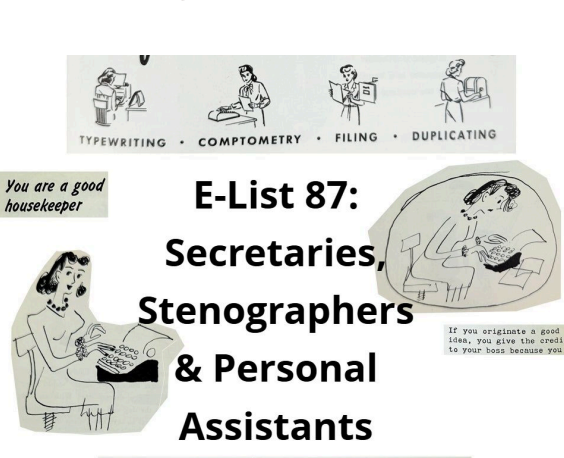
Capitol Hill Books


TYPEWRITING · COMPTOMETRY · FILING · DUPLICATING
You are a good housekeeper
E-List 87:
Secretaries,
Stenographers
& Personal
Assistants
If you originate a good idea, you give the credit to your boss because you
Shorthand SPEED IS ESSENTIAL

Dear friends and colleagues,

This week we have on offer twenty-one items relating to the rise and decline of the 20th century American secretary, a position predominantly occupied by women, in part due to the decimation of the young male workforce during the first World War, the arrival of women's suffrage, and the birth of the New Woman which brought with her the promise of financial and sexual independence. Secretary schools were formed (see nos. 2, 5, 6, 14), competitions organized (no. 7), manuals proliferated (nos. 2, 6, 8, 9, 11-13, 16, 21), smut circulated (nos. 1, 18-20). By 1984 "secretary" was one of the most common careers in the country. 1984 was also the year Apple introduced the personal computer, setting in motion the contraction of a profession "to whose untiring and often unheralded work the world of business owes much of its success" (no. 11).

Best,

The gang at Capitol Hill Books, ABAA/ILAB

CONFESSIONS
of a
French
Steno-
grapher
$1.00
All Rights Reserved

1. Anonymous; R.R. Epperly [cover illustration]

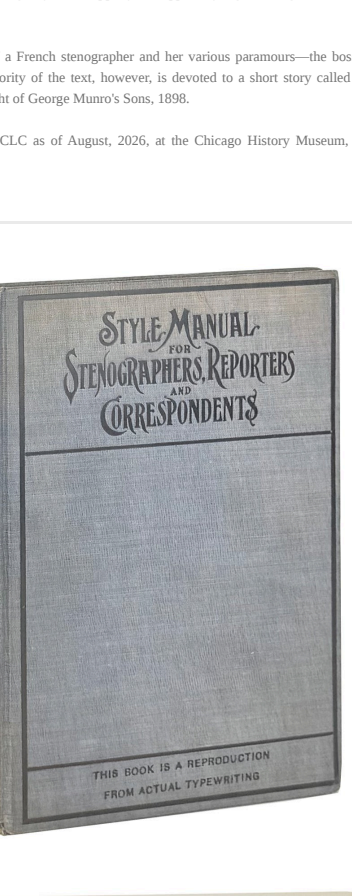
Confessions of a French Stenographer

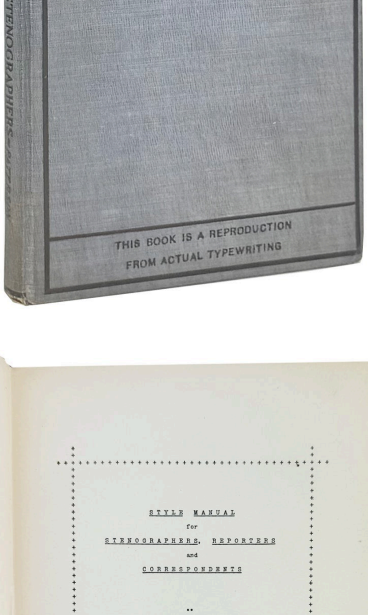
N.p.: s.i., n.d. [ca. 1898 or shortly after]. Octavo (19.5cm); publisher's pictorial staplebound wrappers signed in image by R.R. Epperly; [32]pp. Very light toning to textblock else a Fine example.

Short "confession" of a French stenographer and her various paramours—the boss's son, the boss himself, etc. The majority of the text, however, is devoted to a short story called "Leave Love to Itself," with a copyright of George Munro's Sons, 1898.

Three examples in OCLC as of August, 2026, at the Chicago History Museum, Ohio State, and UVA.

