

The PALIMPSEST

FEBRUARY 1943

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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

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSEST

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material 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

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With Gager in Georgia

John T. Gager died on November 24, 1939, at his farm home in Bethel Township, Fayette County, Iowa, near the village of Alpha, where he had been prominent in the community for almost seventy years. He was at the date of his death thirteen days past his ninety-ninth birthday. He had been for some years the oldest person residing in Fayette County, and so far as known attained a greater age than any other man who ever lived in the county.

But the fact which gave his passing the greatest significance was that he was Fayette County's last surviving veteran of the Civil War. For twenty months before his death he was the county's only surviving man of the army which marched under the banner of the Union in the war between the States. His death occurred almost seventy-five years after Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox.

Mr. Gager never failed to vote at a general

election or primary, and not even when he was at his ninety-eighth milestone did he consent to use an absent voter's ballot, but insisted on riding to the country polling place. At age ninety-five he went swimming with his grandchildren in a pool in an abandoned quarry. Throughout his diary the pleasure he derived from reaching a river in which he could swim is frequently recorded.

He was twice married. By his first wife he had ten children, of whom only one survived him, his son, Ernest Gager, at whose home he died. For many years he lived with his son Charles and family on the Gager homestead where he first located in 1872. Charles died only ten months before his father did.

Born in Broome County, New York, November 11, 1840, John T. Gager came with his parents in 1851 to Brush Hill, DuPage County, Illinois. There he enlisted in the Union Army, and there he returned after the war, married, and farmed for seven years. Then he and his family moved to northwestern Fayette County, where he remained for the rest of his life. He farmed, operated a grist mill at Alpha, and developed a mile-long lake and camping resort on Crane Creek above the mill dam.

He was the first superintendent of the Alpha Sunday School. He was a member of the Con-

gregational Church and the Good Templars Lodge when those organizations existed in the village.

But all these matters are by the way. This is not an obituary sketch. It was as a veteran of the Civil War that he was best known to the public, and his own heart interest was largely centered in that conflict. He was the last commander of the Fayette County Veteran Association, and in his ninety-fifth year was serving in that capacity when the association held its fifty-fifth and final reunion in West Union on August 15, 1935, with all of the county's six Civil War survivors present.

John T. Gager enlisted July 29, 1862, in Company B, 105th Illinois Infantry, and served until June 7, 1865, thus participating in all but the first year of the war. For each of the four calendar years during part or all of which he was in the Army, he kept a diary, in a little book about a quarter of an inch thick, with pages two by four inches in size. Each page had room for the entries for three days, about thirty words to the day.

Home from the war, John T. Gager deposited his four volumes of diary in a desk, the drawers of which were locked while the house was occupied by renters for a few years. When the family returned, they found the desk drawers had been broken open and some articles taken. Among the

things that disappeared were three volumes of the diary, those for 1862, 1863, and 1865. Fortunately, the single volume that was left was the one for 1864, when Private Gager participated in the Atlanta campaign and Sherman's March to the Sea. This little diary is now the property of, and in the possession of, Mrs. Helen Gager, widow of the son, Charles Gager.

The seventy-eight years that have passed since 1864 have not served to dim the writing, and almost all of the book's nicely written entries are still perfectly legible. Nor is its good state of preservation due to lack of use, because several interested persons have had the privilege of going through it, and Mr. Gager himself referred to it often, reliving his soldiering days again and again. He was so familiar with its contents that even after he was past ninety years of age a casual inquiry as to where he was and what he was doing on a certain date would bring an almost word for word recital of the entry.

The reader of the diary is struck with the ability of an intelligent man to put into thirty words a day a story of the activities of General Sherman's army which enables any one familiar with the history of those campaigns to follow pretty closely the progress of the fighting. The soldier of those days of course had a much better view of the mili-

tary ensemble than any soldier can have of the large scale operations in present-day warfare. Armies were incomparably smaller then than now. The contacts between the common soldier and the higher officers were more intimate. The military movements were much slower. The effective range of weapons was a small fraction of the present distances. For all these reasons, the private soldier had a close-up view of what was going on and understood the general strategy and tactics of a campaign.

