

# THE PALIMPSEST

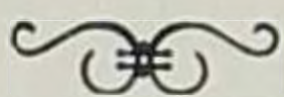
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## Bertha M. H. Shambaugh

The Amana colonies are old in the story of Iowa — almost as old as the state itself. The site for the colonies was chosen in 1854 by their inspired leader — Christian Metz. The first settlement was made the next year. In the years that followed Christian Metz's death in 1867, the Colonies were fortunate in their continued sound leadership, particularly in times of crisis. They have also been fortunate in possessing for more than half a century a faithful, sympathetic, and thoroughly competent historian — Mrs. Bertha M. H. Shambaugh, the wife of Dr. Benj. F. Shambaugh.

From early girlhood Mrs. Shambaugh was interested in the Amana colonies. In 1896 she made her first contribution to literature with an article on Amana in *The Midland Monthly*. This article was awarded a prize by the editor and publisher — the revered Johnson Brigham. It was the first in a series of articles on the same subject, including a significant sketch written for *Hastings*

*Encyclopedia of Religions* published in Scotland.

Mrs. Shambaugh has always enjoyed the confidence and friendly cooperation of the Amana Community. When she embarked on her first volume the Great Council of the Brotherhood promised her free access to the archives of the Society. The book was completed in 1908 and published by the State Historical Society of Iowa under the title *Amana the Community of True Inspiration*. This solid volume has remained the standard reference on old Amana for two generations.

When the "Great Change" was effected in 1932, Mrs. Shambaugh kept in close touch with the reorganization. Since her first book had long been out of print, Dr. Shambaugh suggested that it be reprinted, with a section added to include the changes, under the title *Amana That Was and Amana That Is*. The idea was greeted with warm applause by Amana leaders, and the book itself won high praise from many Iowans.

Born and educated in the Hawkeye State, both Dr. and Mrs. Shambaugh were as indigenious to Iowa's soil as the original oaks that abounded on old "Capitol Square." Mrs. Shambaugh's book on Amana is but an illustration of the lifelong study of history from the "bottom up" that characterized the historical outlook of the Shambaughs to regionalism in its truest and deepest sense.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN