

The
PALIMPSEST

Volume 72, Number 1

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

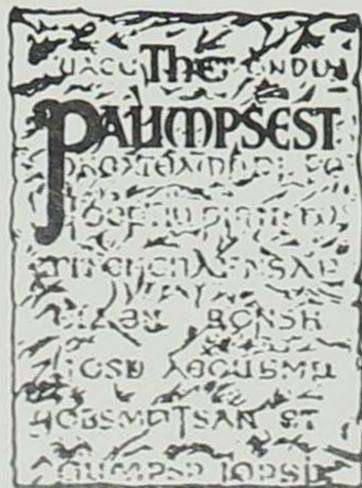
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COURTESY PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART



Artist Henry Ossawa Tanner is perhaps best known for his religious paintings and *The Banjo Lesson*. In this *Palimpsest*, curator Jack Lufkin uncovers the story of how Sue Brown, and the Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, arranged for Tanner to paint a posthumous portrait of Booker T. Washington, whose speeches in Iowa had inspired his listeners.



The Meaning of the Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest (*pal 'imp/sect*) 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 record 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 NEW REBELLION.
The Great Secession Speech
OF
VICTORIA C. WOODHULL,
BEFORE THE
National Woman's Suffrage Convention,
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This page, lower photo: F.F. Smith (left), retired professor of natural sciences, shakes hands with John Fisher, Buena Vista College president (1954-1960).

COVER: Woman suffrage poster, circa 1915-1918 (SHSI Archives/Iowa City). Actual size: 23½" × 40½".

The PALIMPSEST

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

Ginalie Swaim, Editor

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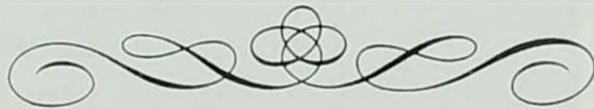
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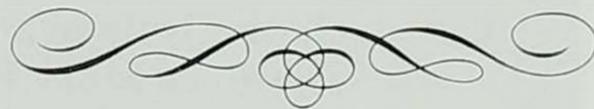
Suffragists, Free Love, and the Woman Question

by Diana Pounds



*“There is something revolting and unwomanly
in this uproar and clamor for the ballot.”*

Letter to the editor, *Daily Iowa State Register*, October 26, 1871



IN THE PAGES of Iowa's newspapers of the 1870s, they were cheered as society's best class of women. They were jeered as ugly old maids and floozies. And they were feared as emasculating radicals out to destroy the happy American home. They were woman suffragists and they burst into the limelight and the headlines in the winter of 1871/72.

It was indeed news when proper nineteenth-century ladies, quiet homebodies for so long, began noisily to demand the vote along with other rights — such as the right to good jobs and educations. Among the newspapers closely following the activities of the reformers were the Des Moines *Daily Iowa State Register*, the *Dubuque Herald*, and the *Burlington Hawk-Eye*. During the winter of 1871/72, as Iowa suffragists pushed their campaign for the ballot, the three newspapers printed hundreds of articles about suffrage as well as other women's rights issues.

From the suffragists' standpoint, however, the press coverage left something to be desired. While suffragists got some good press, many news stories painted most unflattering pictures of the women who wanted to vote. The

intensity of the anti-suffrage sentiments suggests much more was at stake in nineteenth-century America than the mere depositing of a feminine vote in a ballot box. A likely explanation for the strong negative reaction to the suffragists is that both the press and the public viewed woman suffrage as a threat to a way of life, to the very traditions held dear by nineteenth-century Americans.

Iowa suffragists were certainly bucking tradition when they went after the vote in the 1870s. No state in the Union had yet granted women the right to vote, but things looked promising for would-be female voters in Iowa in the winter of 1871/72. The previous year, the Iowa General Assembly had passed a resolution to amend the state constitution, giving women the right to vote. Two hurdles remained. The same resolution had to be passed by the 1872 General Assembly. Then it needed the approval of voters in a general election.

Iowa suffragists, sensing a good opportunity to lead the way to the ballot box, mounted a

Right: Illustration from L. P. Brockett's *Woman: Her Rights, Wrongs, Privileges, and Responsibilities* (1870).



THE WIFE AND MOTHER AT A PRIMARY,



THE FATHER STAYS AT HOME, ATTENDING TO THE CHILDREN.



Considered pure and pious, woman was deemed guardian of morals. Her duty: to raise upstanding children.

heavy campaign to persuade both lawmakers and the public that women should have the vote. Nationally known suffragists lent a hand. During the summer of 1871, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, on a cross-country speaking tour, spent three days in Des Moines. Iowa suffragists hoped to further their cause at the first state convention of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association in Des Moines in October.

Much of the discussion of the suffrage issue was carried on in the newspapers. Readers of the *Des Moines Register*, *Dubuque Herald*, and *Burlington Hawk-Eye* had good exposure to arguments of both suffragists and their opponents as they debated what was often referred to as the "woman question." Although the woman question ostensibly referred to the question of whether women would be allowed to vote, there was considerably more to it than that for many nineteenth-century men and women. In addition to the ballot, some women

were pushing for other rights — better educations, jobs outside the home, wages comparable to men's, and more liberal divorce laws. While some Victorians — both men and women — favored giving women more freedom and opportunities, others worried that such actions would destroy the family. They feared that women with the political clout of the ballot, good educations, and a chance at well-paying jobs no longer would be willing to stay home and be good mothers and wives.

Nineteenth-century women lived in the straitlaced era of England's influential Queen Victoria and were expected to abide by a restrictive set of Victorian traditions that tended to subjugate women to men. Such traditions reflected Victorian society's attitudes about the sexes. Preachers pointed to passages in the Bible, instructing women to obey their husbands. Scientists maintained females were both physically and intellectually inferior to males. And doctors claimed women were crea-

tures of passion rather than reason because they had smaller brains and more finely developed nervous systems. Women were neither expected nor encouraged to get as much education as men. Some believed too much education could damage a woman's reproductive organs.

While Victorians doubted that woman could compete with man physically or mentally, most agreed she bested the male species in spirituality. Woman was believed to be naturally pure, pious, and sexually prim. It supposedly was easy for her to be good, because she was simply built that way. Because of her innate righteousness, woman was put in charge of her family's morality. Just as it was her duty to keep a nice home, it was her duty to raise upstanding children and set a good example for the rest of the family.

Woman's place was so well defined in nineteenth-century America that there was a special phrase for it — the "woman's sphere." A proper nineteenth-century American woman operating within the confines of this sphere conducted herself purely and demurely at all times, got just enough schooling to become a good wife and mother, and worked within the home. Her primary task was to turn her home into a quiet haven where man could recuperate from the stresses and chaos of the outside working world.

The image of the ideal Victorian lady was a powerful one for nineteenth-century Americans. Magazines, books, and newspapers reinforced the tender picture of the genteel lady, happy in her proper sphere, making a warm home for her husband and children. "A neat, clean, fresh-aired, sweet, cheerful, well-arranged house exerts a moral influence over its inmates," the *Dubuque Herald* enthused in one news story.

MANY WHO OPPOSED woman suffrage feared the vote would destroy this Victorian ideal, dragging her down into the dirty world of politics and somehow causing her to lose interest in taking care of her home and her

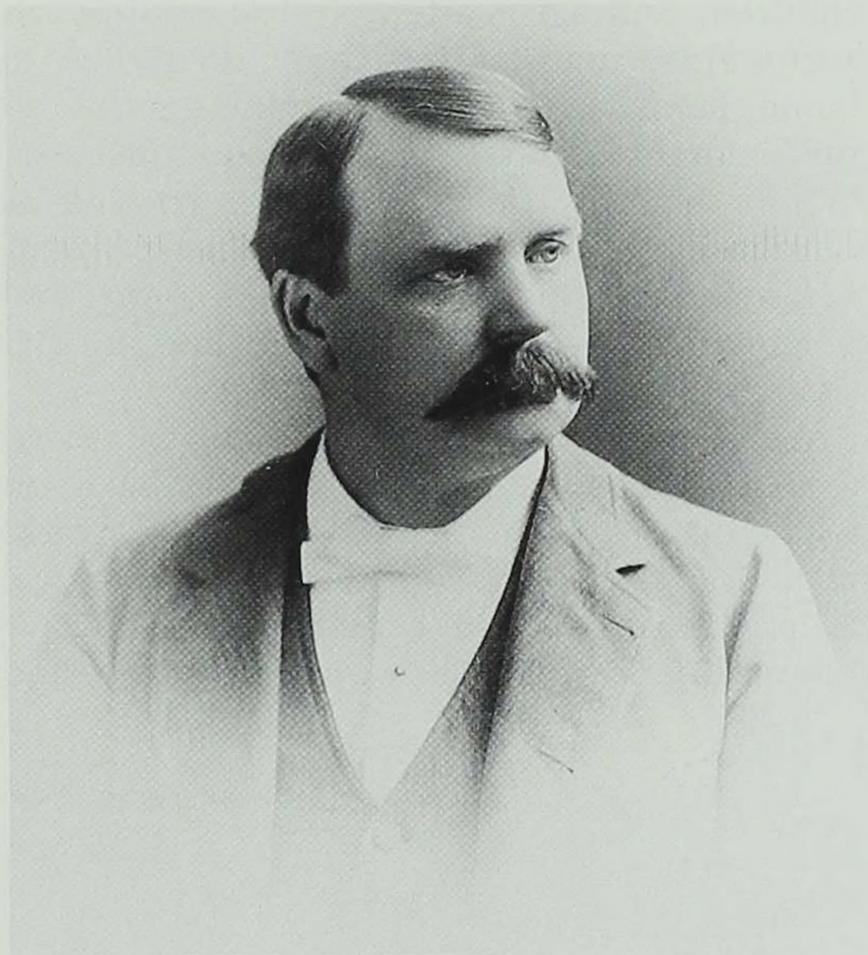
children. Suffragists attempted to refute such arguments, maintaining their allegiance to home, family, and traditional nineteenth-century morality. But it was difficult business. While the Victorian lady was portrayed as pure, feminine, and submissive, the suffragist was sometimes tagged as masculine, ugly, and domineering — or at least likely to become so if she got the vote.

Articles in the three Iowa newspapers reveal a recurring debate about whether women would be soiled by contact with the dirty world of politics. "Throw women into the political arena and some of the fairest features of their moral superiority will be exposed to a rude and

PARLOR IN CLARION, IOWA (SHS/DES MOINES)



"A neat, clean, fresh-aired, sweet, cheerful, well-arranged house exerts a moral influence over its inmates" (*Dubuque Herald*). Anti-suffragists feared that the vote would lead women out of this "woman's sphere" and into the "sordid" world of work and politics.



James Clarkson, *Des Moines Register* editor, praised Iowa suffragists in October 1871. By the new year, he had changed positions and opposed woman suffrage.

perilous test," a *Register* article quoted author Carl Benson.

Another oft-expressed fear was that politics would make women more masculine. Typical is this *Des Moines Register* item: "A writer in the *Woman's Journal* hopes we may never get over the feeling that a woman is made to be gentler than man." In another *Register* story, the *St. Louis Christian* complained about "feminine men, husbandly wives, paternal mothers, matronly lawyers, delicate doctors, dowager divines, statesladies, city mothers, alderwomen, bearesses and bullesses in Wall street" who were "determined to see the universal petticoat wave triumphantly over a subjugated world."

It was but a short step, in some minds, from the macho female voter to the macho female voter bossing her henpecked husband. Such imagery is evident in a *Register* account of a woman who pressured a poll clerk into taking her vote during a New York election: "Mrs. Muller, being no joke in physique, the clerk didn't care about telling her that he could not take her vote. The policemen around giggled. . . . She went home and informed her weaker half, who, in turn, went to the polling place and

deposited his vote, no doubt on the same ticket."

In addition to masculine females and overbearing wives, suffragists were sometimes portrayed by their detractors as "old maids." An example of such sniping is this *Register* account of a Connecticut suffrage meeting: "At the late woman suffrage meeting at Trumbull, Connecticut, all ladies in favor of the movement were requested to rise, whereupon one old maid responded — the last rose of summer."

