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HISTORY OF THE DESERET ALPHABET AND OTHER ATTEMPTS  
TO REFORM ENGLISH ORTHOGRAPHY

by

Douglas Allen New

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

Curriculum Development and Supervision

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1985

This Dissertation is Gratefully Dedicated  
To My Wife, VerNene

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express warm appreciation and admiration to Dr. Gail Johnson of the Department of Elementary Education for his tireless kindness, helpfulness, and good humor. Special appreciation is also extended to the other members of my committee, Drs. Douglas Alder of the Department of History, Jay Monson and Malcom Allred of the Department of Elementary Education, and Richard Knight of the Department of Secondary Education. Not only did they make the effort to make themselves available, providing insights and directions, more importantly, they were always kind and understanding.

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Douglas Allen New

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	iii
LIST OF FIGURES . . . . .	vii
ABSTRACT . . . . .	x
Chapter	
I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE. . . . .	1
Introduction . . . . .	1
Statement of the Problem . . . . .	7
Purpose . . . . .	10
Delimitations . . . . .	11
Procedure and Methodology . . . . .	14
Review of the Literature . . . . .	16
History of the English Language and Background of the Spelling Problem . . . . .	16
Simplified Spelling and Phonetic Alphabets . . . . .	17
The Deseret Alphabet . . . . .	21
Reasons for Non-acceptance of Orthographic Reform . . . . .	23
Definitions . . . . .	24
Organization of Chapters . . . . .	29
II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE . . . . .	31
III. SIMPLIFIED SPELLING . . . . .	43
Introduction . . . . .	43
Early Attempts at Spelling Reform . . . . .	44
Later Attempts to Simplify Spelling . . . . .	73
Noah Webster's American Spelling . . . . .	73
Benn Pitman's Solution . . . . .	79
Alexander J. Ellis' Glossic . . . . .	82
The Principles of '76 and the SRA . . . . .	86
The Simplified Spelling Board . . . . .	93
Frederick C. Wingfield's Fwnetic Crthqgrafi . . . . .	107

	Robert E. Zachrisson's Anglic . . . . .	111
	Nue Spelling . . . . .	118
	Axel Wijk's Regularized English . . . . .	124
	Frank C. Laubach's English the New Way . . . . .	130
	Godfrey Dewey's World English Spelling . . . . .	133
	The Spelling Action Society's SR1 . . . . .	138
	Summary . . . . .	142
IV.	AUGMENTED AND NON-ROMANIC ALPHABETS . . . . .	144
	Introduction . . . . .	144
	William Thornton's Universal Alphabet . . . . .	145
	Isaac J. Pitman's Phonotype . . . . .	146
	Edwin Leigh's Pronouncing Orthography . . . . .	155
	Alexander Melville Bell's Visible Speech . . . . .	159
	George Bernard Shaw and the Shavian Alphabet . . . . .	161
	James Pitman's i.t.a. . . . .	173
	John R. Malone's Unifon . . . . .	182
	Summary . . . . .	185
V.	THE DESERET ALPHABET . . . . .	187
	Introduction . . . . .	187
	Characteristics of the Deseret Alphabet . . . . .	191
	Creators of the Deseret Alphabet . . . . .	194
	Reasons for Creation of the Deseret Alphabet . . . . .	198
	Promotion of the Deseret Alphabet . . . . .	204
	Reasons for Abandonment . . . . .	240
VI.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	249
	Introduction . . . . .	249
	Arguments Against Spelling Reform . . . . .	250
	Orthographic Change Would Be	
	Prohibitively Expensive . . . . .	250
	Confusion Would Result . . . . .	251
	Spelling Would Lose Stability . . . . .	253
	Etymological Values Would Be Lost . . . . .	253
	Present Spelling Has Aesthetic Superiority . . . . .	254
	Simplified Spelling Would Not	
	Promote World Use of English . . . . .	254
	Spelling Reform is Not Necessary . . . . .	255

Reasons for Non-acceptance of Spelling Reform . . . . .	257
Social Inertia Exerts a Powerful Influence . . . . .	258
Our Orthography Becomes a Precious Tradition . . . . .	258
Conventional Orthography Bears the Stamp of Authority . . . . .	259
Only Children or Beginning Learners Require Reform . . . . .	259
The Reputation of Reformers is Poor . . . . .	260
Reformers Do Not Agree Among Themselves . . . . .	261
The Future of Orthographic Reform . . . . .	262
Recommendations for Future Research . . . . .	264
REFERENCES . . . . .	266
APPENDICES . . . . .	280
Appendix A. Dissertations Dealing with the Initial Teaching Alphabet Completed Before August, 1984 . . . . .	281
Appendix B. The Letter of Franklin D. Richards, L.D.S. Church Historian, to Hubert Howe Bancroft . . . . .	286
Appendix C. Bibliography . . . . .	291
Books and Theses . . . . .	292
Articles and Reports . . . . .	304
VITA . . . . .	314

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Extracts from the first eight verses of the Gospel of John in six early English Bibles . . . . .	40
2. A specimen of Orm's orthography as found in the <u>Ormulum</u> . . . . .	45
3. An illustration from John Hart's <u>Method or Comfortable Beginning for All Unlearned, Whereby They May Bee Taught to Read English, in a very short time, vvith pleasure</u> , 1570 . . . . .	48
4. Title page of Sir Thomas Smith's <u>De Recta et Emendata Linguae Anglicae Scriptione</u> , 1568 . . . . .	50
5. Title page of William Bullokar's <u>Booke at Large</u> , 1580 . . . . .	51
6. Title page of Richard Hodges' <u>The English Primrose</u> , 1644 . . . . .	55
7. The Lord's Prayer and the Creed, written in the Reverend John Wilkins' proposed alphabet . . . . .	56
8. Title page of G. W.'s <u>Magazine</u> , 1703 . . . . .	61
9. Title page of <u>The Needful Attempt</u> , 1711, author unkown . . . . .	62
10. Title page of Sayer Rudd's <u>Podromos</u> , 1755 . . . . .	64
11. Benjamin Franklin's Reformed Alphabet . . . . .	67
12. Benjamin Franklin's first letter to Mary Stevenson, written in his proposed alphabet, dated July 20, 1768 . .	69
13. Typescript of Benjamin Franklin's first letter to Mary Stevenson, written in his proposed alphabet, dated July 20, 1768 . . . . .	70
14. Title page of Noah Webster's <u>Dissertations</u> , 1789 . . . . .	74
15. Noah Webster's Dedication to Benjamin Franklin of <u>Dissertations on the English Language</u> , 1789 . . . . .	75



16.	Title page and a sample lesson from Benn Pitman's <u>First Phonetic Reader</u> , 1855 . . . . .	81
17.	An editorial cartoon lampooning President Theodore Roosevelt's attempt to simplify spelling . . . . .	101
18.	A specimen of Nue Spelling . . . . .	123
19.	William Thornton's Universal Alphabet . . . . .	147
20.	The first of Isaac Pitman's Phonotypic Alphabets . . . . .	151
21.	Five versions of Fonotypy . . . . .	152
22.	A specimen of Edwin Leigh's Pronouncing Print . . . . .	157
23.	A specimen of Alexander Melville Bell's Visible Speech . . . . .	162
24.	The Shaw Alphabet Reading Key . . . . .	169
25.	The Shaw Alphabet for Writers . . . . .	170
26.	A specimen of the Shaw Alphabet . . . . .	172
27.	The Initial Teaching Alphabet . . . . .	175
28.	The Unifon Alphabet . . . . .	183
29.	The Deseret Alphabet . . . . .	192
30.	The title page of George D. Watt's <u>Exercises in Phonography</u> , 1851 . . . . .	199
31.	<u>The Deseret Alphabet</u> , 1854 . . . . .	210
32.	Deseret Gold Coin, minted 1860, bearing the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord," in Deseret characters . . . . .	218
33.	Title page of the <u>Deseret First Book</u> , 1868 . . . . .	225
34.	A lesson from the <u>Deseret First Book</u> , 1868 . . . . .	226
35.	Title page of the <u>Deseret Second Book</u> , 1868 . . . . .	227
36.	The Errata Sheets from the <u>Deseret First Book</u> and the <u>Deseret Second Book</u> , showing one side of each . . . . .	229

37. The title page of The Book of Mormon, published in Deseret characters, 1869 . . . . . 233
38. Municipal Election—People's Ticket, (February 14, 1876). Election flier printed in Deseret characters . . . . . 238

## ABSTRACT

History of the Deseret Alphabet  
and Other Attempts to Reform English Orthography

by

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Utah State University, 1985

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The purpose of this paper was to examine some of the many proposals and attempts to reform English spelling. The first chapter contained a statement of the problem, an explanation of the procedure and methodology of the research techniques used in this study, a review of the literature, and a definition of terms used in the study. In order to present the reader with a background into the perceived problems inherent within English orthography, a brief history of the English language, with special reference to its spelling, was presented in the second chapter.

The third chapter examined a variety of attempts to reform the spelling of English words prior to the year 1789. Proposals to simplify English spelling, including the work of Noah Webster, Benn Pitman, Alexander J. Ellis, the Spelling Reform Association, the Simplified Spelling Board, Frederick Wingfield, Robert Zachrisson, the

Simplified Spelling Society, Axel Wijk, Frank Laubach, Godfrey Dewey, and the Australian Spelling Action Society, were then described. Chapter four contained an examination of a number of attempts to produce and popularize phonetic alphabets, including augmented and non-romanian alphabets such as the Universal Alphabet, Phonotype, Pronouncing Orthography, Visible Speech, the Shavian Alphabet, the i.t.a., and Unifon.

Chapter five examined the Deseret Alphabet as a case study of one attempt to create and disseminate a phonemic orthographic system using a non-romanian alphabet. An examination of the social and educational context of its formation, its creators and proponents, the extent of its acceptance and utilization, methods of instruction, and reasons for its abandonment was undertaken. A look at the Alphabet as a linguistic entity, its strengths and shortcomings, was made.

The sixth and final chapter presented tentative reasons for the relative non-acceptance of orthographic reform, as well as the arguments which are presented for the retention of the present orthography. Finally, suggestions of future directions for research are given.

(314 pages)

CHAPTER I  
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

For many hundreds of years, the English speaking peoples of the world have been concerned about the spelling, and some would say the misspelling, of their language. A noted scholar of the English language, Professor G.L. Brook, has written:

English spelling is notoriously difficult, and foreigners learning English are bewildered by the lack of correlation between spelling and pronunciation. Those whose native language is English have for so long been accustomed to the vagaries of English spelling that they take them for granted, but it is not uncommon to find even well-educated Englishmen who will admit cheerfully, or even with a touch of pride, that they cannot spell (Brook, 1958, p. 100).

Professor Brook is by no means alone when he writes of the difficulties that spellers of our language have with our capricious and often contradictory orthography. His sentiments have been echoed and re-echoed by those in all strata of society. Even computers are having trouble with English spelling. Hanna programmed a computer with over 3080 spelling rules, then asked the computer to spell 17,310 common English words. The computer spelled only 49% of these words correctly (Hanna, et al, 1966).

This, of course, comes as no surprise to the thousands of teachers who struggle daily to teach their students the mysteries of spelling and reading our mother tongue. The American College Dictionary (Barnhart, 1963, p. xxvii) informs us that only one sound in English (the th, as in thin ) has one spelling. The combination of the letters

t and h, however, can produce two sounds, as in thin and then. The sh sound, on the other hand, has fifteen possible spellings. Six other English sounds have eleven spellings each. To make matters worse, the schwa sound, found in 60% of all English words, is not represented by a single letter or symbol, but can be spelled 36 different ways.

Cannon (1869) said:

There are many words in our language about whose spelling and pronunciation usage is divided...The letters E-A-R spell ear, if we prefix the letter B to this word, we do not produce the word beer, but bear (bare.) If we again add the letter D to those we have already got, we produce (not bear'd) but beard--the ornament which some men are so proud of. If to beard we prefix the letter H, we convert the word into heard; but if we leave out the D and add T instead, we make heart.

Now all those words are differently pronounced, and it will thus be seen that the addition of a single letter will often entirely alter the sound of the other letters in the combination. The letter C produces some very amusing changes in words. In October, for instance, it sounds like K, but like S in December. Again, it makes lose, close and transports a lover into clover. To further illustrate our present absurd way of spelling and pronunciation, we give a few more examples. If we take the letters augh, which generally spell AW, and place the letter L before them, we produce laugh, not law. If we rub out the L at the beginning of the word and write T at the end, we are told that the word does not spell aft but aught. If we then place L at the beginning of the word and ER at the end, we do not read it as lawter, but laughter (lafter); and S added to this again makes (not slafter) but slaughter. Y converts one man into many and N gives a crow a crown; P turns lumber into plumber, and shows a rover to be a prover. B throws poor Tom into the tomb; and the magical E turns Sam into the same; makes Mr. Strang look strange, a star to stare, and throws a rag into rage (p. 180).

Geoffrey Chaucer (1957) has lamented:

And for there is so grete dyversite  
 In English, and in writyng of our tonge,  
 So preye I God, that non myswrite the  
 Ne the mysmetere for default of tonge (p. 479).

Apparently, however, the concern over English spelling irregularities has not always existed. Old English was a highly phonetic language, as are its other Germanic cousins, and its letters were pronounced as they appeared. For example, the K in knee was at one time pronounced. Then, in 1066, the French-speaking Normans conquered England. They not only arbitrarily changed the spellings of hundreds of words, but also introduced many French words into the English language. In addition, many other foreign words have been borrowed and adopted into English from German, Spanish, and scores of other languages. And while the pronunciation of our language has changed through the centuries, the orthography has not. Thus, in short, the problem lies in the fact that one sound can have many spellings, and one spelling can produce many sounds, such as the various pronunciations of ough as in rough, hiccough, through, bough, ought, dough, and trough, or the many possible spellings of the sh sound, as in ship, sure, champagne, anxious, mission, nation, social, issue, ocean, nauseous, Sean, pshaw, fuchsia, schist, and conscious.

In light of the long concern over English orthographic inconsistencies, it comes as no surprise that the idea of reforming English spelling is not a new one. The first reformer of whom we have record is an English Augustinian monk named Orm who lived in the 12th century. Many other Englishmen have followed in his stead, including

John Hart, Alexander Gill, and Ben Jonson (Pitman & St. John, 1969). In the United States, Benjamin Franklin devised a phonetic alphabet and staunchly defended spelling reform. With his long exposure to the printed word and his varied and practical interests, Franklin waited until he was in his sixties before he began experimentation with his phonetic alphabet (Franklin, 1972).

Thomas Jefferson also wrote in defense of spelling reform:

A change has long been desired in English orthography, such as might render it an easy and true index of the pronunciation of words. The want of conformity between the combinations of letters, and the sounds they should represent, increases to foreigners the difficulty in acquiring the language, occasions great loss of time to children in learning to read, and renders correct spelling rare but in those who read much (Jefferson, 1904, p. 347).

Noah Webster, author of the first American dictionary and the famous "Blue-backed Spellers," advocated various reforms in his Dissertations on the English Language (1789). Many of his reforms are with us to this day. For example, we leave the U out of colour, the ME out of programme, and spell theatre with an ER.

In England, Sir Isaac Pitman published his Stenographic Shorthand in 1837. While it was not intended as a spelling reform, but rather a system for rapid writing, Pitman was profoundly interested in orthographic reform. He later designed a system of "phonography," as he termed it, to be used as a popular system of phonemic writing. A Phonotypic Journal was published, a popular society to promulgate its proposals was established, and the Bible and a number of other works were printed in phonographic characters (Goodfellow, n.d.).



An early disciple of Pitman, George Darling Watt, later took these reforms to America where they were taught to Brigham Young and other early L.D.S. (abbreviation for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, formal name of the Mormons and their Church) Church leaders (R. Watt, 1977). George Watt also served as the official Church stenographer during the early 1840s and recorded many of the sermons of Joseph Smith. After coming to Utah, Watt's services were in great demand and his reportings filled the pages of the pioneer Deseret News and he recorded many of the sermons found in the Journal of Discourses (Stringham & Flack, 1958). Many of the principles of Pitman's phonography were later incorporated into the Deseret Alphabet.

Samuel Clemens was also an ardent advocate of spelling reform, as was Melvil Dewey, originator of the famed Dewey Decimal Classification system (Elliott, 1981). Theodore Roosevelt, while President of the United States, threw the weight of his office behind a proposal to reform English spelling and mandated that all government documents be printed using the reforms suggested by the Simplified Spelling Board (Vivian, 1979; Dornbush, 1961; "President Roosevelt," 1906). This organization, which exists to this day under a new name (the Simpler Spelling Association), was funded by Andrew Carnegie, and was headed by Brander Matthews, a professor at Columbia University. Other members of the board included Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, William James, the "Father of American Educational Psychology," Mark Twain, Isaac Funk (whose name is associated with the

Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary ) and Richard Watson Gilder, editor of Century Magazine (Goodfellow, n.d.)

The National Education Association (NEA) also supported simplified spelling by approving a resolution to "rationalize our spelling" (Vaile, 1904). The Chicago Tribune, among other publications, also launched a drive to simplify spelling and used its pages to propagate these reforms. The Tribune's attempt lasted until 1975 (Vivian, 1979).

George Bernard Shaw, the English playwright, was also intrigued by spelling reform and sought for creation of a phonetic alphabet of 40 letters. While his reforms never caught on, this did not deter Shaw in his efforts, which lasted beyond the grave. Shaw stipulated in his will that a trust be established to finance spelling reform and monies from this trust aided in the formation of the Shavian Alphabet. Shaw's influence can also be indirectly seen in the creation of the Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a.). Principally the brainchild of Sir James Pitman, grandson of Sir Isaac Pitman, the i.t.a. was not an attempt to reform English orthography, per se, but rather, was an attempt to aid the beginning reader of English. Downing (1964) confirmed this when he wrote that the Pitman Augmented Roman Alphabet (the original name for the i.t.a.):

...has been designed not as a permanent spelling reform but as an initial device to grade the difficulties of written and printed language in order to help the child read the traditional orthography of English. Because the aim of i.t.a. is to improve reading in the conventional alphabet and spelling of English, the design of i.t.a. is quite different from what it might have been if it had been developed as a spelling reform. (p. x).

This "rumpus" over spelling reform (as O'Connor termed it) is not only alive in the United Kingdom and the United States, but Canada and Australia as well (O'Connor, 1976). It has been estimated that there have been over three hundred documented attempts to reform English orthography (Ives, 1979; Groff, 1976; Venezky, 1970).

#### Statement of the Problem

As has been seen, numerous writers, philosophers, linguists, educators, and others, have indicated that the present orthography of the English language presents decoding problems for both native-speaking English beginning readers, as well as for those for whom English is a second language. Indeed, one writer has produced a book entitled English Spelling: Roadblock to Reading (Dewey, 1971). Additionally, others perceive traditional English orthography as the main cause of spelling difficulties, which, these writers argue, all face to some extent.

Since the twelfth century, various reforms have been proposed to effect changes in English orthography. These reforms may be broadly classified into two general categories: Simplified Spelling and Phonetic Alphabets (Monson, 1953). The various merits and drawbacks to these proposals are debated to this day.

Information concerning historical attempts at orthographic reform are only to be found in scattered documents, many of which are located in specialized journals or are otherwise inaccessible to policy makers, developers of curriculum, teachers, or other interested parties. No attempt has yet been made to bring together these extensive materials into a single, comprehensive, unified historical study. Such a work would prove valuable to historians of education, our language, and our culture. Also, a readily accessible historical perspective of orthographic reform would prove beneficial to educational practitioners and others in their current and future deliberations.

The Deseret Alphabet was a major attempt on the part of a religious society to reform English orthography. It has been the subject of numerous articles, both secular (Walker, 1974; Ellsworth, 1973; Simmonds, 1969) and religious (Asay, 1978; Rowe, 1978; Dederer, 1969). Additionally, its history has been the subject of three Master's theses (Wintersteen, 1970; Olsen, 1952; Monson, 1947).

It has been the subject of much controversy from its inception, with its Mormon supporters echoing the sentiments of Brigham Young, a chief proponent of the Alphabet who said that it would prove to be a great advantage to both foreigners and children in their efforts to learn English (Young, 1868, p. 298). On the other hand, Jules Remy, in a contemporary Gentile (non-Mormon) account predicted that the Alphabet, while "praiseworthy," would, nonetheless, "have no success, and will be abandoned by its authors, on account of the difficulty

which must be experienced in its application" (Remy, 1861, p. 185). This dichotomy of opinion has survived to this day, with some calling the Deseret Alphabet "outstanding" (Carter, 1939) and "noble" (Christensen, 1955), with another labeling it an "educational freak" (Dwyer, 1971.) One writer has even commented that copies of the Deseret News during the 1850s and 1860s which had articles published in the Deseret characters "could have been mistaken for a Turkish tax list" (Ashton, 1950, p. 76). To date, however, no comprehensive examination of the Deseret Alphabet as a reading/spelling curriculum has been undertaken. We do not know how it was taught in the schools, nor where it was taught or by whom.

June Russell Gilstad speaks of the utility and desirability of historical research of reading when she states:

Reading educators ought to inquire, how can knowledge of past reading instruction enable us to have a better understanding of contemporary practices and help to resolve current problems? The answer is that the most extensive and richest source of specific information about current practices is to be obtained from those who initiated and transmitted them to us, namely our predecessors. Information from them will enable us to distinguish specific, inherited practices from one another and, knowing their origins, to develop a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of them....

Historical knowledge, by enabling us to distinguish and understand our current procedures, can provide an enlightened perspective and realistic foundation for contemporary investigations (Gilstad, 1979, pp. 4-5).

These needs represent a number of serious gaps in our knowledge of educational history which need to be filled.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine selected attempts which have been made to reform English orthography. There exist numerous sources, primary and secondary, on the history of the English language. This is also true of sources concerning the need for orthographic reform as well as various proposals and attempts to effect these reforms. These sources are herein synthesized into a comprehensive, yet concise, whole.

This study:

1. Presents a brief history of the English language in order to provide the reader with a background into the perceived problems inherent within English orthography, what they are and how they came to be. This will give a better understanding of the current structure, both written and spoken, of the English language. Also examined is the lack of phoneme-grapheme correlation which are the basis, spelling reformers argue, of the need for spelling reform.

2. Examines attempts, past and present, to simplify the spelling of English words. These attempts seek to phoneticize the spelling of English words by deleting silent letters and double letters and by generally assigning one sound to one letter. In simplified spelling, there are no attempts to add any additional characters or marks to either the alphabet or individual words.

3. Examines the many attempts to produce and popularize

phonetic alphabets. These would include augmented alphabets which use the Roman alphabet as a base (such as the i.t.a.) and non-roman alphabets (such as Franklin's alphabet, Pitman's phonotypic characters, and the Deseret Alphabet.)

4. Examines the Deseret Alphabet as a case study of one attempt to create and disseminate a phonemic orthographic system using a non-roman alphabetic system. An examination of the social and educational context of its formation, its creators and proponents, the extent of its acceptance and utilization, methods of instruction, and reasons for its abandonment, is undertaken. A look at the Alphabet as a linguistic entity, its strengths and shortcomings, is made. This study also determines whether the Deseret Alphabet met the objections of our present orthography.

5. Examines tentative reasons for the relative non-acceptance of orthographic change, as well as the arguments which are presented for the "conservation" of the present orthography (Smith, 1980.) Finally, suggestions of future directions for research and further examination are given.

#### Delimitations

There have been over three hundred documented attempts or proposals to reform English orthography (Ives, 1979). It is not the purpose of this study to present all of these proposals. Many were

very limited in the scope of their acceptance. Others were merely repetitions of previous proposals. Numerous proposals were made during and prior to the 16th century, when printing was relatively new and books were scarce. There is very little information available about these early proposals, therefore they are given only cursory attention. Finally, relatively few proposals ever get beyond the production stage and are generally untried or untested.

The following criteria are used to determine whether to include a particular spelling reform proposal or attempt in this study. The particular reform need meet only one of the following criteria to be included:

1. The fame of its creators and/or proponents;
  2. The extent of its acceptance and/or utilization, either in the schools or by the public in general;
  3. The amount of existing literature on the particular reform;
- and,
4. The availability of those materials;
  5. The conceptual significance or uniqueness of the particular proposal, as identified in the current literature.

There have been many hundreds of scholarly and popular works written on the history of the English language. Thousands of articles, in both the professional and popular press, have been written. Our language has a rich, varied, and fascinating history. However, it is not the purpose of this study to present the history of our language to



any extent; this has been done elsewhere (Brook, 1958; Pei, 1952; Bryant, 1948). The chapter on the history of the English language is brief and focuses on the changes which have occurred over the centuries in our written and spoken language and which have occasioned the need for orthographic reform and to give the reader enough background to understand the reasoning behind spelling reform.

Various attempts and proposals have been designed to aid the speller, as well as the reader in decoding. These include diacritical markings, color codes, and rebus syllabaries. While they do represent attempts to aid the reader in his attempt to successfully deal with the demands of a difficult orthography, they are not attempts to reform English spelling; therefore, they are not examined in this study.

Finally, the Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a.) has had the most widespread trial in the schools of any of the various orthographic reforms. It has been the subject of numerous theses and dissertations, most of which employed an experimental design which compared the effects of the i.t.a. on spelling and reading scores of children with control groups taught in the traditional orthography. It is beyond the scope of this work to present a critical examination of these studies. For the convenience of the reader, an appendix (Appendix A) is included listing all dissertations completed in the United States dealing with the i.t.a. completed before August, 1984.

## Procedure and Methodology

In order to locate pertinent sources or written materials on spelling reform and the Deseret Alphabet, the author first went to a number of preliminary sources. A computer search of the ERIC file, U.S. Government Documents, the Language and Language Behavior Abstracts, and the America: History and Life file was undertaken. Additionally, a manual search of all of the Cumulative Dissertation Abstracts, Cumulative Book Indexes, the Nineteenth Century Readers' Guide, as well as the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature was accomplished. The key words used included; ALPHABET(S); DESERET ALPHABET; ENGLISH LANGUAGE, HISTORY; ENGLISH LANGUAGE, ORTHOGRAPHY; INITIAL TEACHING ALPHABET; READING; SPELLING; and SPELLING REFORM.

From this search, it was determined that scores of dissertations, hundreds of books, and thousands of articles, both in professional journals and popular magazines on the subject of spelling reform have been written.

In searching for materials on the Deseret Alphabet, it was necessary to go to the holdings of Utah State University, the University of Utah, Brigham Young University, the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Utah State Historical Society. Additionally, a search was made of the indexes of every periodical having to do with L.D.S. or Utah histories. Also, every available book and dissertation written on the history of Utah and the L.D.S. Church and its leaders (such as Brigham Young, Heber C.

Kimball, and Orson Pratt) and on the life of others prominent in the formation and propagation of the Deseret Alphabet (such as George D. Watt, creator of the Alphabet, and Richard L. Campbell, Territorial Superintendent of Schools) was examined. Every known reference to the Deseret Alphabet has been identified and is now in the possession of the author, as is a photocopy of the two Deseret Readers.

This dissertation employs two methods of historical study. As the reforms proposals are identified and gathered, they are placed into one of the two categories suggested by S.C. Monson (1953): (1) Simplified Spelling, or (2) Phonetic Alphabets. They are then presented in chronological order within these subtopics. This portion of the study is organized and synthesized as a descriptive historical study. No attempt is undertaken to evaluate or interpret the data at this point. A chronicle of the proposals and attempts are given, examining a) who was involved in the reform; b) where it took place; c) when; d) how the reform was designed; e) the extent of its acceptance and/or use; and, f) its conceptual nature, that is, how the reform sought to accomplish its proclaimed end--the improvement of English spelling.

The chapter on the Deseret Alphabet is not only descriptive, but also interpretive in nature. Reasons for its creation, reactions to it, and causes for its abandonment are examined. The concluding chapter analyzes why these reforms have had relatively little support or acceptance, and examines the "case" against spelling reform and the future of orthographic simplification. Analysis, evaluation, and

interpretation is not undertaken for each individual reform proposal examined, nor are the various proposals compared or contrasted with each other.

Occasionally, it is necessary within this study to consult secondary sources. Insofar as possible, the primary sources which are cited are then examined.

### Review of the Literature

As this study is largely a gathering and organization of existing literature, only a brief review is given here; this is divided into subsections corresponding with the purposes of this study. This review is designed to lay the foundation for the chapters which follow.

#### History of the English Language and Background of the Spelling Problem

D.G. Scragg has written a scholarly volume entitled A History of English Spelling (1974). In it, Scragg reviewed the history of the spelling of English words, beginning with Germanic Old English, the introduction of the Roman alphabet by early Christian missionaries, and the invasion of England by the French in 1066. Scragg indicated that while English pronunciation has undergone profound changes, our orthography has not kept pace with those changes. A pivotal factor which arrested English orthographic change was the publication in 1755 of Dr. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language. Not only

did Johnson freeze the spelling of English words so that spelling could no longer be changed easily, in order to be more consonant with the pronunciation of the particular words, but he made the spelling of a number of words more difficult. For example, Johnson changed det to debt in order to show the etymologic background of the word.

Additionally, Scragg has shown that the spelling of many of our words today is the result of printers' mistakes which were repeated and eventually took hold. Well written and scholarly, this study is rich in the use of primary sources.

#### Simplified Spelling and Phonetic Alphabets

In 1789, Noah Webster published his Dissertations on the English Language: with notes, historical and critical, to which is added an appendix, an Essay on a Reformed Mode of Spelling, with Dr. Franklin's Arguments on that Subject. In this work, Webster acknowledged that spoken languages "are changing, from age to age, in proportion to improvements in science" (p. 391), but that spelling does not keep pace with those changes. Webster then argued for a simplification of spelling, making it more agreeable with the spoken language. Nila Banton Smith wrote that this was an opportune time for Webster to accomplish his reforms as the people of the newly independent United States were anxious for reform, for the throwing off of things which were European, hence decadent, and for the adoption of that which was peculiarly American (Smith, 1965).

A professor of English at Yale University, Thomas R. Lounsbury, labored long and hard for spelling reform. His foremost work on the subject was English Spelling and Spelling Reform (1909) which carried a distinct apologetic tone. In this work, Dr. Lounsbury wrote about "the problem" of "the orthographic situation" in which he briefly dealt with the history of the English language and the lack of consonance between written and spoken English. He proposed simplified spelling as a "method of relief" and then went on to deal with "Objections, real and reputed" against orthographic reform. While Dr. Lounsbury did not present any new proposal to reform spelling, his summation of arguments, pro and con, of the English language, are scholarly and notable. It should be kept in mind, however, that this work was written for the purpose of arousing public support for orthographic simplification.

George Bernard Shaw wrote and spoke often about the English language in general and spelling reform in particular and his writings have been collected in a work entitled Shaw on Language, edited by Dr. Abraham Tauber (1963), with a foreword by Sir James Pitman. This work is a compilation of scores of letters, speeches, and excerpts from Shaw's many works. Shaw's popular play Pygmalion, from which was drawn the musical My Fair Lady, contains many pleas for spelling reform, according to Tauber. It was Shaw who attempted to demonstrate the absurdity of English spelling by writing that FISH should be spelled GHOTI (the GH from enough, O from women, TI from solution.) Also

contained in this book is a brief history of the development of the Shavian Alphabet. This alphabet was created after the death of Shaw, according to the principles laid down in Shaw's Will.

Jown A. Downing was a prolific and vocal supporter of the i.t.a. and one of his works is entitled The Initial Teaching Alphabet Reading Experiment (1964). This work contains a history of the formulation of the i.t.a. and cites research dealing with the implementation of the i.t.a. within the schools and its relative effectiveness in teaching beginning reading as opposed to t.o. (traditional orthography). Downing stressed the fact that the i.t.a. was neither a phonetic alphabet nor an attempt to reform English spelling. A major purpose of the i.t.a. was to prepare readers to cope effectively with reading and writing in the traditional orthography. Examples of works produced in the i.t.a. are reproduced and numerous questions concerning the system are addressed. Downing's work is most notable in that it represents the first of a number of books seeking to popularize the i.t.a. among educators and the general public.

W. Haas, in his work Alphabets for English (1969) presented a number of papers on the broad topic of English orthographic reform. The first, written by Haas himself, is entitled "On spelling and spelling reform." It is a very well-informed and well-formulated survey of the work done in the field of spelling reform. The second paper is by Sir James Pitman and presents the reader with a brief examination of the Initial Teaching Alphabet. The next paper is by

Axel Wijk and deals with his attempt to "regularize English" (see below). P.A.D. McCarthy is the next contributor with his "New Spelling with Old Letters." The basic idea of this system, worked out by the Simplified Spelling Society in Great Britain, is the systematic registration in writing of each phoneme by one and the same grapheme or graphemic group. This system is known as "New Spelling." The fourth paper, "The Bernard Shaw Alphabet," also by McCarthy, details the history of the alphabetic script awarded the chief prize in the competition organized in Great Britain in conformity with G.B. Shaw's will.

McCarthy informs us that Shaw was obsessed with the idea of liberating written English from "the unhappy legacy from Rome," i.e. from the Roman alphabet and its inconsistent use in English, and he bequeathed a large sum of money to be used for the construction of an alphabetic script to be used for English. McCarthy writes of the competition, in which he served as a judge, and of the subsequent printing in this new alphabet of Shaw's Androcles and the Lion (1962). This work is especially worthy of note in that its contributors are well-known in the field of spelling reform and were first-hand witnesses to various attempts to reform English orthography which took place in Great Britain since World War Two.

Reform proposals for English spelling are not the exclusive domain of native English-speakers, as the Swedish Axel Wijk demonstrates. In his Regularized English, Regularized English (1977), Wijk presented "a



proposal for an effective solution of the reading problem in the English-speaking countries." Basically, Wijk proposed a phonetic spelling for English using the traditional alphabet. He "regularized" English by discarding all irregular ways of writing phonemes or phonemic groups. Since there is often more than one way of writing a certain phonic fact, Wijk's scheme is able to preserve an important asset of traditional spelling, that is, to differentiate homophones by spelling them differently. Thus, Wijk argued, we can still distinguish BLUE from BLEW. Wijk's work has been cited by a number of others prominent in the spelling reform movement, some of whom argue that Wijk's "regularization" of English is the most practicable of the recent reform proposals.

#### The Deseret Alphabet

The most thorough, extensive, and scholarly treatment of the Deseret Alphabet yet published is Samuel Christian Monson's thesis, The Deseret Alphabet (1947). The history of the Alphabet, the reasons for its creation, as well as the causes of its abandonment, are detailed. This study is rich in detail and many primary sources are identified and utilized. His thesis does not, however, deal with the Alphabet as an educational entity, if it was taught, or by whom. Much of Monson's work on the Deseret Alphabet was incorporated in his later dissertation Representative American Phonetic Alphabets (1954). The latter study presents a history of the most well-known American phonetic alphabets,

their creators, and the degree of their usage.

Larry Wintersteen has also produced a thesis entitled The Deseret Alphabet. (1970). While it is largely a reiteration of previously published materials on the Deseret Alphabet, and relies too heavily upon secondary sources (three-fourths of Wintersteen's citations are from secondary sources), it is notable in that Wintersteen includes a number of interviews with people who remember being taught reading using the Alphabet or know of those who were. While not particularly well written, and frequently inaccurate in his citations of primary sources (over 50% of his Deseret News citations, for example, were inaccurate), his usage of oral history makes this work unique in the field.

Floris Springer Olsen's thesis is entitled Early Nineteenth Century Shorthand Systems and Possible Similarities Between Any of Them and the Deseret Alphabet (1952). In it, she examined the history of the Deseret Alphabet and compares it with various shorthand systems in terms of similarities of characters, sounds which the characters represent, and manners in which the systems operated.

Another scholarly examination of the Deseret Alphabet has been undertaken by William V. Nash in his research paper, "The Deseret Alphabet" (1957). In it, Nash presented the history of the Alphabet, characteristics of the symbols, source of the Deseret characters, as well as the use of the Alphabet. This paper is rich in detail and contains an excellent bibliography of original sources.

Juanita Brooks has also written an erudite article entitled "The Deseret Alphabet." Appearing in the Utah Historical Quarterly in 1944, her examination of the Alphabet has been cited often by other writers in their works on the Deseret Alphabet.

Ida Watt Stringham and Dora Flack (1958) have written the most thorough and comprehensive biography of George D. Watt yet undertaken, England's First "Mormon" Convert: The Biography of George Darling Watt. Though apologetic in tone, Stringham and Flack present the reader with a view of Watt's early life and introduction to the Pitman Phonotype, his conversion to Mormonism, and his labors as a recorder of the sermons of early Church leaders. An entire chapter is devoted to Watt's central role in the development and early dissemination of the Deseret Alphabet. This book was written for Watt's many descendants and is by no means a critical examination of the man or his work.

Scores of other articles have appeared both in scholarly journals and popular magazines, as well as in L.D.S. Church publications. It has also been given brief mention in many histories of Utah and the Mormons, as well as in the biographies of a number of early Church leaders. Descriptions of the Alphabet have also appeared in the writings of a number of travelers who came to the early Utah Territory and later reported their adventures.

#### Reasons for Non-acceptance of Orthographic Reform

Spelling for the Millions (1977) by Edna L. Furness is more a book

on how to improve your spelling than on spelling reform, but it does deal with the need for spelling reform and what we can do until such reform is effected. Philip T. Smith's article, "In Defence of Conservatism in English Orthography" (1980), is one example of the many arguments which have been used against spelling reform. Smith's basic premise is that traditional English orthography provides the reader with many kinds of linguistic clues which aid in comprehension and word identification. He stated that there is evidence from a variety of psycholinguistic tasks which shows that both adults and children exploit this information and allows them to read more easily. He also argued that a fast and effective writing system need not stay close to the phonemic details of speech.

Finally, a short story on spelling reform "Meihem In Ce Klasrum" (Mayhem in the Classroom) by Dolton Edwards (1952) has been published in The Astounding Science Fiction Anthology. This story dealt with the "history" of the reformation of English orthography from the time the President of the United States inaugurated National Easy Language Week in 1946 to the ultimate simplification of spelling by the year 1975. It is an imaginative and amusing view of what would happen to a world in which spelling had been simplified.

#### Definitions

(Note: These definitions have been taken from A Dictionary of Reading and Related Terms published by the International Reading Association

(Harris & Hodges, 1981). The only exceptions are the definitions of "Deseret," "Gentile," and "Mormon.")

Alphabetic writing -a writing system in which one or several letters represents one speech sound or phoneme, but not a syllable, morpheme, or word.

Analphabetic -not alphabetic; using a system other than our Roman alphabet.

Augmented alphabet -any number of expanded English alphabets designed to make spelling and reading easier by the addition of letters so that each grapheme represents a different phoneme of the spoken language.

Color coding -the use of color cues to indicate the relationship between specific letters or graphemes and the sounds they represent.

Decode -to change communication signals into messages; especially, to get the intended meaning from an analysis of the spoken or graphic symbols of a familiar language. Note: to learn to read, one must learn the conventional code in which something is written in order to decode the written message. In reading practice, the term is used primarily to refer to word identification rather than to higher units of meaning.

Deseret -A Book of Mormon term meaning "honeybee." The symbolism of the industriousness of the bee and the unity of the hive was selected by Brigham Young as an ensample for the Latter-day Saints. Even in modern-day Utah, variations on the bee and the hive are found on the state flag and the state seal, and the bee is the Utah state insect.

Deseret is also a common term in present-day Utah, with a bank, a mortuary, a pharmaceutical company, and a chain of second-hand thrift stores each having "Deseret" in their names.

Diacritic or Diacritic (-al) mark -a mark added to a grapheme to indicate a specific pronunciation. Note: Diacritic marks are generally used to augment an alphabet so that a unique symbol is available for each speech sound or phoneme in a particular language.

Digraph -two letters which represent one speech sound, as ch for /ch/ in chin.

Encode -to change a message into symbols.

Etymology -the study of the origins and development of the structure and meanings of words.

Gentile -the Mormon term for people not of their faith.

Grapheme -a written or printed orthographic representation of a phoneme, as b and oy for /b/ and /oi/ for boy. Note: In English, a grapheme may be a single alphabet letter or a group of letters as in boy above, and includes all of the ways in which it may be written or printed.

Grapheme-phoneme correspondence -the relationship between a grapheme and the phoneme(s) it represents; letter-sound correspondence. Note: technically, grapheme-phoneme correspondence refers to letter-to-sound correspondence, not vice-versa.

Homograph -a word with the same spelling as another word, whether or not pronounced alike, as pen (a writing instrument) vs. pen (an

enclosure,) or bow (and arrow) vs. bow (of a ship.)

Homophone -technically, a word with the same pronunciation as another word, whether or not spelled alike, as hair and hare , or scale (of a fish) and scale (a ladder.)

Lexicography -dictionary making, as writing, editing, compiling a dictionary.

Linguistics -the study of the nature and structure of language and languages; the study of the nature of language communication.

Mormon -common nickname for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or for the Church itself. It comes from the title of the L.D.S. book of scripture, The Book of Mormon.

Orthography -the study of the nature and use of symbols in a writing system; a writing system, generally, one in which the speech sounds of a language are represented by alphabetic characters.

Phoneme -a minimal linguistic unit in spoken language whose replacement can result in a meaning difference, as /p/ , /b/ in pin and bin.

Phoneme-grapheme correspondence - the relationship between a phoneme and its graphemic representation(s), as /s/, spelled s in sit, c in city, and ss in grass. Note: technically, phoneme-grapheme correspondence refers to sound-to-letter correspondence, not vice-versa.

Phonemic alphabet -a writing system with a predominant one-to-one correspondence of phonemes with graphemes, and in which other correspondences are predictable by simple rules.

Phonetic alphabet -an alphabet containing a distinctive alphabetic character for each distinguishable speech sound, or phone, of a language.

Phonetics -the scientific study of speech sounds; specifically, their physical structure, production, transmission, and reception, as well as their transcription, analysis, and classification.

Phonetic spelling -the respelling of entry words in a dictionary or glossary according to a pronunciation key; incorrect spelling of a word as though it were phonetically regular.

Phonology -the study of speech sounds and their functions in a language or languages.

Rebus -the use of a picture or symbol that suggests a word or a syllable.

Spelling -the process of representing language by means of a writing system, or orthography.

Spelling reform -an individual or organized effort to simplify an orthography, generally one based on a correspondence of phonemes and graphemes so that spelling conforms to pronunciation, and vice-versa.

Syllabary -a list of syllables, or the characters representing syllables.

Transliterate -to represent or spell (words, letters, or characters of one language) in the letters or characters of another language or alphabet.



## Organization of Chapters

This study is organized into chapters in the following manner:

1. Chapter one contains this dissertation proposal, including a statement of the problem and an introduction to the study.

2. Chapter two contains background information on the history of the English language. This gives a better understanding of the current structure, both written and spoken, of the English language. Also examined is the lack of phoneme-grapheme relationship which is the basis, spelling reformers argue, of the need for spelling reform.

3. Chapter three contains a history of various spelling reform proposals before 1789. This chapter also deals with various efforts to simplify spelling while retaining our traditional alphabet.

4. Chapter four examines various attempts to produce and popularize phonetic alphabets, including augmented alphabets that use the Roman alphabet as a base, and non-roman alphabets.

5. Chapter five deals with the Deseret Alphabet as a case study of a reading/spelling curriculum using a non-roman phonemic alphabet. An examination of the social and educational context of its formation, its creators and proponents, the extent of its acceptance and utilization, methods of instruction, reactions to it, and reasons for its abandonment, is undertaken. A look at the Deseret Alphabet as a linguistic entity, its strengths and shortcomings, is made. This chapter also determines whether or not the Alphabet met the objections

of our present orthography. The chapter on the Deseret Alphabet is not only descriptive, but interpretive in nature.

6. Chapter six examines the various reasons for the non-acceptance of orthographic reform, the "case" against spelling reform, the effects which reforms have had to date, and the future of orthographic simplification. Also in this chapter, recommendations of future directions for research are presented.

## CHAPTER II

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Dissatisfaction with the ability of children and adults to spell correctly has been a persistent concern since at least the thirteenth century (Ebel, 1969). The inconsistencies of English orthography elicited E.O. Vaile (1901) to call English spelling "accursed." Lounsbury (1909, p. 47) wrote that no other spelling in the world is "by any means so wretched as ours." Monroe (1915, p. 393) wrote that "English spelling is recognized to be worse than that of any other modern language..." The noted linguist and author, Mario Pei (1965), has written:

English spelling is by far the worst, the most inconsistent, of all spellings on earth...(p. 432).

English spelling, as has been frequently pointed out by G.B. Shaw, Senator Robert Owen, and others, is a monument to traditionalism so weird as to be practically incredible. We have only five written vowels but at least thirteen vowel sounds, plus some thirty vowel combinations, or diphthongs...A group like ou appears with a different phonetic value in each of these words: "house," "cough," "cousin," "through," "furlough," "could."

The process of learning to spell is an endless one, continuing through elementary school, high school, and college, and often not quite completed by the time the English-speaking student emerges with a university degree. In this one respect, English is a tongue of infinite difficulty, far harder than any of its kindred Indo-European languages (pp. 303-304).

The first objective of this study is to present a brief history of the English language in order to provide the reader with a background

into the perceived problems inherent within English orthography, what they are and how they came to be. This will give a better understanding of the current structure, both written and spoken, of the English language. Also examined is the lack of phoneme-grapheme correlation which are the basis, spelling reformers argue, of the need for spelling reform.