Private Gager began his diary with the entry: "Friday, January 1, 1864, Finds the 105th Ill. Vol. comfortably quartered at Fort Steele (4 Co's inside) where we have been since Aug. 19th, 1863. John Kenyon arrived from the North last eve. Bro't me a Box & letter."

The diary of a soldier's life if repeated in complete form would tire the general reader by its monotonous repetition, especially in the early part of the year 1864, before the big military movements were started. Still, to one especially interested in Civil War history, there is cumulative effect in the brief statement each day of the hours kept, the number of miles traveled, the kind of roads, the mud or the dust, the rain or the sunshine, the drills and the guard duty, the detail to picketing, and the side activities such as attending

religious meetings or going to a city on leave. All taken together they drive into the mind a vivid consciousness of what in those years a soldier's day-by-day life must have been, except when the fighting was hardest. A few sample entries are as follows:

January 11, 1864. "Had Dress Parade last evening at 4 o'clock, the first one this year, 64. Owing to so much flooding ice in the Ohio, we recd. no mail today. Dress Parade at 4. Weather warmer. On Guard."

January 14. "Nothing unusual transpired today to awaken the dull monotony of camp life, especially when we stay so long in one place. Weather Pleasant."

February 6. "Signed our Pay Rolls this morning, think we will get our pay soon. Received a letter from Charley. Some rain last night, cool today. On duty."

February 24. "Our marching orders were genuine this time. Left the Fort at 7 A. M., marched $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and camped for dinner. Marched $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther and camped about 3 P. M."

February 26. "Broke camp this morning at daylight. Passed the Stone River battlefield at 10. Reached Murfreesboro at 11 A. M. Camped near the town for the day. Pleasant."

February 29. "Rained all night and is raining

still. Started as usual, marched through a hilly country, and reached Tullahoma at 3 P. M. hard time to camp. Rained hard all day."

March 4. "Had a pretty hard march today in the Mts. Started at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7, the 105th in advance. Camped on the eastern slope of the Mts. at 3 P. M. after 10 miles of hard marching."

March 9. "Started this morn. at 6. Crossed the Tenn. R. on pontoon bridges. Passed the Ala. line into Tenn. Hundreds of dead mules along the road. Marched 11 miles and camped near Tenn. R."

March 11. "We are done marching for the present. Over 200 fell out of the Brigade on the hard march yesterday, having marched 20 miles over a mountain road in Georgia. Changed clothes & washed today. Rec'd. a letter from home. Have a pleasant camp. All well."

On February 23rd he reported that he had "had a good time down to the Capitol last night," when there was a Washington's day celebration in Nashville. On March 12th, 13th, and 14th he reported "the whole regiment at work" splitting stakes and raising tents, and declared "our camp is a very pleasant one for Lookout valley."

On March 17th he went up the side of the mountain and got pine trees to set out on the company street. On March 19th the brigade marched

in review before Generals Hooker and Howard. After reporting six inches of snow and a hard freeze, he stated on March 28th that he was "the sickest I ever was in my life." On April 2nd, though he had a skirmish drill at 9, company school at 2, and dress parade at 5 he "read a good story in the Novelette."

On April 13th "a party of us went up on Look-out and had our pictures taken." On April 25th he reported that "There has over 30,000 Troops passed here in the last 3 weeks."

With a campaign in prospect on May 5th he reported the position of his regiment as "2 miles south of Ringgold, 7 miles from Tunnel Hill, and 14 from Dalton." The entry for May 7th is: "Started at daybreak on the Nickajack trail. Crossed Taylor's Ridge at 10 and drove in the Rebel Pickets that were stationed there. No engagement today." On the next day he says: "Did not move all day, but were held in readiness. Geary's Div. were engaged all day 4 miles from here at Dug Gap. Our loss 500." And one day later, "Were in line of battle all day, but did not move." On May 11th "Our Division came along at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 6, we fell in our proper place, marched 10 miles and camped in Snake Gap. Cut out the road thru the Gap." On May 12th he ends an entry, "80,000 troops here."

