The Palimpsest

JULY 1928

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH
Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials 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 records 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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THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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The Lay of the Land

From Marshalltown the Iowa River flows east until within less than ten miles of joining the Cedar River in the northeast corner of Johnson County where it turns directly southward and eventually enters the Mississippi below Muscatine. Meanwhile the Cedar River continues its southeasterly course to a point about ten miles north of Muscatine where it is deflected to the southwest and meets the Iowa at Columbus Junction. Nature apparently altered her purpose. Instead of the Iowa becoming a tributary of the Cedar in northeastern Johnson County, and the Cedar entering the Mississippi at Muscatine, according to the original plan, the two streams diverge and then the Cedar abruptly reverses its course and rushes to join the Iowa. The rivers behave like two lovers obviously intended for each other. The one persistently approaches the other from afar, though with much hesitant meandering if you will glance at

a map, and then at the last moment coyly turns aside (but not too far) while the other keeps matter-of-factly on his way only to realize that ultimate union depends upon him and then straightway he frankly seeks his mate.

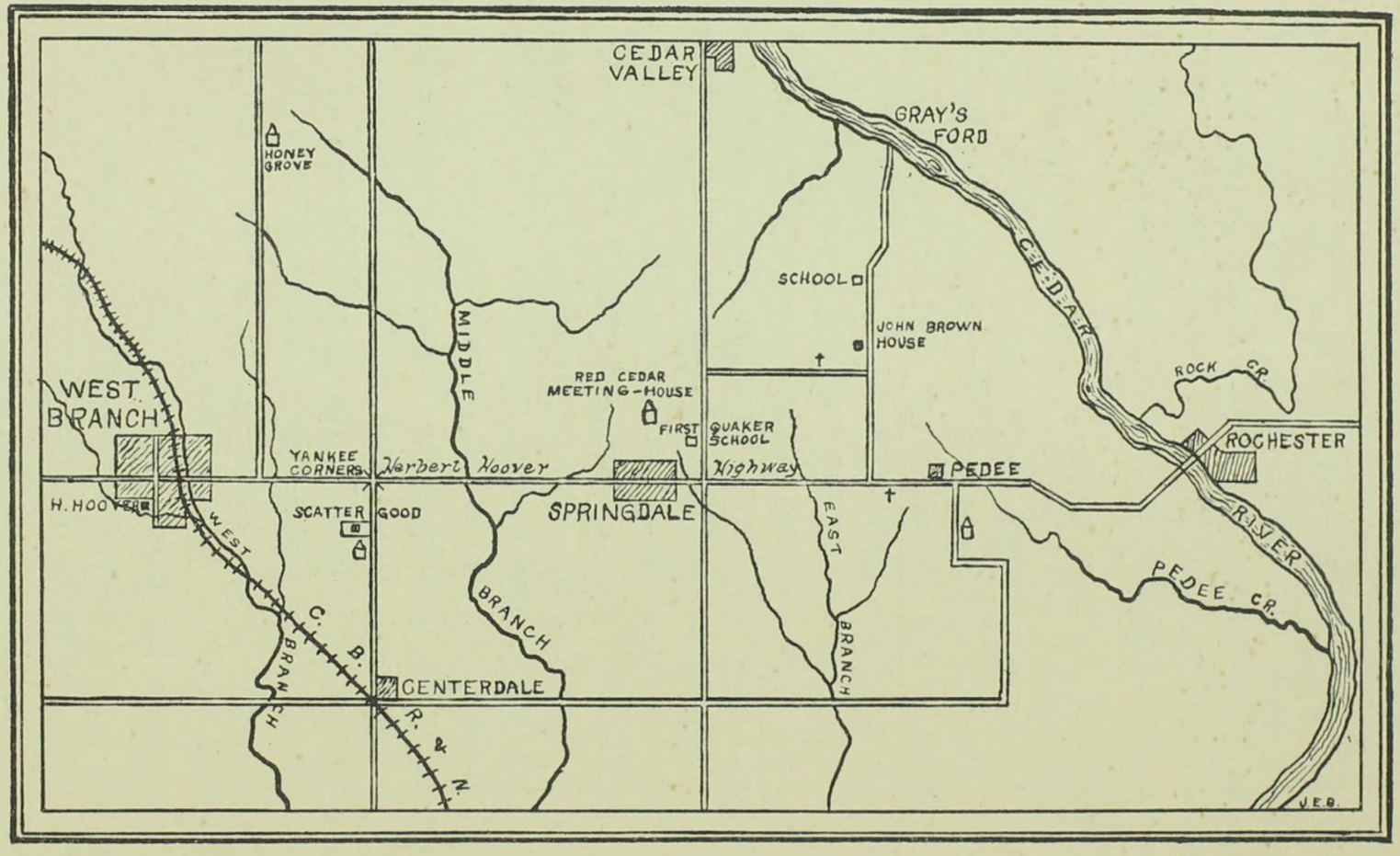
The egg-shaped area enclosed by the two rivers within the distance of their flirtation contains about fourteen townships, or approximately five hundred square miles. When the first settlers came, nearly a hundred years ago, the rivers were bordered by a fringe of timber — oak and walnut and elm and maple interspersed with wild plum, choke-cherry, and crab-apple. But beyond the timber, from east to west and north to south, stretched the virgin prairie — rich pasture for deer and elk and the home of innumerable quail and prairie chickens. From the vantage ground of a gentle hilltop the pioneer could gaze for miles in any direction over the majestic expanse of the undulating plain. In the summer when the grass was high and every hillside was radiant with prairie flowers it seemed like a terrestrial sea made glorious with color. Swell after swell receded over the surface of the land until the mighty rhythm of that tremendous symphony of form beat everlastingly into the soul of the beholder, while the wind made infinitely varied overtones of light and shadow on the grass.

For the settlers who came in the early forties this was paradise enough. The soil was rich and deep and black. The rolling contour of the country

provided natural drainage. Plenty of timber for building and fuel was close at hand. Springs of pure water bubbled out of the ground in convenient places. And the climate was most salubrious. What more could be desired? It was a veritable garden of opportunity.

When the capital of the Territory was located at Iowa City the settlers came flocking in that direction. From Muscatine and Davenport they moved westward to the Cedar River and beyond into the very heart of the rich prairie. It was natural that they should follow the most direct routes. Taverns were built at convenient places and settlements developed along the way. The old stage road from Davenport to Iowa City crossed the Cedar River near the mouth of Rock Creek about five miles north of the Cedar County line and thence ran directly west to the capital. Along this road, now straightened, improved, and named for Herbert Hoover, the earliest settlers established their homesteads.

As early as 1836 Stephen Toney and George McCoy settled near the mouth of Rock Creek on the Cedar River, established a ferry, and laid out a town which they named Rochester. During the next three or four years others came to live in that vicinity, a mill was built, a tavern erected to accommodate travellers on the stage route to the new Territorial capital, a post-office called Rock Creek was located there, and Rochester became the principal village in Cedar County, serving as the county seat until 1840



A PAST AND PRESENT MAP OF THE SPRINGDALE COMMUNITY ON A SCALE OF ONE-HALF INCH TO A MILE

when Tipton was officially designated. Being strategically located, Rochester prospered for a time, but even before the Civil War the decline began. By 1870 the population was only one hundred and seventy-four, and in 1903 the post-office was discontinued. Now the most interesting thing about the place is a vague legend that this deserted village was the childhood home of Sarah Bernhardt.

During the two decades preceding the Civil War other settlements developed along the old road west of the Cedar River — Pedee, Springdale, and West Branch. Pedee, locally known as Stringtown because the cabins of the settlers bordered the road for nearly a mile, was the first to develop and for many years lent its name to the countryside for miles around. By 1845 the community had risen to the importance of having a post-office, located about two and one-half miles west of Rochester, and in December, 1849, a Presbyterian church was organized.

While Pedee seems to have been chiefly Presbyterian, most of the settlers who arrived during the fifties were of the Quaker faith. Gradually the village of Springdale, almost wholly composed of Quaker families, took form and a post-office of that name was established in 1851, though it was originally located two miles farther west near Yankee Corners (the boyhood home of Judge Horace E. Deemer). This peaceful village has always been regarded as the center of the Quaker community.

There the first meeting was organized, a splendid school was developed (the first whose graduates were admitted to the State University without examination), and thereabouts the descendants of the early pioneers still reside. Rural mail-boxes bear the names of Maxson, Mather, Negus, Branson, Pearson, and Varney — eloquent testimony of the stability of the founders of Springdale.

It was early in the fifties when David Tatum, James Townsend, Eli Hoover, and other Friends located on the west branch of Wapsinonoc Creek and the post-office of West Branch was soon thereafter established, though it was not until the construction of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad in the late sixties that the town was platted. About the same time an adjoining town of Cameron was laid out, but presently the established name of West Branch was accepted for the whole place. From a little country village the community developed into a town of over four hundred inhabitants in 1880 and now the population is twice that number. West Branch, like Springdale, has always been characterized by the Quakers who still constitute a large proportion of the residents.

From the very beginning the people who came to live beside the Iowa City-Rochester road between the east and west branches of Wapsinonoc Creek have constituted a peculiarly united community. Most of those who came before the Civil War were Quakers whose religious tolerance, simple living,

and moral standards imparted an atmosphere of peace to the whole settlement. Adherents of other creeds and representatives of divergent principles have mingled with the Friends without serious discord. The established tradition of harmony still prevails.

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

The Coming of the Quakers

Few movements better illustrate the restless energy of American life than the rapid settlement of the vast region west of the Mississippi River. Under the French and Spanish régimes this land had lain almost untouched by white men — a land of quiet, disturbed only now and then by the passing war cry of the red men of the plains, or the mighty stampede of the bison herds. Then came the Anglo-Saxons — restless, eager, thrifty — looking here and there for homes. As if by magic all was changed within the span of a single century.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the settlement of Iowa was well advanced. By this time also the Quakers were rapidly making a place for themselves in the young Commonwealth. Until about 1850 the busy town of Salem had served as the chief point of entry for the stream of Quakers which poured into the southeastern part of the State and settled in the fertile valleys between the Des Moines and Skunk rivers. While settlements were thus rising one after another in quick succession, a new gateway was opened, and at Bloomington (now Muscatine) the ferrymen became familiar with the Quaker salutations, "thee" and "thou".

[This account of the beginnings of the Springdale community is adapted for THE PALIMPSEST from Louis T. Jones's *The Quakers of Iowa*.— THE EDITOR.]