Suffrage supporters sought to counter arguments that woman suffragists would change women for the worse or damage traditional family life. A *Burlington Hawk-Eye* article quoted Philadelphia suffragists who maintained that woman suffrage would bring "greater purity, constancy and permanence in marriage."

Suffragists also appealed to democratic ideals. Women have a right "to a direct voice in the enactment of those laws by which they are taxed and the formation of that government by which they are governed," the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association declared in an article submitted to the *Des Moines Register*, *Dubuque Herald*, and *Burlington Hawk-Eye*. Denying women the vote "is unjust, unconstitutional and a direct insult and wrong to more than one-half the entire population of the United States."

All three Iowa newspapers gave considerable space to those on both sides of suffrage and women's rights during the fall and winter of 1871/72. Both editorialists and letter writers had the chance to have their say:

"The only logical reason that sustains the right of man to vote is equally applicable to woman," a *Hawk-Eye* editorialist wrote.

"Let us . . . speed the day when America shall become the first Republic, i.e., a government of the people, for the people, by the people," wrote well-known suffragist Lizzie Boynton Harbert in a *Register* letter urging Iowans to attend the state suffrage convention.

Those of the religious persuasion often attempted to interpret God's position on women's rights, and several *Des Moines Register* letter writers brought the Almighty into the woman question.

"God made man, and woman also, to be

active and useful, and it was never meant that there should be any line drawn as to their privileges and rights — the woman is equal to the man and should have the same rights — social and legal,” letter writer James Ellis wrote.

“You may look at this matter in whatever light you will,” wrote one anti-suffragist, “but simmer it down, and it is but a quarrel with the Almighty that we are not all men.”

DES MOINES *Register* editor James Clarkson seemingly could not quite decide where he stood on the issue of woman suffrage. On October 18, 1871, the first day of Iowa’s first statewide suffrage convention, Clarkson asked Iowans to “give serious consideration to the importance” of the convention and praised Iowa suffragists as some of “our best educated and better class of people” who “seek to give to women, as to men, the right to vote, securing for all citizens alike that equality of rights which all citizens should have.” A few days later, Clarkson again praised the women at the convention for their good sense, dignity, and intelligence. “We have never seen a Convention conducted with more decorum or a greater degree of intelligent accord,” he pointed out in an editorial. “All who attended it were impressed with the conviction that its members were earnest and honest, and could see that they were intelligent and well armed.”

For suffragists, the October editorials were perhaps the high point of *Register* coverage of their winter campaign for the vote. Shortly after this initial show of support for the suffragists, Clarkson apparently began to have second thoughts. In a January 21, 1872, editorial, Clarkson offered several arguments against woman suffrage. It provoked a response from a leading Des Moines suffragist, Annie Savery, and the editor and the suffragist were soon engaged in an editorial-page battle. The two crossed swords — or pens, in this case — in what came to be known as the “woman warrior question.” Clarkson editorially maintained women should not be allowed to vote because they could not be soldiers. “Women, while



Des Moines suffragist Annie Savery tackled questions, such as women serving as soldiers and holding office, with *Des Moines Register* editor James Clarkson.

they could and perhaps would use the ballot, in bringing war on, could not and would not use the sword after war had come,” he pointed out.

Taking a swipe at Civil War draft dodgers, Savery replied: “If the laws compelled all who vote, to perform what is voted for, voting, I imagine, would soon be at a discount, and all those who now claim that special privilege, would doubtless avoid the polls, as they did the draft office during the war!” Savery added that, if necessary, “there could doubtless be found” women “willing to carry the musket.”

Clarkson countered by pointing out that “the peculiar organization of woman makes it impossible for her to be a soldier” and “the world’s several thousand years of history proves it.”

From the woman warrior question, Clarkson and Savery moved on to the issue of women officeholders. Clarkson maintained that once they got the vote, women would want to hold

office. The editor worried that women could not hold office and properly care for their families. Few women could satisfactorily meet "the duties of office and the duties of maternity," Clarkson wrote.

Few women would seek office under such circumstances, Savery replied in a letter to the editor. However, should a woman find herself in such circumstances, Savery asked Clarkson if he would "make a new rule for her not now applied to men, for is it not quite common for incompetent men to hold office?"

Because Clarkson's editorial battle with Savery came just three months after he had kicked off the statewide suffrage convention with glowing reports, Iowa suffragists now found themselves on the defensive, fighting with Clarkson and others they had counted as friends. What happened in those ninety days to so turn things around? Some blamed a public relations disaster that hit the suffrage movement hard in the early 1870s. This disaster came in the form of an attractive, eloquent woman reformer with a flair for bad publicity — Victoria Woodhull.

WHEN WOODHULL joined the national suffrage movement in the early part of 1871, she brought publicity, fire, and money to the cause. She also brought an unsavory reputation that would haunt the movement for years. For Iowa suffragists, the haunting began in the winter of 1871/72, when news of Woodhull's "wild" lifestyle began to appear in Iowa newspapers. In light of her upbringing, it is little surprise that Woodhull had some problems fitting into the mold of the modest and demure Victorian lady.

Born Victoria Claflin in 1838 in Homer, Ohio, she spent her youth wandering the Midwest with her family, a shiftless group that told fortunes, held seances, sold alcohol-laced "cure-all" potions, and, it was rumored, ran an itinerant house of prostitution.

By the early 1870s, Woodhull and her sister Tennessee Claflin were living in New York City. With the help of wealthy financier Cornelius Vanderbilt, they had become Wall Street's



THE SCHLESINGER LIBRARY, RADCLIFFE COLLEGE

Victoria Woodhull, suffragist and reformer, advocated "social freedom" involving free love, marriage, divorce, and prostitution. "Freedom does not mean anarchy in the social relations any more than it does in religion and politics," explained an 1871 broadside about a Woodhull speech, "also that the advocacy of its principles requires neither abandoned action nor immodest speech." Right: Sampling from 1871 *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*, published by Woodhull and her sister.

first female stockbrokers and launched a daring weekly journal — *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*. The journal advocated numerous reforms, such as socialism, licensing of prostitutes, and sexual freedom.

A strong suffragist, Woodhull also supported the "free love" movement, which advocated open sexual encounters between willing partners. Although national suffrage leaders had misgivings about Woodhull's free-lover reputation, her energy and eloquence won them over and they welcomed her into the movement. Rumors about Woodhull's wild lifestyle, however, gained credence in May of 1871 when her own mother testified in a police court hearing that Woodhull was sharing her New York mansion with "the worst gang of free lovers" that "ever lived."

The subsequent scandal created headlines and shock waves throughout the eastern press,

WOODHULL & CLAFLIN'S WEEKLY.

PROGRESS! FREE THOUGHT! UNTRAMMELED LIVES!

BREAKING THE WAY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

VOL. 2.—No. 21. WHOLE No. 47.

NEW YORK, APRIL 8, 1871.

PRICE TEN CENTS.

VICTORIA C. WOODHULL & TENNIE C. CLAFLIN
EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.

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THE Cosmo - Political Party.

NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT OF THE U. S.,
In 1872.

VICTORIA C. WOODHULL

SUBJECT TO
RATIFICATION BY THE NATIONAL CONVENTION.

THE NEW REBELLION.

The Great Secession Speech

OF
VICTORIA C. WOODHULL,

BEFORE THE
National Woman's Suffrage Convention,

AT
Apollo Hall, May 11, 1871.

TO ALL WOMEN WHO WOULD BE VOTERS

AND TO

ALL MEN WHO RESPECT THEIR RIGHTS AS CITIZENS.

THE CONSTITUTION, THE LAW AND WOMAN'S
RIGHTS, AND REDRESS UNDER
THEM.

THE TIME FOR ACTION COME.

OFFICERS OF ELECTIONS, BEWARE!

VICTORIA C. WOODHULL
WILL DELIVER HER ARGUMENT FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL EQUALITY,
"THE GREAT POLITICAL ISSUE."
AT THE
MUSIC HALL, BOSTON,
MONDAY EVENING, MARCH 27.

News comes from Iowa that there is not one woman convict in the penitentiary. This speaks well for the morality of the woman citizens, or for the equity of the men judges and jurymen who will not condemn "persons" that have no votes, they are so clearly irresponsible. Good for Iowa, either way.



FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER (NOVEMBER 25, 1871)

Contending a constitutional right to vote, Woodhull was ejected from New York City polls in late 1871.

and then headed west. For Iowa suffragists, it hit home at the worst possible time — just as they were gearing up for their October 1871 state convention. To the Iowa suffragists trying to focus attention on their convention and the ballot during the winter of 1871/72, it must have seemed at times that the Des Moines press was interested in nothing but “the notorious Mrs. Woodhull.” From October 1871 through January 1872, the three Iowa newspapers printed nearly seventy articles about Woodhull or the free-love movement she espoused. A lively combination of sex, scandal, and suffrage, Woodhull would have been hard for any editor to resist. The dull, gray columns of the Des Moines *Register* now fairly sizzled with Woodhull’s fire in a November account of a boisterous speech she gave in New York. In one notable passage, the *Register* printed Woodhull’s defiant reply when a heckler at one of her lectures shouted the question: “Are you a free lover?”

“Yes, I am a free lover,” Woodhull responded to loud hisses. “I have an inevitable, constitutional and natural right to love whom I may, to love as long or as short a period as I can, to change that love every day, if I prefer, [renewed hisses] and with that right neither

you nor any law . . . have any right to interfere.”

The free-love issue unleashed a storm of controversy about the wisdom of giving women the vote, and Iowa suffragists suddenly found themselves guilty by association with a free lover who lived hundreds of miles away. One of the first shots in the press was fired by anonymous letter writer “R.W.T.” of Four Mile Township. In a lengthy letter to the editor of the *Register*, R.W.T. pointed out Woodhull’s “poisonous sentiments” were fast “being imbibed by suffragists,” then added, “there is something revolting and unwomanly in this uproar and clamor for the ballot, and demanding all of men’s so called privileges — free love not excepted.” “Are we to infer,” sniped the *Dubuque Herald*, “that the women’s suffrage convention of Iowa is to be run as a kind of branch of Mrs. Woodhull’s?”

FREE LOVE — not suffrage — had suddenly become the issue in the Iowa press. Iowa suffragists found themselves again on the defensive, trying to allay fears that the ballot would turn women into promiscuous, marriage-spurning free

lovers. Some local woman-suffrage organizations scrambled to pass resolutions disavowing free love. The Polk County suffrage association, via the *Des Moines Register*, felt it necessary to publicly condemn free love and divorce and point out that the ballot would only make marriage "more pure and more sacred." The Marshall County suffrage association, in the same newspaper, called for the resignation of current state officers who favor "free love and free lust and easy divorce laws." In letters in the *Register*, the *Herald*, and the *Hawk-Eye*, state suffrage leaders publicly denounced "lewdness and licentiousness and every form of impurity, whether practiced by man or woman" and affirmed their conviction that "the ballot in the hands of woman will lead to greater happiness in the married state, greater purity of life and more elevated morality."

Marriage and morality were of considerable concern to free-love critics. In a *Dubuque Herald* article, one writer sarcastically suggested that Woodhull's favored method of selecting the father of her children was to choose from a

"dozen suspicious characters" long after the child had been born. Free love, according to the disapproving *Des Moines Register*, was "such a love as the flies have that cross in the air, love that is no more a love than is the sexual passion of the beasts." The *Register* also proposed that "Woodhullism" be the name given to a new kind of marriage that lasts "only while fancy shall bind or lust incline."

Woodhull was criticized or ridiculed in the bulk of the news stories about her. She was, to the news writers of the day, the "notorious and miscellaneously married," the destroyer of the "foundation of society," and the proponent of "monstrous doctrines."

Not everyone, however, was so quick to judge Woodhull. In a letter to the *Register*, one writer suggested that those who were "smoking out" free lovers ought to include such Biblical characters as Solomon, David, Moses, and Abraham as well as some current "patrons of the thousands of assignation houses in our Bible loving land."

