



*(courtesy the author)*

## “Miss Paul” Hits the Glittering Chautauqua Trail

by Elaine Carol Main

Can all the glitter of a Michael Jackson concert and the excitement of a Fourth of July fireworks display and the fervor of a religious revival meeting be thrown together into one event? Ask any Iowan who remembers Chautauqua, and the answer is an enthusiastic “Yes!”

Chautauqua circuits once made Iowa summers memorable. Chautauqua performers

traveled from tent to tent throughout Iowa and brought live entertainment to towns, large and small. There were lecturers on all types of topics, musical groups, vocalists, and acting groups.

Chautauqua was a booking service for flesh-and-blood entertainers and educators. The entertainers were not only booked into small towns by Chautauqua organizers, they were delivered in package deals. Generally, a community paid in advance for a three- to seven-



day cycle of performers. Then the booking agents would send elaborate publicity and promotional materials — banners, posters, broadsides — in advance of the arrival of the entertainers. Finally, the tent would arrive. Within its confines, small-town Americans quickly forgot that they were perched on slab benches or folding chairs borrowed from a local funeral parlor. They sat enthralled as the performances began and their world was broadened by the lecturers, musicians, vocalists, and — most important for one young woman from Springville, Iowa — dramatic readers.

That young woman was Margaret D. Paul, and she was awed by the way that dramatic readers hypnotized audiences. She saw how a good Chautauqua reader could take the words of a book, add voice fluctuations and pauses and gestures, and create a gripping story that carried an audience wherever the reader wished.

There was power in dramatic reading.

That power which could be created by interpreting the printed word appealed to Margaret. She was a short, slight person, but she knew that when she “recited” she had power. She could make an audience laugh or cry, and could show them far places even she had never visited.

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Margaret had always been fascinated by the power of drama. Ten years younger than the other children in the family, Margaret had amused herself through a lot of empty time as a youngster and had spent countless hours in front of a mirror “play acting,” reciting, and delivering speeches.

In addition to a natural dramatic ability, she had an unusual amount of gumption and ini-



*The Springville Methodist Church's Bethany Circle baseball team of 1904. Margaret Paul is third from the right in the back row. (courtesy the author)*





*The Class of 1904 — Springville High School. Margaret Paul is on the extreme right in the second row. (courtesy the author)*

tiative. She had been the one who had made an unassisted triple play when the members of the Springville Methodist Church's Bethany Circle challenged the Presbyterian women to a baseball game. Margaret had also written the twenty-one stanzas of her high school class poem that complained about their unjust treatment by the school board. "If these are the happiest days of our lives, then life is a battle and pleasures few," she concluded.

Margaret took as much elocution training as Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, offered, and obtained a certificate from its School of Oratory in 1908. The certificate qualified her to share her recitation and dra-

matic reading talents with young people, and Margaret taught in Linn County (Iowa) school systems, such as Springville District No. 4, the Independent District of Prairie Valley, and Marion School Township.

Using skills honed at Cornell, she began presenting programs of readings. By the summer of 1907 Margaret had acquired enough glowing endorsements from satisfied audiences to warrant printing an advertising folder. "Testimonials" came from Iowa churches in Central City, Marion, Mt. Vernon, Traer, Viola, and her hometown — Springville. The advertising folder touted her ability as a reader, impersonator, and elocutionist and



listed forty possible readings, including "The Parson's Butterfly." A second brochure, dated 1908, contained endorsements from Iowa towns even farther afield. A third advertising brochure contained reference to the Iowa Lyceum and Chautauqua Bureau of Ottumwa. The booking and management arrangement must have been successful because a fourth advertising brochure included endorsements from audiences in a four-state region — Iowa, Kansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota. She now offered impersonations and readings in humor, pathos and dialect, musical recitations, and sacred recitals.

Meanwhile, summer Chautauqua performers were playing to full tents in small towns across the country. Iowa, always proud of its interest in education and "betterment," was a fertile field for the Chautauqua circuits. Indeed, it was a Cedar Rapids man, Keith Vawter, who had founded a top booking agency. One of his headliners and highest-paid performers was Leland Powers, a man who entranced audiences with his recitations and readings. Powers commanded a fee of \$200 a night.