The first Friend known to have entered at this new gateway was Brinton Darlington, who bought a farm near Muscatine in 1843. Then came Laurie Tatum in 1844, who pressed on about thirty miles to the northwest and settled beyond the Cedar River in the southwest part of Cedar County. Close upon his coming followed J. H. Painter and family in 1845. Thus, as at Salem, hardly had the waving prairie grass been touched by the first Quaker until it was pressed by the foot of the second. The track then made was soon to become a beaten path across the prairie, then a well defined road, and finally a veritable highway for immigrants.

During the next five years seven or eight Quaker families settled in the community, then called Oakley. Homesteads were established on both sides of the road, now known as the Herbert Hoover Highway, from the west branch of Wapsinonoc Creek to the east branch, between the present site of West Branch and the old Pedee settlement near the Cedar River. Meetings on First-days, that is, Sundays, were held at the homes of various Friends, usually in silence because there was no minister in the settlement. In January, 1850, two Quaker ministers from England, Robert Lindsey and Benjamin Seebohm, visited Oakley. They had arrived at Burlington on the nineteenth and after spending a few days at Salem proceeded across country with Joseph and Amos Hoag to the new settlement of Friends in Cedar County about eighty miles to the north.

Having picked their toilsome way over the hills and dales and intervening plains of Henry and Washington counties and the southern part of Johnson County, the group of Quaker travellers crossed the Iowa River on the morning of January 25th and entered Iowa City, the capital of Iowa. Passing almost directly to the eastward, in the afternoon as they were "within 5 miles of the end" of their journey they suffered the misfortune of a broken axletree of the carriage and "had to leave it in the midst of the prairie". Thus discomfited, the two English Quakers were given "Joseph D. Hoag's 1 horse buggy", while he and Amos mounted their friends' horses and so came on to the home of Laurie Tatum. There they were "cordially received & kindly welcomed into their humble dwelling by him & his wife, an agreeable & interesting young woman, who has recently ventured out into this new country to share in the toils of her husband in providing a home on these western prairies."

Two very pleasant and profitable days were spent in the Oakley settlement visiting with the Friends. Of Sunday the twenty-seventh Lindsey records:

"A fine bright winter's morning. The thermometer at 10° above zero. At 10 o'clock attended the usual first day morning meeting at Oakley held at the house of Laurie Tatum. Nearly all their members, & some of their neighbors were present, & it was a satisfactory meeting. At 6 in the evening we had an appointed meeting in a schoolhouse 3 miles

from here, which was very crowded & the forepart of it in consequence thereof a good deal unsettled; but thro' patient waiting a precious calm was mercifully vouchsafed, & dear Benjamin was strengthened to labor among them in right authority, & the meeting concluded to good satisfaction."

A year later in the month of August, William Evans, a Philadelphia Friend, on a religious visit to the meetings in Iowa, came into the Oakley settlement, of which he wrote the following description:

"The residences of the settlers in this place, scattered over prairie land, are chiefly log buildings; the settlement being several miles in extent. In the summer season, while the grass is green, the country, with the cabins and little surrounding improvements dotted over it, has a picturesque appearance; yet to a stranger, it gives a sensation of lonesomeness."

The first collective religious meetings to be held among this new group of Friends began in the "fore part of 1849", and were held as the occasion suited at the homes of Laurie Tatum or J. H. Painter. By the year 1852, however, the community had increased in numbers to such an extent that it became necessary to erect a building for "meeting" purposes; and to that end a "gravel" house with a flat roof was built about one-half mile north of the present village of Springdale. On April 9, 1853, in this the second house erected in Cedar County for religious purposes, was established the Red Cedar

Monthly Meeting. Less than a year later the Quakers who lived west of Yankee Corners organized a meeting and in 1856 the Honey Grove Meeting, four miles north of West Branch, was established.

The composite nature of this new center of Quakerism in Iowa and the rapidity with which it grew are well shown by the records of the Monthly Meeting for the first eight months of its existence. At the time of its organization in April, 1853, the committees appointed show that there were no less than thirty-four men members of the meeting. By the close of the year there had been received by the Red Cedar Monthly Meeting sixty-six certificates of membership, representing three hundred and twenty-two men, women, and children. These certificates show that the new arrivals came from Maine, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Canada. For the next four or five years the movement continued strong. In the year 1854 alone eighty-four certificates of membership were received, likewise from very divergent sources. The Red Cedar Meeting was over-crowded, and then the immigrants moved on to the northwest, settling the region to such an extent that for many years the fertile divide between the Iowa and Cedar rivers to the northwest of Springdale for some miles was known as "Quaker Ridge".

Louis T. Jones

COURTESY OF BETH MATHER HIGBEE

THE OLD SPRINGDALE MEETING-HOUSE

The Inner Light

There are in the United States to-day approximately one hundred and ten thousand members of the various branches of the Society of Friends. About eight thousand of these live in the State of Iowa. The number of Friends, or Quakers, as they are commonly called, has never been large, but in spite of their small number, the men and women of this faith have played an influential part in establishing the moral standards of many communities.

It is not strange that this has been so. Progress is achieved not by followers, but by individuals with initiative, and the cornerstone of Quaker character and conduct has always been individualism. Not the selfish principle that so often goes by that name of every man for himself and the Devil take the hindmost, but that finer individualism of the true pioneer — that every one should help himself and in case of need lend a hand to his neighbor.

This principle of independence began with their religion. George Fox, the founder of the Religious Society of Friends, taught his followers that "the manifestation of the Spirit" was given to every man and upon this "Inner Light" each Friend was taught to depend. Religion was a matter solely between the individual and God. The responsibility could not be shifted to church or state, minister or

priest. The Friends believed that the Bible was a revelation of God but not even this could be followed as the sole guide in deciding new problems. The individual was held responsible for his decisions and acts. No spiritual crutches were provided.

To the early Quakers, membership in the Society was, and still is, a prize to be won and that not too easily. Children of Quaker parents inherit a birthright membership in the meeting to which their parents belong. Others may be admitted upon showing evidence of their sincere acceptance of the principles of the Friends. No attempt is made to persuade people to join the Society; the person wishing to join must request that he be admitted. True to their belief that it is the inner life and not formal ceremonies which testify to spiritual life, the Friends dispense with baptism, the Lord's Supper, and other services in use in most churches.

The second fundamental principle of the Friends is their insistence that outward conduct conform strictly to the inward revelation. A Quaker is not permitted to compromise with sin so far as his own conduct is concerned. As in the case of the early Christians persecutions are to be endured, but principle is not to be sacrificed.

On the other hand the Friends believe that other people have a right to their own beliefs. Each individual is responsible to God and the Quaker does not interfere, though he carries his message far and wide. It is true that the rules of the Society of

Friends have been strictly enforced and erring members have frequently been excluded from the meeting but such persons have been free to go and worship in peace; the Friends do not interfere.

These principles, taken together, explain why the Friends very early adopted a number of ideas and customs which seem peculiar. Some of these ideas were really fundamental and have gradually been accepted by the rest of the world. Among these is the equality of men and women. If the adult individual is to be held responsible to God for his acts, the woman as well as the man must be a free agent. Women were preachers and missionaries in the Society of Friends from the beginning and, due no doubt to Quaker influence, women were legally qualified to vote in New Jersey from 1776 to 1807.

Originally the Friends adopted the plan of having separate meetings for men and women. This arrangement was partly due to the belief that women could handle their problems better in a separate group and partly to a desire to silence charges of immorality brought against them during the period of persecution. Separate seating of men and women in the meeting-house has been retained by the Friends in all but one branch.

The same recognition of personal responsibility and personal independence early led the Friends to an uncompromising opposition to slavery. A man could not be expected to serve God if held to bondage under a master. As a result most Quakers be-

came ardent abolitionists. Many Quaker homes in Iowa were stations on the Underground Railroad and the quiet, non-resisting but persistent Friends were among the most efficient conductors on the road. The Quakers believed in obedience to civil authorities — except where the law required them to do something which, according to their principles, seemed morally wrong. Hence they had no scruples against out-witting the slave catchers. Lie or fight they would not, but there were many other way of assisting the fugitives to evade the pursuers.

A story may be told to illustrate their quiet shrewdness which was so often revealed in the operation of the Underground Railroad. Two slave girls had sought shelter at a Quaker home. Suddenly the master of the girls and several other men appeared and demanded the surrender of the slaves. The old Quaker, more concerned at that moment about the safety of the girls than for the doctrine of non-resistance, defied the men to enter his house. At this critical moment the Quaker housewife appeared and urged her husband to admit the men. "Thee knows", she said quietly, "that they will not find any slaves here." Nor did they: the girls had been hidden beneath the feather beds. Even if the girls had been discovered, the Quaker woman could doubtless have insisted that she told the truth: in her belief no one was a slave.

The doctrine of non-resistance which has been one of the unusual characteristics of Quaker faith is, of

course, based partly upon the Biblical teaching, but it, too, is interwoven with this emphasis on individual responsibility. The Quakers do not believe in coercion of any kind, not even in forcible resistance to persecution. Their definite and persistent opposition to war as a method of settling disputes has made them very unpopular on various occasions both in Europe and America; but criticism of the Friends in this matter has been greatly diminished by the recognition that this refusal to engage in combatant war service is not due to fear of injury nor to unwillingness to endure discomfort. The Quaker dislikes war because he believes it is wrong to hurt another person, not because he fears injury himself. As a matter of fact Quakers have sometimes taken up arms when convinced that the war was just, and they have ever been willing to care for the wounded, to bury the dead, and to give relief to civilians in need, no matter how great the danger or hardships.

Holding rather strictly to the teaching of primitive Christianity, the Friends have been characterized by simplicity in dress, speech, conduct, and mode of life. Their meeting-houses have always been plain and the interiors unadorned. Industry and frugality have marked their home life and kept them above want in spite of frequent persecutions. Early in their history the Friends adopted a distinctive style of dress. This must be plain, so that Friends who could not afford expensive clothing would not be embarrassed by the richer dress of their fellows.

Children were taught that this dress was a symbol of the Society and that no Quaker should sully the costume by appearing in questionable places or company or by acting to bring discredit on his faith.

A number of the interesting customs of the Friends are explained by their insistence on personal equality before God. To remove the hat in the presence of another was once a sign of servility or at least of some inequality of rank or station. A Quaker removed his hat when he prayed, but kept it on in the presence of King, civil magistrate, noble, priest, or minister, in meeting or in court. Since this act has become merely an act of social courtesy without any implication of inferiority, Friends probably do not feel that it is now as significant as it formerly was. Indeed, a number of the non-essential requirements as to dress, speech, and behavior have been abandoned, especially by the liberal groups.