Another female letter writer waggishly



THE HARRY T. PETERS COLLECTION, MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

"THE AGE OF BRASS, or the triumphs of Woman's rights." A man with baby is only a bystander as women line up to vote for Susan Sharp-Tongue, the "Celebrated Man Tamer" in this Currier and Ives lithograph from 1869.



“GET THEE BEHIND ME, (MRS.) SATAN!”
WIFE (with heavy burden): “I’D RATHER TRAVEL THE HARDEST PATH OF MATRIMONY THAN FOLLOW YOUR FOOTSTEPS.”

Victoria Woodhull is caricatured as “(Mrs.) Satan” tempting a wife burdened by an alcoholic husband. *Harper’s Weekly* noted that the February 17, 1872 cartoon by Thomas Nast should “convey a great moral lesson to those who may be tempted to accept the pernicious doctrines of the free-love school of our day.”

Opposite page: Woodhull presents her arguments on suffrage to the U.S. House Judiciary Committee.

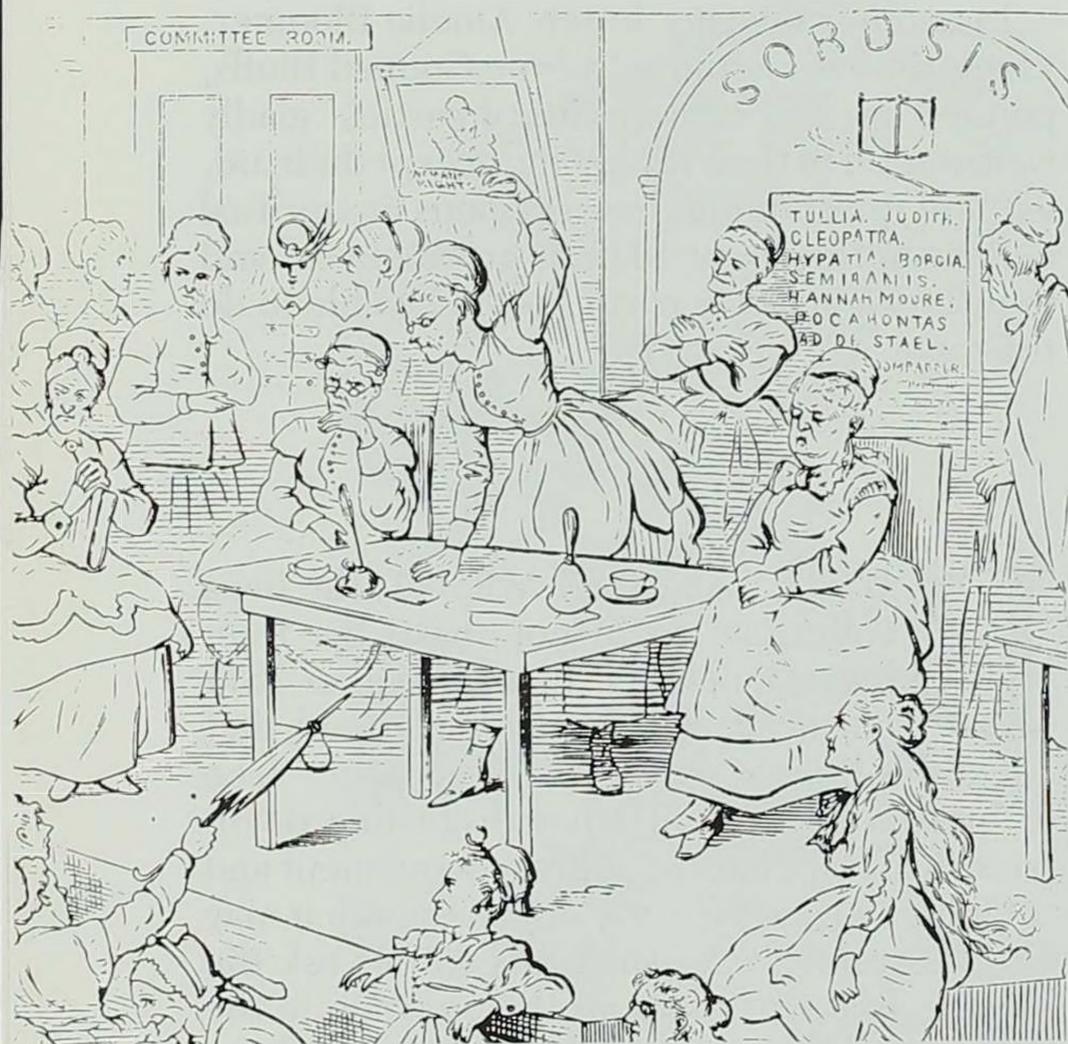
asked the *Register* to enlighten her on the free-love issue: "I notice the gentlemen continuously insinuate that the ladies need nothing more than the ballot to make them all violently opposed to all marriage restrictions. Don't think, dear *Register*, that I am an advocate of woman's rights — far be it from me, I am one of the "Woman's Sphere" people, but I can't help wondering why the gentlemen should think the effects of the ballot would be so vicious; they have it and I don't suppose they ever stray from the path of rectitude, do they?"

As the controversy over free love and suffrage raged on, Iowa suffrage leaders struggled, through the newspapers, to put the issue to rest. In a letter to the editor of the *Register*, Annie Savery wrote: "The Woman Suffrage party is made up of the mothers, wives, and daughters, who believe that the marriage bond is to the social what the Constitution is to the political union. . . . The woman suffrage cause because of its inherent justice can well afford the company of Victoria Woodhull. But from carping friends, who in the name of Christianity offer us a menace with their friendship, we shall ask to be delivered."

In another *Register* letter, Amelia Bloomer, a long-time Iowa suffragist from Council Bluffs, pointed out that men's political parties "gladly welcome all to their ranks, and accept their aid, without questioning their religious or spiritual beliefs, or the doings of their private lives" and the woman-suffrage party should be able to do the same.

BUT TRY AS THEY MIGHT, the Iowa suffragists could not shake the free-love connection. In a December 1871 editorial, the *Register* claimed that "Woodhullism," with its "free love, free divorce, free lust and other disgusting deviltries" had crippled the suffrage movement and set it back years: "Utterly unjust though it may be, the women who shall this winter ask the Iowa legislature to submit the question to the people, will be held as responsible for, and as a party to, all the wild, unwomanly and indecent actions of this female and her free-love gang." The *Register* declared that submitting suffrage





Sorosis, an early women's club in America, was established in 1868 in New York. The group and its suffrage work did not escape the satirical pen of a *Harper's Weekly* cartoonist on May 15, 1869.

to a vote of Iowans would result in its "utter and overwhelming defeat."

Iowans would not get an opportunity to prove or disprove the *Register's* prediction on their voting behavior. In March 1872, the Iowa Senate, on a 22-24 vote, turned down the proposed suffrage amendment, thus denying Iowa voters the chance to vote on woman suffrage.

Press coverage of Victoria Woodhull and the free-love issue undoubtedly hurt the suffrage cause in Iowa. But the *Register's* claim that Woodhull killed the movement seems an exaggeration. There simply was too much uncertainty about woman suffrage during the winter of 1871/72, and most of it involved, in one way or another, the woman's sphere.

The notion of a woman's sphere was surely a comforting one to many nineteenth-century Americans, both male and female. There was a reassuring orderliness to a world in which man had his sphere — making a living, politicking, intellectualizing — and woman had hers — running the home, raising the children, tending to the family morals. Woman suffrage appeared to threaten all that.

News articles, editorials, and letters to editors reveal considerable fear that the ballot would inevitably lead to the demise of the woman's sphere — that voting women would develop a taste for political office and a distaste for housework, that they would become more masculine and less virtuous, that they would embrace a promiscuous lifestyle and abandon their families. Those who saw the ballot as the beginning of the end for the woman's sphere, worried about what lurked beyond that sphere.

THE IDEA OF WOMEN out of their sphere and on the loose must have been a frightening one to many, and those who feared the worst, found the worst — in the notorious, free-wheeling, free-loving Victoria Woodhull. For many, Woodhull must have seemed the evolutionary end-product of the future woman, emboldened by the ballot and freed from her sphere. Woodhull was seen as aggressive, intelligent, promiscuous, mouthy, and outrageous. The bitter attacks on Woodhull reveal the depth of concern among media and others about the threat she presented to marriage, to family, to life as nineteenth-century Americans knew it. Many of those who feared Woodhull also feared the suffragists, with whom she had so closely aligned herself.

But Woodhull or no Woodhull, it appears that nineteenth-century Iowans simply were not ready for voting women and, particularly, any changes in the social order that might result. Despite suffrage activities throughout America during the 1870s, women did not have the ballot in any of the nation's thirty-seven states, and as it turned out, they weren't close to getting it. In 1890, when the Territory of Wyoming achieved statehood, it became the first state in which women had equal suffrage.

Iowa suffragists had a particularly long wait. It would be fifty years before they would cast the ballot, which had seemed so near at hand in 1872. The Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote, took effect August 26, 1920. One day later, Mrs. Jens G. Thuesen, voting in a Cedar Falls school election, became the first woman in Iowa and probably the first

in the nation to vote under the amendment.

At the time, Victoria Woodhull, the wealthy widow of an Englishman, was living on her estate in the English countryside. Many of her fellow suffragists — Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Iowa's Annie Savery — had not lived to see women armed with “that little piece of paper . . . that sacred gift of liberty,” as Savery once called it.

The reformers of the seventies called themselves suffragists. Their granddaughters would call themselves “voters.” And their granddaughters' granddaughters would call them-

selves “feminists.” Whatever their labels or their causes, the women of the twentieth century and beyond owe something to those rather “unladylike” females, many of them Iowans, who dared to break out of their traditional sphere in the early 1870s. They may not have been immediately successful. Those who left their home chores to lobby lawmakers or make speeches one month most likely were back home the next. But, with the help of the Iowa press, they made some headlines. And if they didn't exactly break the woman's sphere wide open, they at least made a crack or two in it. □

