

A Young Woman in Iowa

by

Elizabeth Wright Heller

Elizabeth Amelia Wright was born in Lone Rock, Wisconsin on July 16, 1860, the daughter of Rev. William Carey and Permelia Holcomb Wright. Elizabeth, or "Lizzie" as she was called, did not enjoy a happy childhood. Her mother died when Elizabeth was three. After her father married Hannah Lloyd Jones in 1865, the girl became the victim of a stepmother's antagonism—at least according to Elizabeth's own account. At the age of nine, Elizabeth moved with her family to McGregor, Iowa. The Wright household grew steadily through Elizabeth's younger years and included her half-brother, Frank Lloyd Wright, later to become one of America's great architects. The family later moved to Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

At age sixteen, Elizabeth left her father's home to live with her uncle Albert Holcomb (her real mother's brother) and his wife Nellie. This couple gave the girl bed and board, but not, evidently, an affectionate home. Elizabeth felt their kindness was based on "duty" rather than love. Despite lack of warmth, the Holcombs made certain that Elizabeth received an adequate education. She attended normal school, and in 1877 she entered Rockford Female Seminary in Rockford, Illinois. There she was a student at the same time as Jane Addams and Ellen Starr, two women later to become famous for their pioneer social work at Hull House in Chicago.

By 1880, Elizabeth, with no real home, came to Iowa at the urging of a college friend. She settled at Marengo in Iowa County.

The village Elizabeth came to was a bustling place, probably typical of dozens of other small Iowa towns. She was particularly sensitive to

the delicate social structure of the community. Her comments indicate that there were definite patterns prescribed for a young, unmarried woman, "earning her own living." Everyone in the small community had a well-defined place, as Elizabeth's reluctance to wear her fancy hat illustrates. Likewise, the respect shown Elizabeth's womanhood by her male colleagues points up the nineteenth century notion of femininity.

Throughout Elizabeth's careers as milliner, printer, and teacher, she exhibited a strong will and self confidence. She gives a fascinating glimpse into late nineteenth-century life in Iowa. It is interesting to note, for example, that Ann Swezey owned only one of three millinery shops in town, according to an 1880 Marengo business directory. Elizabeth's job as printer was perhaps the least conventional, although women journalists or even typesetters were not unknown at the time. J. G. Sehorn, editor of the Democrat, was a much traveled man and an experienced editor, having published papers in Iowa City and Columbus Junction. His paper was only five years old when Elizabeth set its type and was noted locally for its fine power driven press. Elizabeth's friendly patron, editor F. S. Spring of the Republican, was the proprietor of what had been the county's first paper. He had been a journalist in Pennsylvania and New York before moving to Iowa.

Teaching was traditionally one of the more accepted roles for single women of the time. Elizabeth described what must have been a typical experience. Teachers were certified on a graded scale by the results of testing. For example, Iowa County had 292 applicants for teaching certificates in 1879: 107 receiving the first grade (or highest) certificate, 133 the second grade, twenty-five the third grade, and twenty-seven being rejected. It is interesting that new applicants alone for 1879 totaled one percent of the county's population. While Elizabeth's teaching career was short-lived, it was obviously very important to her.

Following is part of a 300 page autobiography

entitled "The Story of My Life," which Mrs. Heller wrote before her death on March 3, 1950, and which is now on deposit at the State Historical Society of Iowa. This portion deals with the period between her arrival in Iowa by 1880 and her marriage to John Heller in November 1881. These excerpts have been chosen and arranged by Mrs. Heller's granddaughter, Hope Rogers of Vinton, Iowa. They have been placed in chronological order and some minor alterations have been made in punctuation.