May 15. "This morning we were marched around to the extreme left. 3d Div. of 20th Corps ordered to charge a Fort. The charge began at noon and took the Fort, but could not take the breastworks beyond. Loss heavy." Next day: "The whole Rebel army evacuated their strong works last night. Our brigade moved on the Battle Field and buried the dead of both Armies."

May 17. "Started at 4, crossed the Chattahoochee River on a ferry boat, marched 15 miles and camped for the night. The Rebs are not far ahead of us."

May 18. "Started early, marched 17 miles, overtook and skirmished some with the Rebs, about Sundown, & laid on our Arms all night."

May 19. "Started this morning at 6, the 105th in advance of the whole Army. Skirmished most of the day, drove the Enemy about 3 miles. At night they all left. Our loss light."

May 23. "Reveille at 3, started at 6, marched 10 miles through a scorching Sun, then rested 2 hours, marched 2 miles further, camped near Etowah R."

May 25. "Started at 9 o'clock, marched 12 miles & found the Enemy in force. A severe battle was fought from 3 o'clock until dark."

May 30. "The Enemy made a desperate

charge the whole length of the lines about midnight, which caused heavy cannonading and musketry on our side & a terrible repulse to them."

June 2. "Moved over to the left of the 23d Corps, the rain fell in torrents. Advanced in line of battle, Cos. A, F, G, and B as skirmishers. Stayed out all night. Dr. Potter killed by a shell."

June 8. "Remained in same place as yesterday. Rained as usual. Capt. Rogers is quite sick today. No mail arrived. Done some washing. Attended prayer meeting in evening."

June 12. "Rained without ceasing. We are living on $\frac{3}{4}$ rations now-a-days. Received 3 letters, wrote & mailed two. The Rebs charged our Right several times but were repulsed. *Rain.*"

June 17. "The Enemy evacuated their works in front of us last night. We moved out early, soon overtook them & had a running fight with them for about 2 miles. Drove them in their earthworks and gave them a good shelling."

The entry of June 21st is much like many others about that date: "Remained at the Breastworks all day. Heavy skirmishing in front, and stray balls flying over. Severe cannonading of the left. Rained as usual. Mailed a letter. All well." To the entry for June 27th is added: "Had to keep our heads low, for the bullets flew pretty thick."

July 3. "The Enemy evacuated their strong

works in front of us last night. We followed in pursuit at daylight, overtook their rear guard at 8 o'clock, gave them a good shelling, got shelled in return."

July 17. "By consent of both parties we do not shoot. Called in from picket at 4 p. m. The whole Corps had moved to the left. We crossed the River at 10 p. m. and camped at midnight."

After noting on July 19th that "We are now within 5 miles of Atlanta," the entry for July 20th reads: "Started this morning at 9, felt our way thro' the woods 3 or 4 miles, met the Rebs in a fair fight & drove them with terrible slaughter. Fight lasted from 3 o'clock till sundown. Rebel dead lay very thick all over the ground."

July 21. "Our wounded were soon taken care of, but we were at work all night carrying off wounded Rebels, and were busy most of today burying the Rebel dead."

July 22. "We advanced again this morning, skirmishing lively with Rebs, and drove them into their forts $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Atlanta. Built Breast-works under fire."

August 2. "The 23d Corps moved from the left and took up position to the right of us. We started at 6 p. m., moved around to the rear of the 14th Corps (5 miles) & camped for night. Our troops massing on the right."

August 19. "Lieut. Fisher, Co. I, instantly killed on the skirmish line this morning. Co. K nigger killed. Skirmishing very brisk today. Nothing unusual occurred. Weather hot. We have good news from Mobile."

August 22. "The Pickets have effected a compromise, so there is no firing. Our siege guns send Shells over into Atlanta every five minutes day & night. A great many rumors from the right."

September 3. "A portion of our Division moved into Atlanta yesterday and captured nearly 1,000 prisoners."

