

The following is an interview with penman HL Dyer that appeared in The Educator, February 1946

This month we have the pleasure of interviewing a penman, missionary, and former prisoner of the Japanese H. L. Dyer, Box 308, S. Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Ed.:

Mr. Dyer, where were you born?

Mr. D.:

I was born in the state of Maine.

Ed.:

What was your early schooling?

Mr. D.:

Grammar grades and high school in Bangor, Maine, Beal Business College of Bangor, and Bryant and Stratton Business College, Boston.

Ed.:

Where did you get your first penmanship inspiration?

Mr. D.:

It was in Bryant and Stratton Business College that I became intensely interested in penmanship not only because the school was noted for its fine penmanship teachers, but because of a young man by the name of Knight who attended your school. He had taken up various styles of penmanship and could write so that it fascinated all. Fortunately for me my desk was right next to his and I could see his wonderful penmanship all day. I began to practice but I could see I was getting nowhere by myself and so after graduating from Bryant and Stratton I moved to California where I taught in an academy. Having a little money to put into advancement for myself, I enrolled *in a penmanship course with the Tamblyn Studio in Kansas City, Missouri. I made rapid progress as long as I practiced faithfully.

Ed.:

What was the nature of the first pen work you did?

Mr. D.:

While I was teaching in the academy in Loma Linda, California I filled in the names on the diplomas for the school. Of course I did the work in the "Artistic Style" because I did not know how to do Text Lettering. For this I received fifty cents for each diploma. During this year, 1936, I also began to do calling cards and wedding announcements for the village folk.

The next year, 1937, I moved to Phoenix, Arizona where I was engaged in accounting work. While here I made some pen drawings for cuts. I am interested in pen drawing as well as penmanship. I have made window signs and posters. This hobby of mine is intensely interesting to me. My wife sometimes has to drag me away from it in the evening and get me to bed.

Ed.:

When did you go to the Philippines?

Mr. D.:

In the fall of 1937 we went out to the Philippines as missionaries. I was the business manager of a school out in Manila. While here I made certificates for various people and filled in diplomas. I was able to organize a large penmanship class here among the Filipinos and stir up considerable interest. Then the war came and school was stopped and the students fled for their lives.

Ed.:

After your experiences in the Philippines do you expect to go back there?

Mr. D.:

Yes, we intend to go back to Manila next fall and I want to begin another class for the folks over there. It is possible that I may get some subscriptions to the "Educator" and some may want to enroll in some correspondence courses. When I go back I will be Business Manager and Head of the Department of Commerce.

Ed.:

How long have you been interested in penmanship?

Mr. D.:

I have been interested in penmanship for seventeen years although I have never become proficient in it. I love it because it fascinates me and someday I am going to master it. I plan to take some more work with you. I have also enjoyed my correspondence with you. I remember back in 1936 or 1937 I wrote to you with a request that you write my signature. You were very kind and in due time I received the signature which was beautiful.

Ed.:

How tall are you and what do you weigh?

Mr. D.:

I am 5 feet, 11 inches and weigh 220 pounds.

Ed.:

What are your hobbies?

Mr. D.:

All kinds of penmanship, lettering, and drawing, cooking, golf, oil and water colors.

Ed.:

Are you married?

Mr. D.:

Yes, I am married and have a daughter thirteen years old.

Ed.:

Do you consider that penmanship has a great future?

Mr. D.:

I know there are great possibilities in the penmanship profession. I am one who recognized the importance of a good hand. Penmanship reveals character. I am glad that you are carrying on the good old art of penmanship and sending out the "Educator" month by month to encourage others to take up the pen. As soon as I get a little better I am going to do a lot of pen work for the public.