Price: $150


STYLE MANUAL FOR STENOGRAPHERS, REPORTERS AND CORRESPONDENTS
THIS BOOK IS A REPRODUCTION FROM ACTUAL TYPEWRITING



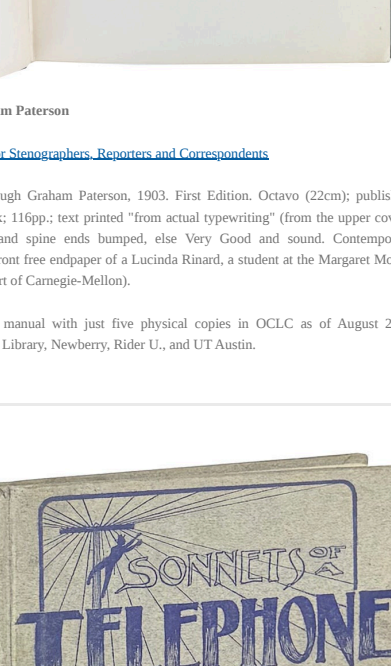
2. Hugh Graham Paterson

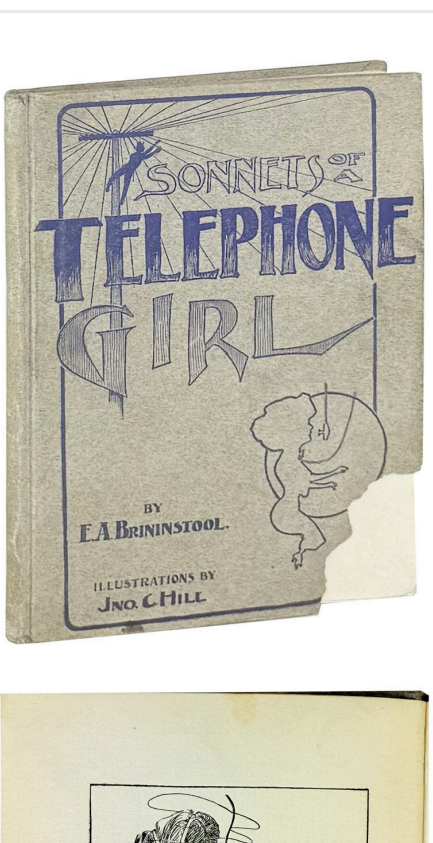
Style Manual for Stenographers, Reporters and Correspondents

Chicago, IL: Hugh Graham Paterson, 1903. First Edition. Octavo (22cm); publisher's blue cloth lettered in black; 116pp.; text printed "from actual typewriting" (from the upper cover). Light shelf wear, corners and spine ends bumped, else Very Good and sound. Contemporary ownership inscription on front free endpaper of a Lucinda Rinard, a student at the Margaret Morrison Carnegie School (now part of Carnegie-Mellon).

Quite a scarce manual with just five physical copies in OCLC as of August 2026, at NYPL, California State Library, Newberry, Rider U., and UT Austin.

Price: $150


SONNETS OF A TELEPHONE GIRL
BY E.A. BRININSTOOL
ILLUSTRATIONS BY JNO. C. HILL



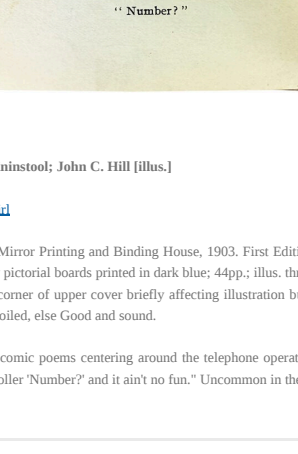
3. E.A. [Earl Alonzo] Brininstool; John C. Hill [illus.]

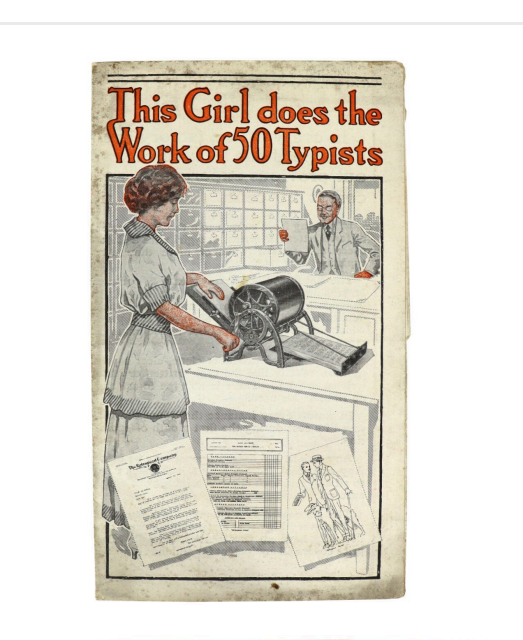
Sonnets of a Telephone Girl

Los Angeles, CA: Times-Mirror Printing and Binding House, 1903. First Edition. Small, slim 12mo (15.5cm); publisher's gray pictorial boards printed in dark blue; 44pp.; illus. throughout. Rather large loss to bottom fore-edge corner of upper cover briefly affecting illustration but not the text, boards and textblock a bit fingersoiled, else Good and sound.

Uncommon collection of comic poems centering around the telephone operator; "I have to sit here every blessed day / And holler 'Number?' and it ain't no fun." Uncommon in the trade and OCLC.

Price: $75


This Girl does the Work of 50 Typists


FORM LETTERS RULED FORMS DRAWINGS
ROTOSPEED Stencil Duplicator
Price $38.50
One Model No Accessories

4. The Rotospeed Company

This Girl does the Work of 50 Typists [Caption title]

Dayton, Ohio: The Rotospeed Company, ca. 1915. Three-panel fold-out pictorial duotone brochure (16 cm). Mild wear and light soiling to front and back panels when closed, interior mostly clean and bright. Small pin-points of wear where folds meet. Very Good overall.

A tidy and illustrative brochure from Rotospeed advertising their easy-to-use stencil duplicator for "every office, factory and store," at $38.50, first manufactured in 1913 for $25. So easy a girl could do it.

None located in OCLC as of August 2026.