Margaret was probably in at least one audience that applauded the Bostonian after a program of "monacting." Powers, already popular and in great demand for his oral reading performances, was unique through monacting. It was an invention which would have intrigued Margaret. In monacting, Powers singly ("mono-") took all parts in a dramatic play ("-acting"). Monacting was better than watching a stage full of actors, according to one Powers admirer:

*I can see him now — a distinguished, scholarly gentleman in evening clothes, who by a simple change of voice and manner portrayed all the characters in Sheridan's Rivals so distinctly that they have lived in my memory these many years, above any stage characterization with*

### Readings

1 Spreading the News	22 Jane Jones
2 The Slow Race	23 Mother Sez
3 The Angel and the Shepherds	24 Our Hired Girl
4 The Resurrection	25 The Elf Child
5 The Soldier of the Empire	26 The Shave Store
6 The Legend Beautiful	27 When the World Busts Through
7 The Worker in Stone	28 The Elopement
8 The Going of the White Swan	29 A Fragile Parting
9 Judia	30 Auf Wieder Sehen
10 Our Folks	31 Aux Italiens
11 The Artist's Secret	32 Lecture by One of the Sex
12 Hagar	33 Sweet Girl Graduate
13 A Record of Bad Luck	34 Studying for the Contest
14 A Telephone Romance	35 A Day of Precious Penalties
15 Keeping a Seat at the Benefit	36 A Model Story
16 The Minister's Call	37 Minty Malviny
17 The Lie	38 The Cushville Hop
18 The Three Stages	39 Anzeline
19 A Love'y Scene	40 Money Musk
20 The Usual Way	41 Just be Glad
21 Scart o' Dyin'	42 The Farson's Butterfly

*Miss Paul's program of readings as it appeared in an advertising folder of 1907. (courtesy the author)*

*costume and make-up.*

At a time when churches disapproved of dramatic plays and considered the theatre evil, Powers had invented a way of making the works of playwrights — even Shakespeare — widely popular again. His skill at character acting was labeled "inimitable genius," and he was called one of the very few real artists in the field. Margaret's educated but conservative parents frowned upon the theatre, but they endorsed the benefits of Chautauqua and included Powers' monacting among the benefits.

Powers had ten years' experience giving



public readings and lecturing at famous Boston private speech schools when he began his own school, the Leland Powers School of the Spoken Word. It was located in the New Century Building at 177 Huntington Avenue, in downtown Boston. The site was also close to his alma mater, Boston University School of Oratory, and two private schools that offered speech, Emerson College and Curry College.

To hone her recitation skills even further, Margaret decided to risk her savings on a year of study at the Leland Powers School of the Spoken Word. Not only was she applying to a school with a strange-sounding name but one

which was so far from Iowa that it was hardly known in the Midwest. Margaret hadn't been outside of Iowa, much less to the East Coast, yet that cultural center, Boston, sounded like the Promised Land.

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Margaret was accepted at Powers' school in 1913, and that was no mean feat. The school was selective and expected students to show talent and progress.

Since the school had begun, ten years earlier, enrollment had been limited to eighty-four students, divided into six sections. Originally, Powers and his wife, Carol Hoyt Powers, had taught all the classes. Later, graduates were employed to teach additional sections, and Margaret was instructed by six different teachers.

Students worked hard. During her year at Powers' school, Margaret sent weekly letters to her mother, Anna Ford (Mrs. George) Paul, who lived on a farm ten miles northeast of Cedar Rapids, outside Springville, Iowa. Margaret reported that classes lasted from 8:50 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. five days a week. Saturdays were class days until noon, but Mondays were free. Students "have something different every hour every day of the week," she wrote. "They certainly give us a great deal to do."

The school year began in October. From that time until Margaret completed her work in April, the pace increased. In January she believed that more work had been "piled on" than during the previous term. A considerable amount of work was assigned for vacation periods as well. She took books along with her on a visit to relatives over winter term break and spent a considerable amount of time memorizing and writing two papers. Students had to attend classes "right up to the last minute," even during examination week at the end of April.

Powers' unique philosophy of speech educa-

## Margaret D. Paul



## Reader, Elocutionist Impersonator

Under Management of  
Iowa Lyceum and Chautauqua Bureau  
OTTUMWA, - IOWA

The cover of a brochure put out by the Iowa Lyceum and Chautauqua Bureau. (courtesy the author)



tion aimed at three lofty goals: "stimulating the cause of the material presented, developing the organic means of presentation, and [developing a] better knowledge of the right modes of execution." To be responsive to literary material, he encouraged students to free their voices and bodies from habits.

Powers was a forerunner of progressive education and believed students learned by doing and discovery. He also believed that a good voice was latent in every individual. His voice training simply helped students free their voices through clear articulation, the elimination of bad habits, the easing of tension, and the developing of flexible pitch, rate, volume, and vocal quality. Teachers demonstrated gestures and positions and good vocal production, but mostly the students learned by doing and discovering.

To become good platform readers or interpreters, the students were instructed to step into the literature they read and attempt to "embody the spirit and essence of the literature." Teachers asked questions to help the students concentrate on the material, analyze it, and determine the author's purpose. It was a big order.

