seashore, others in the hills and valleys. The remarkable climatic conditions afford good operating light at all seasons of the year.

And as for scenic effects, it may be said that within an hour's ride from the city by trolley or auto in any different direction is a diversified range of natural locations covering everything desired from Alaskan snow-clad mountains—dog teams and all the trimmings, to placid lakes, roaring mountain streams, cactus and sage-covered deserts, tropical islands, rock-bound coasts, sand dunes of Sahara, pine-clad hills, cattle ranches, orange groves, oil fields, Chinatowns, Japanese fishing villages, ocean-going steamers, battleships, submarines, army encampments, forts, coast defenses, shipbuilding, Indians, Mexicans, old missions and old country villages (erected over night) in appropriate scenic locations.

It is small wonder, therefore, that such a locality should be the

chosen workshop of our most popular form of amusement—"the movies." Every day we see murders, highway robberies, bank burglaries, wild chases through crowded thoroughfares, up alleys and over housetops, wife beaters, kidnapers, comic cops and comedians.

People get accustomed to seeing a wild-eyed female with a handbag in one hand and a six-shooter in the other chasing a half-stewed husband through the thickest traffic at the busiest hour of the day. It's only the "movie crowd" pulling a stunt that will get ten million laughs between the time it is released in New York and when shown here in some local show shop maybe months later. For be it known, that while most of the big productions are filmed in and around Los Angeles, they are all released through New York, so by the time the films get back to their own home town they are old-timers, but none the less eagerly looked forward to by those who have been chance spectators, and perhaps included in the scene by the same reason.

Eccentric Lettering  
For FILM SUB-TITLES

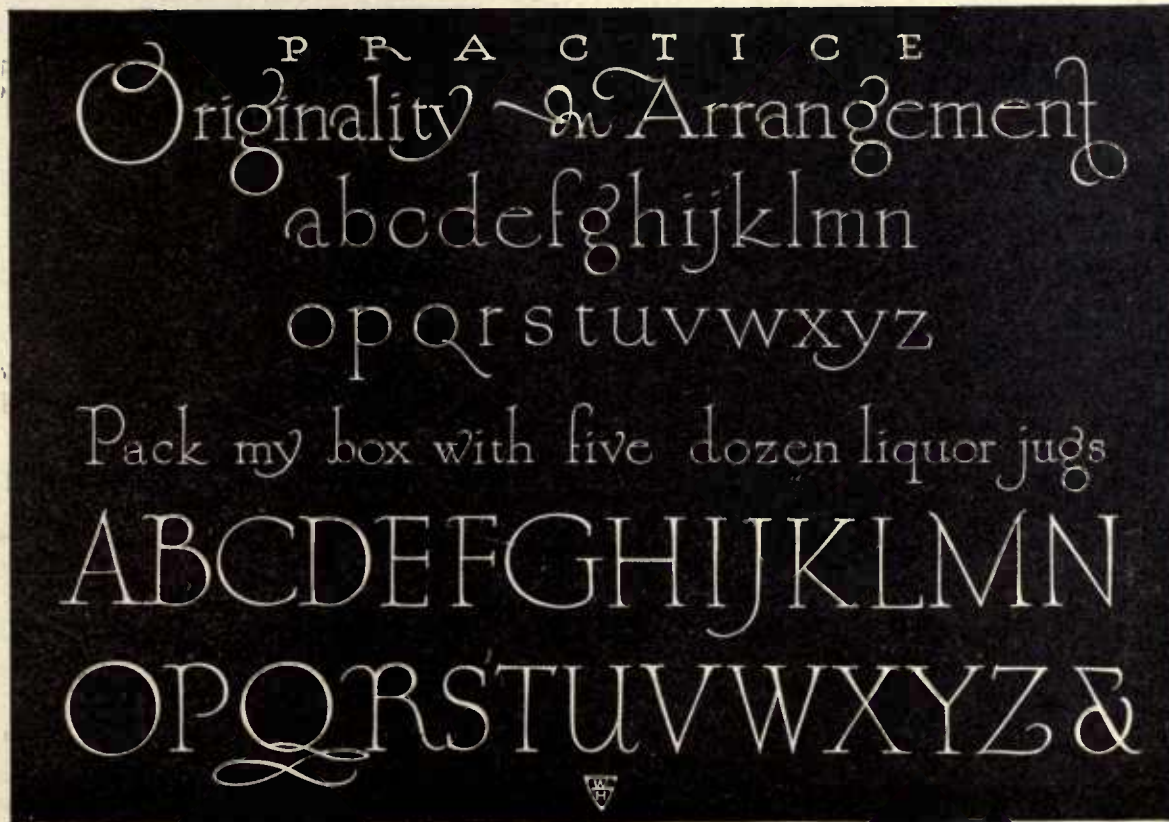
His object was  
I think to find  
a short route  
to East Indies