September 4. "Our communications are severed again, so we get no Mail. Regtl. Inspection at 10 A. M., Religious Services at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10. Wagon trains and supplies all moving to Atlanta."

September 14. "Nothing of importance occurred today. The general Topic discussed everywhere is the Traitorous proceedings of the Chicago convention. Received letter, wrote one."

September 17. "Labored faithfully all day bringing lumber and working on our houses. We have now got up good and comfortable quarters."

"Received the news of Sheridan's victory in the Shenandoah valley" was an entry on September 22nd, and on September 24th Private Gager "Got a pass this morning and went down to Atlanta."

September 29. "We get no mail or papers now-a-days, so it is pretty lonesome in camp. All hands at work fixing up the ground. Troops continue to go back."

October 3. "The wagon & R. R. Bridges went away by the flood yesterday. Nearly the whole Construction Corps is at work on them today. Troops going to the rear all the time."

October 4. "More troops and wagons going to the rear than ever. General Sherman here most all day."

Beginning with October 5th "it is rumored that the Enemy hold the railroad up at Big Shanty."

October 6. "Rumors that the Rebs are driven from the R. R. and are coming this way."

October 7. "No communication with the North yet." That day and the next, "Worked most of the day making an abattis."

October 9. "The R. R. Bridges were finished and the trains passed up with R. R. Iron."

October 10. "Went down the river about 2 miles to get persimmons and pumpkins." This must have been fun for on the 13th and 14th he recorded two more persimmon forays. On October 15th he "received a large mail last evening and again this morning", and so on the following day "Spent most of the day reading."

October 19. "The 105th was paid today up to

Sept. 1, 1864. We rec'd 8 months pay. The guerillas captured and burned a train between here and Marietta."

October 21. "We have not had any mail for a week, so it is getting to be lonesome times again. Bought a pair of boots for \$5."

October 29. "Trains came thro' from Chattanooga today for the first time in 3 or 4 weeks. Now we expect to have something to eat again, & also some mail."

October 30. "Orders recd. for the 20th Corps to get ready for a 50 days campaign. Which way we are going is more than any of us know." The famous March to the Sea had been decided upon.

An entry on November 2nd says: "Orders received to turn over all surplus baggage and prepare to march." On November 5th Private Gager drew clothing and blankets, and "Received orders to be ready to march at 7 o'clock in the morning," but on November 6th he wrote, "our marching orders were countermanded at midnight."

November 9. "The Rebs made a reconnaissance in force this morning to see if the 20th Corps had evacuated Atlanta, but by the way the shells flew they thot the Yanks had not all gone."

November 11. "This is my birthday. Received a can of butter by mail."

During the next three days he was busy "tearing up the railroad between here and Marietta". Then the great march began. On November 15th Private Gager observed that "All the public property in Atlanta is in flames. The grand movement commences today. Started at noon on the Augusta road, passed Decatur at Midnight. Marched all night" and "camped at sunrise" about "15 miles from Atlanta. Remained in camp 1 hour. Started and marched 12 miles and camped on Yellow River after dark. All very tired. My feet were pretty sore." The next day's march began at five o'clock and the army camped at eight. But, wrote the soldier, "we have all the fresh pork and sweet potatoes we want." The army marched sixteen miles the next day and "camped at 7 p. m. Hard days march."

November 20. "Started at daylight. Passed over beautiful country. All well, but the march is hard."

November 21. "The mud is ankle deep so it is very hard marching today."

Laying pontoon bridges across streams and swamps is frequently mentioned on the following days. On November 22nd Sherman's army entered Milledgeville, on the Oconee River, and remained for the day. Private Gager "Did some washing, cooking and *resting*. In the eve went

down town and destroyed Arms, Ammunition, Salt". On November 29th he "Had to build 9 bridges. The rebs charged on the advance several times today. 2 of our men killed, 3 Rebs killed."

December 1. "I went a foraging today; we went about 7 miles south of our main route. Got plenty of Pork, Sweet Potatoes, Syrup."