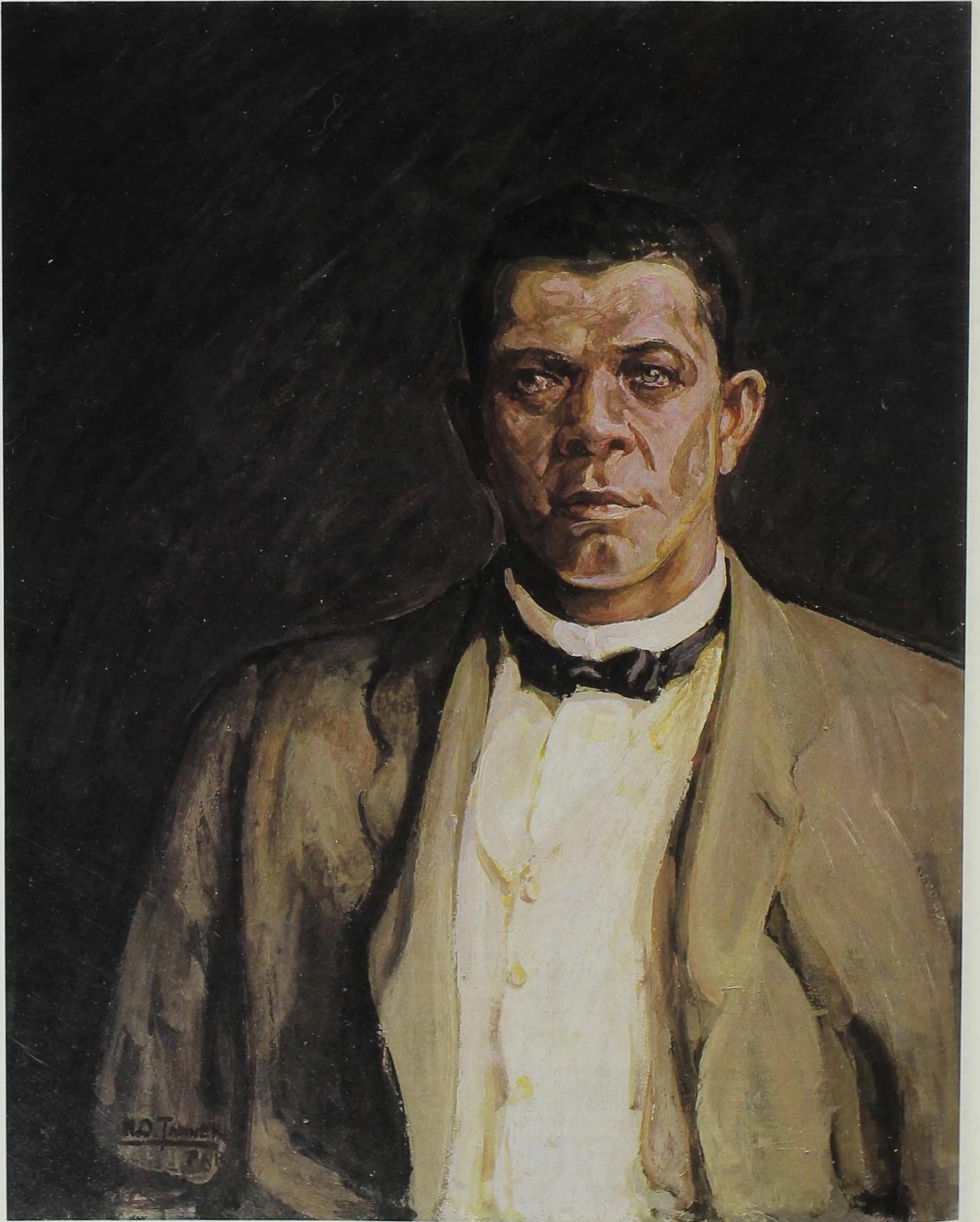


“THE AGE OF IRON: MAN AS HE EXPECTS TO BE.” A Currier and Ives lithograph from 1869 spells out a common fear that women — given the vote — would abandon the “woman's sphere” and its domestic duties of home and children.

NOTE ON SOURCES

Major secondary sources used for this manuscript include Louise R. Noun, *Strong-Minded Women* (1969); Barbara J. Berg, *The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism* (1978); Mabel Collins Donnelly, *The American Victorian Woman* (1986); Ruth Bordin, *Woman and Temperance* (1981); Catherine Clinton, *The Other Civil War* (1984); and Barbara McDowell and Hana Umlauf, eds., *The Good Housekeeping Woman's Almanac* (1977). Important sources on Victoria Woodhull are James

Brough, *The Vixens* (1980); Emanie Sachs, *The Terrible Siren* (1978); and Linda Gordon, “Voluntary Motherhood: The Beginnings of Feminist Birth Control Ideas in the United States,” in *Clio's Consciousness Raised*, Mary S. Hartman and Lois Banner, eds. (1974); as well as Noun's *Strong-Minded Women*. Newspaper quotations are from the *Dubuque Herald*, *Des Moines Daily Iowa State Register*, and *Burlington Hawk-Eye*.



Henry Tanner and Booker T. Washington

The Iowa Story Behind the Portrait

by Jack Lufkin

A SMALL but active group of black women in Iowa brought about the creation of a portrait of a preeminent black leader by a preeminent black painter of the same generation. The painting, owned by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is a portrait of Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856–1915) by noted black artist Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937).

Washington is perhaps best known for his success in developing Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Alabama into a flourishing and nationally prominent educational institution for blacks. There, the artist's sister, Hallie Tanner Dillon, was the campus physician. Washington visited Tanner in Paris in 1899 while vacationing in Europe and admired the painter's success. "My acquaintance with Mr. Tanner," he wrote in his popular autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, "reenforced in my mind the truth which I am constantly trying

to impress upon our students at Tuskegee — and on our people throughout the country . . . any man, regardless of colour, will be recognized and rewarded just in proportion as he learns to do something well — learns to do it better than someone else."

This message was one that Washington espoused on his national speaking tours. Addressing various public groups and chautauquas, he championed self-help and accommodation, emphasizing economic opportunity and education for blacks over civil rights advocacy. Washington brought this message to Iowa as well. In 1904 he visited Buxton, Iowa, where many black miners lived and worked. In early March 1911, Washington again came to Iowa. Sponsored by the Northwest Teachers Association in Sioux City, he addressed a crowd of twenty-five hundred on the value of black economic efforts and self-help. The *Sioux City Journal* thought his two-hour speech was impressive and called him "a prophet out of the wilderness." The *Iowa Bystander*, a Des Moines newspaper owned and operated by blacks, covered Washington's stay in Des Moines. Its editors said he infused spirit and optimism in a black community divided by strife and beleaguered by white indifference

Left: *Portrait of Booker T. Washington*, by Henry Ossawa Tanner. Painted in 1917 for the Iowa Federation of Colored Women's Club, the portrait measures 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ " × 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". The oil painting is now on loan from the Museum Bureau, State Historical Society of Iowa to the Philadelphia Museum of Art for an exhibit on Tanner.

and hostility: "It was a pleasure to see us together for once."

Washington's wife, Margaret, also carried this message to Iowa. In 1914, as president of the National Association of Colored Women, she spoke at St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Des Moines. There she stressed the importance of charitable activities by women's clubs and the need for racial cooperation. She also edited the "National Notes" newsletter for the National Association of Colored Women and through this group worked closely with another black leader — Iowan Sue Brown.

Born in Virginia in 1877, Brown attended high school in Ottumwa and later moved to Des Moines with her husband, attorney S. Joe

Brown. There she became involved with the Colored Women's Clubs, founded a welfare agency called the Richard Allen Aid Society, and served as a district superintendent of the AME Sunday School and later as president of the Des Moines chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She also served as business manager for the National Association of Colored Women.

Shortly after Booker T. Washington's death in 1915, Brown wrote to Henry Tanner asking if he would paint a posthumous portrait of Washington for the Iowa Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, over which she presided. Tanner was happy to oblige. "I usually ask one thousand to twelve hundred," he replied, "but would make it for you for \$500 if



Sue Brown (middle row, far left) at 1936 convention of the Iowa Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. On behalf of this group, Brown had asked Henry Tanner if he would paint a portrait of black leader Booker T. Washington. When he agreed, Brown set about to raise the artist's fee. Brown was assisted by Historical Department curator Edgar Harlan. The federation's records are kept in the Archives of the State Historical Society of Iowa (Des Moines).

SIOUX CITY JOURNAL (May 27, 1936)



HENRY OSSAWA TANNER PAPERS, ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Artist Henry Ossawa Tanner, well known for his religious art and paintings such as *The Banjo Lesson*, painted Booker T. Washington's posthumous portrait in 1917. Tanner lived much of his life in Paris.

you wished me." Brown now faced the task of raising the money. Assisted by Curator Edgar Harlan of the Historical Department in Des Moines, she set up the Booker T. Washington Memorial Fund. Federation members solicited donations, starting at five dollars each.

In 1917 the portrait was unveiled at a federation meeting in Ottumwa and then transferred by Harlan to the Iowa Hall of History in Des Moines. The painting was a respected addition to the portrait gallery. Tanner was a recognized and successful artist, whose paintings won international prizes and hung in the Louvre, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Although Tanner's painting of Washington is not considered among his best, it is a work of considerable historical significance given the eminence of both painter and subject.

The portrait of Washington is now on loan from the State Historical Society of Iowa to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which has mounted an exhibit of Tanner's work. The Tanner exhibit will later travel to the Detroit Institute of Arts, the High Museum of Atlanta, and the Fine Arts Museum in San Francisco.

Meanwhile, a museum exhibit about the struggle by black Americans for greater freedom and economic opportunity will open in April in the State Historical Building in Des Moines. "Field to Factory" is a traveling Smithsonian Institution exhibit that chronicles the Great Migration of blacks from the South to the East and Midwest. □

The Story of ANN RALEY

Mother of the Coppoc Boys

by Richard Acton

ANN RALEY'S SON Edwin Coppoc was going to hang. His leader in the raid on Harpers Ferry, John Brown, had already been executed for treason to Virginia, murder, and inciting slaves to revolt. Edwin and three others were due to die on December 16, 1859. Five days earlier a young Quaker woman of Springdale, Iowa, wrote to one of Edwin's fellow prisoners, "The time will soon be here when . . . Edwin will be executed. If this reaches thee in time give my love and sympathy to [him]. . . . Poor Ann Raley is almost crazy, some think she will not live through it."

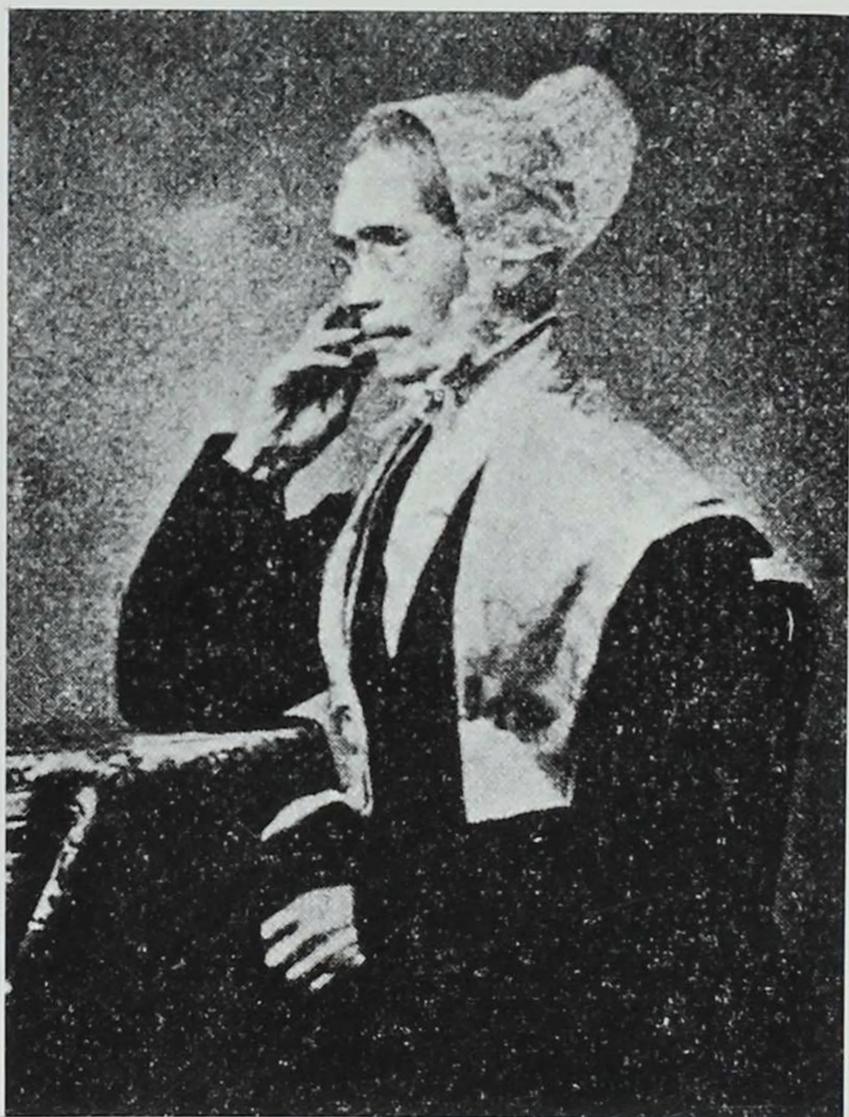
But Ann Raley was both a survivor and a tigress. For years before Edwin was sentenced to death, she had faced tragedy after tragedy and had always overcome them. This time, her Quaker faith would be matched by her clever and deliberate press campaign as she defended her son. Just as the bloodshed at Harpers Ferry foreshadowed the bloodshed of the oncoming war, so the fury of letters and documents that erupted from Ann Raley, the press, and the governor of Virginia portended the shattering

of the Union by the secession of South Carolina.

ANN RALEY was born in 1804, the eldest child of a New Jersey Quaker couple, Joshua and Rachel Lynch. The following year the family moved to Columbiana County, Ohio, where her father was a farmer, Quaker preacher, and school-teacher — a career she too would later pursue in Ohio. As a child she had suffered the agony and disfigurement of the loss of one eye in an accident, and her vision would always be hampered.