Price: $75

The SECRETARIUS
1921

5. Boston University

The Secretarius, March, 1921

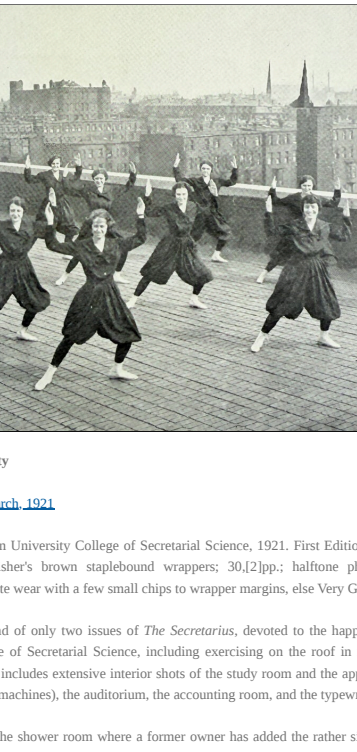
Boston, MA: Boston University College of Secretarial Science, 1921. First Edition. Oblong octavo (15.5x23cm); publisher's brown staplebound wrappers; 30,[2]pp.; halftone photographic illus. throughout. Moderate wear with a few small chips to wrapper margins, else Very Good and sound.

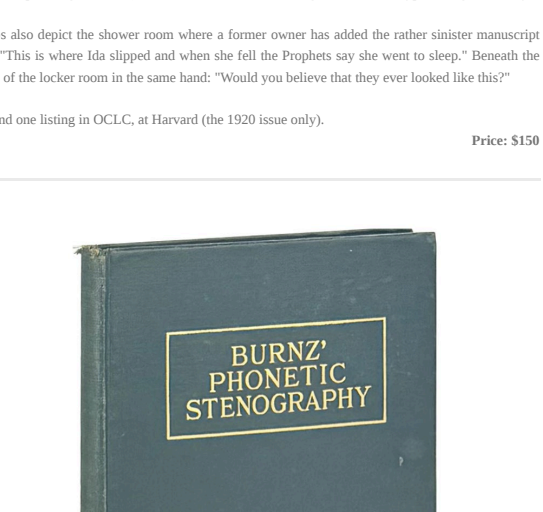
Evidently the second of only two issues of *The Secretarius*, devoted to the happenings of Boston University's College of Secretarial Science, including exercising on the roof in matching billowy black bloomers. Also includes extensive interior shots of the study room and the appliance laboratory (lots of duplicating machines), the auditorium, the accounting room, and the typewriting laboratory.

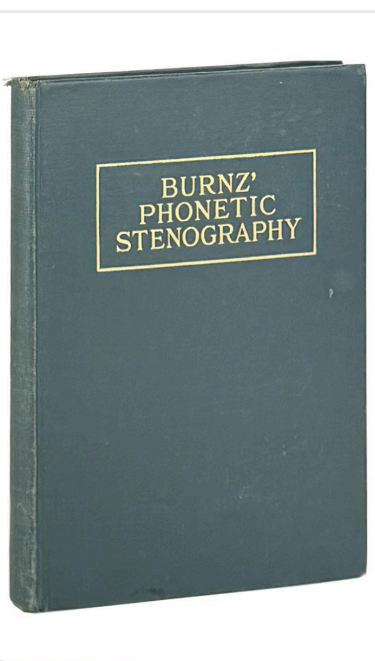
Photos also depict the shower room where a former owner has added the rather sinister manuscript note, "This is where Ida slipped and when she fell the Prophets say she went to sleep." Beneath the photo of the locker room in the same hand: "Would you believe that they ever looked like this?"

We find one listing in OCLC, at Harvard (the 1920 issue only).

Price: $150


BURNZ' PHONETIC STENOGRAPHY



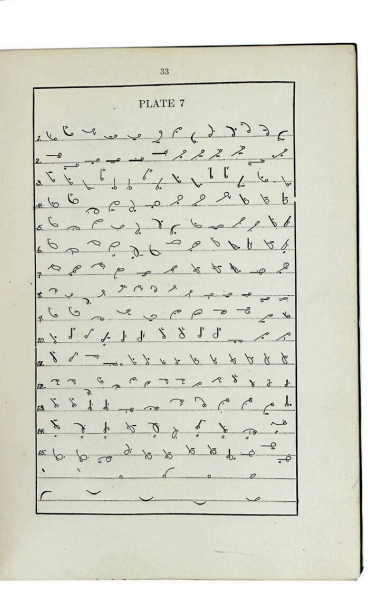


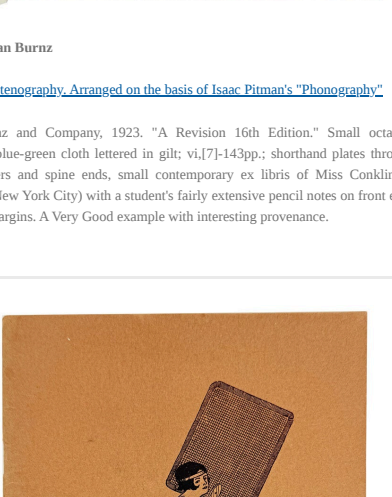
6. Eliza Boardman Burnz

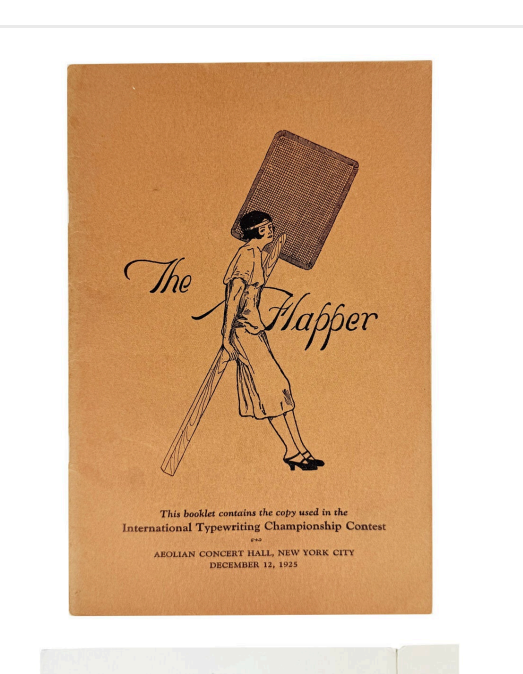
Burnz' Phonetic Stenography, Arranged on the basis of Isaac Pitman's "Phonography"