December 3. "Our Brigade left the road and went to destroying railroad. Marched 23 miles and camped at 11 P. M. Crossed many swamps. All tired out."

December 7. "Our road is blocked with trees every few rods."

December 8. "Swamps all around. Marched all night, going only 4 miles, and stopped this morning [December 9] at 10 o'clock for breakfast." The Union Army "Camped at 8 P. M. 15 miles from Savannah. The roads all blockaded."

December 10. "Marched 10 miles & deployed in line of battle before the Rebel works 3 miles from Savannah. Skirmishing and cannonading."

December 12. "Advanced our lines again today. Nothing to eat but rice and beef. The Rebs threw 2 shells into our Regt., but hurt no one. No communications yet."

December 14. "Fort McAllister, on the right, was captured yesterday & our Communications

are now open, but we get no Mail or Hard Tack yet. The Rebs Shelled us again today. Lonesome times."

December 17. "We received our first mail to-day since we left Atlanta. It came via New York. I recd a letter from home, also a vest."

December 18. "Plenty of papers to read, but not of very late date."

December 19. "The mosquitoes were so bad last night we could not sleep."

The purpose of the campaign was about to be realized. On December 20th Private Gager reported: "All are talking about the Grand Assault we are to make Thursday." But on the following day, "To our great surprise and satisfaction the Rebs evacuated the City of Savannah last night & we marched in this morning. They left Artillery, Ammunition & everything."

December 22. "Went down town this morning & all through the City. Got me a good Blanket and some other Notions." He added the next day that "Savannah is quite a large & very handsome city." On the day before Christmas he mailed some letters and sent "a package to Mother. Some steamers came up today. Worked on our house and fireplace."

There is no climax to this story. Private Gager could not know that the final surviving entries of

his painstaking wartime record of those dangerous, weary, lonesome days would be at the close of 1864. There is no hint of conclusion as he recorded the events in Savannah at the end of December.

December 27. "The 14th Corps was reviewed today. Drills the same as yesterday. Quite a number of steamers came in from Hilton Head."

December 30. "The 20th Corps was reviewed at 11 o'clock by Gen. Sherman on Liberty and Bay streets. We left Camp at 8 A. M. & returned at 3 P. M."

December 31. "Received orders to march at 6 o'clock this morn across the River into South Carolina. Could not lay the Pontoons so we did not cross."

Private Gager had another volume of his pocket diary ready for another thirty-word entry on January 1, 1865.

WALTER H. BEALL

The Monticello Friday Club

On April 23, 1887, twelve women of literary tastes met at the home of Mrs. H. D. Sherman in Monticello, Iowa, to commemorate the birthday of William Shakespeare. This festive occasion was the climax of a systematic study of the great dramatist and poet. "According to their rules," reported the Monticello *Express* of April 28, 1887, "no other subject was to be mentioned by any one present, under penalty of a fine. At the close of the meeting the fines which would have been imposed against each member were remitted by universal and mental consent".

For three years this group had been delving into *Harper's Study of Shakespeare*, and felt they had exhausted the subjects of greatest interest to them regarding the Bard of Avon. Accordingly they decided to broaden the scope of their discussions and organize a literary club with a constitution, officers, and avowed purposes. The object of the ladies was to form an organization to promote better understanding of literature and social culture. And so, on the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, the Friday Club was formed in 1887. The motto adopted by the twelve charter

members, "After the education of the school, the education of the hearthstone", has guided the club to the present time. Having begun spontaneously and having followed its own inclinations for many years, the Friday Club of Monticello has never lost its independence and become a literary section of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs.

At the first meeting, Sarah Secrest Sherman was elected president. She was one of the oldest of the group, a graduate of Cornell College, an ardent reader, and a student of the arts and history. Kate Curtis Mirick was chosen vice president. She also possessed the important quality of being learned, for she graduated with highest honors from Iowa State College in 1877. Interested particularly in nature, especially geology, Mrs. Mirick collected interesting specimens which were presented to the geology department at Iowa State College. Mary Farwell Carpenter was elected secretary. She has always been most active in the civic affairs of Monticello. Her education began in a country school from which she entered Iowa State College in 1875 and graduated in 1877. While she was at Ames, she was a member of I. C. Sorosis which became the Iowa Gamma chapter of Pi Beta Phi sorority.

