

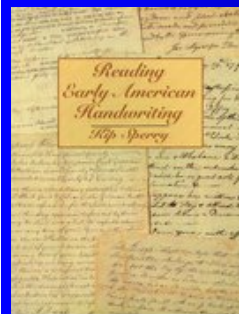
Reading Old Handwriting

requires patience and persistence.

It is a tedious process, but it is of utmost importance to transcribe the original documents.

<http://copland.udel.edu/~tdoherty>

Reading Early American Handwriting by Kip Sperry (1998) – 289 pages



Practice makes perfect

Several handwriting examples with transcriptions

Learn the old alphabets

http://www.genealogical.com/item_detail.asp?sgid=1000&ID=5513

The Uncommon English Alphabet Everybody has their own style!

A
X
L
E

Q
U
A
I
L

M
Y
S
T
E
R
Y

Easier to transcribe in word/phrase context

Source: <http://www.iltrails.org/handwriting/A-T.html>

Transcribing 1795-1838 Words in Wills and Patents A-E

administrators	credit
aforesaid	current
also	Daniel
April	deceased
assignees	December
barrels	deed
be	devides
bequeath	dispose
better	dozen
black oak	east
bless	Edward
Captain	either
Charles	ejection
Christian	else
[comma]	establish
consideration	estate
court	

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/special/oldenglish/oldenglish.htm>

Transcribing 1795-1838 Words in Wills and Patents E-N

Executors	John
Executrix	John
expressed	Joseph
fee	Junior
first	July
France	keep
Francis	known
general	less
George	lying
give	madam
God	March 2 nd
Heires	married
hereof	mister
Houses	Mr.
imprimis	Nathaniel
Item	next
James	Notary Public
January	November

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/special/oldenglish/oldenglish.htm>

October	said
order	Samuel
our	scituate
ourselves	Scotland
pair	seals
parish	seized
patent	
percent	Senior
picked	September
Plantation	soever
pleased	son
possess	sterling
premises	such
presents	sufficient
	sum

Transcribing 1795-1838 Words in Wills and Patents O-Z

viz
vizt
wafer
which
William
William
with
ye
ye said

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/special/oldenglish/oldenglish.htm>

Always Begin With a Good Copy

my Lands him and his heirs forever
 Item give and bequeath unto my well beloved ^{Daughter} Mancy one bed and
 furniture that was formerly called her mothers
 Item give and bequeath unto my dwell beloved daughter mary
 one white cow big with calf and the best bed and furniture
 out of five that I have — Levin Clifton 1789 will, Sussex Co DE

Light setting (above) - dark setting (below)

my Lands him and his heirs forever
 Item give and bequeath unto my well beloved ^{Daughter} Mancy one bed and
 furniture that was formerly called her mothers
 Item give and bequeath unto my dwell beloved daughter mary
 one white cow big with calf and the best bed and furniture
 out of five that I have — Levin Clifton 1789 will, Sussex Co DE

Which one would you want to transcribe?

Transcribing Handwriting

- ◆ Learn scribe's handwriting style
 - compare same letters/words in document
 - local sources to identify misspelled place
 - common phrases often repeated
- ◆ Scribes abbreviated (paper was dear)
 - names: Jno=John, Jos=Joseph
 - "=" used to extend a word to next line
 - mostly chronological: get bearings by mo/yr

Transcribing Handwriting

- ◆ Transcribe slowly - evaluate with care
- ◆ Transcribe with a relative –
it's like a day at the beach
- ◆ Indexes and abstracts are transcribed,
as are many vital records
– ask for originals

Aunt Allie 1920s Letter

imprisoned in some other place
 he managed to pry out a stone
 But the opening was too small
 to permit - spread with the bulley
 (something) that day, so although it
 was winter he stuffed rags &
 squeezed himself out. I then ran
 & bleeding he crawled away through
 the snow. He dared not to
 get out any clothing & dared not
 cry out before him for fear a sentry
 would see it before he got it. He

New Brunswick Loyalist (Stephen Wright?)
 in Revolutionary War

Example Martha (Ranlet) Melcher's 1881 Diary

Sam's
 1st wife also
 has mental
 problems!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1881
 Homeopathic Hospital
 I was not able to visit at
 the beginning of the year, but
 I will visit soon. I have
 been here since the 12 of Dec
 came here from a cousin to
 have treatment for my knee
 and nervous constitution
 I need New York Card
 from Charlotte. I was able
 to rest better nights, but
 my stomach & bowels
 have been troubling me

SUNDAY 2

1798 New Castle Co DE Probates, Benjamin Reynolds, administrator for both George Spain* & Joseph Reynolds

Lot of Green Wards - 6.
 1 Battalion - 4.
 Benj. Reynolds, Dollar 434.05
 Apprais'd the 17th day of the 11th mo. 1798.
 Errors Excepted
 Benj. Reynolds, administrator

* George Spain married Elizabeth Reynolds 16 Nov 1793

Errors Excepted
 Benj. Reynolds, administrator

Use original documents to compare signatures

1798 Renunciation of Cain McKenney estate

*April of first day 1788 Respected Friend.
these are to Inform thee that I do allow and
appoint William Underwood to settle my
fathers affairs he Being lately Dead
witness Present Jacob Mccinney
Josiah Davis
Joseph Underwood*