New York: Burnz and Company, 1923. "A Revision 16th Edition." Small octavo (18.5cm); publisher's dark blue-green cloth lettered in gilt; vi,[7]-143pp.; shorthand plates throughout. Brief scuffing to corners and spine ends, small contemporary ex libris of Miss Conklin's Secretarial School Studios (New York City) with a student's fairly extensive pencil notes on front endpapers and occasionally in margins. A Very Good example with interesting provenance.

Price: $125


The Flapper
This booklet contains the copy used in the International Typewriting Championship Contest
AEOLIAN CONCERT HALL, NEW YORK CITY
DECEMBER 12, 1925


WORLD'S CHAMPION TYPISTS
PROGRESS
New World's Typewriting Championship Trophy



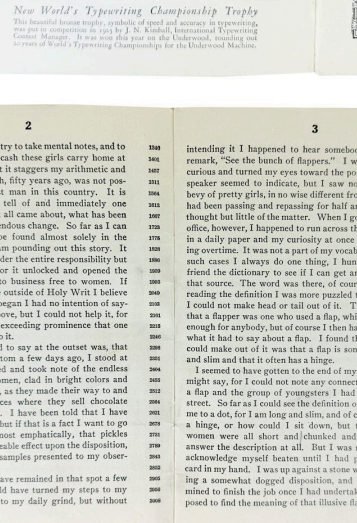
7. J.N. Kimball

The Flapper

New York: Underwood Typewriter Co., 1925. First Underwood Edition. Octavo (20.5cm); publisher's brown pictorial card wrappers; [4],24,[4]pp.; illus. Light edge wear, else Near Fine.

Short story used as the text of the International Typewriting Championship Contest sponsored by Underwood and held at the Aeolian Concert Hall in New York, December 12, 1925. Each line of text includes the number of total "strokes" the typist would make (grand total: 41,205 strokes). Uncommon in OCLC.

Price: $50


LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 1096
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius
How to Dress on a Small Salary
Gloria Goddard

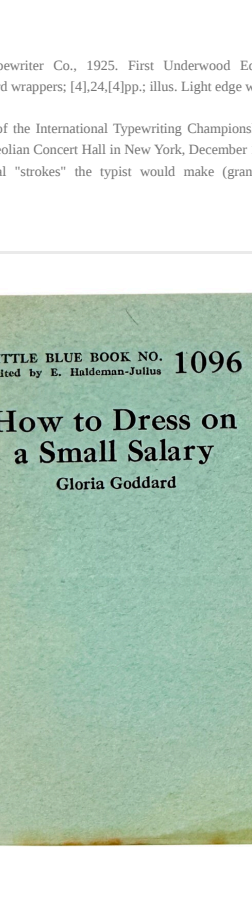
8. Gloria Goddard

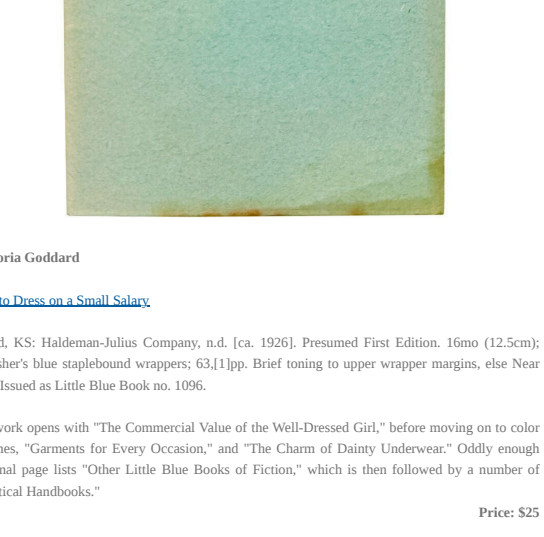
How to Dress on a Small Salary

Girard, KS: Haldeman-Julius Company, n.d. [ca. 1926]. Presumed First Edition. 16mo (12.5cm); publisher's blue staplebound wrappers; 63,[1]pp. Brief toning to upper wrapper margins, else Near Fine. Issued as Little Blue Book no. 1096.

The work opens with "The Commercial Value of the Well-Dressed Girl," before moving on to color schemes, "Garments for Every Occasion," and "The Charm of Dainty Underwear." Oddly enough the final page lists "Other Little Blue Books of Fiction," which is then followed by a number of "Practical Handbooks."

Price: $25


Speedwriting Dictionary


SPEEDWRITING
PRINCIPLES

9. Charles E. Smith and Emma B. Dearborn

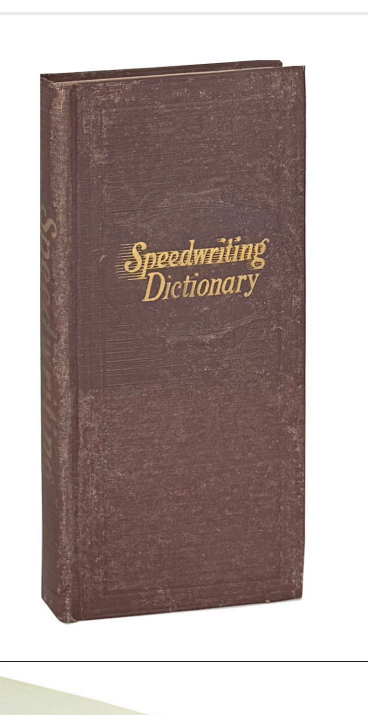
Speedwriting Dictionary (English Edition)

New York: Brief English Systems, 1927. First Edition Stated. Narrow octavo (21cm); publisher's brown cloth lettered in gilt; vi,[2],324pp. Cloth sizing a bit stripped and spotted, narrow but rather deep strip of chewing to bottom edge of rear cover. Good to Very Good with contemporary ownership inscription of an Emily A. Spelman to front flyleaf and recent possum-themed ownership ex libris to front pastedown.