Columbus had  
no whiskers-but,  
the wind was  
very windy

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



LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES



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LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

ADOLPH ZUKOR  
P R E S E N T S  
DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS  
*In*  
"A MODERN MUSKETEER"

BASED ON  
D'ARTAGNAN  
*of* KANSAS

PHOTOPLAY  
& DIRECTION  
*by* ALAN DWAN

An Artcraft Picture  
Lasky Corporation  
*Cecil B. DeMille General Director.*



THOS. H. INCE *Presents*

CLARA KIMBALL YOUNG

*In*

A B C D E G  
Q S T V X Z

H K I J L P M R  
F N Q R S T U Y

WONDERLANDS


*abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz & æ*

The  
XMAS  
BOOK SHOP

GIFT  
BOOKS  
*For*  
The Entire  
Family.

*Economy  
of  
Motion*

In devising contracted forms or modifications of standard alphabets for speed-work - aim to make every stroke of the brush count as a finished part of each letter - By so doing - a certainty of automatic action will gradually be acquired which eventually develops individuality in hand lettering the same as in the average hand writing. Artistic rendering being a matter of subsequent application.



QUAKER  
GREY


The  
popular  
shade  
for  
spring  
1917.

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES


TOURNAMENT  
*of* ROSES



PASADENA  
CALIFORNIA  
NEW YEARS DAY 1918

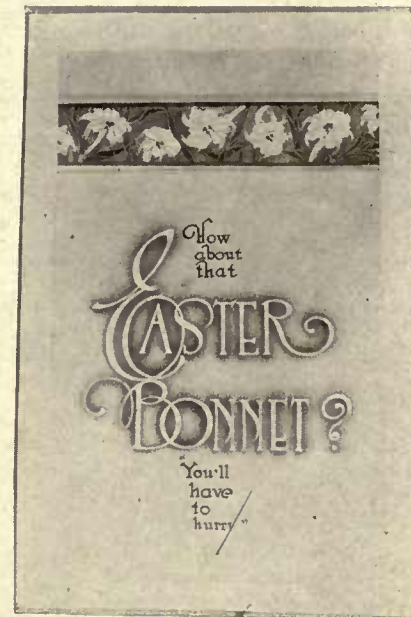
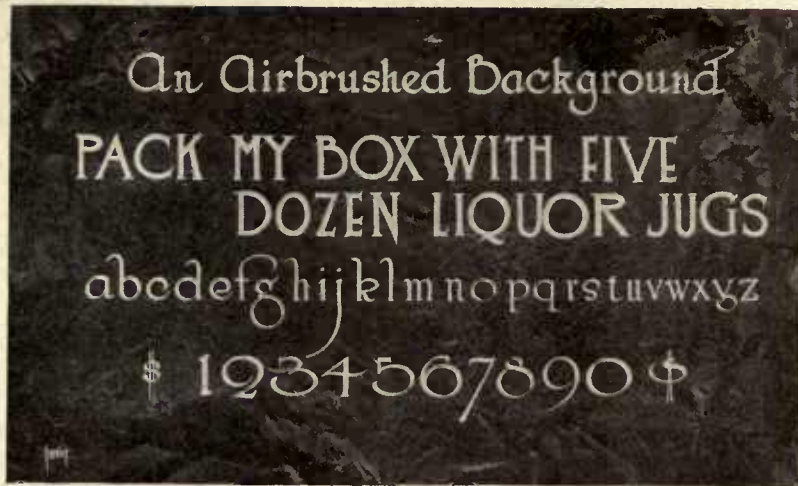


-how about your  
COMPLEXION



TRY A  
JAR OF  
VELMA  
CREAM

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES





WE  
FEATURE

*Manhattan*  
SHIRTS

IN THE  
BETTER  
GRADES

\$ 2.<sup>00</sup>  
TO  
\$ 12.<sup>00</sup>

*The Best Known &  
Known as the Best*  
Hartman & Co.