April of first day 1788 Respected Friend
these are to inform thee that I do allow and
appoint William Underwood to settle my
fathers affairs he Being lately Dead
witness Present Jacob Mccinney
Josiah Davis
Joseph Underwood

Source (p.12):
Cain McKenney
1788 probate
papers
New Castle Co
Delaware

1692 Apprentice Indenture – Boston (p. 8)

This Indenture wittneseth that John Bowers of medfield
in y^e County of Suffolk in New england hath of his own free
Will and with y^e Consent of his Gardian [Guardian] Benjamin Clark
hath put and bound him selfe unto Samuel wight in said
Town and County lininn [linen] weauer [weaver] as an apprentice from
y^e Day and Date hereof untill y^e first Day of July in y^e
year one thousand six hundred ninety and four: in case

Source: Sperry, "Reading Early American Handwriting" (1998), p.238

1690 Petition to County Court – Boston (p. 9)

To the much honord the County Court now sitting in Boston
The Petition of Margaret Haywood Widow & Relict of Anthony
Humbly sheweth Heiwood [Haywood] late of Boston dec^d

That your poor, afflicted Petitioner is, by y^e Decease of her Late
Husband, left in a very distressed & desolute Condition, with four
young Children to bring up, & nothing wherewithall to doe it,
And therefore praies y^t you will please to appoint some meek
Persons imediatly to set out to her the Thirds of the Houses & Lands
that her late husband decd joined at

Source: Sperry, "Reading Early American Handwriting" (1998), p.256

1761 Baptism Forks of Brandywine Presbyterian Church Chester Co PA (p. 7 of handout)

[page] 108
Lords day being the 26 of april 1761
and ye first Sabbath after my ordination
I baptised first one adult person
william temple, & children Sarah daughter
of paul mcNight and Margret daughter of
william Byrs.
Tusday [Tuesday] preached in the meeting House
Baptised Thomas the Son of will^m Temple
Wednesday Baptised two Infants twins Samuel
& Joseph the Sons of Joseph Byrs

Source: Sperry,
"Reading Early
American
Handwriting"
(1998), p.188

1690 Petition to County Court – Boston (p. 9)

according to Law, & may she have the Liberty to chuse her Part
& may there be any other way found out, such as in your Wisdome shall
seem best, to add something toward her Relief out of the Estate, as it is ~
extremely needed, so it wilbe [will be] most thankfully acknowledged.

And your Petitioner shall soon pray &c [etc]

Boston 29th July 1690

Source: Sperry, "Reading Early American Handwriting" (1998), p.256

1652 Probate Court Paper – Norfolk Co VA (p. 10)

An Attachmt [Attachment]:
is granted unto Bartholomewe Hoskins agt [against] soe [so] much of
the Estate of John Piggott Marchant as shall become satisfactory for the
some [sum] of One Thousand & fower [four] Hundred pounds of tob:
[tobacco] w^h [with] Caske unto y^e
sd [said] Hoskins or his assignes beinge made appeare to be due upon bill
together w^h [with] Co^{ts}. [Court] Chardges [Charges]:

Source: Sperry, "Reading Early American Handwriting" (1998), p.278

1658 Order Book – Northumberland Co VA (p. 11)

M^r Peter Ashton }
his Cer^t for Land }

These are to Certifie that according to sufficient prooffe made before this Court there is due to M^r Peter Ashton 200 acres of Land for the transportacon of 4 psons [persons] into the Country (vizt [namely]:)

Charles Hoyle } Eduard [Edward] Dyer }
Edward Rogers } W^m fflorence }

Source: Sperry, "Reading Early American Handwriting" (1998), p.284

Genealogy

- ◆ It's not a hobby, it's an obsession
- ◆ Will I ever find time to mow the lawn again?
- ◆ How can one ancestor cause so much trouble?

I think that I shall never see
a complete Genealogy!

<http://copland.udel.edu/~tdoherty>

Always Spell Check Your Work



Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marques four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word
And weight four it two say
Weather eye am wrong oar write
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the error rite
Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it
I am shore your pleased two no
Its letter perfect awl the weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.



Course Evaluation Form

*Please complete
and hand in
anonymously
after class.*

*I need a volunteer
to collect forms.*

<http://copland.udel.edu/~tdoherty>

Academy of Lifelong Learning Course Evaluation Form

Course **Genealogical Research Methods** Date **4-27-05**

Please circle your choices.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
This course is well organized.	5	4	3	2	1 NA
Handouts/supplementary materials are effective.	5	4	3	2	1 NA
Instructor is knowledgeable in the subject matter.	5	4	3	2	1 NA
Course objectives were clearly stated.	5	4	3	2	1 NA
Course objectives were achieved.	5	4	3	2	1 NA
Course met my expectations. (If not, what were your expectations?)	5	4	3	2	1 NA
For me, the most valuable aspect of this course was _____					
If I were the instructor, the one thing I would have done differently is _____					