Another peculiarity of the Friends is the use of "thee" and "thou" instead of the usual "you". This, too, goes back to an earlier time. When the Society of Friends was first organized the pronouns "thou" and "thee" were used when speaking to an equal or to one of inferior social standing, while "you" was used by an inferior in addressing a superior. The Friend, insistent upon his equality before all men, invariably said "thee" and "thou", though this mark of Quaker training has now lost its significance. It has, in fact, been largely discarded by many Friends.

For the same reason, the Friends have always refused to use titles, which denote political or social superiority. The simple prefix "Friend" was adopted as the usual form of address and was used to rich and poor, master and servant, nobles and commoners alike. Even "Mister" was rejected as a corruption of the term "Master", and no one was recognized as the master of the Quaker: he was decidedly the "captain of his soul". Friends, however, had no objection to such official titles as President or Governor, since the Bible recognized the need of public officers and the duty of the individual to obey them — unless obedience involved violation of a moral principle.

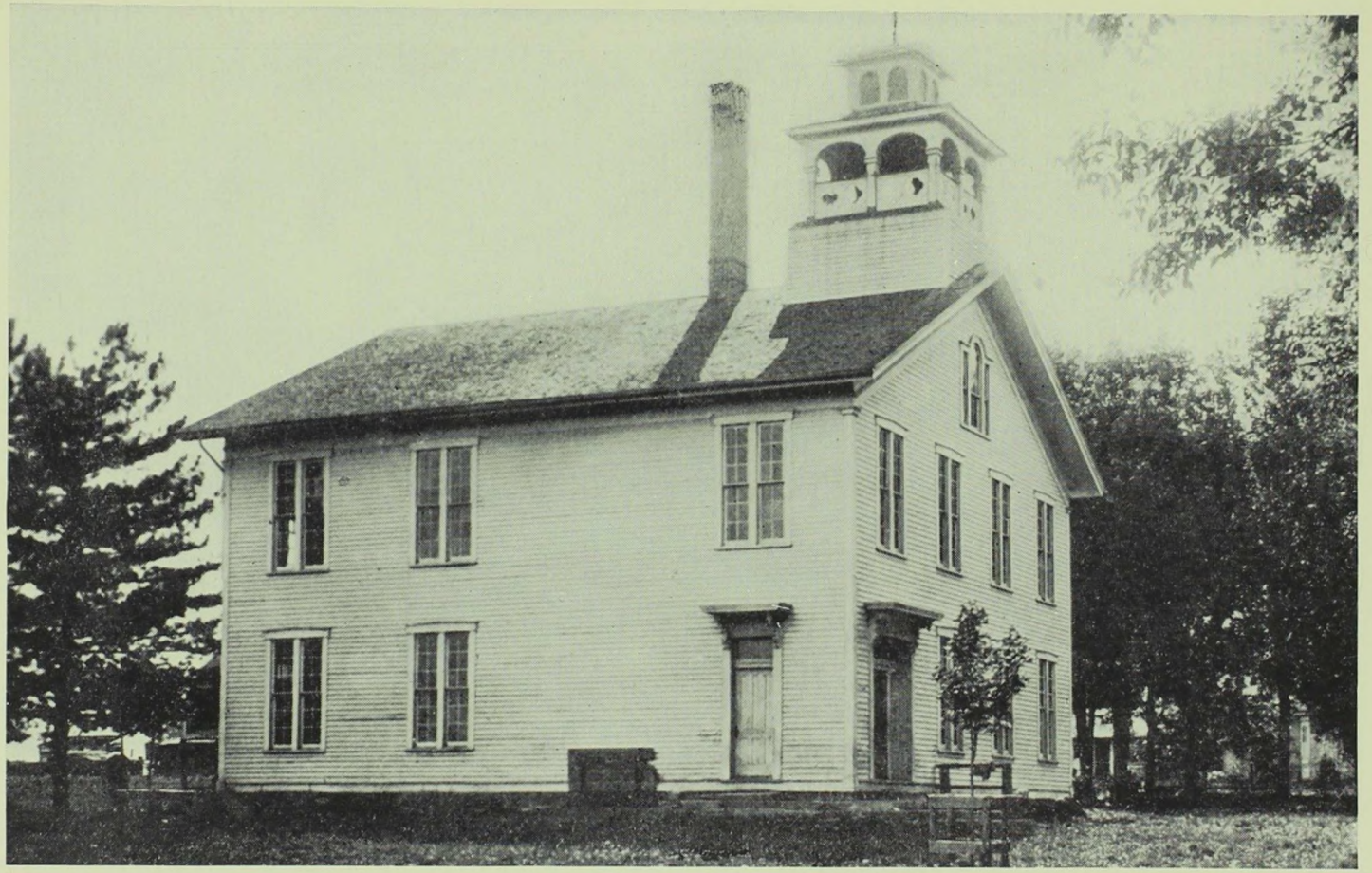
Since the Quaker recognizes no intermediary between himself and God and assumes full responsibility for his own spiritual decisions, the service in the meeting-houses of the Friends is simplicity itself. The Society of Friends makes no provision for an ordained minister. Men or women gifted with spiritual leadership are frequently designated as ministers or preachers, but without salary or official authority. The congregation enters quietly and sits for a time in silence, each member meditating upon spiritual things. Any member may speak if the spirit so moves. Those who speak in meeting often fall into a sing-song rhythm. There is no excitement or emotional appeal. Only one branch of the Friends uses musical instruments and singing in their religious services. The Quaker meeting depends for its

inspiration not upon the eloquence of the minister, the beauty of the surroundings, or the excellence of the music, but upon the revelation of God to the members.

This simplicity of service also characterizes their marriage ceremony. There are to the Friends only three parties to a marriage — God, the man, and the woman. There is no wedding march and no minister to read the service. The man and woman who desire to marry rise in the midst of the congregation, join hands, and the man first says: "In the presence of the Lord, and before this assembly, I take [her name] to be my wife; promising, with divine assistance to be unto her a loving and faithful husband, until death shall separate us." The woman recites a corresponding pledge. Special provisions have been made in the Iowa law concerning the performance of marriage ceremonies to make this form legal. The requirements as to the civil license are observed.

Friends look upon marriage as a solemn obligation not to be lightly undertaken or made the subject of trivial jokes. The marriage of a Friend to a man or woman outside the Society is not approved. The home life in Quaker families has usually been wholesome. In spite of the serious attitude toward life, Friends have usually been cheerful and the life of the boys and girls not unpleasant. Probably the worst trial of the youngsters has been the silent meetings.

The Friends have always emphasized the duty of



COURTESY OF BETH MATHER HIGBEE

THE OLD SPRINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL

charity, and in charitable work they make no distinction as to creed, race, social class, nationality, color, or religion. It is said that one Danish Friend, upon his arrival in Cedar County, was given a cow by kindly neighbors. He decided that this was a worthwhile precedent and in after years he gave a cow to any family of Danish Friends who arrived in the community. In spite of their belief in individual action, the Quakers approve of associations for all good works. The Friends were active in relief work during the World War. Quaker hospitality was noteworthy, even in an age distinguished by that virtue, and no one who applies for shelter is turned away.

The attitude of the Quaker toward society in general may be summed up in a quotation from *American Individualism*, by Herbert Hoover. In this he presents his ideal of American democracy: "that while we build our society upon the attainment of the individual, we shall safeguard to every individual an equality of opportunity to take that position in the community to which his intelligence, character, ability and ambition entitle him; that we keep the social solution free from frozen strata of classes; that we shall stimulate effort of each individual to achievement; that through an enlarging sense of responsibility and understanding we shall assist him to this attainment; while he in turn must stand up to the emery wheel of competition."

RUTH A. GALLAHER

Dusky Lading

To the tourist, who mayhap has passed through the quiet village of Springdale, it may seem incredible that there, once upon a time, was a station on the Underground Railroad; that in some of those very fields and orchards escaping negro slaves hid in fright with their pursuers in sickening nearness, and that in some of those homes they were fed and sheltered and helped upon their way. The smooth, broad road, the swift automobile, the many-shaded green checkerboard of cultivated fields, the spacious houses, the well-kept lawns — all these and many more were missing from the picture then.

Imagine a road, narrow, rough with ruts, partially overgrown with sod, bordered on either side by fields of corn and wheat occasionally enclosed by zig-zag rail fences, while in the vales the waist-high grass betokened virgin prairie. Some of this rank grass had sharp rough blades which would lacerate the skin in smarting scratches. As the long grass swayed in waves of sheenful beauty, there may have been billows caused not by breeze, but by crawling, hunted dusky forms; and as the tassels of the stately corn quivered and the leaves rustled, crouching black men may have given thanks for the protecttion of its tall growth.