Ann married a neighboring Quaker, Samuel Coppoc, in 1831. During the next decade she bore and reared six children — Levi, Maria, Edwin, Lydia, Barclay, and Joseph. In 1841 Ann's husband suddenly died, aged only thirty-seven. The family was left destitute, and Ann had no choice but to split up the children and scatter them locally. Each child was taken in by different relatives or friends. For the next eight years Ann remained in Ohio and con-

"I do not believe in the principle of war, or the taking of human life . . . but my Bible tells me to do unto others as I would have them do unto me, and to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free."
—Ann Raley



MIDLAND MONTHLY (OCTOBER 1895)

tinued to oversee her children's upbringing.

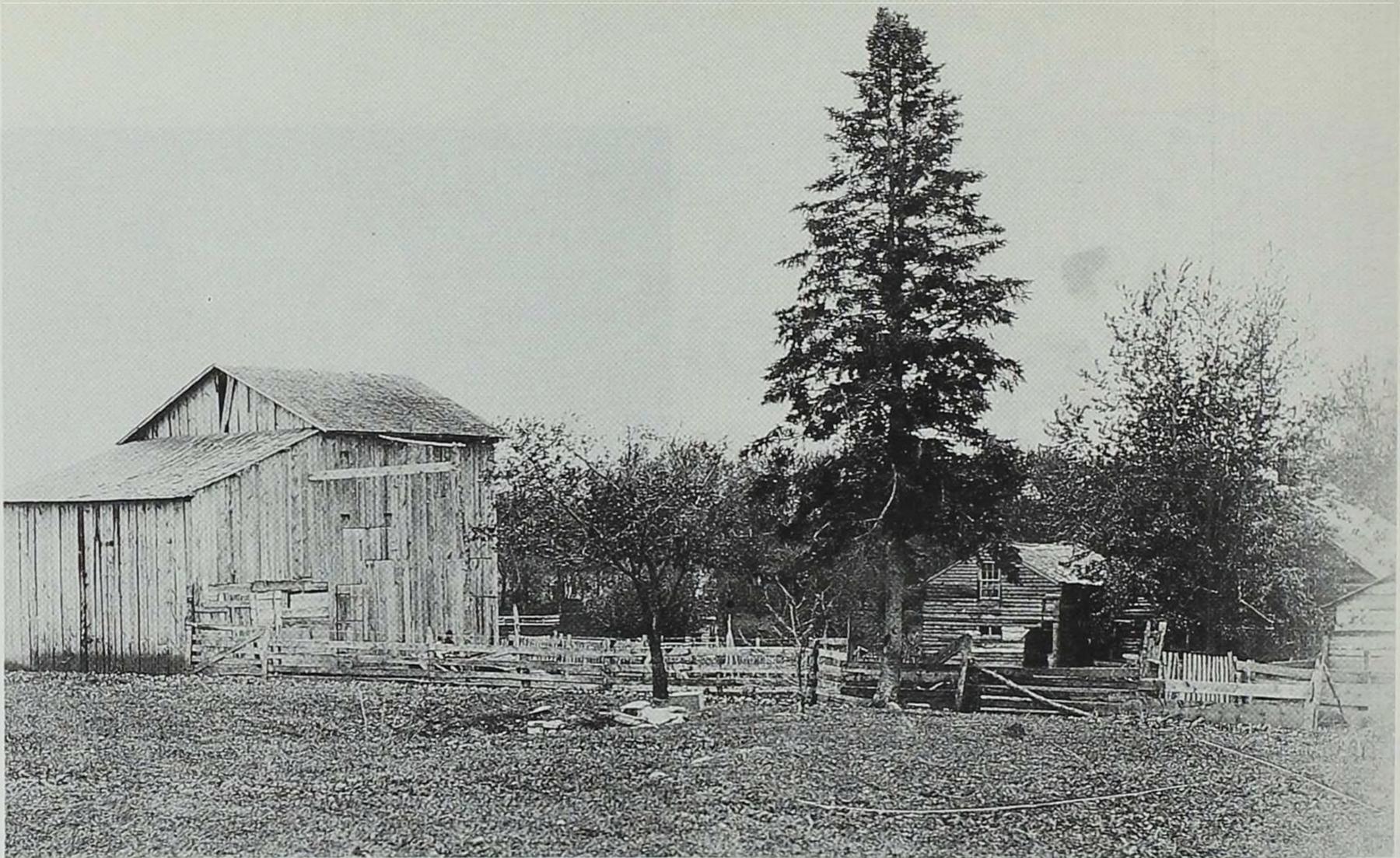
Then in December 1849 her old father died, and Ann inherited a precious one hundred dollars. Although her roots were in Ohio, Ann determined to use the money to give her family and herself a fresh start in the new state of Iowa. Unbroken prairie at the future Springdale in Cedar County, Iowa, was being sold by the government for only \$1.25 an acre. Quakers had begun to settle there. After the money had been paid in March 1850, Ann gathered together her family — only Barclay was left behind in Ohio — and moved to Springdale. There she bought land, and her elder sons, eighteen-year-old Levi and fifteen-year-old Edwin, built her a frame house and started a small farm.

Ann's spiritual and social center was the local Quaker meeting house, built in 1852. One historian records: "There were only a few families at that time, and the worshipers often came to meeting in the middle of the week just as they left their work — barefooted, and without coats or vests; and it was no unusual thing for families to come in a wagon drawn by oxen." The family

was also involved in village affairs — Levi was elected the first constable of Springdale in 1852.

Early in 1853 Ann remarried. Her second husband, Joseph Raley, was a Quaker widower thirteen years her senior; he went to live with Ann and her family on their farm. A few months later her third son, fourteen-year-old Barclay, left Ohio and joined Ann at Springdale in time for his sister Maria's marriage to a local Quaker youth. After twelve years Ann had successfully reunited her entire family. But the joy was all too short-lived. Just one month after Maria's wedding, Ann's younger daughter, Lydia, died of consumption at the age of seventeen. Two years later the same dread disease carried off twenty-two-year-old Maria.

A NN WAS LEFT with her four sons. She had long endeavored to instill her strongly held Quaker beliefs in them. She was a woman of marked clarity, idealism, and intelligence, and as she



COURTESY MERLIN MATHER (1892 PHOTO)

The home of Ann Raley and family. Note house, right of pine. Just east of Springdale, the farm was an Underground Railroad station. From here, Ann's sons Barclay and Edwin Coppoc left to join John Brown.

put it, worked for "the day when all mankind, free and equal, standing in the image of God, shall live to his glory." Ann's desire for equality encompassed the rights of women. A contemporary Springdale Quaker woman called Ann "a staunch advocate of woman suffrage [who] worked in the cause in her private way. Some thought her a fanatic; be that as it may, she was firm and true to the cause she avowed and never wavered from her purpose."

But it was Ann's belief in freedom and the abolition of slavery that was to win renown for her and her sons. In Springdale itself her house was a station on the Underground Railroad for slaves escaping from the South. Accused of harboring runaway slaves, Ann acknowledged it proudly: "As to my house being a depot for the afflicted and suffering . . . we have not altogether that honor, as there are so many of the neighbors who wish to participate in the generous attention."

Although Ann's sons were imbued with her philosophy of human worth and equality and her abomination of slavery, they failed to conform to the rules of Quakerism. The minutes of the Quaker monthly meeting recorded in the fall of 1854: "Levi, complained of for attending balls & Dances," and a year later, "Levi, dis-

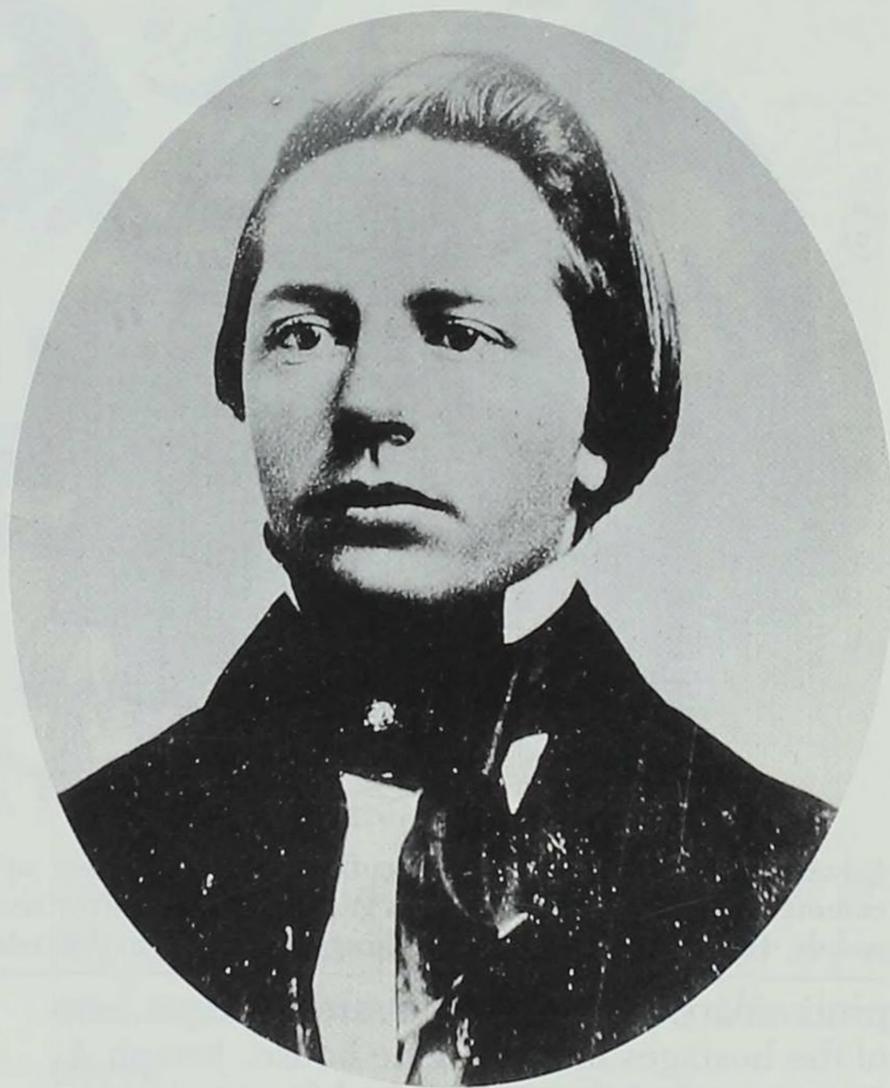
owned [expelled] for dancing." In January 1857: "Edwin, complained of for attending a dance," and six months later, "Edwin, disowned for attending a dance." On the same day the minutes recorded: "Barclay, complained of for striking a man in anger."

Later in 1857 tragedy struck Ann's family again when twenty-five-year-old Levi, her eldest son, developed consumption, as had his sisters. Ann nursed him assiduously, but Levi died in August. Meanwhile, Barclay had developed a consumptive look, and his worried mother sent him off to Michigan and the lakes to recuperate. He returned to Springdale in time for the arrival of John Brown in December 1857.

John Brown was already well known as a veteran and ruthless fighter against slavery in "bleeding Kansas." Now he had decided to invade Virginia and the South to liberate all the slaves. The ten men he brought to Springdale from Kansas were the nucleus of the invading army he envisaged, but most of them knew nothing of his true plans. When he left the men in Springdale for the winter of 1857/58, they thought they were training for further warfare in Kansas. They drilled hard with guns and wooden swords, and spent much time studying

military manuals and history. A mock legislature was held in Springdale in which John Brown's men and local youths debated slavery, suffrage, and reform issues, and deep friendships sprang up between the men and some of the Quaker families and their daughters. Edwin and Barclay Coppoc were fascinated by the men, who left with Brown and two local recruits in April 1858 for Canada. Nearly a year later, in February 1859, Brown reappeared in Springdale for two weeks, on his way to Canada with eleven slaves he had freed in Missouri.