Performances were valuable learning tools. Teachers gave recitals, demonstrating what the students were practicing. The students were cautioned to be original in their work, however, and not mimic what they saw. In addition, students were expected to "appear" once a month, but Margaret reported the schedule often wasn't that frequent. These recitals were sometimes in front of small groups, sometimes before the whole school. The year ended with a week of graduation recitals which everyone attended.

Margaret had a fan in Mrs. Powers. The school's co-founder praised Margaret's January performance. In February, Mrs. Powers requested that Margaret perform a pantomime so the whole student body could see it.

The school offered unusual social events for

## Press and Personal Comments

### RUSSEL, KANS.

Miss Paul renders her selections, not only for their entertaining qualities, but for their purity and refinement, as well as that deep educating influence which creeps in through smiles and tears and makes humanity broader, happier and better.

—Russel Reformer.



The Lost Word

### MOBRIDGE, S. D.

We were especially pleased with Miss Paul's rendering of Van Dyke's "The Lost Word," a selection from "Ben Hur," and Scotch dialect pieces. We hope to have the pleasure of welcoming her again in Mobridge.

H. G. BOOTH,  
Pastor Congregational Church.

### IPSWICH, S. D.

Her manner is pleasing and natural, and her work full of force and appreciation.

EARLE V. PIERCE,  
Pastor First Baptist Church.

### DEWITT, IOWA

Her supreme charm is in her naturalness. Her voice is a contralto, mellow and flexible. She throws herself wholly into her subject with the result of objectivity, that grand desideratum in a public speaker.

Wm. GARDINER. Pastor Congregational Church.

### MT. VERNON, IOWA

In the interpretation of gay and lightly sentimental moods, Miss Paul proved herself a mistress.

She was especially successful in reading to music in the last selection—From the *Cornellian* (Cornell College Weekly.)



Money Musk

*Endorsements from Miss Paul's audiences in three states as they appeared in yet another advertising brochure. (courtesy the author)*

its students. A costume party held in January featured a trained hippopotamus, trick mule, snake charmer, strong woman, tightrope walkers, bareback rider, Siamese twins, minstrel show, dwarf dance, and the mysterious Dip of Death. "It cost less than a formal party," Margaret concluded.

The annual senior party was held just a month later, on Valentine's Day. Sponsored by the junior class, it was an event similar to the previous month's successful party. Drawing on a circus theme, the party featured one big show ring, sideshows, and two fortune-tellers. Circus stands served refreshments of sandwiches, wienies, ice cream cones, lemonade, popcorn,



and peanuts. Margaret served on the arrangements committee, although a bout with mumps kept her from participating in some of the planning.

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Today, Boston's Prudential Center dominates Huntington Avenue. In 1913, however, Huntington Avenue was the "Quartier Latin," a red-blooded world of student life with a Bohemian atmosphere. Powers' school was one of many educational institutions located nearby. Along the avenue were the public library, art museum, symphony, opera, and recital and lecture halls. As one observer described the avenue, "Every second portal is ready to swing inward to the explorer for truth — theology or theosophy, medicine or melody, religion or relaxation."

Many students lived along Huntington, and at 196, Suite 4, roomed Margaret and another Powers' student, Miss Lenore Riehman. Coincidentally, Miss Riehman was also from Iowa — the small town of Grand Mound, only fifty-five miles east of Margaret's home. The two were a good match.

Their suite was actually a room and bath. "It is upstairs, of course," Margaret noted. "Everything is, here." It was a spacious front room with bay window, and contained a large fireplace with mantle and mirror, two single beds that converted into "sanitary couches covered with couch covers," a chiffonier, library table, morris chair, baby grand piano, mission rocker, and armchair. The bathroom offered "hot and cold water all the time."

The women had laundry privileges in the building's kitchen. "There are three big sinks or marble tubs," Margaret wrote. "Above each are hot and cold water faucets. Then there is a drain in each, so all one has to do is to wash; there is no carrying water at all. We use Miss Mellish (landlady)'s washboard, of course. We also use her irons on a gas range like Aunt Jen's."

Wet laundry could be hung outdoors, where "we are no more exposed than you are when you hang them on the porch," she assured her mother. During March their house was "done over" — walls papered, rugs sent to the cleaner, and floors varnished. The results pleased the women, although the work took longer than they had been led to expect. They put up with the disorder and mess in exchange for reduced rent.

Even the regular rent was reasonable at \$3.50 per person per week, and the location of their house was ideal. It was only a block from Powers' school and five blocks from the Boston Students' Union, where they could get splendid meals — breakfast and dinner — for \$3.00 per week. The women made their own lunches, enjoying Boston's delicatessens, which were unlike food shops around Springfield. "That's what Aunt Jen had in Chicago, you know, where you can get anything you want in the eating line," Margaret explained.