At that time not every one in Iowa thought that

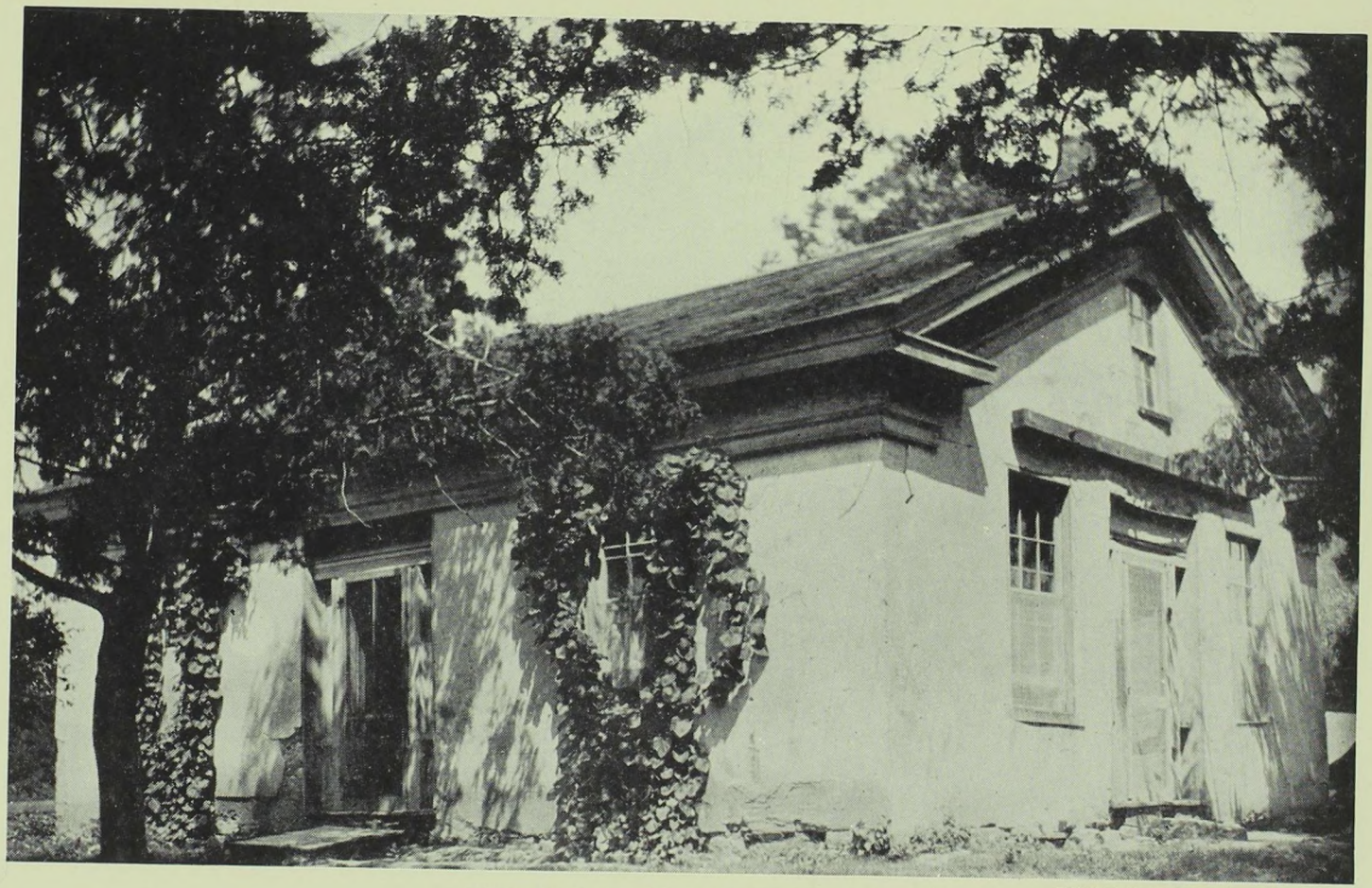
the slaves should be free. On the contrary many believed that slavery was an institution, which, if they preferred not to practise themselves, was perfectly legal and perhaps justifiable in the South. Those who knew of slavery as practised with moderation, undoubtedly thought there was no occasion to get unduly exercised about it. Most people in Iowa, however, were opposed to slavery whether the conditions of the slave were good or bad. This anti-slavery sentiment centered particularly about the New England village of Denmark, and the Quaker settlements of Salem and Springdale. In spite of the fact that assisting a slave to escape was in violation of the federal law, these people risked heavy fines and imprisonment by doing so.

How the news spread, no one can say, but slaves in Missouri soon learned that there were friends in Iowa upon whom they could rely if they should attempt to escape their bondage. From house to house they could make their way by night and hide in the fields by day. The main line of the Underground Railroad (for there were numerous branches and spur lines) entered Iowa at the southwestern corner near Tabor, and passed through Lewis, Des Moines, Grinnell, Iowa City, West Liberty, Tipton, DeWitt, Low Moor, and Clinton, whence it crossed the Mississippi River to join a like system in Illinois. It was not really a railroad, nor yet a tunnel, but a route, on which there were families who were willing to make their homes a station, and who could be

depended upon to do their best in forwarding the passenger, or members of the runaway group. The greatest of secrecy was necessary for the master of the slaves was often in hot pursuit.

That the Quakers, who by nature are peace-loving and law-abiding citizens, should have become parties to such a system seems strange indeed. But these Quakers heeded spiritual rather than temporal laws, and they believed that to fail in helping to liberate a slave was to fail to keep the law of God. They were virtuous in their violation of the law; they believed implicitly that it was their duty. As one of their precepts forbids the bearing of arms or engaging in combat, their reputation was a strategic advantage, which at this time aided them greatly in their work. Although the Quakers of Salem are most often mentioned in connection with the Underground Railroad, those of Springdale and West Branch played heroic parts also.

The operators of the Underground Railroad were altogether too shrewd to keep any records of the organization or its activities. Neither personnel, stations, nor schedules were known to the public. They knew full well that such a record might prove to be evidence which could be used against them. Hence the only information available is that which has been handed down by word of mouth from the generation which took part in the stirring events of that day. As is usual when stories have been told and retold, the main content of the tale may remain



THE OLD JOHN BROWN HOUSE

COURTESY OF BETH MATHER HIGBEE

unchanged, but the embroidery of detail may alter with subsequent telling.

It is said that many negroes found refuge and help in and about Springdale. They would lie hidden in cornfields or other suitable hiding places during the day, resting, because to travel in the daylight was very dangerous. Then when night had come, they would resume their journey, being guided by the north star. Nearly all had weapons of some sort, possibly a butcher knife, or small arms. Often they very narrowly evaded capture even at the stations on the Railroad.

One man had in his home a basement room which was cozily fitted out with a fireplace, about which the family was accustomed to gather in the evenings. When this family began to befriend fugitive slaves they used this room to conceal their secret visitors. Pursuers often came to the house, but none ever ventured to open the door and start down the stairs toward that basement room, knowing that to do so would be certain death, for, outlined against the light he would be a splendid target for the desperate slaves concealed in the darkness below.

The Quaker might not hesitate to break the law by concealing "niggers" and helping them escape, but he would not lie about it. He might evade the truth, but if it were at all possible he would not disregard it altogether. A story is told of William Maxson, who was not a Quaker by birth. He thought to help some negroes to Canada by putting them in sacks

and shipping them as potatoes — at least the official records of the railroad would be clear. The station agent, who was supposed to be opposed to such work, was present when they were loaded into a box car. While thus busily engaged, one of the sacks of potatoes sneezed, much to the consternation of Mr. Maxson. He later said he did not know what was going to happen then. But the station agent, if not in sympathy was at least not antagonistic; so the "potatoes" were sent upon their way, and it is presumed that they eventually arrived safely at their destination.

At one time a number of fugitives had been concealed at the home of Laurie Tatum. When conditions seemed right for a "flitting" Mr. Tatum loaded them into his wagon, covered them so that an observer would never suspect the true character of the load, and set out for Mechanicsville, where he hoped to deliver them into other kind hands. To reach Mechanicsville it was necessary to cross the Cedar River at Gray's Ford, and it so happened that at this point the river sometimes formed beds of quicksand. There misfortune overtook Mr. Tatum in his enterprise, for his wagon stuck in the shifting sand. There was nothing to do but secure help. He could scarcely risk apprehension by asking one or more of the negroes to get out, so he decided to go to the nearest house for the aid he so greatly desired. The man of the house was a stranger, which did not decrease Mr. Tatum's concern. After in-

specting the slowly sinking wagon, the stranger suggested they would have to unload. Immediately Mr. Tatum replied that he did not think that would be necessary at all. "What do you have on your wagon?" asked the stranger. Mr. Tatum looked him squarely in the eye and said, "Meat and wool." Possibly the stranger comprehended the full meaning of the reply. At any rate he complied with Mr. Tatum's wish; they secured a fence rail from one of the old worm fences close at hand, got it under the wheels, and at length succeeded in raising the wagon to higher and firmer ground.

How many times these quiet, unassuming Quakers must have put themselves at the mercy of strangers! How sincerely they must have believed in the thing they were doing! Not only the men risked fines and imprisonment by assisting runaways, but the women also helped, many times by clever ruses.

Little Anna Varney, who lived about two miles west of Springdale on the old stage road from Iowa City to Davenport, thought it strange no doubt that she should so often be unceremoniously bustled off to spend the night or the afternoon at the home of a neighbor. Perhaps she sensed an undercurrent of excitement which her parents tried to suppress. Could it be connected with these strangers who came in the darkness, and whom she never really saw but sometimes heard? Instinctively she realized that it must be something about which her mother did not wish to speak, and so she did not ask.

One quiet Sunday afternoon there came a light tap at the door. Immediately Anna was given permission to go to the neighbor's house to play. As soon as she had gone, her mother admitted a negro woman with two children, one white and one black. The negress was very much frightened and in great distress. She was running away with her two children, who were sons of the master. Not far behind the master was in swift pursuit. Astride his horse, he was beating down the tall grass of the swamp with his whip, thinking that possibly the fugitives were concealed there.

The negro mother, who seemed to be more intelligent than the usual lot, told Mrs. Varney that her white boy made them conspicuous, and that she very much feared they would be overtaken, for it would be so easy to identify them. Mrs. Varney had an inspiration. If she could report not having seen a negro woman with two boys, one black and the other white, the owner might be thrown off the trail. Quickly she put a quantity of tea to steep upon the stove and allowed it to become very, very strong. With this solution she stained all the visible parts of the white boy a walnut-brown color and, after a refreshing lunch, sent them upon their way. About three months later, it is said, Mrs. Varney received a letter from this woman whom she had befriended, which told of their safe arrival in Canada.

Mabel Erie Brown

John Brown's Band

One day late in October, of the year 1856, there rode into the town of West Branch an elderly man, weary and travel-stained. He was mounted on a mule and led a horse. He made his way to the only tavern in the place, over the entrance to which hung the sign, "The Traveler's Rest". This tavern was kept by a genial, rosy-cheeked Quaker by the name of James Townsend. On dismounting the traveller asked his host: "Have you ever heard of John Brown of Kansas?" According to the story, Townsend, without replying, took from his vest pocket a piece of chalk and, removing Brown's hat, marked it with a large X; he then replaced the hat and solemnly decorated the back of Brown's coat with two large X marks; lastly he placed an X on the back of the mule. Brown in this way having been admitted to the tavern free list, Townsend said: "Friend, put the animals in that stable and walk into the house; thee is surely welcome."

