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## Handwriting, An Old Art

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A means of communication, and a fine art. Handwriting is as old as the hills. Some of the first writing was done on stone. That was back many, many years ago during a period of which we have few records and know very little. We do, however, know that the Roman alphabet was perfected several thousand years ago and that our modern lettering has been developed from it. From that time on we have records of the various changes in styles of writing of which there were many. Each generation developed its own styles that, in a general way, must have been an improvement over preceding styles. By handwriting, we refer to all types of plain and fancy forms of letters that were used to convey thought or preserve records.

Back in the days before the printing press and other machines such as the typewriter, the monks and others did a large amount of beautiful handwriting. They developed the beautiful art of illuminating. While this work was slow and laborious, its beauty compelled people to read and reread it. The work of the monks served a very definite purpose and became very valuable as works of art.

Handwriting on one hand, is a tool for communication, and on the other hand, is an enchanting art. Perhaps down through the ages the practical and the artistic sides of handwriting have not been separated and too much attention, at times, given to the artistic side. This is especially true in the teaching of handwriting in

the public schools. As recent as Spencer's time, forms with beautiful shades and flourish were taught in schools. These have been discarded in favor of quicker and more practical styles. The passing of Spencerian ornamental forms for simpler and more practical forms is progress which penmen should welcome. As penmen, we may feel a little tinge of regret in the passing of some of our pet styles, but we must give in to progress.

We must recognize the distinction between requirements for communication and those of fine art, and intelligently work accordingly.

In public schools or handwriting for communication we must, in these hectic days, sacrifice some beauty for speed and ease. Perhaps some penmen still cling to old styles and feel that something has been lost, but where good taste is not used in the selection of styles it reflects unfavorably on the profession as a whole.

### HANDWRITING AS AN ART

There are many places or ways one can indulge in the artistic side of handwriting. As a fine art, the letters on a document can be made very ornamented and beautiful. This type of work is commonly referred to as engrossing and illuminating. There is a very great demand for artistic lettering, script, and color work. Undoubtedly more work is being done today than ever in history. It is also safe to say that this kind of work can be developed and expanded greatly.

In the past countless centuries changes have constantly taken place in handwriting and it is reasonable to expect changes in our present and future styles and methods of teaching.

If one will thoroughly prepare in handwriting and keep up-to-date on styles his work will always be in demand.

The people of one generation should develop the styles of his generation using, of course, any good things of past generations. However, he need not lament the passing of the work of a former generation as we are sometimes inclined to do. Sure, some styles come and go, but handwriting in some form or other will go on forever.

More handwriting books, pencils, pens, paper, and other handwriting materials are being sold today than ever. There is a great future ahead in handwriting and it will pay if you make it.