

Nib Noise

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Welcome to *Nib Noise*. I hope you'll enjoy reading this month's issue.

PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS NEWSLETTER!

The robot that sends *Nib Noise* out refuses to learn to read. If you have comments or questions, send email to:

richard@richardspens.com

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Sub-brands. Waterman had 'em (Penanink, Remex, Aikin Lambert). Parker had 'em (Silver Dollar, Writefine). Wahl had 'em (Oxford, Monitor). Morrison had 'em (Marathon). Eclipse had 'em (Monroe, Marxtion, Park Row). Why shouldn't Sheaffer have had them? No reason, obviously, and in fact they did (VACUUM-FIL, WASP, Craig). As exemplified by the nice icy blue Deluxe Clipper in the image above, WASP pens were excellent pens, and WASP was by far Sheaffer's best known sub-brand. Featuring the Clipper, the Addipoint, and a few lesser known low-end models, the Wasp Pen Company did excellent business from the mid-1930s until about the beginning of World War II. Which brings me to a pen that is an elegant combination of WASP and War.



This plunger-filling Clipper was made in about 1940, and it was given to John Durkovitz in 1941 by his some of his fellow citizens in Exeter, Pennsylvania. With the clouds of war looming over America, John was among those called up for one year of service to their country. On June 4, he was inducted into the U.S. Army in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. Assigned Army Serial Number 33023224, he survived boot camp, was trained as a mortarman, and was assigned to

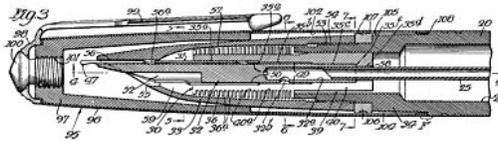
the 2nd Chemical Mortar Battalion, the “Red Dragons.” The 2nd Cml Bn was equipped with the 4.2-inch M2 rifled mortar, which was capable of firing smoke, high explosive, and phosphorus bombs as well as gas bombs (which would be held in reserve to be used in retaliation should an enemy use gas on American troops). His experiences in the war made a whole book, *Finding My Father’s War*, by Walter J. Eldridge. It’s not available as an ebook, but it’s a great read, and used copies of the trade paperback version can be had for less than \$10.00. You can read an abridged version of the story in my article **Personalized Pens: History in Your Hand**.

FROM THE CRYPT

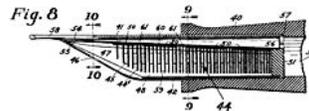
A decade ago, I wrote a series of seven quickie articles that I posted somewhere. The Internet being a graveyard, I’ve exhumed them, and I’ll be running them here. Here’s the fifth:

The Parker Pen Company Didn’t Really Invent the “51”.

It’s true. Parker really did not invent the “51”. It’s unquestionably true that Parker’s engineering department, personified by one Marlin S. Baker, perfected the design and made it salable, but Baker, whose name is on U.S. Patent No [2,223,541](#), is not the guy who came up with the concept of the hooded nib with an ink collector buried inside it.



The honor of having invented the “51” goes to Russell T. Wing, an independent inventor from Minnesota. In 1937, Wing filed for patent protection on his design that featured an improved capillary feed and a shroud that covered it to reduce evaporation. In 1940, he received U.S. Patent No [2,187,528](#). Here is the key drawing from his patent.



There were other features in the patent as well, features that did not make it into the “51”. But in January of 1938, a year before Baker filed for his patent and nearly three years before it was issued, Wing signed an agreement giving Parker exclusive manufacturing rights to what would become the central features of the “51”. Wing’s compensation came in the form of a royalty on every “51” sold. The contract specified a minimum payment of \$5,000 for the first year and \$8,000 per year after that.