There was no treasurer when the club was founded because no expenses were contemplated.

The matter of dues was warmly discussed but the Friday Club decided against having any. Sometime later dues of a very small amount were assessed, varying according to needs. Mrs. Carpenter, Mrs. Mirick, and Mrs. Davidson wrote the constitution which set a limit of fourteen members. It has since been changed to allow sixteen.

Only four of the twelve charter members are still living. Mrs. W. A. Mirick (1858—) of Boone, Iowa, and Mrs. Henry M. Carpenter (1860—) of Monticello, Iowa, have already been mentioned. Another living charter member is Olive McKean Howard (1869—), a graduate of Lenox College, and one of the six charter members who were born in Iowa. Mrs. George B. Howard now makes her home in Baltimore, Maryland. The fourth charter member who is still living is Lena Spaulding Wurzbacher (1866—), who now lives in Seattle, Washington. She was born in Anamosa and attended Oberlin College. In 1900 she and her husband, Frank B. Wurzbacher, went to Alaska where they lived for fifteen years. The eight other original members were: Adaliza Dean Davidson, Franc Bush Davis, Jessie Fawcett Doxsee, Agnes Mathews Noyes, Sarah Penniman Perley, Sarah Secrest Sherman, Elizabeth Cowles Stillman, and Luna Farwell Templeton.

A brief glimpse of the backgrounds of the remaining charter members reveals some unusual qualities. Adaliza Dean Davidson (1841-1923) was intensely interested in horticulture and fossils. At the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, she was awarded the medal of honor at the Women's Building for her fossil collection. Mrs. James Davidson was born in New York and graduated from Ingham University in LeRoy, New York, in 1861. In 1864 she moved to Iowa with her husband.

Sarah Penniman Perley (1839-1900) came from sturdy Puritan stock in New Hampshire whose ancestors had landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620. In 1856 she came to Iowa and lived with her family on Bowen's Prairie until she went to Mount Holyoke for her college education. She married C. C. Perley. Another one who came to Iowa from New Hampshire was Agnes Mathews Noyes (Mrs. Matt Noyes) whose short life (1851-1894) suddenly put an end to her creative writing and her pleasure in reading.

The most musical one among the charter members was Luna Farwell Templeton (1867-1939). She was educated at Iowa State College, and while she was there she conducted the orchestra. Mrs. Edward Templeton was a younger sister of Mrs. Carpenter.

Jessie Fawcett Doxsee (1861-1928) came to Iowa from Ohio in 1887 as the bride of J. W. Doxsee. Her greatest pleasure was in travel, especially during the later years of her life. "She regarded it as a religious privilege to travel the roads that Christ had trodden and to drink at the well where he announced that he was the Messiah."

Franc Bush Davis (1863-1936) was born in Iowa and at the age of eleven she had to assume the management of the household because of her mother's death. However, at sixteen she entered Lenox College, from which she graduated. Mrs. Dan L. Davis is survived by her husband who lives in Ashtabula, Ohio.

In the early 1850's, Elizabeth Cowles Stillman, a Mount Holyoke graduate, came to Iowa from Massachusetts. She lived on Bowen's Prairie, near Monticello, in a house located on the old Military Road.

Although the minutes of the Friday Club meetings have always been completely and accurately kept, a devastating fire at the home of Jennie Babcock Rohn on December 26, 1894, destroyed the records up to that date. Much of the information about the club prior to that time has been obtained from Mrs. Carpenter, for she is the only charter member who has been continuously active.

Throughout the fifty-six years of the Friday Club's existence there have been only forty-nine members. All but five have had college training, and half of them attended universities or colleges in Iowa. In addition to their own educational experience, the Friday Club ladies have enjoyed the advantage of husbands who have been prominent in the community. Ten have been professional men, another ten have been merchants, six have been farmers or cattle buyers, five have been bankers, four ministers, and four superintendents of schools. Obviously the first part of the club's motto, "education of the school", has been well recognized.

A survey of the programs for many years indicates that the Friday Club has faithfully observed the rest of the motto pertaining to "education of the hearthstone". At first the programs were planned for only three months at a time and were not printed. For the past fifty-two years, however, they have been printed for the entire year. Each year three or four club members take their turns in arranging the schedule of meetings. The general subject of study for 1891 was "From Maine to California". This program carried the members through New England to Washington, D. C., thence to the Southeast, then to the Middle West, the Deep South, the Southwest, and finally

to the Northwest. The annual programs as a whole show that literature, the theater, and art were the favorite subjects. Music was combined with many of the individual programs, particularly when it was appropriate to the topic under discussion.

From 1906 to 1913 there was a trend toward studying American literature. Then, with the World War looming on the horizon, the members began to learn of the geography, history, religion, music, literature, and art of Germany, France, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries. This type of study and the trend of world affairs seems to have had an expansive influence upon the club. For example, for the season of 1919-1920 the subject selected was "Our New Possessions". Included in this globe-encircling excursion were stop-overs at Alaska, Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippine Islands, the South Sea Islands, and the Virgin Islands. The history of these picturesque regions, the life and customs of the inhabitants, and the importance of each to the United States were all considered. Music pertaining to the countries was played, and the flora, fauna, and climate were described with the aid of maps.

For three years following the war, the club continued its study of geography. Literature cropped up again during the years 1923 to 1925. Since

then there has been a more varied course, including studies on women and social economics. From 1931 to the present time it has been the idea of the Friday Club to associate the programs with new books, using a book title as the keynote for the year and supplementing it with articles on the same subject. Thus, in 1937-1938 Van Wyck Brooks's *The Flowering of New England* supplied the theme and much of the material. For example, at a meeting in October at the home of Lillian Kendall Northrop, the literary program consisted of a sketch of Henry Thoreau, another on Thoreau at Walden, a reading of "Baker Farm", and a poem — "The Fisher's Boy".

Another literary program, given at the home of Lisle Richardson Lovell in November, 1924, was concerned with contemporary writers. A sketch was given on William Lyon Phelps, and Ethel George Fraser read two essays — "The Way of the Best Sellers" and "Does It Pay to Advertise?". On the same program a sketch of Hilaire Belloc and an illustrative essay by him were presented.

The Friday Club has frequently used the drama for the basis of its programs. In March, 1934, for example, at the home of Alice Kint Stuhler, Mary Farwell Carpenter read "Elizabeth the Queen" while Lou Densmore Carpenter presented

a paper on Lynn Fontaine. Another example of a drama program paper was "The Theater on the High Seas" by Lillian Haley Stuhler.

Thoughts of the dance have also invaded the minds of the members of the Friday Club. A typical program on that subject was given in 1934. It included such contributions as a paper on "The Dance and its Place among the Arts" by Chloe Carson Skelley, and a poem, "Pavlova", by Selma Prahm DeShaw.

Music should perhaps be mentioned in connection with the dance. An example of a musical program is one held at the home of Imogene Dunham Stuhler on July 4, 1924. It took the form of a book review of *My Musical Life* by Walter Damrosch, a sketch on "American Indian Music and Composers" with vocal selections by Eloise Brainerd Thomas, a sketch on "Edward MacDowell, an American Nature Composer", with piano selections from his "Woodland Sketches".

Graphic art, too, has occasionally occupied the attention of the club. One program included an essay on "Culture and Painting", a paper on "American Men of Art", and a pageant of American art.

Poetry has always figured prominently in the programs of the Friday Club, for there is no end to the study of that branch of literature. Appro-

priate poems are often read in connection with particular subjects, but a whole session is frequently devoted entirely to poetry. Emily Nichols Richardson was hostess for an interesting program on lyric poets in January, 1925. On that occasion Jennie Babcock Rohn presented a sketch on Louis Untermeyer with criticisms of his works and a reading of selected verse. Gems from various other poets were also read.

