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AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE MAJOR SHORTHAND
SYSTEMS TAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS
OF THE UNITED STATES FROM 1916 TO 1966

AN ABSTRACT OF
A THESIS
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MASTER OF SCIENCE

by
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The problem of this thesis was to prepare an historical review of the changes in shorthand which have taken place in this country covering the period from 1916 to 1960.

The introduction was incorporated into the thesis for the purpose of acquiring a deeper personal appreciation of shorthand as well as to provide a source of information for others who may appreciate being made aware of its long and honored history.

The procedure for uncovering these facts involved searching for written material already in existence and incorporating the findings into a logical sequence to show the gradual evolvement of shorthand from its crude beginnings to a fine writing tool, now indispensable to the worlds of business and reporting.

Personal interviews and written communications with professional people directly involved with shorthand were other sources for information used in the preparation of this paper.

Personal involvement in the studying and the teaching of shorthand from textbooks published from 1916 to the present was most helpful. A careful approach was followed to insure that all facts presented could be verified.

Conclusions show that: the decline in the popularity of Pitman Phonography and the rise in the popularity of

Gregg Shorthand was due, mainly, to the simplicity of the latter as compared to that of the former; Gregg Shorthand eventually became complicated in what seems to have been a scheme for promoting the high-speed possibilities of the system; an almost complete turn-about-face movement took place toward the simplification of Gregg Shorthand when it was discovered that the new and very simple Thomas system had begun to cut deeply into the shorthand market. Shorthand is a product sold in the market, and it must be produced in a form and sold in a manner that will lead the public to buy it. The financial power combined with the talents of the men behind Gregg Shorthand has proved, thus far, to be an unbeatable combination. Shorthand is so vital to the needs of business and reporting that their functioning would be seriously impaired without the services of the people who possess the ability to use this tool. Finally, the growing shortage of people who do possess secretarial skills indicates that educators should become more involved in solving the problem of creating the most effective system.