## a dne PALIMPSEST




## The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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## Frank Luther Mott

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## Illustrations

All illustrations, with the following exceptions, are from magazines in the State Historical Society of Iowa collections: The Spokesman from Loras College; Labarum from Clarke College; Merry War and Town Talk from Mrs. Catherine Iten and Bob Fulton; School Music from the University of Illinois; Stylus from the Sioux City Public and Law Libraries; Iowa Classic from Larry Belles; and The Book Marker from Don and Zoe Murphy.

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# THE PALIMPSEST 

Edited by William J. Petersen

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## A Plethora of Publications

How many magazines are published in Iowa today? How many have been published within the state's limits since the beginning of printing in the Territory of Michigan at Dubuque in 1836?

These are hard questions to answer, first, because the definition of "magazine" is often imprecise; second, because many of these old publications have sunk completely beneath the waters of oblivion, with no fragment of a file to be found by the most patient diver; and third, because the sources of information, aside from the files, such as the directories and county histories, are more or less undependable.

We shall here consider any non-newspaper serial published weekly, fortnightly, monthly, bimonthly or quarterly a magazine. "Periodical" would be a more exact word, but that is a librarian's term, and the more popular word will be used here. But even with that matter settled, we often find it difficult to separate newspapers from magazines or periodicals. Although the chief em-
phasis was not upon general news, a publication might use the newspaper format; indeed, in the earlier years this was nearly always the case, because the miscellanies and special-interest magazines were commonly issued from local newspaper shops which were not equipped to produce publications in any other form. Another difficulty that we encounter in separating out the non-newspaper publications is that many special-interest journals and literary miscellanies contain varying proportions of general news.

But without further grumbling about the treach erous ground on which we tread, let us take our courage in both hands and hazard the estimate that at least 800 magazines and special-interest journals have been published in Iowa - some for only a year or less and at least three for a full century or more.

The first three directories compiled - Kennedy (1852), Coggeshall (1856) and Kenny (1861) - included only a very few non-newspaper periodicals; but with the appearance of the first of Rowell's annual directories in 1869, we find 18 such journals listed. During the difficult 1870's the number grew but slowly to 29 in 1880; but in the next decade Iowa boomed in agriculture, in trade and industry, and in journalism. By 1890 the Ayer directory was listing some 90 special journals and miscellanies, generally serving limited audiences; but the "hard times" of the 1890's
were hard indeed for these publications, and by 1900 the figure had dropped to 70. Recovery was rapid, however, and 91 were listed in 1910.

The life expectancy of such magazines is illustrated by the fact that in the decade ending in 1920, 44 of the 91 in the course of publication in 1910 perished, though 42 new ones were begun. Only 47 of the 91 continued without interruption through the decade to 1920. It was easy in those days to start a periodical, often with the aid of a local newspaper publisher or some association or other; but it was not so easy to keep it going.

Since 1920 the totals have remained in the neighborhood of 80. A count of the 1960 Ayer list turns up 86 (though Ayer's own "Summary," including college newspapers and other news media serving special audiences as "periodicals," puts the figure at 126).

Examination of the annual directories over 95 years shows a gradual concentration of the non~ newspaper publications in the larger cities. In 1880 some 29 such journals were issued from 22 towns; in 1960 fully 35 out of 86 were published in Des Moines, 22 of them organs of associations, official agencies, and special-interest groups.

Some of the more interesting and important of this plethora of publications will be discussed in ensuing articles.

## Week-End Miscellanies

In the years before the great Sunday editions of the daily newspapers, with their abundance of miscellaneous reading matter, were widely distrib~ uted, hundreds of cities and towns all over the United States had their weekly miscellanies. These were issued on Saturday for family reading on Sunday - and often treasured throughout the week. It was for such a purpose that the Saturday Evening Post, most famous of the tribe, was founded in Philadelphia in 1821 (though it still chooses to adhere to the discredited fable that Benjamin Franklin founded it in 1728). Others attained distinction in one way or another, but most of this multitude of week~enders lived out their terms, long or short, in parochial obscurity.

But the hunger for Civil War news stimulated the publication of Sunday editions of dailies, and by the end of the Sixties five Iowa cities had such papers - Dubuque (2), Burlington (2), Muscatine (1), Keokuk (2), and Council Bluffs (2). Publishers usually placated the Sabbatarians by working their staffs Saturday nights to get out the Sunday papers, and then giving them Sunday off and issuing no Monday editions; an "extra" might be rushed out on Monday if a big news-break de-
manded it. But these early Sunday papers were of the same size as the week-day papers, contained much the same kind of matter, and were confined to local distribution; and so it was not until the 1890's, when Iowa Sunday papers began follow~ ing the example of the Chicago and East Coast papers in richness of feature material and larger size, with greater breadth of circulation, that they threatened and at last virtually put an end to the old week-enders. Some continued, however, with special emphasis on society and amusements always an important element in the content of these papers.