Dictionary of Emma B. Dearborn's new speedwriting system developed "after watching failures and disappointments through twenty years of teaching conventional shorthand systems" (from a speedwriting ad placed in the *Kansas City Journal*, May 6, 1928).

Five copies in OCLC as of August 2026.

Price: $50


RED CLAY
FREDERIC ARNOLD KUMMER

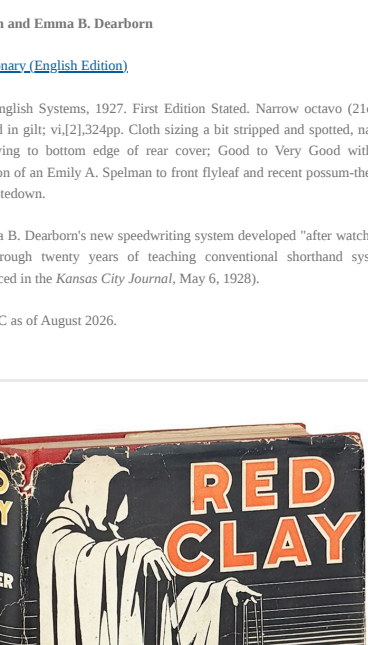
10. Frederic Arnold Kummer

Red Clay

New York: Sears Publishing Company, 1933. First Edition. Octavo (21cm); publisher's cloth in pictorial dust jacket retaining original price ($2.00); [6],303pp. Shallow chips and closed tears to jacket margins with old brief tape repair to verso, spine panel sunned, else Very Good and sound.

Rather uncommon romance between young Alan Prentice and his stenographer Judy Martin who hit the road together after signing a contract stating that they will call off their travels if "any love business comes into their plans."

Price: $50


THE SECRETARY'S HANDBOOK
A Manual of Correct Usage
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

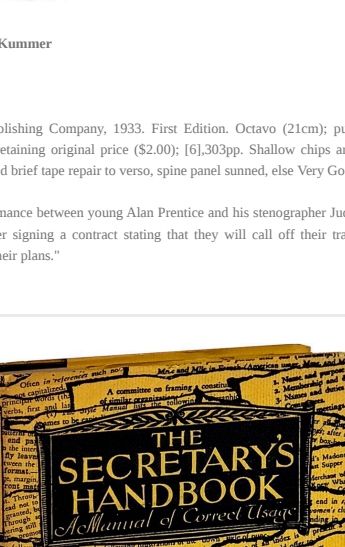
11. Sarah Augusta Taintor and Kate M. Monro

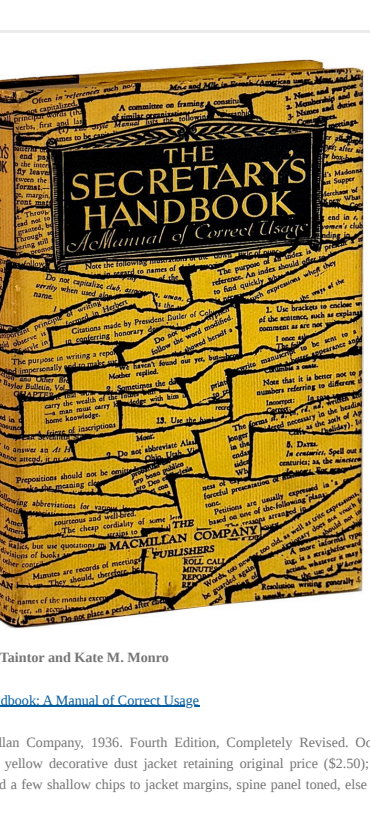
The Secretary's Handbook: A Manual of Correct Usage

New York: Macmillan Company, 1936. Fourth Edition, Completely Revised. Octavo (20.5cm); publisher's cloth in yellow decorative dust jacket retaining original price ($2.50); xiv,[2],406pp.; illus. Light wear and a few shallow chips to jacket margins, spine panel toned, else Very Good and sound.

Useful reference work dedicated "To the secretaries of America to whose untiring and often unheralded work the world of business owes much of its success." This edition with an updated preface noting that "This edition presents new material regarding some of the puzzling points in letter writing" as well as fresh material on report writing. Uncommon in jacket in any edition.