Economics and politics are timely subjects for any program, and so the Friday Club ladies have occasionally varied their literary studies with current problems. Since such subjects are likely to be dull for persons with no pretense of expertness in government or economics, the club programs have usually been designed to stimulate interest. Once a program on economics began with a story by O. Henry entitled "The Discounters of Money". This was followed by a formidable "Compendium — The Horoscope of Taxation". The concluding contribution on this program was a reading entitled "Wanted — An Income Taximeter".

The Friday Club convenes at the home of a club member from three to five o'clock on every other Friday from June through April. Although it is a literary club, there have been occasional social events such as guest days and dinners for

the husbands. The yearly anniversary tea is held on the Friday on or before April 23rd. Original entertainment is presented by the committee members who contrive to show their talent, either in a serious or comic manner.

Occasionally Shakespeare has reappeared on the programs of the Friday Club. Two pantomime scenes from his plays were presented by the committee, consisting of Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Templeton, and Miss Mary Jarman, at the twenty-third anniversary tea in 1910. "The Ghost Scene from *Hamlet* was effective and thrilling", according to the minutes for that day. "The expression on Hamlet's face, as he at length broke from Horatio's restraining hand to follow the ghost who still waved him forth, was one of willingness, even eagerness. The Witch's Scene from *Macbeth* showed much skill in its production. Gesture, expression and costume united to make the gruesome dance of the weird sisters around the seething cauldron a fitting introduction to the tragedy of *Macbeth*." On April 23, 1915, Shakespeare once more provided the substance of the program when parts from *Romeo and Juliet* were presented for entertainment. Imogene Dunham Stuhler and Jennie Babcock Rohn, dressed in Shakespearian costumes, wistfully sang "In the Spring".

The table decorations at the teas are also indicative of the imagination and ability of the committee. The waiters for the teas have always been the young daughters or sons of the members, who, besides serving, occasionally help with the entertainment. At the close of each tea "Auld Lang Syne" is sung by the members, ending for another year the happy association of the Friday Club.

MIRIAM FAY LOVELL

Rumors of War

This facetious account of mustering the Scott County militia to defend the Territory of Iowa in the boundary dispute with Missouri is adapted for THE PALIMPSEST from Fifty Years in Iowa by J. M. D. Burrows, a pioneer merchant in Davenport. — THE EDITOR.

In December, 1839, we were called upon by Governor Robert Lucas to volunteer to march to the Missouri line, and drive the Missourians from our sacred soil. We were all fighting men in those days. The war between Rockingham and Davenport for the county seat was suspended for a short time, and we all united to resist this invasion of our Territory by the miserable Missourians. Davenport was selected as headquarters for Scott County.

Nearly every man in the county was present to be enrolled in the Iowa army on the appointed day. Our colonel, Sam Hedges, made a patriotic speech. But what a sorry lot of soldiers he had to drill! Not having any guns, many came with pitchforks, scythes, hoes, and clubs. One man had a sheet-iron sword, six or seven feet long. Many were drunk, and all were noisy and dis-

posed to make fun of our officers. The whole affair was taken lightly. At last Colonel Hedges, thoroughly exasperated, ordered out of the ranks all who were drunk or improperly armed.

We who remained were getting hungry and asked for rations. When we were informed that we would have to furnish our own blankets, whisky, and hardtack, which the government would refund at some future day, we objected. We were willing to shed our blood for our beloved Territory and, if necessary, to kill a few hundred Missourians, but we were not going to do that and board ourselves besides.

At this juncture, we saw approaching, in solemn column, our fellow soldiers who had been discharged, led by the man with the sheet-iron sword. They charged on us and, notwithstanding we were three to their one, we were badly defeated and scattered in every direction. The Knight of the Sheet-Iron Sword made for Colonel Hedges, and nothing but the colonel's superior fleetness saved him. As he ran he informed us that we could go home; nothing more would be done until he received further orders.

J. M. D. BURROWS

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