

The following was written by one of IAMPETH's founding members, Eileen (Broad) Richardson. This was taken from the Winter 1995 IAMPETH Newsletter; however, the letter was originally published in a 1974 Newsletter.

Joe Vitolo

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Dear Friends of Good Penmanship,

Many people have been asking how the International Association of Master Penmen and Teachers of Handwriting came to be.

Fred and I have a small island in Lake Nipissing, Ontario. We built a small cottage there in 1949 with our own hands. While in the process of building the cottage, we -lived in two tents, one for cooking and one for sleeping. I kept saying to Fred, "The penmen should get together - it would be so exciting to meet the people whose penmanship we have admired so much for so many years and tried so hard to emulate and Lake Nipissing would be such a nice place to meet." Now Fred is a man of action. When we got back to Ottawa in the fall, he got busy. He said, "If E. C. Mills, the greatest of all the business writers, will come, then others will come." He wrote Mr. Mills who accepted the invitation promptly and with enthusiasm. We rented Perkins cottage (on another island). There was no hydro, no telephone, no indoor plumbing. But the scenery of pines and rocks and the lake was beautiful. In July 1950, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Walter, Enrique Benguria (Cuba's foremost penman), Mr. and Mrs. Rene Guillard and Charles Begin came. My Mother and her neighbor friend, Mrs. Murrell came to take care of the cooking.

I shall never forget the day they arrived by boat. The Guillards almost filled the boat with baggage, we think they must have brought full evening dress. Fred had explained the rustic nature of the place and suggested bringing rubber-soled shoes for maneuvering on the rocks. Rene must have missed that part of the letter. for he seemed so shocked at such rustic conditions that he promptly took lumbago and would have gone home immediately if there'd been a way. Fred got out his eiderdown sleeping bag and installed Rene in a big comfortable chair. And remember it was July - and HOT! Now Joe Bailey was Irish and H. J. Walter an Englishman with a fantastic sense of humor. The combination of the sharp Irish wit and the English humor kept us all in stitches of laughter. In no time, Rene's lumbago was gone and he joined in the fun. At the end of the week Rene said, "One week is not long enough, it should be two weeks." We had brought scrapbooks and specimens, old Penmanship journals and had an absolutely hilarious time. Joe Bailey said, "I'm not leaving here until we decide to meet again and form a group to do something for the improvement of the handwriting of young people." He made a motion, seconded by H. J. Walter. The aim was spelled out "to improve the handwriting of young people in United States and Canada. Fred was to choose a suitable name and arrange for the next meeting that was held in Ottawa in the summer of 1951. Rene was elected President, Fred Richardson, secretary and I was the treasurer.