

Taken from Studies in Pen Art by WE Dennis (AN Palmer Company 1914).....Joe Vitolo

Soennecken pens, turkey quills and reeds are used for text lettering. The best is that which you can use best. Most engrossers use the Soennecken pen, probably because it is easier to obtain, but others think there is nothing like a turkey quill. The trouble is in preparing a quill and keeping it in order. First procure the quills (those from the wing), then clip off the feathery part, cut off the end of the barrel and soak well in water, then improvise some kind of vise in which the quill should be placed for flattening. Leave it in this condition until it is dry. With a sharp knife cut it down into the shape of a broad pen and split it like a Soennecken, taking care not to split too far, as it would spread too much. There is a knack which comes only by experimenting in making this kind of a pen, but after this knack is acquired and a quill prepared just right, it works like a charm. By using a large turkey quill, well flattened out, a pen can be made a quarter of an inch or more in width, which is much wider than any steel pens are made for such work.

India ink is generally best liked, although Chinese ink is about as good, and some prefer it. Japan ink (Walkden's or Arnold's) is also good, and some use it altogether; but the waterproof inks are generally hard to manage, especially by those inexperienced in this line of lettering.