The Keokuk Dispatch was begun in 1848, but changed its name six years later to Saturday Post, and ended in 1860. Its chief claim to fame is the fact that it printed the first of Mark Twain's productions for which he received cash payment. Sam Clemens, just turned 21, had been working for his brother Orion in a Keokuk printing office when he conceived the romantic idea to voyage to the headwaters of the Amazon, there to collect coca and make his fortune. In order to help pay expenses, he planned to write letters back home about his adventures. George Rees, then publisher of the Saturday Post, promised him $\$ 5$ apiece for his letters.

Of course, Sam never reached the Amazon. He worked at his trade in Cincinnati for some months, and then in the spring started down the river for

New Orleans - South America bound. But once on the Mississippi, the lure of that great river gripped him, and his boyhood ambition to be a steamboat pilot returned to erase his dreams of the Amazon. In the meantime, Sam had written three letters to the Keokuk Saturday Post - one from St. Louis and two from Cincinnati - under the pen name of "Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass," taken from a character in the Pickwick Papers. The letters were written in dialect, a device characteristic of the humor of the time; but in this case it is not overdone, and the sketches of Sam's travels to Cincinnati are mildly amoosin'. But the Snodgrass Letters have never been considered worthy of inclusion in Mark Twain's collected works.

The Western Soldiers' Friend and Fireside Visitor, a Saturday miscellany of eight newspa-per-size pages established by C. A. Haviland at Davenport in 1867 to catch the interest of returned soldiers and their families, succeeded in building some circulation outside of its home town. After a few years it moved to Chicago to become Gem of the West and Soldiers' Friend and reach for a larger audience; but it perished in 1875 .

The Saturday Evening Post, of Burlington, was founded in 1882 as "a local society and general family newspaper." It published verse and fiction, dramatic and musical news, and "personal gossip." It dropped "Saturday Evening" from the title in 1926 in order to avoid confusion with its
more famous Philadelphia contemporary and con~ tinued as the Burlington Post until its end in 1939.

Cedar Rapids had two week-end journals of society, amusements, and literary miscellany in the 1880's - the Saturday Evening Gossip (1883~ 1889), conducted by Eugene Hunt, also publisher of the short-lived Farm and Home; and Saturday Evening Chat, begun in 1882 as a "society" paper but becoming more a "family magazine" in the latter 1880's. It changed its title to Saturday Record in the next decade and lasted until 1915.

In Marshalltown the Sunday Reflector was begun in 1880 and continued throughout that decade. In Sioux City Kittle Hunt (who later signed herself with more matronly dignity Kathryn Hunt James) started a week-end paper of society and amusement items and literary miscellany under the name Stylus in 1889. It lasted more than half a century, conducted in its later years by Arthur C. Hunt.

The Merry War was the picturesque title of a Clinton Saturday journal of social life and amusements (with verse, sketches, etc.). It was founded in 1886 by D. H. Winget; when he retired in 1933, it was passed on to a succession of editors and owners. The enterprising Bob Fulton was conducting it when he started his "shopper" Town Talk; for about ten years he ran both separately before merging them in 1950 under the Town Talk title, and so it continues.

An early Saturday miscellany in Des Moines was Plain Talk (1870-1950) published for many years by the Bishard Brothers on the East Side of the river, which it long served especially in its news notes. Before the international copyright law of 1891 closed that avenue of supply, Plain Talk often carried two fiction serials at a time by the popular English novelists of the day. Also it printed some verse and many entertaining extracts from other papers, along with notices of the theatrical productions currently being shown in the city, and so on. In later years it gained some reputation as an advocate of reform movements.

Another interesting Des Moines journal was Persinger's Saturday Times, founded in 1883 by H. R. Persinger, who produced on pink paper, full folio size, a collation of items about society, the churches, the stage, music, "Our Colored People," and so on in great variety and with some illustration by sketches. But after four years the paper was merged with John E. Clarey's Saturday Mail, which had been founded as the Saturday Evening Mail Car in 1879, and which was as good as the Times and possibly better. It carried good criticism of Des Moines theaters and concerts, and its departments "The Observer" and "The Lounger" were admirable chitchat. Persinger continued in the editorial chair of the Mail and Times for several years, and the paper lasted until 1907.

The enterprise in illustration noted in Persinger's Saturday Times was even more bold in the Illustrated Des Moines Graphic, a Saturday jour~ nal of 1889-1891. It described itself as a "sporting, sensational, dramatic, and society" paper. Murders and prizefighting were specialties of the Graphic. It also catered to the fraternal organiza~ tions, and ran fiction serials regularly. Though copiously illustrated, it is scarcely possible to describe kindly most of the work of its artists, whose chalk plates and wood engravings were, in gen~ eral, as crude as much of the paper's reading matter. A. R. F. Ziegler was the original publisher, and later editor also.

Still another Des Moines Saturday journal was the Saturday Review, begun in 1890 by John E. Clarey, who had sold his interest in the Mail and Times. Also illustrated by woodcuts, it had much variety. In 1897 Clarey made it a monthly with the title Illustrated Iowa, but the next year it was absorbed by the Midland Monthly.

Iowa probably had more than 50 of these week end journals in the latter half of the 19th century - most of them in the Seventies, Eighties, and early Nineties - distributed among a score of its cities and towns. But we shall have to content ourselves with our look at the dozen discussed above.