That summer Edwin, now aged twenty-four, and Barclay, twenty, were obviously preparing for something. They sold their oxen, and Edwin hired a black man to look after the farm. One day in July Edwin and Barclay departed for Ohio. A worried Ann guessed that their aim was to join John Brown in Kansas.



"I saw no way of deliverance but by fighting a little. If anyone was killed on that occasion it was in fair fight."

—Edwin Coppoc

ALTHOUGH three or four of the local Quaker men knew something of Brown's plans to invade Virginia, the general belief in Springdale was that Brown and his men would be fighting in Kansas. The news of the raid on Harper's Ferry, therefore, burst on Springdale as unexpectedly as it did on the whole country. Ann would write later: "Some time last summer, two of my sons, Edwin and Barclay, left home without informing me of their destination or designs. On hearing of the unlawful outbreak at Harper's Ferry, we learned with great surprise and horror that Edwin was engaged there, in an action so unlike his previous course of conduct."

On the night of October 16, 1859, John Brown and eighteen armed men, white and black, had taken and held the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry for thirty-six hours in the name of freeing the slaves. Some local slaveowners and armory workers were taken hostage. A handful of slaves were temporarily freed and armed with pikes. Brown's party resisted the attempts of local militia to capture them with rifle fire. Four men of Harpers Ferry including the mayor were shot dead; ultimately ten of the raiders died.

John Brown and his party were finally cap-

tured in the fire-engine house by United States Marines under Colonel Robert E. Lee, and one Marine was killed. Edwin Coppoc was captured unharmed. Two raiders escaped — as did Barclay Coppoc and two others who had been rearguards at Brown's base five miles away in Maryland. These three had never gone into Harpers Ferry or even crossed the state line into Virginia at all. On hearing the raid had failed, Barclay and the others disappeared on foot into the Pennsylvania mountains. Virginia governor Henry A. Wise offered a substantial reward for their capture.

John Brown was tried immediately after the raid and was convicted of treason to Virginia, murder, and inciting slaves to revolt. Although there was no proof that Brown himself had murdered anyone, aiding and abetting were grounds for the murder conviction. At Edwin's



HARPER'S WEEKLY (NOVEMBER 12, 1859)

Edwin Coppoc (center) is handcuffed to John Brown at the arraignment. *Harper's Weekly* artist-correspondent commented, "In person, Brown is gaunt and tall — over six feet, I should think. He walks like a man accustomed to the woods. His face indicates unflinching resolution, evil passions, and narrow mind."

preliminary hearing on the same charges, one of the hostages in the engine house, Joseph A. Brua, testified that Edwin had fired twice and that Mayor Fontaine Beckham was killed by the second shot. In a one-day trial Edwin was found guilty. (The trial records were later destroyed by fire, but apparently Brua gave the same testimony at the trial. Moreover, no evidence was called for the defense.)

Although Harpers Ferry filled America's newspapers for months, the press had been ordered by the court not to publish any details of the preliminary evidence. Furthermore, the press did not publish the evidence of Edwin's trial; the newspaper columns were filled instead with news of John Brown's classic plea in mitigation, delivered the same day as Edwin's trial. Hence, the fact that it was undoubtedly Edwin who had killed the unarmed mayor of Harpers Ferry was not known to his mother or the public at large. Nor did Edwin ever admit murder. Before sentencing, Edwin stated: "I never committed murder. When I escaped to the engine house and found the captain and his prisoners surrounded there, I saw no way of deliverance but by fighting a little. If anyone was killed on that occasion it was in fair fight."

After he had been convicted Edwin wrote to his mother: "I have seen my folly too late and

must now suffer the consequences which I suppose will be death. . . . I hope you will not reflect on me for what I have done, for I am not at fault, at least my conscience tells me so. . . . We were surrounded and compelled to fight to save our own lives. . . . I am happy to say that no one fell by my hand, and am sorry to say that I was ever induced to raise a gun. . . . I am sorry, very sorry that such has been the case." The next day he added to his letter a request: "If . . . you have any sweet cakes or other nicknacks, just send them along. They will go very good here between the iron bars. We get plenty to eat here, but *it is not from home*." A few days later he was sentenced to hang on December 16.

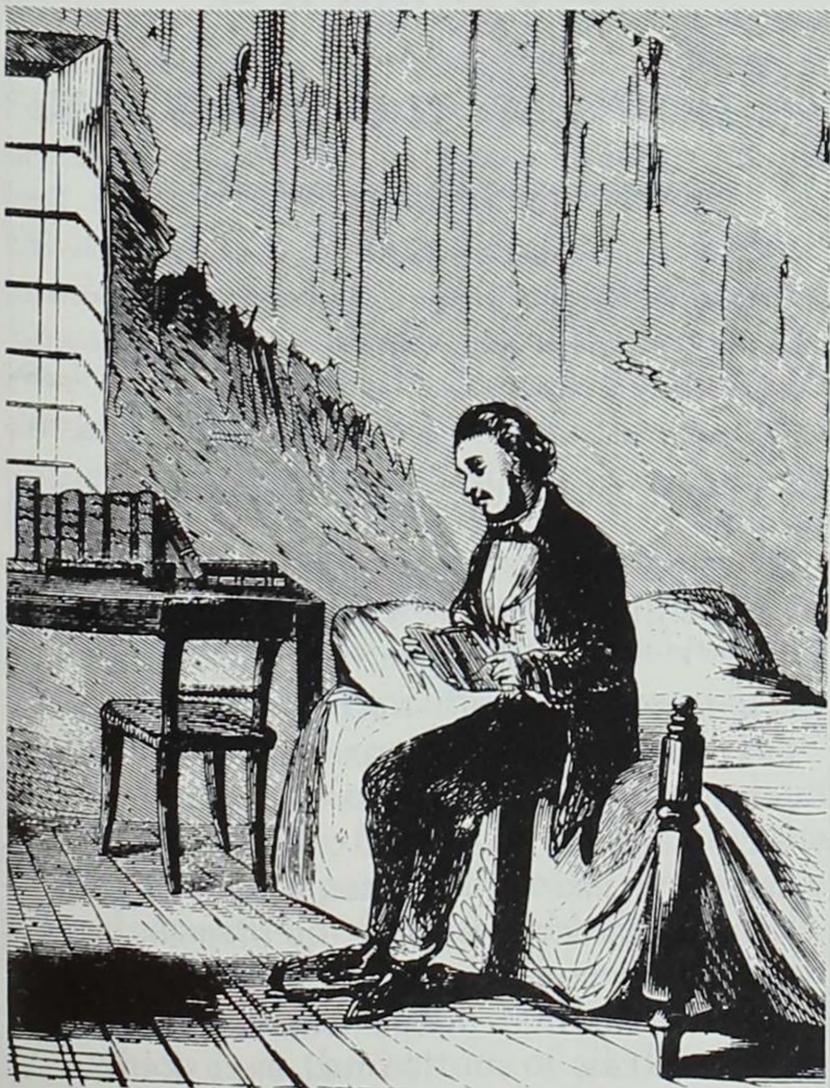
JUDGING FROM ANN'S spirited defense of Edwin, she apparently believed every word of her son's letter and was spared ever being told of the evidence that Edwin had killed the mayor. She asked the Quaker postmaster of Springdale, Thomas Winn, to go to Virginia to plead for clemency. He departed with a petition to Governor Wise signed by two hundred sympathizers.

On arrival in Charlestown, Virginia, Winn immediately called on the special prosecutor, who recalled later that "an old gentleman came

all the way from [Edwin Coppoc's] people to see him, bringing him a pound cake to comfort him. . . . [I] passed him into the jail with the cake for Coppoc." Edwin had his mother's forgiveness — and her cake.

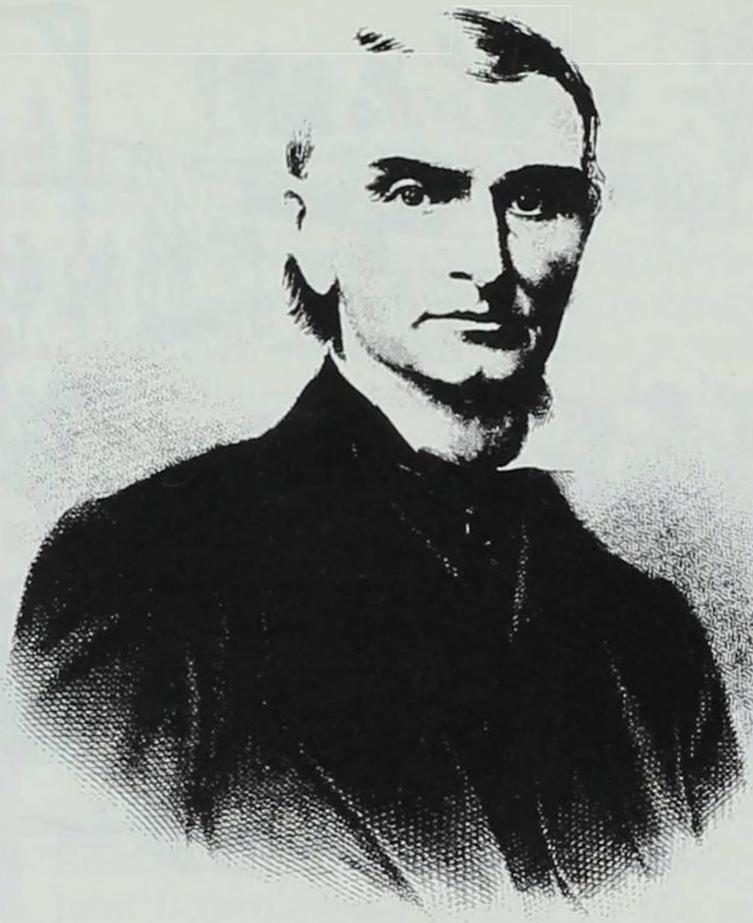
Thomas Winn and other friends and relatives of Edwin's from Ohio lobbied to such good effect that Governor Wise concluded that Edwin's death sentence should be commuted because he believed Edwin had been "careful of the lives of prisoners at Harper's Ferry, and was I think, misled into the crimes there." Wise recommended clemency, but the Virginia legislature — with which the decision lay — thought otherwise, and the hanging was ordered to proceed.

Relieved to learn that Barclay had reached safety in Canada, Ann awaited Edwin's execution, sustained by the depth of her faith. "My anxious desires and intercessions to the throne of grace on [Edwin's] behalf a parent's heart can only know," she wrote, "and I received, on my pillow, in the midnight hour, a full



"I have seen my folly too late and must now suffer the consequences," Edwin wrote to his mother from prison. "I hope you will not reflect on me for what I have done, for I am not at fault, at least my conscience tells me so."