Mail was delivered four times a day, and sometimes the tube in the wall brought the announcement of a parcel post delivery: "Package here; please come down and sign for Miss Paul." The packages were usually from home, and Margaret would use the food inside to repay others' hospitality. Often the packages contained "Rocks," those substantial Iowa cookies that shipped and stored well. The other temptations in these packages were nuts, and they provided a ready excuse for candy-making. Miss Riehman had a chafing dish. Margaret furnished the nuts, and Miss Riehman purchased sugar (at five cents a pound) and chocolate, and together they made fudge.

Sunday always included dinner at the Student Union, preceded by church at one of Boston's many edifices. Just two blocks from their room was the mammoth mother church of the new Christian Science denomination. "It is the largest in the world and cost over \$2 million," Margaret reported. Chimes from the church were beautiful and often ordered their



day, sometimes playing for as long as a half hour.

During the year, Margaret visited Phillips Brooks' Episcopal church, the Baptist church of "famous Dr. (Orrin Philip) Gifford" in Brookline, a Brookline Methodist church, and a Jewish synagogue. She also worshipped in Widow Lettis Bedgood's 1724 pew in the Old North Church, famous for its lantern signal to Paul Revere. However, she was regular enough in attending one Sunday School class that she presented a recitation at their fundraising program. The class netted \$25 from the project and presented Margaret with a bouquet of thirty red and white carnations.

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To a young woman from Iowa, the Boston area offered much in the way of sightseeing, and the city was a cultural treasure chest. Margaret sampled much of what the 1913-14 season offered. She attended a theatrical production of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. She was in the closing night's audience of the moving picture *Les Miserables* after its three-month run. In January two dozen people from the school attended a performance by Ethel Barrymore, and in February Margaret heard the Shakespearean performer, Sir J. Forbes Robertson, whom she labeled "the greatest English actor," and Lady Robertson, who played opposite her husband. She went to the symphony and attended library lectures.

Suffrage for women was an issue that generated a great deal of heated discussion in 1913. In October, even as the members of the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association held their annual meeting and urged support for an amendment to the state's constitution that would allow woman's suffrage, Margaret attended a suffrage meeting in Boston. Three speakers she heard were: the Rev. Samuel Crothers, a Cambridge Unitarian pastor who would author *Meditations on Votes for Women* the following

year; Belle Case LaFollette, an editor, writer, and suffrage activist, who was the first woman law graduate of the University of Wisconsin; and Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the dramatic and controversial English suffragette.

On May 3, 1914, Margaret joined a suffrage parade. "I don't know if anything will be thrown at us or not, but we will risk it," she wrote. Such fears were not groundless. The previous year, forty persons were hospitalized when five thousand women marched in Washington, D.C., and there were reports of angry, jeering men slapping the demonstrators, spitting at them, and poking at them with lighted cigars. Fortunately, the Boston parade was a great nonviolent success, "and I'm glad I went."

Society life in Boston revolved around afternoon tea. It was more than a coffee break; it was a Boston institution. Margaret's first Boston tea was an Iowa affair, a reunion of twenty Cornell College alumni in Winchester, eight miles from the city. That meant a ten-cent, hour-and-a-half ride by public cars and subways with changes in Cambridge and Arlington. The event was formal, and guests stood and ate — with gloves and hats on. "They served tea or cocoa with sandwiches, cake, and salted nuts, and you could have all you wanted of each," she noted.

There was much to see in Boston — Bunker Hill Monument with its 994 steps, Navy Yard, the USS *Constitution* or "Old Ironsides," the State Capitol Building, Paul Revere's House, and Old North Church and its cemetery. She copied down the messages from one of its gravestones:

As You are now,  
So once was I;  
As I am now,  
You soon will be,  
So think on death  
And follow me.



She reported that someone had written beneath in chalk:

*To follow you,  
I'm not content,  
Unless I know first  
Where you went.*

\* \* \*

Margaret could afford only one year of study at the Leland Powers School of the Spoken Word, and she felt that much was a luxury. The year in Boston had been great fun. It was a "pleasant year of spending. I hate to think of earning and hoarding again."

She was now ready for the summer Chautauqua circuits, but during the remainder of the year she planned to teach. Halfway through the Boston year her lifetime teaching certificate had arrived from Des Moines. That was helpful because her previous teaching stints at Springville, Prairie Valley, and Marion had required annual and semiannual approvals. She commented on the receipt of her lifetime teaching certificate in the following manner: "This fact will be of interest to no one, however, unless I should decide to apply for some school, so you need not publish it." She did apply for positions. By April Margaret had filed three applications for the following school year.