## The Two Midlands

The first and certainly one of the most important adventures in the publication of a high-class magazine in Iowa was the Midland Monthly.

Johnson Brigham had been born in a small village in central New York State and had engaged in newspaper work in that region before coming to Iowa to become editor and part owner of the Cedar Rapids Republican in 1882. He was 48 years old when he sold his interest in that paper and fulfilled a long cherished ambition to start a literary magazine in Des Moines.

When Brigham issued the first number of the Midland Monthly for January, 1894, the low~ priced magazine revolution had just begun. S. S. McClure had founded his magazine only a few months earlier at 15 cents a copy in the face of the 35-cent Harper's, Century, and Atlantic; soon afterward McClure's joined the Cosmopolitan and Munsey's, as well as others yet to be founded, at ten cents. And some of these - McClute's for instance - though cheap in price was not shoddy in content; they were lively and exciting, printed some of the best contemporary writers, and were lavishly illustrated by the new (and cheaper) halftone process.

It was this highly successful new departure in magazine journalism that Johnson Brigham sought to join with his Midland Monthly. It was well, though not lavishly, illustrated - mostly by pho~ tographs reproduced by halftone, but sometimes by line drawings. Alas, there were rather too many unexciting portraits and pictures of architectural monuments to suit modern taste; such things were more prized in those days than in ours. The size was a modest octavo; the pages numbered 96 , with usually 16 pages of advertisements; and the price was 15 cents per copy, or $\$ 1.50$ a year. Distribution was almost wholly by mail subscriptions.

The Midland Monthly was distinctively an Iowa magazine during its four and a half years under the Brigham management. It attempted some promotion in other midwestern states, but found it too expensive to continue. It absorbed small literary magazines in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Ohio, but gained little thereby in the way of geographical expansion of its circulation. Its content was by no means limited to Iowa life and cul ture, however; loyal though it was to its own state, it showed no inclination to limit the view of its readers to the Iowa prairies or to special Hawkeye activities and problems.

But the memories of the Midland Monthly most cherished by old-timers like the author of these lines are those of Hamlin Garland's contributions
("Prairie Songs" in the first number; recollections of boys' work and games during Iowa winters in the second), of the moving short stories by Octave Thanet (Alice French, of Davenport), Brigham's own critical comment (in his editorial department at the back of the book), and Frank W. Calkins' serial "The Young Homesteaders."

Brigham followed McClure's example in featuring material about Lincoln's early life. Three articles about John Brown in Iowa were of special interest and importance. One by Ransom L. Har~ ris told of Brown's life at Tabor and his association there with Richard Realf, the English poet. Another, signed by the romantic name Narcissa Mary Smith, dealt with Brown's band at the Quaker village of Springdale. In the next number a brother of Barclay and Edwin Coppoc, Spring~ dale boys who joined the band, defends their characters - especially that of Edwin, who was hanged with Brown. Perhaps even more important historically was Benj. F. Gue's article about Brown in Iowa. Three articles about the Spirit Lake Massacre appeared in the magazine, contributed respectively by former Governor C. C. Carpenter, who was a boy private in the relief expedition; Abigail Gardner Sharp, who survived the massacre; and Harvey Ingham, editor of the Algona Upper Des Moines when he wrote this article and later of the Iowa State Register at Des Moines.

Travel articles were common, too, in the Midland Monthly. For example, in the number for September, 1897, there were well illustrated pieces on the Yukon and Hawaii. Discussions of social and economic problems were not wholly neglected. In short, Johnson Brigham edited a magazine notable for its variety and wide interests. Though some things in it were on the dull side, it seems as one now looks through its files, to have been well suited to its time and place.

But the magazine was in a precarious financial situation throughout its brief life. In spite of Brig~ ham's enterprise in promotion, it never exceeded 13,000 in circulation, and about 16 pages was the limit of its monthly advertising.

In 1898 Brigham was appointed State Librarian. When he took over the duties of that office in May, his printers, Conaway and Shaw, who may be presumed to have had some stake in the magazine at that time, assumed its management; but Brigham's name was carried on the cover as editor up to and including the number for January, 1899. In that issue the publishers, who had failed in an attempt to organize a stock company to support the magazine in Des Moines, announced its sale to John L. Settle and H. M. Whitener, of Fredericktown, Missouri.

The new owners immediately moved it to St. Louis, where it came out in February under the slightly changed title, The Midland Monthly

Magazine. The new owners planned that "it will be enlarged to the size and style of Munsey and McClure." Price was reduced to that of those magazines - ten cents a copy, a dollar a year. Pages were increased a little in size and number. The picture of a pretty girl appeared on the cover. Advertising did not increase in quantity and declined in quality.

But Settle was not a McClure, nor Whitener a Munsey, nor St. Louis a New York. Only four issues were published in St. Louis, the last being a combination number for May and June, 1899. Thus the Midland Monthly Magazine died, without obituaries and with few mourners.