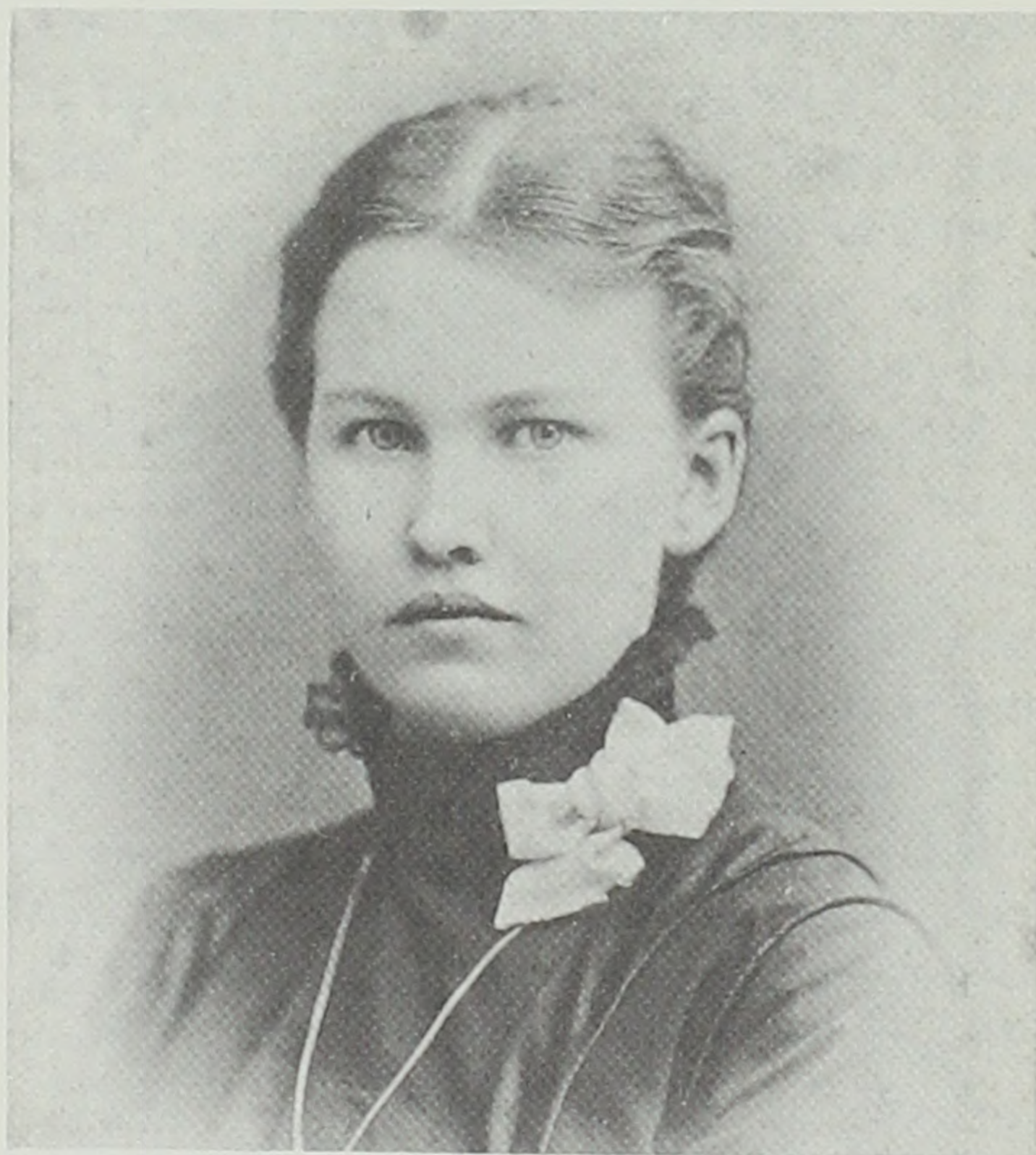
The Editor

The Millinery Shop

Lille Stivers (of Toledo, Iowa) wrote me to come out to Iowa and get a school or a music class, and she would help me. So that was what I did. I felt that I was starting out in the world for myself, and to make a living for myself, and I was homeless. But as usual I found friends.

Lille claimed me for a good visit first, and we surely had a good time, and her parents were very nice to me. Her father was a lawyer. Wallace Lout, whom she afterwards married, was a law student in his office and boarded with them. I was too late to get a school, but they furnished me a team and driver to take me up to Beaman and some other place, but so many people were moving away that I did not get enough music scholars to pay.

Then Lizzie Danskin near Marengo, Iowa, wanted me to come down and make her a visit, so I did so, and stopped at her brother's at Watkins to see about music scholars, but without success. Then I hired a livery rig to take me to Danskin's at Marengo.



Elizabeth Wright in 1877.

I went to the Presbyterian Church with the family and there I met Mrs. Swezey, at that time a prosperous milliner, who took quite a fancy to me.

Then at Lizzie's I met Alice Belt and she took a great notion to me and insisted on my coming over and visiting her for awhile, so I did, and while there Mrs. Swezey sent word to Lizzie or saw her in town and wanted me to come and stay with her awhile, So I went there, and stayed for some time. I met Kate Porter there and Menia Baumer, who did hair work in Mrs. Swezey's shop, and became great friends.

It was fun to sell hats and I had very good luck at it. I was considered a very good looking girl and I had a wonderful complexion without any artificial assist-

ance, and I had a face that could wear any kind of a hat, so I tried them on myself to show them off, and usually made a sale. I used to tell Mrs. Swezey that she ought to hire me for a dummy to try hats on and pay me a large salary.

Mrs. Swezey had a thriving business there. She used to go into Chicago twice a year to buy goods and had a millinery opening after she came back every spring and fall. She liked having me around to help show off the goods, which I enjoyed doing. She always thought a great deal of me and was a very good friend to me. Menia used to say that "Mrs. Swezey thinks you are the only girl that was ever born and raised."

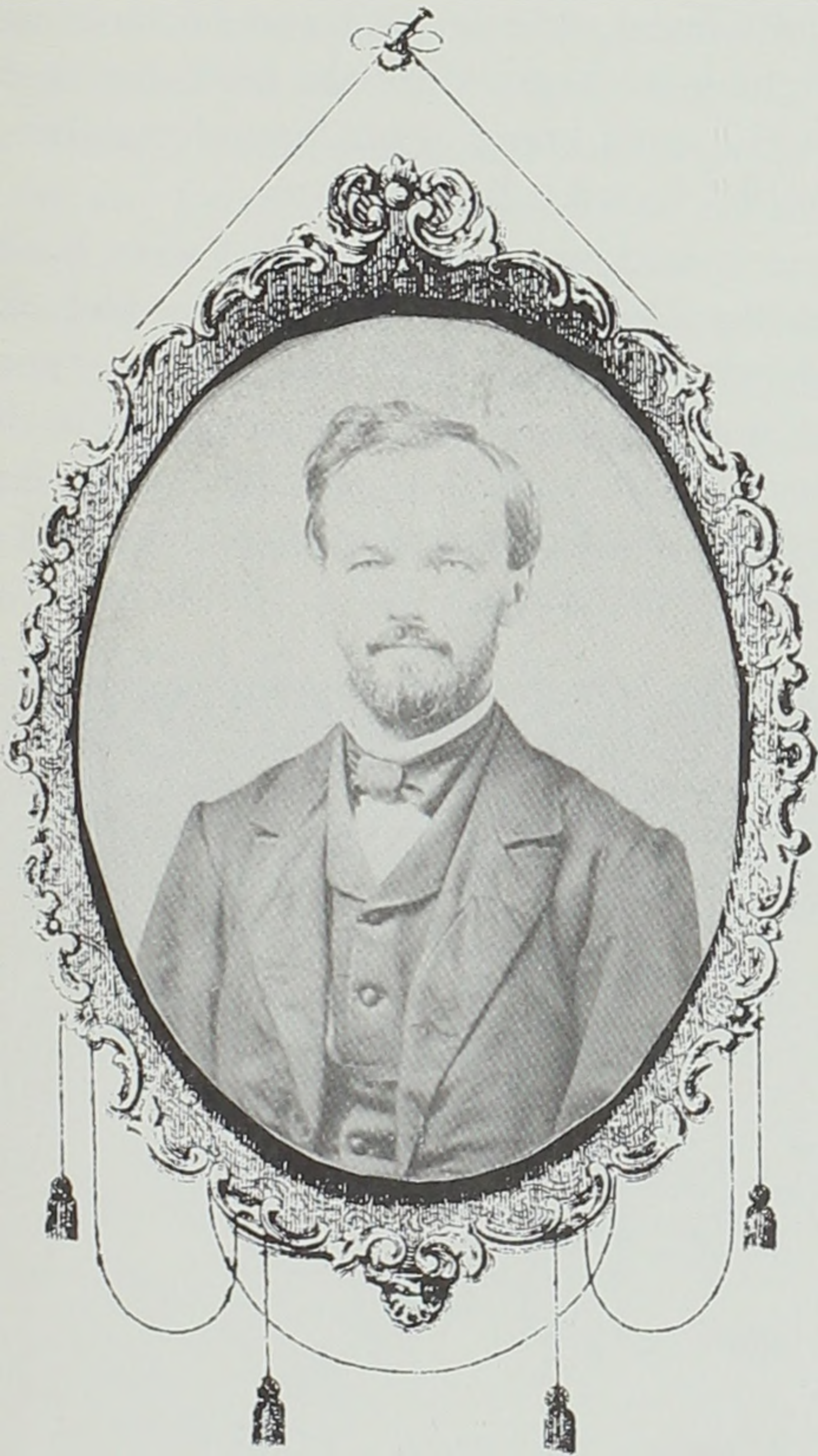
One time Menia and I decided to have bonnets just alike, only in different colors. They were black felt and Menia's was to be trimmed with wine color and mine with pale blue and black. Mrs. Swezey went to work and made mine up to suit herself. I had a plume the fall before and she put that on. Then she made the ties, which were long, out of a beautiful black brocaded ribbon, edged with pale blue plush, an inch or more wide. They were simply elegant and the bonnet was lovely and looked like a pattern hat right from Chicago and like it cost about ten dollars. I looked fine in it too, but I wouldn't wear it. I told her it wouldn't look right for me to come out in such an expensive looking hat as that with my little wages and that I had nothing to correspond with it, and folks would talk about me, so I just couldn't wear it.

She was terribly disappointed and got out of patience with me and declared she had nothing else in the store that she would put on it. I had to take off the trimming and go out to a store and get two-toned ribbon like Menia's and fix it over myself, only I left the plume on. It was white edged or shading into tan.

Well, it was pretty, anyway, but Mrs. Swezey would hardly speak to me for weeks. And years afterwards I saw those beautiful ties tucked away in a drawer and she had never used them for anything or anybody. It was too bad, but I think I was right. Girls are not so particular about dressing according to their means or circumstances nowadays, but that is the way I was brought up. People were quick to say things if a girl dressed beyond her means when earning her own living.

Mrs. Swezey often wanted me to stay with her and promised to get a piano and build a new house and take me into partnership with her. But I knew she was hard to get along with, and I knew I did not like millinery work, and I did not want to go in with her.

Mrs. Swezey did finally build a big brick building but it cost her more than she expected. She borrowed from the Building and Loan and got cheated badly. From then on she got more in debt and gradually went down hill till she lost everything. Poor soul. She died not many years ago, poor and lonely and unhappy. I used to feel sorry for her and did what I could for her and she liked to come and see me when we were living in Marengo.



William C. Wright, Elizabeth's father.

She always thought I was just about right.

Mrs. Swezey had a friend who was the wife of an editor, Mrs. Sehorn. I told her that I thought I would like to work in a printing office and she said she would tell Mr. Sehorn. Then he came over to see me. He was quite favorable toward trying me out. He said he thought it would be a good thing to have a lady in the office, for she would have a good influence, and she wouldn't get drunk on Saturday nights



Permelia Holcomb Wright, Elizabeth's mother.

and raise hell around. So he engaged me, and I moved again.

The Printing Office

I went into the *Democrat* office to work and boarded in the editor's family. I only got a small salary till I learned to set type well, and I learned fast. In six weeks I could set a type as fast as I ever could, and I received two dollars a week

and my board, which was very good pay for a girl in those days. I was glad to get it and I liked the work and had a good time. And I was saving my proof to see how much type I could set in a day.

Mr. Sehorn was publishing the *Victor Index* at that time (as well as the *Marengo Democrat*) and brought Mrs. Richards down to edit it there, and she had a little girl named Lola. They were added to the family and there were ten of us in all, with Grandma Norton who owned the house, and the hired girl and two of the men, Steve Downard and Henry Rosenquest.

He used to send me out on errands frequently; sometimes to get five cents worth of beefsteak for a family of ten, and sometimes for pills or even brandy when he had one of his terrible headaches.

One day the London Circus was in town. I was planning to attend with Mr. Rosenquest that evening. The town was full of folks and it was raining and a lot of women came into the house to get out of the rain, and there was much confusion. The living rooms were right back of the office and the doors open.

All at once Mr. Sehorn called me out of the composing room into the office and informed me I would have to get dinner, as Saidie was sick. It was eleven o'clock and I didn't know the first thing about anything in their kitchen and all those folks were around.

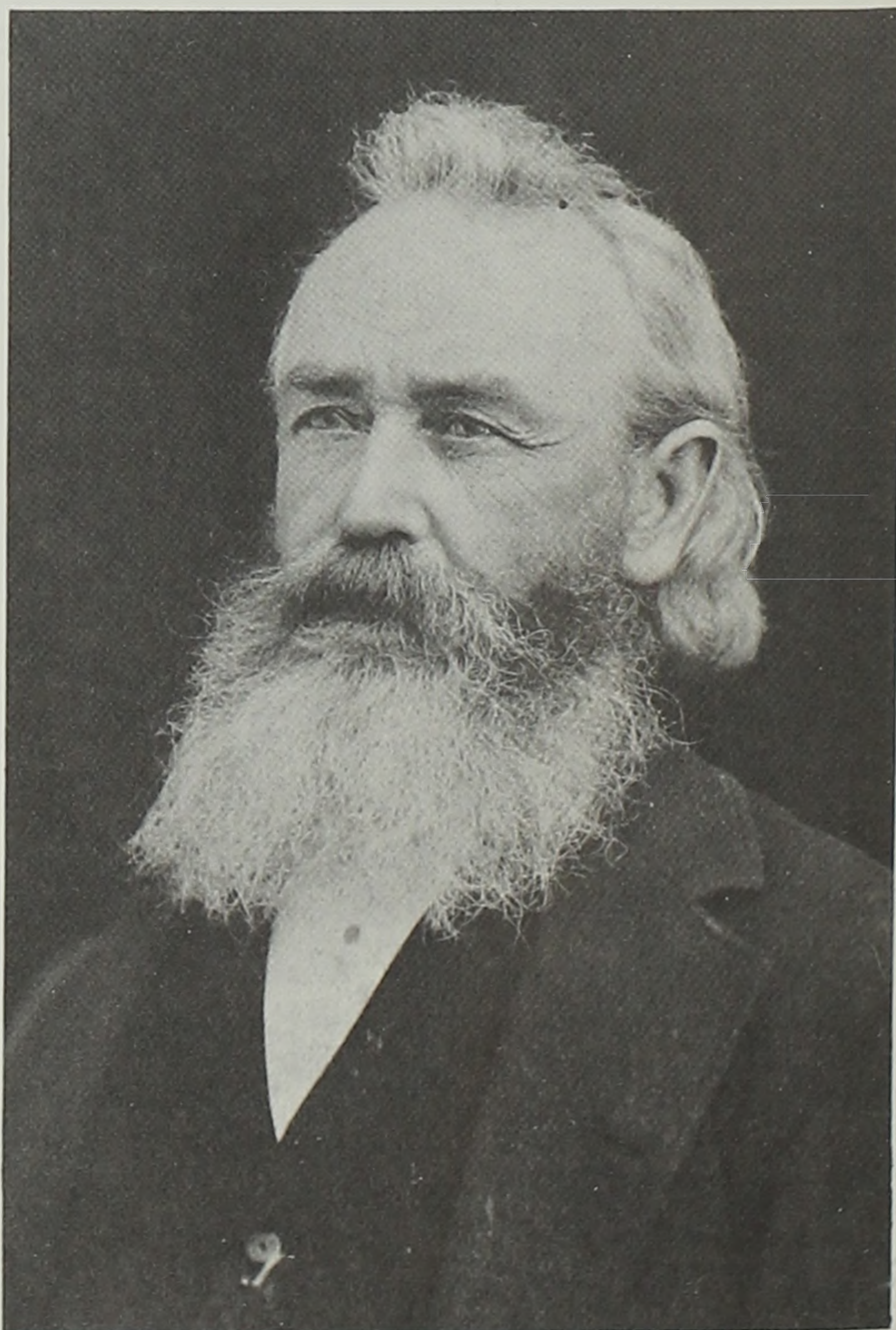
I said, "Why, I can't get the dinner."

Then he got mad and said, "What the hell is the use of keeping anybody around if they can't do anything?" Then he grumbled something and said, "You can consider yourself discharged."

So I considered it, stopped work, and

went right over to the office of the *Marengo Republican* and applied for a job, telling old Mr. Spering, the editor, how it was. It happened that one of his men, Ed Cowles, was leaving and he took me right in to begin work the next day, and said I could board at his home for awhile, until I found a better place.

I moved over there. When I went back to the *Democrat* office the boys had all struck, and Mrs. Richards took me one side and told me that if I would go back to work it would be all right and Mr. Sehorn would apologize. I said one dismissal was enough and I would not run



F. E. Spering, editor of the *Marengo Republican*.

the risk of another. Mr. Sehorn said he was sorry if he had said anything unbecoming for a gentleman to say to a lady, but the fact was he was not himself as he had one of his terrible headaches. I guess he had been drinking too much.

I said I would overlook it but I wouldn't stay any longer. And I moved out. All the boys asked me to come back, too, but said they didn't blame me for not staying.

The night after I left the *Democrat* office I went to the London Circus with Mr. Rosenquest. He was a very handsome man and I liked him. But he did not stay in town very long. He went to Des Moines and worked on the *Register*.

I had made a decided change for the better in my affairs and felt very much pleased over it. Mr. Spering was a very nice man and was very nice to me always, in a fatherly sort of way, and I liked Mrs. Spering too. Nothing more was said of my getting another boarding place. Mrs. Spering's niece, Jennie Vanderwort, lived with them and was in high school. We got along very well. The house was small and had only one story, so Jennie and I roomed together. Mrs. Spering sewed for folks a good deal and had many callers.

Mr. Spering was a very kindhearted man. He had a dog called Sandy and a cat called Tim. If either one was in his chair when he went to sit up to the table he would lift them off the cushion very kindly and set them down in another chair. At the office I have seen him sit on the front edge of his arm chair so as not to disturb Sandy in the back of it, scolding and grumbling at him, however, for getting in his way.

The firm was Spering and Crenshaw but Mr. Crenshaw was postmaster and

was not in the office much, so Mr. Spering ran the paper alone.

Bert Hull, a nice boy about my own age, was what was called the "printer's devil" as that was the name given to the youngest boy in the office who did the cleaning, etc., and was learning the trade. Charley Edwards also worked there, and tried to do the job printing until Joe Kohler came from Davenport.

The office ran the whole length of the building and the composing room and cases were in the back part and the printing presses in the middle, and the office proper occupied the front, but all was in one room.

Mrs. Swezey's millinery shop was next door and when we ran out of copy I would slip out the back door and into her shop and when copy came, Bert would come out the back door and whistle and I would come back. All would be quiet until I came in and Bert and I were talking, when Mr. Spering would exclaim from the office, "Hello Elizabeth! You've got back, have you?"

