



# Words of Wisdom, circa 1891

*A new poster series from Old Tom Foolery*

Way up in the boonies of Minnesota, we stumbled across an unintentionally funny instructional book from 1891. We felt it was our civic duty to share its antiquated-yet-timeless advice and illustrations with the modern world. So here it is, bit by bit, in the form of this old-timey poster series. Every poster is screen-printed by hand on rich khaki-colored paper.





## HOW TO WRITE.

### A Complete Set of Rules for Position and Practice.

1. Sit in an upright and easy position. It will add to the ease and beauty of your writing. Keep both feet on the floor.

2. Hold the pen firmly, but not so tightly as to cramp the fingers.

3. Place the hand on the paper as the top of the holder will always point over the right shoulder. This will cause the points of the pen to press equally on the paper.

4. Keep the wrist from touching the paper or desk, and keep the thumb from bending while writing. Avoid the finger movement. It is not practical.

5. Let every downward stroke of the pen be drawn towards the center of the body, and the writing will have the correct slant.

6. Never practice carelessly. Always practice with a free and quick stroke. Let the movement be bold, firm, and steady, resting the pen so lightly that the arm, hand and fingers can move freely together.

7. In making the shades, press on the pen with a gentle, springing movement. It will avoid heavy and irregular strokes.

8. Heavy shading, or shading every downward stroke, never adds beauty nor grace to the writing.

9. The thoughtful student is penmanship, as in other studies, will win. Think and write. Practice with perseverance, and your success will be certain.

10. To make the greatest improvement in the shortest time, practice upon the letters separately until you can make them all correctly.

11. Flourishes, too heavy shading, too large or too small letters, should be carefully avoided.

12. Practice writing by copying business letters, notes, drafts, receipts, etc., and you will improve your knowledge of business as well as your penmanship.



“Keep both feet on the floor.”



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5. Let every downward stroke of the pen be drawn towards the center of the body, and the writing will have the correct slant.
6. Never practice carelessly. Always practice with a free and quick stroke. Let the movement be bold, free, offhand, resting the pen so lightly that the arm, hand and fingers can move freely together.
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#### HOW TO APPLY FOR A SITUATION.

1. Fit yourself by securing a fair knowledge of Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar, United States History, Book-keeping, and master Penmanship sufficiently so as to write neatly and rapidly. Obtain a good commercial education in some reliable institution if you possibly can.

2. Secure a few letters of recommendation from your friends and prominent business men if possible.

3. Make up your mind what business you desire to follow and get a list of the best houses in this line, and then make preparation to apply.

4. Then put on your best clothes, see that they are neatly brushed, that your hair is faultless, your boots shined, your hands and face clean, and your finger-nails properly trimmed.

5. Go to the best houses first. Walk directly to the office and ask for the proprietor. If he is not in, leave a card and cannot see you, say that you may call again and politely leave. Make a note of your call and then go to the next place on your list.

6. If you succeed in seeing the proprietor and are permitted to state your case, come to the point at once. Say that you are from Illinois or whatever State you are from, and that you have been in the city for so many days, or weeks, as the case may be, trying to learn some things that may enable you to be helpful in a business house, and that you desire to try, wages no object; you are willing to demonstrate your fitness at whatever work they may have, no matter what it is.

7. If you are fortunate enough to gain the proprietor's confidence, so that he is willing to try you, be glad and ask him to give you any work he may have. If he has no work he will say so, and you bid him good-day and politely retire.

8. Before you go to the next place stop for a moment and consider first, that you made no failure in not securing a position, for the reason that it did not exist, and study carefully and see if you have not made any mistakes in your method of application.

9. Enter the next house with as much courage and confidence as you would if you were sure of a favorable reply. Adopt the same course as before, and if unsuccessful, remember that you and God hold the secret, and keep on in the same way. If in a large city, visit forty or fifty houses each day. Truth and perseverance will win you a position, for many of our most prominent business men of to-day began by working long and hard in securing their first situation in the same way.

