

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 *Vidette-Reporter*, of Iowa City, observed as late as 1884: "Of the 35 exchanges received at our office, 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 example. 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-campus, 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 "Grinnell 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 Saroyan, 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 "Topsy") 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* (1924-1930), 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 colleges) 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 Administration; 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 college literary magazines of the state — the *Spokesman*, 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.