The old court house was close by and the lawyers, county officers, and many others often came in on business or to talk to Mr. Spering. They were always very gentlemanly and never talked anything that would be considered improper before a lady, and always treated me with respect. Everyone did, for that matter. I was very careful, too, and attended strictly to my own business and never gave anyone the slightest reason to talk about me and I think they never did, at least not in any derogatory way. But I had a good time and made some good friends almost from the start.

I used to want a little gold printer's

stick to wear for a badge and was always raving about it. The first Christmas the boys presented me with a large heavy package and all stood around and watched me unwrap it. I had given them each some little foolish thing and made them quite a speech about it, then they gave me this. I unwrapped for quite awhile and then went on unwrapping until at last I found a brick. I removed it and more wrappings until I came to a tiny box and inside was my gold printer's stick. I was surely delighted and let them know it. I wore that stick constantly for years.

For quite awhile I wore a jacket and skirt and a collar like a man's, and a little white necktie also like men wore, and I fastened the stick on the bow tie. I used to launder it and then make the bow and hook it in so I wouldn't have to tie it so much and it always looked nice and the stick was made like a breast pin, only smaller. I was very proud of it. I liked the work in the office, too. There was something fascinating about setting type and I never tired of it.

Joe Kohler tried to go with me but I did not want to go with him and soon got to going with Will Burgy more than anyone else except Edward G. Seamands, who worked in the office for some time. He was a poet and used to write poetry to me and made love to me that way. He was a southerner and quite interesting, and claimed to have been a sailor.

Mr. Seamands was quite romantic, and I liked him pretty well. He was very gentlemanly and was a good talker and of

course that appealed to me, as did his poems and declarations of admirations, affection, etc.

Now, I actually can't remember what story he told me, or stories about himself, nor what he was going to do. It has all gone from me, but they were all very plausible and he wanted to marry me as soon as he got into the business he was negotiating for, whatever it was. He gave me a lot of references to give my father when I wrote him, which I did after he had left town. He wrote me most beautiful letters every day or two after he left. It is funny I can't remember even where he went. But father wrote to the references and in the course of time he traced him out and found that he was a married man and had a wife in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Of course I wrote him about it and he replied with a long letter explaining how he had been tricked into marrying her by a supposed friend, to save himself, and how he left her when he found out about it. Of course I sent that to my father and he told me very emphatically that I was never to see him again nor write to him nor anything or I would be no child of his. So I decided that I cared more for my father than I did for him and so followed his advice. I remember now that I went with Bill Burgy afterwards.

The next summer after I went into the *Republican* office, Mrs. Sperring went back East for a visit and left Jennie and me to keep house. I was to make the bread, for Jennie didn't know how, and Mr. Sperring gave me two forenoons out

of the office every week so I could bake the bread. I had the best luck with my bread and learned to make the nicest rolls of a neighbor, Mrs. Taner. I had a chance to sew a lot those forenoons. I always had time to do my own washing and ironing too. Aunt Nellie used to send me a dress occasionally, and of course I did my own sewing.

One time the boys in the office were teasing me about Will Burgy, when Charley Edwards said he heard Mrs. Eyrick, who was Will's mother, telling him, "Now Willie, you never marry that printer girl; she can't cook, she can't bake bread, she can't do anything."

Mr. Sperring spoke up and said, "I'll bet nineteen cents and a half, Elizabeth, that you can make better bread than she can."

Another thing that I enjoyed very much in the printing office was the entertainments, theaters, concerts, and such like, for the editors always received complimentary tickets because of the advertising they gave them and write-ups afterwards. Mr. Sperring always got one for me, including me in his "family," whenever they gave enough and sometimes the office force got theirs separately.

If the company happened to be pretty tight with their free tickets I usually had an opportunity to go with someone else without cost. So I missed very few of the entertainments that came. But if it happened to be on Wednesday night and we were late getting to press, I had to feed the press and so did not get to go. That was a great disappointment to me.

By feeding the press I mean I had to stand up high beside the large machine which was turned by a man hired for the purpose. His name was Rinaldo Smith and he was not overly intelligent. If I happened to miss one accidentally I had to "throw off the impression" and the big cylinder went around without printing and then Rinaldo would get mad.

I had the big pile of papers on a table above the press and took one at a time and brought it down where the claws would catch and carry it around the cylinder to be printed and lay it off on another table, so I had to attend strictly to my business as it kept me busy, but I liked it and seldom made a mistake.

The papers were all run through twice if printed all at home, but they usually had what we called a "patent side" which was already printed. As many county papers had the same patent side it furnished good reading matter cheaply. It took about two hours to get the papers printed.

I had two little boy friends who were great admirers of mine and they liked to stand up beside me and watch me feed the press, but I could never have but one of them there at a time. The boys were Fred Feenan, a lawyer's boy, and Jimmie Gilbert, the photographer's son. One day Jimmie somehow got his foot caught in the machinery and was hurt quite badly, so after that I would not let either of them stand up there. Mr. Gilbert, Jimmie's father, used to often take tin type pictures of us girls and especially me, for

a little or nothing when he had time, so I had lots of pictures taken. There would seldom be more than two or three of a kind. They were taken on tin plates and then developed so we could get them in a few minutes and it was great fun.

There were many interesting things about the work. There was one girl named Della Dillon who was a dwarf and used to contribute a good many pieces for the paper and used so many more words than necessary. Once I told Mrs. Spering that I could write her article and say the same thing in nearly half the words that she did, so just for fun I tried it at home and did it. But of course that was just for my own amusement, for I always had an ambition to be a writer. But after I went to work for my living I did not have time to indulge myself in that pastime.