Price: $75




Exercise to Relieve Menstrual Congestion
47

12. American Telephone and Telegraph Company / Bell System

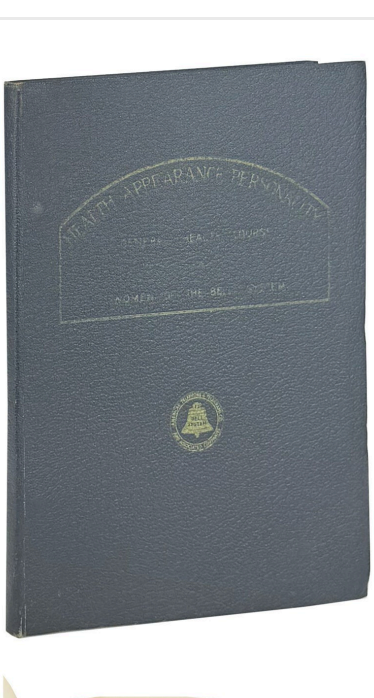
Health - Appearance - Personality: General Health Course for Women in the Bell System

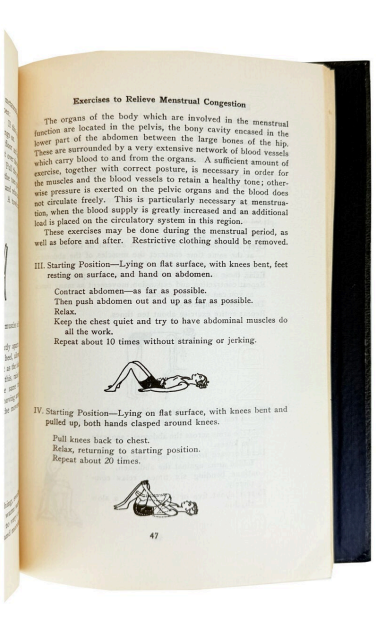
N.p.: American Telephone and Telegraph Company, 1939. Revised Edition. Octavo (23cm); publisher's limp black cloth lettered in yellow; [8],97pp. Light edge wear, upper cover titling a bit dulled, else Very Good and sound.

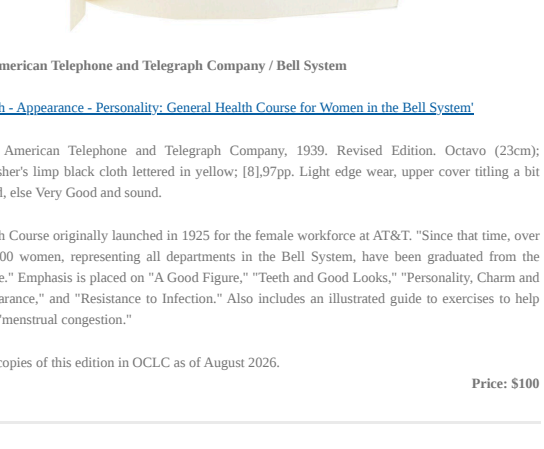
Health Course originally launched in 1925 for the female workforce at AT&T. "Since that time, over 150,000 women, representing all departments in the Bell System, have been graduated from the course." Emphasis is placed on "A Good Figure," "Teeth and Good Looks," "Personality, Charm and Appearance," and "Resistance to Infection." Also includes an illustrated guide to exercises to help with "menstrual congestion."

Five copies of this edition in OCLC as of August 2026.

Price: $100


Memo How to be a Super Secretary


You are truly humble
Arrogance is the privilege of little people. The more important an executive, the more gracious, considerate, and democratic he is. The same ought to be true of his secretary. Your job is to big you cannot afford to be haughty. Be indispensable ...but don't let on you think that you are!
You hide your light
If you originate a good idea, you give the credit to your boss because you know when he advances you advance with him. You give credit to others when it is due...sometimes when it is not, just to keep them happy. You never "steal the show" because you don't have to...without your checking it, word gets around that you are good.


You are a good housekeeper
Your office habits are tidy
You keep your own desk neat
You are loyal
MY BOSS RIGHT OR WRONG
MY BOSS is the world's best

13. Remington Rand Inc.

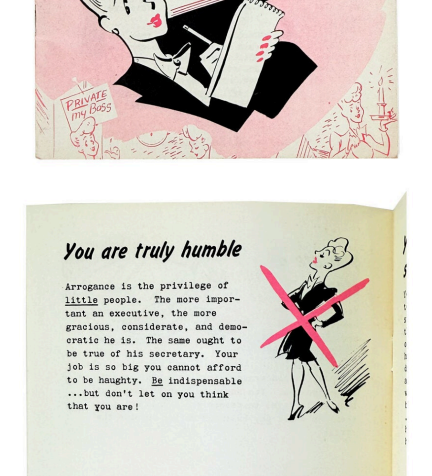
Memo: How to Be a Super Secretary

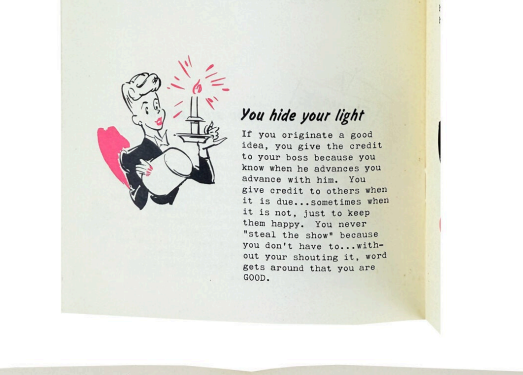
New York: Remington Rand Inc., 1946. Presumed First Edition. Octavo (20cm); publisher's pink pictorial staplebound self-wrappers; [20]pp.; illus. throughout. Light dust-soil else Just About Fine. With the distributor rubberstamp of the Adding Machine & Typewriter Co. (Muncie, IN) to rear wrapper.

Rather dreadful how-to guide from a leading typewriter manufacturer. Includes pieces of advice like "You are pleasant, even under strain," "You never sulk in your tent," "You hide your light," "You are a good housekeeper," and concludes with "Bosses' Pet Peeves": chewing gum, too much make up, too bossy, too emotional.

One copy in OCLC as of August 2026, at the Hagley Museum in Delaware (miscatalogued (?) with a 1945 date).