Brown had just come from the stirring scenes of Kansas Territory: from the battle of Black Jack, fought in the preceding June, and from Osawatomie and the Lawrence foray, events that then were

[This story concerning John Brown's band while in winter quarters at Springdale training for the raid on Harper's Ferry is adapted for THE PALIMPSEST from Irving B. Richman's sketch, *John Brown among the Quakers*.— THE EDITOR.]

but a few weeks past; and the suggestion has been made that in Brown's narrative of his Kansas adventures worthy James Townsend received a full equivalent for the buckwheat cakes and "sorghum" for which his hostelry was famous, and to which on this occasion John Brown doubtless did ample justice. Be that as it may, it is certain that, during Brown's short stay in West Branch, he heard of Springdale and of the strong anti-slavery sentiment of its shrewd, thrifty, Quaker population; for henceforth this village became one of his places of frequent resort.

Late in November, 1857, John Brown, accompanied by several men who had fought with him in Kansas, came to the Quaker settlement on their way east where Brown planned to establish a military school preparatory to making "a bloody spot at another place to be talked about" like "bleeding Kansas". It had been his purpose to stop at Springdale merely long enough to sell his teams and wagons, and then to proceed by rail to Ashtabula County, Ohio. But the panic of 'fifty-seven had begun and money was scarce. He was nearly out of funds, and unable to raise any. Under these circumstances he decided to spend the winter at the village, and to resume his journey early in the spring.

He was more than welcome, and so were his men. To the Quakers he and his band stood as the embodiment of the sentiment against human slavery which that sect so firmly held. To be sure, John Brown

and his followers were not men of peace; they, one and all of them, had fought hard and often in the Kansas war; but much was pardoned to them by the Quakers because of the holiness of their object; for, while the Quaker would not concede that bloodshed ever was right, it was with extreme leniency that he chid him who had shed blood to liberate the slave.

Brown's band, composed of John H. Kagi, Aaron D. Stephens, John E. Cook, Richard Realf, Charles P. Tidd, Luke F. Parsons, Charles W. Moffat, William H. Leeman, Owen Brown, and a negro, Richard Richardson, who had been picked up at Tabor, were given quarters in the house of William Maxson which was situated about three miles northeast of the village. Maxson himself was not a Quaker, and the direct responsibility of housing men-at-arms was thus avoided by this Quaker community. Brown, however, was received into the house of the good Quaker, John H. Painter, who became one of his staunchest and most confidential friends.

The time spent in Springdale was a time of genuine pleasure to Brown's men. They enjoyed its quiet, as also the rural beauty of the village and the gentle society of the people. There were long winter evenings to be passed in hospitable homes; evenings marked by discussions of slavery or by stories of perils and escapes on the border.

Then, in turn, there was the pleasure — not unmixed with a certain wonder and awe — which was afforded to the villagers by the presence among them

of men of such striking parts and individuality as were these followers of John Brown. It was not every village that was favored with the society of a John Henri Kagi, for instance, a man of thought and of varied accomplishments — a stenographer, among other things, and, at one time, correspondent in Kansas for the New York *Post*; or of an Aaron D. Stephens, a man who had served in the United States Army, been sentenced by a court-martial to be shot for assaulting an officer who it was said was brutally chastising one of the men, but had escaped and was now enlisted with Brown under the name of C. Whipple; or of a Richard Realf, eloquent, poetic, impetuous, claiming to have been the especial *protégé* of Lady Noel Byron, and suspected of having been mixed up in foreign political troubles; or of a John Edwin Cook, also poetic, handsome in flowing hair, a masterly penman, lily fingered perhaps, but none the less of great courage and the crack shot of the company.

It was not all play for Brown's men while in Springdale. Brown himself never for a moment lost sight of the great end which he had in view. Aaron D. Stephens was appointed drill-master, and a regular daily routine of military study and drill insisted upon. Five o'clock was the rising hour; immediately after breakfast study was begun and continued until nine or ten o'clock; books were then laid aside and the men drilled in the school of the soldier on the broad sward to the east of the Maxson house.

In the afternoon a sort of combined gymnastics and company maneuvers were practiced, the object of which apparently was to inure the men to the strain of running, jumping, vaulting, and firing in different and difficult attitudes. Among other exercises was a sword drill which was performed with long wooden sabres, one of which — the one used by Owen Brown — is still preserved in the Maxson family.

Tuesday and Friday evenings were set apart for the proceedings of a mock legislature of the "State of Springdale" which had been organized. The sessions were held either in the large sitting-room of the Maxsons, or in the larger room of the district school building, a mile and a half away. There were a speaker, a clerk of the House, and regular standing committees. Bills were introduced, referred, reported back, debated with intense earnestness and no little ability, and finally brought to vote. Some of the measures were "to render operative the inalienable right of women to the elective franchise", "to make null and void the Fugitive Slave law of this State", "to appropriate 50,000 acres of land, to be divided into small farms for the benefit of fugitives from slavery", and "to establish a college for classical, physiological, and political education of women". Other questions debated were: "*Resolved*, That a prohibitory liquor law is both wise and practical"; "That the law for the organization of the grand jury be and hereby is repealed"; and "That John Brown is more justly entitled to the sympathy

and honor of this nation than George Washington''. Kagi was the keenest debater, and Realf and Cook orators of very considerable powers.

The other evenings of the week were passed by each one according to his fancy. There were the good substantial homesteads of the Painters, the Lewises, the Varneys, the Gills, that could be visited; or Richard Realf had consented to address the Lyceum at Pedee, and all Springdale was going to hear him — this in part for the pleasure there was in listening to so good a speaker, but more perhaps because of the anti-slavery views to which in all probability he would give utterance, to the dismay of the Pedeeites who were strong Democrats.

It is perhaps not surprising that, under conditions such as these, some of the hardy fellows of Brown's command should have been visited by thoughts of love. All were bachelors, and, moreover, all were young — between eighteen and thirty. Even Owen Brown, who seems to have been a bachelor from principle and who never married, went so far as to divulge the fact that there was one maiden near Springdale whom he would marry, if he ever married at all, but to whom, out of abundant caution, he had resolved never even to speak.

At the time John Brown's band was staying at Springdale, there were living with their mother in a quaint frame house in the village, two young men of strong character, Edwin and Barclay Coppoc. Edwin was twenty-four years old and Barclay twen-

ty. Barclay, being in danger from consumption, had found it necessary to travel, and for a time had served with a Company of Liberators in Kansas. They both took much interest in Brown, his men, and his cause, and at length enlisted under his leadership.

On April 27, 1858, Brown returned from the East with some funds in hand and more promised, and gave orders for the expedition to move. He wrote to his wife: "We start from here to-day, and shall write you again when we stop, which will be in two or three days." The immediate destination of the band proved to be Chatham, Canada West.

The leave-taking between them and the people of Springdale was one of tears. Ties which had been knitting through many weeks were sundered, and not only so, but the natural sorrow at parting was intensified by the consciousness of all that the future was full of hazard for Brown and his followers. Before quitting the house and home of Mr. Maxson where they had spent so long a time, each of Brown's band wrote his name in pencil on the wall of the parlor, where years afterward, the writing could still be seen by the interested traveller. The old house itself, which was built of cement and gravel in 1839, is still standing, but for a good while has been unoccupied. It is falling into sad decay, though even yet is it full of interest.

Irving B. Richman

The Scattergood Seminary

Thomas Scattergood, a Wilburite Quaker of Philadelphia, seeing the need of education in accordance with strict Quaker discipline, gave ten thousand dollars to start a school in Cedar County, Iowa. The quiet rural community of West Branch and Springdale, away from the distractions of the city and the influences of less rigid standards of conduct, seemed to be an ideal location for such a school. Moreover, there were many Wilburite Quakers in that locality, under whose direction the school could be maintained. The local Quarterly Meeting immediately appointed a committee to build the schoolhouse, and in that very spring of 1890 the ground was broken on a beautiful site two and one-half miles southeast of West Branch. Benjamin Ellyson, a farmer residing in the neighborhood, spent the whole summer overseeing the erection of the two and one-half story building.

When the school opened in the fall, with Richard and Sarah Mott as Superintendent and Matron, there were over thirty students enrolled. During the early years, an average of nearly forty boys and girls attended the classes which ranged from elementary work through three years of high school.

It is the practice among Friends to have boarding-schools in which the boys and girls live together in a

wholesome, well-regulated atmosphere. At Scattergood, however, this custom was not strictly followed at first: children living in the neighborhood were permitted to sleep at their homes and attend the school as "day scholars". But this arrangement proved unsatisfactory and was abandoned. Students may now spend one week-end a term away from the school.

From three to seven students have graduated each year. Usually they have gone to the Barnesville Academy of the Ohio Yearly Meeting for their final year of high school. Now, however, with the elementary grades discontinued and the work of the school devoted to older pupils, the last year of high school has been added, and for two years the Scattergood Seminary has been accredited, the majority of the graduates going directly to college.

Scattergood has grown. The original large schoolhouse is still retained as the main building containing the girls' dormitory with its nine double beds, the senior girls' home-room, the room for the junior girls, the freshman and sophomore girls' room, and those of the two "lady-teachers"; the classrooms; the teachers' "den" in which the pupils may confer with their instructors, and which takes the place of the usual principal's office. The furnace room, laundry, and dining room, with its two oval tables, are in the basement. It is here that a few of the girls may help pay for their tuition of eighty-one dollars a term ($162 a year) by washing the

dishes. The boys and the "man-teacher" have their rooms in a special dormitory built in 1916.

In the fall of 1923, through the influence of the young people of the Yearly Meeting of Conservative Friends, the students of the school, both boys and girls, built a gymnasium on plans drawn up by Will Mott of Iowa City, chairman of the committee. The committee, appointed the year before by the Meeting to investigate the advisability of building a gymnasium, had reported in favor of building if funds could be raised. While the Meeting was at lunch in a large barn, Anna Mott told them why money was needed. The sum of one thousand dollars was raised by personal donation that day, and when the Yearly Meeting closed, fifteen hundred dollars had been pledged. The gymnasium, intended purely for exercise, not as a practice floor for intramural competition, is a one-room building, thirty-six by seventy feet. A scissors truss supports the roof, giving additional height to the basketball floor.

The most recent addition to the buildings of the seminary is the primary schoolhouse given to Scattergood last year by the Hickory Grove Monthly Meeting. Moved over near the main building and equipped with benches and tools, it now houses the manual training classes.

Around the school are many evidences of the work of the manual training classes. As well as repairing chairs and benches, the boys have made for the school a medicine chest, a well-planned magazine

case in the library, and a novel thirty-two hole mail-box for the upper hall in which each teacher and pupil has a compartment for turning in papers, returning corrected work, and for correspondence. The students may not bring newspapers or periodicals into the school, but the school subscribes to a number of interesting magazines which are kept in the library. The library contains several hundred books: last year a gift of fifty volumes of travel and biography was made to the school, and the Friends in Philadelphia allowed the Scattergood Seminary to order seventy-five volumes from the Friends' book store. The only fiction is that required for English work. A large glass-covered case on one side of the library contains a fascinating collection of stones, shells, petrified wood, moss, and fossils, mostly donated by Alva Smith.