There have been many hundreds of scholarly and popular works written on the history of the English language. Thousands of articles, in both the professional and popular press, have been written. Our language has a rich, varied, and fascinating history. However, it is not the purpose of this study to present the history of our language to any extent; this has been done elsewhere. This chapter on the history of the English language is brief and focuses on the changes which have occurred over the centuries in our language, providing the reader with enough background to understand the reasoning behind spelling reform. For an in-depth study of the history of English, the reader is invited to peruse the works on the history of the English language and English spelling listed in the bibliography.

Monroe (1915) pointed out that in considering the principles of orthography we need to bear in mind the fact that words were spoken long before they were written down. "Even now the real life of the language lies in the spoken word rather than in the written page" (p. 391). Writing is a means of recording that which has an independent existence of its own. The object of writing is to give permanence to

the spoken word and to expand its influence.

English belongs to the family of about 100 Indo-European languages. From their original home, which is believed to have been somewhere in east-central Europe, the Indo-European peoples began to disperse about 3000 B.C., first to the south-east, then across all of Europe and into western Asia as far as India. The term "Indo-European" refers to the extent of the various tribes' migrations. After the tribes, of which we know very little, separated, each tribe's language developed in isolation. English is in the Germanic branch of Indo-European, together with Dutch, Frisian, Flemish, German, and the Scandinavian languages (Pei, 1965).

The first external influence on English came in pre-English times through contact on the continent between the Roman legions and the Germanic tribes. These tribes borrowed Latin words describing warfare, trade, and home life. Examples include the words street, wall, pound, butter, and bishop.

A second stage of borrowing from Latin occurred during the period when the Roman legions occupied Britain. During this time, from the beginning of the first century to the fifth century, Romans were in contact with the original Celtic inhabitants of Britain. Although Latin did not replace the Celtic languages, it did influence them. The place names of towns ending in -cester (Worcester), -caster (Lancaster), -wick (Southwick), and -wich (Sandwich) are continuing examples of Roman influence upon English (Deighton, 1971).

During the fifth century, invaders from the Danish peninsula, Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, invaded Britain, driving the native Celts to the northern and western portions of Britain. From the Germanic invaders came some geographic names, such as London, Dover, York, and Thames. Germanic languages replaced the Celtic languages in what came to be known as Angle Land or Enga Land. Even today, in French, England is called Anglaterre. In Spanish, it is called Inglaterra. Both mean "land of the Angles."

A third stage of borrowing from Latin came after Christianity was systematically introduced into Britain, in 597 A.D., when a mission from Pope Gregory the Great, headed by Augustine, landed in Kent. Christian influence brought about a significant change in Anglo-Saxon life, and they borrowed a large number of Latin religious, domestic, and educational words. These include candle, hymn, nun, monk, priest, temple, cap, school, and grammar (Deighton, 1971).

In the ninth century came the invasions of the Scandinavians, or Vikings, who conquered the northeastern half of England. These invaders spoke various dialects of Old Norse; like Old English, it was a Germanic language, and many common nouns and verbs were introduced by them. These include law, husband, egg, give, and take. Also adopted into standard English were the pronouns they, their, and them. With the assimilation of Scandinavian influences into English, the period of Old English, A.D. 450 to 1066, came to a close (Francis, 1963).

The Norman conquest of 1066 was the beginning of the Middle English period, during which the vocabulary and word-forming processes of English were significantly affected. William of Normandy's conquest was a military, political, and cultural one, and until about 1200 the language of the conquerors prevailed over English, which was relegated to a position of little prestige. The Normans were a rich, powerful, and refined class, and French became the language of the court and of commerce. Even those whose native speech was English, if they desired to assume a position in the upper classes, had to learn French early. Only the ordinary people continued to use English freely and exclusively. Although these masses lacked wealth and power, their very numbers forced bilingualism upon their superiors. French was the last foreign influence on English before the Renaissance.

The works of Geoffrey Chaucer, and to a lesser extent, John Wyclif's translation of the Bible into English, brought Middle English to its peak, which period ended about 1450. The Late Middle English period saw the beginning of what is known as the Great Vowel Shift, considered the most significant change in pronunciation in the language's history. Nist (cited in Deighton, 1971, p. 369) has classified the Great Vowel Shift as "a major dislocation [in] the pronunciation of the English language." The pronunciation of vowels changed markedly. At the same time, a number of consonants and consonant clusters either changed their pronunciation or became silent. Thus Chaucer's boot was pronounced like our boat, and his bleed like

our blade. Other phonological changes took place in English during this time, thus the /gh/ in laughter changed from /x/ to /f,/ and the /k/ in knee became silent.

Nist (cited in Deighton, 1971, p. 370) has illustrated the major changes in phonology that resulted from the Great Vowel Shift. Several words common to both Middle and Modern English and their corresponding present-day rhymes are presented below:

COMMON WORD	MIDDLE ENGLISH	MODERN ENGLISH
house	goose	louse
bite	sweet	light
blood	road	mud
meat	fate	sweet
fly	sea	sigh
debate	pot	eight
love	groove	of
rout	cute	pout
wait	height	late
blow	sue	so

"The present-day result of these influences is that of all the leading languages on earth, English is notoriously the worst speller--that is, its written system corresponds poorly with its spoken" (Deighton, 1971, p. 370).

While English was undergoing the Great Vowel Shift, the Early Modern Period of English began with the publication by William Caxton of the first book printed in England in 1476. During this time, the rediscovery of Greek and Roman history, philosophy, and literature brought many new words into English. Italian, Spanish, German, and Dutch words were also absorbed into English, and French words continued



to enter during the Renaissance period.

As England established an empire, and later America spread its interests throughout the world, many languages influenced English. Among these influences are Arabic (algebra, alcohol), some of the languages of India (thug, bungalow), Chinese and Japanese (tea, chop), Australian (kangaroo), Malay (taboo, gong), Hungarian (paprika), Afrikaans (trek, spoor), and Native American (tepee, papoose). This borrowing of foreign words has contributed to the inconsistencies of English spelling because the pronunciations of many foreign words have been anglicized without a corresponding graphemic change. Monroe (1915) has written:

Inconsistency is introduced when words are borrowed from foreign tongues, since they sometimes bring with them the spelling they had in the language in which they were born, a language which had its own system of symbols satisfactory to itself but not likely to be identical with the system of the other language into which the new word is adopted; and the orthographic confusion is made worse when some of the imported words are allowed to retain their original symbols and others are respelt in accordance with native usage (p. 392).

Modern English spelling is historically related to the emergence of the Phoenician alphabet (about 1000 B.C.) and its subsequent refinement in Greek (900 B.C.) and Latin (600 B.C.). From Italy the Latin alphabet passed, in the course of Roman conquest, to Gaul and Britain. The present English alphabet owes much to Anglo-Saxon scribes—mostly monks and religious clerics—who drew together the alphabet of Old English. It was with the coming of the Christian missionaries that the continuous history of English orthography began

(Scragg, 1974). They used what Latin graphemes they could, borrowed some from the older runic alphabet, and invented some. The result was an alphabetic system that came very close to being isomorphic, that is, achieving a one-to-one sound-spelling correspondence. During the period of Old English, those who could write, spelled the language with a high degree of spelling accuracy.

Following the Battle of Hastings on October 14, 1066, an increasing divergence between the signs of the alphabet and the sounds they represent took place. First of all, the English language was suppressed and for more than two centuries the official language of the English court was French. At the same time the language of the British peasant was being driven underground, English was being deluged with a vast influx of loan words, at first from French, then from the other Romance languages, and from Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

Still other factors, such as learned restoration (the desire on the part of some lexicographers to show the etymologic origins of words), spelling pronunciation, and transliteration from Greek to Latin, also contributed to the growing confusion in English spelling. These factors, respectively, gave English the silent b in doubt and debt, the k represented by c in perfect, and the unnecessary h in rhyme and rhythm.

Finally, to make matters worse, printers of the Early Modern English Period helped codify and systematize the orthography of the language at a time when it was undergoing spectacular changes in

pronunciation. Unfortunately, many of the spellings of words which early printers introduced were either the result of that which was most convenient for the printer, or else were downright errors. For example, many spellings in the first King James Bible of 1611 were inconsistent, the preferred spelling being that which suited the spacing (Scragg, 1974).

By 1700 the stabilization of English spelling was complete. Relatively few changes have taken place in spelling since that time, and have affected comparatively few words. (See Figure 1 for a representation of the changes and eventual standardization of English spelling.) The major exceptions to this, however, were the changes introduced by Noah Webster. In his patriotic zeal to produce a peculiarly American language, Webster simplified the spellings of many words, dropping the silent u in honour and colour, the k in publick and musick, and the use of s instead of c in defense. Webster's Blue-backed Spellers, and his later dictionary, have had great influence in determining American spelling and were the chief cause of the divergence of British and American orthography.

Thus, while the pronunciation of English has changed extensively since Caxton's first printing in 1476, the writing system has changed comparatively little. This freezing of English spelling according to the conventions of the fifteenth century in spite of subsequent changes in pronunciation is one of the principal causes of the difficulties and inconsistencies of modern English spelling.

Figure 1. Extracts from the first eight verses of the Gospel of John in six early English Bibles.

## WYCLIFFE—1380

1. IN the bigynnyng was the word and the word was at god; and god was the word; 2. this was in the bigynnyng at god; 3. alle thingis weren made bi hym; and withouten hym was made no thing. that thing that was made 4. in him was liif, and the liif was the ligt of men; 5. and the ligt schyneth in derknessis; and derknessis comprehendid not it. 6. A man was sente fro god to whom the name was Ion; 7. this man cam in to witnessyng, that he schulde bere witnessyng of the ligt, that alle men schulden bilue bi hym; 8. he was not the ligt, but that he schulde bere witnessyng of the ligt.

## CRANMER—1539

1. IN the begynnyng was the worde, and the worde was wyth God; and God was the worde. 2. The same was in the begynnyng with God. 3. All thynges were made by it, and without it, was made no-thinge that was made. 4. In it was lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyght of men, 5. and the lyght shyneth in darcknes, and the darcknes comprehended it not. 6. There was sent from God a man, whose name was Iohn. 7. The same cam as a wytnes to beare wytnes of the lyght, that all men through hym myght beleue. 8. He was not that lyght; but was sent to beare wytnes of the lyght.

## RHEIMS—1582

1. IN the beginning vvas the WORD, and the WORD vvas vwith God, and God vvas the WORD. 2. This vvas in the begin-ning vwith God. 3. Al things vvere made by him; and vwithout him vvas made nothing. That vwhich vvas made, 4. in him vvas life, and the life vvas the light of men; 5. and the light shineth in darke-nesse, and the darknesse did not compre-hend it. 6. There vvas a man sent from God, vwhose name vvas Iohn. 7. This man came for testimonie: to giue testimonie of the light, that al might beleue through him. 8. He vvas not the light, but to giue testimonie of the light.

## TYNDALE—1534

1. IN the begynnyng was the worde; and the worde was with God; and the worde was God. 2. The same was in the begynnyng with God. 3. All thinges were made by it; and with out it; was made nothinge; that was made. 4. In it was lyfe; and the lyfe was the lyght of men; 5. and the lyght shyneth in the darcknes; but the darcknes comprehended it not. 6. There was a man sent from God; whose name was Iohn. 7. The same cam as a wytnes to beare wytnes of the lyght; that all men through him myght beleue. 8. He was not that lyght; but to beare wytnes of the lyght.

## GENEVA—1557

1. IN the begynnyng was the word, and the worde was with God, and that worde was God. 2. The same was in the begynnyng with God. 3. Althinges were made by it, and without it was made nothing that was made. 4. In it was lyfe, and the lyfe was the light of men. 5. And the light shineth in darknes, and the darknes comprehended it not. 6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was Iohn. 7. The same came for a wytnes, to beare wytnes of the light, that all men through hym might beleue. 8. He was not that light, but was sent to beare wytnes of the light.

## AUTHORIZED—1611

1. IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2. The same was in the beginning with God. 3. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5. And the light shineth in darknes, and the darknes comprehended it not. 6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was Iohn. 7. The same came for a witness, to beare witness of the light, that all men through him might beleue. 8. He was not that light, but was sent to beare witness of that light.

Note. From Alphabets and Reading (p. 68) by J. Pitman and J.

St. John, 1969, London: Pitman Publishing Association.

In short, Pitman and St. John (1969) have identified the sources of confusion and inconsistency inherent within English spelling:

- 1) The etymological origins of words, the blending of different tongues that gave rise to the English language, and the continual assimilation of foreign words.
- 2) Changes in pronunciation that made the original phonemic representations of words anachronistic.
- 3) The individual, and often mistaken, preferences of printers and dictionary makers (p. 62).

Thus, today, the forty plus phonemes of the English language are represented by 251 spellings (Pei, 1965). A single letter or group of letters may stand for many different sounds. For example, /ough/ takes on many sounds, as in cough, hiccough, though, through, bough, dough, and rough. Conversely, many sounds may be represented by the same letter or combination of letters. The multitude of English orthographic anomalies may be seen in the fact that the /sh/ sound has fifteen possible spellings or in the many ways of representing the sound in /i/ (such as eye, aye, aisle, isle, assign, phial, indict, choir, quire, dye, die, style, rhinoceros, rheinberry, rhinestone, rhyme, buy, by, beguile, seismic, life, height, hi, and sigh). To make matters worse, the unaccented vowel, or schwa, sound, found in 60% of all English words, is not represented by a single letter or symbol, but can be spelled 36 different ways. Further examples of English orthographic irregularities are included in Chapter I of this work.

The result of all this can be summed up in the words of a nineteenth century American schoolmaster who wrote:

Our children spell their way laboriously, carefully, tearfully, many times, through the eight grades of the primary and grammar schools, completing something every here and there, but never the spelling. Entering the High Schools, they find it there in every year of the course—twelve years for the course in spelling—spelling everywhere and everywhen; spelling oral and written; spelling singly and in classes; spelling solo and in concert; spelling from card and from speller; spelling from readers First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth; spelling from text-books in arithmetic, grammar, geography, and history; and, in addition to all this, long lists of selected words are placed upon the blackboards for no other purpose than that their spelling may be memorized. Then after leaving school, there must needs be...further study in the orthographic art (cited in Scragg, 1974, p. 92).

CHAPTER III  
SIMPLIFIED SPELLING

Introduction

This chapter examines orthographic reform schemes, past and present, to simplify the spelling of English words. These attempts seek to phoneticize the spelling of English words by deleting silent letters and double letters and by generally assigning one sound to one letter or groups of letters. In simplified spelling, there are no attempts to add any additional characters or marks to either the alphabet or individual words. The first part of this chapter deals with attempts to reform English spelling before 1789, the year Noah Webster published his Dissertations on the English Language. The early reform proposals examined in this chapter include both attempts to simplify spelling and to popularize phonemic alphabets.

Following this examination of early proposals to reform English orthography, later attempts to simplify the spelling of English words are presented in this order:

1. Noah Webster's American Spelling
2. Benn Pitman's Solution
3. Alexander J. Ellis' Glossic
4. The Principles of '76 and the SRA
5. The Simplified Spelling Board

6. Frederick C. Wingfield's Fwnetic Orthqgrafi
7. Robert E. Zachrisson's Anglic
8. Nue Spelling
9. Axel Wijk's Regularized English
10. Frank C. Laubach's English the New Way
11. Godfrey Dewey's World English Spelling
12. The Spelling Action Society's SR1

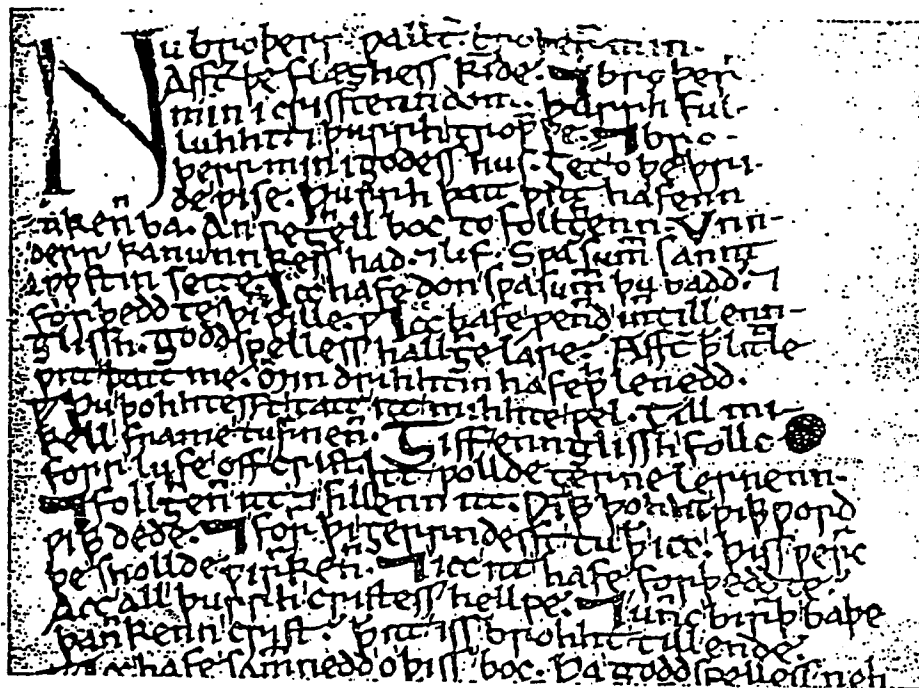
(Note: Archaic and non-traditional [reformed] spellings which appear in the original documents have been retained in this chapter.)

#### Early Attempts at Spelling Reform

The first spelling reformer of whom we have record was an English Augustinian monk named Orm (or Ormin) who lived during the twelfth century. He composed the Ormulum, a religious poem paraphrasing the Scriptures which was "designed to improve both men and their orthography" (Tauber, 1958, p. 11). The chief difficulty then encountered with Middle English orthography was distinguishing between long vowel sounds and short ones. Orm proposed to solve this by doubling the consonants following the short vowel sounds. Thus, fire was to have been spelled fir; and fir, firr (See Figure 2 for an example of Orm's work). His proposal to revise and rationalize English orthography got no support, and his manuscript lay in obscurity until it was exhumed by nineteenth century philologists and spelling reformers (Mencken, 1945).



Figure 2. A specimen of Orm's orthography as found in the Ormulum.



Transliteration of the first twelve lines of the manuscript:

Nu broper<sup>r</sup> walll. broper<sup>r</sup> min.  
 Afft þe flashess kide. 7 broper<sup>r</sup>  
 min i cristennom. þurh ful-  
 luhht. 7 þurh trow<sup>pe</sup>. 7 bro-  
 per<sup>r</sup> min i Godess hus. 3et o þe pri-  
 de wise. Þurh þatt witt hafenn  
 tãken<sup>a</sup> ba. An re3<sup>b</sup>ell boc to foll<sup>b</sup>enn. Vnn-  
 derr kanunnkess had. 7 lif. Swa sum<sup>m</sup> sannt  
 Awwstin sette! Icc hafe don swa sum<sup>m</sup> þu hadd. 7  
 forþedd te þi<sup>a</sup> wille. ¶ Icc hafe wen<sup>d</sup> in<sup>till</sup> enn-  
 3lish. Goddspellless hall<sup>3</sup>e lãre! Afft þ litle  
 witt tatt<sup>a</sup> me. Min drihtin hafe<sup>þ</sup> lenedd.

<sup>a</sup> altered from þatt

Translation:

Now brother Walter, my brother  
 by way of nature, and my brother  
 in Christianity, through  
 baptism and through faith, and  
 even in the third way my brother in  
 God's house, in that we have  
 both undertaken to follow the Rule  
 for the state and life of a canon that St  
 Augustine laid down. I have done as you asked, and  
 carried out your wishes. I have turned into  
 English the holy teaching of the Gospel by means of  
 the little wit that my Lord has granted me.

Note. From A History of English Spelling (p.29) by D.G.

Scragg, 1974, New York: Barnes and Noble.

G.H. Vallins (1954) stated that although Orm's design bears little resemblance to modern spelling reform proposals, the monk nevertheless recognized two principles that underlie all reform designs which followed him, namely: "that consistency, and the perfect correspondence of sound and symbol - that is, the use of one symbol to represent one sound and one sound only - was the chief necessity....Though no poet, in the realm of spelling he was a notable pioneer" (pp. 91-92).

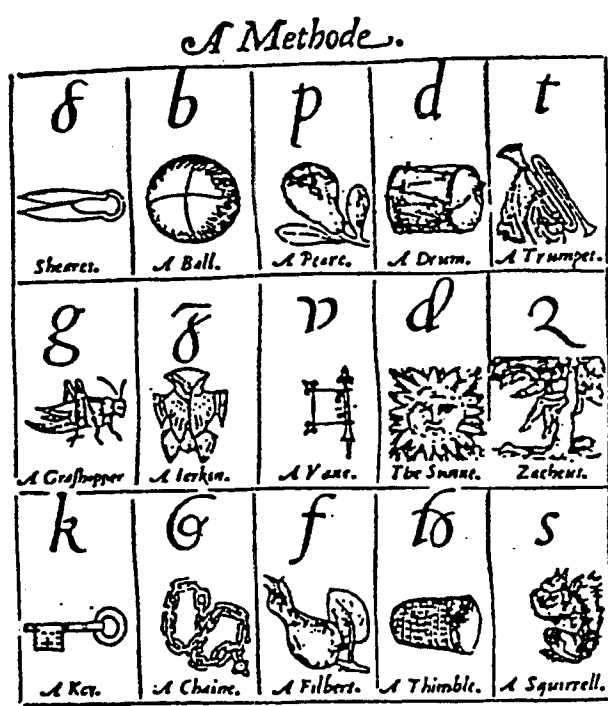
Orm was followed three and a half centuries later by Sir John Cheke, a professor of Greek at Cambridge University. Cheke proposed to discard the useless final e (as in give) and to differentiate between short and long vowel sounds by doubling the latter. In favor of a "clean and pure" English, he opposed the use of loanwords, as well as the use of silent consonants, for example, the b in doubt. As part of his attempt to reform English spelling, Cheke prepared his translation of the Four Gospels using his simplified spelling. This manuscript was not published during Cheke's lifetime, but it circulated in manuscript form and influenced a number of other scholars (Pitman & St. John, 1969).

In 1551, another attempt to create a more phonetic writing system was made by John Hart, author of The Opening of the Unreasonable Writing of our English Toung: Wherein is Shewed What Necessarili is to be Left, and What Folved for the Perfect Writing Thereof (Iles, 1965). This work remained in manuscript, and was not published during Hart's

lifetime, but in 1569 he published a revised version of this manuscript in which he explained and defended his system, entitled An Orthographie, Conteyning the Due Order and Reason, Howe to Write or Painte Thimage of Mannes Voice, Most Like to the Life or Nature. The main difference between the manuscript and the Orthographie is that the latter contained extensive passages of transcription in Hart's phonetic system. Hoping to reform English orthography on a strictly phonetic basis, he used new letters for such combinations as sh, ch, th, and dg. In addition, Hart placed diacritical marks under the vowels. In 1570, he elaborated his system in A Method or Comfortable Beginning for All Unlearned, Whereby They May Bee Taught to Read English, in a very short time, vvith pleasure (Tauber, 1958; Mencken, 1945). In this work, Hart defends his use of additional characters, arguing "...nor is any man bounde to the shape of this or that letter, but that which is easiest to be written, and best giueth the Reader the vnderstanding of the writers meaning, and is most easiest to be taught, to the ignorant of all letters." In an effort to demonstrate the effectiveness of his system, Hart described how,

As by the way of pastime, I haue done from a Welshman's mouth, though I vnderstood no worde thereof, and did reade it againe to him, and diuers others of that language, so as one amongst them (which knew me not) sayde vnto the rest in Welsh, that I coulde speake Welsh so well as he. But the rest knowing the contrary, laughing tolde me what he sayde, whom I forthwith certified, that I did it, by an order and certaine knowledge what I did write, and not by any acquaintance with the tongue. The like haue I done to the Irishe, and may as easily doe of the Barbarian, or Russian speeches" (Hart, 1570, Preface. Cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 77 See Figure 3 for an example of Hart's system).

Figure 3. An illustration from John Hart's Method or Comfortable Beginning for All Unlearned, Whereby They May Bee Taught to Read English, in a very short time, vvith pleasure, 1570.



Note. From Readiness for Reading with i.t.a. and t.o. (p. 55)  
by D.V. Thackray, 1971, London: Geoffrey Chapman.

In 1568, one of Cheke's disciples, Sir Thomas Smith, a Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth I, published a Latin tract entitled De Recta et Emendata Linguae Anglicae Scriptione (See Figure 4). Written as a series of dialogues, it proposed English orthographic reform by means of a thirty-four letter alphabet (the *Alphabetum Anglicum*) and a diacritical mark and accent system. Smith's system was the first of many phonemic alphabets proposed for English, as it was published a year before Hart's Orthographie (Pitman & St. John, 1969).

William Bullokar published a series of four books in "amended" spelling, the first of which was Booke At Large, for the Amendment of Orthographie for English Speech..., in 1580, "wherein, a most perfect supplie is made for the wantes and double sounde of letters in the olde Orthographie....for the easie, speedie, an perfect reading and writing of English, (the speech not changed, as some vntruly and maliciously, or at the lest ignorantlie blowe.abroade" (Bullokar, 1580, Preface. Cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 90. See Figure 5). As a teacher, Bullokar found that the lack of agreement between the sounds and spelling of English caused children a great deal of difficulty when they were trying to learn how to read. Out of this discrepancy grew "quarrels in the teacher, and lothsomnesse in the learner, and great payne to both; and the conclusion was, that both teacher and learner must go by rote, for no rule could be followed" (Bullokar, 1580, p. v). Bullokar wished to correct this situation by reforming English orthography and making spelling conform to pronunciation. Bullokar's

Figure 4. Title page of Sir Thomas Smith's De Recta et Emendata  
Linguae Anglicae Scriptione, 1568.



Figure 5. Title page of William Bullokar's Booke at Large, 1580.



*Bullokar's Booke at large, for the Amendment of Orthographie for English speech: whercin, a most perfect supplie is made, for the wantes and double founde of letters in the olde Orthographie, with Examples for the same, with the easie conference and vse of both Orthographies, so some expences in Booke for a time, vntill this amendment grow to a generall vse, for the easie, speedie, and perfect reading and writing of English, (the speech not changed, as some vntruly and maliciously, or at the least ignorantlie blowe abroade) by the which amendemene the same Authour hath also framed a ruled Grammar, to be imprinted heereafter, for the same speech, to no small commoditie of the English Nation, not only to come to easie, speedie, and perfect vse of our owne language, but also to their easie, speedie, and readie entrance into the secretes of oiker Languages, and easie and speedie pathway to all Strangers, to vse our Language, heerebefore very hard vnto them, to no small profite and credite to this our Nation, and stay therevnto in the weightiest causes.*

*There is also imprinted with this Orthographie a short Pamphlet for all-Learners, and a Primer agreeing to the same, and as learners shall go forward therein, other necessarie Bookes shall speedily be provided with the same Orthographie.*

*Heerevnto are also ioyned written Copies with the same Orthographie.*

*Giue God the praise, that teacheth alwaies.*

*When truth trieth, error flieth.*

*Scerne and allowed according to order.*

*Imprinted at London by*

*Henrie Denham.*

*1580.*

new orthography made use of thirty-seven symbols, accent marks, apostrophes, and hooks above and below letters (Tauber, 1958).

Bullokar published his books at his own expense, and considering that new type for his symbols needed to be cast, that expense was considerable. Before printing the book, he publicly presented his ideas in London and offered free samples of his writing system. Bullokar was eager to introduce his system into the classroom. For this purpose, he transliterated Aesops Fablz in tru Ortoigraphy with Grammar-nots and the Short Sentences of the Wys Cato from the Latin and had them published together in 1585. He also translated Cicero's Of Offices, but this work was not printed. Bullokar's plan for the reform of English included a dictionary and grammar book as well as the new writing system. He never did compile the dictionary, but in 1586 he published his Bref Grammar for English, the earliest surviving printed grammar of the English language (Pitman & St. John, 1969).

The most extensive treatise on English spelling of the sixteenth century was Richard Mulcaster's Elementarie, published in 1582 (Tauber, 1958). Concerned that "the right writing of our English tung" was "yet in question," Mulcaster encouraged modest changes in English orthography, usually the elimination of superfluous letters. He wrote that custom and common usage, as well as sound, form "the triumvirate in their gouernment of the pen," and, therefore, should govern spelling. Mulcaster also included a glossary of 7,000 words in his orthography in an appendix to his work (cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 91).



In approximately 1617, Alexander Hume wrote Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the British Tongue: A Treatise, Noe Shorter Than Necessarie, for the Schooles. In it, Hume urged regulation of the uncertain and unpredictable orthographic situation, which situation he blamed on the printers. His own work, however, contained numerous spelling inconsistencies.

Dr. Alexander Gill, successor to Richard Mulcaster as High Master at St. Paul's, conceived the first spelling reform effort of the seventeenth century. It was an augmented alphabet of forty letters, presented in his Logonomia Anglica, published in 1618. Gill argued that English pronunciation should be determined by "the agreement of good men...and the practice of the learned." He went on, "Just as accomplished artists represent the appearance of the human face so that it resembles the living feature, so it should be proper to transcribe the sounds so that we do not misrepresent the true pronunciation in any way" (Gill, 1618, p. 87). Gill stated that the four major considerations of spelling are: (1) derivation; (2) difference; (3) accepted custom, and; (4) dialect (Tauber, 1958).

The influence of Gill can be found in the works of John Milton, who was a student at St. Paul's for four years. Following Gill's reasoning, Milton spelled prizner for prisoner, biznes for business, and fjer for fire. "The poet also wrote femal, facil, and apostat and avoided etymological spellings that conflicted with pronunciation,

writing: iland, sutle, sovran, etc" (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 78).

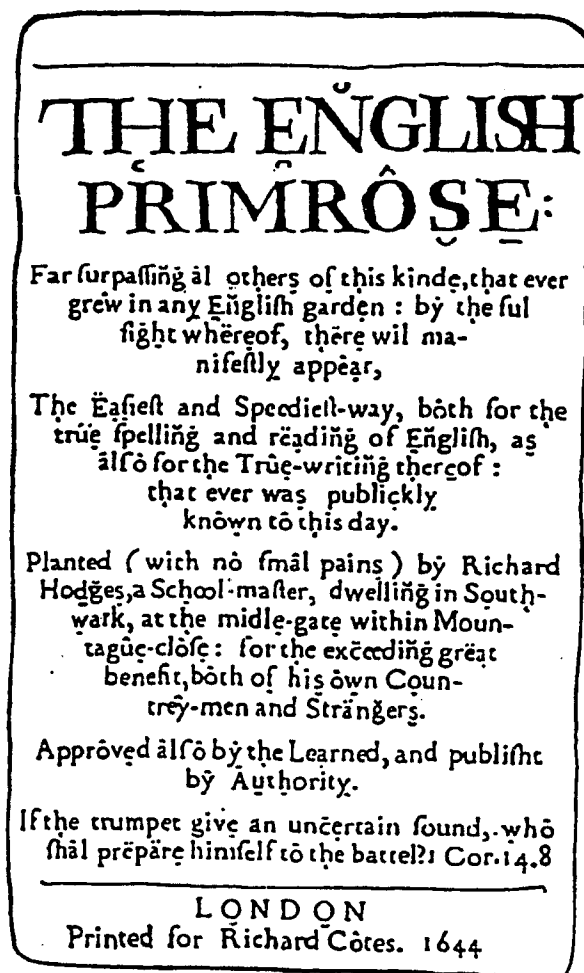
In 1644, Richard Hodges, a Southwark schoolmaster, published a spelling-book entitled The English Primrose (See Figure 6). Hodges, in the Preface to this work, declared it to be "Far surpassing al others of this kinde, that ever grew in any English garden....The Easiest and Speediest-way, both for the true spelling and reading of English, as also for the True-writing thereof: that was ever publicly known to this day." He further states that the Roman alphabet and English spelling made it impossible for learning to read to--

...bee pleasing to the Scholars. 'Tis most true, that they poor boys bee often chiden, rebuk't, knockt and whipt, when the fault is not in them, that they apprehend not what is taught, but in the uncertain, and perplext, and intricate expressing of our Tongue, by letters wrong named; and by their various sounds and forces attributed to them" (Hodges, 1644, Introduction. Cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 91).

Hodges' system involved a complex employment of diacritical markings and the elimination of most double consonants. He also complained about the redundancy of c and k in words like lack and luck but accepted that "for the present," one must bear with them (cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 91).

Oliver Cromwell's brother-in-law, the Bishop of Chester, the Reverend John Wilkins, produced An Essay Toward a Real Character and a Philosophical Language in 1668. In it, Wilkins sought to analyze the nature of the English language and reform its spelling by use of a 450-character phonetic alphabet (See Figure 7 for a specimen of Wilkins' orthography). The work contained many engravings showing the

Figure 6. Title page of Richard Hodges' The English Primrose, 1644.



Note. From Readiness for Reading with i.t.a. and t.o. (p. 55)

by D.V. Thackray, 1971, London: Geoffrey Chapman.

Figure 7. The Lord's Prayer and the Creed, written in the Reverend John Wilkins' proposed alphabet.

### *The Lords Prayer.*

Yr fadher haitfi art in héven, halloëd bi dbyi nám, dhyi cingdyn cym, dhyi ill bi dyn, in erth az it iz in héven, giv ys dhis dai yr daili bred, and fergiv ys yr trespassez az vi fergiv dhem dhat trespas against ys, and led ys nat int' temptafian, byt deliver ys fram evil, far dhyi iz dhe cingdim, dhe py-ët and dhe glari, far ever and ever, Amen.

Yi biliv in God dhe fadher almyiti maker of héven and erth, and in Dzhesys Cryist hiz onli syn yr Lord, hve vaz cansèved byi dhe holi Gost, barn af dhe Virgin Màri, syffered ynder Pensiy: Pyilat, vaz crucified ded and byriëd. Hi descended int' hel, dhe thyrd dai hi ros again fram dhe ded. Hi ascended int' héven, hær hi sitteth at dhe ryit hand af Gød dhe fadher, fram hær hi shal cym to dzhydzh dhe caic and dhe ded. Yi biliv in dhe holi Gost, dhe holi catholic tshyrtsh, dhe cammynion af Saints, dhe fergivnes af sinz, de resyrrection af dhe bady, and lyif everlasting. Amen.

Note. From A History of English Spelling (p. 100) by D.G. Scragg, 1974, New York: Barnes and Noble Books.

action of the palate and tongue to reflect the physiology involved in the production of speech sounds, but Wilkins' work apparently made no impression on his contemporaries (Mencken, 1945).

Ben Jonson's posthumous work, English grammar, published in 1640, sought to use the Roman alphabet exclusively to bring about moderate orthographic reform. Jonson's plan included the omission of the final double consonant (as in tell ), the gh (as in light ), and the redundant c (as in pickle ). Although he expressed pessimism about the possibility of effecting even moderate reform, Jonson liberally included Greek and Latin quotations in his work for support.

In 1662, James Howells published Of Divers Superfluous Letters In The English Orthography, and Some Seleccions Discovered in the German Practice of the Language, A New English Grammar. Because foreigners "found such a difference betwixt the printed words and the pronouncing of them in English that they throw away their books," Howells proposed a spelling reform designed to make English "the more docible and easy to be learnt by Forreners" (Howells, 1662, p. 7). In order to make words shorter and more phonetic, he recommended: (1) the deletion of the u in words such as honour; (2) spelling logic, not logique; (3) the omission of ne in sinne, sunne, etc.; (4) the ending y and not ie, as in bodily; (5) eI instead of le as in tinkel; (6) the omission of silent final e, as in give and; (7) the omission of p in assumption, and i in parliament. In an "Advertisement" to Howells' work, he wrote:

Among other Reasons which make the English Language of so small Extent, and put Strangers out of Conceit to learn

it, one is, That we do not pronounce as we write: which proceeds from divers superfluous Letters that occur in many of our Words, which adds to the Difficulty of our Language. Therefore the Author hath taken Pains to retrench such redundant unnecessary Letters in this Work (though the Printer hath not been so careful as he should have been) as among multitudes of other Words may appear in these few, done, some, come: Which though we to whom the Speech is connatural, pronounce as monosyllables, yet when Strangers come to read them, they are apt to make them Dyssyllables, as do-ne, so-me, co-me: therefore such an 'e' is superfluous.

Moreover, those Words that have the Latin for the Original, the Author prefers that Orthography rather than the French, whereby divers Letters are spared, as Physic, Logic, Afric, not Physique, Logique, Afrique: Favor, Honor, Labor, not Favour, Honour, Labour, and very many more; as also he omits the Dutch 'k' in most Words; Here you shall read Peep<sup>l</sup>e, not Peo-ple, Tresure, not Treasure, Toung, not Tongue, &c. Parle<sup>m</sup>ent, not Parli<sup>a</sup>ment, Busines, Witnes, Sicknes, not Business, Witness, Sickness; Star, War, Far, not Starre, Warre, Farre, and Multitudes of such words, wherein the last two letters may well be spared. Here you shall also read Pit, Piety, Witty, not Piti-e, Pieti-e, Witt<sup>i</sup>-e, as Strangers at first sight pronounce them, and abundance of such like words....(cited in Norton, 1907, p. 9).

Many of Howell's suggestions eventually found their way into our language, "without Literature receiving any violent shock" (Norton, 1907, p. 9).

Early English spelling reform was not without its opponents, as witnessed by Robert Clavell's Friendly Advice to the Correctour of the English Press At Oxford Concerning the English Orthographie, published in 1682. In it, the author condemned those who would "innovate our writing" and destroy the God-given purity of English spelling. Tracing the English language back to its origin at Babel, Clavell attacked phonetic spelling as "barbarous." Additionally, since spelling reform was never consented to by the King, it was obviously an act of

rebellion. Reformers even had the temerity to tamper with the orthography of the Bible. Clavell concluded that further changes in spelling would threaten the social order of the realm (Tauber, 1958, pp. 21-22).

Francis Bacon was another opponent of spelling reform, and wrote of it in his De Augmentic Scientiarium:

And with regard to the common orthography itself, a controversy and question has been raised among us, namely, whether words ought to be written as they are pronounced, or in the usual way. But this apparently reformed style of writing (viz., in which the spelling should agree with the pronunciation) belongs to the class of unprofitable subtleties. For the pronunciation itself is continually changing; it does not remain fixed; and the derivations of words, especially from foreign tongues, are thereby completely obscured. And as the spelling of words according to the fashion is no check at all upon the fashion of pronunciation, but leaves it free, to what purpose is this innovation? (cited in Booth, 1907, p. 79).

Jonathan Swift also attacked the "folly" of phonetic spelling in his Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue in 1712:

Not only the several Towns and Counties of England, have a different Way of pronouncing, but even here in London they clip their Words after one Manner about the Court, another in the City, and a third in the Suburbs; and in a few Years, it is probable, will all differ from themselves, as Fancy or Fashion shall direct: All which reduced to Writing, would entirely confound Orthography (cited in Scragg, 1974, p. 102).

Not to be deterred, in 1691, John Ray published A Note on the Errours of Our Alphabet. The last of the seventeenth century spelling reformers, Ray called attention to the lack of system in English spelling and suggested that plans be developed to deal with it, as well

as achieve consistency and uniformity of spelling throughout England.

The most outstanding work on spelling reform published during the first half of the eighteenth century was written by "G.W." (according to David Abercrombie, G.W. was probably John White, a Devon schoolmaster) in 1703 and carried the cumbersome title Magazine, or, Animadversions on the English Spelling; Observing The Contradictions of the English Letters Warring themselves against themselves, and one with another, by Intrusions and Usurpations; with Amendment offer'd For the Benefit of all Teachers and Learners, Writers and Readers, Composers and Scriveners, whether Strangers or Natives, who are concern'd with our English Tongue. The greater part of the pamphlet is taken up with expounding the illogicalities and inconsistencies of English spelling. In this work, G.W. presented his "compleat Alfebet" of 34 letters, as well as a considerable number of words and some complete text in his new spelling (G.W., 1703. Introduction by D. Abercrombie, 1958. See Figure 8).

In the year 1711, an unknown author penned The Needful Attempt, to Make Language and Divinity Plain and Easie (See Figure 9). Although designed to promote spelling reform, its main interest to current historians is the evidence it provides about the English pronunciation of the time.

The year 1755 saw the publication of Podromos: Or, Observations on the English Letters by Sayer Rudd, an English physician and cleric. Considered by historians to be an important treatise on English



Figure 8. Title page of G.W.'s Magazine, 1703.

# MAGAZINE,

OR,

ANIMADVERSIONS

ON THE

## English Spelling;

OBSERVING

The Contradictions of the English Letters  
Warring themselves against themselves,  
and one with another, by Intrusions and  
Usurpations; with Amendment offer'd.

For the Benefit of all Teachers and Lear-  
ners, Writers and Readers, Composers  
and Scriveners, whether Strangers or  
Natives, who are concern'd with our  
English Tongue.

---

*Nunquam sera est ad bonos mores via.* Syntax.

---

By G. W.

---

LONDON: Printed for the Author. 1703.  
Price Sixpence.

Figure 9. Title page of The Needful Attempt, 1711, author unknown

THE  
*Needful Attempt,*  
 TO MAKE  
 LANGUAGE  
 AND  
 DIVINITY  
 Plain and Easie.

---

Exteriorum gratiâ (si qui fortè inspexerint)  
 paucula quædam, paginarum quartæ,  
 & quintæ, latinè redduntur; quæ præci-  
 pue usûs catholici censentur.

---

L O N D O N :

Printed, and are Sold by T. Morphett near  
 Stationers-Hall; and W. Smith Bookseller  
 in Cambridge. 1711.

spelling and pronunciation, it was written as an attempt to simplify English orthography (See Figure 10).

The greatest blow to spelling reform, according to many proponents of change (Dewey, 1971; Lounsbury, 1909; Vaile, 1901), came in 1755 with the publication of Samuel Johnson's magnum opus, A Dictionary of the English Language. While the standardization and stabilization of "correct" spelling was not Johnson's main goal in preparing the dictionary, his work ratified customary usage, rather than supported change. Johnson, in an attempt to apply the principles of etymology in spelling, placed the silent b in debt, and mistakenly added the k to musick and publick. Not only was Johnson's scholarship sometimes faulty, it was also inconsistent, as when he recommended such contradictory pairs as deceit and receipt, moveable and immovable, sliness and slyly, and deign and disdain. Johnson did not think that phonetic considerations should outweigh all others in spelling, and, as he stated in the Preface to his Dictionary:

Thus have I laboured, by settling the orthography...to perform all the parts of a faithful lexicographer. In this part of the work, where caprice has long wanted, I have endeavored to proceed with a scholar's reverence for antiquity, and a grammarian's regard to the genius of our tongue. I have attempted few alterations and among those few, perhaps the greater part is from the modern to the ancient practice (Johnson, 1755, Preface).

Although Johnson was not an advocate of change, he did make the attempt at minor spelling reforms, as in catcal (catcall) and unrol (unroll), which failed to be accepted. His chief objection to phonetic spelling was that spelling would lose the quality of permanence if

Figure 10. Title page of Sayer Rudd's Podromos, 1755.

ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΟΣ:  
 O R,  
 OBSERVATIONS  
 ON THE  
 ENGLISH LETTERS.

BEING

An Attempt to reform OUR ALPHABET, and  
 regulate OUR MANNER of SPELING, parti-  
 cularly, in such words as admit THE ASSI-  
 MATION.

Written originally for the USE of

Mess<sup>rs</sup>. NORRIS and RANDOLPH;

By SAYER R U D D, M. D.  
 Minister of *Walmer*, and Master of the Academy at  
*Deale*, in KENT.

*Perueniri ad summa, nisi ex principiis, non potest.*  
 QUINT. Inst. L. X. C. I.

L O N D O N:

Printed for THE AUTHOR; and Sold by M<sup>rs</sup>.  
 DAVEY and LAW in *Academy-Lane*; BAKER of  
*Tembridge*; SMITH of *Leatherbury*, and SILVER of  
*Sandwich*.

MDCCCLV.

pronunciation was the guide. Johnson's work had a tremendous influence, both in England and America, and most words are still spelled as Johnson spelled them. Those few who dared to differ with Johnson's mode of spelling were attacked as "unmanly" by a writer named Armstrong in his essay, "The Modern Art of Spelling," in 1757 (Tauber, 1958, p. 27). However, since the publication of Johnson's Dictionary in 1755, Dr. Johnson "has been saddled with unjustified odium" by spelling reformers; "Bernard Shaw, for instance, cavilled at 'Dr, Johnson's monumental misspelling, which is now more sacred than the creed and the catechism'" (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 73).

Henry Gallup Paine's remarks in his Handbook of Simplified Spelling are representative of those who credit Johnson with being the major stumbling-block to spelling reform:

At a time when English spelling was still unsettled, when etymology was largely based on guesswork, and English filology was in its infancy, his literary reputation gave to his dictionary...an "authority" far beyond that which it--or indeed any dictionary compiled at that time--could possibly merit.