I used to follow Mrs. Spering's advice about going with certain men for she knew more about what was proper or best than I did and we always got along very well. I always was very careful about my reputation and I knew that girls of Maren-go could do lots of things that would be overlooked because of their family's position but which would ostracize me, being a stranger, so I was very careful. I never heard of anything that was ever said against me, and certainly no man ever said anything improper or disrespectful to me.

The second year that I was in the office Susie Heller came to learn the milliner trade, as Mrs. Swezey always had several apprentices learning, so of course I got



"Aunt Nellie" Holcomb.

acquainted with her.

Susie Heller invited Menia Baumer and I out to her home to spend New Year's and the week end, and of course we were delighted to have an outing together. We went up to Ladora on the morning train where someone was to meet us. But no one was there, so we went over to Denny's hotel, as Menia was acquainted with them, and Susie's brother Sime was at the depot. He escorted us over there and John [Heller] came after us.

That was a winter of very deep snows and the sleighing was fine. Menia and I were both in the highest spirits and would have had a good time anywhere together, and we certainly did have a good time. John asked John Shover to stay over Sunday and help entertain us, which he did. We had oyster stew for supper, and we ate a race to see who could eat the most.

Sunday night we went to Koszta to church in the big sled, and John and Menia sat up on the seat and John Shover sat between Susie and I in the bottom of the sled and put an arm around each of us. It was a very cold night and I said I never was so grateful for a man's coat sleeve as I was that night. When we got home the teacher had gone to bed and let the fire go out.

Menia and I danced a galop to get warm while John got the fire to going.

The first night Menia and I talked most of the night, as girls did and probably do yet. We tied our toes together as girls used to do the first time they slept together, to see which would be married first. In the morning I had the shortest piece—of course it broke in the night—and the end didn't go around my toe once. But Menia's end went around several times, so she said I would be married within a year. I hooted at the idea.

John [Heller] told me that I ought to teach school and I said that I had always wanted and intended to, but never had. So he said he could get me a school if I would take it. I didn't know whether I could get a certificate or not.

Some time later in the winter John came into the printing office and said he could get me a school in either his district or No. 4 and he wanted to know if I would take it. I said I would have to think it over. He wanted to know how long it would take—five minutes? I told him a week or two.

So I went to see Mr. David Hughes,

who was County Superintendent then, and he said teachers were rather scarce, and he thought it would be a good idea. He said I could take part of the examination one month and part the next, so I wouldn't have to take so much time out of the office at one time.

I borrowed some books of Fanny McKusker, Blanche's sister, and studied up some, as I hadn't looked into a school book for two years. I took the first part of the exam the last of February and the rest the last of March and got a Second Grade Certificate.

Mr. Spering was interested and didn't blame me for going where I could do better, but he and the boys were all sorry to have me leave and I was sorry to leave, too. They had all been so nice to me and I had had a good time and been happy there. We were all sorry to say goodbye.

The Schoolma'am

I bid the printing office and its force goodbye and moved out to the country to teach school. There were tears in Mr. Spering's eyes when I said goodbye, and they were all looking out of the window. It was a late spring after a hard winter and we sat on the front steps on Easter Sunday with a big snowbank in the yard.

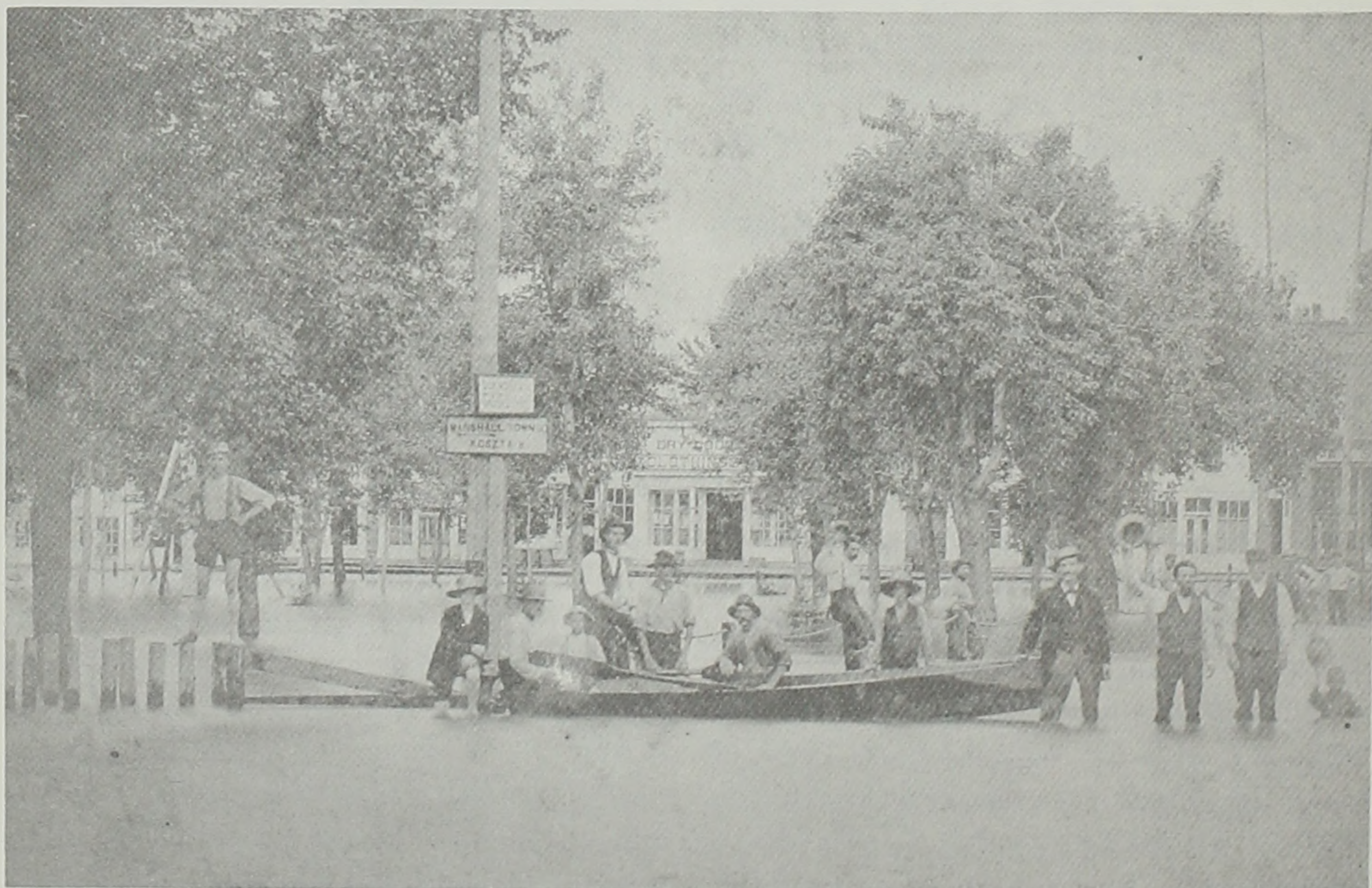
Most of my scholars were in the primary. My oldest scholars read in the third reader. I was sorry, for I was better prepared to teach older and more advanced children and would have found it more interesting, but I did the best I could with them. My favorite was Frankie Mantz, just