Varied interests occupy the lives of the pupils at Scattergood. Debates within the school and literary society work are supplemented by series of slides borrowed from the State University and by an occasional lecturer. Every year the whole school enjoys an all-day picnic at Cedar Valley. Dancing, of course, is not allowed by the Quaker discipline. Although formerly even whistling and singing were frowned upon, in recent years the pupils are permitted to have mouth organs and radio music. Both the boys and the girls have organized for the purpose of governing the performance of certain duties about the school such as keeping the rooms neat and

clean and doing chores. Under this system of student government teachers do not stay in the classroom all the time.

Discipline is seldom needed, although some infractions are inevitable. One time, it is said, as a penalty for some offense, the boys had all been forbidden to go beyond the front gate of the school grounds. Waiting for mail long overdue is tedious and irksome, and the boys were very anxious to fetch it from West Branch — but the rule had been made. At last, however, youthful ingenuity found a way around the difficulty: the gate was lifted from its hinges and carried in front of the boys to the post-office where the letters were obtained and brought triumphantly to the school. The gate, swinging once more on its hinges, had not been passed.

The girls' student government sets the rules of dress. Bright colors are avoided, but the dresses are not drab. Sleeves must come to the elbow, just so they do not wrinkle when the arm is bent, and the length of skirts is set at from twelve to fourteen inches from the floor. They allow no piping, braid, or trimming except plain collars and cuffs of harmonizing color, and no buttons unless made useful by loops or buttonholes. The girls used to wear small bonnets when away from the school, but now they may wear plain colored hats with a band of the same color. Jewelry is not allowed, nor is silk, either in stockings or dresses. The boys' clothes

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN E. BRIGGS

THE SCATTERGOOD SEMINARY

need no special regulations; even the roll collar, which formerly had to be removed from the coats, is now left on.

Primarily a sectarian school, and under the direct supervision of the Meeting, the Scattergood academy has always stressed the religious side of the education of its pupils. Each student commits to memory a passage from the Bible every week. Besides the First-day and Fourth-day Meetings which the school attends, collection (assembly) is held twice each day — in the morning before the first class the Bible is read by a teacher, and the last thing in the evening before retiring the Bible reading is done by the Superintendent.

Scattergood has never been self-supporting. The neighborhood puts up fruit for the school, and barrels of fruit are shipped in by Whittier, Cold Creek, Earlham, and other neighborhoods of Friends connected with the school. Chickens, pigs, and cows are kept on the property (about ten acres), but this is the first year that they have had enough cows to make their own butter. The deficiency in finances is always made up by the Yearly Meeting and by personal donations: one man in the East gives three hundred dollars yearly; Herbert Hoover has shown his interest by subscribing some every year.

The period of sectarian academies in the history of Iowa education has passed. Only the names and faint recollections remain of the flourishing seminaries of fifty years ago. But the Scattergood Semi-

nary still survives. It has been in continuous operation since it was opened in 1890, except during two epidemics of scarlet fever and one whole year when there were not enough students present to pay for keeping the school open. With twenty-two pupils in residence there last year and with an accredited standing now, the school which bears the name of the Philadelphia Quaker who made it possible, bids fair to continue as a worthy example of an Iowa academy.

WINIFRED STARBUCK

Bert Hoover

On a summer afternoon in the early eighties a chubby-faced, bare-foot lad might have been seen looking for pretty stones and fossils along the gravelled embankment of the railroad track at West Branch. Picking up pebbles, rubbing them vigorously to make them shine, and moistening them with his tongue to see if they would sparkle would doubtless be considered dull pastime for the average boy. But for Herbert Hoover — "Bertie" he was called at home — it was a matter of pure delight. Collecting choice specimens of stones was his hobby. Dr. William H. Walker, the dentist, could point out the beauty and fine qualities of an agate, and the peculiar characteristics of a fossil coral. And these were things that interested Bert.

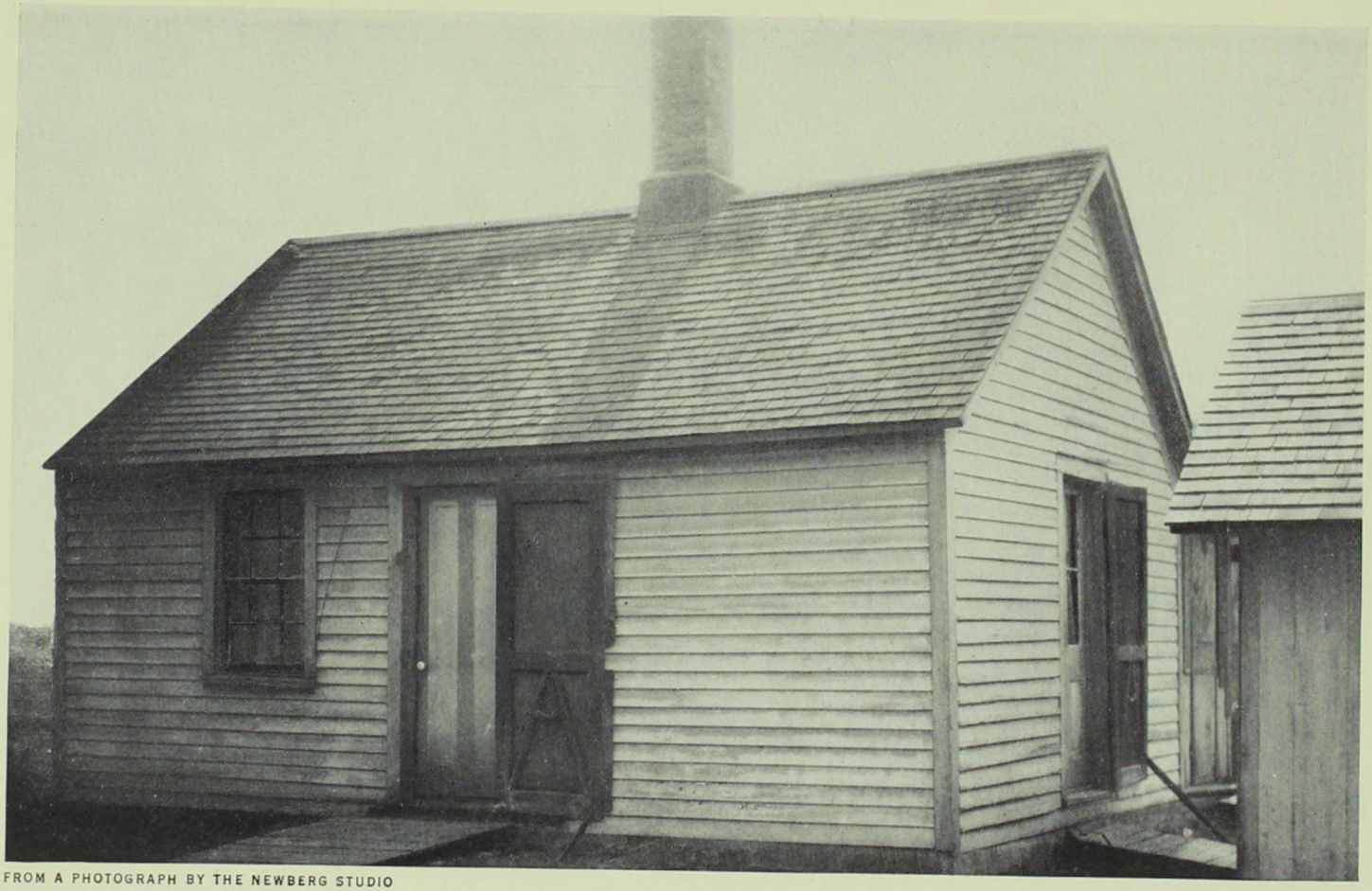
The boy's father and mother were Quakers, as were their parents and grandparents for several generations. His father, Jesse Hoover, the village blacksmith, was known for his stalwart character, his high ideals, and his strict adherence to the Quaker faith. Huldah Minthorn Hoover, his mother, was a gracious, womanly woman, a recorded minister of the Society of Friends, always ready to serve, and proud to associate with the most humble of the community. One might well say of her as Hamlin Garland has written of his own pioneer mother: "She

was neither witty, nor learned in books, nor wise in the ways of the world, but I contend that her life was noble. There was something in her unconscious heroism which transcends wisdom and the deeds of those who dwell in the rose-golden light of romance. Now that her life is rounded in the silence whence it came, its significance appears.''

The humble little two-room cottage in which Hoover was born and spent his early boyhood still stands on the bank of the west branch of Wapsinonoc Creek. In a little room seven feet wide and thirteen and a half feet long he first saw the light of day. It is now used for a tiny kitchen but it is open to the public and its owner, Mrs. Jennie Scellars, is proud of the fact that her home was the birthplace of Herbert Hoover.

The boyhood of Bert Hoover was not particularly romantic. He was a boy among boys — ''a reg'lar feller''. He went swimming and fishing like other boys, caught rabbits in a figure-four trap, shot pigeons and prairie chickens with a bow and arrow, watched a torch-light parade at a Republican rally, and sold old iron to earn money for fireworks on the Fourth of July. A record of his school attendance during the spring of 1882 when he was seven years old is still preserved in the beautiful penmanship of his teacher, Mrs. R. Anna Painter. And he left his name with kind sentiments plainly written in the autograph albums of his friends.

A. W. Jackson, an early resident of West Branch,



FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY THE NEWBERG STUDIO

THE BIRTHPLACE OF HERBERT HOOVER

remembers him as "round faced, chubby, serious, and pretty much in the way". By his teacher, Mrs. J. K. Carran, he is characterized as "industrious and determined". Whatever he did "he put his whole heart into, whether it was coasting down Cook's hill on his home-made sled, or diving into the old swimming hole down by the railroad track, or getting a hard lesson in school. He worked with all his might."

Another characteristic which he seems to have possessed as a boy was "keeping still when he has nothing to say." Even as a youngster he could express himself upon any subject that interested him; but he was never adept at "just making a talk for the sake of talking." He preferred to listen to the others if they had anything worth while to say; if not, he had something of his own to think about.

