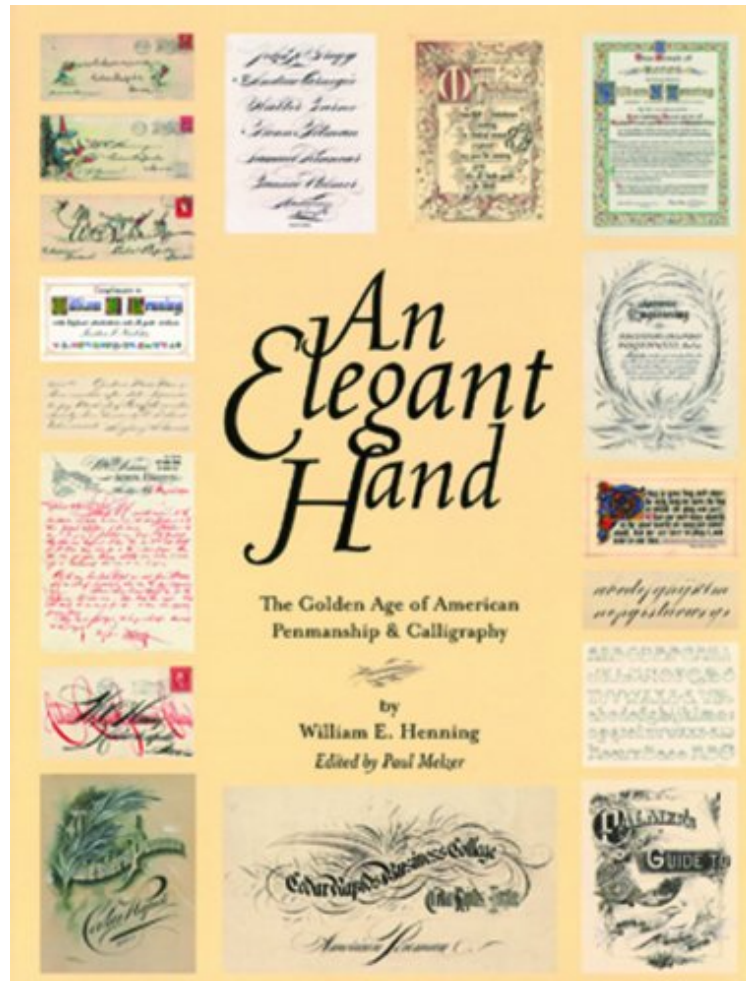


An Elegant Hand: The Golden Age of American Penmanship and Calligraphy

William E. Henning

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William E. Henning : An Elegant Hand: The Golden Age of American Penmanship and Calligraphy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Elegant Hand: The Golden Age of American Penmanship and Calligraphy:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By UsCoops I love the history and all of the handwriting specimens by ornamental penmanship greats. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By manordon Lovely book and arrived in tip-top shape. Thanks. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Book With a Flourish! By Jim Schmidt Thanks to my mom and dad - and some good elementary school teachers - I've got pretty nice handwriting. But it's *nothing* like the beautiful examples in this book from some of America's master penmen. The story of how the book came to be is nearly as interesting as the book itself and is a real testament to the

diligence of the editor. The reproductions of the samples are very good given the age of the original examples and the kind of paper the book was printed on. The capsule biographies of some of the featured penman are interesting. Their education, initial interest in fine handwriting, correspondence and collaboration with other famous penmen, and professional careers, was interesting. Especially interesting was how many of the penmen were also expert document examiners as consultants or as witnesses in court. While the focus is on a few personalities, some of the introductory material does give a good general introduction to the evolution of handwriting training in America's elementary schools and business colleges, but I think I'd like to find another book that expands on that part of American educational history. If there's a disappointment in the book, it's that there is absolutely no annotation/attribution for the biographical details and - especially - quotes - in the book. As art history and educational history, with terrific illustrations befitting a "coffee table" book, I recommend it.

This work chronicles the history of the Golden Age of American penmanship and calligraphy. The author guides the reader through the lives and careers of some of the most important American penmen, including Platt Rogers Spencer, the Father of American Handwriting, and Spencer's gifted student, George A. Gaskell, whose books and periodicals reached hundreds of thousands of students throughout the second half of the 1800s. Paul Melzer, the editor of this work, added more than 400 examples taken from original specimens to handsomely illustrate Henning's manuscript.

From Library JournalThe period from 1850 to 1925 saw a flowering of American penmanship. In addition to itinerant writing masters, there were hundreds of private business schools, all of which taught penmanship (before the typewriter was invented). Periodicals such as *The Western Penman* were devoted to the subject, and expert calligraphers produced textbooks and copybooks for students. Even today, books on Spencerian calligraphy and on the Palmer method are being published (e.g., Michael Sull's *Spencerian Script and Ornamental Penmanship*). The present work details this period in history, devoting a chapter to each of seven experts (including Spencer and Palmer) and mentioning the work of 40 others. The text conveys the author's enthusiasm for the subject; Henning's father was himself once an editor of *The American Penman* and is one of the book's main subjects. Published posthumously (Henning died in 1996), this book was edited by rare book dealer and autograph collector Paul Melzer. The text is very readable, and the more than 450 illustrations are well chosen. Complementing Tamara Plakins Thornton's *Handwriting in America: A Cultural History*, this work is excellent for collections on the letter arts or on the history of education in America. Margarete Gross, Chicago P.L. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.