The Midland of Iowa City owed nothing to Johnson Brigham's magazine except its name. It belonged to another genre and another generation. It was one of the class of "little magazines," a group hard to define because of its diversity. Most of them were uncommercial, did not pay contributors, carried little or no advertising, and had small circulations. They were aimed at various audiences. They were as different as their editors. Some were mainly expressions of eccentric personalities in unusual forms. Others were more serious attempts to place before the public the writings of deserving authors whose work did not meet the requirements of the great mass-circulation magazines whose editors preferred, understandably, to adhere to patterns that
had long made them successful. It was to this latter class of "little magazines" that the Midland belonged.

The writer of these lines contributed a special article about the Midland to The Palimpsest number for March, 1962, and he has no intention of repeating here matters noted in that earlier, more personal sketch; but no such survey of the more important and interesting magazines published in Iowa as is attempted in this series would be complete without a brief summary of the his~ tory of Frederick's Midland.

A group of young men pursuing advanced studies in English under Professor Clark F. Ansley at the State University of Iowa founded the magazine. In the first number - a modest but well printed pamphlet of 36 pages dated January, 1915 - John T. Frederick was named as editor. Though he had associates from time to time who shared the burdens of editing and publishing the magazine, throughout the eighteen years of its existence John Towner Frederick was the Midland.

Frederick was born on a farm near Corning, Iowa, educated in the schools of that town and at the State University of Iowa at Iowa City. He grew up sensitive to beauty as he saw it in the Iowa countryside and in literature and art. The Midland was designed to present such things in writing done "strictly in the amateur spirit." And
the editor, when he wrote those words in the first number of his fledgling magazine, was using the word "amateur" in its etymological sense of what is done for love rather than gain.

Too much is often made of the regionalism of the Midland, doubtless because of its name. Cer~ tainly its twenty volumes contain much about life in Iowa and the Midwest, but even in its early years it contained several pieces about the Far West, some stories are set in the East, and there are articles and verse dealing with foreign lands. Of course, much of the poetry is universal.

The Midland soon won a reputation for its good short stories. As it happened, Edward J. O'Brien began his annual compilation of Best Short Stories with the year in which the Midland was founded, and he declared that the ten stories printed in the magazine in that year afforded "the most vital interpretation in fiction of our national life that many years have been able to show." In succeeding years O'Brien sometimes reprinted as many as three stories from a single year's output of the Midland.

Among distinguished contributors of short fiction to the Midland were Ruth Suckow, William March, Raymond Weeks, Leonard Cline, Leo L. Ward and Paul F. Corey. Notable among its poets were Edwin Ford Piper, whose Barbed Wire Poems came out of his native state of Ne braska but who was long an English professor at

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## THE SATURDIY EVENING P0SI.




CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1906

## DEDICATING IN DIXIE.

The Story of How lowa Has Remembered and Honorrd Her Brave Sons Who Fought and Fell in the Southland in the Days of '61.
 troops had no part. They did not
appear upon the scene until after Grant, ordered to Chattanooga to suc-
cor Rosecrans's pent-up and starving army, had brought forward a portion of the forecs under Sherman, waich
had done such valiant work in his campaigns in the Mississippi Valley, Grant found the condition of affairs in artived on the 23 rd of October, in a Unost deplorable condition. The an aggressive enemy who took particular delight in raiding the supply of diffecult and traversing many miles aflorded the only means by which provisions, fodder and ammunition could be brought into that city. The some time and large numbers of



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of 'Fighting Joe 'Ilooker. Crossing the Tennesscco, thic flareerer batlle of Wau
hatehie was foughe, where the deleat of the Confederates gave to the Union
forces command of Lonkout Valley to the west of Lookout Mountain. Swins-
ing around the mount ain thes- Troops part of them towa regiments, on No far-famed "Battle Above the Clouds," driven permanently from Lookout
Mountain. The batle was not fought Mountain. The battle was not fought,
as many suppose, on the very top of the mountain, but on a shelf of
comparatively level ground which extends out from the nose of the moun tain immediately below the preci
pitous cliff which form its summit As the troops charged the Confederate lines and breastworks, there was
a dense fog or cloud hanging over the montain, so that those in thi
valley bencath were unabic to follow valley beneath were unable to follon On the same day, November 24th,