VIRGINIA STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

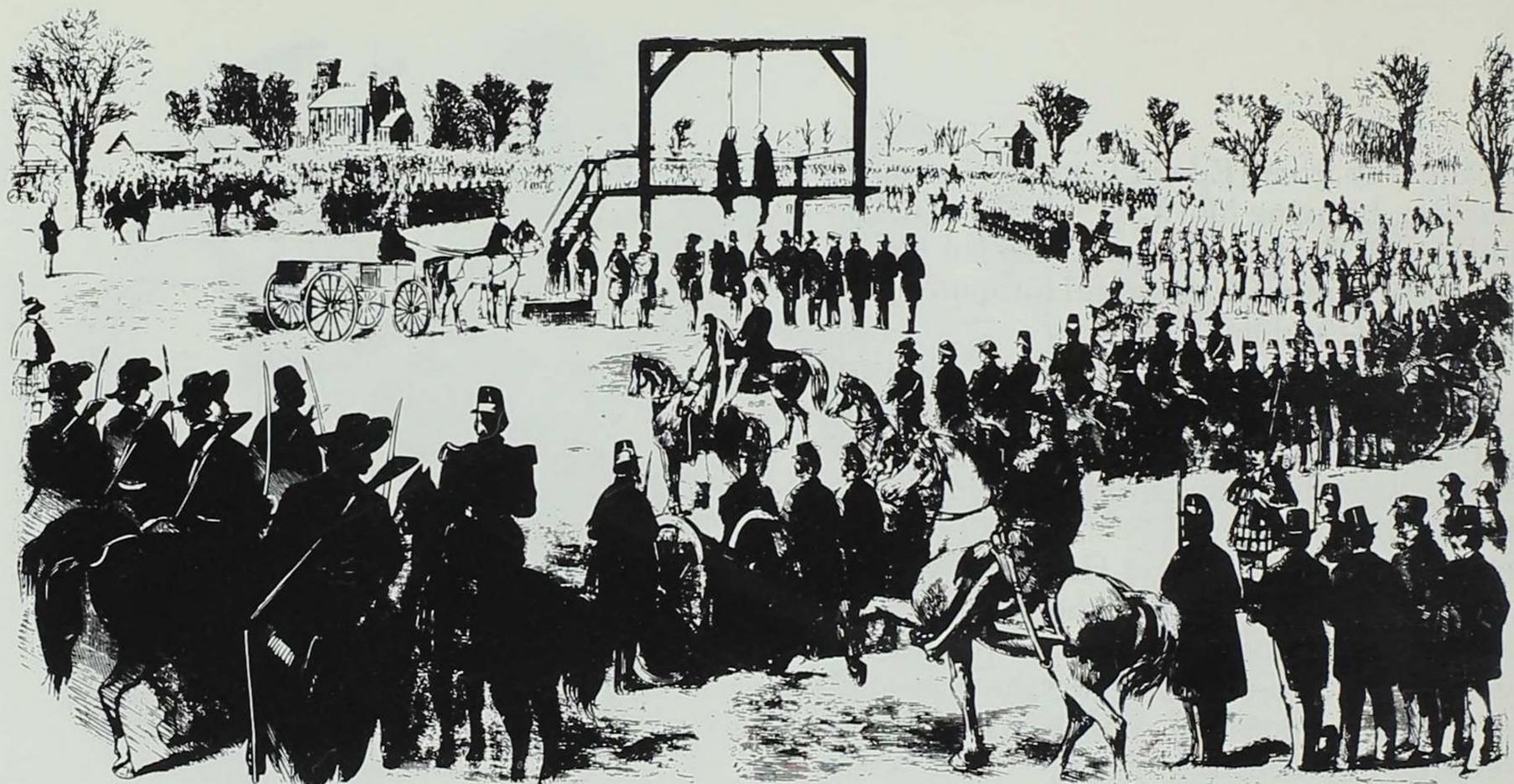


Edwin Coppoc had been "careful of the lives of prisoners at Harper's Ferry and was I think, misled into the crimes there."

—Virginia governor Henry A. Wise

assurance that his sins would be remitted through the pardoning mercy of Jesus Christ our Lord; that he would be supported above the fears of death upon the scaffold, and be received into one of the mansions of everlasting rest. This has supported my poor tired mind through this dark conflict."

Five days before Edwin was to die, Ann fired off a cogent letter to the press — the start of a newspaper campaign on behalf of her sons. The letter was a stout defense in reply to a critical newspaper story about her youngest son Joseph's freeing of slaves in Missouri. She wrote: "That I have a son [Joseph] who feels it his duty to assist the noble image of God to a *land of liberty* I am happy to acknowledge. . . . I have three surviving sons. The eldest [Edwin] is in a Southern jail, about to be offered up as a willing sacrifice to his country, not for the dark crimes for which he has been condemned, but for defending the great cause of Freedom. The second [Barclay] is in Queen Vic's dominions . . . ready to do anything for the great Cause. The youngest [Joseph] is at home attending school, except when the calls



FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER (DECEMBER 24, 1859)

of humanity as before alluded to, claim his attention.

"I do not believe in the principle of war, or the taking of human life on any occasion," she continued, "but my Bible tells me to do unto others as I would have them do unto me, and to undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free. . . . I feel it a duty to lend my influence in support of these *Divine Truths*."

She ended: "I am proud to say, that I have endeavored to implant the seeds of the great principles of humanity in the minds of my children, and am truly thankful to the great author of my being, that those seeds have taken root and are springing up and producing the fruits which may in time repay the labor."

On the afternoon of the day of Edwin's execution, a young Quaker girl was sent to keep the grieving mother company. Ann greeted her quietly with the words: "I'm glad thou art come. Edwin was hanged at one o'clock today."

The next day Barclay came home.

Barclay had returned for his brother's funeral. Edwin had expressed the wish to be laid by the side of his brother Levi and his sister Lydia at Springdale, but Thomas Winn and Edwin's Ohio uncle Joshua Coppoc — to spare Ann the ordeal of viewing Edwin's body "horribly blackened and disfigured" — took the body to Ohio instead of Iowa. They buried it in a Virginia-made coffin in a Quaker cemetery near Salem, Ohio. Although more than a thousand people attended the funeral, there was a

After the hanging, Edwin Coppoc was buried in a Quaker cemetery in Salem, Ohio. Following a public outcry, the body was then exhumed for a more public funeral. Handbill lists prominent Salem citizens.

FUNERAL OF EDWIN COPPOCK.

The friends of Edwin Coppock and of the great principles of Freedom, for which he sacrificed his life, and to advance which, he suffered martyrdom, being desirous of showing proper respect to his memory have obtained his remains from his relatives, and have made arrangements to inter the body in the Cemetery in SALEM. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1859.

To meet at the TOWN HALL, at 1 o'clock, P. M. All the friends of JUSTICE, LIBERTY, and HUMANITY, are invited to attend and participate in these solemn rites.

R. H. GARRIGUES,	JOHN HUDSON,
DANIEL BONSALL,	C. H. GARRIGUES,
JACOB HEATON,	JAMES WHINERY,
ISAAC TRESPOTT,	ELIJA WHINERY,
OLIVER MILLER,	ALLEN BOYLE,
JOHN W. FAWCETT,	EDWARD GIBBONS,
J. K. RUKENBROD,	JOEL MILLAN,
ISAAC SNIDER,	J. C. WHINERY,
T. E. VICKERS,	SAMUEL BRUBAKER,
W. P. WEST,	A. WRIGHT,
JOHN McLERAN,	SAML. D. HAWLEY,
A. BRADFIELD,	J. M. BROWN.

clamor in abolitionist Salem for a yet more public funeral. The body was exhumed, placed in an Ohio-made coffin (a deliberate political statement), and reburied in a larger cemetery. This time a vast crowd of more than six thousand attended the service.

ANN HAD BEEN inundated with letters of sympathy from all over the country, but because of her poor eyesight had been unable to answer most of them. A letter to which she did reply was from the Reverend Nathaniel North, a Presbyterian minister in Virginia. He had visited Edwin's cell mate in Charlestown Prison and had seen Edwin a number of times. Just before the execution he had written to Ann of Edwin's Christian preparations for death; of the Quakers who had visited him; of the sadness of the times. Finally he had commended some Biblical verses to Ann to comfort her.

Ann's strongly worded reply expressed barbed gratitude. Her anger at the state of Virginia permeated the letter, and she recognized the national repercussions of Harpers Ferry: "Thy account of my dear Edwin is truly satisfactory, and thy care and concern for his best interest is grateful to my feelings. . . . Edwin did not go into Virginia to commit murder or treason. . . . You have erected a monument in the hypocritical sentence, the mock trial, and the barbarian gallows, by which Virginia will be remembered in the annals of history. . . . But I forgive you. I should be less than my noble son if I did not. . . . He went for a great and noble purpose . . . but he saw his mistake in the *manner* of doing it, this was all he had to repent of on that score."

She turned to the political consequences of the execution: "You are working against yourselves; every murdered son of America whom you send out to the North with the print of the accursed halter upon their necks, and whose funerals are attended by assembled thousands, has the tendency to kindle the fires of indignant hatred against not only the demon cause [slavery] which is at the bottom of all this, but is ready to burst like a volcano on the heads of the actors. The South feels herself insulted. . . . The North is a hornet's nest."

Her next words seemed directed particu-

larly at Reverend North: "Surely, this being the case it behooves every true Christian, every minister of the gospel, every politician of the land, to raise their voices against this great and crying evil, before it is too late . . . before the United States of America be deluged with havoc and blood." She ended the letter in Quaker style: "From thy sincere but unknown friend, Ann L. Raley." North's letter and Ann's reply both appeared in Ohio and Iowa newspapers.

IN THE GROWING FERMENT, the Virginia authorities were determined to bring Barclay Coppoc and the other survivors of John Brown's band to trial for the same charges of treason to Virginia, murder, and inciting slaves to revolt. After the *Muscatine Daily Journal* of December 22 reported that Barclay had been among those at Thomas Winn's return home, a local reader wrote to the new governor of Virginia that "Barclay Coppoc is with his mother in Springdale." Governor John Letcher (who had succeeded Governor Wise) sent a special agent to Muscatine to effect the arrest of Barclay. The Virginia agent, Courtland Camp, arrived at Muscatine on January 9 and stayed under an assumed name at the Mason House Hotel. But he apparently made no effort to go to Springdale.

Ann knew Barclay was being hunted, and now began her fight to save this son. On January 23 she wrote to a friend in Ohio: "Barclay is at home and seems determined to stay, although there are reports almost continuously of somebody being in search of him. He says he has hurt nobody, and will not *run* nor will he be *taken* . . . I think B's friends will take care of him."

"B's friends" were apparently a group of Springdale young men armed and ready to defend Barclay. The Democrat press gleefully reported that they were hypocritical Quakers in arms. The Republican press had it that none of them were Quakers. But Barclay was one Quaker who definitely did go everywhere armed — with no less than four revolvers. The Quaker elders called on him in his mother's house to complain, but he ignored their admonition. Inevitably the Monthly Meeting

recorded: "Barclay, disowned for bearing arms."

On January 23 in Des Moines, the agent Courtland Camp presented Iowa governor Samuel J. Kirkwood with a requisition from Governor Letcher to extradite Barclay Coppoc as a fugitive from Virginia justice. Kirkwood was undoubtedly sympathetic to Barclay's cause (given his remarks about John Brown in his recent inaugural speech). He rejected Camp's requisition on the very narrowest of technical grounds.

Angered at Kirkwood's rejection, Camp ignored the governor's advice to restrain himself and fumed, "I don't care a damn who knows it now, since you have refused to honor the requisition." Anti-slavery legislators who had overheard the argument in the governor's



"You are hunting all through the land a poor fatherless boy, whom somebody has said that somebody imagined, had had some connection with Brown."
—Ann Raley about her son Barclay

office hired a messenger to ride to Springdale to warn Barclay to flee. Obstinate, he refused to budge.

The next day Kirkwood wrote two further reasons to the Virginia governor: the affidavit did not state that Barclay Coppoc had committed the acts charged in Virginia, nor were any of the facts stated on which the special prosecutor had based his belief. Courtland Camp returned to Muscatine to await a corrected requisition from Virginia.

Jonathan W. Cattell, state senator from Cedar County, recognized the great folly of Barclay remaining in Springdale. Having written the original warning to Barclay, he now wrote to Ann's friend Dr. Henry C. Gill at Springdale. It was inevitable that a second corrected requisition would be acted on, Cattell warned, and he feared bloodshed if Barclay did not leave.

Ann Raley now entered the fray over the requisition. She wrote a powerful letter to Virginia governor Letcher and sent a copy to the *Chicago Press and Tribune*. In the letter she explained that her early sympathy for Virginia for "the unlawful outbreak" had turned to contempt because of the manner of the killing of John Brown's men during the raid, the "farical representation of the forms of law," and the hangings of Edwin and the others. But Ann considered that the "most disgraceful part" was that Virginia authorities were "hunting all through the land a poor fatherless boy, whom somebody has said that somebody imagined, had had some connection with Brown." Barclay had signed no constitution or pledge of allegiance to Brown, Ann argued, nor had he been in Virginia during the raid or injured anyone. "Yet you are chasing him with biped bloodhounds and big bloated marshalls, secret patrols and spies, and most inhuman of all, the thousand dollar reward for him dead or alive."

