

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian



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Reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic! Writing was one of the three R's in the last century. Every teacher in a district schoolhouse years ago taught penmanship and there were so many volumns devoted to correct style. George Shattuck of Medina, an expert in penmanship, developed the Medial System and during his career sold over 80 million copybooks. There were also the Spencerian copybooks and the Palmer Method, etc. By the time you got to the third grade the teacher would allow you to use ink from one of those wells in your desktop. It was indeed a momentous sense of satisfaction for students when they were considered old and big enough to use ink.

Penmanship was considered to be an important part of every student's education as reading depends on legibility. Mr. Shattuck and others with a perfect style made use of their talents too. In the

last century it was considered proper etiquette to leave a calling card upon visiting your friends. These were beautifully hand lettered with simply your name on them. The size of the card was slightly smaller than a contemporary business card. Many households even had a special dish near the front door call a tazza which was a depository for such calling cards.

The accompanying picture is a pen and ink drawing done by H. Clure White of Gaines around 100 years ago. Mr. White, for a while, taught penmanship in Chicago school. In this drawing he is simply "showing off" the things he can do with a variety of steel pen nibs. These nibs which spread with pressure, could form various widths of lines as the ink flowed. Note that the little banner in the drawing carries the name of this delineator, H.C. White.