But Bert's boyhood days were not all filled with the boundless joys of youth. There were likewise days of hardship, of sadness and bereavement. When he was only six years old his father fell a victim of typhoid fever and died at the age of thirty-three. The family had just moved from the one-story cottage by the blacksmith shop into a two-story house behind the maples a little to the south. The estate was meager and the demands upon it were great. Mrs. Hoover turned to sewing: she was an excellent seamstress. Moreover, she was frequently called upon to minister at the Quaker meetings, for which she received no regular compensation but ac-

cepted occasional gifts from friends. By industry and economy she would have succeeded in holding the little family together but for her own untimely death, which occurred when Herbert was nine years old.

Completely orphaned, the lad found a home temporarily with his Uncle Allan and Aunt Millie Hoover on a farm near West Branch. The freedom of country life and the adventurous experience of the farm appealed to his youthful and exuberant nature. And his Aunt Millie's culinary ability appealed with equal strength to his ever increasing appetite. But there were also new duties and new responsibilities confronting him. Laurie Tatum, wise and friendly counselor who had often given him pennies and fatherly advice, was appointed guardian. He spoke to Bert about his conduct; he must be kind and brave and prudent, and help as much as he could on Uncle Allan's farm.

Uncle Allan and Aunt Millie made no distinction between Bert and their own son, Walter, of the same age. They awarded praise and blame with impartial justice and affection. Bert helped to bring in the wood, pumped water, learned to feed and harness the horses, and taught the young calves to drink from a pail.

When haying time came he conceived the idea of training one of the calves to draw a mowing machine. Uncle Allan heard of the plan but made no objection, so a harness was made for the calf. Next

a mowing machine was improvised with some boards and a cross-cut saw. Bert was the mechanic. When completed the machine "was a triumph. The wheels were borrowed from an old buggy, the framework was neatly sawed and nailed, and the steel cutting-edge, sharpened by patient toil with a file, actually moved back and forth like that of a big machine." Aunt Millie was called to admire it; Uncle Allan praised it highly. Then the calf was brought forth, fully equipped, and the traces were fastened to the whiffletree. Suddenly there was a commotion. The bawling calf, tail high in the air, tore through the barnyard. The mower crashed into a tree, the traces broke, and the calf escaped. The pride of boyish invention lay in a wreck against the trunk of an apple tree.

But the days spent on the farm were not all days of hilarity. There were busy days — days of training in industry and economy. The summer passed with its orderly cycle of work: the corn was plowed, the hay cut, the wheat and oats threshed, and the grain carried to the nearest mill for grinding on toll. Bert was too small to do a man's work, but he helped as much as he could. He observed that there was always plenty of work, and that the reward for service lay largely in the satisfaction of tasks well done.

If the influences of the first decade of a person's life determine the principal traits of his character, then Herbert Hoover owes much to his experiences

and early training at West Branch. And there seems to be considerable evidence that the boy was indeed father to the man. His boyhood days, with their joys and hardships, their lessons of industry and thrift, and their fine dreams of future success have borne abundant fruit.

J. A. Swisher

Boyhood in Iowa

I prefer to think of Iowa as I saw it through the eyes of a ten-year-old boy — and the eyes of all ten-year-old Iowa boys are or should be filled with the wonders of Iowa's streams and woods, of the mystery of growing crops. His days should be filled with adventure and great undertakings, with participation in good and comforting things. I was taken farther West from Iowa when I was ten, to Oregon and thence to that final haven of Iowans — California — where I have clung ever since. Some one may say that these recollections of Iowa are only the illusions of forty years after, but I know better, for I have been back and checked it up. I was told that when I went back everything would have shrunk up and become small and ordinary. For instance, there was Cook's Hill — that great long hill where, on winter nights, we slid down at terrific speeds with our tummies tight to home-made sleds. I've seen it several times since; it's a good hill and except for the older method of thawing out frozen toes with ice water the sport needs no modern improvement. The swimming hole under the willows down by the railroad bridge is still operating efficiently, albeit

[These personal recollections of boyhood experiences at West Branch, Iowa, were related by Herbert Hoover in an informal address before the Iowa Society of Washington on November 10, 1927.— THE EDITOR.]

modern mothers probably compel their youngsters to take a bath to get rid of clean and healthy mud when they come home. The hole still needs to be deepened however. It is hard to keep from pounding the mud with your hands and feet when you shove off for the thirty feet of a cross-channel swim. And there were the woods down by the Burlington track. The denudation of our forest hasn't reached them even yet, and I know there are rabbits still being trapped in cracker boxes held open by a figure four at the behest of small boys at this very time. I suspect, however, that the conservationists have invented some kind of a closed season before now.

One of the bitterest days of my life was in connection with a rabbit. Rabbits fresh from a figure-four trap early on a cold morning are wiggly rabbits, and in the lore of boys of my time it is better to bring them home alive. My brother, being older, had surreptitiously behind the blacksmith shop read in the *Youth's Companion* full directions for rendering live rabbits secure. I say "surreptitiously", for mine was a Quaker family unwilling in those days to have youth corrupted with stronger reading than the Bible, the encyclopedia, or those great novels where the hero overcomes the demon rum. Soon after he had acquired this higher learning on rabbits, he proceeded to instruct me to stand still in the cold snow and to hold up the rabbit by its hind feet while with his not over-sharp knife he proposed to puncture two holes between the sinews and

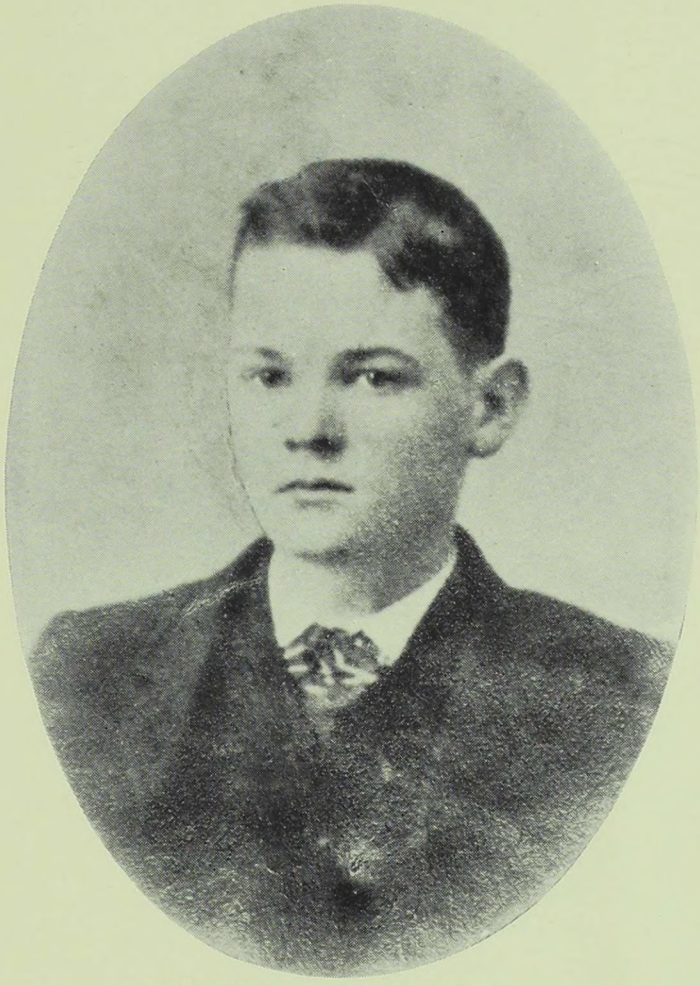
back knee joints of the rabbit, through which holes he proposed to tie a string and thus arrive at complete security. Upon the introduction of the operation the resistance of this rabbit was too much for me. I was not only blamed for its escape all the way home and for weeks afterwards, but continuously over the last forty years. I have thought sometimes that I would write the *Youth's Companion* and suggest they make sure that this method is altered. For I never see rabbit tracks across the snowy fields that I do not have a painful recollection of it all.

There were also at times pigeons in the timber and prairie chickens in the hedges. With the efficient instruction of a real live American Indian boy from a neighboring Indian school on the subject of bows and arrows, we sometimes by firing volleys in battalions were able to bring down a pigeon or a chicken. The Ritz Hotel has never yet provided game of such wondrous flavor as this bird plucked and half cooked over the small boys' camp fire. And in those days there were sun and cat fish to be had. Nor did we possess the modern equipment in artificial lures, tackle assembled from the steel of Damascus, the bamboos of Siam, tin of Bangkok, the lacquer of China, or silver of Colorado. We were still in that rude but highly social condition of using a willow pole with a butcher string line and hooks ten for a dime. Our compelling lure was a segment of an angle worm and our incantation was to spit on the

bait. We lived in the time when fish used to bite instead of strike and we knew it bit when the cork bobbed. And moreover, we ate the fish.

And in the matter of eating, my recollections of Iowa food are of the most distinguished order. You may say that is the appetite of youth, but I have also checked this up. At later stages in my life, I had opportunity to eat both of the presumably very best food in the world, as well of the very worst. When I ate the worst, my thoughts went back to Iowa, and when I ate of the best I was still sure that Aunt Millie was a better cook. Some thirty years after this time, in visiting Aunt Millie, I challenged that dear old lady, then far along in years, to cook another dinner of the kind she provided on Sabbath Days when we were both youthful. She produced that dinner, and I am able to say now that if all the cooks of Iowa are up to Aunt Millie's standard, then the gourmets of the world should leave Paris for Iowa, at least for Cedar County.

I mentioned the Burlington track. It was a wonderful place. The track was ballasted with glacial gravels where on industrious search you discovered gems of agate and fossil coral which could with infinite backaches be polished on the grindstone. Their fine points came out wonderfully when wet, and you had to lick them with your tongue before each exhibit. I suppose that engineering has long since destroyed this inspiration to young geologists by using mass production crushed rock.



COURTESY OF MRS. CHARLES STRATTON

HERBERT HOOVER

My earliest realization of the stir of national life was the torch parade in the Garfield campaign. On that occasion, I was not only allowed out that night, but I saw the lamps being filled and lighted. There was no great need for urging voters in our village — there was a Democrat in the village. He occasionally fell to the influence of liquor, therefore in the esteem of our group he represented all the forces of evil. At times he relapsed to goodness in the form of rations of a single gum drop to the small boys who did errands at his store. He also bought the old iron from which the financial resources were provided for firecrackers on the Fourth of July. He was, therefore, tolerated and he served well and efficiently as a moral and political lesson.