five, and starting in. When I quit at the end of four months, he could read well in his first reader and spell every word in it much better than his older brother, Everett, who could read in the third book. Byron Border and Oliver Rummelhart were also starting, but were not nearly so bright as Frankie, who afterwards became a lawyer.

My scholars were Roy and Ollie, age 7 and 6; Minnie and Josie Shea, age 9 and 5; Hattie and Byron Border, 8 and 5; Lucinda and Oliver Rummelhart, 7 and 5; Everett and Frankie Mantz, 9 and 5; Rosa Moitzfield, 6. Ollie didn't come so much, but as she learned easier than Roy she did better than he did. I encouraged Roy and helped him all I possibly could and he got a pretty good start, so I think he kept up with her better after that.

Once Everett Mantz half laid down in his seat and I told him to sit up. He replied, "I don't have to." So I immediately walked over to his seat, ran my fingers through his front hair and yanked him up by it. He sat up, but the next day he came to school with his hair shingled as short as it could be.

We had some frightful storms during school hours as well as other times that summer. The schoolhouse was set on a hill and the wind had a good sweep at it in every direction and sometimes the children were frightened and so was I. I remember one time the clouds looked so threatening, and the wind all went down, and it was very still for some time except the muttering of distant thunder. Then, all at once, the wind began to sing through the grass with an ominous sicken-



Downtown Marengo during the 1881 flood.

ing sound, and then in a minute or two the storm was upon us in all its fury.

Frankie Mantz was reading and he always shouted out his words at the top of his voice, but soon I couldn't hear him. The roar of the thunder and wind and rain was deafening, and it was so dark we could hardly see except for the lightning. The school house creaked and groaned and shook so we thought it would go over any minute. There were only the two Mantz boys and Roy that day, and I dismissed school and we all sat up in the northwest corner on a recitation seat. We couldn't even talk so we could hear for awhile, and sometimes we stopped up our ears. But it passed over, and no harm done.

Another time in the afternoon the children were frightened, and the storm came up quickly. The children came running in at recess and wanted to go up to Hellers—it was much more protected up there and was near by, so I told them to run, but I stayed.

John was working at his brother Morris's, and he came down with his team on the way home, and he stopped at the house till the storm was over. He held the horses close to the little schoolhouse and stood in the door.

It was such a stormy summer that the little ones and those that lived farthest away did not come lots of days if it acted threatening. Sometimes we had such storms at night and often I thought sure the schoolhouse would be blown away, but it was always there in the morning.

Once the Iowa River came up over Marengo and Koszta and in Marengo they went around in boats. John took Susie and I down to Koszta one evening and right

in the street we had to put our feet up on the dashboard to keep them out of the water which ran right through John's new high buggy. Men were wading through water which came almost up to their shoulders. That was the summer after the big snows of the winter.

There was vacation during the hot weather after two months of school, and they [Hellers] wanted me to stay out there, so I did most of the time except the two weeks of the Teacher's Institute. I enjoyed that. Prof. Henry Sabin was State Superintendent about that time but he was at the Institute as one of the instructors. He was a wonderful man and such a good one. I read one of his books for teachers and think every teacher ought to read it. One could tell by it that he was one of the best.

Just one incident stands out clearly in my mind about that Institute; it was called a Normal I believe, Normal Institute, and Normal for short. Prof. Sabin had put on the blackboard the first two or three words of each line of Longfellow's *Rainy Day*, a piece that I always loved. He asked how many could tell what it was and I answered. Then he asked how many could repeat the poem and I was the only one. Anyway, he called on me and I recited it. When I finished I saw the tears stood in his eyes and I felt that that was the highest compliment I ever could have had.

John came down after me for over Sunday.

Every Saturday Susie and I took the team and buggy and went somewhere, quite often to Marengo. It was a nice team and before we got near town Susie would begin to pull their heads up and get them on their mettle and then when

we got in town they would sail in with their heads high, stepping high, and looking their best.

One day in harvest time Susie and I took the best team to Marengo and when Morris came down to help he inquired where the team was. John told him, "Susan and the schoolma'am went to Marengo with them."

Morris said, "I suppose if the schoolma'am wants a horse she can have it, even if we have to stop work."

And John replied, "You bet she can."

John used to take us both out some but he took me alone more. Often in the evening during the week and always Sunday evenings, he took me out for a buggy ride. And he certainly "pressed his suit" with ardor, although I objected and discouraged his efforts.

John was a good man and had good principles, and he was so dependable and thought so much of me. He also thought I was the best looking girl he ever knew, and I doubt if he ever changed his mind about it. He was pretty good looking himself.

John was always so good to his sister, Susie, which argued well for the way he would treat his wife. He was fourteen years older than I was, and I had often said I was going to marry a man who was much older than I and be "an old man's darling." So eventually he won out, although I confess I did not want to get married.