10. Remember that most of the prominent business men of to-day worked their own way up from the bottom, and they will have considerable sympathy for a young man who is starting out in life with nothing but an honest heart and willing hands.



*“Pluck and perseverance  
will win you a position.”*



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3. Make up your mind what business you desire to follow and get a list of the best houses in this line, and then make preparation to apply.
4. Then put on your best clothes, see that they are neatly brushed, that your linen is faultless, your boots blacked, your hands and face clean, and your finger-nails properly trimmed.
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*“During business hours,  
attend to nothing but business.”*



IT NEVER PAYS TO MISREPRESENT THE THING YOU ARE SELLING.

#### BUSINESS MAXIMS.

1. Your first ambition should be the acquisition of knowledge, pertaining to your business.
2. Above all things acquire a good, correct epistolary style, for you are judged by the business world according to the character, expression, and style of your letters.
3. During business hours attend to nothing but business, but be prompt in responding to all communications, and never suffer a letter to remain without an answer.
4. Never fail to meet a business engagement, however irksome it may be at that moment.
5. Undertake no business without mature reflection, and confine your capital closely to the business you have established.
6. Lead a regular life, avoid display, and choose your associates discreetly, and prefer the society of men of your own type.
7. Avoid litigation as much as possible, study for yourself the theory of commercial law, and be your own lawyer.
8. Never run down a neighbor's property or goods and praise up your own. It is a mark of low breeding, and will gain you nothing.

*“A drunken man is always  
at the mercy of his enemies.”*



#### **PRACTICAL RULES FOR SUCCESS.**

1. Keep your health good by adopting regular and steady habits.
2. Never be afraid to say no. Every successful man must have the backbone to assert his rights.
3. Remember that steady earnest effort alone leads to wealth and high position.
4. Be not ashamed to work, for it is one of the conditions of our existence. There is not a criminal who does not owe his crime to some idle hour.
5. Never covet what is not your own.
6. Remember that time is gold.
7. To industry and economy add self-reliance. Do not take too much advice, think for yourself. Independence will add vigor and inspiration to your labors.
8. Don't be selfish. Selfishness is the meanest of vices, and the parent of a dozen more. Selfishness keeps a penny so close to the eye it can't see a dollar beyond.
9. Never forget a favor, for ingratitude is the basest trait of a mean man's character.
10. Never taste or touch that which befogs the mind or dethrones the reason. A drunken man is always at the mercy of his enemies.



*“Writing hurriedly is not only an injury to the writer, but vexatious, unsatisfactory, and disrespectful to the reader.”*



CORRECT POSITION OF THE PEN.

#### How to Improve Your Penmanship in Letter Writing.

1. Never be satisfied with mere legibility; for neatness, elegance and correctness are equally important.
2. Remember, carelessness and too much haste not only fail to improve your penmanship, but actually ruin what progress already attained.
3. Many persons write letters so hurriedly as to slur over the words, half forming and deforming many of the letters, or making sort of a wavy line to represent a word; this is not only an injury to the writer, but vexatious, unsatisfactory and disrespectful to the reader.
4. Write plainly and neatly as possible, rapidly if you can, slowly if you must. A neat and well worded letter of one page once a month, is better than a slovenly scrawl of four pages once a week.
5. When persons contemplate having a photograph taken, they often bestow much care upon their personal appearance, in order to heighten the effect of the artist in the presentation of their physical likeness. These same persons, however, will often sit down and write hurriedly an important letter, that from undue haste abounds in blots, illegible writing, erasures, bad spelling, and the wrong use of capital letters; without once thinking they are transmitting to their correspondent a kind of mental photograph of themselves, drawn by their own hand, and one, too, which better indicates their fitness for business or for society than the others.



“20 grains make one scruple,  
3 scruples make 1 drachm...”