**Oak Park**

*"The Beautiful"*

Residence Property  
on Lake Burien  
Large Tracts 66 x 127  
\$ 225.<sup>00</sup> 10% Cash  
Come in and get particulars~

Artistic  
Novelties  
in Spring  
and Easter

Sho-Cards

order early.






WE'RE BRINGING  
PARIS TO YOU  
*Thursday and Friday September 20-21*  
*Fashion Show Days*  
*Gowns-Frocks-Wraps-Suits-Hats*  
*Copies and Adaptations*  
*from Famous Paris Designers*  
*Celebrating the beginning of our*  
*second year as leaders of Fashion.*  
Vogue Company



ABCD  
EFGH  
IJKLM  
NOPQ  
RSTU  
VWXY



ECCENTRIC  
ROMAN

abcdefghijklmnop  
lmnopqrstuv  
wxa & yz

Knockout Speed



Eccentric Italics

ABCDEFGHIJKLM  
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
W XYZ & W Y T O

abcdefghijklmnopqr  
stuvwxyz yz w v a n d


*A Letter of Artistic character that  
admits considerable speed in the making*





*Opheum*  
THIS  
WEEK

GERTRUDE  
HOFFMANN



NEXT  
WEEK  
**TOTO**  
Screen Comedian  
Extraordinary

*In*  
The JUNK MAN

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES



**WINTON SIX  
NOTICE**

¶ Last winter we announced the 33 HP New Six Winton Six at \$2000. Deliveries began this spring. We are now manufacturing this extremely successful model, and shall continue its manufacture until next year, without change.

¶ Shortly before the next New York show we shall announce a new model 48 HP Winton Six, which now sells at \$2500. There will positively be no reduction in the price of this car.

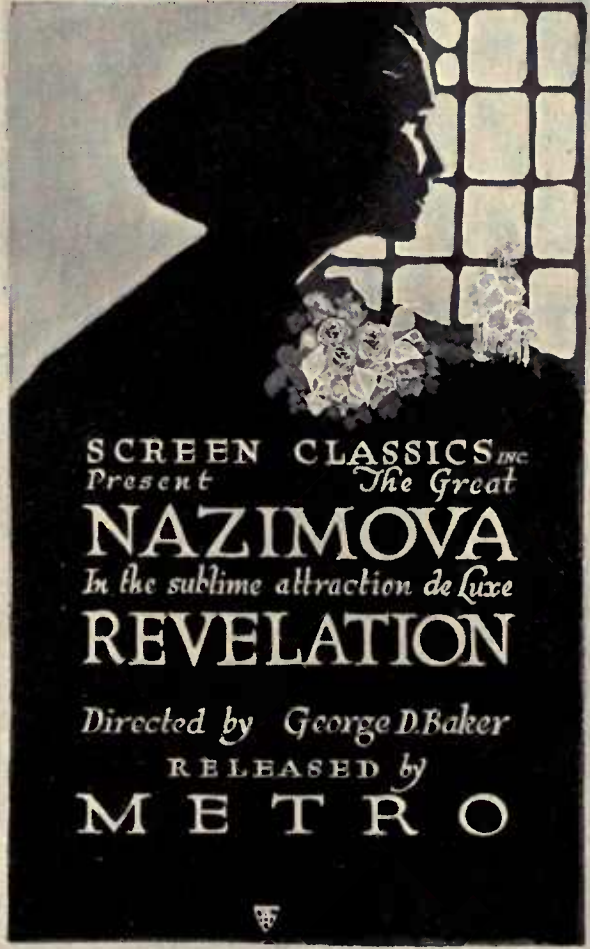
¶ From its exhaustive experience with motors of various types, the Winton Company is convinced that the world has not produced a motor superior to the rightly-built six-cylinder, hence we shall continue to make sixes exclusively.