Thru whim or indolence he approved, in certain instances, spelling that were inconsistent with those he adopted for other words of the same general class. Thus, while retaining the Latin p in receipt, he left it out of deceit; he speld deign one way, and disdain another; he speld uphill but downhil, muckhill but dunghil, instill but distil, inthrall but disinthral ...In other instances his carelessness permitted him to deviate in the text from the spellings given in the vocabulary....

[Johnson accepted] a vast number of unhistorical, illogical, and unscientific forms. Words that have greatly altered in pronunciation since Johnson's day continue to be speld as he speld them; and the change and growth of our flexible language has failed to be recorded by an orthography

that owes much of its inflexibility to his influence (Paine, 1920, pp. 7-8).

A man well acquainted with Samuel Johnson's work, Benjamin Franklin, writer, publisher, inventor, and statesman, was also the first American spelling reformer. In 1768, while living in London, Franklin wrote A Scheme for a New Alphabet and Reformed Mode of Spelling. It contained an alphabet of 26 letters, including the traditional letters of the Roman alphabet without c, v, q, w, x, and z, with six new letters for sounds he felt were imperfectly represented in traditional spelling (See Figure 11). There were no silent or superfluous letters in the Franklin alphabet. Except for two six-line verses and the Lord's Prayer which Franklin transcribed into his system, a word list which was the first step in composing a dictionary, and a letter which he wrote to Mary Stevenson in defense of it, and her reply thereto, nothing ever came of his scheme (Ives, 1979; Franklin, 1972). Franklin's letter, dated July 20, 1768, contained this:

I wish you to consider this Alphabet, and give me Instances of such English Words and Sounds as you may think can not perfectly be expressed by it. I am persuaded it may be completed by your help. The greater difficulty will be to bring it into use. However, if Amendments are never attempted and things continue to grow worse and worse they must come to be in a wretched condition at last; such indeed I think our Alphabet and Writing already in; but if we go on a few centuries longer, our words will gradually cease to express Sounds, they will only stand for things, as the written words do in the Chinese Language, which I suspect might originally have been a literal Writing like that of Europe, but through the Changes in Pronunciation brought on by the Course of Ages and through the obstinate Adherence of that People to old Customs, and among others to their old manner of Writing, the original Sounds of Letters and Words are lost, and no longer considered (Franklin, 1972, p. 175. A

Figure 11. Benjamin Franklin's Reformed Alphabet.

[TABLE of the REFORMED ALPHABET.]		To be printed.
Classical.	Sounded [respectively] as in [the Words in the Column below.]	[Manner of pronouncing the Sounds.]
o	Old.	o
• a	John, Folly; Awl, Ball.	a
u	Man, can.	u
e	Men, lend, Name, Lane.	e
i	Did, Sin, Deed, seen.	i
u	Tool, Fool, Rule.	u
• y	uni, un; as in umbrage, unto, &c. and as in er.	y
b	hunter, happy, high.	bub
g	give, gather.	gi
k	keep, kick.	ki
• fi	(fi) Ship, wish.	ifb
• ng	(ng) ing, repeating, among.	ing
n	end.	en
r	Art.	r
t	Teeth.	ti
d	Deed.	di
l	ell, tell.	el
f	Effence.	es
z	(ez) Wages.	ez
• h	(th) think.	eh
• dh	(dh) thy.	eh
f	Effect.	ef
u	ever.	ev
b	Bees.	b
p	peep.	pi
m	ember.	em

\* [N.B. The six new letters are marked with an asterisk to distinguish them, and two new letters are proposed, &c.]

Note. From The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (vol. 15, pp. 176-177) by B. Franklin (W.B. Willcox, Ed.), 1972, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

copy of the complete text of this letter to Miss Stevenson is found in Figures 12 and 13).

Miss Stevenson, also writing in the Franklin alphabet, responded on September 26, 1768:

Dear Sir,

I have transcribed your alphabet, &c. which I think might be of service to those who wish to acquire an accurate pronunciation, if that could be fixed; but I see many inconveniences, as well as difficulties, that would attend the bringing your letters and orthography into common use. All our etymologies would be lost; consequently we could not ascertain the meaning of many words; the distinction too between words of different meaning and similar sound would be useless, unless we have living writers publish new editions. In short, I believe we must let people spell on in their old way, and (as we find it easiest) do the same ourselves (cited in Webster, 1789, p. 407).

Franklin, writing in reply, offered a number of generic arguments for, and in defense of, spelling reform. Franklin's defense of spelling reform, some writers have argued, was more important than the Franklin scheme itself (Tauber, 1958; Webster, 1789). Franklin's reply, dated September 28, 1768, is here reproduced, in toto, because of the great stock which ensuing spelling reformers have placed in it. So well did it reflect the aims and mood of later reformers that Noah Webster, Isaac Pitman (in his Spelling Reform Tract no. 113) and others have often reproduced it (Scragg, 1974).

Dear Madam,

The objection you make to rectifying our alphabet, "that it will be attended with inconveniences and difficulties," is a very natural one; for it always occurs when any reformation is proposed, whether in religion, government, laws, and even down as low as roads and wheel carriages. The true question then is not, whether there will be no difficulties or



Figure 12. Benjamin Franklin's first letter to Mary Stevenson, written in his proposed alphabet, dated July 20, 1768.

Dear Pali,

Ritfrijnd, July 20. 68.

Yi intended to hav sent in Yiz Papers surer,  
lyt bing bizi farrgat-it.

Mr Kolman has mended delli: lyt iur gud  
Mijer has bin indijord uiz e slyit Fivyr, atand  
uiz mytfe fiibilnes and uirnes. fi uind. nat-  
lax mi to send in. uyrd av it-at Zi tyjn, and in  
nax betur.

Yi uif. iur to konsider Zis Alfabet, and giu  
mi Instances of sylf Iglyf Words and Saunds  
az iu mac Zink kannat perfektly bi obprest  
lyt it. Yi am persuaded it mee bi kemplited  
lyt iur help. Zi greater difikyli uil bi to  
bring it into ius. However, if Amendments  
ur never affered, and Zigs kantine to go  
~~uirus~~ ~~uirus~~ and ~~uirus~~, Zee myst lym to bi in a rattled  
Kandifryn at last; sylf indid yi Zink our  
Alfabet and Kyitig ahiedu in; lyt if uig an  
az uir hev dyn e fiv Sentaria langor, iur  
uyrds uil graduoli uis to obpres Saunds, Zee  
uil onli stand for Zigs, az Zi ridin uyrds Du  
in Zi Phinix languadp, kuitf yi suspckt  
myt.

Mis Stevenson

Note. From The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (vol. 15, p. 175)  
by B. Franklin (W.B. Willcox, Ed.), 1972, New Haven, CT: Yale  
University Press.

Figure 13. Typescript of Benjamin Franklin's first letter to Mary Stevenson, written in his proposed alphabet, dated July 20, 1768.

Dür Pali, Ritsmynd, Dsulüi 20.-68  
 Yi intended to hev sent iu diz Pepers sunyr, büt büg bizi fargat it.  
 Mr Kolman hez mended decli: büt iur gud Mýchyr hez bin indispoz'd uith e slqit Fivyr, atended uith mýts fiibilnes and uirines. Si uiuld nat allau mi to send iu uýrd av it at di tujim, and iz nau beter.  
 Yi uis iu to kansider dis Alfabet, and giv mi Instanses af sýts Iglis Uýrds and Saunds az iu mee tink kannat perfektlüi bi eksprest búi it. Yi am persueeded it mee bi kamplited búi iur help. Di greeter difikýlti uil bi to brig it into ius. Hauevyr, if Amendments eer nevyr atempted, and tigs kantinu to gro uýrs and uýrs, dee mýst kým to bi in a retsed Kandisýn at last; sýts indiid üi tink aur Alfabet and Rýitig alredi in; büt if ui go an az ui hev dýn e fiu Senturiz langer, aur uýrds uil graduali süs to ekspres Saunds, dee uil onli stand far tigs, az di ritün uýrds du in di Tsuiniiz Languads, huits üi süspekt mýit oridsinali hev bin e litiral Rýitig lük dat af Iurop, büt tru di Tseendsez in Pronýsiesýn braat an búi di Kors af Eedses, and tru di abstinet Adhirens af dat Pipil to old Kýstýms and amýg ýchýrs to dheer old manýr ov Rýitig, di oridsinal Saunds af Leters and Uýrds eer last, and no langýr kansidered. Yi am, mýi düir Frend, Iurz afeksýnedli,  
B. FRANKLIN

Note. From The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (vol. 15, p. 174) by B. Franklin (W.B. Willcox, Ed.), 1972, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

inconveniences; but whether the difficulties may not be surmounted; and whether the conveniences will not, on the whole, be greater than the inconveniences. In this case, the difficulties are only in the beginning of the practice; when they are once overcome, the advantages are lasting. To either you or me, who spell well in the present mode, I imagine the difficulty in changing that mode for the new, is not so great, but that we might perfectly get over it in a week's writing. As to those who do not spell well, if the two difficulties are compared, viz. that of teaching them true spelling in the present mode, and that of teaching them the new alphabet and the new spelling according to it, I am confident that the latter would be by far the least. They naturally fall into the new method already, as much as the imperfection of their alphabet will admit of; their present bad spelling is only bad, because contrary to the present bad rules; under the new rules it would be good. The difficulty of learning to spell well in the old way is so great, that few attain it; thousands and thousands writing on to old age, without ever being able to acquire it. It is besides, a difficulty continually increasing; as the sound gradually varies more and more from the spelling; and to foreigners it makes the learning to pronounce our language, as written in our books, almost impossible.

Now as to the inconveniences you mention: The first is, "that all our etymologies would be lost; consequently we could not ascertain the meaning of many words." Etymologies are at present very uncertain; but such as they are, the old books still preserve them, and etymologists would there find them. Words in the course of time, change their meaning, as well as their spelling and pronunciation; and we do not look to etymologies for their present meanings. If I should call a man a knave and a villain, he would hardly be satisfied with my telling him, that one of the words originally signified a lad or servant, and the other an under plowman, or the inhabitant of a village. It is from present usage only, the meaning of words is to be determined.

Your second inconvenience is, "the distinction between words of different meaning and similar sound would be destroyed." That distinction is already destroyed in pronouncing them; and we rely on the sense alone of the sentence to ascertain which of the several words, similar in sound, we intend. If this is sufficient in the rapidity of discourse, it will be much more so in written sentences, which may be read leisurely, and attended to more particularly in case of difficulty, than we can attend to a

past sentence, while the speaker is hurrying us along with new ones.

Your third inconvenience is, "that all the books already written would be useless." This inconvenience would only come on gradually in a course of ages. I and you and other now living readers would hardly forget the use of them. People would long learn to read the old writing, tho they practiced the new. And the inconvenience is not greater than what has actually happened in a similar case in Italy. Formerly its inhabitants all spoke and wrote Latin; as the language changed, the spelling followed it. It is true that at present, a mere unlearned Italian cannot read the Latin books, tho they are still read and understood by many. But if the spelling had never been changed, he would now have found it much more difficult to read and write his own language; for written words would have no relation to sounds; they would only have stood for things; so that if he would express in writing the idea he has when he sounds the word Vescovo, he must use the letters Episcopus.

In short, whatever the difficulties and inconveniences now are, they will be more easily surmounted now, than hereafter; and some time or other it must be done, or our writing will become the same with the Chinese, as to the difficulty of learning and using it. And it would already have been such, if we had continued the Saxon spelling and writing used by our forefathers.

I am, my dear friend,  
Yours affectionately,

B. Franklin  
(cited in Webster, 1789, pp. 408-410).

In 1786, Franklin invited a young schoolmaster, Noah Webster, to come and visit in order to discuss their common interest in language. In the Preface to his Dissertations on the English Language: with Notes, Historical and Critical, To which is added, by way of Appendix, an Essay on a Reformed Mode of Spelling, with Dr. Franklin's Arguments on that Subject, Webster paid homage to the "Sage Philosopher" and acknowledged that it was Franklin who first interested Webster in the

subject of spelling reform, noting that "such a reformation is practicable and highly necessary" (p. xi. See Figure 14). Although Webster "respectfully" dedicated his work to "His Excellency," Benjamin Franklin (See Figure 15), he declined to support Franklin's spelling reform scheme. This was in spite of the fact that Franklin had given Webster the dictionary which Franklin had prepared and the type which he had cast in the new alphabet (Webster, 1789, p. 407, note). Although Franklin's alphabet and spelling reform proposal were not used, Franklin did have a tremendous impact upon Noah Webster, whose reforms to this day distinguish American spelling from that of Britain.

#### Later Attempts to Simplify Spelling

##### Noah Webster's American Spelling

In 1789, Noah Webster produced an Appendix to his Dissertations entitled "An Essay on the Necessity, Advantages and Practicality of Reforming the Mode of Spelling, and of Rendering the Orthography of Words Correspondent to the Pronunciation." Webster began this Essay:

It has been observed by all writers on the English language, that the orthography or spelling of words is very irregular; the same letters often representing different sounds, and the same sounds often expressed by different letters. For this irregularity, two principal causes may be assigned:

1. The changes to which the pronunciation of a language is liable, from the progress of science and civilization.
2. The mixture of different languages, occasioned by revolutions in England, or by a predilection of the learned, for words of foreign growth and ancient origin (Webster, 1789, p. 391).

In this same Essay, Webster wrote:

The question now occurs; ought the Americans to retain

Figure 14. Title page of Noah Webster's Dissertations, 1789.

DISSERTATIONS  
ON THE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE :  
WITH NOTES,  
HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL.

To which is added,

BY WAY OF APPENDIX,

AN E S S A Y ON  
A

REFORMED MODE OF SPELLING,

WITH

DR. FRANKLIN'S ARGUMENTS ON THAT SUBJECT.

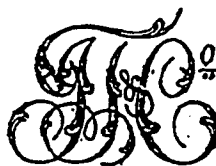
---

BY NOAH WEBSTER, JUN. ESQUIRE.

---

PRIMA DISSENTIUM ELEMENTA, IN QUIBUS ET  
IPSIS PARUM ELABORATUR. FACIUS.

---




---

PRINTED AT BOSTON, FOR THE AUTHOR,  
BY ISAIAH THOMAS AND COMPANY,  
MDCCLXXXIX.

Figure 15. Noah Webster's Dedication to Benjamin Franklin of  
Dissertations on the English Language, 1789.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY,

*Benjamin Franklin, Esq;* LL. D. F. R. S.

Late PRESIDENT of the COMMONWEALTH of PENNSYLVANIA,

The following DISSERTATIONS

Are most respectfully Inscribed,

By His Excellency's

Most obliged and most obedient Servant.

*The Author.*

---

DEDICATIONS are usually designed to flatter the Great, to acknowledge their services, or court their favor and influence. But very different motives have led me to prefix the venerable name of FRANKLIN to this publication.

RESPECT for his Excellency's talents and exertions, as a great Philosopher and a warm Patriot, I feel in common with all the lovers of science and freedom; but my peculiar admiration of his character, arises from considering it as *great in common things.*

A ?

HIS

these faults which produce innumerable inconveniences in the acquisition and use of the language, or ought they at once to reform these abuses, and introduce order and regularity into the orthography of the AMERICAN TONGUE? (pp. 393-394).

Webster then presented his list of "necessary" alterations:

1. The omission of all superfluous or silent letters, as 'a' in bread. Thus bread, head, give, breast, built, meant, realm, friend, would be spelt bred, hed, giv, brest, bilt, ment, relm, frend. Would this alteration produce any inconvenience, any embarrassment or expense? By no means. On the other hand, it would lessen the trouble of writing, and much more, of learning the language; it would reduce the true pronunciation to a certainty, and while it would assist foreigners and our own children in acquiring the language, it would render the pronunciation uniform, in different parts of the country, and almost prevent the possibility of changes.

2. A substitution of a character that has a certain definite sound, for one that is more vague and indeterminate. Thus by putting 'ee' instead of 'ea' or 'ie,' the words mean, near, speak, grieve, zeal, would become meen, neer, speek, greev, zeel. This alteration could not occasion a moments [ sic ] trouble; at the same time it would prevent a doubt respecting the pronunciation; whereas the 'ea' and 'ie' having different sounds, may give a learner much greater difficulty. Thus greef should be substituted for grief; kee for key; beleev for believe; laf for laugh; dawter for daughter; plow for plough; tuf for tough; proov for prove; blud for blood; and draft for draught. In this manner 'ch' in Greek derivatives, should be changed into 'k'; for the English 'ch' has a soft sound, as in cherish; but 'k' always a hard sound. Therefore, character, chorus, cholic, architecture, should be written karacter, korus, kolic, arkitecture; and were they thus written, no person could mistake their true pronunciation.

Thus 'ch' in French derivatives should be changed into 'sh'; machine, chaise, chevalier, should be written masheen, shaze, shevaleer; and pique, tour, oblique, should be written peek, toor, obleek.

3. A trifling alteration in a character, or the addition of a point would distinguish different sounds, without the substitution of a new character...

These, with a few other inconsiderable alterations, would answer every purpose, and render the orthography sufficiently correct and regular (pp. 394-396).



Webster then listed the "numerous, great and permanent" advantages of the alterations which he suggests in his simplified spelling proposal:

1. The simplicity of the orthography would facilitate the learning of the language...with the proposed orthography, a child would learn to spell, without trouble, in a very short time, and the orthography being very regular, he would ever afterwards find it difficult to make a mistake. It would, in that case, be difficult to spell wrong, as it is now to spell right.

Besides this advantage, foreigners would be able to acquire the pronunciation of English...

2. A correct orthography would render the pronunciation of the language, as uniform as the spelling in books...Such uniformity in these States is desirable; [sic] it would remove prejudice, and conciliate mutual affection and respect.

3. Such a reform would diminish the number of letters about one fifteenth or eighteenth...an advantage that should not be overlooked.

4. But a capital advantage of this reform in these states would be, that it would make a difference between the English orthography and the American...I am confident that such an event is an object of vast political consequence....

A national language is a band of national union. Every engine should be employed to render the people of this country national; to call their attachments home to their own country; and to inspire them with the pride of national character. However they may boast of Independence, and the freedom of their government, yet their opinions are not sufficiently independent; an astonishing respect for the arts and literature of their parent country, and a blind imitation of its manners, are still prevalent among the Americans. Thus an habitual respect for another country, deserved indeed and once laudable, turns their attention from their own interests, and prevents their respecting themselves (pp. 396-398).

Webster presented a number of "objections" to his spelling reform,

which included the ones Franklin dealt with in his letter to Mary Stevenson. He also listed habit and indolence as obstacles to improvement, "But," Webster wrote, "America is in a situation the most favorable for great reformatations; and the present time is, in a singular degree, auspicious." He went on:

Now is the time, and this is the country...

Let us then seize the present moment, and establish a national language, as well as a national government....As an independent people, our reputation abroad demands that, in all things, we should be federal; be national; for if we do not respect ourselves, we may be assured that other nations will not respect us. In short, let it be impressed upon the mind of every American, that to neglect the means of commanding respect abroad, is treason against the character and dignity of a brave independent people (pp. 405-406).

In 1793, Webster produced A Grammatical Institute of the English Language, consisting of a spelling book, a grammar, and a reader. The success of the first part of the book was tremendous and was later reprinted separately under the title, The American Spelling Book. It has been estimated that over one hundred million copies of this "Blue-Backed Speller" were sold in the next hundred years (Mencken, 1948). In all editions of his spelling book, however, Webster chose to retain the traditional spelling of the day (Deighton, 1971; Mencken, 1945).

Webster's simplified spellings did not begin to take hold until he published his second dictionary, A Dictionary of the English Language Compiled for the Use of Common Schools in the United States, in 1807. In it, Webster introduced a number of changes which characterize

American spelling to this day, including:

1. Eliminating the final u in words such as savior, favor, and honor;
2. Omitting the final k in music, physic, and logic, etc.;
3. Eliminating the silent e in ax, and;
4. Using single letters for digraphs in words such as fetus, diarrhea, economy, and ecumenical.
5. Changing c to s in defense, offense, and pretense.

Webster was also responsible for changing waggon to wagon, gaol to jail and words such as centre and metre to center and meter. While he tried to introduce other reforms, such as wimmen for women, bild for build, and ribin for ribbon, they were not well accepted and never took hold. While Webster failed to produce a distinctive American spelling, many of the reforms he advocated are now standard American spelling (Tauber, 1958).

#### Benn Pitman's Solution

Isaac Pitman's younger brother, Benn, after teaching school and promoting his brother's reforms in England, moved to America and settled in Cincinnati. He continued to work in the area of spelling reform, writing and publishing several books on the subject. He also developed a reform scheme of his own. In the preface of one of his books, A Solution to the Alphabetic Problem, Benn Pitman wrote:

The perversity of English spelling and its failure to indicate pronunciation are not realized by the average teacher or parent for they judge from a habit, acquired by ten, twenty or more years of familiarity. To the child each

word, when first encountered, is a puzzle. How shall a collection of letters be pronounced? How shall a given word be spelled? (Pitman, 1910, p. 4).

Pitman provides the solution with his Complete Alphabet, a scheme which provided for 39 sounds of the English language, while making no change in the the traditional alphabet other than the elimination of c, q, and x, and the addition of a dot to indicate a long vowel. Pitman's seven rules for phonetic spelling were:

1. Let each of the consonant signs represent the one sound for which it is now commonly employed.

2. Use consonant digraphs according to the same rule.

3. Dispense with the useless duplicates c, q, x.

4. Use the vowel signs for their most usual powers.

5. Dispense with the dot over i and j, and use this distinct and unobtrusive sign as a diacritic mark, to indicate the Long Vowels.

6. The three remaining simple vowels, as heard in alms, Paul, and pool, for which letters are not provided in the present alphabet, may be represented by the digraphs aa, au, and oo.

7. The diphthongs heard in coil and cowl are suggestively represented by oi and ow (Pitman, 1910, p. 8).

Unlike his brother Isaac, Benn advocated a gradual spelling reform process, and in later years joined the Simplified Spelling Board (Iles, 1965). His work first appeared in 1855, with the printing, in Cincinnati, of A Child's First Primer and The First Phonetic Reader (See Figure 16). The Primer was a book of 145 pages, the first 56 of which consisted of lists of syllables in Benn Pitman's Complete Alphabet, each page concentrating on one sound. Short rhymes teaching

Figure 16. Title page and a sample lesson from Benn Pitman's First Phonetic Reader, 1855.

First  
Phonetic Reader.

BY BENN PITMAN.

PUBLISHED BY THE  
American Phonetic Publishing Association,  
BENN PITMAN, CORNER OF FIFTH & JOCK,  
LOWERY BROTHERS, VINE ST.  
CINCINNATI.  
1855.

[ 21 ]

Jerj Wof-ig-ton.

Hwen Jérj Wof-ig-ton woz a-bót siks yerz old, hiz fq-der gav him a hac-et, ov hwig he woz ver-i fond, and woz kon-stant-li gō-ig a-bót, gop-ig ev-er-i tīg dat kam in hiz wa.

Wun da, in de gqr-den, hwar he had of-n a-muzd him-self hak-ig hiz mud-erz pe-buf-ez, he un-luk-i-li trjd de ej ov hiz hac-et on de bod-i ov a bu-ti-ful yun Ig-glij ger-i-trz, hwig he bqkt so ter-i-bli dat j dō not be-lev de tre ev-er got de bet-er ov it.

De nekst mern-ig, de old jentl-man, fjnd-ig ɾt hwot had be-fel-n hiz fa-vor-it tre, kam in-tu de hrs, and askt fer de e-tor ov

moral lessons made up the bulk (78 pages) of the material to be read by the child. The final section of 11 pages contained a treatise on alphabetic irregularities, an explanation of the Complete Alphabet, and a short discussion of how speech sounds are produced.

His most important book, A Solution to the Alphabetic Problem, was not published until over half a century later, in 1910. In it, he repeated his arguments for spelling reform. He concluded his pleas:

It is time that the hesitating, time-wasting perplexities of children over their spelling and reading should cease; phonetic spelling will save all their time and tears (Pitman, 1910, p. 21).

#### Alexander J. Ellis' Glossic

In 1843, Alexander John Ellis, King's Scholar at Eton, philologist, and man of great wealth, first met Isaac Pitman and began a lifetime of interest in spelling reform. In 1848, Ellis published his book, A Plea for Phonetic Spelling, in which he demonstrated graphically the many irregularities of English spelling. Ellis also worked with Pitman on the development of the Phonotype Alphabet (which is discussed in the next chapter) and on the development of several more augmented alphabets (Harrison, 1965).

In 1867, after Ellis lost faith in converting people to Fonotypy, he began work on his own and created the "Paleotype" phonetic alphabet which contained hundreds of characters. Realizing the difficulties of this spelling reform, Ellis suddenly changed his whole approach to the subject and started to think in terms of digraphic spelling.

Tauber explains Ellis' change of mind:

He wanted a simplified spelling which could be immediately used for all kinds of printing at any printing press throughout the world that possessed a font of Roman letters. The sound values assigned to the old letters should be derived from existing associations so that they would suggest their sound almost spontaneously to anyone who could read. The new spelling must be such that anyone who learned to read in it should be able to read the conventional spelling as well. The new spelling should occupy less space, if possible (Tauber, 1958, p. 30).

Tauber concludes, "these principles became the credo for many followers in America and England" (p. 30).

In 1870, after years of experimentation, A.J. Ellis finally settled on a system of digraphic spelling which he named "Glossic." Based on forty-three sounds, Ellis conceived of Glossic as a means to teach children to read. A more elaborate notation, "Euniversal Glossic," was designed as an international alphabet to reproduce dialects for phonetic discussion and is presented in the book The Alphabet of Nations (Scragg, 1974; Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 93).

The system can best be explained by a summary of its objects and means:

Objekts:

1. Too fasil'itait Lerning too Reed
2. Too maik Lerning too Spel unnes.eseri
3. Too asim.ilait Reeding and Reiting too heerring and Speeking
4. Too maik dhi Risee.vd Proanunsiai.shen ov Ingglish akses.ibl too awl Reederz, Proavin.shel and Foren

Meenz:

1. Leev dhi Oald Speling untuch.t
2. Introadeu.s along seid ov dhi Oald Speling a New Aurthog.rafi konsis.ting ov dhi Oald euzd invai.rriabli in dhair best noan sensez.
3. Employ dhi New Speling in Skoolz too.
4. Teech Reeding in boath Aurthog.rafiz.
5. Alou eni Reiter to reit in dhi New Speling oanli on aul okai.zhenz loozing kaast, proavei.ded he euzez a Risee/vd Proanunsia.shen; dhat is -- aknol'ej dhi New Speling konkur'entli widh dhi Oald (cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 94).

After a while Ellis realized that Glossic was too far removed from traditional spelling and therefore made some changes to produce a system of digraphic spelling called Dimid'ium Spel'ing "haaf ov whot is needed" (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 94).

Dimid'ium appears little different from Glossic. His purpose in both cases was to provide a system of spelling that could be immediately used by any printing works which had a font of Roman characters.

If nomic reederz [Nomic: "dhe fonetic euzejez ov prezent customary speling] ar tou hav the sleitest difiiculty in reeding the new speling, goud bey tou our haaf loaf! Ingglissh reederz wahnt goh tou scool agin, eh pourr cohz - a burnt cheild dredz the feir! Hens, if possible, every thing prizented tou thair eyz shoud bi whot thay aulredy understand. In uther wurdz the new speling must be bilt on thi leinz ov thi oald.

Revolewshun may bi the best soleushun, but ey doo not intend tou wurk in that direcshun eny longger. Mey paast expeeriens, whitch haz been boatth grait and painfoul, wornz me tou trey anuther road. It iz not without egzurting grait fors ohver miself thut ey - uv rinounst a purly fonetic alfabet. But Glosic woz mey furst step in the new direcshun,



and Dimidium or 'haafway speling' is mey secund.

It iz thi outcum ov thurty sevn yeerz ov consienshus wurk, cominst and carid on for edewcaishunal and filolodjecul purpusez (cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, pp. 94-95).

Although there is little information on the use of either Glossic or Dimidium, perhaps the real value of Glossic was that it pointed the way or opened the door to further experimentation and development of digraphic alphabets and new spelling systems.

Tauber summarizes Ellis' influence on spelling reform:

The work of Ellis was influential ideologically, his academic stature gave status to the spelling reform movement and attracted to it reputable philological scholars in England and America; his ideas became the foundation stones on which the structure of organized spelling reform in England was built and holds firm to this day. These principles have become the basis of the spelling reform movement in America today (Tauber, 1958, p. 33).

In his later years, Isaac J. Pitman, too, was convinced that the most practical course in promoting spelling reform was to stay within the limits of the Roman alphabet. After a series of experiments, Pitman postulated the following Three Rules of Spelling Reform:

RULE 1 — Reject q, c, x as redundant; use the other consonants for the sounds usually associated with them; and supply the defieciency of twelve other letters by these digraphs--

ch	'th	th	sh
cheap	thin	then	wish
zh	ng	aa	ai
vision	sing	palm	pale
ee	au	oa	oo
peel	pall	pole	pool

Write ay for the second vowel, and aw for the fourth, at the

end of a word; as pay, law.

RULE 2 -- A, e, o, u, ending a syllable (except at the end of a word; as sofa), represent a long vowel; as in fa-vour, fe-ver, ho-li, tru-li.

RULE 3 -- A, e, i, o, u, in close syllable (and a at the end of a word), represents the short sounds in pat, pet, pit, pot, put. Use u- for u when it is pronounced as in but.

Write the diphthongs thus: ei, by; ou, now; iu, new (yu initial); ai, Kaiser; oi, coy (cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 95).

Isaac Pitman's monthly journal The Speler, first issued in January 1895, was for the most part printed according to these "First Stage rules and to the end of his life he advocated this more limited reform with the same energy and persistence as he had devoted to Fonotypy" (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 95).

#### The Principles of '76 and the SRA

Nearly half a century following the publication of Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language, interest in spelling reform in the United States was such that the American Philological Association (APA) formed a committee to study the notion. Much of this interest was generated by the efforts of Isaac and Benn Pitman and their associates, and supporters of spelling reform in the National Teachers Association, later renamed the National Education Association, including its first president, Zalmon Richards, Horace Mann, and President F.A.P. Barnard of Columbia (Dewey, 1971). Consisting of Professors Francis A. March of Lafayette College, William Dwight Whitney (who served as chairman) and J. Hammond Trumbull, both from

Yale, S.S. Haldeman of the University of Pennsylvania, and F.J. Child of Harvard, the committee reported in 1876 that the revision of spelling was urgent (Mencken, 1945). Their report, known as the "Principles of '76," presented at the annual meeting of the APA in July, 1876, read:

1. The true sole office of alphabetic writing is faithfully and intelligibly to present spoken speech. So-called "historical" orthography is only a concession to the weakness of prejudice.
2. The ideal of an alphabet is that every sound should have its own unvarying sign, and every sign its own unvarying sound.
3. The alphabet intended for use by a vast community need not attempt an exhaustive analysis of the elements of utterance and a representation of the nicest varieties of articulation; it may well leave room for the unavoidable play of individual and local pronunciation.
4. An ideal alphabet should seek to adopt for its characters forms which should suggest the sounds signified, and of which the resemblances should in sum measure represent the similarities of the sounds. But for general practical use there is no advantage in a system which aims to depict in detail the physical processes of utterance.
5. No language has ever had, or is likely to have, a perfect alphabet, and in changing and amending the mode of writing of a language already long written, regard must necessarily be had to what is practically possible quite as much as to what is inherently desirable.
6. To prepare the way for a change, the first step is to break down, by the combined influence of enlightened scholars and of practical educators, the immense and stubborn prejudice which regards the established modes of spelling almost as constituting the language, as having a sacred character, as in themselves preferable to others. All agitation and all definite proposals of reform are to be welcomed so far as they work in this direction.
7. An altered orthography will be avoidably offensive to those

called upon to use it; but any sensible and consistent new system will rapidly win the hearty preference of the mass of writers.

8. The Roman alphabet is so widely and firmly established in use among the leading civilized nations that it cannot be displaced; in adapting it to improved use in English, the efforts of scholars should be directed for its use with uniformity and in conformity with other nations (cited in March, 1893, p. 16).

This report was accepted by the APA, and the committee was asked to continue its labors for another year, with March as its chairman. The following year, 1877, in accordance with the Principles of '76, the APA created the Standard Phonetic Alphabet. "So soundly [was it] conceived that it served, a generation later, with insignificant alterations of fundamentals, as the basis for the Revised Scientific Alphabet, commonly known as the NEA Alphabet...and [was] used as Key 1 of the Funk & Wagnall's New Standard Dictionary" (Dewey, 1971, p. 21).

Shortly after the publication of the Principles of '76, from August 14-17, 1876, in conjunction with the United States Centennial Exposition, an International Convention for the Amendment of English Orthography was held at Philadelphia "to settle upon some satisfactory plan of labor for the prosecution of the work so happily begun by the American Philological Association and various other educational associations in this country and England" (March, 1893, pp. 16-17). Sponsors of the Convention were the London Philological Society, the British National Union of Elementary Teachers, the American Philological Association, the Pennsylvania State Teachers Association, the Connecticut Legislature, and the National Education Association.

S.S.Haldeman, president of the APA, was chairman of the convention, and Melvil Dewey served as secretary. Realizing that undirected, individual efforts were largely ineffective, on the fourth day of the convention, the group changed its name, and the Spelling Reform Association (SRA) came into being (March, 1893).

Francis A. March was elected president of the Spelling Reform Association, with Melvil Dewey as secretary. Commanding the support of a distinguished group of businessmen, legislators, and scholars, including many who were active in the APA, the SRA supported, supplemented, and encouraged the spelling reform efforts of the APA (Dewey, 1971). The SRA adopted the Principles of '76 as the ideological basis of its work, and went on to adopt these principles of its own:

1. A general standard of orthography, uniformly applied, was to be the goal.
2. The supervision and approval of the APA would be sought for any plan adopted.
3. Publishers were solicited to publish books in reform spelling.
4. All experiments having as their object the improvement of spelling were welcomed.
5. The letters b, d, e (as in met), f, g, h, i (as in pin), l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, and z were considered satisfactory, and needed no change from their normal use.
6. The forms for capital and small letters should correspond, as far as practicable.
7. The names assigned to the letters of the alphabet should contain their accepted sounds.
8. The convention recognized the importance of providing a phonetic alphabet, composed solely of the present letters or

material contained in the ordinary printer's case, as a means of disseminating at once through the press and among people generally, a knowledge of phonetic spelling (cited in Tauber, 1958, pp. 94-95).

Motions to open correspondence with English friends of spelling reform were adopted. The SRA convened often, and in October, 1876, the Deseret Alphabet was shared with the group by A.J. Pierce (the Deseret Alphabet is discussed at length in Chapter V). After 1882, the SRA met concurrently with the APA. Although an official organ of the SRA, entitled Spelling, was published on the initiative of Dewey, apathy slowed the activities of the SRA, and after 1886, the National Education Association became the leading light of the spelling reform movement (Tauber, 1958).

Three years after the formation of the Spelling Reform Association, the British Spelling Reform Association was organized in 1879 with A.H. Sayce, deputy professor of comparative philology at Oxford, as president, with members including W.W. Skeat, J.A.H. Murray, Sir Isaac Pitman, Charles Darwin, and Alfred Lord Tennyson. "In its constitution the aim was stated to be recommended simpler spelling of English words than those now in use, and to further the general use of such simpler spellings by every means in its power and to cooperate with the Spelling Reform Association of America" (Harrison, 1965, p. 52).

In the United States, a great deal of legislative activity was generated for spelling reform at this time. In 1875, the Connecticut Legislature approved a joint resolution to create a commission to

investigate the use of "amended orthography" in public documents. The legislature of Wisconsin followed suit and recommended that the Superintendent of Public Instruction supply dictionaries using an amended orthography. Iowa and Pennsylvania also considered the same moves (Tauber, 1958, p. 110). In 1889, a bill was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives to use the APA joint rules for amended spelling. In 1890, two bills were introduced in the House to instruct the public printer to use the APA joint rules in printing public documents.

In 1892, a bill to provide funds for the creation of an experimental school in Chicago to determine the effectiveness of simplified spelling as an aid to reading, was introduced in Congress. Although this Bill to Test and Try the Science of Spelling, and to Provide for Establishing 100 Schools for that Purpose and to Establish a Spelling School in the Columbian Exposition to be Held in Chicago in 1893, and the two former bills never passed, they did attract attention to the spelling reform cause (Tauber, 1958, p. 111).

The years that followed 1880 brought disenchantment to members of SRA and the chief efforts at spelling reform shifted over to the National Education Association (NEA) due primarily to the efforts of E.O. Vaile of Chicago (Vaile, 1904).

The most notable achievement of the NEA at that time was their adoption in 1898 of a list of twelve words for simplification:

<u>Conventional Spelling</u>	<u>Simplified Spelling</u>
programme	program
though	tho
although	altho
thorough	thoro
thoroughfare	thorofare
through	thru
throughout	thruout
catalogue	catalog
prologue	prolog
decatalogue	decalog
demagogue	demagog
pedagogue	pedagog

(cited in Tauber, 1958, p. 137).

The adoption of the resolution to use the twelve words was only the beginning of the NEA participation in spelling reform. The twelve simplifications were thereafter used in all the publications of the NEA and in many educational journals, including the Educational Review, edited by Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia (Monroe, 1915). In 1898, a committee on spelling reform was appointed to consider the advisability of other spelling changes.

The committee recommended that besides "The Twelve Words" (as they came to be called) the option should be to include new spellings such as ar, giv, posibl, definit, geografy, fantasy, enuf, among others.

Although some of the spellings of The Twelve Words were eventually adopted for general use and most of the new spellings were met with indifference, the NEA continued to use many of the spellings for almost sixty years.

In 1921, the National Education Association withdrew its



endorsement of the reform movement, and during the next few years most of the magazines and newspapers that had adopted its Twelve New Words went back to orthodox forms (Mencken, 1945).

Tauber stated, "The campaign to promote spelling reform in the NEA expired not with a bang, but with a whimper" (1958, p. 162).

#### The Simplified Spelling Board

The chief event of early twentieth century spelling reform was the establishment in 1906 of the Simplified Spelling Board backed by wealthy philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who promised the Board \$10,000 a year for ten years (although the total amount of Carnegie's support was closer to \$250,000) (Mencken, 1945). The Simplified Spelling Board consisted primarily of members from the American Philological Association, the London Philological Society, the Spelling Reform Association, the Modern Language Association of America, the National Education Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and other interested linguists and educators (Iles, 1965). Among its original members were Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University; David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University; Richard Watson Gilder, editor of the Century; Justice David J. Brewer, of the Supreme Court of the United States; Isaac K. Funk, editor of the Standard Dictionary; Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain); William T. Harris, U.S. Commissioner of Education; Henry Holt, the publisher; Thomas R. Lounsbury, Chaucer scholar and professor of English at Yale; Thomas Wentworth Higginson; William James,

psychologist and author; Melvil Dewey; and Brander Matthews (Dornbush, 1961; Mencken, 1948).

In 1906, a Simplified Spelling Society was organized in Great Britain, with Walter William Skeat of Oxford as president. The British Society, too, received Carnegie funds of approximately 1,000 pounds annually (Monroe, 1915). The Society's most visible contribution to the cause of orthographic reform for years was the publication of its monthly magazine, Pioneer of Simplified Spelling (Iles, 1965). In 1911, an international conference on spelling reform, sponsored by the British and American groups, was held, with another planned for 1914. Political tensions leading to World War I, however, prevented its convening. The Society was later responsible for the creation of New Spelling, which is examined later in this chapter.

Of the work and relationship between the two spelling reform societies, Dr. Paul Monroe has written in the Cyclopedia of Education:

The Simplified Spelling Society and the Simplified Spelling Board are independent organizations working in accord for the same end. They are both animated by the desire of making our noble tongue fitter for its future service as a world-language, of lifting a heavy weight from the backs of our children, and of making English easier for the foreigners within our borders whom we are assimilating by countless thousands and also for the foreigners outside our borders, in our colonies or in other parts of the globe (Monroe, 1915, p. 395).

Mindful of the long history of failure to simplify the spelling of English, the Board stayed away from what might be considered radical or revolutionary schemes for spelling reform, or any sudden or violent changes. "It desires in respect to the spelling of some words, and to

restore former usage when that is better and more reasonable than modern usage. It desires to do this gradually, in keeping with the genius of the language, and progressively, in accordance with the spirit of the race" (Paine, 1920, pp. 17-18).

According to the principle of gradual and/or natural change, the Simplified Spelling Board recommended the adoption of the following four principles.

1. When current usage offers a choice of spelling, to adopt the shortest and simplest. Examples: blest, not blessed (1 syl.); catalog, not catalogue; center, not centre; check, not checque; gage, not gauge; gram, not gramme; honor, not honour; license, not licence; maneuver, not manoeuver; mold, not mould; plow, not plough; quartet, not quartette; rime, not rhyme; tho, not though; traveler, not traveller.

2. Whenever practical, omit silent letters. Examples: activ, not active; anser, not answer; bluf, not bluff; definit, not definite; det, not debt; eg, not egg; engin, not engine; frend, not friend; hart, not heart, helth, not health; promis, not promise; scool, not school; shal, not shall; suffraget, not suffragette; thru, not through; trolly, not trolley; yu, not you.

3. To follow the simpler rather than the more complex of existing analogues. Examples: aker, not acre; buro, not bureau; deciet, not deceit; enuf, not enough; maskerade, not masquerade; spritely, not sprightly; telefone, not telephone; tung, not tongue; wize, not wise.

4. Keeping in view that the logical goal of the movement is the eventual restoration of English spelling to the fonetic basis from which in the course of centuries and thru various causes it has widely departed, to propose no change that is inconsistent with that ideal (Paine, 1920, p. 18).

Immediately after its organization, the Simplified Spelling Board began an active campaign to get organizations and individuals to take initial steps toward spelling simplification by adopting a list of 300

common words of which alternative spellings were listed in leading dictionaries and used at times by popular and/or eminent writers. All those who approved the aims of the Board were asked to carry a card which stated that they agreed to use/write the simpler alternative forms as far as it was practical to do so.

The response to the initial campaign was beyond the expectation of the Board itself. H.G. Paine, in the Handbook of Simplified Spelling (1920) wrote, "Within a few months, many of the leading filogists, educators, scientists, and men of letters announced their adhesion and thousands of teachers, fasicians, lawyers, clergymen, and other professional men; businessmen, firms and corporations; educators and publishers signed the agreement" (p. 21).

This response was due in large measure to the proselytizing efforts of men such as the humorist Mark Twain. In a speech delivered September 18, 1906, at the annual dinner of the Associated Press, Twain urged the group to accept the SSB's proposed changes, saying, "If the Associated Press will adopt and use our simplified forms, and thus spread them to the ends of the earth...our difficulties are at an end." He continued:

...And so I beg you, I beseech you--oh, I implore you to spell them in our simplified forms. Do this daily, constantly, persistently for three months - only three months - it is all I ask. The infallible results? - victory, victory all down the line. For by that time all eyes here and above will have become adjusted to the change and in love with it, and the present clumsy and ragged forms will be grotesque to the eye and revolting to the soul. And we shall be rid of phthisis and phthisic, and pneumonia and pneumatics, and diphtheria and pterodactyl and all those

other insane words which no man addicted to simple Christian life can try to spell and not lose some of the bloom of his piety in the demoralizing attempt. Do not doubt it....

People say it is the spelling of Chaucer and Spencer and Shakespeare and a lot of other people who do not know how to spell anyway, and it has been transmitted to us and we preserve it and wish to preserve it because of its hallowed associations.

Now I don't see that there is any real argument about that. If that argument is good, then it would be a good argument not to banish flies and the cockroaches from hospitals because they have been there so long that the patients have got used to them and they feel a tenderness for them on account of the association....

[At the conclusion of his speech, Twain lampooned the opponents of reform by saying they charge that] Simplified spelling brought about the sunspots, the San Francisco earthquake, and the recent business depression, which we never would have had if spelling had been left all alone (cited in Iles, 1965, pp. 19-20).

So effective was the propaganda of the Simplified Spelling Board that the Board of Superintendents of New York City Schools in 1906 unanimously recommended the use of the 300 words for all New York City schools. The Modern Language Association of America in the same year, 1906, not only accepted the list of 300 words for its publication, but in some instances began to make other simplifications beyond the original list.

Some examples of the recommended changes spelled in simpler form are as follows:

abridgment	humor
altho	jail
antitoxin	judgment
bark	labor
behavior	lisens
caliber	mama

catalog	medieval
center	meter
clue	mold
controller	odor
defense	phenomenon
dike	program
draft	prolog
endeavor	quartet
envelop	rancor
esthetic	sulfur
ether	tenor
fantasy	theater
flavor	tho
gage	thoroly
gipsy	thru
good-by	vapor
hiccup	wagon
honor	whisky

(cited in Tauber, 1958, p. 176).

During his second term, President Theodore Roosevelt fought a losing battle for spelling reform. Encouraged by his friend, Brander Matthews, President of the SSB, Roosevelt, who was himself a weak speller, on August 27, 1906, issued the following order to the Public Printer, Charles Arthur Stillings:

My Dear Mr. Stillings:

I enclose herewith copies of certain circulars of the Simplified Spelling Board, which can be obtained free from the board at No. 1 Madison Avenue, New York City. Please hereafter direct that in all Government publications of the Executive departments the 300 words enumerated in circular shall be spelled as therein set forth. If anyone asks the reason for the action, refer him to Circulars 3, 4, and 6 as issued by the Simplified Spelling Board.