MR. OLIVER P. EMERY



"Just a Sprinkle," An Iowa Folk-Story of Old Man Schoonover


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| PUBLISHED BY THE STUDENTS OF LUTHER COLLEGE. |  |
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| BUSINESS MANAGER: <br> M. O, Aabele. <br> BOARD OF EDITORS. <br> E. O. Hove, local: <br> O. M. Kalheim, GENERAL: $\qquad$ $\qquad$ EXCHANGES: J. A. NEss. O. K. Fuglei, PERSONAL: Geo. Markhus. | taken. It excited great enthusiasm and commotion. The paper was the talk of the day. It seemed almost that a new era had arisen in the history of Luther College. Gigantic ideas began to float about in many an enthusiastic mind. But as ideas and plans were about to assume the shapes of reality and calm and serious reflection had taken the place of exuberant enthusiasm, then did difficulties and scruples present themselves more and more. There are many things that may render the success of this paper difficult. It may, for instance, with good reasc:1 be questioned, whether we have the abilities, sufficient to carry on successfully such a work as the e iting of a paper, considering, that it has to be only a secondary work, the work of spare hours, and furthermore considering, that, accordings to the nature of circumstances, there will have to be a frequent change of editors. But hoping, that interest for the success of the paper, combined with a strong will and assiduous hard labor, will overcome difficulties, and repressing scruples we venture the attempt. <br> This step has not been taken without any consideration as to object. This paper has also its aim and purposes to be of some benefit, if possible. We suppose it is hardly necessary for us to say, that this paper does not intend to play the part-of an ordinary journal, commenting on politics and events and oc- |
| "College Chips" <br> is published on the second and last aturday of every month during the college year. Subscription price 50 cents a year In advance. <br> Advertising rates furnished ou application. Address "College Clifips" Decorih, Iowa. |  |
| When we have ventured to enter the ficld of journalism, we are not free from a conscious feeling of having hereby ventured a difficult step. Those with whom the idea originated had at first doubtful hopes, as to whether this idea ever would be realized. The idea appeared grand and plausible enough, the practicability of it, however, seemed questionable. But as the matter became known to the boys in general, it was received with such approbation, that want of interest at least seemed to be no hinderance to making the idea a reality. Outsiders to whom the plan was disclosed upproved of it and encouraged its execution <br> The matter was, consequently, taken up in farnest and the necessary measures were |  |


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## THE IOWA PUBLISHER

 And the Bulletin of the Iowa Press Association

Vol. 1 January, 1929 No. 1 CONTENTS

Yes, We Have Dailies Today
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The President's Page
Ben Harris, Fighter for Freedom
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PHILOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

A Journal Devoted to Scholarly Investigation in the Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures

VOLUME I

JANUARY, 1922
NUMBER 1

Vol. 8
1900


IOWA BUSINESS DIGEST


BUSINESS IN IOWA


## The SAlidland

A MAGAZINE OF TAS MIDDLE WEST PUBLISBED AT LOWA CITY, 10WA

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so Cents a Copy


## Journal. <br> Far'm <br> Student's

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 THE COLLEGE, AMES, IOWA.
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## IOWA CLASSIC.



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## The Book Marker

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## STRIKES

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An inside report on ROBERT McNAMARA's

# REVOLUTION IN THE PENTAGON 

and how it affects: our chances of war and peace the safety of our cities U.S. ability to fight war anywhere civilian control of the military BY THEODORE H. WHITE
the University of Iowa; Jay G. Sigmund, the Cedar Rapids bard; Arthur Davison Ficke of Davenport; and William Ellery Leonard of Wisconsin. Leyland Huckfield's Saskatchewan poems were features in the early 1920 's; and soon afterward James Hearst, the farmer-poet living near Cedar Falls, became a favorite of many Midland readers. John G. Neihardt, Mark Van Doren, Witter Bynner, Glenn Ward Dresbach, Lizette Woodworth Reese, and Clement Wood were occasional contributors.

Though most of the Midland's pages were given to short fiction and poetry, there were a few critical discussions of contemporary literature, and in the later volumes a department of book reviews appeared "in the back of the book."

The magazine changed its editorial home repeatedly in its first seven years, as Frederick was led by various interests to Minnesota, to the University of Pittsburgh, to a farm in the "cut-over" lands of northeastern Michigan; but it continued to be printed by Willis Mercer in Iowa City. Mercer had a personal interest in the magazine that was continually helpful. The first subscription price of $\$ 1.50$ was increased to $\$ 2$ in 1920 and $\$ 3$ in 1924. Before the move to Chicago it never had a circulation in excess of 500 .

Though usually a monthly, the Midland sometimes experimented with bimonthly and semimonthly publication. In the latter phase, it com-
monly devoted an entire issue to the work of a single author.

In 1924 Frederick invited the writer of this little summary of the Midland's history to become coeditor (and a little later co-publisher also) of the magazine. This pleasant though arduous relation~ ship existed until the removal to Chicago.

In the optimistic and booming years of the late 1920's plans were developed to take the Midland to Chicago, where an important literary group with cultural and financial backing had recently developed. The move was made in 1930, and the next year the magazine, still printed in Iowa City, was given a quarto page. But it was an unpropitious time for any new venture. "The fourth year of the depression proves to be one too many for the Midland," wrote Frederick in the last number of the magazine, issued in June, 1933. The magazine's list and title were merged with those of the Frontier, in Missoula, Montana.

Henry L. Mencken once declared that the Midland was "probably the most important literary magazine ever established in America." Menck~ enian hyperbole, of course; but it cannot be denied that this magazine had a very real importance in the encouragement of sincere authorship and good writing over almost two decades.

## College Literary Magazines

At least 50 literary or general-interest magazines have been published for longer or shorter periods and more or less regularly in Iowa's institutions of higher education. This does not include the humorous magazines, published fitfully on many campuses, often only a jump or two ahead of the censors. Nor does it include the magazines published for alumni, either by alumni associations or college administrations.

A few Iowa colleges published, usually for short periods, journals to present the work of faculty members. One of the earliest of these was the Iowa Classic, conducted 1870-1875 by President John Wheeler, of Iowa Wesleyan College. The College had its own printing office, and issued the Classic at first in newspaper form, eight pages monthly at 50 cents a year; but in its last two years it was a 12 -page quarto and was filled mainly with work furnished by the student literary societies.