¶ Having for years enjoyed the confidence of the best class of motor car buyers, our patrons may be assured that we have no intention whatever of offering for sale any experimental model. And they may be equally certain that we will not cheapen the character of our product. In other words, if you buy a Winton Six today, you will not find the Winton Company discrediting your purchase and destroying your faith in us tomorrow or next week or next month or next year.

The Winton Company

*If* you have been relying on your a-b-c-ability or natural talent to produce an acceptable grade of commercial lettering without the aid of adaptable tools

Stop fooling yourself.  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
reflect the characteristics imposed on each element by the tool with which its made.  
ijklmnopqrstuvwxyz



SCREEN CLASSICS INC  
Present *The Great*  
NAZIMOVA  
*In the sublime attraction de Luxe*  
REVELATION  
*Directed by George D. Baker*  
RELEASED by  
METRO

LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

Single Stroke Show-card Roman  
*Elementary Principles.*

||| 1 ||| / 0 5 ||| / z z \ \ n o i  
a b c d e f g h i j k l m  
o p q 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 U ----- V W X Y Z &  
1 2 3 4 5 ¢ \$ 10 6 7 8 9 0 ¢

Practical Modifications of  
Single Stroke Roman

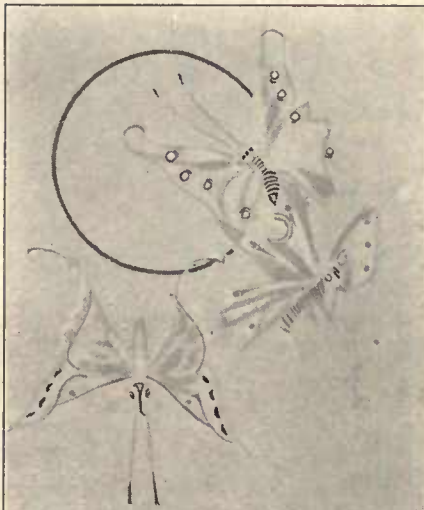
that are artistic and permit of more speed.

a a b b c d e e f f g g h i i j j k k l  
l m m m n n o p p q r s s t t u u v v w  
x x y y z z & 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 \$

A A B C D E 8 F G H 9 I J K L M M 9  
N O P P Q Q R R S S T 9 U V W X Y Z &



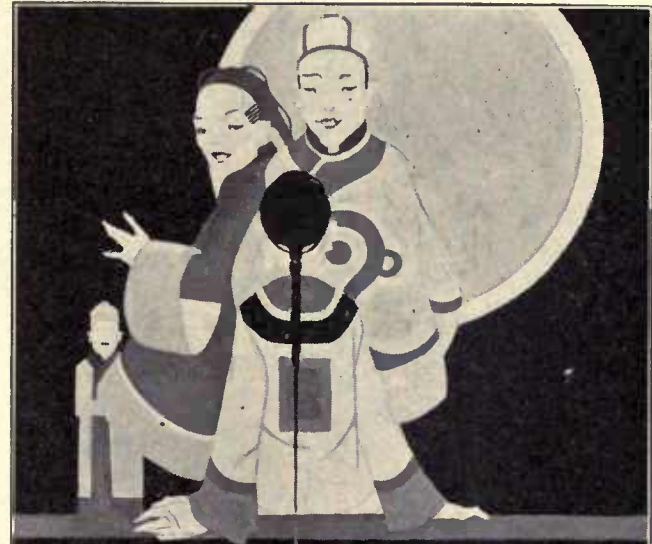




*The* RICHNESS  
& REFINEMENT

Which these fabrics  
radiate ~ together  
with the absolutely  
faultless tailoring  
will proclaim you  
altogether the  
better dressed man

*Chas. Levy & Son*  
DESIGNERS



*- items from our selection of*  
ORIENTAL  
ART GEMS

You are cordially  
invited to inspect  
this wonderful display.

*Mezzanine Floor*







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Oct 13 '50 JD

18 Mar 51 KW

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29 Oct '51 LU

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