Most of the criticism of the proposed step is evidently made in entire ignorance of what the step is, no less than in entire ignorance of the very moderate and common-sense views as to the purposes to be achieved, which views are so excellently set forth in the circulars to which I have referred. There is not the slightest intention to do

anything revolutionary or initiate any far-reaching policy.

The purpose simply is for the Government instead of lagging behind popular sentiment, to advance abreast of it and at the same time abreast of the views of the ablest and most practical educators of our time as well as of the most profound scholars—men of the stamp of Professor Lounsbury and Professor Skeat.

If the slight changes in the spelling of the 300 words proposed wholly or partially meet popular approval, then the changes will become permanent without any reference to what public officials or individual private citizens may feel; if they do not ultimately meet with popular approval they will be dropt [new style], and that is all there is about it.

They represent nothing in the world but a very slight extension of the unconscious movement which has made agricultural implement makers and farmers write "plow" instead of "plough"; which has made most Americans write "honor" without the somewhat absurd, superfluous "u"; and which is even now making people write "program" without the "me"—just as all people who speak English now write "bat," "set," "dim," "sum," and "fish," instead of the Elizabethan "batte," "sette," "dimme," "summe," and fysshe"; which makes us write "public," "almanac," "era," "fantasy," and "wagon," instead of the "publick," "almanack," "aera," "phantasy," and "waggon" of our great-grandfathers.

It is not an attack on the language of Shakespeare and Milton, because it is in some instances a going back to the forms they used, and in others merely the extension of changes which, as regards other words, have taken place since their time.

It is not an attempt to do anything far-reaching or sudden or violent; or indeed anything very great at all. It is merely an attempt to cast what slight weight can properly be cast on the side of the popular forces which are endeavoring to make our spelling a little less foolish and fantastic (cited in Harrison, 1961, pp. 86-87).

Protagonist and antagonist forces formed battlelines, and spelling reform became a national and even international issue. American, British, and Canadian newspapers lampooned the reform attempt with

headlines such as "ROZEVULT AKSEPTS LATEST SPELLING RULES" (Vivian, 1979, p. 165. See Figure 17). The New York State Commissioner of Education declared that he "didn't believe in telling people how to spell" (Harrison, 1961, p. 88). Congress also took umbrage with the President's attempt. Massachusetts Congressman John A. Sullivan claimed that "old spelling" was good enough. He went on: "If the President of the United States has authority by imperial ukase to change the spelling of 300 words, it follows that he has authority to change 30,000 words, or every word in the language. The result may be that a new court language may be established by Executive decree for the new American empire. We got along very well with the customary form of the English language until the reign of the present Ruler" (Congressional Record 41, pt. 1:312; cited in Vivian, 1979, p. 171).

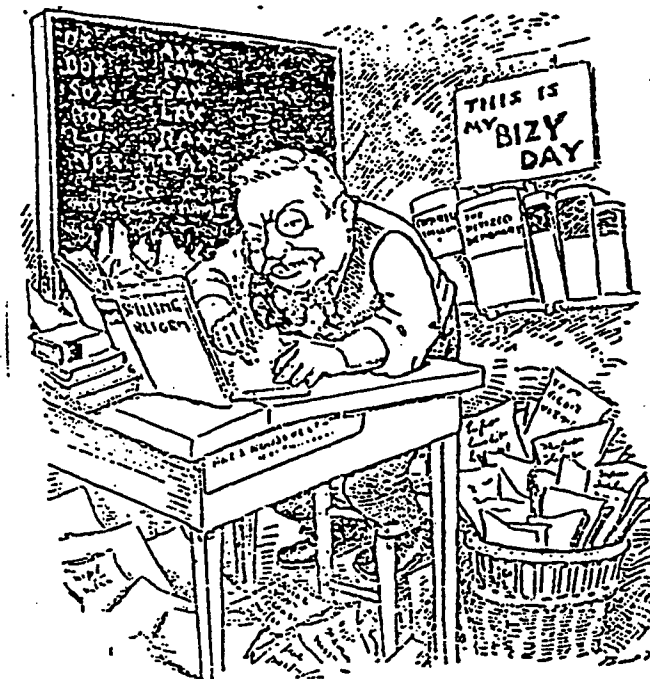
On December 12, 1906, Roosevelt's attempt to effect spelling reform was circumvented by Congress in the form of a rider to the printing money bill, which read:

No part of the compensation provided by this act shall be paid to the Public Printer unless he shall, in printing documents authorized by law or ordered by Congress or either branch thereof, conform in the spelling thereof to the rules of orthography recognized and used by accepted dictionaries of the English language (Harrison, 1961, p. 88).

On December 13, 1906, President Roosevelt accepted the inevitable and rescinded his order of August 27. While he was President, Roosevelt made no further efforts to carry out spelling reforms. He wrote to Brander Matthews on December 16, 1906, that "I could not by fighting have kept the new spelling, and it was evidently worse than useless to



Figure 17. An editorial cartoon lampooning President Theodore Roosevelt's attempt to simplify spelling.



The caption read: THIS DOES SETTLE IT.

President Roosevelt positively cannot accept nomination for a third term: he has undertaken the introduction of spelling reform, and that is trouble enough for one man.

Note. From "President Roosevelt and Spelling Reform," 1906,  
The American Monthly Review of Reviews, p. 611.

go into an undignified contest when I was beaten" (cited in Dornbush, 1961, p. 238). Roosevelt accepted membership on the SSB, used some simplifications in his own correspondence, but said no more publicly about the matter (Mencken, 1945). When Roosevelt's term of office expired in March, 1909, the conservative newspaper, the New York Sun, published a one word editorial: "Thru." (Ives, 1979, p. 43).

The National Education Association, in 1907, approved the work of the Simplified Spelling Board and directed the use of the list of 300 words in its journal. In 1916, the National Education Association added the spelling t for ed in the past tense of English verbs ending in ed but pronounced t. Thus the NEA simplified the use of over 900 words in addition to the original list of the Simplified Spelling Board. Local teachers associations in all sections of the country began to follow the example of the National Education Association and passed resolutions in support of the movement.

Leading periodicals and newspapers, including the Literary Digest, Independent, Current Literature, Educational Review, The Chicago Tribune and the Minneapolis Journal were the first to approve of the idea of simplified spelling and to adopt the list of 300 alternative spellings (Iles, 1965). The spelling simplifications begun at the Chicago Tribune were used for a number of years, discarded, then reinstated in 1934, to be finally abandoned in 1975 (Vivian, 1979). In an editorial entitled "Thru is through and so is tho," which announced the abandonment of the reform attempt, the Chicago Tribune explained

that one reason for their decision was that "the writers of the spelling texts would not yield. When Johnny would write Tribune style, teacher sat him down" (cited in Ives, 1979, p. 51).

On January 30, 1908, a second list of words was promulgated. The new list added whole classes of words. There appeared in the 1908 list the following words:

ake	eg
aile	foren
agast	gastly
alfabet	gard
autograf	hight
biografy	iland
boro	ile
bild	lim
campain	fonetic
cifer	fotograf
curtesy	sissors
crum	siv
det	solem
diafram	telefone

To these were added:

docil	premis
facil	favorit
fertil	definit
hostil	exquisit
juvenil	activ
engin	captiv
famin	executiv
feminin	objectiv
practis	exclusiv

In January 1909, a third list was added. New classes of words included:

alredy	dreamd
bred	happend
brest	offis
breth	auspis
ded	servis

hed	absolv
lether	delv
def	twelv
wepon	cary
zelot	nerv
bagd	stary
speld	

(Tauber, 1958,, pp. 196-197)

Shortly after publication of its fourth word list, the Simplified Spelling Board resolved no further changes in spelling until the recommendations and lists already published gained general acceptance by the public at large. In an attempt to promulgate and legitimize its reforms, Funk and Wagnalls published A Dictionary of Simplified Spelling based on the rules of the APA and the SSB (Vizetelly, 1915).

After a while, it became obvious that the four progressive lists previously published and disseminated were unlikely to gain quick acceptance and, in fact, might even retard the spelling simplification movement. It was with this concern that in 1918 the Filology Committee of the Simplified Spelling Board, after long and arduous deliberation over a two year period, recommended the adoption of systematic rules for changing the spelling.

In 1919, the Simplififed Spelling Board brought out a Handbook of Simplified Spelling and in it summarized its successive recommendations. The list contained 32 rules wih ten exceptions.

These were as follows:

1. When a word begins with or includes ae or oe, substitue e: esthetic, medieval, subpena; but retain the digraph at the end of a word: alumnae.

2. When bt is pronounced t, drop the silent b: det, dout, dettor.
3. When ceed is final, spell it cede: excede, procede, succede.
4. When ch is pronounced like hard c, drop the h except before e, i, and y: caracter, clorid, corus, etc. But retain architect, chemist, monarchy.
5. When a double consonant appears before a final silent e, drop the last two letters: bizar, cigaret, creton, gavot, gazel quartet, program.
6. When a word ends in a double consonant, substitute a single consonant: ad, bil, bluf, etc. But retain ll after a long vowel: all, roll. And retain ss when the word has more than one syllable: needless.
7. Drop the final silent e after a consonant preceded by a short stressed vowel: giv, hav, liv.
8. Drop the final silent e in a one syllable word with short vowels: ar, gon, wer. But not when sounded as in there.
9. Drop the silent e in the unstressed final short syllables, ide, ile, ine, ise, ite, and live: activ, bromid, definit, determin, practis, hostil.
10. Drop the silent e after lv and rv: involv, twelv, carv, deserv.
11. Drop the silent e after v or z when preceded by a digraph representing a long vowel or a diphthong: achiev, freez, gauz, sneez.
12. Drop the e in the final oe when it is pronounced o : fo, ho, to, wo. But retain it in th inflections: foes, hoed.
13. When one of the letters in ea is silent, drop it: hed, bed, brekfast, hart, harth. But not in bead, read, real.
14. When final ed is pronounced d, drop the e: cald, carrid, employd, marrid, robd, etc. But not when a wrong pronunciation would be suggested: bribed, caned, filed, priced, used.
15. When final ed is pronounced t, substitute t : askt,

fixt, helpt, adresst, shipt, stopt, stuft, advanst, etc.  
But not when a wrong pronunciation will be suggested: baked,  
reduced, faced, hoped.

16. When ei is pronounced like ie in brief, substitute ie:  
conciet, deciev, iether, reciev, wierd.

17. When a final ey is pronounced y, drop the e: barly,  
chimny, donky, mony, vally.

18. When final gh is pronounced f, substitute f and drop the  
silent letter of the preceding digraph: enuf, laf, ruf, tuf.

19. When gh is pronounced g, drop the h: agast, gastly,  
gost, goul.

20. When gm is final, drop the silent g: apothem, flem,  
diafram.

21. When gue is final after a consonant, a short vowel, or a  
digraph representing a long vowel, or a diphthong, drop the  
silent ue: tung, catalog, harang, sinagog, leag. But not  
when a wrong pronunciation would be suggested: rog for  
rogue, vag for vague.

22. When a final ise is pronounced like ize, substitute ize:  
advertize, advize, franchise, rize, wize.

23. When mb is final after a short vowel, drop b: bom, crum,  
dum, lam, lim, thum.

24. When ou is before l and pronounced o, drop u: mold,  
bolder, sholder. But not sol for soul.

25. When ough is final, spell o, u, or up, according to the  
pronunciation: altho, thru, hiccup, do, donut, furlo.

26. When our is final and ou is pronounced as a short vowel,  
drop u: color, honor, labor.

27. When ph is pronounced f, substitute f: alfabet, emfasis,  
fantom, fonograf, fotograf, sulfur, telefone, telegraf.

28. When re is final after any consonant save c, substitute  
er: center, fiber, meter, theater. But not lucer, mediocer.

29. When rh is initial and the h is silent, drop it:  
retoric, reumatism, rime, rubarb, rithm.

30. When sc is initial and the c is silent, drop it: senery, sented, septer, sience, sissors.

31. When u is silent before a vowel, drop it: bild, condit, garantee, gard, ges, gild, gide.

32. When y is between consonants, substitute i: analisis, fisic, gipsy, paralize, rime, silvan, tipe (Paine, 1920, pp. 14-15).

Although the list of 32 rules was a "noble" attempt by the Simplified Spelling Board to eliminate many silent letters, it failed to obtain complete elimination of some of the more common silent letter combinations such as the gh in such words as sight, night, through, and slough. The rules were further weakened by the appearance of so many exceptions that they became hard to remember. Perhaps a fair evaluation of the results of these published rules was best summarized by Mencken, "The clumsy novelties [of the list of rules] gave the whole spelling reform movement a black eye" (Mencken, 1945, p. 403). The remains of the Simplified Spelling Board eventually merged with the Spelling Reform Association in 1946 and formed the Simpler Spelling Association, with headquarters at Lake Placid, New York (Dewey, 1971).

Frederick C. Wingfield's  
Fwnetic Crthqgrafi

In 1928, Fred S.C. Wingfield, a Chicago printer, launched what he called Fwnetic Crthqgrafi. It is a novel system compared to other digraphic systems in that his system bears little resemblance to orthodox or traditional spelling (Pitman & St. John, 1969).

Fwentic Crthqgrafi is a system built upon what Wingfield describes

as "based on optimal English phonemes, reassignment of c, j, q, x and the use of standard digraphs" (Wingfield, n.d., a, p. 1). Originally intended to be a secondary or auxiliary language and proposed for use by students of English-American language, Fwentic Crthqgrafi was later conceived as a means of permanent reform for English.

Since its inception in 1931, Fwnetic Crthqgrafi has changed to Fonetic Crthogرافي. An example of how it appeared in 1944 is shown in the first sentence of the Declaration of Independence:

"Hwen in dh kors v huimn jvents, it bjkmz nesiseri for won pipl ta dizqlv dh politikl baendz hwitsh haev k'nektd dhem widh anvdr, and tu asuim amvng dh Pqwrz o dh rith, dh separeit and jkwal steishn to hwitsh dh lez o neitshr and v neitshrz Gqd entaitl dhm, a djsnt rjspekt tu dh openynz v maenkaind rjkairz dht dhei shwd diklai dh kcz'z hwitsh impel dhem tu dh separeishun" (cited in Mencken, 1948, p. 288).

The strangeness of his spelling system and the general lack of acceptance by the public has caused Wingfield to modify and change certain rules over the course of the years.

The following summary and transliteration of several of the current rules for Systematized Spelling will help understand his newer system.

1. The final e is silent, with the exception of the monosyllables: be, he, me she, thee, we. The final e lengthens the preceding vowel unless two or more consonants intervene. The suffix -ing also affects the preceding vowel in the same manner.
2. When e accompanies another vowel it causes that vowel to be long. From this rule six vowel digraphs are retained: ae (Gaelic), ee (see), ie (tried), oe (doe), ue (due), ye (xyelofone).
3. Two consonant letters following a vowel shorten the



vowel; thuss, bigger, batle, gather, hopper, title, number, etc.

4. The letters a, o, u followed by -tion are generally long: donation, motion, solution, etc.

5. The final syllables -tion, -tio, -tial, -cial, -sial, -sion, -cion are retained.

6. The following words are retained without changes: all, alrely, also, altho, alter, ball, call, wall, etc.

7. The letter o in unstressed syllables often has the short sound of u (i.e. kingdom, community, etc.): com, don, som, son, ton, won.

8. The u in the following words is pronounced as in bulletin, bushel: cud, ful, put, shud, wud, etc.

9. The er in the following words is pronounced as in very, kery, mery: bery (bury). ther, wher, etc.

10. A few conventional digraphs are preserved: ea (meal), aw (dawn), ei (vein), oa (road).

11. The following digraphs of conventional spelling are changed as follows:

-or as in vigor changed to -ur, vigur  
 -ir as in first changed to -ur, furst  
 -oo as in floor changed to -oa, floar  
 -ea as in break changed to -ei, breik

12. Unphonetic, and/or silent letters may be retained if there is sufficient analogical or etymological reasons for their preservation. Some examples are: of, off, sign,, signifi, benign, benignant, Gnostic, agnostic, symptom, sympathy, debt, debit, etc.

13. Some words are arbitrarily respelled as uce for use, noe for know, nue for knew, etc.

14. C and g immediately preceding e, i, y are soft: cent, city, icy, gentle, ginger, geology. In other positions, c and g are hard: electric, go, grand, big. For hard c write k: Kelly, kite, stickey. For hard g write gh: gherkin, ghetto, ghiv, gness, ghide, ghest, etc.

15. The letters l and r are doubled when immediately preceded or followed by vowels: errand, error, arrest, irradiant, jelly, mello, illegal. Exceptions to this rule are: araenge, arivel.
16. The letter s in initial position sounds as in see, so, stand. The s in medial position sounds like the sound of z as in present. The s in final position sounds like the sound of z in friends. Exceptions sometimes occur after the letters c, f, k, p, s, t: decs, mufs, caps, Bess, rests.
17. The letter x in the initial position has the sound of z; when intervocalic x has the sound of gz (exult); in the final position x sounds as in fix and box.
18. The initial y sounds as in yes, otherwise it sounds as in mystery. When y is followed by e it is pronounced like the long i as in xyelofone, tyre.
19. When z starts a word it retains its z sound (zebra). In other positions z is used as if there is familiar precedence for its use as in dazle, haze, alfabetize, buz, etc.
20. When in conventional spelling a final long vowel is followed by a single consonant plus -able, change to -eble; e.g. unmistakeble (Wingfield, n.d., c, p. 1).

In support of his list of changing rules and the assertion that his system is too radical, Wingfield relates the following imaginary anecdote:

Suppose one owns a house badly in need of a new paint job. A painting contractor is engaged; in due time the painter "completes" the painting and notifies the owner that he wants his pay-off.

The owner goes to inspect the painting job. He finds the house painted in front and on two sides, but the rear of the house is unpainted nor have the eaves been painted. The owner objects.

The painter: 'You are entirely too radical. Few people will see the backside nor notice the unpainted eaves!'

I think the owner would consider himself to have been short-changed and would bring an action against the painter

for breach of contract (Wingfield, 1978, p. 2).

The moral of Wingfield's story is that to change the appearance of English orthography is a major undertaking. It might be better to do the job correctly (meaning employing radical changes) in the first place rather than to make cosmetic changes.

The following is an example of Systematized Spelling in its latest (1978) form:

#### THE GETYSBURG ADDRESS

4 score and 7 years ago our fothers braut foerth on thiss continent a new nation, conceived in liburty, and dedicated tu the proposition that all men ar created eequal. Now we ar engaged in a graet civil waur, testing whether that nation or eny nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We ar met on a graet batlefeeld of that waur. We hav com tu dedicate a poertion of that feeld as a fienal resting place for those hu here gave their lives that that nation miet liv. It is altugether fitting and propur that we shud du thiss. But in a larger sence, we cannot hallo thiss ground. The brave men, livving and ded, hu strugled here, hav consecrated it....(Wingfield, n.d., b, p. 1).

#### R.E. Zachrisson's Anglic

R.E. Zachrisson, professor of English at the Royal University of Uppsala, Sweden, and author of many books on English pronunciation, unlike most other spelling reformers, proposed his system of simplification of English spelling called Anglic as an international language.

In his book Anglic: A New Agreed Simplified English Spelling, Zachrisson asserts that "an international language would prove a most valuable assest toward the maintenance of the world's peace, the prosperity of the nation, and the spreading of culture and

enlightenment all over the world." Zachrisson claimed that no other language had a better claim to be the international language of the world than English which was spoken by a third of the world population. "For simplicity of grammar and a cosmopolitan vocabulary, English has no rival. It is the easiest language for the greatest number of people" (Zachrisson, 1932, p. 4).

The one big problem with English, however, is the fact that English is extremely difficult to learn due to the lack of consistent sound representations. Quoting Jacob Grimm, Zachrisson writes: "When we consider its richness intellectually, and condensed adaptability, not one of all other living languages may be placed next to English. Did not a whimsical antiquated orthography stand in the way, the universality of this language would still be more evident" (Zachrisson, 1932, p. 10). Zachrisson goes on to conclude that English has the most antiquated, inconsistent and illogical spelling of any modern spelling system - a true handicap for its adoption as a world language.

Zachrisson stated that the Roman alphabet can be adapted for a phonetic spelling of English if we use not only single letters but also letter combinations in order to represent each sound. The great problem, Zachrisson warned, "is to find an orthography which is phonetic in principle, but which at the same time bears sufficient resemblance to present spelling for the two systems to be used side by side for the same purpose" (Zachrisson, 1932, p. 12).

Anglic attempts to answer the need for a new phonemic alphabet for

English without adding any new letters to the alphabet and at the same time keep some continuity with conventional English orthography by generalizing the most common or serviceable of existing spelling variants. The net result is that "practically 60 to 75 percent of the words on the average printed page are left unchanged at the same time that most of the practical advantages of complete and exact phonetic spelling reform are achieved" (Zachrisson, 1932, p. 12).

The original Anglic of 1930 was changed somewhat in 1932 (Iles, 1965). The reasons for the change are explained as follows:

Anglic Spelling has been revised with a view of fulfilling the following conditions:

- (1) To represent every word in one harmonious spelling, reflecting a pronunciation or pronunciations which are commonly used in standard speech,
- (2) to be phonetic in principle but at the same time deviate as little as possible from the existing spelling,
- (3) to take into account different standards of pronunciation,
- (4) to be easily learnt by necessitating as few rules as possible,
- (5) to save space in some words (Zachrisson, 1966, p. 23).

The rules for spelling in Anglic as revised in 1932 are as follows:

#### Vowels and diphthongs in stressed syllables

1. to 5. Short vowels as in man, men, him, not, tub. 6. to 10. The long vowels merely add a lengthening mark (e) to the short vowel letters, as in maelstrom, see, die, sloe, fuel. When followed by another vowel, the length sign is omitted (as in present spelling): dais, paabl, graer, seing, theori, real, hier, diet, post, snoing (sno.i), nuer, going, fuest, duel, plaing, diing, vuing.

11. Short- oo in good, bull is written: good, bool.
12. Long- oo in moon, lunatic, rude, fool is written muun, luunatik, ruud, fuul.
13. Intermediate ur found in girl, fern, occur, furry, is written gurl, furn, okur, furri.
14. Broad a (Italian) in father, palm, starry, card is written (1) aa, (2) ar, where the existing spelling contains an r pronounced in some dialects as faadher, paam, starri, kard.
15. Broad o in all, haunt, caught is written au, o broad or long in more, for, course, story is written (1) or, where the existing spelling contains an r, (2) oe before r followed by a vowel: aul, haunt, kaut, (1) for, mor, kors, (2) stoeri.
16. The diphthong in coin, boy is written koin, boi.
17. The diphthong in house, cow, sound is written hous, kou, sound.
18. The schwa or lightly pronounced obscure vowel is generally written a: about, admier, data, aeria, iedea, trial. (2) - er in prefixes and endings where the existing spelling has an r: perfekt, saleri, efert, modern, western, iern (iron). (3) Occasionally o or u: kustodi, matrimoni, rekogniez, solueshon, difikult, fakulti, surkemstans. (4) Soemtimes e, as in the endings - el, - en: barel, komen, korel, parchment, aba, ans, reli.ans, pursuans, oeriol.
19. Written o occurs chiefly before a single consonant, as in: -ok -dom, -som, -on, -(i)ot, -uous, -ion, -shon, -yon, -jon, -zhon as in: matok, freedom, random, seldom, abot, balot, chariot, bishop, galop, tempestuosm karion, reejon, naeshon, nashonal, opinyon, vizhon.
20. Written u occurs chiefly in the endings -(i)us, -(i)um, as in: boenus, sensus, surkus, oedius, raedius, buetius, kurtius, kolum, album, meedium, faemus.
21. Short i is written generally (1) i, also finally and before a vowel: mistaek, distrakt, mesinjer, solid, horid, palis, kurij, linin, thikit, forist, muezik; miniatuer, miriad, peeriod, negoeshiaet, raedius, stuedio, aeria, selestial, rufian, oedius, konveenians, piano, fiasko, kordialiti, piti, pitiabl, taxi, muni, hevi, kofi, enemi.

(2) e in pretonic syllables, especially in certain prefixes: be-, de-, e-, en-, ex-, egz-, pre-, re-, se-, and in the following endings: -est, -ez, -ed; -nes, -les, as in beleev, deseev, elastik, entier, exes, egzit, egzamin, prepaer, retier, select; hardest, kaesez, haunted, faernes, kountles.

22. o is written o: obskuer, (but oebae), folo, naroeest, foloer, ominus, (but oemen), oliv, (but oelio).

23. The vowel oftens appears with its full value in a more stresst position in cognate words: kordial, but kordialiti, method - methodikal, industri - industrial, koloni - koloenial. This is regularly the case in words stresst as follows: admiraeshon but admier, supozishon - supoez, relativ - relaet. In spite of this, we should write: mentl - mentalist, speshl - speshaliti, mortl - mortaliti, simbl - simbolikl, similer - similariti, injeri - injuurius.

24. Suffixes not found on the above lists (-dom, -som, -ful, -aet, -abl, -ibl, etc.) are only changed so as to conform with the general rules of Anglic spelling.

#### Consonants

Only the sounds of k and ng are written in more than one way.

25. The sound of ch is written: chin, much, waach, belch, bench, church; except where the old spelling gives a close proximation of the sound: naetuer, fuetur, murmer.

26. The hard g in get, guide, bag, vague is written g: get, gied, bag, vaeg.

27. The soft sound of g /j/ in bridge, strange, large, jam, gentle, is written: brij, straenj, jam, jentl.

28. The sound of k in keen, cat, act, accent, school, kiss, is written: keen, kat, act, aksent, skuul, kiss, komikl.

29. l, n, t, at the end of words after a consonant, except in such combinations as rl, rn, where a vowel, generally e, must be inserted are written: apl, orakl, ofishl, muuvabl, maep1, madn; but quorel, squirel, squodren. Write al (31) after a vowel or diphtong as well as after unstessed syllables: trial, loial, aktual, admiral, jeneral; kruuel (cruel). Where the ending is pronounced t, use t in place of ed, as in; passed, stressed, missed, write past, strest, mist, but not in weded, wanted, rieted.

30. The sound of ng in sing, stronger, language, bank, lynx, vanquish is written: (1) ng, (2) n before k, x, and q: (1) sing, strongger, langgwij, (2) bank, linx, vanquish.

31. The sound of kw in quite, acquaint, is written qu: quiet, aquaent. But not when k and w are in different syllables, as i awkward-aukwerd.

32. The hard sound of sh in shall, shine, sure, nation, procession, special is written: shal, shien, shurr, naeshon, speshl.

33. The hard th in think, both is written th, as: think, boeth. The soft th in bathe is written dh, as baedh.

34. The sound of w in wet, wine, anguish, persuade, is written: wet, wien, anggwish, perswaed.

35. The sound of wh in white, whet, whine, is written: whiet, whet, whien.

36. The sound of x (ks) is written x when in the existing spelling has x: in other cases, ks, as in box, ax, aksent, akshun, sukses.

37. The sound of y in yes is written y, as in: yes, yet, yonder, milyon, lauyer, uenyon. But not in: ues, uezing.

38. The hard sound of s (c) in cit, boss, circle, cedar, city, civil, is written s: sit, bos, surki, seeder, siti, sivil.

39. The soft sound of s (z) in rose, hoses, zeal, zoz, is written z: roez, hoezez, zeel, zuuz, kumz, handz.

40. The soft sound of sh in usual, vision is written zh: uezhooal, vizhon.

The following rule was added at a later date when a few words were noticed that could be confused:

41. Separate with a dot adjacent letters which are not in the same syllable and which might be mistaken for a usual digraph, as in: shorthand, mishap, outhouse, engage, gaety, reelect, quite, lower, influence, power - short.hand, mis.hap, out,hous, en.gaej, ree.elekt, kwie.et, en.gaej, loe.er, influu.ens, pou.er (Zachrisson, 1966, p. 23).



An example of the original (1930) Anglic is as follows:

Lincoln'z Gettysburg Speech

Forskor and sevn yeerz agoe our faadherz braut forth on this kontinent a nue naeshon, konseevd in liberty, and dedikaeted to the propozishon that aul men ar kreaeted eequel.

Now we ar engaejd in a graet sivil wor, testing whedhr that naeshon, or eny naeshon soe konseevd and soe dedikaeted, kan long enduer. We ar met on a graet batl-feeeld as a fiend resting-plaes for those who heer gæv their lievz that that naeshon miet liv. It is autogedhr fiting and propr that we shood do this....(McCarthy, in Haas, 1969, p. 94).

Anglic was almost immediately submitted to a number of tests.

Courses were given in Stockholm and Uppsala. "After twenty lessons," Zachrisson reported, "the pupils had acquired a working knowledge of English and were able to read not only Anglic but also easy specimens of English in existing spelling" (Zachrisson, 1932, p. 13)

On June 4, 1930, the Anglic Fund was formed for the purpose of making Anglic used and known throughout the world. Two days later, the Anglic Association was formed in Uppsala, Sweden with Zachrisson as its president. The object of the association was to find the solution the problem of an international language. The association produced a monthly paper Anglic Edukaeshonal Revue, "Its ultimate object being to teach Anglic all over the world through the medium of German, French, Swedish, and other languages" (Zachrisson, 1932, p. 14).

At a conference held in London in June, 1930, representatives of

the Anglic movement and leading British and American spelling reformers agreed "to give the Anglic movement their full support and cooperation in their respective countries and through their respective organizations so far as practical, both as an international auxiliary language and as a basis for reform of English spelling for the English-speaking world" (Zachrisson, 1932, p. 14; Dewey, 1971).

One spelling reformer, Ralph Gustafson, of the United States, produced a scheme which he called Simpl Orderli Speling, which was based on Zachrisson's Anglic. Gustafson has introduced some modifications in the system in order to get rid of "a strickli British stiel uv pronunsiashon tu wich moest Amerikanz ar not akustomed." In 1945, Gustafson sent out a circular warning readers that his system "iz experimental and must not be regarded az definit or fienal" (cited in Mencken, 1948, p. 289). This was the first and last word on Simpl Orderli Speling, and nothing else ever came of the system.

### Nue Spelling

World War II did not stop the activities of spelling reformers. In 1940, a digraphic system of spelling was developed and published by the Simplified Spelling Society in Britain. Christened "Nue Spelling," the system closely approximated the system developed by Zachrisson in 1930 (Pitman & St. John, 1969; Iles, 1965).

The principles upon which Nue Spelling was based can be summarized as follows:

1. No new characters to be introduced.

2. No new accents or diacritics to be introduced, and detached marks as such to be used in any case as sparingly as possible.
3. Unused or relatively unfamiliar combinations of letters to be avoided as far as possible (though some exceptions to this are inevitable).
4. Current usage to remain unaltered wherever common sense and expediency suggest. This 'principle of least disturbance' means that as far as possible each sound should be written with its most habitual single letter (or pair of letters).
5. Each symbol (letter or digraph) to be self-contained, that is, its significance not to depend on any other letter in the sequence. This precludes, e.g., the doubling of consonant letters to indicate the (short) value of the preceding vowel.
6. The complete scheme to be thorough-going, simple, regular and free from exceptions and anomalies, economical, easy to learn and use, and no concessions to be made to the habits of generations brought up on our present spelling, if future generations might thereby be inconvenienced (Haas, 1969, pp. 94-95).

The principal changes required by the Nue Spelling system are summarized as follows:

1. The replacement of (nearly) every long a and of every ai, ay, ei, ey, eigh, pronounced as long a by the symbol ae.
2. The replacement of (nearly) every long e and of every ea, ei, ie, and i pronounced as long e by the symbol ee.
3. The replacement of (nearly) every long i and of every y and igh pronounced as long i by the symbol ie.
4. The replacement of (nearly) every long o and of every oa as well as every ou, ow pronounced as long o by the symbol oe.
5. The replacement of every long u and of every eu, ew, ui, pronounced as long u by the symbol ue.
6. The replacement of every oo, u, ue, ui, ew,

pronounced as long oo by the symbol uu.

7. The replacement of the combinations ar, air, er, eir, pronounced as air by the symbol aer .

8. The replacement of the combinations er, ear, ir, yr when occurring in stressed syllables with the pronunciation of final or preconsonantal er, ir, ur by the symbol ur.

9. The replacement of unstressed i and e pronounced as short or consonantal i before a following vowel by the symbol y and the replacement of a by e in the unstressed suffixes -age, -ate, -ace.

10. The replacement of (nearly) all double consonants by single consonants, in both medial and final position.

11. The replacement of c by s and k respectively according to the pronunciation; of g by j when it has its soft sound; of s by z when it represents the voiced s sound; si, ssi, ti by sh when they represent the voiceless sh sound, and of si and s by zh when they stand for the voiced sh sound (Wijk, 1977, pp. 103-104).

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address  
in Nue Spelling

Forskor and seven yeerz agoe our faadherz braut forth on dhis kontinent a nue naeshon, konseevd in liberti, and dedikaeted to dhe proposishon dhat aul men ar kreeaeted eekwal.

Nou we are en/gaejd in a graet sivil wor, testing whedher dhat naeshon, or eni naeshon soe konseevd and soe dedikaeted, kan long enduer. We ar met on a graet batlfeeld ov dhat wor. We hav kum to dedikaet a porshon ov dhat feeld as a fienal resting-plaes for dhoes huu gaev dhaer lievz dhat dhat naeson miet liv. It iz aultogedher fiting and proper dhat we shood duu dhis....(Haas, 1969, pp. 95-96).

P.A.D. McCarthy made these points:

...which will have no doubt occurred to many of you while reading the foregoing specimen. The first point worth making is surely this: that although you may have been held up in your reading momentarily by this word or that, and although (if you have never looked at New Spelling before) you must have been struck initially by the appearance of many

words, nevertheless you were able to make out the passage--in other words, New Spelling can be read at sight. In fact about a third of all words, including an even higher proportion of the commonest words, are spelt in New Spelling as they are spelt now; a further third at least are only very slightly changed, and still others, though more extensively altered, are none the less immediately recognizable. Of course if you were already to know the relevant facts as to which letters stand for which sounds in the system, you would have no difficulty in reading all words at sight.

Secondly, usage as regards spacing, punctuation and capitalization remains unaltered. It would be perfectly possible to use New Spelling and, for instance, abolish all capitals, or write question-marks at the beginning as well as at the end of each question-sentence, as is done in Spanish, but these things are not themselves part and parcel of New Spelling.

It should next be pointed out that the text of the above passage (it is of course Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address) is rendered into an English pronunciation, though obviously originally spoken with an American one. This enables me to draw attention to the fact that New Spelling allows for a certain amount of regional variation in pronunciation to be shown, as regards the distribution of sounds (thus an American would probably say, and could therefore write, advanst where most forms of British English would have advanst ), but that a general-purpose orthography is most effective when designed to show the essential linguistic distinctions only, and not all the other personal or regional differences; and in fact a true New Spelling version of an American rendering of the passage need differ from the above in no more than perhaps half a dozen places. The almost complete standardization of spellings which the New Spelling system makes possible is naturally of great practical importance where the printing of books for world-wide use is involved, but at the same time a fair number of existing alternative pronunciations of individual words (alternatives even for British speakers) can in fact be indicated, and would then be likely to appear in, for instance, personal correspondence. A complete dictionary of New Spelling would therefore list the alternative spellings possible within the framework of the system (P.A.D. McCarthy, in Haas, 1969, pp. 96-97).

One of the most striking departures made by New Spelling is the

use of dh for the voiced sound of th. The letters q and x are not used, as they are considered redundant. Nue Spelling uses a combination of letters to make up for this omission; e.g., kwiet - quite, ekstend - extend, egzist - exist, angzie.eti - anxiety. Another notable innovation is the use of a dot placed on the line within a word at a point of syllabic division when ambiguity is present, as in mis.hap, pou.er, angzie.eti.

Another change in Nue Spelling that affects a large number of words is the replacement by j of g and dg when they have a soft pronunciation, as in jem, juj, lej, and baj. Also, the various spelling of the /sh/ sound, as in nation, ocean, tension, and suspicion, are replaced with shon. "Nue Spelling was on the whole systematic but it was never intended that it should be phonemically perfect 'because reason suggests that the gap between the old spelling and the new should be made as small as possible without sacrifice of simplicity and consistency'" (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 97).

The Simplified Spelling Society prepared a number of books to be used as beginning readers for the schools, including Dhe Railwae Enjin, Three Baerz, Dhe Enchanted Hors, Sinbad dhe Saelor, Aladin, Sinderela, Sleeping Buety, and Dhe Litl Red Hen (Pitman & St. John, 1969. See Figure 18). Also published by the SSS was the book, Nue Spelling, (Ripman & Archer, 1948) which contained the philosophy behind the reform proposal, as well as the use of the system. The book apparently had some impact, for in 1949, a spelling reform bill based

Figure 18. A specimen of Nue Spelling.



"Huu wil help to  
miks mie flour and  
to maek sum  
bred?" sed dhe Litl  
Red Hen.

"Not I," sed dhe  
poosy

"Not I," sed dhe  
pupy

"Not I," sed dhe  
piggy

Note. From Dhe Litl Red Hen (n.p.) by The Simplified Spelling  
Society, 1945, London: Heffer and Sons, Ltd.

on the principles of Nue Spelling was introduced in Parliament. Although the bill had strong and vociferous support, it never passed (Wijk, 1977; Reed, 1972; Harrison, 1964).

### Axel Wijk's Regularized English

In 1959, Axel Wijk, Docent in English at the University of Stockholm, published a book, Regularized English/Regularized English after years of study and research. This study was followed in 1966 by his Rules for the Pronunciation of the English Language wherein he presented a thorough discussion of the relationship between English spelling and pronunciation (Pitman & St. John, 1969).

Originally, Wijk's chief purpose for the research was to make a thorough scholarly investigation of the whole problem of spelling reform with the intent of trying to discover why these proposals have all come to naught. "It took me (Wijk) several years to work through the various sound symbols systematically, to collect and arrange all exceptional spellings, to discover and formulate the rules for pronunciation...and finally to collect and arrange the statistics concerning the distribution of the irregular spelling" (Wijk, 1959, p. 52).

The results of Wijk's investigation showed that the majority of English words, "about 90 to 95 percent actually follow certain regular patterns in regard to their spelling and pronunciation" (Wijk, 1959, p. 52). Wijk's rules to explain this high percentage of regularity occupy over 100 pages of his book.

Wijk maintained that many people have an exaggerated idea as to



the number of symbols that are used in ordinary English spelling. He explains:

We find in spoken Standard English 46 different speech sounds, 21 vowels and diphthongs, and 25 consonants. In the written form of the language, the 21 vowels and diphthongs are normally represented by 60 different symbols and the 25 consonant sounds by 44 symbols, as given in the lists below.

Symbols of simple vowels and diphthongs: a, e, i, y, o, u; ar, er, ir, yr, or, ur; aa, ae, ae, ai, ay, au, aw, ea, ee, ei, ey, eu, ew, ie, ye, oa, oe, oe, oi, oy, oo, ou, ow, ue, ui, uy; aer, air, ayr, ear, eer, eyr, eur,, ew(e)r, iar, ier, yer, oar, oor, our, ow(e)r, uer; igh, aigh, augh, eigh, ough = 60

Symbols of consonant sounds: b, c, ch, d, dg, f, g, gh, gn, gu, h, j, k, l, m, n, ng, p, ph, q, qu, r, s, sc, sch, sh, si, ssi, sci, ti, ci, ce, t, tch, th, u, v, w, wh, x, xc, y, z, zi = 44

If we add up the vowel and consonant symbols, we find that the 46 sounds of the spoken language are normally represented by 102 symbols in the written language (60 plus 44 minus 2, since u and y stand for both vowel and consonant sounds). If double consonants are added, we get 15 more symbols: bb, cc, dd, ff, gg, ck, or cq (instead of 'kk'), ll, mm, nn, pp, rr, ss, tt, vv, zz.

When it is sometimes said that there are more than 250 different symbols (or even many more) for the 46 speech sounds, this is only due to a peculiar way of counting, which we need hardly enter into in this connection (Wijk, 1959, p. 80).

Wijk argued that to spell all words according to phonetic principles would lead to such extensive changes in the present system that it would not stand the slightest chance of acceptance. The only alternative, as he saw it, was to examine symbols and try to determine how these should be used in a reformed orthography, to decide which use or uses may be conveniently retained and which should not. Generally

speaking, this meant the retention of all regular or most frequent uses of various sound symbols, and the respelling of irregular or less frequent representations. This meant then that since there is generally more than one regular or frequent spelling pattern there could be more than one acceptable spelling of that particular sound.

For example, Regularized English gives three regular spellings for the i -sound, as found in jest, gem, bridge, three regular spellings for the k -sound as found in cat, king, (plus x for / ks /, as in tax). Three regular spelling for the voiceless s -sound as found in side, certain, scene (plus x for / ks / as in tax); and five regular spellings for the sh -sound, as found in ship, nation, tension, mission, special.

The vowel sounds can also be expressed in a variety of regular alternative spelling patterns. For example, Regularized English gives five regular spellings for the long a sound as in sale, sail, way, vein, they (plus eigh as in weigh); four regular spellings for the long e -sound, as in be, see, sea, piece; five regular spellings for the long i -sound, as in write, by, lie, lye, right; three regular spellings for the long u -sound as in duty, due, neuter, new, suit. Wijk also allowed multiple alternatives for the other vowel sounds; five regular spellings for au -sound and five for oo -sound.

Wijk's system does not introduce new symbols, but reforms the spelling by making it more "regular" by discarding all irregular ways of writing phonemes or phonemic groups. Since there is more than one

way to state a phonemic fact, as pointed out above, Wijk's scheme is able to preserve an important aspect of the traditional orthography, namely its ability to differentiate homophones by spelling them differently. Thus, in Regularized English, one can still distinguish blue from blew, sea from see, and hear from here. In this way, Wijk maintains that he manages to retain the graphic picture of traditional spelling in more than 90% of English spellings, while Nue Spelling can do this only in 10% or less (Wijk, 1977).

Wijk gives the following examples of how Regularized English looks in print:

1. Objections to a Change in the Present Spelling. We instinctivly shrink from eny change in whot iz familiar; and whot can be more familiar than the form ov wurdz that we hav seen and written more times than we can possibly estimate? We take up a book printed in America, and honor and center jar upon us every time we cum across them; nay, even to see forever in place ov for ever attracts our attention in an unplezant way. But theze ar isolated cases; think ov the meny wurdz that woud hav to be changed if eny real improvement were to rezult. At the first glaance a passage in eny reformd spelling looks 'queer' and 'ugly.' This objection iz aulwayz the first to be made; it iz perfectly natural; it iz the hardest to remoove. Indeed, its effect iz not weakened until the new spelling iz no longer new, until it haz been seen offen enuff to be familiar.

2. By the adoption ov such a system ov spelling az Regularized English it woud be possible to lay down definit rules ov pronunciation for the English language, which woud make it considerable eazier for children to lern to read and write. In aul probability it woud lead to a saving ov at least wun year's wurk for aul scoolechildren. It woud aulso contribute very largely towardz abolition ov the existing amount ob illiteracy and backwardness in reading. Finally, it woud remoove the principal obstacle that prevents English from becumming a truly international language (Wijk, in Haas, 1969, p. 61).

Concerning the advantages of using Regularized English over other systems involving spelling changes, Wijk emphasizes the following four:

1. Regularized English offers a reformed system of spelling for English which is sufficiently phonetic in character to permit of its being taught in accordance with definite rules of pronunciation. It employs the traditional alphabet and uses its various letters and combinations of letters in the same way as they are normally used in the present orthography. It preserves the traditional spelling in about 90 percent of the total vocabulary, but abolishes all irregular spellings and replaces them by regular ones.
2. Regularized English can be used simply as a new, more efficient method for teaching reading but keeps the way open to a future spelling reform, in case it should prove desirable to carry out such a reform.
3. Regularized English gives a clear idea of the general structure of the present English spelling system and shows what are its regular and its irregular features.
4. With its simplified spelling, Regularized English is eminently suitable for use as a medium of international communication. On account of its reliable and comparatively simple rules of pronunciation it can be taught with ease both to such foreigners as have already learnt to read their own native language, and to the inhabitants of developing countries who may not have any literature in their own language or who may not at present have any written spelling between Regularized English and ordinary English makes it extremely easy to transfer from the former to the latter, in reading as well as writing. As far as mere reading is concerned, books in traditional orthography would be accessible without any difficulty (Haas, 1969, pp. 69-70).

In 1977, Axel Wijk published a new version of Regularized English which contained a proposal for a solution to the reading problem in English-speaking countries. In his new work, Wijk claimed that the phonics method of teaching reading would have more relevance when the 5 to 10 percent of the irregular spellings were replaced by more regular ones.

Wijk's two-part reading proposal is presented in several chapters of his book. The first part introduces the beginning reader to five letters for the short vowel sound, 21 consonant letters and various consonant digraphs. In the second part, Wijk's reading proposals become quite complicated as he introduces 72 phonic units (phonograms or spellings) representing vowel sounds of stressed syllables (Wijk, 1977).

