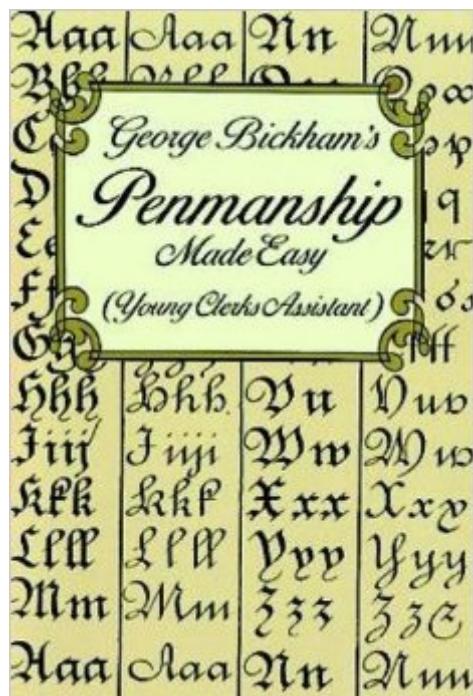


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# George Bickham's Penmanship Made Easy (Young Clerks Assistant)



## Synopsis

George Bickham was an enterprising eighteenth-century engraver and calligrapher who promoted the practice of proper penmanship. This volume, an unabridged reprint of his now extremely rare calligraphy manual, *The Young Clerks Assistant*, provided "young practitioners" with much valuable information on how to write not only legibly but also with beauty and grace. The book begins with "Directions for Learners," a series of helpful hints on forming letters, holding the pen, arm and wrist positions, proper posture, and so on, followed by a wealth of calligraphic specimens: alphabets, maxims, didactic verses, and other words of advice for elevating the moral standards of the young. For modern calligraphers, Bickham's guide offers an abundance of models for imitation and provides a delightful look back at the instruction manuals and teaching methods of the mid-1700s. Enhanced with many charming engravings, this hard-to-find antique teaching tool can be read as easily for pleasure as for inspiration. It will appeal to calligraphers, graphic artists, and any devotee of fine penmanship.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mr. Bickham was an 18th century engraver and calligrapher. Although the book (originally published ca 1733) begins with a set of rules on how to form letters, these rules and the book's examples are best studied by an experienced calligrapher. This is NOT a beginner's book. But it is delightful for those who like to examine the formal hands of nearly three centuries ago. The examples are not just alphabets but writing samples. Fancy "Content alone is true happiness; or the Country Lass"? How

about "Beauty's a Fair But Fading Flower"? There are many calligraphic examples from copperplate to blackhand. As the gentleman says, everything the "young clerk's assistant" might need.

...still an enjoyable read for the price. A good portion of the writing samples included in Mr. Bickham's book were not, in fact, considered calligraphy in their time, but rather to exemplify legible and easy styles of business hand, intended, as per the book's subtitle, for clerks and others whose jobs necessitated a good deal of writing and record-keeping, prior to the era of the typewriter. To the reviewer who complained of the cursive scripts being illegible, try reading handwritten cursive a bit more often; the scripts do retain certain archaisms such as the extended S, but are not significantly different from, for instance, the Spencerian system of cursive penmanship, which dominated American schools throughout the 19th century. If you want illegible (to the modern reader's eye) calligraphy, try picking your way through an illuminated medieval manuscript. That said, this caveat must be included: this book does -not- give explicit instruction on how to reproduce the styles, it is merely a collection of the best samples-- it's best for those who already have some grasp of some form of calligraphy or antiquated penmanship. For those -looking- to learn, I would recommend Theory of Spencerian Penmanship as a starting point, at the very least. For those who have no interest in taking up calligraphy and merely enjoy looking at elegant handwriting, it's a delightful curiosity and memento of the vanished culture of penmanship; much of the writing samples given are quite simply beautiful to look at; though this particular calligraphy enthusiast would hope that admiration of beautiful writing would spur more people to take up interest in a now-esoteric art.

I'm no calligrapher. That said, I've a deep love and appreciation for penmanship and also for reading and learning about antique script hands. This short work by one of the greatest engravers and calligraphers ever is a wonderful read, a fun way to practice penmanship (as an advanced study) and a rich (if by no means comprehensive) source of samples for persons interested in 18th Century engraving, handwriting and calligraphy. I can't imagine recommending this little book to beginners. For one thing, Copperplate (the writing hand of the 18th Century) is not a hand most people learn in grade school and use as kids. Thankfully, there is a real revival of interest in Copperplate scripts and for those of us who are already trying their hand at Copperplate, and perhaps working with some other calligraphic scripts, this book is quite a good resource -- one of two by Mr. Bickham reproduced by Dover Publications.

Keeping this book in its proper context is important. This is a reprint of a guide published in 1733.

It's not a modern "how to" guide that shows you every stroke for you to improve your penmanship. It is a quaint old 61-page sample book that shows examples of a few general fonts. I wouldn't recommend this book to someone who wants to learn how to make each letter of each font. This book won't do that. This book is a quaint historical document, or as the back cover says, "a delightful look back at the instruction manuals and teaching methods of the mid-1700s."

My son had the most horrid penmanship several years ago I have ever seen. I guess it comes from using a keyboard all of the time to communicate. I bought this book hoping to help and it did. The thing to remember is NOT to go through it fast. Buying practice paper and extending the time spent writing will help a lot. I really like this book. My son's penmanship is now legible.

Very hard!!! The writing concept is great but you really have to be determined and on your toes if you hope to achieve the same skill set this book obviously expects from anyone who wants to write the way English was first written centuries ago!! Anyone who can indeed learn to write penmanship in this very ornate but beautiful style, should win a gold medal!!!

I was having problems deciphering the handwriting on a Will from 1809 but the alphabet on page 33 and the example on page 34 solved all my problems. An interesting little book in more ways than one, and very helpful in my situation.

I did not find anything easy about this book. There is about four pages of instruction written in fancy penmanship that makes it hard to read. the rest of the book is examples of other fancy writing and no instructions.

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