Epworth Seminary seemed interested in her application. It was an institution with a Protestant history (Methodist and Presbyterian), established in 1857. The community of Epworth was located thirteen miles west of Dubuque, Iowa.

"Is \$50 a month plus room and board enough for next year?" Margaret asked her mother. "The Principal of Epworth Seminary said he thought they could give that."

Epworth had advantages. It was close to home. It had a seminary atmosphere. She could plan her own curriculum. And the principal was from Cornell College, her alma

mater, and had spoken favorably about her application.

Yet Margaret wrestled with the thought that she could get something better by waiting longer. She also knew she could earn more by moving further west or remaining in the East. She realized, however, that there were not many openings for teaching speech and drama, her specialties.

Powers' advice about her future carried weight. He flattered her by offering to hire her as a teacher or reader. He believed as a public teacher she should be earning \$700 or \$800, which was more than Epworth was offering, and on the side she could give recitals under a private manager.

She sent her parents a copy of the possible Epworth contract, cautioning them not to "say anything about it to anyone, for it's nobody's business." That was good advice. Although she hadn't expected the Epworth electors to vote on her application until May 1, she received their rejection before the end of April. Epworth Seminary could not hire an English teacher who had not earned a college diploma. Margaret's studies at Cornell College and the Leland Powers School of the Spoken Word proved insufficient.

That forced her into action.

"I have joined an agency, so I will get a position of some kind alright," she wrote.

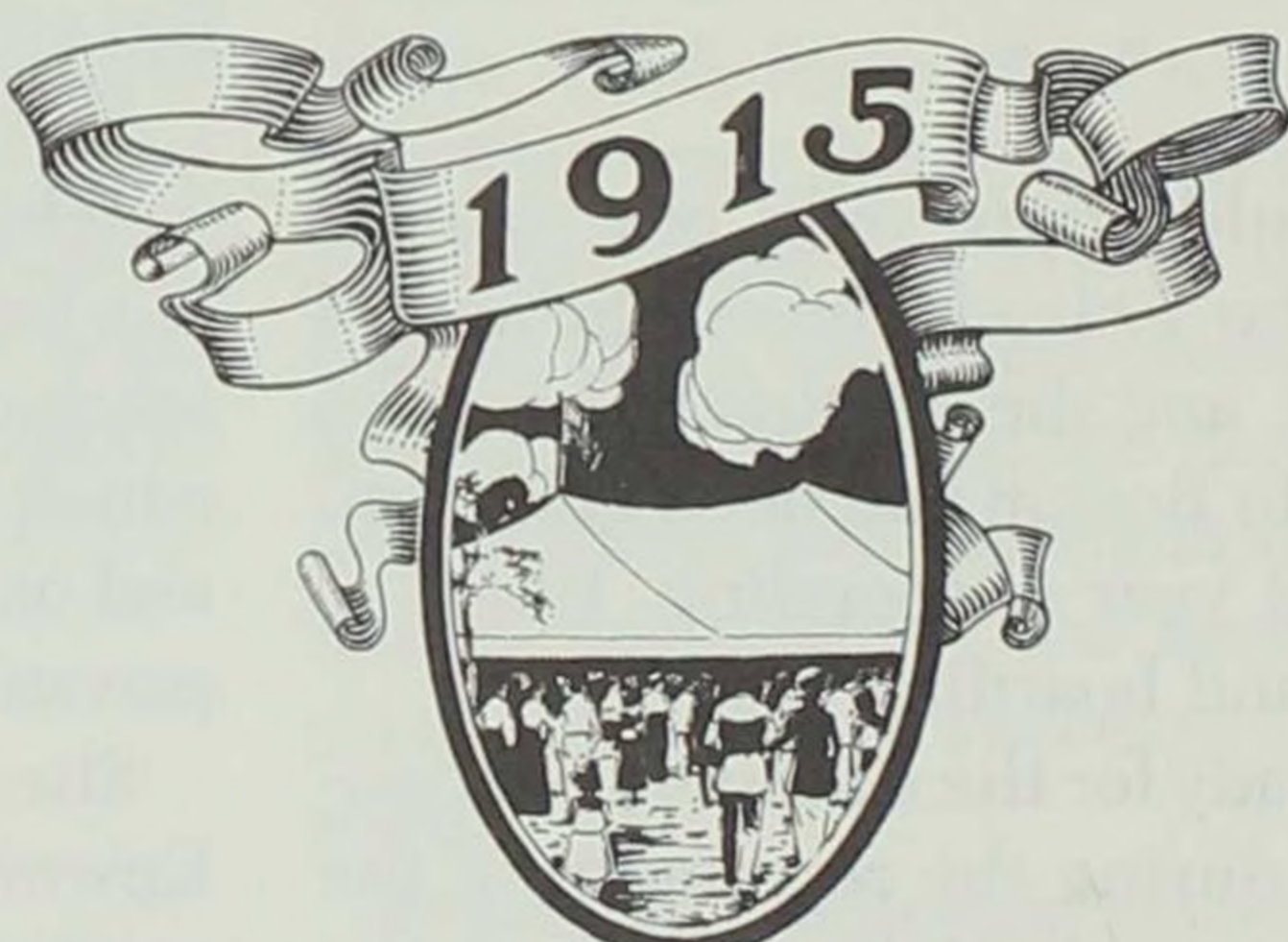
In addition, several months earlier she had concluded a deal with Carl Burroughs, a classmate at Springville High School, to act as her summer manager. He had not undertaken such work before and was hesitant about the project. Yet Margaret believed his contacts would be better than she could do, for she disliked such arranging. Quite a number of people around her in Boston had private managers. She and Burroughs wrote a "business-like contract," and she sent a copy home. "But 'mum' is the word," she cautioned. "Don't mention this until we can see how well he can do." She believed the arrangement would be of no loss



*A program of the Jones Chautauqua System for a Miss Paul performance at home in June 1915. (courtesy the author)*

# CHAUTAUQUA

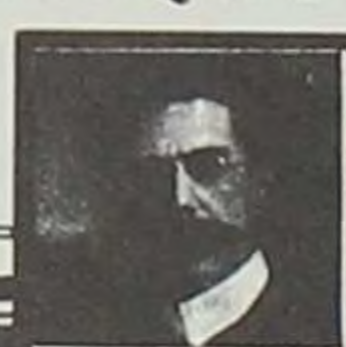
SPRINGVILLE      JUNE 25-30



SIX BIG DAYS      TWELVE PROGRAMS

## JONES CHAUTAUQUA SYSTEM

THE WORLD'S GREATEST  
CHAUTAUQUA SYSTEM



to anyone. Moreover, if he could secure good dates for her, it would help his career also.

Meanwhile, her only performance was a reading for a church social in Dorchester, Iowa. For pay, Margaret received supper, carfare, flowers, and the experience — no money.

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**E**pworth Seminary's offer was followed by an even better one from Lenox College, a similar small church-related school in Hopkinton, Iowa, thirty miles north of Springville. Lenox College offered three pluses: 1) Mar-

garet would be head of its Expression Department; 2) it was even closer to home than Epworth; and 3) she could be a student there, as well as a teacher, and earn a bachelor of arts degree. A degree in the field of public speaking had not existed at Cornell College. Since Margaret's lack of a degree had prevented her from obtaining the Epworth Seminary position, she was aware of its growing importance to teachers.

Margaret accepted the Lenox College position, earned her bachelor of arts degree in two years, and stayed on to teach a third year.

These were her Chautauqua years. For the two summers of 1914 and 1915, she accepted



# P R O G R A M

FIRST DAY		Afternoon	
Entertainment.....		Streed Family Orchestra, assisted by Wilbert Maynard, Cornetist	
		Evening	
Concert.....		Streed Family and Wilbert Maynard	
SECOND DAY		Afternoon	
FIRST PART	Music.....	Weaver-Young Company	
SECOND PART	Crayon Lecture, "Dead Bear".....	Prof. G. E. Weaver	
		Evening	
FIRST PART	Violin and Piano.....	Weaver-Young Company	
SECOND PART	"Facts and Fun of the Crayon".....	Prof. G. E. Weaver	
THIRD DAY		Afternoon	
FIRST PART	Piano Recital.....	Rose Clark Price	
	Readings and Solos.....	Edna Bennett Smith	
SECOND PART	Lecture.....	Prof. W. A. Price	
		Evening	
FIRST PART	Music and Readings.....	Mrs. Price and Miss Smith	
SECOND PART	Lecture.....	Prof. W. A. Price	
FOURTH DAY		Afternoon	
FIRST PART	Concert.....	The Geary Girls Trio	
SECOND PART	Readings.....	Margaret D. Paul	
		Evening	
FIRST PART	Music.....	The Geary Girls Trio	
SECOND PART	Monolog.....	Margaret D. Paul	
FIFTH DAY		Afternoon	
FIRST PART	Song Recital with Piano.....	Ronayne-Sumner Company	
SECOND PART	Lecture Entertainment.....	Rev. David V. Bush	
		Evening	
FIRST PART	Musical Program.....	Ronayne-Sumner Company	
SECOND PART	"Pikes Peak or Bust".....	Rev. David V. Bush	
SIXTH DAY		Afternoon	
FIRST PART	Humorous Readings.....	Frances Josephine Manatt	
	Piano Recital (American Program).....	Mabel Lillian Rusland	
SECOND PART	Lecture.....	Edgar S. Kindley	
		Evening	
FIRST PART	Humorous Readings.....	Frances Josephine Manatt	
	Piano Recital (Scandinavian Program).....	Mabel Lillian Rusland	
	"The Norwegian Peasant Girl".....		
SECOND PART	Lecture.....	Edgar S. Kindley	