The major points of Wijk's reading proposals have been summarized by Emmett Betts:

1. Traditional spellings are antiquated; therefore, present major hazards to beginners who are learning to read and write.
2. A major spelling reform is quite remote as evidenced by previous failures of partial or all-out proposals.
3. A spelling system for use with beginners in reading appears to be a possibility and maybe a probability.
4. The low application/exception ratio of phonic rules imposes serious limitations on extant phonic methods and introduces confusions that contribute to reading difficulties.
5. There is an immediate need to legitimate phonic instruction via some type of regularized English.
6. Experimental studies by a multi-disciplinary group are prerequisite to spelling reform (Betts, 1976, p. 16).

Axel Wijk wrote that:

The essential characteristic of Regularized English is that it is NOT a new system of spelling for English. It is in fact nothing but the regular system of spelling that is inherent in ordinary English and which emerges when we eliminate the 5 to 10 percent of irregular spellings in the language and replace them by regular ones. Though this system is considerably more complicated than a pure phonetic

system of spelling, the important thing is that it is regular and therefore can be taught according to definite rules of pronunciation, such as we find in other languages with reasonably "phonetic" systems (Wijk, in Haas, 1969, p. 85).

Wijk's Regularized English still has its proponents, many of whom view the system as one of the the most promising and viable of the current spelling reform proposals. There has, however, been no attempt to use this system in the schools, nor has there been wide public acceptance of the scheme.

Frank C. Laubach's  
English the New Way

Frank C. Laubach began to achieve world-wide fame in 1953 by teaching an experimental group of 50 volunteer teachers to use a new digraphic and diacritical marking system called "English the New Way" At first the system consisted of a phonetic alphabet of 42 letters. Most of the Roman letters were used with vowel digraphs to denote long vowels (ae, ee, ie, oe, ue). Since this process made the vowels "pile up" (as in vaereeaeshon, gradueaeshon, and creeaeshon, etc.), Laubach began using slanting lines for the long vowels: so/, we/ be/gan just be/cause it was conve/nient on the ty/pewri/ter. The slanting lines met with opposition and were subesequently replaced with a macron over the long vowels.

Laubach began a series of experimentation and research projects and came to the conclusion that there are 54 spellings that occur frequently enough to be considered as regular. These 54 regular spellings, in addition to the 42 basic sounds produced a code of 96

symbols that can be used to spell every word in the English language.

(Laubach, 1960). As Laubach expressed it:

If you confine yourself to only 42 letters, you throw out most of the perfectly regular spellings as they are found in the English language. You cut out three-fourths of the good apples in order to get rid of those rotten spots, irregular spellings. But our purpose is not to reform good spellings, but only to reform the irregular spellings. So we include all these 96 good regular ways of spellings. This includes some 60% of all words (Laubach, 1968, pp. 5-6).

Laubach claimed that it took a student about two months to become proficient in the new system, and that he could say every sound instantaneously:

After that, he can pronounce 5,000 words, 10,000, 100,000, all the words in the dictionary. Compare that with the primary schools where children learn 350 words the first year (Laubach, 1968, p. 6).

In August, 1967, Laubach went to Hong Kong to test his new system on non-English speaking Chinese. English the New Way was printed and used in adult education courses at a local YMCA. The text was supplemented by a chart of four pages, designed to teach the sounds of English. Within two months the Chinese students were reading simple stories from English the New Way and could pronounce the 5,000 words found in the glossary (although often the meaning was not understood). The following is an example of English the New Way:

With these 96 "key" spellings, you can pronounce every regular spelling in the English language.

The 42 Basic Soundz

b	c	d	f	g	h
j	l	m	n	p	r
s	t	v	w	y	z

x a e i o u  
 a e i o u er  
 oo uu or aw ow oi  
 sh ch zh ng th th

Key tw  
 Correct Regular "New Spellingz"  
 Wurds Illustrating theze Soundz

big	car	did	fix	get	hat
jump	leg	man	now	pin	run
sun	ten	verry	will	yet	zipper
six	at	end	it	hot	us
able	even	child	over	united	her
food	buuk	for	saw	now	oil
she	much	mezhure	sing	this	thing

54 uther regular wayz two spell

<u>basic</u>	<u>uther regular wayz</u> <u>tw spell</u>				<u>wurdz illustrating</u> <u>theze spellingz</u>			
i	y				pity			
a	ae	ai	ay	a-e	graet	maid	day	made
e	ee	ea	ey	e-e	bee	eat	key	complete
i	ie	igh	y	i-e	tie	high	my	wide
o	oe	oa	ow	o-e	toe	load	low	hope
u	ue	ew	yoo	u-e	value	few	yoo	tune
o	aa	an	ar	orr	faather	Jonah	car	sorry
a			arr				carry	
er	ur	urr	ir		burn	hurry	bird	
er	ear	eer	irr	ere	hear	cheer	mirror	here
ar	air	aer	err	are	hair	baer	merry	care
aw	au	ong			auto	song		
or	oar	our	oor	ore	roar	four	floor	more
oo	ww	w				tw(2)	tw(to)	too
c	k	ck			kill	kick		
c	s				cent	place	city	
kw	qu				quick			
x	cks				checks			
x	egz				eggz	exactly	example	
ow	ou				ou			
oi	oy				boy			
ng					singer			
ngg					fingger			
f	ph				photograph			
ul	le				apple			
th	tth				bretth	thing		

(Laubach, 1968, p. 7).



Interest in English the New Way spread rapidly, and with the blessing of the U.S. Simpler Spelling Association. Shortly after the initial experimentation, the Hong Kong Baptist College and Augsburg Lutheran College replaced their old English courses with English the New Way. Six other schools also agreed to use the new system. Once called "the greatest breakthrough in teaching English in 200 years" (Laubach, 1968, p. 8), it soon fell into desuetude after Laubach's death in 1970.

Godfrey Dewey's  
World English Spelling

The U.S. Simpler Spelling Association was formed in 1946 from the merger of the Spelling Reform Association and the Simplified Spelling Board. That same year, the SSA presented a system of digraphic respelling called World English Spelling, a system similar to New Spelling (Dewey, 1971; Pitman & St. John, 1969). Largely the work of Godfrey Dewey, son of Melvil Dewey, WES was originally intended to be an initial teaching medium, and not a system of permanent spelling reform (Dewey, 1978).

To teach children to read effectively is increasingly being recognized as the paramount problem of American education. In this effort, it has long been realized that the complex irregularities of our traditional orthography (T.O.) are a chief obstacle. The simple and obvious way to remove this handicap would be to reform our English spelling, but that long sought goal still lies one or two generations in the future. There is, however, an immediately available alternative which minimizes the impact of our spelling difficulties—a phonemic notation to be used for the first

teaching of reading and writing, to be followed by a complete transition to reading and writing English in its traditional form. Such an initial teaching medium (i.t.m.) is not spelling reform but an educational tool, to be judged strictly on its merits in producing better results more quickly....

WES, in the modified form here presented, assigns the same values to the 24 Roman alphabet letters when written singly, but supplies the remaining phonemic symbols required by standardized combinations of the Roman letters (usually familiar digraphs) instead of new characters, and makes substantially the same concessions from strictly phonemic writing made in i.t.a. keeping strictly within the resources of the universally available Roman alphabet (Dewey, 1968, pp. 1, 8).

A number of writers have referred to WES as the "typewriter version of i.t.a." because they both derive most of their phonemic structure and much of their symbolization from the same source (Dewey, 1968, p. 18. The i.t.a. is examined in Chapter IV of this work.) The twenty-four Roman letters used in i.t.a. are assigned identical values in WES. Of the 20 new i.t.a. characters, 13 are obvious blends of the corresponding WES digraphs, except for the WES trigraph thh. The remaining seven i.t.a. characters correspond to WES thus:

i.t.a.:	ø	ɜ	ʒ	ŋ	æ	ω	ω
WES:	r	s	z	ng	aa	uu	oo

World English Spelling, like i.t.a., uses a dot to separate confusing syllables (short.hand, en.gage) in the earliest stages of learning. A ligature, or small line, is used to connect the digraphs during the initial teaching process to show that the digraph is a unitary symbol. In the later stages of reading in WES, neither of these devices are employed.

Emmett A. Betts has listed the advantages of WES over other systems, including i.t.a.:

1. It employs 24 of the 26 letters of the universally understood Roman alphabet.
2. A standard typewriter may be used.
3. Digraphs rather than ligatured characters are employed...
4. The common spellings for speech sounds (phonemes) are based on the extensive research of Dr. Godfrey Dewey.
5. WES spelling have been simplified for the i.t.m. version; e.g., th is used for both the voiceless sound in think and the voiced sound in there.
6. A dictionary, World English Spelling (WES) dictionary, lists the few guidelines, spelling rules, and the spelling of about 3,600 commonly used words, as is done for i.t.a.
7. The spellings are highly compatible with T.O., as is true of i.t.a.
8. The names of the letters usually recorded in standard dictionaries are retained and respelled in WES: e.g., the name of the letter b is bee, not buh. (This procedure minimizes the probabilities of a teacher telling a child that the first letter of bat is buh—a confusing absurdity of the first rank.)
9. The need for the schwa sound in unstressed syllables is solved by retaining "any single vowel letter of T.O., or when that might be misleading, write /e/." (WES Dictionary, p. 24). For example:

<u>Word</u>	<u>Dictionary Respelling</u>	<u>WES</u>
belief	/be-'lef/	beleef
quiet	/'kwi-t/	kwie.et
common	/'kam-n/	common

10. Syllable-by-syllable reading (i.e., the stressing of all syllables observed in some classrooms) is reduced by respelling certain unstressed syllables, as in captain-capten, stable-staeb1, situation-situeashon, probable-probab1.

11. To avoid 'clumsy' spellings, a redundant spelling ue is used for the /yu/ glide, as in i.t.a. For example, the letter y as in yet and the oo as in moon are available, but few is simply spelled fue rather than fyoo.
12. Diacritical markings are obviated by employing digraphs, as sh in sure-shoor, sugar-shuugar, ng in finger-finger, versus singer-singer.
13. Lower case letters are used, as in i.t.a., so that the child will not have to learn different letters (graphic shapes) for the F-f, G-g, and so on.
14. Spellings with zero or almost no signals (predicability) of sounds are significantly reduced as roadblocks to reading; e.g., one-wun, once-wuns, you-yoo, eight-aet, does, duz (Betts, 1976, pp. 10-11).

WORLD ENGLISH SPELLING  
(WES)

Consonants as in

p	pay, happy, cap
b	bay, rubber, cab
t	town, letter, bit
d	down, ladder, bid
k	keep, week, back, expect, quite
g	game, ragged, bag, exact
f	fast, office, photograph, safe
v	vast, never, save
thh	thought, nothing, both
th	that, rather
s	seal, lesson, city, race, base
z	zeal, puzzle, is, raise, size
m	might, common, them
sh	shall, pressure, nation, wish
zh	pleasure, vision, rouge
j	just, general, stage, judge
n	night, dinner, then
ng	thing, long, going, single
nk	think, bank, uncle, ankle
l	late, fellow, deal
r	rate, married, dear
w	wet, forward, one, quick
wh	which, everywhere
y	yet, beyond, million

h had, behind, who  
 ch check, church, watch

Vowels and Digraphs as in

a at, man, ask, about, data  
 aa alms, father, bah  
 ar army, market, far  
 e edge, men, said, head, any  
 ae age, main, say, air  
 i it, him, pretty, give  
 ee each, here, see, be  
 o on, bother, not, was, what  
 au author, law, all, water, ought  
 or order, north, for, story, more  
 u up, other, but, some, touch  
 oe old, note, goes, so, coal, show  
 uu full, sure, should, good  
 oo fool, move, group, rule, too  
 ie ice, tie, kind, might, by  
 ou out, pound, now, bough  
 oi oil, point, boy  
 ue use, your, music, due, few  
 er further, collar, motor, murmur  
 ur further, her, early, first, work  
 (Dewey, 1968, p. 32).

Linkon's Getizberg Adres  
 in World English Spelling

Forskor and seven yeers agoe our faatherz braut forthh on this kontinent a nue naeshon, konseevd in liberti, and dedikaeted to the propozishon that aul men ar kreeaeted eekwal.

Nou wee ar en.gaejd in a graet sivil wor, testing whether that naeshon, or eni naeshon soe konseevd and so dedikaeted, kan long enduer. Wee ar met on a graet batlfeeld ov that wor. We hav kum to dedikaet a porshon ov that feeld as a fienal resting-plaes for thoez hoo heer gaev thaer lievz that that naeshon miet liv. It iz aultogether fiting and proper that wee shuud doo this....(Dewey, 1968, p. 32).

Although Godfrey Dewey died October 8, 1977, World English Spelling still has a number of adherents who view the system as a transitional spelling reform (Dewey, 1978, note; Hildreth, 1975; Bowyer, 1970).

### The Spelling Action Society's SR1

The spelling reform effort in Great Britain is more than 600 years old. Spelling reform has been the goal of many Americans for 200 years. Not until 1969, however, did Australia join the "rumpus" to reform English spelling (O'Connor, 1976). It was in that year that Harry Lindgren, a former teacher and author, first presented his scheme for spelling reform in his book, Spelling Reform: A New Approach.

Lindgren's approach to spelling reform is a gradual one. Spelling Reform One (SR1) would be to write the clear short vowel sound as in bet with an e in all cases (Yule, 1976). While it affects only a small number of words (see following list), Lindgren writes that "it is a significant step in the right direction" (Lindgren, 1969, p. 19). Later steps in the reform movement, SR2, SR3,...SR50,

...are deliberately left fluid...for we have several years to think about them....But there will eventually be a master plan, consisting of the changes that will bring us a substantial part of the way towards the spelling aimed at, in a serial order chosen so that they interfere with one another as little as possible, and so that the anomalies inevitably introduced are minimal compared with those removed. The master plan will not be a straitjacket, but we will feel our way forward, always guided by experience, always ready to modify the approach to the goal and even the goal itself (Lindgren, 1969, pp. 26-27).

In 1971, Harry Lindgren became one of the founders of the Australian Spelling Action Society, whose specific purpose was to promote the use of SR1 in all English speaking countries. At the same time, Lindgren became Executive Secretary of the Society and editor of

its monthly newsletter, Spelling Action. Within a few years of its inception, the SAS had representatives in the United States, India, and New Zealand, and promoters in most other English speaking countries of the world. SRI gained greater recognition when Prince Philip of England, long an advocate of spelling reform, announced his support of the system (O'Connor, 1976).

In September 1974, SRI received its biggest boost when the Executive Board of the Tasmanian Teachers' Federation adopted Spelling Reform Step One at its Executive Meeting and later called for its adoption at the Australian Teachers' Federation meeting in Sydney in 1975. The motion supporting the use of SRI as an alternative spelling system in Australian schools was approved, sparking a spirited debate in the press (O'Connor, 1976).

In that same year, the Victorian Action Committee Against Illiteracy, VACAI, an organization of parents concerned about the illiteracy problem, after three months of study and at the request of the Victorian Technical Teachers' Union seeking guidelines for its own attitudes, arrived at the following conclusions:

The difficulties of English spelling are a major handicap for many learners, particularly those already facing other handicaps. On consideration of the evidence so far before it, VACAI emphatically points out that we consider the basic cause of illiteracy to lie in the injustices of our economic system, and that spelling reform in our society could become a diversion in the fight against illiteracy.

However, we have arrived at the following conclusions:  
a) Modification of the irregularities of English spelling is both desirable and possible. b) The modification proposed (Spelling Reform 1) is in line with the way spelling has

changed in the past, and if given a trial, could either point the way to further reforms, or demonstrate its impracticability. c) As the meeting place of English and American spelling, Australia is in a unique position to pioneer. d) In the current climate of change, a unilateral modification such as SR1 is likely to be taken up, once the way has been led. e) There is some evidence that the opposition to reform by some of the more literate and vocal sections of the community is not shared by the public, particularly the less literate.

However, caution is still required. There are still questions to ask and problems to be overcome...

While favourable to spelling reform and open-minded in its encouragement of research and experimentation, VACAI does not at present regard the promotion of reform as part of our mandate in our fight against illiteracy.

VACAI therefore recommends that for a two-year period:

1. Research, experimentation and investigation in spelling and spelling reform should be actively encouraged by all concerned with illiteracy.

2. Teachers and public generally should become familiar with the issues.

3. Students, teachers and members of the public generally who choose to try SR1 (spelling the short 'e' sound with 'e' as in 'bet') should not be penalized; i.e. that dual spellings be permitted, as they are in many words already in dictionaries ("Extracts," 1975, p. 5).

From 1975 to 1980, many articles appeared in Australian newspapers and magazines using SR1. During that period, four books were published using SR1. The first was entitled Escape to Elysium by L.J.J. Nye. This was followed in quick order by Reef Poems by Mark O'Connor, one of Australia's leading poets, In the Pub by Rosemary Waters, and The Coals of Juniper by Graham Jackson (O'Connor, 1976).

All members of the Spelling Action Society receive a list of words



to be spelled according to SR1. Samples of more common spellings are given in the "Short List" below.

<u>Present Spelling</u>	<u>SR1</u>
abreast	abrest
again	agen
against	agenst
ahead	ahed
already	alredy
any	eny
ate	et
bread	bred
breadth	bredth
breakfast	brekfast
breast	brest
bury	bery
cleanliness	clenliness
cleanse	clense
dead	ded
deaf	def
dealt	delt
death	deth
dread	dred
dreamt	dremt
endeavour	endeavour
feather	fether
friend	frend
guess	gess
guest	gest
haemorrhage	hemorrhage
haemorrhoids	hemorrhoids
head, -head	hed, -hed
health	helth
heather	hether
heaven	heven
heavy	hevy
instead	insted
jealous	jelous
jeopardy	jepardy
lead (metal)	led
leant	lent
leapt	lept
leather	lether
leaven	leven
leisure	lesure
leopard	lepard
many	meny

meadow	medow
meant	ment
measure	mesure
peasant	pesent
pheasant	phesant
pleasant	plesant
read (past)	red
ready	redy
realm	relm
said	sed
says	ses
spread	spred
steady	stedy
stealth	stelth
sweat	swet
sweater	sweter
thread	thred
threat	thret
threepence	threponce
treachery	trechery
tread	tred
treadle	tredle
treasure	tresure
wealth	welth
weapon	wepon
weather	wether
zealous	zelous

(Lindgren, 1969, pp. 122-126).

It is too early yet to say whether SRI is a movement whose time has come; but there is one issue which even its opponents may care to ponder. Imagine that all reform proposals fail, and continue to fail for the next three centuries; so that the English of 2250 A.D. is still being written essentially according to the pronunciation of 1650 A.D. or earlier. If so, one prediction is safe: no one but scholars will be using it (O'Connor, 1976, p. 165).

### Summary

For the past seven centuries of its history, the English language has been beset with numerous proposals and attempts to simplify its

spelling. These schemes have met with varying degrees of success, and have not gone unopposed. To this day, spelling reformers press on with a missionary zeal, and the words of Paul Monroe are indicative of the feelings of those who would simplify our orthography:

Every simplification, however slight, will help to lift a burden from the shoulders of future generations. It will save the time of the child and the money of the parent; and, what is even more valuable, it will remove a stumbling-block from the child's path, since every restored analogy will relieve him from reliance on his memory to the neglect of his reason. It will render English swifter of acquirement by the immigrant, and thereby it will help to fit the alien for citizenship. It will render English easier for the foreigner now perplexed and repelled by the inconsistencies of the existing orthography. Whatever hastens the simplification of English spelling will aid in the wider acceptance of English as a world language; and it will, therefore, help bring us nearer to a better international understanding and to peace on earth and good will toward men (Monroe, 1915, pp. 395-396).

CHAPTER IV  
AUGMENTED AND NON-ROMANIC ALPHABETS

Introduction

This chapter examines some of the many attempts to reform English orthography by employing augmented or non-romanian alphabets designed since 1789. Attempts to produce and popularize these types of phonetic alphabets prior to that time are examined in Chapter III. An augmented alphabet is an expanded romanian (also called Latin) alphabet designed to make reading and spelling easier by the addition of letters or characters so that each grapheme represents only one phoneme, and each phoneme is, in turn, represented by only one grapheme. A non-romanian alphabet is one in which the traditional letters of the alphabet are discarded and replaced by characters designed to represent a particular phoneme. The following alphabets will be presented in this order:

1. William Thornton's Universal Alphabet
2. Isaac J. Pitman's Phonotype
3. Edwin Leigh's Pronouncing Orthography
4. Alexander Melville Bell's Visible Speech
5. George Bernard Shaw and the Shavian Alphabet
6. James Pitman's i.t.a.
7. John R. Malone's Unifon

### William Thornton's Universal Alphabet

Dr. William Thornton, physician, inventor, architect (Thornton designed the U.S. Capitol), first Superintendent of Patents for the United States, artist, and author, was also the presenter of a plan for a Universal Alphabet to be used with all languages (Aikman, 1966). In 1793, Thornton wrote Cadmus, or a Treatise on the Elements of Written Language, which was awarded the Magellanic Medal of the American Philosophical Society for his "Prize Dissertation." As Cadmus of Thebes brought the Phoenician alphabet to the Greeks (Pei, 1965), so Thornton would bring his Universal Alphabet to the world.

In Cadmus, Thornton presented his aims for the Universal Alphabet which included not only improving the speech of school children, peasants, and foreigners, but also to serve as an alphabet for those countries which did not yet have one. His advocacy of phonemic spelling and the decision to supply new characters for phonemes "improperly" represented in traditional orthography came as a byproduct of his work on teaching the deaf (Scragg, 1974).

Exhorting his countrymen to have the good sense and courage to seek independence in the use of language, Thornton explained that past failure to reform orthography was due to "ancient prejudices" and "erroneous custom." He then presented a plea for an international alphabet that would not only improve the lot of American school children, but which also could be used to record the speech of other languages and be pronounced by those who knew the alphabet. He went on

to say that this "Universal Alphabet ought to contain a single mark or character, as the representative of each sound which is possible for the human breath to utter. No mark should represent two or three distinct sounds; nor should any simple sound be represented by two or three different characters" (Thornton, 1793, p. 11). Tauber (1958) has synthesized the gains which would come from the Universal Alphabet:

1. Foreign languages could be learned more easily.
2. Pronunciation would improve if letters and symbols really represented sounds which could quickly be imitated or reproduced.
3. Incorrect spelling would be obviated.
4. The ability to read would be gained more quickly (p. 63).

Dr. Thornton provided symbols only for English sounds at first, with other characters to be added later to serve as a truly universal alphabet. He analyzed each sound and explained with key words the symbols of his alphabet. Thornton's script had thirty symbols, eliminating c, q, and x, and adding J, I, o, 7, L, e, and o. Thornton also doubled vowels for length, as seen in Figure 19.

While there is no record of Thornton's Universal Alphabet being used either in the schools or for private use, many of the concepts and symbols of his work appeared later in the alphabet of the International Phonetic Association (IPA) (Tauber, 1958).

#### Isaac Pitman's Phontype

In 1826, at the age of thirteen, Issac Pitman left school to become a counting house clerk. Six years later, he was sent to Borough

Figure 19. William Thornton's Universal Alphabet

SYMBOL	SOUND	SYMBOL	SOUND
VOWELS		VOWELS	
Common:		Stopt:	
J, ə	sun, herd	G, g	get, gun
II, ɪ	what, yawn	B, b	but, ball
A, a	rat, calm	D, d	dull, dim
E, e	red	ASPIRATES	
I, i	fit	Sibilant:	
O, o	fog, yoke	ʃ, ʒ	ship, assurance
U, u	wool, soup	F, f	fun, fall
Unclassified:		Θ, θ	third, thin
Y, y	ye, yarn	S, s	set, sun
Z, z	zeal, zephyr	Short:	
R, r	red, word	K, k	kiss, come
L, l	let, lass	P, p	pen, puff
J, j	treasure	T, t	ten, talk
V, v	vast, very	Unclassified:	
Θ, θ	that, the	⊙, ⊙	what, while
W, w	wolf, would	H, h	hat, hall
Nasal:			
M, m	met, moss		
N, n	nap, nut		
ŋ, ŋ	king, thank		

Note. From Cadmus, or a Treatise on the Elements of Written Language (p. 37) by William Thornton, 1793, Philadelphia: R. Aitkin & Son.

Road Training College for a brief period of training to become a teacher.

Pitman soon became interested in speed writing. He studied the construction of words and thereby invented methods of rapidly indicating sounds. In 1837, at the age of 24, Pitman created the 'stenographer's sound-hand' (shorthand) which still bears his name. Shorthand systems, over 200 of them, were common in the two preceding centuries, but Pitman's system was new in that it was based on phonetic principles (Scragg, 1974; Monson, 1954). In 1839, Pitman opened a private school and added shorthand to the curriculum. At the same time, he opened a correspondence school and gave tuition-free instruction in his shorthand system. His free postal system grew rapidly and in 1842 he published his Phonographic Journal, a shorthand periodical. The very first issue ran to a thousand copies (Iles, 1965).

Issac Pitman soon became interested in spelling reform through his interest in shorthand. Pitman believed that just as a logical and reliable relationship between characters and sounds was the essence of shorthand, he believed the same principle applied to longhand or the normal printing system. His early life as a country schoolmaster had convinced him how difficult it was to teach children to read and he believed that his proposal would also provide an effective teaching medium (Pitman & St. John, 1969; Dewey, 1971).

Pitman looked upon his system of shorthand as a means of



advocating spelling reform. Much of the profits he received from his lectures and manuals went to finance his campaign for spelling reform, including "the casting and rejection of numerous experimental metal types; the launching of several journals, a 750-page Bible, Milton's Paradise Lost, reading primers, and other works..." (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 80).

Several of Issac Pitman's brothers, as well as his many friends and admirers, became his lecturers. They traveled extensively, often crossing oceans, teaching and spreading enthusiasm for Pitman's system without financial compensation.

All the lecturers became, for a longer or shorter period, devoted missionaries in what they regarded as an educational and semi-philanthropic movement, teaching Phonography, more or less gratuitously, and advocating a reform of English spelling which would result in great shortening of the time of children in learning to read, and tend to bring the elements of education within the reach of all (Harrison, 1964, p. 30).

In 1843, Issac Pitman became associated with Alexander John Ellis, a wealthy mathematician and philologist deeply interested in philosophy and music. Ellis, like Pitman, had been working on the production of a phonetic alphabet which might be applied to the spelling of all languages that included symbols for many other sounds not found in English. Ellis' book, The Alphabet of Nations (1848), was the first work on scientific phonetics. Ellis hoped that the development of a new phonetic alphabet would be a desirable and necessary instrument in national education in that it would furnish the only means by which reading, spelling, and writing could become general among the great

body of English people.

Ellis and Pitman then combined their efforts and worked together to develop a phonetic alphabet which was first published in the Fonotypic Journal in 1844 (See Figure 20). Five new versions of Phonotype were developed from 1844 to 1852 (See Figure 21); and, by 1856, 23 phonetic alphabets had been presented by Pitman (Monson, 1954).

In his constant seeking for improvement Isaac Pitman several times changed letters in his Phonotypic Alphabet (and his shorthand). These changes often caused friction. The harshest criticism that has been leveled against him, apart from the fact that he drove those who worked for him as hard as he drove himself, was unyieldingness where his spelling was concerned. He would listen graciously and pleasantly to every argument and then serenely go his own way. He had many arguments with the councils, his advisory bodies, and with his great helpers like A.J. Ellis. Benn Pitman believes that his brother's "mania for change and improvement...did more to check the spread of Phonetic Reform, stop practical teaching, and dampen the ardour of those friendly to orthographic consistence, than all other causes combined" Despite such possible repercussions of his never-ceasing search for perfection, Isaac Pitman's own altruism and wholehearted enthusiasm prevailed over difficulties and his friends continued in his support (Harrison, 1964, p. 37).

During the first five months of 1849, The Phonetic News, a 12-page newspaper, published by Ellis, was produced in the new alphabet. The newspaper met with poor reception and eventually was discontinued. A number of other spelling reform periodicals were published by Pitman, but they, too, failed to gain wide circulation and were suspended.

Aided by influential scholars, such as F. Max Mueller, Professor of Philology at Oxford University, Issac Pitman's Fonotype was found to be an effective system in teaching children and illiterate adults to

Figure 20. The first of Isaac Pitman's Phonotypic Alphabets.

THE PHONOGRAPHIC AND PHONOTYPIC ALPHABETS.

VOWELS.					CONSONANTS.				
Short hand.	Long hand.	Type	Example of its sound.	Example of its sound.	Short hand.	Long hand.	Type	Example of its sound.	Example of its sound.
N.1	Ē ē	i	lect	i	∖	P p	P p	pay	pī
	Ī ī	i	fit	it	∖	B b	B b	lay	bī
2	Ē ē	e	mate	e		T t	T t	toe	tī
	Ē ē	e	met	et		D d	D d	doc	dī
2½	Ē ē	e	mare	e	/	Ĉ ĉ	Ĉ ĉ	chew	ĉī
3	Ā ā	a	psalm	a	/	J j	J j	jew	jī
	Ā ā	a	Sam	at	—	C c	C c	call	cī
4	Ō ō	o	caught	o	—	G g	G g	gall	gī
	Ō ō	o	cot	ot	∪	F f	F f	few	fī
5	Ū ū	u	cur*	u	∪	V v	V v	vicw	vī
	Ū ū	u	carry	ut	(	ʒ ʒ	ʒ ʒ	thigh	ī
6	Ō ō	o	bone	o	(	ʒ ʒ	ʒ ʒ	thy	dī
7	Ū ū	u	fool	u	)	S s	S s	scal	cs
	Ū ū	u	full	ut	)	Z z	Z z	scal	zc
COMPOUND VOWELS.					)	ʒ ʒ	ʒ ʒ	meal	ī
∪	Ī ī	i	high	i	)	ʒ ʒ	ʒ ʒ	measure	zī
∪	Ō ō	o	hoy	ō	(	L l	L l	lay	el
∪	Ō ō	o	how	ō	∪	R r	R r	ray	re
∪	Ū ū	u	how	ū	(	M m	M m	sum	am
∪	Ū ū	u	hew	ū	∪	N n	N n	sun	en
COALESCENTS.					∪	Ū ū	Ū ū	sun	in
∪	Y y	y	yen	ye	∪	Ū ū	Ū ū	sun	en
∪	W w	w	way	we	∪	Ū ū	Ū ū	sun	in
BREATHING.					∪	Ū ū	Ū ū	sun	in
(.)	H h	h	hay	he	∪	Ū ū	Ū ū	sun	in

\* Additional exemplificative words for this vowel, when unaccented, are amuse, masse, principal, principle, mettle, metal, formal, gospel, evil, pistol, consul, pillar, temper, ellipsis, tenor, murmur, bosom, schis-m, open, dozen, German, lemon, gallant, talent, etc.

Note. From Alphabets and Reading (p. 82) by J. Pitman and J. St. John, 1969, London: Pitman Publishing Association.

Figure 21. Five versions of Fonotypy.

No. 1. *January, 1844.*  
 I E A O U (heard) W, I E I O U W,  
 I O V W, W Y H, P B T D C Y C O, F Y  
 O A S Z I X, L R, M N U

*Specimen.*

NUGIU HWOTEVER IZ MOR TU BI  
 DEZIRD, OR MOR DELATFUL, DAN AE  
 LIT OV TRWØ: FOR IT IZ AE SORS'OV  
 WIZDUM. HWEN AE MAND IZ HAR-  
 AST WIA OBSKWIRITI, DISTRAKTED BI  
 DUTS, RENDRD TORPID OR SADEND  
 BI IGNORANS OR FOLSITIZ, AND TRWØ  
 EMERJEZ AZ FROM A DARK ABIS, IT  
 LINZ FORØ INSTANTENIUSLI, LAK AE  
 SUN DISPERSIY MISTS AND VEPURZ,  
 OR LAK AE DON DISPELIU AE TEDZ OV  
 DARKNES.

No. 3, *June, 1846.*

i e a o u, i e a o u, i o v u,  
 w y h, p b t d c j e g, f v t d s z  
 j s, l r, m n u.

*Specimen.*

Nutij hwotever iz mor tu bi  
 dezird, or mor deljtful, dan de  
 lit ov trut: for it iz de sors ov  
 wizdum. Hwen de mjnd iz har-  
 ast wid obscuriti, distracted bi  
 dsts, renderd torpid or sadend  
 bi ignorans or folsitiz, and trut  
 emerjez az from a dare abis, it  
 sinz fort instantaniusli, lje de  
 sun dispersij mists and vapurz,  
 or lje de don dispelij de sadz ov  
 darcnes.

No. 5, *Proposed June, 1852.*

i e a o u, i e a o u, i y u, w  
 y h, p b t d c j e g, f v t d s z j s,  
 l r, m n u.

*Specimen.*

Nutij hwotever iz mor tu bi  
 dezird, or mor delightful, dan de lit  
 ov trut: for it iz de sors ov wiz-  
 dum. Hwen de mjnd iz harass  
 wid obscuriti, distracted bi dsts,  
 renderd torpid or sadend bi ignor-  
 ans or folsitiz, and trut emerjez  
 az from a dare abis, it sinz fort  
 instantaniusli, lje de sun dispersij  
 mists and vapurz, or lje de don  
 dispelij de sadz ov darcnes.

No. 2, *October, 1844.*  
 i e a o c (heard) o c, i e a o u,  
 i q u u, w y h, p b t d c j k g,  
 f v t d s z j s, l r, m n u.

*Specimen.*

Nutij hwotever iz mor tu bi  
 dezird, or mor deljtful, dan de  
 lit ov trot: for it iz de sors ov  
 wizdum. Hwen de mjnd iz har-  
 ast wid obscuriti, distracted bi  
 dsts; renderd torpid or sadend  
 bi ignorans or folsitiz, and trot  
 emerjez az from a dark abis, it  
 sinz fort instantaniusli, ljk de  
 sun dispersij mists and vapurz,  
 or ljk de don dispelij de sadz ov  
 darknes.

No. 4, *Jan., 1847.*

z a q o o u, i e a o u, i o v u,  
 w y h, p b t d c j e g, f v t d s z  
 j s, l r, m n u.

*Specimen.*

Nutij hwotever iz mor tu be  
 dezird, or mor delightful, dan de lit  
 ov trut: for it iz de sors ov wiz-  
 dum. Hwen de mjnd iz harass  
 wid obscuriti, distracted bi dsts,  
 renderd torpid or sad'nd bi ignor-  
 ans or folsitiz, and trut emerjez  
 az from a dare abis, it sinz fort  
 instantaniusli, lje de sun dispersij  
 mists and vapurz, or lje de don  
 dispelij de sadz ov darcnes.

No. 6, *Romanic Alphabet.*

aa, bb, cc, dd, ee, ff, gg, hh ii, jj,  
 kk, ll, mm, nn, oo, pp, qq, rr, ss, tt,  
 uu, vv, ww, xcs, yy, zz.

*Specimen.*

Nothing whatever is more to be  
 desired, or more delightful, than  
 the light of truth: for it is the  
 source of wisdom. When the mind  
 is harassed, with obscurity, dis-  
 tracted by doubts, rendered torpid  
 or saddened by ignorance or falsi-  
 ties, and truth emerges as from a  
 dark abyss, it shines forth instan-  
 taneously, like the sun dispersing  
 mists and vapours, or like the dawn  
 dispelling the shades of darkness.

Note. From Alphabets and Reading (p. 81) by J. Pitman and  
 J. St. John, 1969, London: Pitman Publishing Association.

read and write orthodox as well as Fonotypic spellings.

Fonotypic reading classes were organized in many parts of the country, not only in schools but also for inmates of workhouses, reformatories and jails; for the members of a Phonetic Sunday School Movement and a temperance society of working men...Fonotype was used with success by missionaries in Africa, China and India; in Nova Scotia it was applied to Micmac, a version of American Indian language that until then had been only spoken (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 85).

Dewey (1971) reports that "the first serious and sustained effort in the United States to popularize Pitman's Fonotypy was that of Stephen Pearl Andrews, who brought back from London in 1843 some of Isaac Pitman's books and pamphlets on Phonography and Fonotypy" (p. 20). This is incorrect, however, for in 1842, George Darling Watt, a Mormon convert who later devised the Deseret Alphabet based on Pitman principles, was teaching classes on the subject in Nauvoo, Illinois (R. Watt, 1983). Nevertheless, in 1844 Andrews did publish the first American instruction book on Pitman's Phonography, and in 1846 the First Book of Andrew's and Boyle's Series of Phonotypic Readers. This was six years before Isaac Pitman's younger brother, Benn, moved to America and began to stimulate further interest in the subject (Dewey, 1971).

Among the best documented experiments using Fonotype was a large scale experiment in ten schools in Waltham, Massachusetts, between 1852 and 1860 where Fonotype was found to be a much superior system than conventional orthography (Dewey, 1971; Pitman & St. John, 1969). Recognition of Fonotype as an excellent aid for teaching reading was

also reported by the American Philological Society in 1899.

We tested it thoroughly for six or seven years in the town of Waltham, Massachusetts which then had about eight hundred children in the public schools. The effect upon the school life of the town was very marked. The saving of time in teaching the children to read and to spell enabled us to introduce exercises for the eye and hand, thus cultivating habits of observation, skill in drawing and writing, and geometric ability. The fonetic print corrected the brogue of the Irish children and the Yankee dialect of the American in a surprising manner. An improvement in the moral and intellectual tone of the schools was also noticeable, arising certainly in part from giving the children interesting reading instead of such absurd falsehoods as that of saying, 'say', 'you', 'pea', spells 'cup' (cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, pp. 85-86).

Pitman's Fonotypy was also used in the schools in Cincinnati, Ohio, from 1851 to 1858, and in Syracuse, New York, from 1853 to 1863. Zalmon Richards, first president of the National Education Association, was one of the teachers who used the system and reportedly taught reading in one-fourth the usual time required (Dewey, 1971). Horace Mann was also witness to the use of Fonotypy in the schools, and later wrote this testimonial:

Having witnessed the exercises of a class of nine children under your care in reading phonography (or phonetic shorthand) and phontypy (or phonetic print) it gives me pleasure to assure you of the delight which their performance gave me. I think the nine Muses were never listened to by a more grateful audience...the children you exhibited had certainly made most wonderful proficiency, and were, in several of the essentials of good enunciation and reading, years in advance of most children who had been taught in the old way (cited in Dewey, 1971, p. 50).

Meanwhile, in England, Isaac Pitman continued to experiment with different alphabets and with symbol variations within the alphabets themselves. Ellis' desire to stick with consistency in symbol

representation and Pitman's desire to experiment with different designs soon brought about a split between the two and from 1867 on they continued to work on their own. Ellis went on to create the "Paleotype" phonetic alphabet, composed of hundreds of characters, as well as Glossic (which is discussed at length in Chapter III).

Issac Pitman continued his interest in spelling reform until the end of his life, producing at least 72 different or slightly different versions of the Phonotypic alphabet (Pitman & St. John, 1969). In his later years, however, Isaac Pitman became convinced that the most practical route to spelling reform lay in retaining the resources of the Romanic alphabet (see Chapter III). In 1894, three years before his death, Isaac Pitman was knighted by Queen Victoria for his service in phonetics and spelling reform.

As Fonotypy spread rapidly through the English-speaking world, so that the sun never set on neither it nor the British Empire, numerous imitations of the system arose (Monson, 1954). These include, among others, Benn Pitman's American Phonetic Alphabet, Andrew Comstock's Alphabet, Andrew J. Graham's Alphabet, and the Deseret Alphabet, which is examined at length in Chapter V.

#### Edwin Leigh's Pronouncing Orthography

One of the most successful experiments with an augmented alphabet began in 1866 when Dr. Edwin Leigh introduced his "Pronouncing Orthography" system into the Clay School in St. Louis on a trial basis. The system proved successful and continued to spread for over twenty

years into schools as far away as New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C. (Huey, 1910).

The alphabet contained seventy characters. The main characteristic or uniqueness of the alphabet was that it employed hairline types for silent letters and modified forms for others, thus allowing the transference to traditional spelling after the initial stages of reading (March, 1893). Edmund B. Huey, in his Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading, described the system as "a spelling method, but the word is spelled by its elementary sounds and not by the letter names. The word is slowly pronounced until its consistent sounds come into consciousness, and these sounds are associated with the letters representing them" (Huey, 1910, p. 266).

In 1867, the experiment was so successful that the St. Louis Board of Education introduced it into all the primary grades within the system and adopted the McGuffey Eclectic Readers printed in modified type using Leigh's system of phonetics (See Figure 22). Despite initial rejection on the part of many teachers, the system gradually became well received and school officials evaluated it highly. By 1870, the school superintendent, William T. Harris (later to become U.S. Commissioner of Education), stated:

Each year increases our admiration of the work. Gain in time - quite one half - distinct articulation, and better spelling represent the undoubted advantages. I am satisfied that with the time we now have to devote to the higher readers, our teachers have it in their power to accomplish results in this department we have hitherto considered impossible (cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 87).



Figure 22. A specimen of Edwin Leigh's Pronouncing Print.

2 And both Jesus was celled, and his disci-  
ples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother  
of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have  
I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, What-  
soever he saith unto you, do it.

6 And there were set there six waterpots of  
stone, after the manner of the purifying of  
the Jews, containing two or three firkins  
apiece'.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-  
pots with water. And they filled them up to  
the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now,  
and bear unto the governor of the feast.  
And they bare it.

Note. From The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading (p. 267) by  
E.B. Huey, 1910, New York: The MacMillan Company.

In 1870, Dr. Leigh made several changes in the system to render the transition to ordinary print easier. Two years later, the plan underwent further modification. In 1880, a revised First Reader was published which contained full page illustrations and more attractive print. For the next ten years, the use of Leigh's system of reading in the McGuffey Readers spread to other sections of the country. A school board in Illinois reported this:

Pupils are found in their second year of schooling who have read many books. They learn to read more quickly and in comparison with so little effort, that reading is a pleasure, which could not be said under the old system (cited in Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 87).

Leigh's system was used for some twenty years, until 1888, when it was abandoned. While we have no satisfactory explanation as to its sudden fall from grace, Huey (1910) argued that "the 'pronouncing print' was hard on the eyes, requiring an unnaturally close inspection of each letter, in the beginning; besides, it made trouble for the printer, distracted from attention to the thought in reading, and caused confusion in the attempt to use two alphabets" (p. 261). In commenting on Leigh's alphabet, James Pitman wrote:

...though perhaps not sufficiently scientific or precise by modern standards, [it] was impressive; there was a powerful prima facie case for believing that the alphabet and spelling inherited, virtually unchanged, from the Middle Ages is the root cause of difficulty and failure in reading, and that children do learn to read with a phonetic alphabet in a shorter time; for believing that the easiest way to learn to read orthodox spelling is to begin by learning with a rational and helpful alphabet - in other words that the transition need cause no difficulties. All this evidence seemed to have been forgotten and hidden by the controversy surrounding the attempts to convert the whole community (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 113).

Alexander Melville Bell's  
Visible Speech

In 1867, Alexander Melville Bell, the father of Alexander Graham Bell, produced Visible Speech, "a pictorial representation of the arrangement of the vocal cords required to produce the sounds necessary for the language" (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 102).

Bell's alphabet is one of several alphabets which used symbols to indicate the action of the speech organs. In 1808, Joseph Neef described, but did not actually produce an alphabet which might accurately represent the manner in which sound is produced. William Conning devised the first alphabet to represent speech sound in 1854. Isaac Pitman described Conning's system by stating that he reduced the outlines of the speech organs to six basic forms from which he formed his letters: 1) the perpendicular and hypotenuse of the nose; 2) the lips; 3) the profile outline of the front tooth to represent the teeth, overhanging lip; 4) tongue unbent; 5) tongue in a circular position; and 6) the upper concavity of the mouth. Amasa D. Sprout invented a similar 65 character "Monalpha" alphabet in 1857, but nothing came of it as Sprout was unable to get a foundry to cast types for his planned book. Isaac Pitman also tried to create an alphabet of this type in 1847, as did Daniel Jones and Paul Passy in 1907 (Monson, 1954).

The phonetician, Henry Sweet, described Bell's Visible Speech in the following manner:

It is no exaggeration to say that Bell has done more for phonetics than all his predecessors put together; it is at least certain that this system is the first which gives a really adequate and comprehensive view of the whole-field of possible sounds. His analysis of vowel positions is almost entirely new and original. His system of notation, in which the mechanism of the sounds is most ingeniously symbolized, is not only founded on an adequate analysis, but also thoroughly practical in character, providing forms not only for printing but also for writing, both in long and shorthand, applicable to all languages (Sweet, 1902, p. ix).

The Visible Speech letters were not intended to supersede the Roman alphabet, but to furnish the key to sounding out the present letters. Bell felt that the ordinary typography of English would be learned by visible speech readers from interlinear printing of the Roman with the physiological letter (Bell, 1883).

Bell admitted that teaching children to read in an alphabet different from the present would meet with some objection, but that the advantages would greatly outweigh the inconvenience. "The power to read Visible Speech will be acquired in a relatively short time - a few months, at most - and the learners will then possess a key by means of which they can teach themselves to read from ordinary typography." With this ability, Bell added, they would be able to pronounce "with native accuracy" any foreign language written in Visible Speech (Bell, 1883, Preface).