Things got even more interesting in 1943, when Wing and Parker — in order to forestall pending infringement litigation against Sheaffer — entered into an agreement granting Sheaffer a nonexclusive license to use the collector technology in its “TRIUMPH” point pens. In 1947, Waterman got its turn at signing a licensing agreement to avoid going to court. Wing received royalties from both Sheaffer and Waterman, and when all was said and done, it added up to a pretty tidy sum: for the years 1951, 1952, and 1953, Wing banked royalty checks totaling \$186,787.58.^[1]

Virtually every pen made today has a feed that implements Wing’s collector technology by having some of its fins buried within the section where they can hold a supply of ink that is readily available to replenish ink lost to evaporation. What it comes down to for us, in the 21st century, is that Russell T. Wing was, in a very real sense, the inventor of the modern fountain pen.

And Speaking of the Crypt...

To delay the time when my Crypt articles will be moldering away in unmarked graves, I’ve added a **From the Crypt** section to the Reference Pages area of my website. I’ve already filled the new section with the first four articles, and each of the remaining articles will appear there a week after you’ve received it here in *Nib Noise*.

BROAD STROKES

WASP pens being on my mind and the time since Christmas having been hectic and a bit worrisome, this month I’m falling back on my profiles of the WASP Clipper and Addipoint, which used to be undervalued but have recently come into their own. Shown here are an oversize Deluxe Clipper in gray “circuit board” and a second-generation gray & blue Addipoint (not to scale).



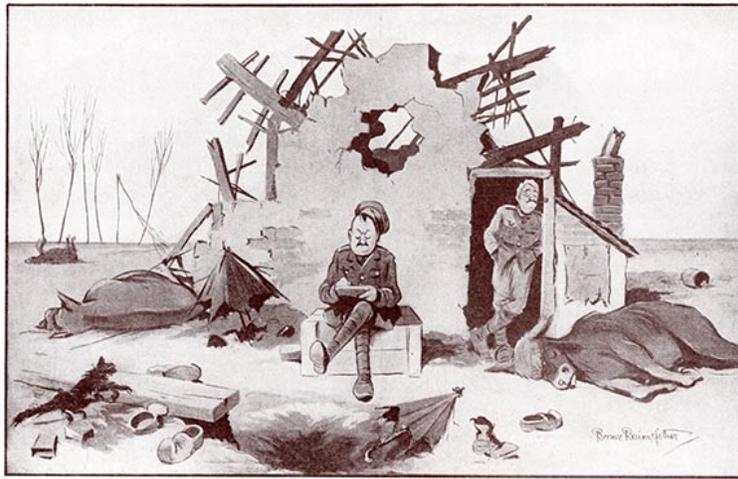


The Nib Noise Archive

For those who enjoy brushing away cobwebs while they dig through attics, the *Nib Noise Archive* is on line. Except for the current issue, the Archive includes every monthly issue since Volume 1, Number 1, which appeared on April 1, 2002.

***PEN WORLD* and Me**

Part II of my latest series for *PEN WORLD* Magazine appeared in December. This two-part series, a much abridged version of Chapter I in my newest book (see below), stepped back 25 years in time from my obsession with World War II to look at the trench pens of the Great War.



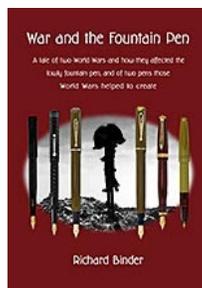
Dear _____
"At present we are staying at a farm"

If you don't already subscribe to *PEN WORLD*, I recommend it as good reading and an excellent way to keep abreast with what's going on in the (pun intended) pen world. Print editions are available by subscription or on newsstands, and digital editions are available by subscription. Back issues are available.

My Books

My newest book, *War and the Fountain Pen*, is now available as an ebook or as a 6×9 premium trade paperback. Both versions have hundreds of newly generated high-resolution illustrations that show beautiful detail. The paperback is on rich heavyweight paper, with premium full color printing.