I had been having a better time every year and would have liked to go on that

way.

However, I have always maintained that love is a growth if founded on respect and friendship or a general liking, and so I found it. I really think it is more lasting than some of this sentimental love that so many profess and that is such an ardent flame and then dies out so soon.

After the fall term of school closed, I decided to go back to Wisconsin to be married, as Aunt Nellie wanted me to and said she would buy my wedding outfit to a certain amount. So I packed up and John took me to Marengo.

I went straight to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where my brother Charlie was living. His wife, Sophia, and I went shopping together or perhaps I should say she went with me, as I did most of the shopping.

I bought my whole wardrobe: underwear, slippers, coat, hat, and navy blue cashmere and satin for my dress and dolman. I was quite extravagant in my wedding hat. It was a white beaver with wide rim and had a long white plume with shaded tan-like edges, fastened on with one long loop and the end tied with pale blue satin ribbon. It was very becoming and very pretty. Then I got a fur cap for common winter wear and my coat was heavy wool, quite light with flecks of darker color in it and trimmed with both black and white.

When I reached Lone Rock, Aunt Nellie had a dressmaker make up my dress and wrap. I think it was \$50.00 Aunt Nellie paid on my outfit, and I had most all of my money from teaching, for John

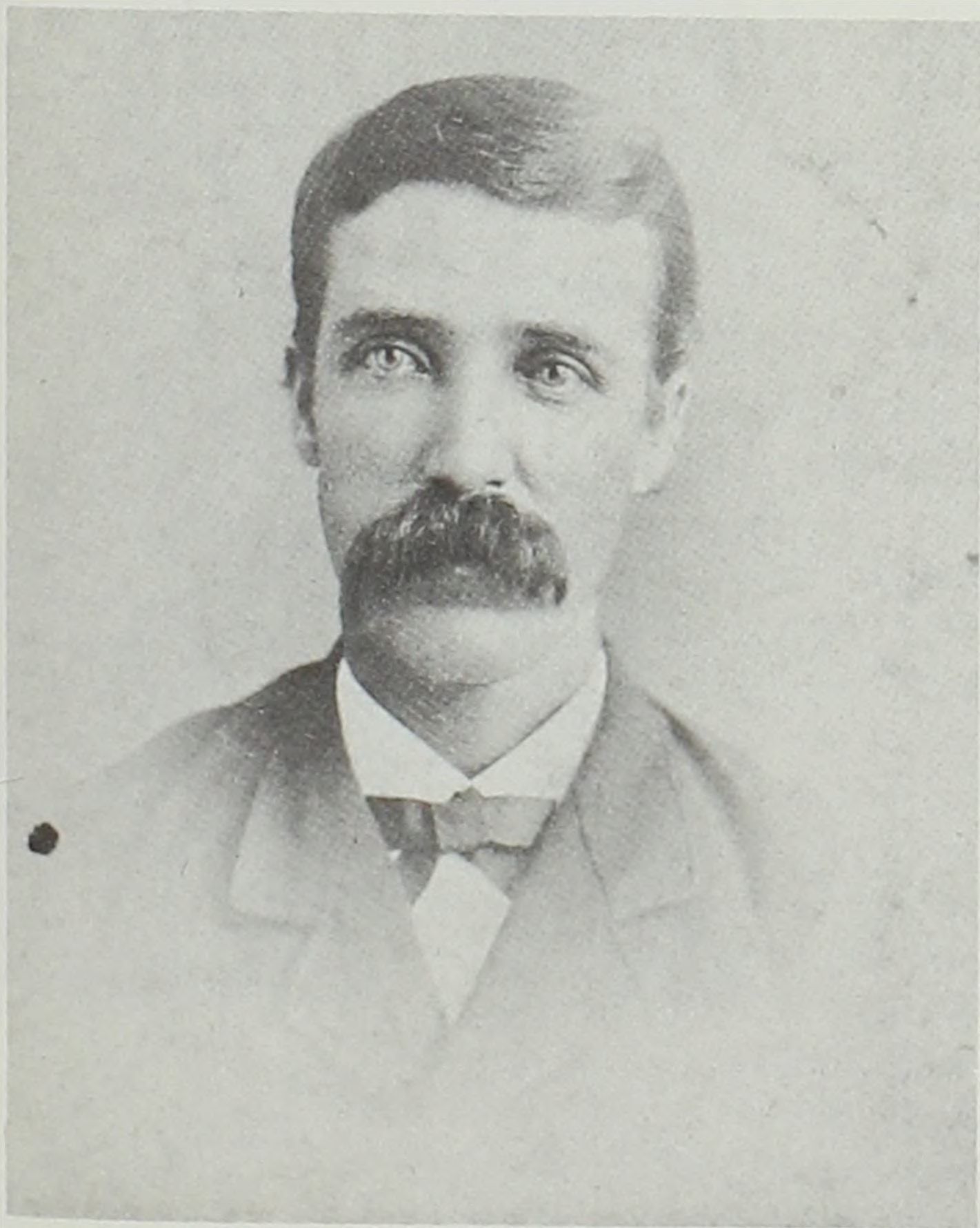
wouldn't take a cent for my board. He said he wouldn't, even if I didn't marry him, which rather touched my heart too.

Thanksgiving in 1881 came on the 24th and John arrived on the evening of the 22nd. He stayed at the hotel nights and for breakfast. Thanksgiving was a beautiful day; I told Aunt Nellie there was only one cloud and that was a pretty one.

We all four went to Madison on the

early train as Mother had requested that I be married in my father's house.

Father performed the ceremony, as I had always wanted him to. He made it very impressive and gave us a good talk at the beginning. I wept. I had told Aunt Nellie I was afraid I would and she said she would spank me if I did. I asked her afterwards why she didn't and she said I didn't belong to her now.



John and Elizabeth Heller at the time of their marriage.