



Review

Pennsylvania Handwriting Analysis Forum

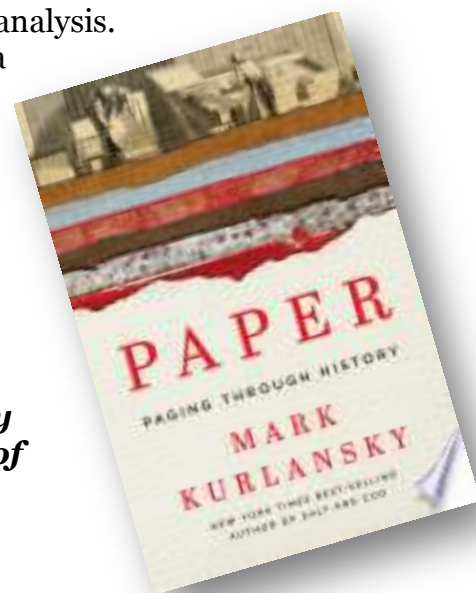
September 17, 2016

Here is a summary of the topics we discussed at the September 17, 2016 Forum. In a few of the summaries I raise some questions that you would be able to answer if you had attended the Forum. If you didn't attend and want to know the answers, they appear after this Review.

1. I revealed that **someone has discovered the source of my pen name Martin J.H. Povser**. I have always emphasized that this man's name can be found in the world of handwriting. However, the person who made the discovery is not involved in handwriting or handwriting analysis. I told our group I would reveal the discoverer's name at a later date along with their method of discovery. I have always said that the Povser name can be found on the internet and that he is connected to handwriting. I also informed the group that I might reveal the discoverer and the source of the Povser name at the next Forum on December 3, 2016. But I haven't decided yet. Stay tuned.

What fairy tale character did I cite and why when I told the group of this sudden revelation of my pen name? (Hint: She is shown above left.)

2. We reviewed the **new book called Paper: Paging through History** by **Mark Kurlansky**. Although our business and other offices are decreasing the use of paper, Kurlansky says we each still use about 700 pounds of paper a year there and elsewhere.

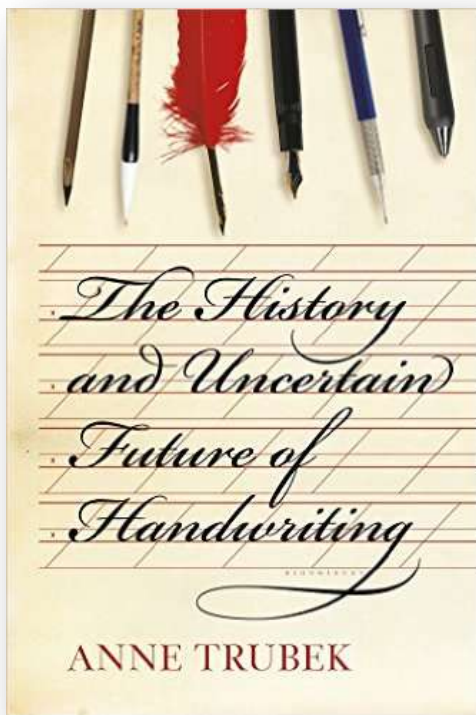


More than 2000 years ago the Chinese began taking plant fibers, beating them, mixing them with water, and draining the residue through a screen. This left a sheet of paper.

What do we call those plant fibers today?

As the Middle Ages opened up to literacy and learning for many, and books were now produced through new devices called printing presses, scribes couldn't keep up with the curiosity and yearning for information. Kurlansky does not believe the modern world and computers will eliminate paper.

What does he believe will ensure that paper survives?

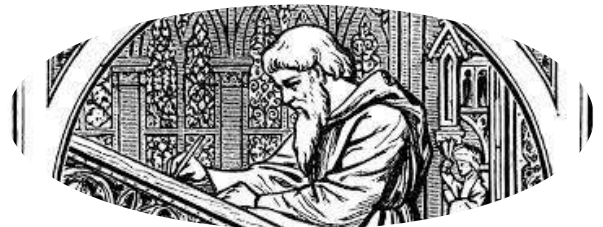


3. A more pertinent **book has been published that discusses the fate of handwriting.** It was authored by Anne Trubek, who has written about handwriting before and whom we have discussed. Her book is **Written Off: The History and Uncertain Future of Handwriting.** She acknowledges the recent studies that demonstrate the benefits of penmanship to the young student's mind. But she considers the research as "fuzzy" and their conclusions unconvincing. We disagree of course. She believes handwriting is doomed by technology and the transition of young writers to printing instead of cursive.

Where in the school curriculum does she suggest handwriting be put for now?

Trubek concedes "We will lose something as we print and write in cursive less and less," then judges that "...loss is inevitable." The reviewer in the *New York Times Book Review* replied to that by saying, "Though one technology often supplants another, that doesn't necessitate concession. Considering its rich significance, instead of hustling handwriting off to the graveyard, perhaps what's called for is resurrection."

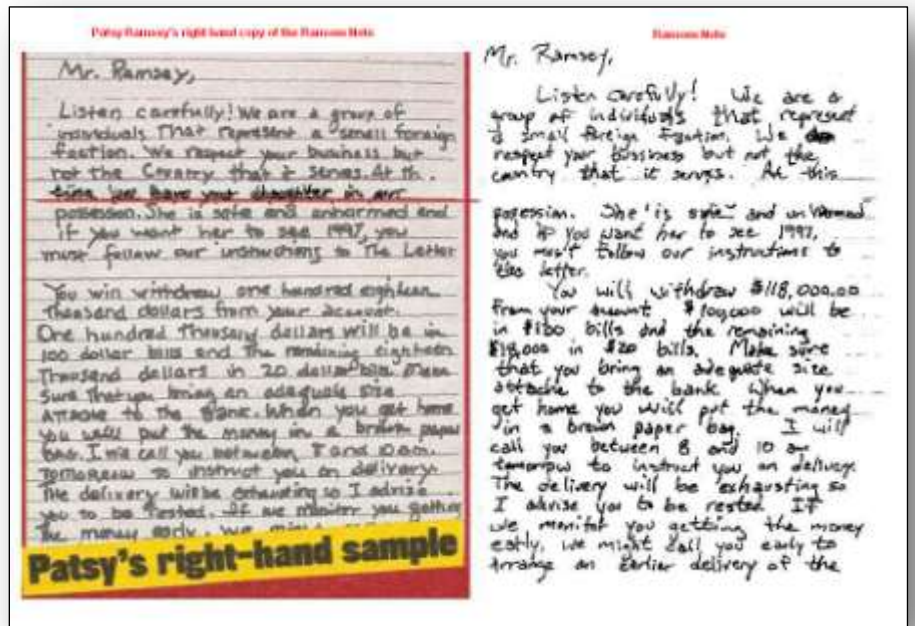
Trubek cites Socrates, who railed against writing as being inferior to oration. **Why did he think writing shouldn't be pursued?**



Trubek quotes scholar Barry Powell who made this observation: "Writing preserves only the thought of What?"

Trubek says that medieval scribes used about how many quills a day?

4. In view of the flurry of TV documentaries re-visiting the **Jon Benet murder case** on its 20th Anniversary, we looked at the **notorious ransom note**. We especially focused on the handwriting of the mother, Patsy Ramsey. When the case originally arose as a national spectacle, I had been



contacted by the National Examiner periodical to offer my opinion on a few issues raised by the handwriting and the focus on Patsy Ramsey as a suspect.

One issue we discussed was the theory that Patsy wrote the note but disguised her handwriting in doing so.

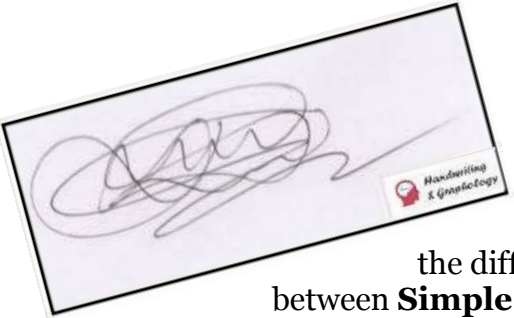
What technique did the authorities think she deployed as a clever way to disguise it?