In 1883, Bell produced his first Visible Speech Reader in which he claimed that no attempt should be made to teach the children the separate names of the letters. "The nature of Visible Speech symbols is such that they will themselves inform the accustomed eye to the

inherent relation to the sounds" (Bell, 1883, Preface. See Figure 23). The words used in the Visible Speech Reader contained a high number of polysyllabic words with the understanding that they can be learned just as quickly as monosyllables. Children were encouraged to analyze words into their component sounds. It was felt that if the child learned all the words in the first Visible Speech Reader, he would soon be able to pronounce any unknown words that may be presented in Visible Speech with very little assistance from the teacher. A translation key was placed at the end of the book for the convenience of the teacher. "By means of this key," Bell stated, "any person may teach reading from this primer without the slightest preliminary acquaintance with Visible Speech" (Bell, 1883, p. 3).

Visible Speech, it is claimed, is the most accurate record of spoken sound ever invented, all the symbols being made up of a few simple elements which can be combined in many different ways. "No other method provides such an objective record of sound, a record verifiable by use of the spectrograph. Unfortunately, no other method is as difficult or as expensive to produce on the printed page and Visible Speech in its present form is impossible to write by hand" (Monson, 1954, p. 173).

George Bernard Shaw  
and the Shavian Alphabet

George Bernard Shaw, one of the best known writers of modern times, is frequently associated with his innovation of the story of a fish - spelled ghoti - the gh of laugh, the o of women, and the ti of

Figure 23. A specimen of Alexander Melville Bell's Visible Speech.

12

VISIBLE SPEECH READER.

XI.



ດຳດຳ



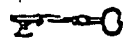
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XII.



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Note. From The Visible Speech Reader (p. 12) by A.M. Bell, 1883, Cambridge, MA: Moses King Publisher.

nation - the transliteration of ghoti representing the sounds of the word fish, as well as the irrational and inconsistent nature of English spelling. Shaw carried on a crusade for Alphabet and Spelling Reform that attracted international attention, culminating in the publicity and controversy over his will, and the publication of the Shaw Alphabet Edition of Androcles and the Lion (1962).

Shaw's writings, including plays, essays, letters, and novels, reflected an early interest in the broad field of language. He dealt with spelling and alphabet reform; better speech and communication; phonetics, dialects, and accents; and international language and communication. Pygmalion, Shaw's play on which the musical My Fair Lady is based, is perhaps the best known example of his writings on these subjects, spanning over 75 years of creative production (Tauber, 1963).

As a writer, Shaw was shocked by the waste involved in writing English: the time wasted in writing unnecessary silent or redundant letters (Shaw used Pitman shorthand in his writing); the waste of materials, such as paper and ink, used in writing these unnecessary letters; the time wasted by students - children and foreign learners - in trying to learn to read and spell; and the waste of time on the part of teachers trying to teach irregular and inconsistent rules (MacCarthy, in Haas, 1969).

To point out this wastage, Shaw

warned of the advantage the Russians enjoyed in the "race of civilization," because they could, in their 35 letter

Cyrillic alphabet, spell Shaw with two letters; "but I have to spell it with four letters: another 100 percent loss of time, labour, ink, and paper...What chance has a Power that cannot spell so simple a sound as Shaw against a rival that can?..."

"Battles may be lost by the waste in writing army orders and dispatches with multitudes of superfluous letters. The mathematicians changed from Latin numerals to Arabic years ago. The gain was incalculably enormous. A change from Latin to British letters will have equally incalculable advantages; but we, being incorrigibly brain lazy, just laugh at spelling reformers as silly cranks" (cited in Tauber, 1963, pp. 65, 68-69).

Toward the end of his life, Shaw became interested in promoting English as a world language. The last article that Shaw wrote, appeared in the Atlantic Monthly in October, 1950. Entitled "The Problem of a Common Language," Shaw wrote:

As the English language goes round the earth, the sun never setting on it, it is impossible to ascertain exactly how many people are writing it, not for one minute as an experiment, but all the time incessantly and perpetually. No matter; a big cross-section will be just as conclusive. In the British Commonwealth and the United States of North America, there are more than 270,000,000 born writers and speakers of English. Of these, the proportion of authors, journalists, clerks, accountants, scholars, private correspondents and others writing continually and simultaneously all around the clock may safely be taken as one in every hundred, making 2,700,000. Multiply this figure by the 73 days [which would be saved by each individual using a phonetic alphabet]. The answer is that every year in the cross-section alone, we are wasting 540,000 years of time and labor which we could save by spelling English phonetically enough for all practical purposes, adding to the Johnsonese alphabet fourteen letters...I have left out India, Pakistan, and Ceylon from the calculation with their 400,000,000 whose dozen dialects are giving way to English. They would make the figures too enormous to be credible. One could only laugh (Shaw, 1950, pp. 61-62).

Not only in favor of spelling reform, which would rid English of



"Dr. Johnson's monumental misspellings" which are accepted by the English-speaking world "in a sort of devil worship of Dr. Johnson" (Shaw, cited in Tauber, 1963, p. 95), Shaw was also in favor of completely abandoning the traditional alphabet, the "unhappy legacy from Rome" (Shaw, cited in Haas, 1969, p. 107). Shaw's preference for a completely non-Romanic alphabet of at least 40 letters arose from his intention that the new alphabet and the old should be used together concurrently and competitively until one or the other was abandoned. Shaw's ideal alphabet would contain at least 40 letters and each letter would be written with the fewest penstrokes as possible to distinguish it from the other letters. His ideal alphabet would not contain separate letter sizes and shapes for capitals. Knowing that he was approaching the end of his life and had neither the will nor the energy to work on his new alphabet, in 1944 Shaw published a widely distributed brochure, "From Bernard Shaw," in which he announced that in his will, a Public Trustee would be appointed to make provisions for just such an alphabet. Shaw died November 2, 1950, and the actual provisions of his will were announced in early 1951. One clause in his will, dated June 12, 1950, called for the following provisions:

To institute and finance a series of inquiries to ascertain or estimate as far as possible the following statistics: (a) the number of extant persons who speak the English language and write it by the established and official alphabet of 26 letters (hereinafter called Dr. Johnson's alphabet); (b) how much time could be saved per individual scribe by the substitution for the said alphabet of an alphabet containing at least forth letters (hereinafter called the Proposed British Alphabet) enabling the said language to be written without indicating single sounds by

groups of letters or by diacritical marks, instead of by one symbol for each sound; (c) how many of these persons are engaged in writing or printing English at any said and every moment in the world; (d) on these factors to estimate the time and labour wasted by our lack of at least fourteen unequivocal single symbols; (e) to add where possible to the estimates of time lost or saved by the difference between Dr. Johnson's alphabet and the Proposed British alphabet estimates of the loss of income in British and American currency (Clause 37 in Bernard Shaw's Will, 1950, cited in Tauber, 1963, pp. 166-167).

Under English law, however, it was impossible to write a will leaving money to an abstract cause such as Shaw's alphabet, unless the cause was somehow considered a charity. Upon his death in 1950, Shaw's will was challenged by two of the three residuary legatees (the British Museum and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art) against the wishes of the National Gallery of Ireland. Five years elapsed after Shaw's death before any legal action commenced or any further public announcement was made about the fate of the will. In February, 1957, the Judge of the Chancery Court ruled the provisions of the will to be invalid. The executor of Shaw's will, the Public Trustee, appealed the decision.

Before the appeal was heard, a compromise settlement was reached in December, 1957, allocating the sum of 8,300 pounds (about \$23,000) for the alphabet project. In order to carry out Shaw's intentions, the Public Trustee, as administrator, was able to offer a prize of 500 pounds for the completion of a suitable alphabet of at least 40 letters to indicate single sounds of the language with the promise that "the alphabet would be used for the transliteration, publication, and presentation to every public library in the United States, British

Isles, and the Commonwealth of copies of Shaw's Androcles and the Lion, printed on facing pages in the orthodox and new alphabet" (Smoker, 1970, p. 3).

Competitors were given a full year in which to design and test their alphabets. Four hundred sixty-seven alphabets were submitted, of which four were considered outstanding. In the end, Kingsley Read's design was finally selected as the alphabet most fitting to meet the criteria laid down in Shaw's will, after it had been modified in consultation with the other three winners, Pauline M. Barrett, J.F. Magrath, and S.L. Pugmire (Pitman & St. John, 1969).

Six purported advantages of the winning alphabet are listed below:

1. Learning to spell English becomes quite a simple process, and takes a fraction of the time now required.
2. Written English occupies one third less space (for the same size letter), leading to saving of paper, ink, wages (for e.g. printers and typists), transport and storage costs (for e.g. all books and newspapers), that must amount to billions of dollars annually. (Compared to this saving, any transitional costs on, for example, new printing fonts and typewriters, would be insignificant.)
3. If new design were adopted - as it could easily be - to other languages (some of which have imperfect or involved systems of writing), world literacy would be furthered.
4. One intrinsic defect of the Roman alphabet per se cannot be overcome by rearranging the Roman letters, namely that there are too few letters, 26, for writing most languages on a "one sound-one symbol" basis. Shavian has over 40 to start with, and several more would undoubtedly be added for other languages as the need arose.
5. Another defect which would not be eradicated even by adding to the number of 'Roman' letters is the traditional use of 'capitals,' practically all of which have shapes

different from the corresponding 'small' letters, and the use of different forms again in handwriting, as opposed to print or type. Shavian uses unchanged shapes throughout.


6. Objections are often raised to interfering or 'tampering' with our ordinary spelling on the grounds that 'phonetic' spellings (e.g. enuf, luv, wot) look illiterate, dialectal, comic or obscene (because of various associations) or that our traditional orthography is somehow 'sacred,' or that the derivation of words is revealed or can somehow be studied by looking at their current spellings. We all know that a half-truth is involved in this last statement, but the point is, that none of the above objections can be made to an alphabet which starts with no associations of any kind, quite apart from its own positive merits. Our traditional Roman spellings remain intact for all to study who wish, and for people to use as long as they are not convinced of the pointlessness of so doing. This might take several generations (Roman numerals linger on even now, for special purposes, but are no longer used for doing sums!); on the other hand, it might not (Peter MacCarthy, 1962, cited in Iles, 1965, p. 13).


The 48 character alphabet is written from left to right across the page very much the same as one would write traditional spellings. A line of writing consists of separate letter shapes and these are grouped by words in the same way that English words and sentences are written. Punctuation remains unaltered. Letters are of three sizes in the vertical dimension: Shorts, Talls, and Deeps (MacCarthy, in Haas, 1969. See Figures 24 and 25).


Aside from differences in letter forms, there is no difference in size, shape, or thickness between initial and other letters, thus eliminating one of the major objections to current Roman usage. To meet the need for an occasional capital letter, a raised "namer dot" is placed over the letter to be capitalized. This namer dot is used for proper names when they first appear in script and in situations where


Figure 24. The Shaw Alphabet Reading Key.


**The Shaw Alphabet Reading Key**  
 The letters are classified as Tall, Deep, Short, and Compound.  
 Beneath each letter is its full name: its *sound* is shown in **bold** type.

Tall:  peep tot kick fee thigh so sure church yea hung

Deep:  bib dead gag vow they zoo meaSure judge woe ha-ha

Short:  loll mime lf egg ash ado on wool out ah

 roar nun eat age ice up oak ooze oil awe

Compound:  are or air err array ear Ian yew

The four most frequent words are represented by single letters: the *q*, of *f*, and *\*, to *l*.

Proper names may be distinguished by a preceding 'Namer' dot: e.g. *·oof*, Rome.

Punctuation and numerals are unchanged. Learn the alphabet *in pairs*, as listed for Writers overleaf.

Note. From The Shaw Edition of Androcles and the Lion (Preface)

by G.B. Shaw, 1962, New York: Penguin Books.

Figure 25. The Shaw Alphabet for Writers.

## The Shaw Alphabet for Writers

Double lines  $\bar{\quad}$  between pairs show the relative height of Talls, Deeps, and Shorts. Wherever possible, finish letters rightwards; those starred \* will be written upwards. Also see heading and footnotes overleaf.

	Tall	Deep		Short	Short	
peep	$\bar{\text{p}}$	$\bar{\text{e}}$	bib	ff	$\bar{\text{f}}$	eat
tot	$\bar{\text{t}}$	$\bar{\text{o}}$	dead	egg	$\bar{\text{e}}$	age
kick	$\bar{\text{k}}$	$\bar{\text{i}}$	gag	ash*	$\bar{\text{a}}$	ice
fee	$\bar{\text{f}}$	$\bar{\text{e}}$	vow	ado*	$\bar{\text{a}}$	up
thigh	$\bar{\text{t}}$	$\bar{\text{h}}$	they	on	$\bar{\text{o}}$	oak
so	$\bar{\text{s}}$	$\bar{\text{o}}$	zoo	wool	$\bar{\text{w}}$	ooze
sure	$\bar{\text{s}}$	$\bar{\text{u}}$	meaSure	out	$\bar{\text{o}}$	oil
church	$\bar{\text{c}}$	$\bar{\text{h}}$	judge	ah*	$\bar{\text{a}}$	awe
yea	$\bar{\text{y}}$	$\bar{\text{e}}$	*woc	are	$\bar{\text{a}}$	or
hung	$\bar{\text{h}}$	$\bar{\text{u}}$	ha-ha	air	$\bar{\text{a}}$	err
	Short	Short		array	$\bar{\text{a}}$	ear
loll	$\bar{\text{l}}$	$\bar{\text{o}}$	roar			
mime*	$\bar{\text{m}}$	$\bar{\text{i}}$	nun		Tall	
				Ian	$\bar{\text{i}}$	yew

Note. From The Shaw Edition of Androcles and the Lion (Preface) by G.B. Shaw, 1962, New York: Penguin Books.

obscurity might otherwise result. Also, contrary to the current alphabet, the Shavian alphabet was designed to discourage cursive writing, thus eliminating the distinction between manuscript and cursive writing (MacCarthy, in Haas, 1969).

Upon acceptance of the winning alphabet, Peter MacCarthy of Leeds University transliterated Shaw's Androcles and the Lion into the Shavian script, as it came to be called. In 1962, Penguin Books published this "Shaw Alphabet Edition," with traditional and Shavian print on opposing pages (See Figure 26). In the Introduction to this work, James Pitman wrote:

Here is Shaw's alphabet. It has been proved that those who wish to read it can do so after only a few hours of concentrated deciphering.

Why would anyone wish to use it?...

The economy in space and greater simplicity of characters ought to increase the speed and ease of writing, even more than it does the ease of reading....Though at this time we can only guess, it is probable that...reading may be 50-75 percent, and writing 80-100 percent faster, and even 200-300 percent, by using simple abbreviations....

I have also offered, if there is a demand, to get further material published in the Shaw alphabet....Meanwhile, if anyone wishes to get printed their own material in Shaw's alphabet, they are permitted to do so (Shaw, 1962, Introduction).

Apparently, however, the demand never arose, for to this day nothing else has been printed in the Shavian script. Indeed, the Shavian alphabet not only met with apathy, but even antipathy, as this article in The Economist of November 24, 1962, pointed out:

Much is claimed for [the Shavian alphabet]; it is said





that it will reduce the space required for printing, it is quicker to read and write and avoids the commonest difficulties of normal English spelling; it will save money, advance child reading by an appreciable time and generally make life easier all around.

Unfortunately, of these claims, only the first, the saving in space, can be supported. It is acknowledged that Shavian could never replace Roman, only supplement it, gradually coming to take a more and more important part over the course of generations. During the change-over, books would have to be printed in both Shavian and Roman types, which hardly looks like a savings of money; children would have to be taught both alphabets (with their strikingly different main and ancillary characteristics) in order to be able to use books published before Shavian, which hardly looks like a saving of time; and it is partly phonetic, with no standard spelling, which would mean...widely differing images between different dialect-speakers of the same word - which hardly looks like avoiding the pitfalls created by the absurdly complicated way in which words in the English language are now spelt ("Shaw's Alphabet: Ploys Unpleasant?," 1962, p. 3).

#### James Pitman's i.t.a.

In 1959, almost a century and a quarter after Sir Isaac Pitman began work on his shorthand, James Pitman, grandson of Isaac, in collaboration with C.N. Fellowes and D.H.J. Schenck, invented the Augmented Roman Alphabet. Acknowledging the debt owed to his grandfather, James Pitman wrote that "the principles of Fonotypy have provided the foundation for my own Initial Teaching Alphabet" (Pitman & St. John, 1969, p. 79). James Pitman intended this alphabet as a means of making it easier for school beginners to learn to read in traditional print. As an alphabet, it is considered a coded symbol approach to beginning read (Auckerman, 1984).

James Pitman described the aims of the alphabet as follows:

The alphabet is a 'reformed' Roman one. It is however, an augmentation of the existing lower-case Ehrhardt alphabet of the Monotype Corporation, and its augmentions have been designed for the purpose of providing a consistently alphabetic representation of the English language suitable primarily for teaching reading to English-speaking children (and adults) and secondarily to adults (and children) who already speak some other language and may also read it in Roman characters (Pitman, in Harrison, 1964, pp. 105-106).

Pitman stressed that his alphabet, unlike other phonetic alphabets proposed before this time, was not an attempt to reform English spelling but simply an initial or beginning teaching alphabet to be used in the initial stages of learning to read. As a permanent spelling reform Pitman himself admitted it was not the most suitable form (Thackray, 1971; Iles, 1965).

With this purpose in mind, two basic changes are made in the written form. First, there is one fixed form for each character. This means that capital letter forms different from small letter forms are eliminated and small letters are always the same shape. When capital letters are required, they are simply the small letter written larger. Secondly, the digraphs are written as one letter both in their spacing and in their shaping. In all, the alphabet contains forty-four characters to correspond to the forty-four phonemes of the language (See Figure 27).

The new alphabet, which later had its name changed from Augmented Roman Alphabet to the Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a.) to better indicate its purpose, was not intended to be spelled phonetically but rather that it should stick to the rule that one sign or symbol should

Figure 27. The Initial Teaching Alphabet.

æ b c d ee  
face bed cat dog key

f g h ie j k  
feet leg hat fly jug key

l m n œ p  
letter man nest over pen

r s t ue v w  
red spoon tree use voice window


y z s wh ch  
yes zebra daisy when chair

th th sh 3 r  
three the shop television drink

a au a e i o  
father ball cap egg milk box

u ω ω ou oi  
up book spoon out oil

A Transitional Literation as proposed for beginning readers by Sir James Pitman, M.P., London, England

the littl red hen 

Wuns upon a tiem littl red hen livd in a barn wîsh her fiev chicks. a pig, a cat and a duck mæd shær hœm in the sœm barn. eech dæ littl red hen led her chicks out tœ look for fœd but the pig, the cat and the duck wœd not look for fœd.

Note. From "The Larger Aspects of Spelling Reform" by J.R. Malone, 1962, Elementary English, 39, p. 444.

always represent one sound, its appearance in use is as close as possible to the appearance of traditional print. Some inconsistencies of traditional spelling are retained when these inconsistencies would cause difficulty in the transition period (O'Halloran, 1973). Thus, both c and k are used when they appear in traditional spelling. Double letters are written when they occur traditionally as in little, and y is used both as a consonant and a vowel (yes and Penny, etc.).

Harrison, in writing about the Pitman alphabet, gave the following thirteen rules for spelling in i.t.a.

1. Y is used as a vowel or consonant in accordance with normal practice: yet, pity, family, (but not pitiful, piteus, familiar).
2. Z, S. The former is used whenever it is normally used; the latter replaces the traditional s when it has the sound of z (horsez).
3. ae, a. ae is the diphthong or long vowel in hate—haet  
a is the long open vowel in calm—cam  
a is the long (or short) vowel in grass
4. c, k. Both represent the same sound. Use the one that occurs in T.O., kick, accept (cook).
5. ch, dich is not wrong, but dit ch, being nearer to T.O. and quite ambiguous, is preferred.
6. j, ǰ. The former is the consonant in jaw and the second is the middle consonant in viǰon (vision). If a dg occurs in T.O., the i.t.a. form is dj (which gives the same sound as j) in order to maintain the d and maintain a visual similarity to T.O.
7. Alternative pronunciations are largely a matter of choice. Dr. Daniel Jones' English Pronouncing Dictionary is recommended as a guide, and where it gives alternatives, the spelling is preferred which corresponds most closely with normal spelling.

8. ue. Some spellings must be arbitrary, and following the English Pronouncing Dictionary, ue is used in words as postuer (posture), pictuer (picture), feetuer (feature).

Initially ue is used to begin such words as uenion (union), but y begins such words as yu (you), ywth (youth), yue (yew). Traditional orthography is the guide.

9. au, or. It should be noted that while w (qu) is often followed by an a in English, a hardly ever has its normal sound in that position. Usually the character au is needed, wau11 (wall), wauter (water), waurm (warm). Also fault and sault, pau (paw).

10. The neutral vowel common in English unstressed syllables is generally represented by the vowel found normally.

11. r, r. The second symbol is written when r is combined with any of the four vowels: e, i, u, y to represent the sound in her, fir, fur, myrrh - her, fir, fur, myrr. It is used with no other vowels.

12. Double letters are used when found traditionally.

13. The vestigial first vowel is retained in the final syllables in such words as special, judicial, ocean, soldier. i is not retained in words ending in cion, sion, or tion (Harrison, 1964, pp. 112-113).

Harrison also called attention to the fact that almost half of traditional spellings were either not affected at all or so slightly as to go unnoticed. Of the other half, about 40% were considered radical changes cof (cough), riet (right), etc.

In the summer of 1960, the University of London Institute of Education, in conjunction with the National Foundation for Educational Research, proposed to begin a scientific investigation of the utility of the new alphabet. The Institute intended that the new alphabet be planned with the assistance and guidance of scientific, educational, psychological, statistical, typographical, and phonetic experts.

John Downing, a teacher and industrial research officer, was appointed to direct the inquiry. Downing's first task was to organize a research unit and obtain the special books and materials needed. James Nisbet and Co., Ltd., publisher of a current reading series (Janet and John), allowed their whole series to be transliterated into i.t.a. for the purpose of comparison, experimentation, and evaluation (Downing, 1978).

It was initially hoped that as many as fifty control groups would be involved in the i.t.a. experiments. Schools using traditional spelling and i.t.a. were then matched by grade level, numbers, ages, and socio-economic levels. In-service training was provided for teachers of the control and i.t.a. groups (Leigh, 1967).

In September 1961, the experiment actually began involving 873 i.t.a. students. A year-end comparison showed that the experimental i.t.a. group had progressed much faster than the control group. The same results were found at the conclusion of the second year (Dewey, 1971).

Downing summed up the evidence of the first two years by drawing the following conclusions:

- 1) Young children get through their beginning reading program faster when books are written in i.t.a.
- 2) They can recognize more words in print when they are in i.t.a.
- 3) They can more readily read continuous English prose accurately.
- 4) They can comprehend more continuous print if i.t.a. is used.

5) They can read faster when the medium is i.t.a.  
(Downing, 1964, p. 57).

At the end of the second year, the experiment involved 2,808 children in sixteen different experimental schools. Another one thousand were added in September 1963. Pitman reported to the conference of the Education Records Bureau in New York in October and November of that year that a considerable number of classes had been formed outside the experimental groups involving another 5,000 students and bringing the number of children involved in i.t.a. classes to 8,800. The number of participating schools reached thirty-three.

Before the experiment in England had hardly gotten underway, it had already attracted attention in the United States (Gunther, 1964; Riemer, 1964). Some school authorities went to England to see the experiment firsthand. Two educators most interested in i.t.a. were Albert Mazurkiewicz of Lehigh University School of Education and Harold J. Tanyzer of Hofstra University, who later helped set up the first large scale experiments in the United States. Mazurkiewicz, with the aid of Tanyzer, helped create a series of beginning readers in the new orthography. They used the symbol i/t/a to distinguish their readers from i.t.a. in England. The Tanyzer-Mazurkiewicz reading scheme (i/t/a Early-to Read Series) was a complete set of readers, workbooks, and teachers' manuals and was the series to be used in most of the experiments in America (Smith, 1965).

With the financial backing of the Ford Foundation the American

experiment got underway in September, 1963. Between five and six hundred children were involved in this first experiment in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Evaluation at the conclusion of the first year testing program indicated that i/t/a/ students achieved better levels of reading, and also received better scores in creative writing, independent writing, and spelling skills than those using the conventional approach.

The second year, i/t/a students began to study spelling formally. As was begun in the transition stage of reading, children were taught the way various vowel sounds might be spelled in T.O. They were introduced to dictionary skills using an i/t/a - T.O. dictionary where they could find conventional spelling of words needed for writing. The results of evaluation of second year i/t/a/ students indicated superiority over comparable T.O. groups.

While the Bethlehem experiment was by far the largest in North America, it was by no means the only one. In the first year, 1963, approximately 3,000 students in seven states were involved in various studies and experiments in using i/t/a. The second year the number increased to over twenty thousand in thirty states. These did not involve only first graders. Tanyzer, in New York and Connecticut, began experimenting with i/t/a in the kindergarten and planned follow-up evaluations through the third grade. Classes in i/t/a were formed for teaching remedial reading, illiterate adults, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed and Spanish-speaking children (Iles, 1965).



By 1967, i/t/a had been adopted for all the schools of three American cities: Bethlehem, PA, Lompoc, CA, and University City, MO. It also saw extensive use in many other communities in both public and parochial schools. Scholastic Books produced about 40 children's classics and old favorites in i/t/a, and Follette Publishing and Henry Z. Walk Publishing also produced a few small enrichment books. An Initial Teaching Alphabet Foundation was established at Hofstra University on Long Island to collect and disseminate information on i/t/a research and materials (Auckerman, 1984). i.t.a. projects were also attempted in Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Bermuda (Deighton, 1971).

Despite evidence that the i/t/a is an effective reading program, the initial enthusiasm demonstrated by the rapid and enthusiastic acceptance of i/t/a in the United States in the early 1960s, the system never took hold in this country. While a few American schools still use the system, no new materials have been published in i/t/a, although it has been adapted for use with the Apple II computer (Auckerman, 1984).

Initial British enthusiasm has also waned, and in 1978 a United Kingdom i.t.a. Foundation was formed to spark enthusiasm for a revival in interest in this approach, inasmuch as "there has been a marked decrease in the use of i.t.a. since the late 1970s." While it is still used in "some small fashion in a few schools" in Britain, there appears

to be no current prospect for a comeback of the system (Auckerman, 1984, p. 304).

#### John R. Malone's Unifon

John R. Malone, an economist and Executive Director of the Foundation for a Compatible and Consistent Alphabet (FCCA) of Chicago, began experimenting with a unique alphabet called Unifon ("single sound") in 1961. (Unifon is the current name of the alphabet. Originally it was called the Shaw-Malone Alphabet, and then the New Single Sound Alphabet.) Originally designed for easy conversion into a binary code to feed information into computers, it was later advocated as a medium for teaching children to read.

Unifon is a 40 character alphabet based on the upper-case letters of the Roman alphabet. It is an isomorphic (one-for-one) system of 24 consonants and 16 vowels. The new alphabet retains 23 existing letters, dropping c, q, and x as redundant. Seventeen new letters are added, all based on existing letters. The six new consonants include a letter for the ng sound, and the five that contain the h sound ( ch, sh, zh, and the two sounds for th ). The eleven new vowels include the 5 long vowels, 5 diphthongs, and the e before an r sound (Culkin, 1981. See Figure 28).

Pitman and St. John describe Unifon thus:

All his forty "single sound" characters are upper-case (without ascenders or descenders), the ratio of height to width being a constant 7:5; the same block-type characters are used to provide a lower-case alphabet, the vertical measure of the characters being reduced by about 29 percent so that the 7:5 rectangle becomes a square. Malone claims

Figure 28. The Unifon Alphabet.

A	Δ	Λ	B	C
at	ate	all	bow	cell say
Ɔ	D	E	I	Ǝ
chair	dip	hen	he	her
F	G	H	ƚ	Ɔ
fast	goat	hat	bit	bite
J	K	L	M	N
jaw	kiss	low	music	no
W	O	Q	Ɔ	Ɔ
king	lot	old	look	out
G	P	R	S	T
boy	pipe	run	sure	table
Ɔ	⊥	U	Ɔ	W
thirst	there	up	due	you
V	W	Σ	Y	Z
vest	wig	azure	yes	zebra

IU L+TL RED HEN



WUNC UPAN U TΔM L+TL RED HEN L+VD  
 +N IU BORN W+Θ H3R FΔV ƆHKC. U P+G  
 U KAT AND U DUK MΔD IER HOM  
 +N IU CAM BORN. IO DA L+TL RED  
 HEN LED H3R ƆHKC ƆT TO LOK FAR  
 FOD. BUT IU P+G, IU KAT, AND IU  
 DUK WOD NOT LOK FAR FOD.

Note. From "The Larger Aspects of Spelling Reform" by  
 J.R. Malone, 1962, Elementary English, 39, p. 441.

that his system is very nearly fully consistent with the "Latin" conventions of most European spelling - e.g., Polish, Czech, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, German - thus facilitating language learning as well as electronic scanning combined with machine translation (1969, p. 88).

Malone has presented the English spelling rules to be used with his 40 character Unifon Alphabet:

1. Spell each word exactly as it sounds: i.e., alfu**bet**, kat, kup, Jon, met, etc.
2. No silent letters; no double letters.
3. Each sound symbolized the same way, exactly, each time it is used.
4. Diphthongs and sounds represented by Latin consonant pairs use new symbols.
5. "Short" vowel sounds utilize customary Latin-English symbol; new "long" vowels have a prominent, added, full-width horizontal member plus Latin symbol.
6. No digraphs nor symbols having both consonant and vowel usage are used.
7. All words sounding the same are spelled the same way; context determines meaning as in the normal spoken tongue.
8. Diphthongs and combination sounds made standard with separate symbols: ai, ch, ng, ou or ow, oi or oy, sh, th (voiced), th, (unvoiced), yu, and zh.
9. Forty phonemes are made conventional but where local dialects or sharper inflection is used, the nearest approximation shall be used for writing. If necessary, accent marks, diacritical marks, etc., can be used for precision in drama work, speech training (Malone, 1962, p. 441).

Unifon has been used in both private and public schools in Chicago and Indianapolis on an experimental basis, with gratifying results.

Two books are also in preparation which will make the system available

to teachers and parents. The tentative titles are Reading for the TV Child and The UNIFON Double-Entry Dictionary (Culkin, 1981). In conclusion, one of the proponents of Unifon Alphabet claims that the following improvements would follow its adoption:

Economics: Unifon takes up 14 percent less space, with consequent savings in labor, storage, ink, and paper.

Decline in Dyslexia: One author believes that more than 60 percent of the world's dyslexia occurs in English-speaking countries and blames the gap between our spoken language and our alphabet.

Voice-Activated Machines: Unifon's one-for-one correspondence would simplify the programming of voice-activated computers and typewriters.

Foreign Languages: Already the official alphabet of several American Indian tribes, Unifon also fits the major European languages with minor adjustments. The new alphabet can ease the acquisition of languages; it could be particularly useful in teaching English to those, such as Spanish speakers, who already have a consistent alphabet.

English as a World Language: English has become the de facto world language, taught in the elementary schools of more than 100 countries. Although relatively easy to speak, English is one of the most difficult languages to learn from written materials. A sensible alphabet would greatly facilitate this process.

Spelling Bees: No more (Culkin, 1981, p. 92).

#### Summary

Spelling and alphabet reform are subjects of great interest and devotion for many individuals. Every year, several new reform schemes are unveiled to the world (Ives, 1979). Phonetic spelling is not,

however, without its critics. Numerous objections to modified romanic or non-romanian alphabets have been posited, and these are detailed in the concluding chapter. One of these objections has been given by George Sampson, honorary secretary of the 'English Association:'

Radical reform in spelling means the exact phonetic representation of pronunciation, But whose pronunciation? There is Scottish English, Irish English, Welsh English, and American English of numerous kinds. There is even English English, of which I will offer some specimens.

I was recently talking to some prominent persons about education. One spoke of "the grat (a as in German) vahyoo of the clahssics," and mentioned "Asthuns"; another spoke of "the greet velyview of the clessics," and mentioned "Ethins"; a third thought it "a gret shem that the univahsities should conten so mach infairior matairiel." And the other day a lady told me she was "afred bebbly hed a pen and mast hev gert a curled."

Well, there are a few specimens of "educated English." Again I ask, Whose pronunciation is to be represented in any 'nu' spelling? (cited in Mencken, 1948, p. 314).

CHAPTER V  
THE DESERET ALPHABET

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the Deseret Alphabet as a case study of one attempt to create and disseminate a phonemic orthographic system using a non-romanian alphabet. An examination of the social and educational context of its formation, its creators and proponents, the extent of its acceptance and utilization, methods of instruction, and reasons for its abandonment, is undertaken. A look at the Alphabet as a linguistic entity, its strengths and shortcomings, is included. This study also determines whether or not the Deseret Alphabet met the objections of our present orthography.

The Deseret Alphabet had as its birthplace, not the well-known American seats of scholarship and erudition such as Boston, New York, or Philadelphia, but rather the newly pioneered Utah Territory. Isolated from the states of the Union, and accessible only with the greatest difficulty and struggle, Utah, during the middle part of the nineteenth century, was the scene for a zealous scheme to change English spelling.

First settled July 24, 1847, by the Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, the desert wastes surrounding the Great Salt Lake were specifically chosen by their leader, Brigham Young, because of their isolation,

defensibility, and the fact that no one else desired to live there. Here, in the hostile desolation of the Great Basin, they hoped to build the Zion of their God.

The proselytizing efforts of Mormon missionaries in Europe, Asia, South Africa, Australia, and the islands of the South Pacific bore fruit, and tens of thousands of converts, many of whom spoke little or no English, gathered to "the tops of the mountains" in the Rockies to be with their coreligionists. Many American, Canadian, and British proselytes to the faith were illiterate. This, naturally, posed a serious threat to a people whose survival in a hostile environment depended upon their cohesion and unity. Communication, written and verbal, was a key, not only to their very existence, but to helping the Latter-day Saints retain and strengthen their faith. In addition, literacy and study were religious ideals, and they viewed the gaining of knowledge as a sacred, solemn, and indeed, God-mandated duty.

Since the organization of their Church in 1830, the Latter-day Saints considered education one of their foremost duties. While on the plains, the Latter-day Saints conducted schools for their children in the backs of their wagons. Shortly after their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, Miss Mary Ann Dillworth began a school for the children, which was patronized during the pioneers' first winter. Less than three years after their coming to Utah, the University of Deseret, one of the first universities west of the Mississippi, was founded (Chamberlin, 1960). At that time, the University of Deseret was not a



class-teaching institution, but rather an education-promoting and supervisory institution, charged with overseeing school matters in the Territory (Widtsoe, 1944). In 1892, this institution's name was changed to the University of Utah (Jenson, 1941). Additionally, nearly every Mormon settlement boasted that its first permanent building was a schoolhouse (Heinerman, 1982; Birkinshaw, 1981; Bennion, 1939).

Brigham Young addressed the problem of creating a literate, monolingual society in early 1853. Young and others are quoted at some length in order to give the reader a greater appreciation for the seriousness and enthusiasm with which the Mormon people tackled the task of spelling reform. Young stated:

Now the people are gathering, and the varied and most general influx of the diverse tribes, nations, kindreds, and tongues is even at our doors. Provisions must speedily be made for this forthcoming crisis and event. Can we suppose that a few interpreters will answer the demands of a constant communication between several thousand languages? May we not, and must we not, look for a standard to be lifted up? Should not that language be such as can be acquired by the most ordinary minds, within a few days or months at the outside? Now is it possible to simplify and reduce the English language or in any way remould it so as to make it answer the emergency that awaits the saints of this generation? ( Deseret News, November 24, 1853. Hereafter cited as DN. Note: Early editions of the Deseret News were not paginated.)

These were not Brigham Young's first remarks on the subject of spelling reform, however, for approximately one year earlier, on April 8, 1852, he said that the English language is "fraught with imperfections and ridiculous vagaries." He went on:

I have asked the Board of Regents [of the University of Deseret] to cast out from their system of education, the

present orthography and written form of our language, that when my children are taught the graphic sign for A, it may always represent that individual sound only. But as it now is, the child is perplexed that the sound A should have one sound in mate, a second sound in father, a third sound in fall, a fourth sound in man, and a fifth sound in many, and, in other combinations, soundings different from these, while, in others, A is not sounded at all. I say, let us have one sound all the time. And when P is introduced into a word, let it not be silent as in Phthisic, or sound like F in Physic, and let not two be placed instead of one in apple (Young, 1852, p. 70).

In his annual message to the Utah Territorial Legislature, on December 12, 1853, after commenting on the "considerable" foreign migration into the territory, Young stated:

While the world is progressing with steam engine power, and lightening speed, in the accumulation of wealth, extension of science, communication and dissemination of letters and principle, why may not the way be paved for the easier acquisition of the English language, combining as it does great extension and varied expression, with beauty, simplicity, and power, and being unquestionably the most useful and beautiful in the world? But while we freely admit this, we also have to acknowledge that it is perhaps as much abused in its use, and as complex in its attainment as any other. The correction of orthography, upon some principle of having characters to represent the sounds which we use, has occupied the attention of many scientific gentlemen from time to time, but through lack of influence, energy, or some other cause, they have failed to accomplish so desirable an object. If something of this nature could be introduced which could be brought into general use, I consider it would be of great utility in the acquirement of our language. I am happy to learn that the Regency are deeply engaged in investigating this interesting subject; and hope that ere long, they may be able to produce something that will prove highly beneficial ("Message of Governor Brigham Young," April 8, 1854, p. 213).

As the Territorial Governor of Utah, Young established a committee to study spelling reform, with the aim of making instruction in English a simpler task. Members of this committee studied various proposals

and designs, including the phontypic alphabet of Sir Isaac Pitman, with its augmented Roman alphabet. Regarding their deliberations, Widtsoe (1944) wrote:

It was first proposed that the Roman type in common use be employed in securing the desired reform....Then it was proposed that a phonographic handwriting be used also in print, as it moved entirely according to sound.

Finally the Regents broke away from all traditions and struck out for themselves. They hewed a new way among the orthographic "corruptions and perversions" of the language (p. 63).

On December 22, 1853, a new alphabet was decided upon. Consisting of 38 characters, it was christened the Deseret Alphabet.

#### Characteristics of the Deseret Alphabet

The original Deseret Alphabet was composed of 38 characters. That number was not constant; at one time as many as 43 characters made up the Alphabet, only to be discarded later. As the system developed, a standard 38 character alphabet emerged (See Figure 29). It was this alphabet that was used in all printed materials. The symbols for the Alphabet appeared in only one form. The only distinction between upper- and lower-case letters was size. No cursive script was provided for handwriting. As the characters were drawn by hand for cursive writing, "this resulted in a rather disconnected, jumbled-appearing script" (Nash, 1957, p. 17).

The 38 characters of the Deseret Alphabet, with only a few minor

Figure 29. The Deseret Alphabet.

Y Q I S O P L I J U P P A L L I J .

<i>Long Sounds.</i>			Letter.	Name.	Sound.
Letter.	Name.	Sound.	7	.....p	
Q	.....c.....as in.....eat.		8	.....b	
8	.....a " ate.		9	.....t	
Q	.....ah " art.		Q	.....d	
Q	.....aw " aught.		C	.....che..as in..cheese.	
O	.....o " oat.		Y	.....g	
Q	.....oo " ooze.		Q	.....k	
<i>Short Sounds of the above.</i>			Q	.....ga...as in...gate.	
†	.....as in.....it.		P	.....f	
7	" et.		Q	.....v	
7	" at.		L	.....eth...as in...thigh.	
7	" ot.		Y	.....the " thy.	
7	" ut.		8	.....s	
9	" book.		G	.....z	
Q	.....i.....as in.....ice.		D	.....esh...as in...flesh.	
Q	.....ow " owl.		S	.....zhe " vision.	
W	.....woo		Y	.....ur " burn.	
Y	.....ye		L	.....l	
Y	.....h		Q	.....m	
			h	.....n	
			N	.....eng.as in.length.	

Note. From The Book of Mormon (frontispiece) by O. Pratt (Ed.), 1869, New York: Russell Brothers.

variations, correspond to the values of the International Phonetic Alphabet, and their use is similar (Dedera, 1969; Conis, 1968; Monson, 1947). A significant exception is that the Deseret Alphabet made no provision for the unaccented vowel, or schwa, sound. The designers of the Alphabet broke down English speech into six long vowel sounds, six short vowels, one aspirate ( h sound), and 21 articulate sounds (consonants). It is evident that the 38 sounds and structure of the Deseret Alphabet, but not the letters, were entirely borrowed from Pitman's phonotype, although phonotype has 40 characters (Alder, Goodfellow, & Watt, 1984). A linguist, J.M. Cowan, commented, "The designers of the Deseret Alphabet made a correct phonemic analysis of English on the whole. They were more successful in breaking down the antiquated traditional orthography than many more recent reformers who have attempted to respell English" (cited in Rowe, 1978, p. 61).

Hubert Howe Bancroft, in his History of Utah (1890), wrote that the characters of the Deseret Alphabet were similar to Reformed Egyptian, the characters used in the Book of Mormon plates. However, a comparison of the Deseret Alphabet with copies of the Book of Mormon script reveals little, if any, similarity (Nash, 1957; Alder, et al, 1984).

T.W. Ellerbeck wrote in 1885 that "the forms of some of the letters were designed or originated by Mr. Watt—those of others were selected by Mr. Watt from some of the ancient alphabets found in the front of Webster's unabridged dictionary..." (cited in Carter, 1939, p.

3). There are a number of similarities between the Ethiopic Alphabet printed in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary of 1848 and the Deseret characters. A number of the characters are similar to the letters of the Latin alphabet, namely C, D, L, O, P, S, and W. Other similarities to the Roman alphabet include a reversed capital B, a stylized g, and an upside down e. These letters, though, represented different sounds than in our current alphabet (Sudweeks, 1954).

#### Creators of the Deseret Alphabet ..

The original committee formed by Governor Young to study spelling reform consisted of Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, and George D. Watt. To this committee were later added Wilford Woodruff, Orson Pratt, William W. Phelps, and Robert L. Campbell. Others had an influence upon the deliberations of the committee, particularly Brigham Young and his Second Counselor, Willard Richards. It was Richards who vehemently opposed the adoption of any alphabet which resembled the present alphabet, and he got his way (R. Watt, 1983). Kimball was First Counselor to Brigham Young in the Presidency of the Church. The Pratt brothers were both Mormon Apostles, as was Wilford Woodruff, who would later become fourth President of the Church. Phelps was a writer and composed a number of songs, still popular in Mormon hymnody. Robert Campbell later became Territorial Superintendent of Schools and was one of the Deseret Alphabet's chief supporters until his death in

1872 (Jenson, 1901).

The Deseret News wrote of the activities of the Board of Regents in an editorial on November 24, 1853:

We have observed the frequent sittings of the Board of late that has fatherly supervision of education in the Territory of Utah, and we are happy to learn that their discussions are calculated to call forth a searching investigation into the elementary sounds of language...The Governor and other members of the First Presidency find time, in the midst of all their onerous duties to mingle in these meetings. The traditions which have come through misty labyrinths of past ages are most powerfully assailed by the Governor, whose keen eye looks with suspicions on the corruptions and perversions of language which was originally pure. Thus far it appears that the orthography of the English language is too full of absurdities to be tolerated by an enlightened people...

Can it be expected that the Apostles at Great Salt Lake City will speak by the immediate power of God so that people of every nation and language will forthwith understand them? Or should we look for the power and wisdom of God to be displayed in forming a simple, easily acquired language, in which barbarians and Christians, bondmen and freemen, of every grade of intelligence, out of every tribe, caste, language, and country, can, in a short time, interchange their sentiments and praise God unitedly in spirit and understanding?

If such a language is ever demanded at all, it seems to be required without delay, even now. It is not for a future generation, but for the present...Now is it possible to simplify and reduce the English language or in any way remould it so as to answer the emergency that awaits the saints of this generation? Tell us ye wise men! Will the old bottles answer for the deposit of new wine? The English language may be as good as any other known language, but is there any other known language whatever fitted to meet the great emergency of the great gathering and great work of teaching the law of the Lord to all people? Let wisdom speak, and her voice shall be heard.

This same edition of the Deseret News also contained a letter which indicates that the efforts of the Board were arousing some

interest:

For the Nus

Mr. Ed.:--We wish that sum ov ur redurs wood tel us where good sens was when our dikshunare makurs larnd us how to spel. Let our misshunares b kalm til tha here from us agen. Awl things are going ahead. I am as ankshus as u, and av meny things u ant sen yet, and shal av mor in a fu das. Grate mane wolvsa in thes mountans, and tha howl dredfuls, sumtimes; grate mene ingins tu, and tha oop wus than wolvs. And wat of it? Kant we tawk with em awl? Kant we tawk with awl the nashuns? Yes we kan, soon as we lurn their langwage.

Urs,

GO A HED.

There has been some controversy as to who actually devised the characters of the Deseret Alphabet. Remy (1861) wrote that W.W. Phelps [whom Remy mistakenly identifies as an Apostle] "worked out the letters" (p. 185). Lyon (1932) held "unequivocally" that "Orson Pratt was the designer of the symbols" (p. 91). Stanley (1937, p. 284) on the other hand, wrote that Parley P. Pratt worked out the "Mormon alphabet." The overwhelming consensus of scholarly opinion, however, holds that the Deseret Alphabet was chiefly the handiwork of George D. Watt (Grover & Cranney, 1982; Nash, 1957; Monson, 1947; Brooks, 1944). Hosea Stout recorded in his journal that George D. Watt was responsible for working out the characters (cited in Alder, et al, 1984). Gustave L.H. Henriod, in his personal history, identified Watt as the "father and originator" of the Deseret Alphabet (Carter, 1968, p. 324). Writing in 1885, T.W. Ellerback, Secretary to Brigham Young, stated that "the alphabet was designed principally by George D. Watt, a phonetic expert..." (cited in Carter, 1939, p. 3).