Price: $50


ST. JOSEPH COMMERCIAL HIGH SCHOOL
DAYTON 2 · OHIO
MEET Betty Business


Combining the highest type of Education, the good secretary's trained hand is guided by mind and heart
Betty checks on Honor

Shorthand SPEED IS ESSENTIAL

14. St. Joseph Commercial High School

Betty Business from Classroom to Job via St. Joseph Commercial High School [Cover title: Meet Betty Business]

Dayton, OH: St. Joseph Commercial High School, n.d. [but ca. 1948]. Presumed First Edition. Oblong 12mo (12.5x18.5cm); plastic comb-bound pictorial card wrappers; [28]pp.; halftone photographic illus. throughout. Light wear and dust-soil to wrappers, else Very Good and sound. Date of publication based on the featured graduating senior class of 1948.

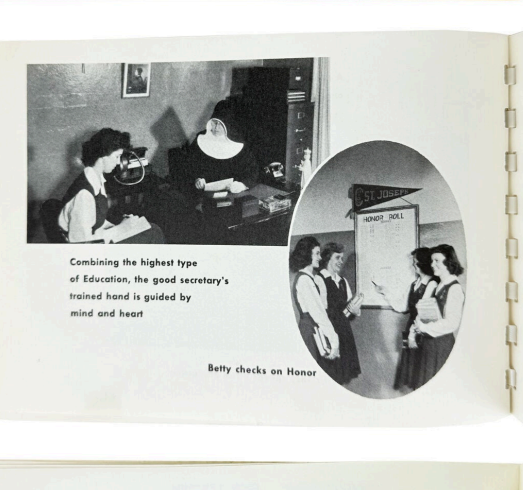
Rare prospectus to this all-girls' commercial school with ties to the Catholic Church founded in 1945 by His Grace, Most Rev. John T. McNicholas. The school emphasized preparation for clerical work, including shorthand, accounting, typewriting, filing, and duplicating.

No copies located in OCLC as of August 2026

Price: $150

---

3 characters in search of a union . . .


Chloe, the Clerical Worker
They and their fellow workers each worked in a Separate Sphere, and each worried over his own Special Worries.
Priscilla, the Professional Worker
Mike, the Maintenance Worker

15. United Office and Professional Workers of America Local 20 / National Social Service Division

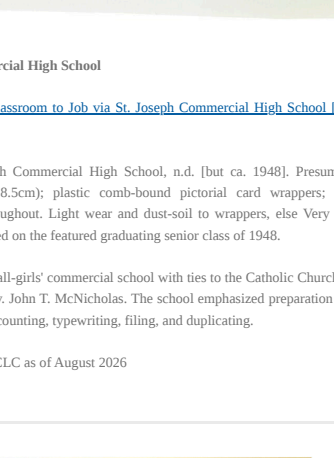
3 Characters in Search of a Union [cover title]

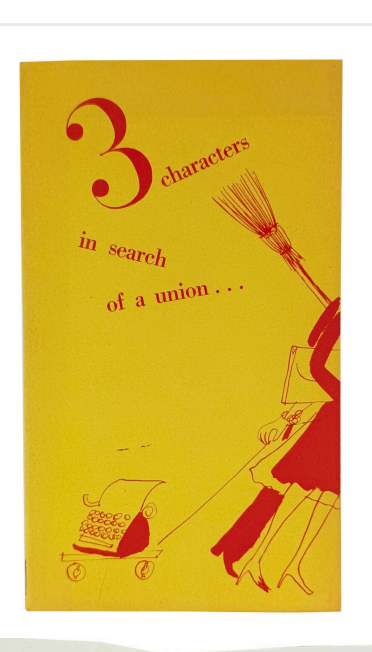
[New York?: United Office and Professional Workers of America Local 20 / National Social Service Division, n.d., ca. 1950s.] First Edition. 12mo (18.5cm); publisher's yellow pictorial staplebound card wrappers; [24]pp.; illus. Light toning to wrapper margins, else Fine.

Quite a rare booklet advocating unionization of three sectors of the white-collar world: the Professional Worker, the Maintenance Worker, and the Clerical Worker.

U. Michigan and U. Wisconsin only in OCLC as of August 2026.

Price: $150


The Successful Secretary
SYBIL LEE GILMORE



16. Sybil Lee Gilmore; Margaret Severson [illus.]

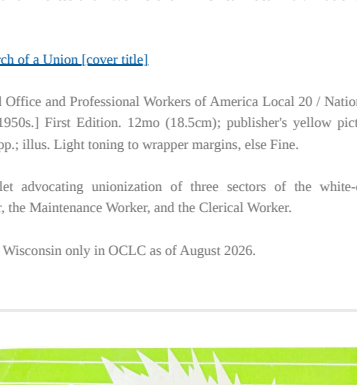
The Successful Secretary

Chicago, IL: Dartnell Corporation, 1951. First Edition. 12mo (16cm); publisher's photo-illustrated staplebound wrappers; 60pp.; illus. throughout. Just About Fine.

Handy guide by the Correspondence Supervisor of the Standard Register Company in Dayton, Ohio. Chapters cover grammar, frequently misspelled words, and "You as Office Hostess," among other important areas.