But Iowa through the eyes of a ten-year-old boy is not all adventure or high living. Iowa in those years, as in these years, was filled with days of school — and who does not remember with a glow that sweet-faced lady who with infinite patience and kindness drilled into us those foundations of all we know to-day? And they were days of chores and labor. I am no supporter of factory labor for children but I have never joined with those who clamored against proper work of children on farms outside their school hours. And I speak from the common experience of most Iowa children of my day in planting corn, hoeing gardens, learning to milk, sawing wood, and the other proper and normal occupations for boys. We had no need of Montessori schools to

teach us application. But of more purpose I can bespeak for the strong and healthy bodies which come from it all. Nor was Iowa of those days without its tragedies. Medical science of those times was powerless against the diseases which swept the countryside. My own parents were among the victims.

There was an entirely different economic setting of farm life in Iowa in those days. I am not stating to you that I had at that time any pretence of economics or the farm problem. Upon Uncle Allan's farm where I lived, we did know of the mortgage as some dreadful damper on youthful hopes of things that could not be bought. I do have a vivid recollection that the major purpose of a farm was to produce a living right on the spot for the family. I know by experience that a family then produced all of its own vegetables, carried its grain to the nearest mill for grinding on toll, cut and hauled its own fuel from the wonderful woods ten miles away, and incidentally gathered walnuts. The family wove its own carpets and some of its clothes, made its own soap, preserved its own meat and fruit and vegetables, got its sweetness from sorghum and honey. These families consumed perhaps eighty per cent of the product of their land. Twenty per cent of it was exchanged for the few outside essentials and to pay interest on the mortgage. When prices rose and fell on the Chicago market, they only affected twenty per cent of the product of the farm. I know, and you know, that to-day as the result of the

revolution brought about by machinery and improved methods of planting and breeding animals, and what-not, eighty per cent of the product of the farm must go to the market. When the price of these things wabbles in Chicago, it has four times the effect on that family on the farm than it did in those days. If prices are high, they mean comfort and automobiles; if prices are low, they mean increasing debt and privation. I am not recommending the good old days, for while the standards of living in food and clothing and shelter were high enough for anybody's health and comfort, there was but little left for the other purposes of living.

That is probably one reason why the people of Iowa of that time put more of their time in religious devotion than most of them do now. It certainly did not require as much expenditure as their recreation does to-day. However, those of you who are acquainted with the Quaker faith, and who know the primitive furnishing of the Quaker meeting-house of those days, the solemnity of the long hours of meeting awaiting the spirit to move some one, will know the intense restraint required in a ten-year-old boy not even to count his toes. All this may not have been recreation, but it was strong training in patience. And that reminds me that I have a brand of Iowa still upon me, for one of my earliest recollections of that great and glorious State was stepping barefooted on a red hot iron chip at my father's blacksmith shop, the scar of which I still carry.

But there are few scars that people carry from the State of Iowa. The good Lord originally made it the richest stretch of agricultural land that ever blessed any one sovereign government. It was populated by the more adventurous and the more courageous, who fought their way along the ever-extending frontier. They builded there in so short a period as seventy-five years a people who to-day enjoy the highest standard of living, the highest average intelligence, the highest average degree of education that has ever blessed a single commonwealth. There is no man or woman born of Iowa who is not proud of his native State.

HERBERT HOOVER

The Community Clubs

During pioneer days, members of the Society of Friends established several closely related neighborhoods in the vicinity of West Branch and Springdale. Developing under the influence of Quaker ideals, these communities have always been known for their friendly coöperation. In more recent years this spirit of unity has become crystalized in the definite form of community clubs.

For more than a decade and a half West Branch has fostered a "good fellowship" organization of which every one in the community is a member. In the spring of 1911 at a meeting of seven persons, four of whom were teachers, the West Branch Sociability Association was originated. Mrs. Carry Montgomery, the wife of a local minister, appears to have been "the moving spirit" and largely responsible for its organization. The first officers elected were Mrs. Montgomery, president; Walter Miles, first vice president; F. B. Tyler, second vice president; Mrs. Eva Penrose, secretary; and Rev. E. A. Lang, treasurer. At first the meetings were held at the home of the president. Later they were held in the parlors of the various churches.

The purpose of the organization as stated in its constitution was "to provide wholesome entertainment, promote good fellowship, and encourage civic

improvement in the community." Any individual who should "feel in sympathy with the purpose of this organization" was "eligible for membership" and could become a member by signing the constitution.

Programs of literary nature were usually held, after which refreshments were served. Although these meetings were open to the public and every one was invited, attendance at first was small. During the World War interest was directed into other channels and for a time the club was discontinued.

In 1919, however, interest was revived and the club was reorganized under the name of the West Branch Community Club. In a campaign for membership at that time a public meeting was held, the constitution and by-laws were read, and the presiding officer asked all who wished to become members to stand. The entire audience arose. Officers were elected by acclamation.

Since the date of reorganization interest in the Community Club has continued to grow. When the new school building was erected the Community Club equipped the assembly room and since then the meetings have been held at the schoolhouse. Meetings occur monthly throughout the school year.

Chautauquas, lecture courses, farmers' institutes, and Fourth of July celebrations are fostered by the Community Club. Some indication of the enthusiasm with which such enterprises are undertaken may be gleaned from the minutes of the business meet-

ings. On one occasion the secretary wrote: "The Committee then gave in detail the Talent arranged for the Chautauqua to be held June 29 to July 4th inclusive. Motion carried to hold a Chautauqua Booster Social in the opera house June 7th." The president then named a "committee on preparing Banners for the Automobile Booster Run for Chautauqua."

At Christmas time each year a three-day Community Christmas celebration is fostered by the club. For this the entire town is appropriately decorated, special attention being given to the decoration of the business district. A feature of the celebration is usually a series of athletic contests of general community interest. This may be followed by a Christmas pageant, a free motion picture show, or an evening of Christmas music. One evening is always devoted to the children, Santa Claus figuring prominently in that program.

Another important activity of the club is to foster an annual community picnic. In commenting upon the approach of this annual event a local editor some years ago explained that "the executive committee is anxious that it should be in fact a community picnic, a community holiday, when everybody will come together for a day of recreation, sociability, and fun — a day that will unite our community more nearly into one big family. Such days make life just a little more joyful and our community a better community."

Activities of the Community Club during recent months have been particularly interesting. When Herbert Hoover was nominated by the Republican party as its candidate for President of the United States, the West Branch Community Club fostered a celebration such as had never before been held in that town. Plans are now being made to hold the annual community picnic this year at a time when Mr. Hoover can be present, and it is anticipated that thousands of people will attend.

Whenever a program or celebration is undertaken by the Community Club every one, regardless of church affiliation, political views, or individual idiosyncrasies joins in the undertaking. Coöperation and enthusiasm characterize all of its activities. Commercial Clubs and Chambers of Commerce are common, and their aims in fostering better commercial relations are well defined. Numerous luncheon and "service" clubs have their special purposes. But a Community Club, as such, is as unique as it is effective. Functioning wholly independently of commercial, religious, or fraternal interests, it serves as a vehicle for the conduct of common enterprises. It fills an important place in the intricate needs of community affairs. This is true not only of the club at West Branch but in neighboring communities where similar clubs have been organized.

A few years ago the village of Springdale was in need of better school accommodations. The idea of consolidation was suggested. Citizens realized that

a community club would secure unity of action in this matter as no other organization could. Accordingly, a club was formed, modelled after that of West Branch, and the consolidation was effected. This called for a new building and a considerable expenditure of funds, but the Community Club was amply able to cope with the situation. A remarkably well-equipped building was planned and erected, much to the credit of the club and to the entire community.

Recently community clubs have been organized at Cedar Valley, Downey, and perhaps in other neighboring towns. The most significant feature of these clubs is the fact that they are really community organizations. Every one in the community is presumed to be a member: to live in the community is to be a member of the Community Club, and any one may participate in the activities if he chooses.

J. A. Swisher

Comment by the Editor

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Any neighborhood, village, or city is much like any other, being composed of people who live in houses arranged in some kind of geometrical pattern. Midwestern towns have so many features of similarity that each one is more or less typical of them all. The frame houses are so box-like, the railroad water-tank and the grain elevators are so inevitable, the streets are so certain to be at right angles, the churches are so sure to have steeples, and even the gardens are so likely to be filled with peonies and dahlias that superficial observers are impressed, if not oppressed, by the monotonous regularity. In contrast with the natural charm of the landscape, not many Iowa towns can be described as picturesque.

Nevertheless every community has its own character just as each individual possesses a distinctive personality. It is so easy and natural to generalize and so difficult to differentiate that the subtle peculiarities of a locality are usually overlooked; yet in the historical background of every community there are invariably certain conditions which have determined its physical features and imparted local variations to the spiritual atmosphere of the place. The

location of a railroad was once a matter of life and death importance to many an Iowa town, and in the near future paved highways and airports may be equally vital factors. If Irish Catholics instead of Quakers had settled at Springdale the temperament of that neighborhood would have been quite different. Some towns have grown and prospered while others have witnessed no material change in thirty years: some display the bustle of enterprise while others have an air of drowsy contentment. Nor are population and general welfare always due to fortuitous circumstances. The natural thrift, intelligence, ambition, moral standards, and civic ideals of the people are far more essential elements of community character than the obvious characteristics.

A TREASURY OF MEMORIES

In the past of a community lie the sources of its present individuality. The ethnic origin of its citizens, industrial development, dramatic episodes, religious influences, and dynamic personalities all leave traces in the body politic like the passing of the seasons is indelibly recorded in the trunk of a tree. Indeed, the forces of local environment shape the life and habits of the individual no less than the group: it is the size and shape of the cells which determine the appearance of the annual rings. Outward appearances offer few clues to past experience. But in the memories of men and women who have lived long in the same locality are stored the intang-

ible resources of their neighborhood. Whoever would know the true spirit of a village, city, or State must draw upon this treasury of memories.

Fortunate is the community that has a custodian of local tradition, a treasurer of historical wealth, for he can interpret the significance of present conditions. The Springdale school and the West Branch Community Club express something of the temper of this generation, but the deeper nature of that community is revealed in the recollections of Laurie Tatum, Willard Maxson, and Mrs. Ellen K. Mather. To have listened to their stories of old John Brown, of Quaker meetings, or of neighborly endeavor is to have gained a truer appreciation of the character and environment of the founders of Springdale and West Branch.

J. E. B.

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