

What happens when two great calligraphers get together to design and market penholders? Here is the story of the Zaner-Bloser penholders, as published in *The Business Educator* (vol. 34, no. 10), June, 1929.

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History and development of the zaner method penholder

The history and development of the Zaner Method Penholder began in 1891 when C. P. Zaner and E. W. Bloser joined forces and began their careers as professional penmen, authors, and educators. At that time they reorganized the Zanerian College of Penmanship, and founded the Zaner-Bloser Publishing Company, and the E. W. Bloser Paper Company, Columbus, Ohio. That was thirty-eight years ago and at that time there was no penholder on the market entirely satisfactory for doing careful pen work.

It was then that they began to develop the shape of a penholder to meet their requirements. They made and tried many different shapes and sizes out of rough wood. These different attempts were carefully worked down to the shape desired, by filing, sanding, smoothing and scraping with glass. This work was done by Mr. E. W. Bloser, who after finishing a penholder and trying it himself, would have Mr. Zaner try it. Finally after many attempts and much filing and scraping, the holder was evolved that satisfied both. A few were made for their own use.

Messrs. Zaner and Bloser used these penholders in their own work, and their coming in contact with a great many students, teachers, and workers in the field of penmanship caused a demand for these holders. It was at that time that they decided to have a small quantity made up for sale. They were carefully hand turned on a wood lathe by an expert in accordance with their instructions. The shape decided on then is the same as now. This Zaner-Bloser penholder has grown into widespread popularity throughout the country.

A demand grew for fancier holders and some were made of rosewood and other fancy, high-priced woods. They began to advertise them, and if you will turn to page ten of our miscellaneous catalog at the present time, you will see a picture of the Zanerian Fine Art Straight Penholder, eight inches in length, made of redwood, boxwood, celluloid, and ebony, all joined harmoniously and painstakingly finished. On page eleven you will see the Zanerian Fine Art Oblique Penholder, eleven and one-half inches long and with an oblique attachment. The Zanerian Plain Oblique Penholder pictured on the same page is made entirely of rosewood and is eleven and one-half inches long. On page twelve, the Zanerian Expert Oblique Penholder and the Zaner-Bloser Straight Holder are pictured, showing the shapeliness of the original Zaner-Bloser penholder.

At various intervals this penholder was advertised in their monthly publication, *The Business Educator*, the publication of which started shortly after the partnership was formed. A little later the idea occurred to Zaner and Bloser that since a penholder of this particular shape met the requirements so well of the more particular pen users, professional penmen and persons who write all day long for a living, why not give the public school pupils and others the benefit of it by manufacturing this penholder in large quantities to sell it at a price such as elementary students could afford to pay.

For thirty-eight years the Zaner-Bloser Company has been doing this, and the price to the trade has been brought down so that the penholder sells for 5 cents. Equipment was purchased and installed, consisting of saws, lathes, drills, press drills, dipping equipment, lacquer tanks, etc.

Our factory, at the present time, is being taxed to the limit. We buy our lumber in carload lots, handle it in twelve different operations, and carefully inspect it to insure our customers against any variation in the finished product. Inserted in the end of the holder is a special rustproof plug, which holds the pen in place and which insures no corrosion or rusting.

People are delighted to use one of these beautifully finished penholders. It fits any hand, large or small, and makes it easy for the teacher to keep tiny fingers in position during the writing lesson. Many teachers use these colored penholders as awards, by giving a red penholder to those who sit in a healthful writing position, a blue one to those who write well in other subjects, etc. The beauty of this penholder is that it costs no more than any other penholder.

You can get your favorite penholder in your favorite color: black, yellow, green, red, or blue.

In the year 1926, Parker Zaner Bloser, after graduating in the College of Education at Ohio State University and receiving his B.S. degree, joined forces with the Zaner-Bloser company. It was in 1927 that he worked out a new double penholder having one end for red ink, the other for black or blue ink. This attractive new penholder retains the shape, beauty and all the good features of the Zaner-Bloser penholder, plus the addition of another writing end. It was patented in 1928. Black and red are the stock colors on this penholder. However, we have made many special orders using different color combinations in the finishing. Engrossing artists throughout the country are pleased with this new penholder, for they find it meets the requirements of their departments. Lettering pens of different sizes can be used. For example, in the red end a No. 1, and in the black end a No. 2, etc.

Catalog or circulars illustrating these penholders will be cheerfully sent upon request.

The Zaner-Bloser Co., Columbus, Ohio. [Pub. in 1929.]

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Ross Green