Season tickets can be purchased at special rates until noon of the opening day. No tickets will be sold at advance prices after noon of the opening day. Children under seven when accompanied by parent or guardian will be admitted free. Children over seven and under twelve will be admitted at reduced rates. All persons over twelve years of age will be required to purchase the regular adult ticket. The single admissions will vary in price according to the nature of the program. It means a great saving to purchase a season ticket in advance. Do not fail to take advantage of the reduced rates.

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the hectic pace of "tent talent" and fulfilled her dream of educating and entertaining through Chautauqua performances. She signed a contract with the Jones Chautauqua System of Perry, Iowa. It was a booking agency begun by C. Durant Jones, who had been a one-time Prohibition party candidate for governor of Iowa. He called his first shows "Temperance Assemblies." The Jones Chautauqua System boasted that it reached a million people in three hundred towns and was the world's greatest Chautauqua system. It booked small towns. For example, Margaret opened her second Chautauqua summer in Mabel, Min-

nesota, a tiny town on the northeast Iowa border.

Margaret's dramatic recitations were featured on the fourth day of a Chautauqua circuit that lasted six. During both afternoon and evening programs, she was the second half of the program, preceded by "The Geary Girls Trio." In the afternoon she gave a series of readings, in the evening a monologue, reminiscent of Leland Powers' popular concerts.

She gave quite a program, compiled from the works of Abraham Lincoln, James Whitcomb Riley, Mark Twain, and others. The titles of her dramatic sketches included "The Other



Wise Man," "Laddie," "Sister Esperance," and "The Lost Word." She drew from a list of musical numbers with titles such as "Money Musk," "Daddy," "The Tin Gee Gee," and "Aux Italiens."

Her readings, monologues, and impersonations were always entertaining. But that did not satisfy her. Margaret wanted to educate her audiences. She urged people to strive toward lofty goals, and she encouraged patriotism, continuous learning, and the betterment of humanity.

She was part of a six-day Chautauqua circuit. The six days did not offer name entertainment, but they did offer variety. The opening day was the "Streed Family Orchestra," with special numbers by cornetist Wilbert Maynard. The second day, Professor G. E. Weaver created crayon illustrations, one lecture telling the story of "Dead Bear" and the other offering crayon "facts and fun." Then followed lectures by Dr. Perkins S. Slocum, Professor W. A. Price, and the Rev. David V. Bush. Musical recitals were given by the "Weaver-Young Company," who specialized in violin and piano, pianist Rose Clark Price, the "Ronayne-Sumner Company," vocalists, and Mabel Lillian Rusland, a pianist with American and Scandinavian programs.

Margaret was in tent Chautauqua at a time when it flourished. Perhaps the most famous Chautauqua promoter was Keith Vawter from Cedar Rapids. He had just established his contract plan, which asked communities to provide financial guarantees. His new "tight booking" scheme depended upon a leapfrog installation of tents with sites arranged geographically. The talent traveled daily, following the leapfrog installation of tents. The Jones Chautauqua System, which booked Margaret, also followed this approach. It allowed them to move into what they claimed were "hundreds of towns that never held a Chautauqua until our system showed them how it could be done."

Margaret traveled six straight days, with only a day's break before starting the cycle again. In a twenty-four-hour period she gave both an afternoon and evening performance and then traveled to the next site, with little time for laundry or emergencies or recuperation. There were uncertain transportation schedules, country hotels, irregular meals, and unpredictable weather including torrid summer heat, rains, and windstorms. The result was exhaustion, and only the heady roar of applause carried performers from deadline to deadline.

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After two summers on the Chautauqua circuit, Margaret made different summer plans. With her degree from Lenox College, she looked for more specialized teaching positions. In 1917 she became a speech and drama teacher at the high school in Whiting, Indiana, earning \$900 (which Powers believed she should have received three years earlier). Whiting was several hundred miles from home, so summer was the time to visit family, not swing the Chautauqua circuit. She combined visits with six weeks of summer study at the University of Iowa in 1918, and a similar six weeks of study at Northwestern University, in Evanston, Illinois, in 1919.