Iowa State College, at Ames, offered scholarly and literary work by its faculty in its College Quarterly (1878-1880). Eventually various specialized technical journals were established at Ames and Iowa City to which faculty, advanced
students, alumni, and outstanding scholars from other universities were not infrequently contributors.

Among such journals at Iowa City are the Philological Quarterly (1922), Iowa Business Digest (1930), Iowa Transit (1890), Iowa Publisher (1925) ; and at Ames the Journal of Parasitology (1914), Iowa Engineer (1901), Iowa State Scientist (1948), and Iowa Homemaker (1921) all of them still in course of publication.

The early student publications at Iowa colleges were an interesting lot. All began as monthlies published only during the school year. The Vi~ dette-Reporter, of Iowa City, observed as late as 1884: "Of the 35 exchanges received at our of fice, but one is a weekly, nearly all being issued monthly." The State University of Iowa paper had become a weekly only the year before; other Iowa college papers were slow to follow its ex ample. The Collegian, of Cornell College, later called the Cornellian, became a weekly in 1891, but continued a special monthly edition through the 1890's. Some of the older monthlies - such as the Simpsonian (1870), the Drake Delphic (1884), and the Iowa Wesleyan (1886) did not turn to weekly publication until after the turn of the century. Our reason for noting these changes to more frequent publication is that the monthlies relied somewhat more on literary miscellany (originating in the literary societies and English
classes) than on the news, which was the staple of the weeklies.

But many full-fledged magazines have furnished ambitious writers on Iowa campuses media for expression by the printed word. Of course the Midland, of Iowa City, was campus born; but both its contributors and its readers were mainly off-cam~ pus, and at one time it actually had more subscribers in California than in Iowa. A few others drew upon outside writers and enjoyed fairly wide readership support.

The Tanager (1925~1948) was subtitled "Grin~ nell College Literary Magazine" and was sponsored by the English Department, with financial backing from the College. It was a well produced monthly with an editorial board consisting of both faculty members and students. Its first editor was Wayne Gard, then an instructor in journalism at Grinnell. Contributing editors 1929~1933 were two former Grinnell students already famous in the world of letters - James Norman Hall and Ruth Suckow. The Tanager's pages were open to faculty, students, alumni, and off campus writers. Among notable contributors were William Saro~ yan, Jay G. Sigmund, Eudora Welty, William March, and Charles Angoff. Thomas Duncan contributed some verse while he was a member of the faculty. The Tanager was, from beginning to end, a credit to Grinnell College.

The Husk was begun by the English Club of

Cornell College in 1922 as a quarterly belonging to the "little magazine" classification. It welcomes off-campus writers. Clyde (known to his affectionate students as "Toppy") Tull was long the guide of this excellent magazine and is still listed as "Adviser." And now we are authorized to announce, with some excitement, a current pregnancy at Cornell: the birth of a new quarterly is expected in March, 1964, for which the grand old name of North American Review has been chosen.

But without question the most distinguished "little magazine" published in Iowa under college or university auspices was American Prefaces (1935~1943). It was a well printed 16-page quarto with self-cover, issued by the University of Iowa under the direction of the School of Letters with the cooperation of the School of Journalism and the School of Fine Arts. Wilbur L. Schramm was its active and able editor; Paul Engle and Robert Whitehand were among the associate editors, and Norman Foerster, head of the School of Letters, was adviser. While students and faculty were well represented in the pages of American Prefaces, the list of famous off campus writers whom Schramm persuaded to contribute an essay, poem, or story was imposing indeed. T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, O. E. Rolvaag, Stephen Vincent Benet, Louis Adamic, and Muriel Rukeyser were in the list. Among American Prefaces' distinguished Iowa writers were Edwin Ford Piper,

James Hearst, Jay G. Sigmund, and Eleanor Saltzman. Associate Editor Paul Engle had already published two volumes of poetry when American Prefaces was founded, and his verse enriches the pages of the whole file. The Atlantic Monthly and the Saturday Evening Post did some poaching on the Iowa campus, and Editor Schramm's distinguished short stories appeared in those magazines in the 1940's. Grant Wood had a little essay in the first number of the Prefaces, and a number of his pictures were reproduced in excellent halftone prints in several later issues.

The earlier Iowa Literary Magazine (19241930), a student monthly, changed its title in its last two years to Hawk Wings. The "little magazine" statements, which was founded in 1959 by Marvin Bell as a quarterly and now calls itself a "non-quarterly" because of its irregular publication, is devoted to modern poetry and art. It is a small quarto of 32 pages, the type handset and then printed along with the pictures by offset. State University of Iowa poetry and art "workshops" furnish most of its material.