We looked at the newspaper in which my comments were quoted and a photo of Patsy getting into her car showed how she might well have used this technique.

What did the photo show that might reveal she used this deceptive technique?

What has been my opinion on whether Patsy Ramsey wrote the ransom note?





5. I gave a **mini-lesson** on the differences between **Simple writing and Elaborate (or Complicated) writing.**

Thomas Edison, President Reagan, and President Clinton, used a simple vertical style not very different from this. This style is probably like the one you learned.

Your parents and grandparents probably learned a style like this with extended beginning and ending strokes. It slants and has very fancy capitals. R H R Y W

(Printing is of course simpler in general, but our focus was cursive style.) I conveyed how a person who typically uses one of these styles will act. Then I discussed how someone who writes with the other style will act. When you weigh their conduct you realize they behave the opposite from each other. An example of Elaborate writing is shown top left. Two examples of Simple cursive writing are shown top right.

What did I say are the ways a person with Simple writing will act? A person with Elaborate writing?

6. Pennsylvania Forum member Teresa Carroll reported on her **internet attendance of an American Handwriting Analysis Foundation meeting.** We are affiliated with this organization. She also told us about how handwriting instruction is being used in her private Quaker school. We then had a general discussion on the status of penmanship as a part of the curriculum throughout the United



States. The status of penmanship as a required course of instruction appears to be that eight states require it (either they have always had it and keep it, or had abolished it and brought it back).



How many states are re-considering it as a mandatory course for elementary school?

The famous national Core Curriculum adopted in recent years doesn't include it. Some private and parochial schools still teach it. The American Handwriting Analysis Foundation and the Campaign for Cursive is a significant move to keep handwriting alive as a critical part of our culture.



7. **One member from the public who appeared at this Forum requires special mention.** Haeryun Folken, a lady originally from South Korea, now living in Chalfont, Pa., appeared at the start of our meeting and remained with us all day. I rewarded her with a free copy of my book *Strokes*. She participated in the discussions and even enjoyed lunch with us at nearby Landis Cafeteria. We thank her for spending the day with us and hope she will become a new enthusiast and advocate for our revered subject of handwriting analysis.

8. We analyzed the **handwriting samples** brought to the meeting by members Martha Murphy, Teresa Carroll, and Sara Welsh.

9. I pointed out and passed around some articles from one of **my albums containing articles about handwriting and handwriting analysis**. We are always amazed how many articles have been written in recent years about both of these subjects in both print and internet media.

Answers to Questions Raised in the Summary of the Forum

1. Rumpelstiltskin

2. Cellulose

Human tastes

3. She suggests we move penmanship to **art class**.

Socrates said writing eroded the need for **memory**.

Powell said “Writing preserves only the thought of **literate peoples**.”

They used about **60** quills each day.

4. Patsy Ramsey was **ambidextrous**. Some experts believe she wrote the ransom note with her left hand. She was primarily righthanded. The photo showed her getting ready to enter her car with her car keys in her left hand.

I found several similarities in the handwriting of Patsy Ramsey and the ransom note. But I had only two samples of her writing to review. I could not say with reasonable certainty that she wrote it. On the other hand, I could not rule her out as the writer. I have not reviewed the writing of her husband John Ramsey.

5. **Simple writing** has no more strokes than necessary to be readable. It can be cursive but it is often printing. It shows a person who is likely to be direct, efficient, a clear thinker (if the strokes have a good rhythm), a problem solver, little focus on their own ego, and frank.

We discussed the other facets of this person. **Elaborate writing** has several more strokes than needed to be readable and typically has large and showy adornment. An elaborate writer can be a time-waster, calculator, pretentious, attention-seeker, social climber, and secretive. We discussed other qualities this person may have.

6. **11 states** are formally considering whether it should be made mandatory again.