George Darling Watt was the first Latter-day Saint baptized in Britain, in the River Ribble, on July 30, 1837, at the age of twenty-two. During the next five years he studied 'phonography' under Isaac Pitman and became close friends with Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and other leading Latter-day Saints. He emigrated to America in 1842 [a shipmate recalled that Watt gave a lecture on shorthand while aboard ship (R. Watt, 1983)] to be with his coreligionists in Nauvoo, Illinois, which was then the headquarters of the L.D.S. Church. While there, he was appointed the official Church stenographer by the Mormon Prophet, Joseph Smith, and was often called upon to record his sermons and that of other dignitaries. Watt organized the Phonographic Society of Nauvoo and served as its president. He also delivered lectures on the Pitman system and taught classes on the subject, with Brigham Young being one of his students. Watt also recorded the proceedings of the trial of those accused of murdering the Mormon Prophet (Alder, et al, 1984; R. Watt, 1983).

Following the deaths of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, the mantle of Church leadership fell to Brigham Young, and the main body of the Church followed him across the plains to the Great Basin. Here, Watt's services as stenographer were often used, and his reports of sermons and other events filled the pages of the pioneer Deseret News. Watt also proposed to publish a journal which would include the speeches of the Presidency, the Apostles, and others. With the complete support of the Church leadership, Watt published the Journal

of Discourses from 1854 until 1868. He became reporter for the Utah Territorial Legislature, secretary for the Board of Regents, and offered his services as a private reporter for people (R. Watt, 1983; R. Watt, 1976). In 1852, Watt began again to lecture on the subject of Phonography, again with Brigham Young as his pupil.

Watt even published his own textbook, Exercises in Phonography (1851. See Figure 30), designed for use in his classes. He, like many other spelling reformers, felt that written English was inferior to spoken English. In the introduction to his text, Watt wrote:

There has hitherto existed among all nations the greatest disparity, in point of facility and dispatch, between the usual methods of communicating thought—speaking and writing; the former has always been comparatively rapid, easy, and delightful; the latter tedious, cumbrous, and wearisome. It is most strange that we, who excel our progenitors so far in science, literature, and commerce, should continue to use the mode of writing which they have handed down to us, (with but very slight changes in the form of the letters,) and which, by its complexity, obliges the readiest hand to spend at least six hours in writing what can be spoken in one. Why should we not attempt to simplify our written characters, and make them correspond in some degree, to the simplicity of spoken sounds? (p. 3).

It was the influence of Watt upon Brigham Young and others, some historians postulate, which sparked their interest in spelling reform which culminated in the formation of the Deseret Alphabet (R. Watt, 1977; Stringham & Flack, 1958).

#### Reasons for Creation of the Deseret Alphabet

There have been a number of reasons posited for the Mormon attempt

Figure 30. The title page of George D. Watt's  
Exercises in Phonography, 1851.

EXERCISES  
IN  
PHONOGRAPHY.

DESIGNED TO CONDUCT THE PUPIL TO A PRACTICAL  
ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE ART.

[CALLED "THE PHONOGRAPHIC CLASS BOOK."]

BY G. D. WATT.

"Who that is much in the habit of writing, has not often wished for some means of expressing by two or three dashes of the pen, that which, as things are, it requires such an expenditure of time and labor to commit to paper? Our present mode of communication must be felt to be cumbersome in the last degree; unworthy of these days of invention; we require some means of bringing the operations of the mind, and of the hand, into closer correspondence."

GREAT SALT LAKE CITY:  
W. RICHARDS, Printer.

1851.

to change English spelling. The first, and most popular, of course, is that the Mormon people wanted to simplify English orthography in order to facilitate the acquisition of a common language. Upon their arrival from foreign lands, many of the Latter-day Saints would naturally settle close to those who shared their tongue. Thus, pockets of Swedes, or Germans, or Welsh would arise, whose inhabitants felt little need or inclination to learn English (McGavin, 1940). This fragmentation of the Latter-day Saints along political or linguistic lines was abhorrent to the Mormon leaders, to whom the ideal of a unified community was paramount. Reiterating the words of Christ, who said, "If ye are not one, ye are not mine" (from the third book of Mormon scripture, the Doctrine and Covenants 38:27), the Mormon hierarchy strove for the creation of a cohesive Kingdom, not only a religious kingdom, but a political, economic, social, and linguistic unit as well.

It was also believed that the Deseret Alphabet would prove beneficial to the Mormon missionaries who were working among the Indians, as it would provide a written medium for the various Indian languages. Additionally, it was hoped that the Deseret Alphabet would aid the Indians in their acquisition of English (Olsen, 1952).

The historian Hubert Howe Bancroft later (1890) wrote that the Deseret Alphabet was indicative of the Mormon desire for "exclusiveness, a separate people wishing to have a separate language, and perhaps in time an independent literature" (p. 712). Brigham

Young's secretary, T.W. Ellerback, listed the reasons for the creation of the Deseret Alphabet as "enabling our youth to learn more easily to read and spell, and to hinder or prevent their access to the yellow colored literature of the age or any unwholesome reading" (cited in Carter, 1939, p. 3). These sentiments were expressed years after the actual experimentation with the Deseret Alphabet was underway, and were largely afterthoughts (Roberts, 1965). The Latter-day Saints were not isolationists. Quite the contrary (Widstoe, 1944). Brigham Young believed firmly that the Gospel as espoused by the Latter-day Saints was light, and once comprehended by the world, would be embraced as the panacea to this world's ills. The Latter-day Saints were convinced that they were building a new society. The Mormon hope was that the Deseret Alphabet would eventually become the written medium for language worldwide, and would prove a boon to all who would receive it. "In many ways the Deseret Alphabet was just one more aspect of the perfect society the Mormons were hoping to build in anticipation of Christ's return" (Alder, et al, 1984, p. 285; Ivins, 1947).

To the Latter-day Saints, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the establishment of their Church was a fulfillment of the Biblical prophecy which spoke of "the times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21; J.F. Smith, 1973). In addition to the restoration of the primitive gospel, the Latter-day Saints looked for that time when the language which was spoken before the confusion of tongues at Babel--"a

pure language; such as God gave Adam at the beginning" (Orson Pratt, in Lundwall, 1946, p. 551) should also be restored. Some early Latter-day Saints expressed the opinion that the Deseret Alphabet was preparatory to the restoration of this universal language to the earth, and would indeed be its written medium ("Language," April 29, 1854).

One factor influencing the creation of the Deseret Alphabet which has been largely ignored in the literature is Brigham Young's personal interest in the matter of simplified spelling. Though highly intelligent and remarkably capable, Young was virtually unschooled. Indeed, he often boasted of the fact that he had only 11 days of formal schooling (Gates, 1931). Although he was highly verbal and was considered a moving speaker, he relied heavily upon his numerous scribes to handle his correspondence (Werner, 1925). Those letters written in his own hand, as well as his early diaries, reveal him to be a phonetic speller, spelling by sound rather than by convention (Birkinshaw, 1981; Jesse, 1974; Ellsworth, 1973).

A story is told of Brigham Young listening to his daughter teaching a Scandanavian girl to read. The Scandanavian convert pronounced throw with the ow sound as in cow. When Young's daughter explained that the word had a long o sound as in go, her foreign friend asked why the word was not spelled thro. This, allegedly, increased Young's determination to reform English spelling (Grover & Cranney, 1982). Along these lines, Alder, et al (1984) wrote that:

Brigham Young felt that children should not be forced to spend long hours sitting quietly in school "on a hard bench until they ache all over." They should be able to move around and do things that interest them. The Deseret Alphabet would make it easier for children to learn to read, and they would not have to spend as much time in school (p. 285).

In light of this, it is of little wonder that from the 1840s, Young took an active interest in the spelling reform movement and attended a number of classes taught on the subject.

Remy (1861), referring to one putative reason for the creation of the Deseret Alphabet, wrote, "Some persons have supposed that the object of this alphabet was to prevent access to the Mormon books and writings; but it is more probable that the only thing intended was to simplify the reading of the English language by establishing a determinate and uniform relation between the sign and its sound; in fact, a phonetic alphabet" (p. 184). If indeed "the purpose of the 'Mormon language' was to keep the secrets of Mormon literature from the world" (Grover & Cranney, 1982, p. 12), why then were cards printed giving the Roman equivalents of the Deseret characters, available for purchase by anyone, thus "making the decoding of materials written in the Deseret Alphabet available to all?" (Nash, 1957, p. 2). On the contrary, the Latter-day Saint Church was evangelical, and went to great lengths to disseminate their writings. By 1855, Mormon scriptures had been translated and published in Danish, German, French, Italian, Hawaiian, and Welsh, as well as English (Weller & Reid, 1958):

### Promotion of the Deseret Alphabet

Upon creation of the alphabet, a campaign was undertaken from the pulpit and the written media to explain and popularize it. The Deseret News, official organ of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, editorialized on January 19, 1854:

The Board of Regents, in company with the Governor and heads of departments, have adopted a new alphabet, consisting of 38 characters. The Board have had frequent sittings this winter, with the sanguine hope of simplifying the English language, and especially its orthography. After many fruitless attempts to render the common alphabet of the day subservient to their purpose, they found it expedient to invent an entirely new and original set of characters.

These characters are much more simple in their structure than the usual alphabetical characters; every superfluous mark supposable, is wholly excluded from them. The written and printed hands are substantially merged into one.

We may derive a hint of the advantage to orthography, from the spelling of the word eight, which in the new alphabet only requires two letters instead of five to spell it, viz: AT. There will be a great saving of time and paper by the use of the new characters; and but a very small part of the time and expense will be requisite in obtaining a knowledge of the language.

The orthography will be so abridged that an ordinary writer can probably write one hundred words a minute with ease, and consequently report the speech of a common speaker without much difficulty.

As soon as this alphabet can be set in type, it will probably be furnished to the schools of the Territory for their use and benefit; not however with a view to immediately supersede the use of the common alphabet—which, though it does not make the comers thereunto perfect, still is a vehicle that has become venerable for age and much hard service.

In the new alphabet every letter has a fixed and



unalterable sound, and every word is spelt with a reference to given sounds. By this means, strangers can not only acquire a knowledge of our language much more readily, but a practised reporter can also report a strange tongue, so that the strange language when spoken can be legible [ sic ] by one conversant with the tongue.

On March 30, 1854, the First Presidency, or ruling body of the Church, issued the "Eleventh General Epistle of the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to the Saints" in which they stated that:

The Regency have formed a new Alphabet, which it is expected will prove highly beneficial in acquiring [ sic ] the English language to foreigners, as well as the youth of our country. We recommend it to the favourable consideration of the people, and desire that all of our teachers and instructors will introduce it in their schools and to their classes. The orthography of the English language needs reforming—a word to the wise is sufficient (Clark, 1965, p. 130).

In his address to the Territorial Legislature delivered December 11, 1854, Governor Young said that it was "an opportune time to introduce the New Alphabet, in forming which, the Regency have performed a difficult and laborious task. I recommend that it be thoroughly and extensively taught in all the schools, combining, as it eminently does, a basis of instruction for the attainment of the English language, far surpassing in simplicity and ease any known to exist" ("Message of His Excellency Governor Brigham Young," April 28, 1855, p. 262). A few weeks before this, on November 30, 1854, Governor Young met with the Regents, who agreed to lecture in different parts of the Territory to promote the Deseret Alphabet (Powell, 1968).

It was the intent of the regents and Governor Young that all

colonists in the Great Basin should acquire skill in the use of the new alphabet. As soon as December 4, 1854, B.B. Messenger was teaching the Deseret Alphabet at an evening school in Farmington, Utah ( Journal History of the Church, December 12, 1854. Hereinafter cited as JHC ). Messenger later taught the Alphabet to the clerks of the Church Historian's Office, and records were kept using this method of writing ( JHC, February 7, 1855; MS, April 28, 1855). Richard F. Burton (1862) recorded that "One of my favorite places of visiting was the Historian's and Recorder's Office...It contained a small collection of volumes, together with papers, official and private, plans, designs, and other requisites, many of them written in the Deseret alphabet" (p. 509).

On February 5, 1855, Lorenzo Snow advertised in the Deseret News that the Deseret Alphabet was one of the subjects to be taught in the evening classes at his Polysophical Institute, along with "Spelling, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, Grammer [ sic ], Composition, Declamation, Languages, Chemistry, natural Philosophy, and other such branches as are usually taught in High Schools." The following month, George A. Smith, a Mormon Apostle recorded that "John B. Milner taught the Deseret Alphabet to 150 scholars at Provo, 60 at Lehi, 28 at American Fork, 25 at Mountainville, 28 at Pleasant Grove, and 22 in the Provo 1st Ward" ( JHC, March 11, 1855). We have, however, no idea of the ages of these "scholars."

On December 7, 1854, the Deseret News reported that the Chancellor

of the Board of Regents desired to make "it an indispensable requisite in teachers to forthwith qualify themselves to teach the Deseret Alphabet in their respective schools." The report went on: "it is expected that the Regents and the Twelve Apostles who may visit the various towns and settlements in the Territory, together with such agent or agents as may be sent by the Board, will teach and enforce these principles."

George Watt was active in teaching and promoting the Alphabet, and we know of numerous occasions when he lectured on the subject, at one time giving "illustrations on the blackboard" ( JHC, June 6, 1855). Albert A. Carrington, editor of the Deseret News, also lectured on the Alphabet, and these men's lectures were "well attended" (Smith, 1854, p. 584). Classes on the Deseret Alphabet were established in many communities of the territory, and it was expected that this innovation "would become part of the regular culture of the settlers" (Moffitt, 1946, pp. 55-56).

The Deseret Typographical Association approved of the Alphabet and unanimously passed the following resolution concerning it on August 2, 1855:

Whereas, the Regency of the University of Deseret, assisted by the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, have invented a new Alphabet:--and,

Whereas, the present system of English orthography is very imperfect, and inadequate to the end it is designed to serve:--and,

Whereas the Deseret Alphabet supplies a simple character

to most of the simple sounds of the human voice, substantially correcting the absurdities of English spelling,—rendering more definite the pronunciation of words, and more easy the acquisition of other languages, and lessening to a very great extent, for the rising generation, the labor of learning to read:—therefore,

Resolved, that this Association hail the Deseret Alphabet as a forerunner in that series of developments in philology which shall prepare mankind for the reception of a pure language.

Resolved, that justice to ourselves, and to our posterity, demands our serious attentions and endeavors be directed toward rendering universal in our midst the practical adoption of this New Alphabet: - and that we may be more capable of fulfilling this resolution,

Resolved, that Elder Geo. D. Watt be solicited to instruct this Association in the principles of the Deseret Alphabet ( DN, August 15, 1855).

Watt instructed the Association at several of their subsequent meetings (Monson, 1947). The Deseret News of October 12, 1855 wrote that Robert L. Campbell, a Regent of the University of Deseret and later Territorial Superintendent of Schools, displayed to the Association a "letter from an elder on a mission, written in the new Alphabet, the writer being unable to write in the common style, and having received but six lessons in the new."

In December, 1855, Brigham Young wrote a letter to Franklin D. Richards, President of the European Mission of the Mormon Church:

We contemplate having a set of school books printed at the Liverpool [Mormon printing] office, in the new alphabet; we would like to have you inform us in relation to getting up a font of type, and whether we will have to send any person to Liverpool for that purpose, or to oversee the printing of books, the manuscript of course being furnished from this territory.

It is our intention to introduce this system in the schools throughout the territory....The Legislative Assembly will probably take this matter in hand and make an appropriation to further this object ("Foreign Correspondence," May 24, 1856, p. 331).

Until this time, there had been nothing printed using the Deseret characters, with the exception of cards and circulars which demonstrated the sounds of the Alphabet (See Figure 31). Jules Remy, who visited Utah in September of 1855, mentioned that "up to this day nothing has been published, as far as we know, with those singular types. We have known them used in private correspondence, and seen them on shop signs" (Remy, 1861, p. 184). James Henry Martineau kept the records of the Parowan Stake in Deseret characters, and a number of people used the Alphabet in their diaries (Grover & Cranney, 1982). Monson (1947) reports that "in Cedar City the tombstone of John Morris, who died February 20, 1855, was carved entirely in Deseret characters, with the exception of his Welsh birthplace, Lanfair Talhairn" (p. 13).

Efforts were being made to procure type for the new alphabet, and on February 15, 1855, the Deseret News reported that "Punches, matrices, and moulds are being prepared by Mr. Sabins, for casting type of the new Alphabet; and we are in the hopes of seeing ere long, a font of handsome letter case, and primary books in the new style, printed for use in our schools." Monson (1947) writes, however, that this type was never completed or used. Later, "two enterprising young lads" working at the Deseret News cut large letters of the Deseret Alphabet in type and an illustrative card made with these characters was offered

Figure 31. The Deseret Alphabet, 1854.

THE DESERET ALPHABET.		
VOCAL SOUNDS.		
Long.	Double.	
Ə . . E	Ḃ . . I	P . . F
Ḑ . . A	Ḑ . . O <sub>w</sub>	Ḑ . . V
Ḑ . . Ah	W . . Wi <sub>w</sub>	L . . Eth
Ḑ . . Aw	Y . . Ye	Ḑ . . The
Ḑ . . O	Y . . H Aspirate.	Ḑ . . S
Ḑ . . O.	Articulate Bounds	Ḑ . . Z
	Ḑ . . P	D . . F-h
Short.	Ḑ . . B	Ḑ . . Zhe
This column of letters are the short sounds of the above.	Ḑ . . T	Ḑ . . Cr
	Ḑ . . D	Ḑ . . L
	Ḑ . . Che	Ḑ . . M
	Ḑ . . G	Ḑ . . N
	Ḑ . . K	H . . Fng

The sounds of the letters Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ are heard in the words  
*fit, net, fat, cut, nut, feet,*  
*Ḑ, Ḑ, L, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ, Ḑ,*  
*che-er, go-ty, with, the, the, sh.*

Ḑ is like fr in stir; are is made by the combination of Ḑ Ḑ: H is heard in length.  
 Learn this Alphabet and appreciate its advantages.

for sale at the post office ( DN, August 15, 1855).

On December 28, 1855, "An act appropriating money for educational purposes..." was passed by the Utah Territorial Legislature. Twenty-five hundred dollars was appropriated "to procure fonts of Deseret Alphabet type, in paying for printing books in said type, and for other purposes" ( JHC, December 12, 1855). By February, a committee composed of Watt, Wilford Woodruff, and Orson Pratt was meeting with Brigham Young "by candlelight" to prepare "a course of spelling books" in the Deseret Alphabet. "They commenced to write upon such subjects as the pioneers, Mormon Battalion, Salt Lake Valley and Utah Territory, Grisley [ sic ] bears and buffalo bullfights, etc." ( JHC, February 4 & 26, 1856; DN, February 6, 1856).

Apparently there was some disagreement about the pronunciation and transliteration of a number of words, so Governor Young appointed Daniel H. Wells, Albert Carrington, and W. Willes to serve as a committee of revision ( JHC, February 6, 1856). This committee even struggled with the question of indicating accent (Beesley, 1975). The Deseret News of February 27, 1856 contained this report:

Elder Woodruff, chairman of the committee for preparing matter for school books in the Deseret Alphabet, reported quite an amount in readiness for revision preparatory to being copied. The committee on revision had been so much occupied with other public duties that they had not been able to pass upon but a small portion of the manuscript presented. On this account, Messrs. E. Smith, O. Pratt, and P.P. Pratt were added to the committee on revision, and it is presumable that the work will progress with greater rapidity.

An order for casting of type was filled by a St. Louis foundry a

year later. Samples of the Deseret type were printed in St. Louis papers, and they elicited comment from the New York Daily Times on August 26, 1857, that the Deseret News "will probably hereafter be a profound mystery, at least in part, to all but the initiated" (cited in McGavin, 1940, p. 3). Sometime during 1857 the Deseret Alphabet type was delivered in Salt Lake City and stored in the Salt Lake Council House until the type was first used in November, 1858.

Progress on the textbooks was halted in 1857, due to the so-called "Utah War." The President of the United States, James Buchanan, had appointed a non-Mormon as governor of the Territory of Utah to replace Brigham Young. The Latter-day Saints, after their experience with "gentile" politics in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, prepared to prevent the new governor from taking office. An army, under Albert Sydney Johnston, was sent from the states to install the new governor. This incident was viewed by the Latter-day Saints as another incident of religious persecution (Birkinshaw, 1981). All missionaries were called home, outlying settlements were abandoned, and even Salt Lake City itself was evacuated and prepared for the torch. The Deseret News press and supplies, as well as all Church and Territorial records, were moved south to Fillmore in Central Utah, with instructions to move them 100 miles further to the south, to Parowan, if the need arose. The misunderstanding with the government was amicably resolved by 1858, but during this time spelling reform was understandably neglected. On November 20, 1858,



Wilford Woodruff called upon President Young and conversed with him in regard to the Deseret Alphabet. The works that we formerly compiled are all lost. The president wished Wilford Woodruff to take hold with George D. Watt and get up some more ( JHC ).

"The Board [of Regents] made arrangements for the printing of the Deseret Alphabet primers" on November 25, 1858, and on that same day "agreed on the arrangement of the alphabet." Two days later "the historian was presented with a card for his office, being the first printing done with the Deseret type." By this, of course, was meant the St. Louis type, as there had been previous printings of Deseret characters on cards and broadsides. On the evening of November 30, the lessons in the proposed Deseret Primer were examined, and this led to "a spirited debate on the pronunciation of the word 'rule.'" Two nights later, George Watt lectured to the regents on the Deseret Alphabet, and "several lessons for the first school book were read and referred to the committee on pronunciation for revision," which committee met the next evening ( JHC ).

At a meeting of the Apostles with the Presidency of the Church it was estimated that it would cost a million dollars to furnish books in the Deseret characters for the people living in the Utah Territory. Although the Roman alphabet was inferior, it appeared that it would be necessary to continue to use the old system. Brigham Young countered that a gradual adoption of the Alphabet would be feasible, with the primers sufficing for the time being. He again stressed the advantages of having an easy way of teaching English to foreigners ( JHC, January 31, 1859).

The next few weeks were spent preparing portions of Christ's Sermon on the Mount for publication in the Deseret News in the Deseret characters, as well as preparing a dictionary in the Alphabet ( JHC, February 1, 3, 8, 11, 1859). On February 16, 1859 the Deseret News printed a cut of the Deseret characters with their Roman equivalents and the Sermon on the Mount in Deseret, being the first text of any kind published in the Deseret characters (Monson, 1947). The spelling, however, was crude, and syllables were hyphenated in an attempt to simplify reading. As a forward to this and later selections, a Deseret News writer said:

We present to the people the Deseret Alphabet, but have not adopted any rules to bind the taste, judgment or preference of any. Such as it is you have it, and we are sanguine that the more it is practised and the more intimately the people become acquainted with it, the more useful and beneficial it will appear.

The characters are designed to represent the sounds for which they stand, and are so used. Where one stands alone, the name of the character or letter is the word, it being the only sound heard. We make no classification into vowels, consonants, &c., considering that to be of little or no consequence; the student is therefore at liberty to deem all the characters vowels, or consonants, or starters, or stoppers, or whatever else he pleases.

In the same edition, an editorial on the Alphabet appeared:

The characters will appear crude and impracticable at first sight. We deemed them so when we were first shown them. But it was not long before we saw our error. We do not say that they are perfect. In fact we believe we can ourselves see where improvements might be made. But we have so far scrutinized them as they are now presented, that we can say unhesitatingly that they are not only a great improvement, but easy of adoption. We look for improvements,

and earnestly commend the subject to the further careful study and unremitting attention of the Chancellor and Regents...We are fully confident that they will do honor to their important trust. At the same time we urge upon our fellow citizens to encourage and support them in their labors. A few men can do but little in such a business. It requires, nay, to be effectual, must have the popular support...It is the floodtide of improvement, and we strip off our traditions and make the plunge. Surely it does not require long arguments to prove the superiority of a system which gives in a common tuition perfection of orthography to a child, over one around whose labyrinths the maturity of college-bred manhood can scarcely wind itself.

Scriptural texts appeared in the Deseret News nearly every week for the next sixteen months, although there was a general dislike of the crudely made type. The words in the first few articles were hyphenated into syllables to facilitate reading, but the practice was not long-lived. On September 7, 1859, a mark resembling an apostrophe, called a "suspending of the voice" sign, appeared. Designed to serve somewhat as a schwa, it was never again used.

During this time Orson Pratt and George D. Watt began copying all of the words in Webster's Dictionary to be used as "a speller and pronouncer in the Deseret characters." On March 21, Pratt announced that he would no longer work on the dictionary because of financial hardship, eyestrain, and the disagreeability of the work. Indeed, "all the gold in California could not hire him to engage in copying and arranging Webster's Unabridged into the Deseret Alphabet..." Robert L. Campbell considered the dictionary "a Herculean task for which we were unprepared..." and which was also "uncalled for and unsaleable." Campbell went on to urge the publication of Juvenile Readers and a

concise speller, with larger works coming later, as the need arose (JHC, March 14 and 21, 1859).

Brigham Young responded that clerks should be hired to do the work of transliteration under the supervision of Pratt and Watt. These clerks were hired the first part of April, but Young soon dismissed them, saying that this work "was business for women and that the Regency had no funds to pay for their labor" (JHC, April 14, 1859).

Shortly before the discontinuance of the Deseret transliterations in the Deseret News, this letter from "A.B." appeared on March 14, 1860 which indicates that the new alphabet was not without its critics:

The circumstances attending the introduction of the Deseret Alphabet are similar in their character to the reception which usually attends innovations upon an established system, whether scientific, theological, or philosophical.. The originators of every new system have always encountered the prejudices which flow as consequence out of the existing ignorance of the newly discovered system or invention--

I really know that the adoption of the Deseret Alphabet will be a boon to all who use it, and the learner as he advances in his studies realizes this truth. It is a set of characters expressing the sounds used in language, and those characters are easily formed. The adoption of this system must greatly facilitate the student in his pursuit of literature and science.

A young Mormon Elder, Marion J. Shelton, was called to labor with the Hopi Indians with a special obligation to teach them the Deseret Alphabet. Laboring in the years 1859-1860, after some three weeks' work among the Hopis, Shelton reported that "those to whom I have given lessons have taken right hold to the alphabet and several of them know

the first six characters, and we can hear them hollowing [ sic ] the sounds throughout the village." While Shelton's skills in the alphabet increased, the initial popularity soon waned. It is even reported that "Shelton finally seems to have been compelled to bribe his one remaining student to keep him working at it." Shelton later wrote that he had "tryed in vain to learn the Indians the misteries of the Deseret Alphabet" (cited in Peterson, 1971, p. 189; New, 1984).

In 1860, the Deseret Assay Office minted a five dollar gold coin. On one side there is an eagle volant with a beehive on its breast. An olive branch and arrows are in its talons. On the reverse side is a lion couchant with three mountains in the background and the date, 1860. Surrounding the lion in the exergue are the words HOLINESS TO THE LORD in Deseret characters ("Coins and Medals," February 14, 1874; Arrington, 1952. See Figure 32 for a rubbing of this coin). When Alfred Cumming became the second governor of Utah Territory, all minting of Utah coinage was discontinued and the coins were withdrawn from circulation, superseded by United States currency. The pure gold Deseret coins were eventually sold as bullion (Foster, 1933; Carter, 1939).

Two years following the minting of this coin, in 1862, Robert L. Campbell presented the manuscript of an elementary reader to Brigham Young. Young rejected it emphatically, for "he would not consent to have his type, ink, or paper used to print such trash (which he considers such works to be, seeing they are in English characters). He

Figure 32. Deseret Gold Coin, minted 1860, bearing the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord," in Deseret characters.



wishes the Deseret characters to be patronized" ( JHC, May 22, 1862).

By March of 1864, however, Young was wondering if Pitman's "system of phonography" might not be a better system and discussed the matter with the Board of Regents ( JHC, March 28, 1864). But from May until August of 1864, and again in November and December, scriptural passages in the Deseret characters appeared in the Deseret News. Between the period of 1864-1867, there is no recorded activity of the Alphabet, although one historian postulates that during this time some further transcribing was done, albeit with no printing and little learning on the part of the populace (Powell, 1968). As Franklin D. Richards later wrote, "Other matters demanding attention, the Deseret Alphabet went out of use by a kind of tacit neglect, or by general distaste for it" (Richards, n.d. For the full text of the Franklin D. Richards letter, see Appendix B).

In 1866, the adoption of Pitman's shorthand was again discussed, as was a system designed by Marion J. Shelton, who had taught the Deseret Alphabet to a village of Hopi Indians some years earlier. In Shelton's orthography, complete words were written in a cursive script, antedating the similar Gregg shorthand system by twenty years (Monson, 1947).

Although it appears that interest in the Deseret Alphabet waned during the early 1860s, interest in phonetic writing remained. On April 24, 1867, a meeting for all persons interested in organizing a phonographic society was announced in the Deseret News. This,

according to Nash (1957), prompted the friends of the Deseret Alphabet, including Brigham Young, to reactivate. The Deseret News of December 19, 1867, stated that

The question of reform in spelling had rested with great weight upon the mind of President Young, and his interest in it has never flagged. Under his direction, years ago, characters were adopted, notices for them were imported and a quantity of type was cast. But, whether from ignorance or design, the matrices were very rudely made, and did the characters great injustice.

In the October, 1867, General Conference of the Church, Brigham Young again tried to induce the Saints to accept the Alphabet, saying, "The Deseret Alphabet should be studied, that our young might advance more rapidly in the knowledge of every science" ( DN, October 9, 1867). George A. Smith, who became President Young's First Counselor following the death of Heber C. Kimball, remarked:

We are composed of persons from various nationalities. We speak a number of languages. The languages and dialects of the British empire, the Scandinavian, the French, Dutch, German, Swiss, and Italian are all represented here...It is very desirable that all our brethren who are not acquainted with the English language should learn it. We do not wish to blot out the original languages that may have been spoken, but we want them all--men and women, old and young--to learn the English language so perfectly that they will thoroughly be able to understand for themselves the teachings and instructions and the published works of the Church, as well as the laws of the country...

In speaking of the education of our children, I wish to draw the attention of the Saints particularly to the system of phonetics, or the Deseret alphabet, which has been referred to by President Young and some of the brethren. This is calculated to considerably abridge the labor of our foreign brethren in learning to read English. I think that in all our schools phonetics should form one branch of study, and as fast as works...can be obtained they should be introduced, for there is no doubt that a general reformation



will be effected in our English orthography. It is said that the Lord will restore to the people a pure language...

I wish our brethren to give this subject their serious and candid consideration, and do their best to introduce into our schools a system that will greatly abridge the time required to gain the various branches of a good education. No greater or more blessed mission can be given to an Elder in Israel than to teach the true principles of education to the rising generation of this Territory. I would advise our brethren, aside from the ordinary schools, to get up evening reading classes in all our settlements for the instruction of those who cannot attend at other times (Smith, 1867, pp. 138-141).

The Deseret News reported that at a meeting of the Regents on February 3, 1868,

A full Board of Regents met in President Young's office, and discussed the best form of characters to be used for a phonetic alphabet. A reconsideration of the Pitman Alphabet drew forth a universal expression in favor of our characters, known as the Deseret Alphabet, as being better adapted; and a motion was made to take the necessary measures to introduce it in printed works.

Samuel W. Richards wrote of this same meeting:

[The Board] agreed to petition the Legislature for ten thousand dollars, and then send a practical printer to the East, and have the type made for the Deseret Alphabet, and publish and import this season, spelling books, primers, readers, &c., to be introduced immediately among our children, and so continue from year to year, until we have published in the alphabet the cream of all knowledge relating to theology, science, history, geography, and all necessary educational works. Brother O. Pratt will probably be employed in compiling matter for these books (Richards, 1868, p. 157).

Ten thousand dollars were provided in the Territorial Appropriation Bill of February 21, 1868, to "the University of the State of Deseret, to be drawn by the Chancellor and expended under the direction and control of the Chancellor and Board of Regents in

procuring books for Common Schools in the territory" (Campbell, 1868b, p. 31; Whitney, 1893).

Why this sudden revival of interest in the Deseret Alphabet and orthographic reform? For one thing, according to William Powell (1968), Indian troubles, lack of paper and other printing materials, crude printing machinery, and many other difficulties which had been deterrents to the Deseret Alphabet, were by this time largely resolved. Even more important, the end of the Civil War, to which Utah was largely a bystander, brought a return to normal business and political activities. With the capitulation of the South came the end of one of the "twin relics of barbarism" —slavery. Now the Republican government turned its attention to elimination of the other—Mormon polygamy. Furthermore, the transcontinental railroad was nearing Utah. Nash (1957) states that "undoubtedly the Mormon leaders wanted to protect their flocks from the ideas brought by the 'gentiles' who were sure to come with the railroad" (p. 13).

This renewed effort to promote the Deseret Alphabet began to have its desired effects, as the following article from the Deseret News of January 27, 1868, evidences:

It is satisfactory to learn of the progress made in the dissemination of this valuable art in the cities and settlements throughout the Territory. We learn that Br. John B. Milner is teaching a couple of classes, numbering about forty pupils, in Provo. Classes have been taught by Br. George Burgon in Farmington, Kaysville, Ogden, North Ogden, Plain City, and Willard. In Cache Valley a number of classes are being taught, in Logan and other places, and more are being formed in various places north. In this city it is being taught by several phonographers, and is a branch

communicated in the Merchantile Department of the Deseret University, where Br. George D. Watt is the teacher.

On April 18, 1868, Orson Pratt began the transcription of the readers in the Historian's Office, and work on the Deseret First Book and the Deseret Second Book was completed by June 25, when the manuscripts were sent to David O. Calder in New York City. Calder had been sent by the Board of Regents to New York to make arrangements with the firm of Russell Brothers for the publication of the Readers, as well as to have new type designed and cast.

On August 13, the Deseret News announced the arrival of the 36-page First Book and editorialized about the Deseret Alphabet, stating that:

[Orson Pratt] has sent out a specimen copy of the primer he has got out. It contains thirty-six pages printed in the new alphabet. The characters, to a person unaccustomed to them, may look strange, but to the eye with which they are familiar, they are beautiful. Their chief beauty is their simplicity.

This system can be made universal among us with but little trouble...it will probably be advantageous to children to have some knowledge imparted to them of the present system, even after the Deseret Alphabet is generally adopted; but with us this should be a matter of second consideration...

The greatest evils which now flourish, and under which Christendom groans, are directly traceable to the licentiousness of the press. It sends forth a prurient and dangerous literature, which corrupts and distorts the minds and judgments of men. It is our aim to check its demoralizing tendencies, and in no way can we better do this, than by making the knowledge of the Deseret Alphabet general and training the children in its use.

In the October General Conference of the Church, Brigham Young

again encouraged the use of

the Deseret Alphabet. We now have many thousands of small books, called the first and second readers, adapted to school purposes, on the way to this city. As soon as they arrive we shall distribute them throughout the Territory. We wish to introduce this alphabet into our schools, consequently we give this public notice. We have been contemplating this for years. The advantages of this alphabet will soon be realized, especially by foreigners...It will also be very advantageous to our children. It will be the means of introducing uniformity in our orthography, and the years that are now required to learn to read and spell can now be devoted to other studies (Young, 1868, p. 297).

Patterned after the popular readers of the period, the Deseret First Book, measuring 5 by 7 1/2 inches, contained 36 pages of graded sentences, elementary mathematic tables, and was adorned with many pictures (See Figures 33 and 34 for the Title Page and sample lesson from the First Reader). The Deseret Second Book, similar in size and layout to the First Book, contained 72 pages (See Figure 35 for the Title Page). The frontispiece of each book was an illustration showing the characters and sounds of the Alphabet. A statement at the end of the Second Book acknowledges that the pictures selected for both the first and second readers were culled from the Willson Readers, which were "so justly popular and so universally used in the Territory" (p. 72). The Second Book contained multiplication tables, a table of Arabic and Roman numerals with their names spelled out in Deseret characters, along with articles on religion (including the entire Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and excerpts from the Book of Proverbs), morals (such as charity, honesty, and the avoidance of tobacco, as well as those "who use the filthy weed"), science,

Figure 33. Title page of the Deseret First Book, 1868.

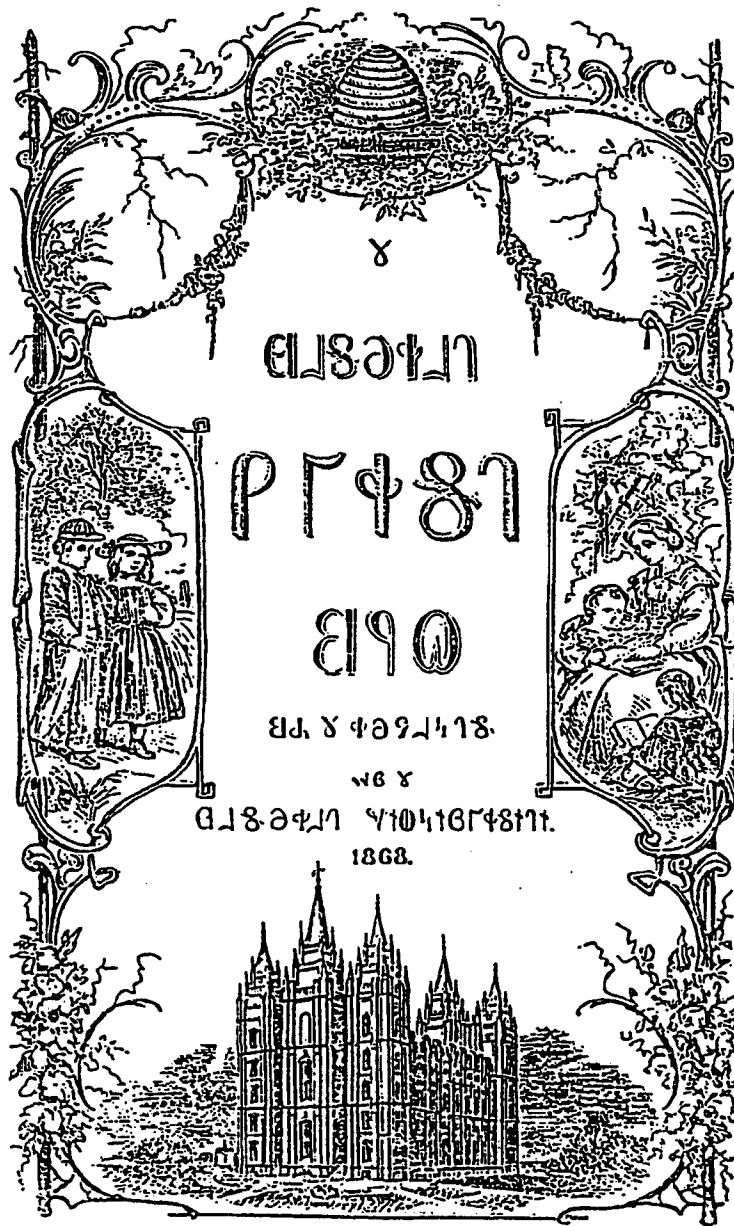


Figure 34. A lesson from the Deseret First Book, 1868.

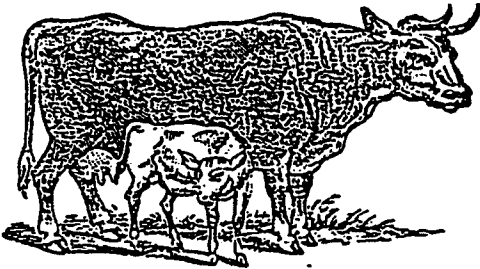
Deseret First Book.	15
<hr/> <p style="margin: 0;">LXIII XXIII.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <p style="margin: 0;">           Wa tne e tne jia fwa n e. De te e waw            e, jia e e h- n e e. fwa wa e e e e. De            tne e e e e e. wa e e fwa n e e. De e e e e            e e e e e e. Y e e e e e e. Wa            e e e e e e e e e e e e.         </p> <hr style="border: none; border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p style="margin: 0;">LXIII XXIV.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">           Y fwa e e e e e. Fe e e e e e e!            Wa e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e.            fwa e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e.            Y fwa e e e e e e. Fe e e e e e. Y fwa            e e e e e.         </p>	

Figure 35. Title page of the Deseret Second Book, 1868.



literature, and some poetry. Other lessons included how to dig a well, riding horses, how to grow rhubarb, how to weave a hat, and the proper use of guns ("A gun is good to keep off the dogs and bad men at night"). Errors were noted in both primers, and an errata sheet was printed ( DN, October 31, 1868). The errata sheet for the First Book contained forty corrected errors, while the Second Book errata sheet corrected sixty-five (Powell, 1968. See Figure 36). These errata sheets were pasted in every book that was sold. Apparently, however, relatively few of the primers were ever sold (Cumming, 1965; Nash, 1957; Frisby and Lee, 1947). In 1958, the Deseret News advertised that it had found boxes of unsold Deseret Readers, which it offered for sale to its readers at 50 cents each, or \$1.00 for the set ( DN, December 20, 1958).

The Territorial Superintendent of Common Schools, Robert L. Campbell, in his annual report to the legislature stressed at great length the need for orthographic reform, as well as the value of the Deseret Alphabet:

The Superintendent takes great pleasure in seconding the efforts of President Brigham Young and the Board of Regents of the University of Deseret in the introduction of the Deseret Alphabet. That English orthography needs reform is patent to all who have given the matter the slightest consideration...

It may be looked on as herculean effort to attempt the reform of English orthography; but it is a reform so much in keeping with the progress of the age in which we are privileged to live, and which portends so much advantage and blessing to our children, that we should be recreant to ourselves and to the cause of truth did we not unitedly take hold of the subject (Campbell, 1868a, pp. 170-171).





In his annual report of 1868, Superintendent Campbell again included a lengthy section on English orthography and the desirability of the Deseret Alphabet. He concludes his report with these words:

To discuss further this matter in an annual report would be inappropriate, but as the subject of orthography meets us at every step in the school-room, and as laudable efforts are being put forth to introduce this important and indispensable reform, the Superintendent could do no less than endorse a movement which augurs so much good to the cause of education. Could sufficient reasons be assigned for following in the footsteps of the fathers in this false system of orthography, we might forbear an innovation which completely upsets the present system, but to hold onto the same, and weave the web of inconsistency and falsehood around the feet of the present and future generations, which tradition and learned bigotry have woven around the past, would be to allow our children to turn around and have it truthfully to say of us as we can say of our ancestors.

"Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there was no profit" (Campbell, 1869, p. 5).

On December 10, the Deseret News was "pleased" to note the return of Robert Campbell and Edward Stevenson, a "home missionary," from their tour of the counties of central Utah.

The introduction of the Deseret Alphabet was a leading topic in their preaching, the incongruities and inconsistencies of the present system of orthography forming the subject of many a laughable joke, while illustrating the advantages of the Deseret system of reading and writing. The Scandinavians hail the new system with much pleasure. The prevailing method of English orthography, on account of its many silent letters, they find difficult to master, and look upon it as inferior to their own; but by means of the Deseret Alphabet they see a means of greatly facilitating their acquisition of the English language.

Upon returning from this tour, Campbell renewed his efforts to get the primers into the Salt Lake City schools. Teachers and trustees of

the Salt Lake schools discussed and agreed to adopt the system during a meeting on January 25, 1869 (Nash, 1957). The Deseret News of March 11, 1869, reported that three day schools and a number of night schools in Ephraim featured the Deseret Alphabet, and that "About 140 copies of the First and Second Deseret Readers have been sold, and in about a month the scholars will be prepared for something more advanced."

Superintendent Campbell discussed his visits among the schools of the Territory and his work in promoting the Alphabet in his annual report for the Year 1869:

The Superintendent, in his recent school visits, has advocated the introduction and adoption of the Deseret characters and system of orthography in our common schools, and takes pleasure in stating that many teachers feel alive to the importance of the subject, and that the school authorities, in every district visited, have given it their hearty endorsement. The work of the reformation of English orthography and the introduction of a new character, in which to write and print our language, is a stupendous task, requiring time, means, patience, and unyielding perseverance; but the ease with which it is attained and the facility imparted by the system to the acquisition of English orthography, enables us to hope that when sufficient means are available to carry on the printing in that method, that but a few years will pass until the News, the Instructor, the Ogden Junction, and a host of other intellectual lights, will spring up, clothed in the unique, novel, and simple dress of the Deseret character. If the Legislative Assembly, in their economical and judicious distribution of the public money, would appropriate two thousand dollars to be expended in getting up a spelling book or elementary dictionary, another step could be taken which is very necessary and important in the further prosecution of this important reform (Campbell, 1869, pp. 1-2).

These were Campbell's last recorded words on the subject, however, for no further mention of the Deseret Alphabet is made in any of his later reports (Brooks, 1944). Indeed, in November, 1870,

Superintendent Campbell wrote to the Deseret News to explain why the National Series of school books was chosen over the McGuffey or Independent Readers. He never referred to the Deseret Readers (Ivins, 1947).