## Tables of Weights and Measures.

### TROY WEIGHT.

24 grains make 1 pennyweight, 20 pennyweights make 1 ounce. By this weight gold, silver and jewels only are weighed. The ounce and pound in this, are same as in Apothecarys' weight.

### APOTHECARYS' WEIGHT.

20 grains make one scruple, 3 scruples make 1 drachm, 8 drachms make 1 ounce, 12 ounces make 1 pound.

### AVOIRDUPOIS WEIGHT.

16 drachms make 1 ounce, 16 ounces make 1 pound, 25 pounds make 1 quarter, 4 quarters make 100-weight, 2,000 pounds make a ton.

### DRY MEASURE.

2 pints make 1 quart, 8 quarts make 1 peck, 4 pecks make one bushel, 36 bushels make 1 chaldron.

### LIQUID OR WINE MEASURE.

4 gills make 1 pint, 2 pints make 1 quart, 4 quarts make 1 gallon,  $31\frac{1}{2}$  gallons make one barrel, 2 barrels make 1 hogshead.

### TIME MEASURE.

60 seconds make 1 minute, 60 minutes make 1 hour, 24 hours make 1 day, 7 days make 1 week, 4 weeks make 1 lunar month, 28, 29, 30, or 31 days make 1 calendar month (30 days make 1 month in computing interest), 52 weeks and 1 day, or 12 calendar months, make 1 year, 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 49 seconds make 1 solar year.

### CIRCULAR MEASURE.

60 seconds make 1 minute, 60 minutes make 1 degree, 30 degrees make 1 sign, 90 degrees make 1 quadrant, 4 quadrants or 360 degrees make 1 circle.

### LONG MEASURE—DISTANCE.

3 barleycorns 1 inch, 12 inches 1 foot, 3 feet 1 yard,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  yards 1 rod, 40 rods 1 furlong, 8 furlongs one mile.

### CLOTH MEASURE.

$2\frac{1}{2}$  inches 1 nail, 4 nails 1 quarter, 4 quarters 1 yard.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

3 inches 1 palm, 4 inches 1 hand, 6 inches 1 span, 18 inches 1 cubit, 21.8 inches 1 Bible cubit,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet 1 military pace.

### SQUARE MEASURE.

144 square inches 1 square foot, 9 square feet 1 square yard,  $30\frac{1}{4}$  square yards 1 square rod, 40 square rods 1 rood, 4 roods 1 acre, or 160 square rods one acre.