Her last teaching position was a long-term one. Beginning in 1919 and for the next twenty-five years she taught "expression," later speech and drama, at Emerson High School in Gary, Indiana. She liked the progressive atmosphere in the school system.

For Margaret it was the perfect teaching position — and an influential one — in a school system that valued speech education. At the heart of the Gary School System was its "Auditorium" program. Auditorium was a scheduled class period for every student, from the primary grades through high school. Each class put on major Auditorium assemblies once



or twice a semester.

When there was not a major presentation, two classes were scheduled for Auditorium together. The first half hour of Auditorium was devoted to music, the second half to speech. During this second half, one class received special help from an Auditorium training



*Miss Margaret D. Paul. (courtesy the author)*

teacher in an adjoining speech studio. Margaret was the training teacher for high school students, teaching the fundamentals of speech and helping students prepare Auditorium programs. These programs included current events topics, storytelling, speeches, debates,

dramatizations, pageants, open forum discussions, and explanations of scientific experiments.

Margaret began work toward a master's degree at the University of Iowa. She planned her thesis as a description of the manner in which education in the Gary School System revolved around speech and the Auditorium program. In her preliminary paper, she credited Auditorium as the school system's prime socializing and integrating force. Work on the degree was interrupted, however, by the death of the university professor directing her work.

Her students and colleagues praised her for what she added to the Gary School System during her years of teaching there. "No one will ever fill the place you had in the school," wrote Principal Everett Spaulding. "All of us feel that your years at Emerson High School contributed largely in making the school a fine place for the boys and girls of Gary."

Margaret's influence on her students was great, and she frequently received letters from former students describing her influence on their lives. A dozen years after her retirement, a letter from Kansas surprised her. It was from Don Starry, the son of a neighboring farmer in Springville, Iowa. Margaret had worked with Don when the boy was to present a piece at graduation. Now, forty-two years later, Don wrote, "There is no purpose to this letter other than to remind you that a lot of people, widely scattered over the nation, love you . . ."

Her influence was also recognized in Gary. "We appreciate . . . above all the splendid character which you have given to our city and our schools. We know of no one whose name is more frequently mentioned favorably, and young people under your influence in school and church groups are most appreciative of your life and your influence," wrote the pastor of Gary's First Presbyterian Church.

Leland Powers would have appreciated the way that Margaret announced her retirement. It was sudden, quiet, and dramatic. On the day before Christmas vacation in 1944 she ended



her teaching day as usual and then abruptly submitted a resignation that was effective immediately. When the students returned to classes in January, Miss Paul was no longer in Indiana. "Well, you certainly took us all by surprise," wrote Miss Hazel Harrison, the head of Margaret's department. "I can't tell you how shocked I was to read your card. . . . I guess you know that you can never be replaced." Yet Miss Harrison recognized the wisdom in quietly slipping out. "I'm glad you didn't tell us. . . . I think I will leave in the same way one of these days."

Margaret didn't know she had twenty-eight years of good living left. She used them well, caring for family members and finding new ways to use her skills in the changing world. She wrote twenty-eight historical sketches which the public heard her read on WMT radio in Cedar Rapids. The members of clubs and organizations in Marion, Iowa, heard her frequent program presentations.

Until her death at the age of eighty-five in 1972 she had the respect of all those with whom she came in contact. Don Starry gave evidence

of that fact in his letter to her sixteen years earlier. He had heard Margaret referred to as "Miss Paul" by a woman Margaret's senior. "In a community where the use of first names is more of a rule than an exception, I was struck by the use of the 'Miss' rather than Margaret," Starry wrote. "Again it showed me that you are held in such high regard and esteem by your own people that they instinctively honor you by a title rather than the familiarity of a name." Margaret was always "Miss Paul," the Iowa reflection of a Bostonian woman. □

#### Note on Sources

Margaret D. Paul was the great-aunt of Elaine Carol Main's husband. For information concerning Miss Paul's life and character, the author is grateful to Miss Paul's nieces, Genevieve Paul Ernst of Chesterton, Indiana, and Margaret Paul Main of Mena, Arkansas. Dick Power, dean of Northeast Broadcasting School in Boston, provided information about the Leland Powers School of the Spoken Word. Secondary source materials that proved valuable in the preparation of this article included: Henry P. Dowst, *Random Notes of Boston* (Boston: H. B. Humphrey Co., 1913); Harry P. Harrison, *Culture Under Canvas: The Story of Tent Chautauqua* (New York: Hastings House, 1958); Gay MacLaren, *Morally We Roll Along* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1938); and Karl R. Wallace, editor, *History of Speech Education in America* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954).