Orson Pratt reported to the Regents that he had finished his transliteration of the Book of Mormon on March 1, 1869. Pratt and Campbell then spent the month in proofreading the manuscript ( JHC, March 1 and 15, 1869). On April 13,

Elder Orson Pratt was authorized to proceed to New York as the representative of the Board, and superintend the publishing of the Book of Mormon in the Deseret Alphabet. It is intended to publish the Book in one volume for family use, and also to publish it in three parts for the use of the schools in the Territory, the whole forming too cumbrous a volume for class use ( DN, April 14, 1869).

Leaving for New York on the morning of April 20, Pratt completed his work and returned to Salt Lake City on September 26 (DN, April 20 and September 27, 1869). Only 500 copies of the complete Deseret edition of the Book of Mormon, measuring 5 7/8 by 8 7/8 inches, and containing 443 pages, were printed (See Figure 37). Eight thousand copies of the first part of the book (through the Words of Mormon) were published, the only portion printed separately (Neff, 1940). This advanced reader measured 6 by 9 inches. On December 16, 1869, the Deseret News advertised: "Deseret Books of Mormon - \$2.00. For Part First, (containing 116 pages) designed for a Third Reader - 75 cents. Heavy discount to Wholesale Purchasers." While neither of these books



contained an errata sheet, Powell (1968) stated that many errors of transcription undoubtedly crept in.

Concerning the publication of the Book of Mormon in Deseret characters, the Deseret News predicted that the

First and second readers, and now the Book of Mormon on this principle...will do more toward spreading a correct style of speaking English among the polyglotian people of this Territory than anything else ever attempted ( DN, September 28, 1869).

On November 6, 1869, George Q. Cannon, an Apostle, editorialized in The Juvenile Instructor, the official Church magazine for children and youth:

There are two Readers and the Book of Mormon now printed in the Deseret Alphabet. Every child should learn to read them. They are easily learned. We got some Readers for our little boys, and they learned to read them very quickly and now they want to get the Book of Mormon to read. When these readers and Books of Mormon are sold, then the Board of Regents will have money to print the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Covenants, a Dictionary and other Books. They will be of great advantage to every man, woman, and child in the Church and to the world; for a correct system will be established....We should have the true system of reading and writing our language. This, the Deseret Alphabet furnishes, and each one should do all in his power to make it universal. We hope that every Sunday School Superintendent will introduce these books into his school, so that all the children may become familiar with the system (Cannon, 1869, p. 180).

The Deseret News of January 17, 1870, contained this letter:

Nephi, Juab County  
January 10, 1870

Editor Deseret News:—Dear Sir,

In order to encourage those teachers throughout the

Territory, who, already having onerous duties to perform in teaching their numerous classes, think they cannot spare time to teach the Deseret Alphabet, I take the liberty, through the columns of the DESERET NEWS, to state that I have a day-school, composed of eighty children of all ages, in which I have introduced the Deseret Alphabet with success.

Many, no doubt, think, as I have heard it expressed, that they have no time; that, besides, it is difficult for children to learn, and that it interferes with the common English alphabet and orthography. I can say, that for my part I have found it altogether to the contrary, and experience proves to me that all that is necessary, is to put the First and Second Readers into the children's hands and they will learn to read in them without teaching. I have my classes read in them once every week, and I find they can do so as easily and quickly as they can in the First and Second Readers of Willson's series, in which they have read for years.

I would say to my brethren, the teachers, try it. There is not any of you but what can devote at least an hour of every week to this branch of education, and as Latter-day Saints it is a duty binding upon you, being the direct counsel of our wise and far-seeing President.

I would also say to every father and mother in Israel, buy these books for your children; they can be had for a trifle. Encourage your offspring in learning to read! Do not throw cold water upon the efforts of our leaders in this respect by being dilatory in providing books or in making light of the subject in any way, and we will soon have a good and distinct orthography as well as a good and distinct religion.

Hoping these few remarks may not prove detrimental to the end in view,

I am, respectfully,  
W.R. May

Two days later, the Deseret News carried an editorial entitled "The People of Utah - Why Peculiar" in which they mentioned, among other things, the Deseret Alphabet:

The want of a system of phonetic spelling has long been felt by philologists; isolated attempts have also been made to supply this want, but the effect has been very limited. Recognizing the importance of this subject the Regents of the University of Deseret took it into consideration, and formed and adopted a phonetic alphabet, which is known as the Deseret Alphabet. Books have been printed in these characters, and the prospect is that at no distant date it will universally be used by the people of this Territory. In the adoption of such a system as this the people have shown their willingness to discard an inconsistent, barbarous style of orthography, which is unsuited to the progress of the age, and in this respect they are peculiar.

During this time, acting under the request of the Board of Regents, Orson Pratt transliterated the Bible and the Doctrine and Covenants into the Deseret characters. A Deseret Phonetic Speller was prepared and John Jaques' Catechism for Children was transliterated into the Alphabet, although we know not by whom (Zobell, 1967). None of these works, however, nor any others, were ever printed again in the Deseret Alphabet. The last reference to the Deseret Alphabet in the Journal History of the Church is Pratt's petition to the Territorial Legislature for \$6,537.87 as payment for 3,996 foolscap pages "in manuscript for educational purposes" ( JHC, January 16, 1872).

The last recorded effort to promote the Deseret Alphabet which this writer has been able to find are the comments of George Q. Cannon, made in 1872. Desiring to develop a uniform procedure in the Mormon Sunday Schools, as General Superintendent of the Sunday Schools, he

suggested the wisdom of forming classes to read the Book of Mormon in the Deseret Alphabet, as it was the wish of President Young that a knowledge of these characters should be extended among the saints (Maiben, 1872, p. 144).



In 1875, an election advertisement for the "People's Ticket" for the Salt Lake Municipal Election, as well as ballots for this election, were the last printing done using Deseret characters (Monson, 1954; Monson, 1947; See Figure 38). The final reference of that period to the Deseret Alphabet is found in The Juvenile Instructor of October 2, 1875:

The Book of Mormon has been printed in the characters of the Deseret Alphabet, but President Young has decided that they are not so well adapted for the purpose designed as it was hoped they would be. There being no shanks to the letters, all being very even, they are trying to the eye, because of their uniformity. Another objection some have urged against them has been that they are entirely new, and we should have characters as far as possible with which we are familiar; and they have felt that we should use them as far as they go and adopt new characters only for the sound which our present letters do not represent (Cannon, 1875, p. 234).

The editorial went on to urge the use of the Pitman phonotypic characters, and indicated that "the Bible, a dictionary and a number of other works, school books, etc., have been printed in these new characters..." Then, in words reminiscent of the promotion of the Deseret Alphabet, it intoned:

We certainly hope to see this new system introduced and be generally adopted in all our settlements. There is no people on the earth who have so great an interest in this reform as have the Latter-day Saints, and we know of no people who are in so good a position to accomplish it as we are. What is needed is union of effort and determination to carry this system into practice, and like everything upon which we are united, it can easily be accomplished (Cannon, 1875, p. 234).



Thus, even though lack of public support caused the virtual abandonment of the Deseret Alphabet, orthographic reform was still a matter of interest. In 1877, upon completion of his transliteration of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants into the Pitman characters, Orson Pratt was sent to Liverpool to arrange for their printing. According to Joseph F. Smith (1877, p. 187), Pratt "was diligently engaged in prosecuting this work at the time the sad news of the death of the President [Brigham Young] reached us. Arrangements had been so far completed that the type was mostly obtained and delivered at our [printing] office, and preparations were nearly made for the commencement of this work." Pratt was recalled to Salt Lake, however, and work on the project was never revived.

According to Franklin D. Richards (n.d.),

Some efforts were made to teach and use the characters in various schools of the Territory. But it was an uphill task. It was found that the tailless characters, however economical in the wear and tear of type, were inimical to the eye, the monotonous evenness of the lines making it more difficult for the eye to follow and distinguish the words than when set in the ordinary type. It is also difficult to insure uniform pronunciation and consequently uniform orthography with the Deseret character. As is the case in other communities, the people generally did not take kindly to the new characters, so that in a short time the Deseret Alphabet fell into desuetude, from which it has never been resurrected, and no desire for its use now seems to exist. Besides, busier times came on, and railroads, mining, and other business interests pressed upon the attention and absorbed much of it, so that the Deseret Alphabet was soon found to have been practically and virtually discarded, lost sight of, and almost forgotten (See Appendix B for the full text of this letter).

## Reasons for Abandonment

The Alphabet had cost the citizens of Utah Territory a considerable sum of money. In 1855, \$2,500.00 was appropriated by the Utah Legislature "to procure fonts of Deseret Alphabet type, in paying for printing books in said type, and for other purposes" ( JHC, December 12, 1855). The total cost of preparing and printing the Deseret First Book, the Deseret Second Book, the Book of Mormon, and the first part of the Book of Mormon, school edition, was \$12,453.86. The legislature appropriated \$10,000, the Church donated \$2,000, and the remaining \$453.86 was to have been made up through sales of the books. Additionally, Orson Pratt petitioned the legislature for \$6,537.87 for services in transliterating the Bible and the Doctrine and Covenants. He was eventually awarded \$6,000 (Nash, 1957; Monson, 1947). These figures represent what Neff (1940, p. 854) called "an educational fortune for that day," more so when one considers the straitened resources of the people and the scarcity of currency in the newly pioneered and inaccessible Utah.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory, Utah, in 1869, brought an end to Utah's physical isolation and allowed for a flood of books, inexpensively published in the East, to satisfy Utahns' demands for reading material (Simmonds, 1969). Referring to this, Powell (1968) has written:

By 1869, the Continental Railroad had been completed, bringing about an influx of outsiders into the territory, as well as a flood of printed material, both from the east and west, and thus the "isolation" of Utah came to an end. The old "Overland Monthly," a staid publication from San

Francisco, devoted to the development of the West, edited by Bret Harte, Charles Warren Stoddard, and Ina Coolbrith, soon found its way into the valley of the saints. From the East the Harpers Weekly, a sophisticated periodical boasting of dignity and pictorial interest, found a welcome spot on the shelves of Salt Lake City bookstores (p. 10).

Until this time, books were somewhat scarce in the Territory. This was due, not to lack of demand or desirability, but rather to the sheer physical difficulty of bringing books to Utah. Prior to the advent of the railroad, the ox-cart and the handcart were the chief means of transportation. Frisby and Lee (1947) have noted that with the coming of the railroads came a flood of low-cost, yet high quality school books--overwhelming competition for the unpopular Deseret readers. Schools that would have previously fostered the Alphabet because of the dearth of regular English textbooks available in the Territory, now refused to buy the Readers or teach the Alphabet (Asay, 1978). Thus, the ready availability of a wide range of affordable reading materials coupled with the tremendous cost in money and effort to produce even a limited selection of books in Deseret, sealed the fate of the Deseret Alphabet (Simmonds, 1969; Jenson, 1941).

Additionally, although initial enthusiasm was high and efforts were made to use the primers in the schools and the Sunday Schools, most eventually became indifferent to the use of this strange new system. Teachers were reluctant to relearn how to read and spell in the new system, and most exhibited very little interest (Wintersteen, 1970). Of great importance is the fact that teaching of the Alphabet could not be enforced due to the fact that Utah schools of the period were not tax supported (Ivins, 1954). Thus, the University Regency or

the Legislature had no real authority or control over the teachers or the curriculum or the schools, which were, in effect, private schools (Ivins, 1947). Schoolteachers in pioneer Utah were not professionals, and the meager pay they received came from the tuition which they charged their students. Few considered teaching a full-time job; most were farmers who taught during the winter or else were mothers who wanted to bring in some extra cash for the family. This assured a constant turnover of teachers, few of whom were willing to make the effort to learn and then teach the Deseret Alphabet (Peterson, 1980). Most students attended school only a few months out of the year, effectively limiting the time they were exposed to the Deseret Alphabet, if indeed they had any exposure at all. Mrs. Jacob Daimé wrote of one teacher who did try to introduce the Deseret Alphabet into her school:

My mother taught school in Tooele, Utah, and tried many a time to get the folk to use the alphabet more. She would practice after supper. Mother loved the President [Brigham Young] and would do almost anything he wanted or liked. Seems like her interest in the alphabet just faded away--of course father didn't help much (cited in Wintersteen, 1970, p. 44).

The Alphabet, so totally foreign to the familiar Roman system used by English speakers and Europeans, was not well accepted. Most of the early Utah settlers had English as their native tongue, and were literate to some degree. There was little motivation for these people to learn an entirely new system and relearn how to read and write, although it would be fine for "foreigners."

As an aside, we know that the Deseret Alphabet was publicized extensively in The Millennial Star, official organ of the L.D.S. Church

in Great Britain. It is also highly probable that a number of Latter-day Saints from Utah serving in the British Isles as missionaries could read and write using the Deseret Alphabet. While we have no definite record one way or another, there remains the possibility that a number of Britons learned and used the Deseret Alphabet, thus making it a modestly international effort at orthographic reform.

We know that the Deseret Alphabet was taught in a number of schools: day-schools for children and youth, in the Sunday Schools, in the Relief Society (the Woman's auxiliary organization of the Mormon Church), and in some private schools and "improvement societies." Additionally, although Ivins (1947) and Wintersteen (1970) state that there is no evidence to indicate that the Deseret Alphabet was taught at the University of Deseret, this writer found a reference in the Deseret News of January 27, 1868 which stated the Alphabet was being "communicated in the Merchantile Department of the Deseret University, where Br. George D. Watt is teacher."

Unfortunately, we have no record of exactly how the Deseret Alphabet was taught. Before any printing was done in the Alphabet, the blackboard served as the means of modeling the characters. With the various printings of broadsides, transliterations in the Deseret News, and finally the Deseret Readers, materials became available for student use. As paper was still a relatively scarce item in the Territory, more often than not students used lap slates and chalk, or just a wooden board and some charcoal, to practice copying the Deseret characters.

Birkinshaw (1981) has written that because teachers of the period were untrained, they just taught what they knew best by whatever means worked. He informs us that singing and chanting as a group was a popular method of instruction, and this was probably used in teaching the Deseret Alphabet. The recitation method was also widely used at the time, as was the system of 'round robin-reading.'

A number of young people were first taught to read using the Deseret system, but most received instruction in the standard alphabet as well. This, of course, was the cause of great confusion and difficulty for the young reader. Learning to read and spell using the standard orthography was trying enough, as the Latter-day Saints fully realized, but trying to read using two such totally different systems was simply too much. Along this line, Jennie Larsen related the following:

My grandfather Josiah Leigh Wood learned to read with the Deseret alphabet. I can remember him telling me he learned to read when he was a boy, but he could not read the books I had in school. It didn't make sense to me at the time and I thought he must be quite stupid but now I can understand. He learned to read in the Deseret alphabet books, and it was a totally foreign language to learn English even though he was speaking it all the time. It must have been very confusing for children then (cited in Grover & Cranney, 1982, p. 52).

The pioneers knew that they could not simply abandon the common English orthography with its wealth of available literature. Nor could they isolate themselves socially, economically, and politically by being unable to read or write using the standard alphabet or spelling norms. Millions of books have been published in the standard English



orthography. To have access to these books while using the Deseret Alphabet left one with two alternatives: spend the money required to transliterate English books into Deseret, or learn the two orthographic systems simultaneously. Thus, the advantages of retaining the traditional system, coupled with the undesirability of teaching two opposing systems simultaneously, ensured the abandonment of the Deseret Alphabet.

Remy (1861, p. 185) predicted that the Deseret Alphabet would "have no success, and will be abandoned by its own authors, on account of the difficulty that must be experienced in its application, not to speak of the inconveniences to which it would give rise, such as the effacement of etymologies, and the disconnection of roots from their derivatives." As is the case with all attempts to create a phonemic alphabet, uniformity of pronunciation and orthography was not achieved using the Deseret Alphabet (Beesley, 1976). This is evidenced by the need for revision committees due to disagreement on pronunciation of many words, as well as the need for lengthy errata sheets for the readers. This difficulty in pronunciation can be demonstrated in the following examples. The word when is pronounced "h-woo-en;" yes comes out "ye-e-s;" will is "woo-i-l;" the article a is phonetically "ah;" and the article the is always "th" as in thy. University is pronounced "ye-i-oo-n-i-v-ur-s-i-t-i." Consonants, too, are difficult to remember (Frisby & Lee, 1947). Birkinshaw (1981) has pointed out the fact that foreigners who attempt to spell English phonetically will not produce standard English spelling, because of their nonstandard English accent. As he succinctly put it, "Vil dis solve the problem? I dunt tink zo" (p. 39).

In addition to the violation of ingrained habits of reading and writing, many complained that the strange characters of the new alphabet were a strain on the eye to read. According to Nash (1957), when the Deseret characters are evaluated in terms of good book type, they are "primitive" (p. 18). Pottinger (1941) has chosen a number of criteria by which to evaluate type, including clearness, legibility, usefulness, unobtrusiveness, proper usage of the type face, necessary decoration, proper proportion of letters, evenness of texture and color, and overall appearance.

One glance at a page printed in the Deseret characters reveals that they are not clear; Wallace Stegner (1942, p. 100) referred to them as "eye-tangling chicken tracks." Often a second look is required to ascertain which character was being reproduced. Some characters are unnecessarily complex, and others are very similar, differing only in slight detail. "Lack of clearness, the unnecessary complexity, and the extreme similarity of many characters made the alphabet monotonous and obtrusive to the eye" (Nash, 1957, p. 18). Nash went on:

In good type individual letters must have individual grace but when in combination-forming words, they must still please the eye. The letters of some types are beautiful to see alone; pleasant to the eye in word combinations; but intolerable when making up an entire page. The Deseret characters alone lacked grace...When together forming words they are displeasing to the eye...and an entire page in Deseret print not only tires the eyes, but is very unpleasant to look at. It simply violates this principle of good book type.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the obtrusiveness of the Deseret characters was that they lacked serifs. Types displaying no serifs can be used effectively for chapter headings as the type is often agreeably sharp, vivid, and legible; but used for entire pages and books it becomes monotonous, tiresome to the eyes, and almost illegible. Here

again the Deseret designers failed. Serifs were deliberately left off the characters; those tiny essential additions might have made reading more easy. With them material in the alphabet would have been more legible; without them Deseret type must be classed as poor type for the purpose to which it was put.

Still another characteristic of good type is the proper proportioning of letters. Undue height as compared to narrowness and inversely undue narrowness as compared to height makes poor type. The proportion of the characters must be right; they must please the eye and be consistent throughout the type. The proportions of Deseret type are bad...Most types have ascenders and descenders; in good type they can neither be too long nor too short in relation to the type body; but they must exist. They relieve the monotony of a line of type and make reading considerably easier. Deseret type has no ascenders or descenders...

The monotonous, tailless, uneven characters of the Deseret Alphabet violates the principles of good book type. Consequently, they tire the reader's eyes, are difficult to read, and generally do not appeal to the reader. It is small wonder that the inhabitants of early Utah were reluctant to accept them in place of the traditional Roman characters. The Mormons had no one trained in the art of designing type; consequently, the results obtained by eager but unknowing individuals were not the most desirable (pp. 18-21).

Not only are the letters monotonous and the words difficult to distinguish, but the lessons contained in the Deseret readers were "not exactly thrilling" (Frisby & Lee, 1947, p. 241), if indeed not downright puerile. "One can scarcely imagine a frontier youngster held spellbound by such exciting lessons as these: 'I see a fly. May I get the fly? Yes, you may get it, but it will fly off. It bit an ox. The ox can run. Can the fly run? Yes, the fly can run up on the high wall'" (p. 241).

The final blows to any hope of reviving the Deseret Alphabet came with the demise of its creators and proponents. Parley P. Pratt, a member of the committee which devised the Alphabet, was assassinated on May 13, 1857 (Stanley, 1937). Robert Lang Campbell, University Regent,

Territorial Superintendent of Common Schools, and vociferous supporter of the Alphabet, died April 11, 1872 (Jensen, 1901). W.W. Phelps, a member of the original committee which devised the Deseret Alphabet, died March 7, 1872 (Grover & Cranney, 1982). George Darling Watt, who stimulated interest in spelling reform among the Mormons and created the Alphabet, was excommunicated from the Mormon Church on May 3, 1874, whereupon he virtually dropped from sight until his death in 1881 (R. Watt, 1977). The death knell of the Deseret Alphabet came on August 29, 1877 with the demise of Brigham Young (Smith, 1973). He had been the driving force behind the Alphabet, and although the active promotion of it had ceased some years earlier, Young's death assured its abandonment (Christensen, 1955; Monson, 1954; Monson, 1953).

Writing some years later, on February 24, 1885, Thomas W. Ellerbeck, secretary to Brigham Young, offered this:

I do not think it was officially discarded but was found in practice that the economical idea for the benefit for enduring qualities of the type did not answer well for the eyes—the monotony of the lines of type without tops or tails made it more difficult for the eyes to follow than the old style. —Busier times coming on, the characters of the Deseret Alphabet gradually disappeared (cited in Carter, 1939, p. 4).

According to Walker (1974), the Deseret Alphabet is responsible for many of the pronunciations and colloquialisms typical of Utah. Older Utahns, especially, pronounce horse, corner, and Mormon as harse, carner, and Marman.

Aside from archival and museum objects, this accent is really the only tangible remnant of Brigham Young's quarter century of persistence with his phonetic alphabet (p. 57).

CHAPTER VI  
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter examines the arguments which are posited for the retention of the traditional orthography, the reasons for the non-acceptance of English spelling reform, and the future of orthographic simplification. Finally, suggestions of future directions for research and further examination are given.

This study has shown that proposals for spelling reform of the English language have been made for centuries, with several new proposals presented each year (Ives, 1979). Many people have supported these efforts and the arguments in favor of reform have had strong appeal. Pei (1952) has appraised the need for spelling reform in these words:

English spelling is the world's most awesome mess. The Chinese system of ideographs is quite logical, once you accept the premise that writing is to be divorced from sound and made to coincide with thought-concepts. The other languages of the West have, in varying degrees, coincidence between spoken sounds and written symbols. But the spelling of English reminds one of the crazy-quilt of ancient, narrow, winding streets in some of the world's major cities, through which modern automobile traffic must nevertheless in some way circulate (p. 280).

To remedy this state of affairs, numerous proposals to reform English spelling have been devised, the alleged advantages and benefits of which have included:

1. Education would become more efficient
2. English would be easier to learn
3. Foreigners would be Americanized more easily
4. English would gain appeal as a world language
5. Spoken English would improve in quality
6. The proper pronunciation of words would be made sure
7. Logical thinking would be encouraged
8. Students would learn to read more quickly
9. Dyslexia and other reading disorders would diminish
10. Savings in time, space, and materials would be realized
11. World communication, understanding, and peace might be promoted (Barnard, 1977; Yule, 1976; Tauber, 1958).

Refutation has counterbalanced the claims of the spelling reformers, and despite numerous and enthusiastic campaigns to effect orthographic change, the resistance has been formidable. The arguments in opposition to change in spelling have apparently been compelling, for little in English orthography has changed.

#### Arguments Against Spelling Reform

##### Orthographic Change Would Be Prohibitively Expensive

A serious objection to changing spelling is the costliness of such a venture, especially if that change required the introduction of new characters or symbols. Any amendment of spelling that would make older books and written records inaccessible or would necessitate the reprinting of previous literature would be enormously expensive, as the Mormon proponents of the Deseret Alphabet came to realize. In 1859, in a meeting of Mormon officials, it was estimated that it would cost \$1,000,000 to furnish even a meager library of books in Deseret

characters for the small populace of the Utah Territory ( JHC, January 31, 1859).

Additionally, students would have to be taught to read in the traditional, as well as the old orthography, and adults would need to be retaught the new spelling. The cost in money, time, and effort could hardly make the effort worthwhile.

Orthographic reform is relatively simple where the majority of the population is illiterate, as was the case in Kemal's Turkey [where a successful spelling reform had taken place]. It becomes a terrific problem where the majority is literate, as in...Britain or America. The older generations must learn all over again, while the younger cannot be separated at one blow from the previous tradition, save by the well-nigh impossible expedient of burning all past records and creating them anew (Pei, 1952, p. 287).

Even slight modifications in current spelling that would slow up current printing or typing processes would raise the cost of printing and publishing appreciably. Dr. William A. Craigie, an editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, who was later knighted for his distinguished services, argued that the cost of retraining proofreaders, printers, and linotypists would be prohibitive (Craigie, 1944). If new letters or characters were added to the present alphabet, or if a non-romanic script was adopted, all existing typewriters, computers, and printing cases would need to be remodeled, readjusted, or replaced, all at considerable expense.

#### Confusion Would Result

If spelling reform was not introduced at the same time and to the same extent in all English-speaking countries, "the resulting confusion

would be worse than the present irregularities" (Craigie, 1944, p. 48). The universal acceptance of any reform scheme could not be attained without its imposition by some pan-national authority, and the numerous English-speaking democracies would probably challenge any attempt to usurp their autonomy.

It is difficult to see by what machinery this universal consent could be secured, or by what authority the result could be imposed on the printer, the publisher, and the reading public, in the event of these disapproving the change. It may be argued that the way could be prepared by efficient presentation of the necessity and advantages of the change, but this implies a considerable waiting time for even the most energetic propaganda to take effect, and past experience is not encouraging in this respect (Craigie, 1944, pp. 48-49).

Scragg (1974) has pointed out that successful spelling reform would remove the international character of many written words, especially those with cognates in the Romance languages. In addition, homophones would become indistinguishable homographs in print, confounding the confusion (Tauber, 1958). Of this problem, Craigie (1944) wrote:

The question of the possibility or advantage of change becomes more difficult when the normalized spelling would reduce to a common form those homophones which at present are differentiated and on that account are immediately recognizable. If the postal mail were respelled as male, the meaning of male carriers might well be in doubt in certain contexts, and if sew became sow it would not only eliminate a useful distinction but would add a third homograph to the noun sow. This problem, of course, applies to all homophones with distinctive spellings, whether these have etymological justification or not. They form indeed one of the features of the English vocabulary which have to be taken seriously into account before it can be decided whether the present orthography can be usefully modified or replaced by one on a more phonetic basis (cited in Mencken, 1948, p. 312).



An accepted reform would also necessitate the revision of all existing dictionaries not just from the point of view of spelling, but in the organization of the related words and derivatives. Dictionaries of English and a foreign language would also require a revision, as would other aids to learning English, thus creating confusion and expense for foreign as well as native interests.

#### Spelling Would Lose Stability

It is contended that pronunciation as the basis for phonetic spelling is an imperfect and impractical criterion. First, reformers would need to determine which particular form of pronunciation would be adopted as the standard. If the American, British, or Australian dialects were chosen (much to the chagrin of other nationals), which regional pronunciation would be accepted as standard? In the United States, for example, would Brooklynese, a Southern drawl, or a Midwest twang be accepted as the basis for spelling? Some opponents claim that if phonetic spelling reform was adopted, Britons, Americans, and Australians would be compelled to use glossaries to read phonetic transcriptions of each other's spoken tongue (Pei, 1952; Mencken, 1948).

Additionally, changes in pronunciation go on, as history has shown. If writing were to change periodically to conform to the spoken language, printed records would lose their permanence (Lindgren, 1969).

#### Etymological Values Would Be Lost

If spelling conformed exclusively to phonetic values, etymologic

clues would be lost, making the sources of English words indecipherable (Lindgren, 1969). Also, Gibson and Levin point out that "current English spelling preserves the morphological similarity of words: telegraph, telegrapher. Reformed spelling does away with this more abstract representation of words" (Gibson & Levin, 1975, p. 187). As Craigie stated, "No language can free itself from its history" (1944, p. 50).

#### Present Spelling Has Aesthetic Superiority

Aesthetic objections have been raised to any modification of English spelling on the grounds that reformed spelling appears "uncouth and even ridiculous" (Mencken, 1945, p. 402). The monotonous, repetitious pattern would rob the language of its freshness, originality, and surprises. Partridge and Clark (1951) stated that "The English speaking peoples, particularly Americans, take a perverted pride in the intricate and mysterious anomalies of the spelling of their language; it makes them feel superior to foreigners" (cited in Pei, 1952, p. 286).

#### Simplified Spelling Would Not Promote World Use of English

English has spread throughout the world in spite of its orthography, opponents to change point out (Craigie, 1944). Others argue that an international language is a hopeless and fantastic dream. To change English orthography on the premise of making the language more universally acceptable is, at best, an uncertain risk (Tauber,

1958). Of this subject, Pei (1952) wrote:

For some incomprehensible reason, [spelling reformers] choose to link their activities with the two largely unrelated problems of the adoption of English as an international language and the preservation of world peace. "Simplify English spelling," many of them say, "and you will abolish the major obstacle to the adoption of English as a world tongue; then, when we have an international language, and this language is English, there will be no more quarrels among the nations, and no more wars."

One might say that this logical sequence is so illogical that one should take no notice of it. Yet it is widespread. The three desiderata (phonetization of English, adoption of a universal tongue, and world peace) are each of them such worthy causes that it is a pity to see them thrown together in a stew-pot of confusion (p. 285).

#### Spelling Reform Is Not Necessary

Many critics have argued that even if spelling reform were possible, phonetic spelling is not at all necessary or desirable. There is no proof that phonetic consistency would aid or speed up reading. In fact, tampering with the present orthography would inevitably lower the reading competency of over ninety percent of the population already accustomed to the present system.

Defenders of the orthographic status quo see no real significance in the unphonetic character of English spelling. They point to the generations who used the language before, learned to read and write it, and thrived. The survival of spelling in its present form is eloquent proof of its serviceability. Why tamper with our orthographic heritage which has served so well for hundreds of years? Craigie (1944) argued that "the failure of so many attempts...is a clear indication that there is no general desire for change" (p. 47).

H.L. Mencken (1948) has expressed doubt about the extravagant claims for spelling reform:

The argument that phonetic spelling would be easier to learn than the present spelling is not supported by the known facts. In some cases it no doubt would be, but in plenty of other cases it would certainly not. Moreover, the number of "hard" words in English is always greatly over-estimated (p. 306).

Mencken also ridiculed the economic arguments for spelling reform:

Some of the favorite arguments of the reformers are so feeble as to be silly - for example, the argument that the new spelling would greatly reduce the labor of writing and the cost of paper and printing (1948, p. 305).

Henry Bradley, in a paper entitled "On the Relations between Spoken and Written Language, with special reference to English" (cited in Scragg, 1974, pp. 114-115) stated:

Many of the advocates of spelling reform are in the habit of asserting, as if it were an axiom admitting of no dispute, that the sole function of writing is to represent sounds. It appears to me that this is one of those spurious truisms that are not intelligently believed by any one, but which continue to be repeated because nobody takes the trouble to consider what they really mean.

Bradley went on to argue that writing's capacity for conveying meaning does not depend on its accuracy as a reflection of speech, and that such accuracy may even be a disadvantage in the case of homonyms. Features of written English, such as capitalization and punctuation, are phonetically useless, and do not form part of the spoken language, but serve as indispensable aids to the reader. Written English is partly ideographic, to the advantage of "the educated adult" (Scragg, 1974, p. 115). Chomsky and Halle (also cited in Scragg, 1974), consider

"that English orthography, despite its often cited inconsistencies, comes remarkably close to being an optimal orthographic system for English" (p. 117). In essence, the non-phonemic writing system of English has the power to express important linguistic relations that are missing from a more directly phonemic spelling, thus permitting intelligent reading and writing (Smith, 1980; Gibson & Levin, 1975). An example of this concept can be seen in words containing the Greek root psych, meaning mind, as in the words psychology or psychiatry. A competent reader, the argument goes, recognizes and utilizes the clue (in this case, psych) to infer the derivation and meaning of the written word, thus improving the reader's comprehension of the printed page.

#### Reasons for Non-acceptance of Spelling Reform

The real reasons for the rejection of spelling reform should be considered. As with any social phenomenon, basic motives, involving emotional and cultural factors, operate independently of the stated reasons, which are often rationalizations. The arguments just cited in opposition were expressed by the outstanding defenders of the orthographic status quo. As Lounsbury (1909) pointed out, from an insight into the psychological and sociological forces that operate, we come to understand that powerful compulsions not necessarily articulated exert additional pressures.

### Social Inertia Exerts a Powerful Influence

The chief obstacle to spelling reform is inertia. According to Craigie (1944), adults accustomed to reading and writing in conventional orthography are distressed by any strange or new arrangement of letters or symbols on a page. Pei (1952) wrote, "We think that is beautiful which is familiar" (p. 287). Lounsbury (1909), in the same vein, wrote, "We are governed by the cheap but all powerful sentiment of association. We like the present orthography because we are used to it....We simply like the spelling to which we are accustomed; we dislike the spelling to which we are not accustomed" (pp. 10-11). As Theodore Roosevelt discovered, people stubbornly defend their old usages against what they think is an encroachment of the untried new - even when it is really a restoration of the tried old. We are unwilling, without the most compelling reasons, to undertake any change so basic to our lives and cultural pattern. Only the most pressing needs could outweigh these feelings.

### Our Orthography Becomes a Precious Tradition

The whole machinery of education is constantly at work to sustain and strengthen our adherence to orthodox spelling, adding another powerful deterrent to change. Any attempted reform of English spelling which completely or extensively alters the appearance of the written and printed language has little chance of being adopted by common consent, because we have been conditioned against it (Yule, 1976).

This basic consideration explains the reluctance to accept even minimal changes. The traditional spelling of the language is given an aura of almost religious sanctity (Lounsbury, 1909).

Conventional Orthography  
Bears the Stamp of Authority

Another factor that has militated against spelling reform stems from our attitude towards authority. Custom and convention play important roles in our lives, including our language activities. An illustration of this fact can be seen in our reliance upon "the dictionary." After the appearance of Samuel Johnson's Dictionary in 1755, the cure for spelling ills could be placed firmly in the dictionary. A manual of correct letter-writing, The London Universal Letter-Writer, published in 1800, maintained that spelling "was of the highest importance" and stated:

Ignorance in this particular is always considered a mark of ill-breeding, defective education, or natural stupidity. To attain [correct spelling] it is necessary to observe the method followed by the best writers of the present day, and to consult some good modern Dictionary (cited in Scragg, 1974, p. 91).

The average person relies upon dictionary authority as a guide to proper spelling. For this reason, any change must have an authority at least as formidable.

Only Children or Beginning  
Learners Require Reform

Most of the problems of spelling are encountered by children or those who have not succeeded in "the system." Successful adults are not often impressed by the difficulties encountered by children or

foreigners learning to read. Usually, only the educator is preoccupied with the problem. Adults are not affected so much by what simplifying spelling would do for the education of children, or foreigners, or illiterate adults, as by the confusion, irritation, and annoyance it would cause them (Tauber, 1958).

### The Reputation of Reformers is Poor

The widespread belief that spelling reform is supported by cranks, eccentrics, visionaries, or crackpots has served to impede the likelihood of a spelling reform gaining momentum. Reformers have a reputation as impractical people, and spelling reformers are no exception. H.L. Mencken described spelling reformers as

advocates of other and even more dubious reforms. It is, indeed, rare to find a reformer who is content with but one sure-cure for the ills of humanity. Henry Holt, the publisher, one of the stout pillars of the Simplified Spelling Board, was also a spiritualist, and at no pains to conceal it. Sir George Hunter was a Scotch wouser who also whooped up Prohibition. George Bernard Shaw supported a dozen other arcana, ranging from parlor Socialism to vegetarianism. H.G. Wells toyed with Socialism, technocracy and basic English; And so on down the line. As long ago as 1892 the old Spelling Reform Association was constrained to issue a warning that some of its members had "zeal without knowledge." "One of the favorite fallacies of the human mind," it said sadly, "is that whoever means well or engages in a good work is therefore entitled, no matter how incompetent, to the sympathy and aid of all good men" (1948, p. 305).

Spelling reformers are often given to hyperbole in overstating their claims, often contributing to a lack of confidence in their allegations. This propensity for exaggeration can be seen in the titles given to spelling reform works, such as Our Accursed Spelling



(Vaile, 1901), English Spelling: Roadblock to Reading (Dewey, 1971) and "English Orthography: A Case of Psychological Child Abuse" (Citron, 1978). One reformer has even gone so far as to ask, "Where is the Messiah to lead us out of the spelling wilderness?" (Bowyer, 1970, p. 12).

Spelling reformers have not always shown that they have considered the practical difficulties which must be reckoned with, and which need to be overcome, or at least sufficiently alleviated, before any change could be effected. Reformers often minimize or ignore these difficulties, considering them to be temporary inconveniences, well worth the end in view. The oft-quoted letter of Benjamin Franklin on spelling reform, found in Chapter III, is an example of this minimization of difficulties.

#### Reformers Do Not Agree Among Themselves

While reformers have been prolix in developing individual schemes, they rarely unify to support one scheme or another. Not only are they not supportive of one another's proposals, but often reformers are vitriolic in their scorn of opposing schemes. For example, Godfrey Dewey went to great lengths to lampoon current spelling and to praise his World English Spelling plan. He did not stop there, however, but went on to demonstrate what he considered the manifest superiority of WES over i.t.a. and New Spelling (Dewey, 1971). Numerous reformers engage in similar mudslinging. This behavior does not impress the public with their good sense or dependability (Tauber, 1958).

In addition to the above reasons for the non-acceptance of

spelling reform, Reed (1972) cites the lack of positive publicity and even misrepresentation on the part of the press and others, the vested interests of businessmen, and an unfavorable attitude of the government toward orthographic change as further obstacles to reform. For all these reasons, the centuries old effort to reform English spelling has failed to make headway. H.L. Mencken has expressed unconcealed contempt in his ridicule of spelling reform:

The spelling reform movement in both the United States and England, in its early days, had the support of many of the most eminent philologists then in practice in the two countries, and also of many distinguished literati, but it has never made any progress, and there is little evidence that it will do better in the foreseeable future....The advantages of spelling reform have always been greatly exaggerated by its exponents, many of whom have been notably over-earnest and under-humorous men (1948, p. 287).

#### The Future of Orthographic Reform

There is absolutely no consensus on the part of educationists, linguists, other scholars, and the public in general on the future of spelling reform. Critics, such as Mencken, just cited, and Craigie (1944) argue that if spelling reform was truly desired or desirable, it would have been accomplished years ago. They paint a bleak, if not entirely black, picture of the future for spelling reform. To those of their bent, orthographic reform "is a treason against our language and country, and not merely an offence against taste" (cited in Lounsbury, 1909, pp. 18-19).

On the other hand, many spelling reformers, especially contributors to the current reform periodical, Spelling Progress Bulletin, are sanguine, and even often giddy, in their prospects for spelling reform. With missionary zeal, they seek to convince the English-speaking world of their bondage to orthographic darkness, anarchy, and tyranny (Evans, 1978); thralls of a "fallen-away" Latin orthography. As soon as people comprehend their miserable situation, they will clamor to bask in the warmth and splendor of regularized, rationalized, reformed, simplified, augmented, or phoneticized (take your pick) spelling Light (Citron, 1978; Stevenson, 1971).

Despite the polemics and boosterism, Hildreth (1975) posited that the English spelling reform movement appeared to be settling down to a choice between an Initial or Transition Spelling System for beginning readers (such as the i.t.a. or Leigh's Pronouncing Print), and a system of regularized or simplified spelling (such as Wijk's Regularized English, or Lindgren's SR1). Experience, however, has shown that while Initial Teaching Media are accepted and hailed as panaceas for a brief period of time, initial enthusiasm soon wanes, and they are relegated to the "educational junk-heap" (Auckerman, 1984). Regularized English, World English Spelling, and other reforms of this nature, while in many ways logical and desirable, are just too much, too soon (Tauber, 1958).

If English spelling is to be reformed, it must be done slowly, carefully, and with great thought. Such a scheme must be well publicized, have the support of recognized authority, as well as the

reading public, and will require considerable financial support. If possible, it should have legislative support on an international scale. It must not greatly offend the sensibilities of the literate, nor must it be expensive, either in terms of making current works outdated, nor in terms of time to learn the new system. Little, if any, relearning, is a requisite. It should be a simple system, requiring no new characters for the alphabet and no new letters for individual words. Some proponents of spelling reform state that it now appears that of current spelling reform proposals, Harry Lindgren's Spelling Reform One probably has the best chance for success (Tauber, 1977; Yule, 1976).

In the light of the long history of failure on the part of authors, statesmen, educators, and other scholars to bring about English spelling reform, it is only natural to wonder whether such a monumental task can ever be accomplished. As Edmund Burke Huey (1910) has written: "Thus far the work of the reformers has succeeded only in multiplying the number of proposals for reform" (p. 358).

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Several areas for future research suggested by this study are:

1. Investigation of the social and educational advantages, if any, which have resulted from successful spelling reforms in such countries as Turkey, China, or the Soviet Union, as well as how these reforms came about.

2. An intensive investigation of the relation between spelling and reading (encoding and decoding) should result in a better understanding of both. This relevant and practical information on the most efficacious methods and materials for teaching spelling and reading should be shared with pre-service and in-service teachers at all levels.

3. Sampling should be undertaken to determine if successful readers would approve of spelling reform, what type of reform, and to what extent the reform should be implemented. This should be undertaken in all English-speaking countries.

4. Investigate the practical questions and difficulties of spelling reform, as well as identify some possible solutions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix A

## Dissertations Dealing with the Initial Teaching Alphabet

Completed Before August, 1984

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Appendix B

Appendix B

The Letter of Franklin D. Richards, L.D.S. Church Historian,  
to Hubert Howe Bancroft

The preparation and use of the Deseret Alphabet was a favorite project of Brigham Young. It was started at his suggestion and afterwards was adopted by the Regency of the University of Deseret. It was designed with the view of enabling young people to learn more easily to read and spell.

This alphabet was designed and arranged principally by George D. Watt, a phonographic reporter in the employ of Brigham Young. The forms of some of the letters were originated by Mr. Watt, those of others were selected by him from some of the ancient alphabets found in the front part of Webster's unabridged dictionary as published about thirty years ago.

With a view to make the type wear well, neither top nor tail extensions were incorporated in the forms of the letters.

The alphabet was used phonetically, modified somewhat after Pitman's style and arrangement of pronunciation.

In June 1859, this alphabet was commenced to be used in keeping Brigham Young's ledger, by Thomas W. Ellerbeck and was continued in such uses by him about one year.

This alphabet was also used to some extent in the Historian's

Office in this (Salt Lake) City, in journalizing, and in compiling history, during a similar period in 1859 and 1860.

The alphabet and brief articles in the character were published in the Deseret News, sometimes weekly, and at others occasionally, during a similar period in 1859 and 1860.

Then, other matters demanding attention, the Deseret Alphabet went out of use by a kind of tacit neglect, or by general distaste for it.

The subject, however, was subsequently revived, though many persons favored Pitman's phonotype, as being but slightly varied from the common alphabet, and therefore easier for most persons to learn, and affording a readier transition to and from the ordinary Roman character, than was the case with the Deseret Alphabet. The Regency of the University of Deseret actually voted to adopt Pitman's characters. But on the 2nd of Feb'y, 1868, the Regency rescinded that vote, and voted to adopt the Deseret Alphabet, and to ask the Legislature for an appropriation of \$10,000 to print school books in that character.

April 18, 1868, Orson Pratt commenced to prepare school books in the Deseret character.

In November of the same year the Regency employed Orson Pratt to transcribe the Book of Mormon into the Deseret character.

In that year also the Deseret Primer, 38 pages, illustrated, was published by the Deseret University in the Deseret character.

In 1869, the Book of Mormon, Part 1, 116 pages, was published in New York, in the Deseret character. The same year the Book of Mormon entire was published in that character in the same city. Both these publications were under the auspices of the Deseret University, to be used for educational purposes.

Some efforts were made to teach and use the character in various schools in the Territory. But it was an uphill task. It was found that the tailless characters, however economical in the wear and tear of type; were inimical to the eye, the monotonous evenness of the lines making it more difficult for the eye to follow and distinguish the words than when set in the ordinary type. It was also difficult to insure uniform pronunciation and consequently uniform orthography with the Deseret character. As is the case in other communities, the people generally did not take kindly to the new characters, so that in a short time the Deseret alphabet fell into desuetude, from which it has never been resurrected, and no desire for its use appears now to exist. Besides busier times came on, and railroads, mining, and other business interests pressed upon the attention and absorbed much of it, so that the Deseret Alphabet was soon found to have been practically and virtually discarded, lost sight of, and almost forgotten.

However, an effort was made subsequently to have the Book of Mormon printed in Pitman's phonotype, and with that view Orson Pratt left Salt Lake City for England in July, 1877, and when there began to make arrangements to accomplish that work. But the death of Brigham

Young in August of that year necessitated the return of Mr. Pratt to Salt Lake City, and the project of publishing the Book of Mormon in Pitman's phonotype was abandoned. Since that time, there has been no effort at authorized publication of books in the English language in any other than the common type, in or for Utah.

The type used by the Deseret News in 1859 and 1860 in printing articles in the Deseret character was made in this city by John H. Humell. That used in printing the Book of Mormon in New York in 1869 was procured by him while in that City.

Dr. J.R. Park, principal of the University of Deseret, might be able to inform you of the number of the editions of books which have been published in the Deseret character, unless he has already done so in the communication forwarded to you sometime since by me.

Appendix C

Appendix C

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