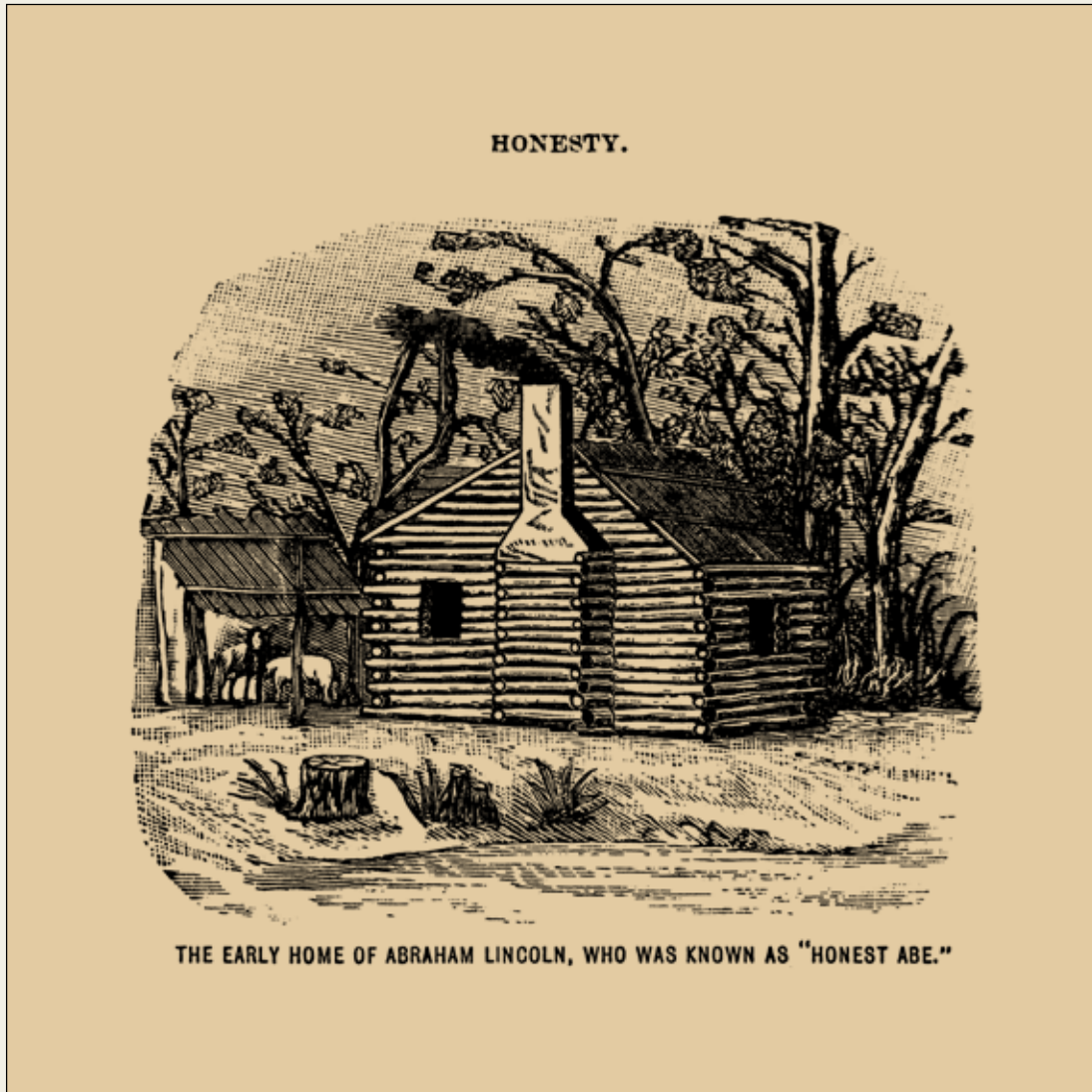
### SURVEYOR'S MEASURE.

7.92 inches 1 link, 25 links 1 rod, 4 rods 1 chain, 10 square chains or 160 square rods, 1 acre, 640 acres one square mile.

### CUBIC MEASURE.

1728 cubic inches 1 cubic foot, 27 cubic feet 1 cubic yard, 128 cubic feet 1 cord (wood), 40 cubic feet 1 ton (shipping), 2150.42 cubic inches 1 standard bushel, 231 cubic inches 1 standard gallon, 1 cubic foot four-fifths of a bushel.

“...Abraham Lincoln, who  
was known as ‘Honest Abe.’”



W-Abe-12x12 (12" x 12")

“...*Free from vice, and  
quiet to ride and drive.*”



**Recelpt for the Purchase of a horse.**

**\$200.00.**

**Omaha, Neb., March 20, 1891.**

**Received of J. Lerch, Two Hundred Dollars, for a black  
mare, warranted only six years, sound, free from vice, and  
quiet to ride and drive.**

**Charles M. Smith.**





## Wholesale Pricing Information

*And other specifics*

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ALL POSTERS ARE SOLD UNFRAMED.

18" x 24" posters are packaged individually  
in tubes unless otherwise requested.

All other sizes are packaged flat in  
a plastic sleeve with cardboard backing.

Poster styles only available in sizes listed  
under each image in this catalog.

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We request a minimum of 3 posters per style.

8" x 10" .....	\$8
12" x 12" .....	\$9
11" x 17" .....	\$10
18" x 24" .....	\$12

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