

Abraham Nicholas III (b. 1692, d. 1744?). This Abraham Nicholas, born in 1692, was the son of Abraham Nicholas II. He was a writing-master with his father at the Hand and Pen in Broad Street whence, according to Massey, he published his first work *The Young Penman's Copy Book* engraved by Bickham in 1715, Shortly after this, and some time before 171g, Nicholas moved his school to Clapham. In 171g he brought out another copy-book entitled *The Penman's Assistant and Youth's Instructor*, advertised in a list of copy-books sold by Overton, and described by Massey as containing 15 narrow plates with only two lines of writing to each plate. His most important work was *The Compleat Writing Master*, containing 32 plates engraved by Bickham, with the author's portrait prefixed. No date is given on the title-page, but some of the plates bear the date 1717 and two are dated 1722. One of these latter, however, is by his brother James and is inserted in order "to acquaint the world that I continue the school" which Abraham was on the point of handing over to him. It might seem possible, therefore, that this 1722 edition was not the 1st edition, but was a reissue by Abraham with some extra plates to assist his brother in carrying on the school "at Clapham in Surry". This theory, however, cannot well be persisted in, faced as it is with Bickham's statement in the introduction to his *Penmanship in its Utmost Beauty and Extent* that Nicholas' book was first published in 1722. In one copy examined, the final plate is in the form of an advertisement of James Nicholas' school where he "Taught Latin, Greek & after the Manner of Eaton-School". Shortly after 1722 Abraham Nicholas left England. Massey says "he went somewhere abroad, I am informed to Virginia, but in what employ I have not been informed that I remember, only that he died about the year 1744"

George Bickham, in a letter prefixed to *The Compleat Writing-Master*, says that he "never saw any pieces that were wrote with greater command of hand than the originals of that book". Two of Nicholas' plates from this work were reproduced by Bickham in his *Penman's Companion* and again in his *Penmanship in its Utmost Beauty and Extent*; they are dated 1722.