Not separately catalogued in OCLC as of August 2026

Price: $150


Kitty Unfoiled
By Anson Campbell
AN INFORMAL PORTRAIT OF THE AMERICAN SECRETARY

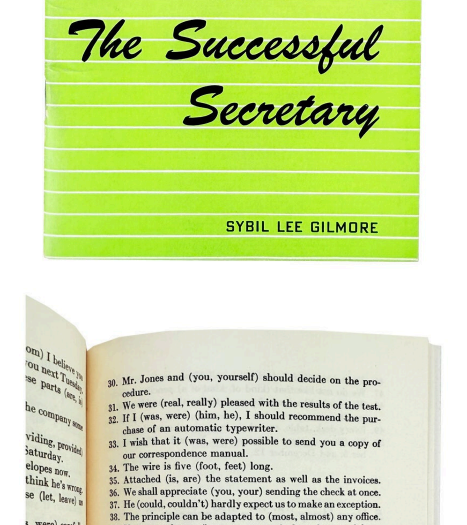
17. Anson Campbell

Kitty Unfoiled: An Informal Portrait of the American Secretary

Pittsburgh, PA: Reuter & Bragdon, 1952. First Edition Stated. Octavo (22cm); publisher's cloth in pictorial dust jacket; viii,154pp.; illus. A few shallow chips and tears to jacket margins; a Fine copy in Very Good jacket.

Complete guide to success for the mid-century American secretary, from how to behave at your first interview ("Do wear your least fussy dress or suit...Don't oversell yourself"); to the finer points of work-place mating ("...even if our secretaries are marrying younger, there is no cause for panic among the older girls"). Though the book is breezily written, the author does offer occasional genuine insight and makes apposite reference to contemporary statistical data. Probably a better book than it needed to be.

Price: $75


PRES.
it pays to be ignorant

18. [Secretaries - Novelty Handkerchiefs]

"it pays to be ignorant"

N.p.: [ca. 1950s]. Small white cloth handkerchief (13.5x16.5cm); Fine condition.

Novelty kerchief illustrated in color with a cartoon of a dainty blond secretary taking dictation while sitting on her boss's lap. The caption reads in blue script, "it pays to be ignorant."

Price: $50

Her Boss Believed in Taking Liberties!
Office Wife
(Teaser)
by Richard Grant
35¢
No. 22
A tangy novel of two-timing — and pleasure before business!

19. Richard Grant

Office Wife

New York: Designs Publishing Corporation, 1937 [but ca. 1960]. Octavo (18cm); publisher's photo-illustrated wrappers; 125pp. Light wear to wrapper margins, brief red pencil scribble to upper cover, textblock uniformly toned as to be expected. Very Good and sound.

"A tangy novel of two-timing - and pleasure before business!" Issued as Intimate Novel no. 22, the work explores the recent rise in the "office wife" phenomenon. Other novels in the series included titles like "Cheap Hotel," "Swamp Girl," and "Plaything."

UVA only in OCLC as of August 2026

Price: $150

How To Marry Somebody Else's Housebroken Husband
Rosina Francesca

20. Rosina Francesca

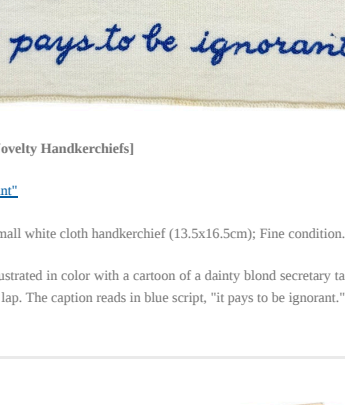
How to Marry Somebody Else's Housebroken Husband

Port Washington, NY: Ashley Books Inc., 1973. First Edition, First Printing. Octavo (21.5cm); publisher's cloth in unclipped pictorial dust jacket; [8],127pp. Wear to cloth sizing along board margins else Very Good, internally clean and sound.

Outrageous how-to for young working women looking to "stalk and marry the housebroken husband," with the initial promise that "the office is a more dangerous meeting ground than any singles bar!" Different chapters explain "Why you should want to marry a married man"; "How to seduce the married man"; and "Why and how to brainwash him" (tell him "you are a liberated woman pursuing a career as a typist or whatever"). The author bio on the rear jacket panel notes all the important qualifications, that she is married to an executive and that they "live in a big Spanish style house in California with their camper, four motorcycles, a jeep and two children."

Three physical copies located in OCLC as of August 2026, at Arizona, LC, and U. Mass Lowell.

Price: $200


By the PRENTICE-HALL Editorial Staff
Revised by MARY A. DE VRIES
SECOND EDITION
PRIVATE SECRETARY'S ENCYCLOPEDIC DICTIONARY
The authoritative, everyday reference-and-guide for the busy secretary
Alphabetically Arranged. Thousands of Entries Cover All Your Duties. Quick Help at Your Fingertips.

21. Prentice-Hall Editorial Staff; Mary A. De Vries [ed.]

Private Secretary's Encyclopedic Dictionary

Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978. Second Edition. Thick octavo (23.55cm); publisher's leatherette in decorative dust jacket; [4],472pp.; tables throughout. Textblock margins and jacket flaps rather heavily foxed, light dust-soil, else Very Good and sound.

Truly a time capsule of defunct technologies and daily requirement that the "busy secretary" needed to survive, from "long-distance calls" and "outgoing mail" to "composing machines" and "traveler's checks."

Price: $50

TERMS: We accept all major credit cards, PayPal, and checks. Reply to info@capitolhillbooks-dc.com for further questions or inquiries, or call Aaron [Leis] at 940-300-2241. All items offered are subject to prior sale. Returns will be accepted for any reason within 10 days of receipt.

Reciprocal courtesies to the trade. Institutions may be billed according to their needs.

Send an email to the above address if you would like to be included on our email list for future e-lists and catalogs.

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
why did I get this? unsubscribe from this list update subscription preferences
Capitol Hill Books · 657 C St SE · Washington, DC 20003-4301 · USA

INTUIT mailchimp