The Western Review, which spent its last ten years (1949-1959) at Iowa City, was founded at the University of Utah in 1937 under the title Intermountain Review of English and Speech, by Ray B. West. Shortly it was renamed Rocky Mountain Review; and when West moved to the University of Kansas to join the English faculty
there, he brought his quarterly, by then a widely known "little magazine," with him as Western Review. When he came to Iowa as an associate in the Writers' Workshop, the Western Review was in his luggage. Six students who received degrees for writing done in the Workshop were published in the ten volumes of the Western Review while it was Iowa-based, but many distinguished off-campus authors were also contributors. Among them were Babette Deutsch, Karl Shapiro, Allen Tate, Kenneth Patchen, Kenneth Rexroth, and Harvey Swados. The magazine was never regional; the word Western in the title referred, said the editor, to mind rather than geography. After the issue for Spring, 1959, the Western Review was merged with Contact, of Sausalito, California.

Sketch has been published three times a year at Ames to present student writing (mostly fiction and verse) by students in English at Iowa State University. It has been consistently well edited and well printed. Looking further back in the history of this institution, we come upon a monthly issued by the literary societies of 1873-1896 called Aurora; it contained articles and verse by both students and faculty, as well as some local and alumni news.

The Simpson Literary Quarterly (1920~1922) printed some excellent material in its short career; Stuart Shaw, presently senior staff lecturer at

New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, was its first editor. After a long lapse, this magazine was followed by Sequel, begun by the Simpson College chapter of Sigma Tau Delta (an English studies honorary society that has been responsible for literary journals in many Midwestern col~ leges) and has been published since 1948 rather irregularly. It is now mainly an annual.

Caravan, begun in 1927 at Coe College, has had a similar history of irregularity and is now a Spring annual. Vernon Lichtenstein, the faculty adviser of the sponsoring Writers' Club for many years, tells how the depression of the 1930's forced resort to hand composition by six students, with some aid from the National Youth Adminis~ tration; and thus three numbers were put out annually.

Manuscript was begun as a semiannual in 1938 at Morningside College. It changed title in 1956 to Perspectives and added to its student work in fiction, essays, and poetry, some fine offset reproductions of student art.

In Dubuque are published two of the older col lege literary magazines of the state - the Spokes~ man, begun in 1903 by students of Loras College as a quarterly; and the Labarum of Clarke College, begun in 1906 also as a quarterly but now a semiannual produced with great skill and artistry.

College Chips, of Luther College, has had a varied career dating all the way back to 1884 . For
many years it was a literary monthly including some news. Sometimes it was printed partly in Norwegian, but since 1927 it has been wholly in English - and often irregular in issue.

Castle Tales was begun at Wartburg College with its issue for February, 1949, as a joint effort of the English, Music and Art Departments. At first it was a semiannual of quarto size and contained short stories, essays, poems, block prints, and occasionally some music. It changed title to Castle in 1958. It is now a handsome large octavo of 72 pages, issued annually. Block prints still appear, but the publication of music was abandoned several years ago. Castle is a student magazine, though an alumnus occasionally contributes.

Another annual is Design, of Iowa Wesleyan College. It was founded in 1954 by Louis A. Haselmayer, now chairman of the College's Division of the Humanities. It is sponsored by Sigma Tau Delta and contains fiction, poetry and essays by English Department students and faculty members.

The Morningside Review is an annual founded in 1962 as a repository of addresses and papers by distinguished visitors and faculty members at Morningside College.

## Some Special Categories

Special notice must be taken of certain Iowa magazines that refuse to be fitted neatly into any category in this series of articles or into any in the series that is to follow. We choose a few of them for attention here.

When Life made its sensational success as a picture magazine in 1936, the amazing welcome it received stimulated other enterprising publishers to enter the field of general pictorial journalism with their own offerings. About a score of such ventures were made, but the only successful one was the fortnightly Look, founded in Des Moines in 1937. Look was no mere imitation; it was packed with original ideas, lively, exciting, and worth reading. Gardner Cowles, Jr., known to Iowa friends as "Mike" when he was first associated with his father and brother in publishing the Register and Tribune, was the founder of Look and remains its editor and president of its publishing company. His magazine was immediately successful, soon gaining a million circulation and moving its main office to New York in 1940. Today it is one of the three great mass circulation magazines in the weekly-biweekly class.

A long forgotten but interesting periodical, im-
portant to the study of early Iowa culture, is the Opera House Reporter, founded by James S. Cox at Estherville. Cox was then manager of the Lough Opera House in that town. In those years such Houses had to take whatever shows came along with no chance of learning about them in advance; and as a result, some very bad ones sometimes appeared on the Lough stage. Cox gave public notice eventually that if an audience decided any show on his stage was really atrocious, it could walk out and get its money back. When this happened, Cox mailed out a circular to other opera house managers warning them against the bad show; they replied with letters about bad and good offerings and begged him to continue the circulars. Thus the Opera House Reporter (affectionately nicknamed "The Iowa Detective") was born in 1898. The very first numbered issue carried some advertisements: an impresario wanted "singing and dancing comedian, heavy man, leading lady; must be good dressers on and off stage"; "The Great Nina, elec~ tric picture and endurance dancer" was guaranteed - "Will forfeit $\$ 500.00$ if you can produce her equal."
L. C. Zelleno and George H. Bubb acquired the paper in 1915. It was then a 16 -page quarto with some illustrations, published weekly at $\$ 2$ a year, including gossip and news of shows and show people; but still featuring "managers' reports,"
now arranged by towns and states throughout the Middle West. In 1917 they moved it to Des Moines. But the motion picture was already making great inroads upon the old opera house business. In the spring of 1921, an attempt was made to enlarge the journal's scope, and the title was changed to Amusement Reporter; but it did not quite last that year out.