War, by definition, is a terrible thing. It brings terror, destruction, pain, suffering, loss, death, and much more. But at the same time, great advances in the things of civilization can and do occur as a result of such conflict. It's easy to notice the great advances that have come out of war, such as better transportation and better healthcare. It's less easy to notice the little things of everyday life, such as better fabrics, better methods for preserving food, and better tools for recording our history, our cares, and our joys. This book takes as its subject the changes war has wrought on one small, but not at all insignificant, tool that we, service members and civilians alike, use to conduct our daily business: the fountain pen.



I invite you to visit my website's **Books page**. It has a complete listing of all my books, with direct links to the vendors' pages where you can buy them for all your close pen friends — or for your own library.



As an Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble Associate, I earn a commission when you purchase one of my books by following a link from my Books page.



By Don Fluckinger

January 2005: Never Spend Your Guitar or Your Pen

So I'm walking the dogs the other day, listening to Pebbles on shuffle-play, and lo and behold, in this cut "Suicidal Flowers" by a psychedelic group called Crystal Chandelier, and I think for the first time ever, I hear a lyrical reference to a fountain pen!



"Suicidal Flowers," the B-side of 45-RPM vinyl *Your Land of Love*, by Crystal Chandelier
(Note misspelling of the group's name on the label)

From the *Glossopedia*

With more than 1,600 entries comprising (with subentries) more than 1,750 individual terms, more than 1,000 illustrations, more than 200 patent citations linked to their respective patent documents at various archives, and extensive cross-references, the RichardsPens *Glossopedia* is the most comprehensive resource of its kind anywhere. Each month, *Nib Noise* includes a randomly chosen *Glossopedia* entry.

Knifing A "quick and dirty" technique for spreading a nib's tines to increase flow by inserting the blade of an X-acto knife between the tines while the nib is still installed in the pen. When attempted by an inexperienced person, knifing virtually always results in damage to the nib's slit edges and slit wall, and it can also produce an hourglass-shaped slit that will not support proper flow. *While knifing is safe in the hands of an expert, its use by others is strongly deprecated!* See also [flow](#), [nib](#).

If you would like to suggest an entry for the *Glossopedia*, I invite you to send an email to me at richard@richardspens.com with your proposed entry. If you don't have a definition for your entry, I'll do my best to find one. And if you don't think you can wait more than 133 years (note how this number keeps growing as new entries are added) to see the whole *Glossopedia* here, one entry at a time (if I don't slip up and repeat an entry or three), you can easily jump the gun by purchasing your own copy in ebook form. When I release the next edition, your ebook vendor will notify you (or make the update silently).

To help you find reference articles on my site that have been edited recently, there is a handy heading right at the top of the reference index, listing the five most recently added or edited reference pages. For edited pages, there are brief descriptions of what was changed.

The Pen Doctor

The Pen Doctor is a regular visitor to the Nashua Pen Spa, and every so often he puts a few prescriptions up on my site. Each month (except when I forget), I'll be reprinting one of his past prescriptions here. This month, just in time for the Christmas gift-giving season, here's what the Pen Doctor prescribes for newcomers who will be discovering how handy it is to have a blotter or three around.

Q: I have a Waterman Charleston, which leaks between the section and the metal converter/cartridge holder. To me, it's a very odd leak. (It even took me a while to figure out why my hands were getting dirty!)



Rx: A leak of the sort you describe can come from either of two causes:

First, damage to the plastic cartridge nipple in the section. This, the less likely of the two causes, requires replacement of the section; it means contacting Waterman Service and hoping they still have parts. If they do, they'll sell you a complete new section assembly, including the nib, and it won't be cheap. If they don't, you'll probably need to haunt eBay looking for a pen that you can cannibalize.

Second, wearing out of (or damage to) the converter's mouth where it fits over the nipple. This is a problem common to all cartridge/converter pens; it happens as the converter is removed and installed repeatedly. Look for splits, roughened edges, and so on. It's easy to fix, with a new converter.



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