A few music journals have been published in Iowa, as Frank Abbott's Presto, born in Cedar Rapids in 1884 but soon moved to Chicago; Wendell Heighton's Western Musical Herald (1906~ 1916), a Des Moines monthly with Minneapolis and Chicago editions; and P. C. Hayden's School Music, begun in Quincy, Illinois, and then moved to Keokuk, where its melodies ceased in 1915.

An admirable small-quarto monthly of thirtytwo pages with self-cover called the Book Marker was published in Des Moines by Donald and Zoe Murphy, 1927-1929. Book reviews, brief critical pieces, and editorial chat composed a delightful bill of fare. But Donald became occupied with writing serials for farm papers, Zoe had a baby, and family budgets of time and money brought an end to a journal that not a few readers were sorry to see die.

In 1900-1901 H. S. Kneedler began in Boone a beautifully printed little magazine after the form, if not the style, of Hubbard's Philistine. It was called The Optimist, and it enlisted a number of
good contributors - such Iowans as Johnson Brigham and Lewis Worthington Smith; such diverse Easterners as Henry L. Mencken and Ella Wheeler Wilcox. But its optimism was shortlived.

A famous journal of its time was the Analyst, dedicated to "pure and applied mathematics," and published by J. E. Hendricks in Des Moines, 1873-1884. After leaving Iowa, it was issued as Annals of Mathematics, first at the University of Virginia, then at Harvard, and finally at Princeton, where it is still published. It has always been a bimonthly.

The Dubuque Chess Journal was a 76 -page octavo published monthly through 1870-1878 by C. A. Brownson. It varied in title - sometimes simply - Chess Journal, sometimes Brownson's Chess Journal. Suspended for eight years, it was resumed 1886-1892.

Another specialized monthly was the Western Penman, begun in Cedar Rapids by A. N. Palmer in 1885. Professor Palmer's beautiful Spencerian writing fascinated boys and girls in many schoolrooms. His little magazine of 16 quarto pages sold for five cents a copy. It was moved to New York in 1905 and published there as the American Penman until 1938. By that time fine penmanship was virtually a forgotten art.

We have left until the last one of the handsomest magazines ever issued in Iowa. This is the

"a magazine of Dama life"
October - November, 1952
Vol. 1, No. 1

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rea cast of Oska losa was photographed by Carl Turk with a Speed Graphic. Inside front cover: The flaming red oak, so typlcal of Iowa autumns was furnished by the Murphy Calendar Company of Red Oak. Inside back cover: Farm scene in northeast Iowa by L. Dale Ahern. Back Cover: Plates courtesy of State University of Iowa. Design by Dale Ballantyne.
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## David E. Archie, Editor

Floyd S. (Toke) Nelson, Production Mgr Duane Modrow, Advertising Mgr. Staff: Dale Ballantyne, Wilma Collins, Loulse Tinley, Carl Turk

[^0]$T$ HIS is the first issue of a new magazine of Iowa life. I hope you like it,

The IOWAN represents not only four years of work and planning on our part, but also the efforts of scores of Iowans who have helped us through the difficult initial steps. We greatly appreciate their faith, and that of our present advertisers and charter subscribers. I am confident that Vol I, No. I, of The IOWAN justifies the support that it has been given.

More than anything else, this magazine is an expression of our faith that Iowans are willing to support a quality magazine about themselves and their state. The proof of this belief is still to come. A great many people are betting against us. But we simply believe that if you give people a good magazine that they like, they'll support it.

While it may be somewhat unusual, this magazine is dedicated to one of its most faithful supporters: John Esden, a cousin who died from bulbar polio on the deadiline day of this issue. He had just finished our Revolutionary War article. At the age of 21, John was one of the most gifted young men I have ever known. Already a profound student of history, economics and politics, he was also a good athlete and a talented musician.

As John, Iowa represents to me the challenge of unfulfilled promise. Our state has so many promising paths open to its future that we have still touched only a few of them. But we are in danger of depending on our own present bounty, stifling initiative and failing to find the right paths awaiting us. As John never rested in his pursuit of knowledge, so I hope Iowa never rests in its quest for a better future.
The IOWAN is not meant to be a private dream. Rather, I hope all Iowans will feel they are a part of an interesting and stimulating venture and join us in building a better magazine and a better Iowa.

David Archie

Iowan, of Shenandoah, a quarterly of 56 smallquarto pages plus cover devoted to Iowa personalities, industry, history, public affairs, travel, nature, sports, homes and gardens, art, and edu cation. About two thirds of it is devoted to pictures, with some eight pages usually in color. Be~ gun as a bimonthly at only $\$ 2$ a year by David E . and Willard D. Archie in 1952, it lost money until, in 1958, it dropped all advertising and newsstand sales, increased the color, and doubled the price. It became a quarterly in 1961. Today it has nearly 10,000 circulation at a regular subscription price of $\$ 7.50$.
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and 8 other Timely Articles

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