Protective of Barclay as he recovered from a bout of severe asthma, she nevertheless was ready to make any sacrifice for the anti-slavery cause. "My poor consumptive boy has thus far been preserved through all his suffering by cold and starvation in the mountains, and from the clutches of rapacious men," she wrote to Letcher, "yet I would be willing to give up this son, also, with the addition of my own life, if

thereby the distressed bondsmen [slaves] might be liberated.

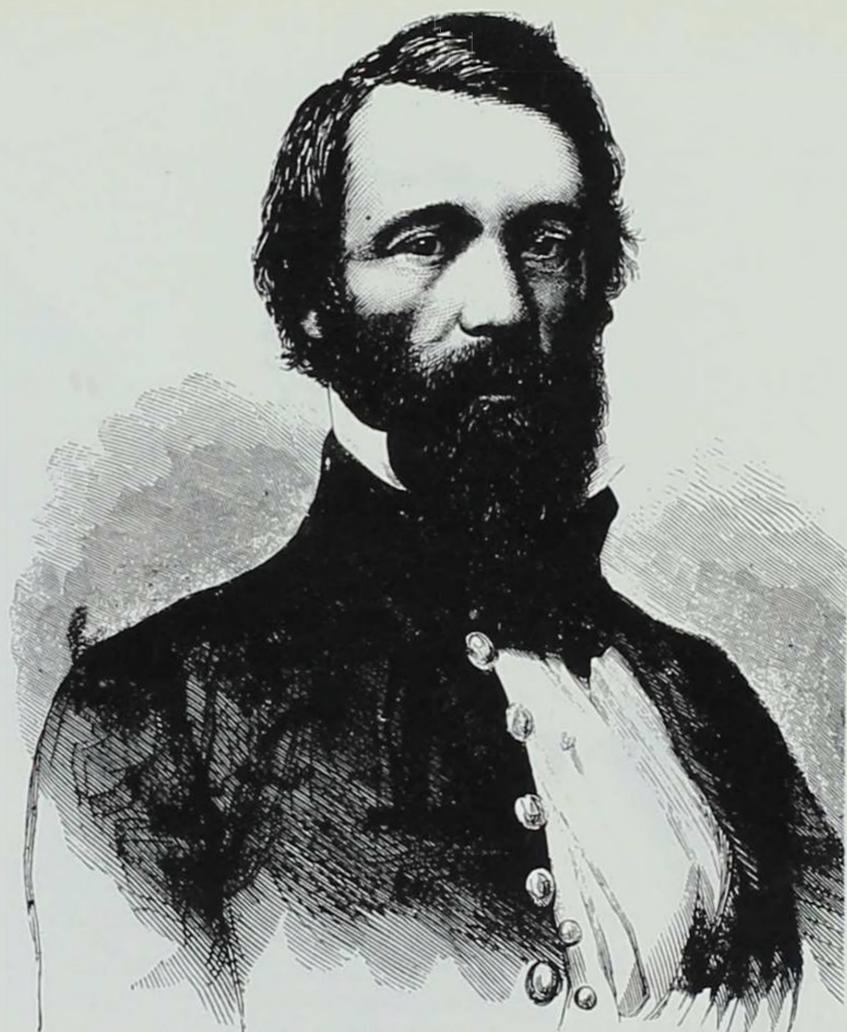
"You hang men for murder while at the same time you are encouraging it by your rewards," she assailed Letcher. "You are hanging men for treason, when thou thyself hath uttered treasonable sentiments in thy inaugural message. . . . You are making radical abolitionists faster than scores of Northern lecturers could do it. Did it never occur to your minds that a few thousand of these might pay you a hostile visit?"

She added a wry postscript: "As thou seems very anxious to have Barclay visit you, if he chooses to go, I shall expect him to receive that kind hospitality at thy house that one of thy sons would receive from me. Perhaps a few months in the genial climate of Virginia might prove beneficial to his health. I think you would soon become attached to him, as he is a pleasant boy, and loves dry jokes."

A few days later Barclay reluctantly gave in to pressure and left Iowa for Chicago, where he arrived on February 8. Two days later the second Virginia requisition reached Des Moines. This time it was based on grand jury indictments charging Barclay with conspiracy, advising slaves to revolt, and murder. Kirkwood could find no legal errors and accepted the requisition. He issued a warrant for Barclay's arrest. The Cedar County sheriff searched Springdale, but by now Barclay was gone.

Letcher did not respond directly to Kirkwood or Ann Raley, but sent a lengthy message to the Virginia legislature, faulting Kirkwood for not honoring the first extradition and for allowing Barclay to be warned. Reminding his legislators of Kirkwood's sympathetic remarks about John Brown in his inaugural address, Letcher stressed that the rejection of the first requisition "ought to impress upon us the necessity of adopting prompt, energetic and decided measures to . . . achieve southern independence."

WHEN GOVERNOR LETCHER'S message was published in the press, the Barclay Coppoc affair became a national issue. The *New York Times* criticized Virginia in a lengthy



"While the great mass of our northern people utterly condemn the act of John Brown, they feel and they express admiration and sympathy for the disinterestedness of purpose by which they believe he was governed, and for the unflinching courage and calm cheerfulness with which he met the consequences of his failure."

—Iowa governor Samuel J. Kirkwood,
1860 inaugural speech

editorial entitled "Preaching and Practice." Ann's press campaign reached new heights when the *Chicago Press and Tribune* printed the whole of her lengthy letter to Letcher, with this preface: "The mother who has lost one son by a violent death at the end of an attempted revolution, and who has another fleeing from men who hunt him for his blood, surely has a right to be heard in their defence."

Various Iowa newspapers also reprinted Ann's letter. Courtland Camp, still lurking in Iowa, called at the offices of the *Muscatine Daily Journal* to denounce the letter as a forgery. Through the press, Ann retorted to "that refined visitor" Camp: "To imagine that such a



VIRGINIA STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

These actions "ought to impress upon us the necessity of adopting prompt, energetic and decided measures to . . . achieve southern independence."
—Virginia governor John Letcher

letter as that would be written, and the name, date and place of residence forged, is too palpable an absurdity to be palmed on an enlightened Republic."

Ann's youngest son, Joseph, headed to Muscatine to hunt out Courtland Camp, only to discover that Camp was away that weekend. A Davenport newspaper later reported that Joseph "swears eternal and deadly hatred" of Edwin's executioners and "declares he would wage war on the angel Gabriel, rather than remain in heaven with the like."

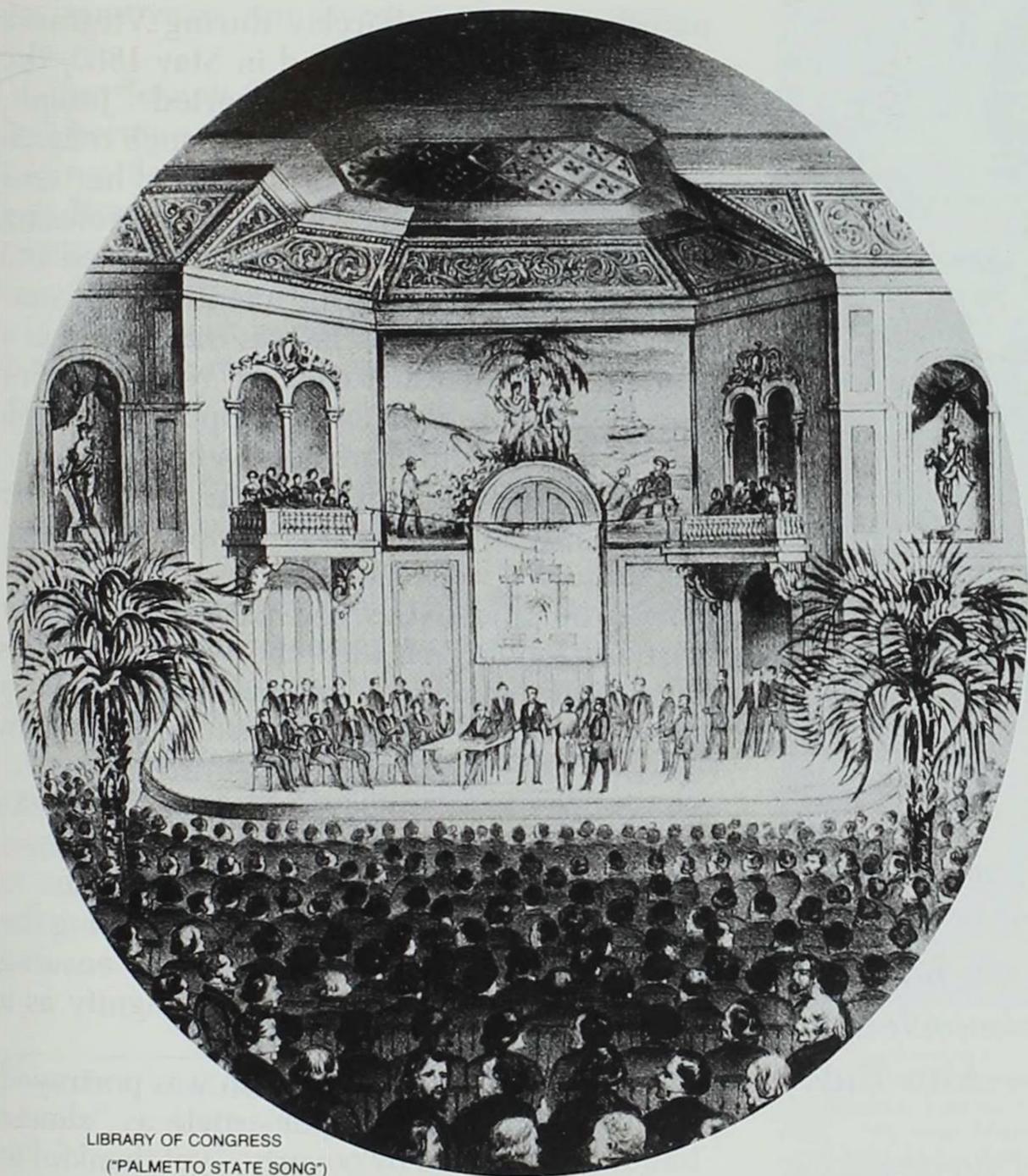
But Ann could fight her own battles — with words. "I have neither the ability nor the desire to be prominent amongst the *literati*," she replied to Camp through the press, "but when circumstances combine to call me out, I

am not ashamed to face the world with my principles; and if those official gentlemen of the South will play roughly with kittens, they must expect to be scratched by them."

Courtland Camp's stay in Muscatine, far from resulting in the capture of Barclay, led to endless ridicule. His talkativeness when supposedly on a secret mission, his drinking, his billiards — all were the subject of comment, and he was generally made a figure of fun. One historian records: "Even the boys hooted at him in the streets, and Mrs. Ann Raley, the mother of Coppoc, sent an invitation for him to come to her house and she would give him his dinner." The *Muscatine Daily Journal* alleged an actual confrontation between Camp and Ann: "A rumor is rife touching one of our citizens, a faithful son of the Old Dominion, who some days ago went out to Springdale for the laudable purpose of reconnoitering the chances for the capture of Coppoc — how a brave old Quaker lady cur-tailed his operations by scissoring off a portion of the caudal extremity of his coat . . . and giving him some sensible advice, which he took — and 'sloped.'" After Camp's departure from Muscatine on February 25, the newspapers dubbed him "[S]camp" and gleefully reported that he had left the town with "a disreputable woman" and an unpaid board bill of thirty-eight dollars.

However farcically Camp was treated, the requisition ended in anything but farce. In fact, the Barclay Coppoc affair, coupled with an Ohio reaction, fueled Southern thoughts of secession. In March the governor of Ohio rejected a similar request to extradite Barclay's two fellow rearguards. The Ohio attorney general could find nothing in the affidavit to suggest they had ever been in Virginia during the raid. Letcher warned his legislature that if Ohio's and Iowa's resistance to extradition was "to become the settled policy of the non-slaveholding States towards us," then Virginia must protect itself from "these gross outrages upon our rights" and "adopt retaliatory measures."

With the election of Abraham Lincoln in November 1860, the hunt for the Harpers Ferry fugitives died away. But in December, South Carolina seceded from the Union. The main political reason, as stated in the declara-

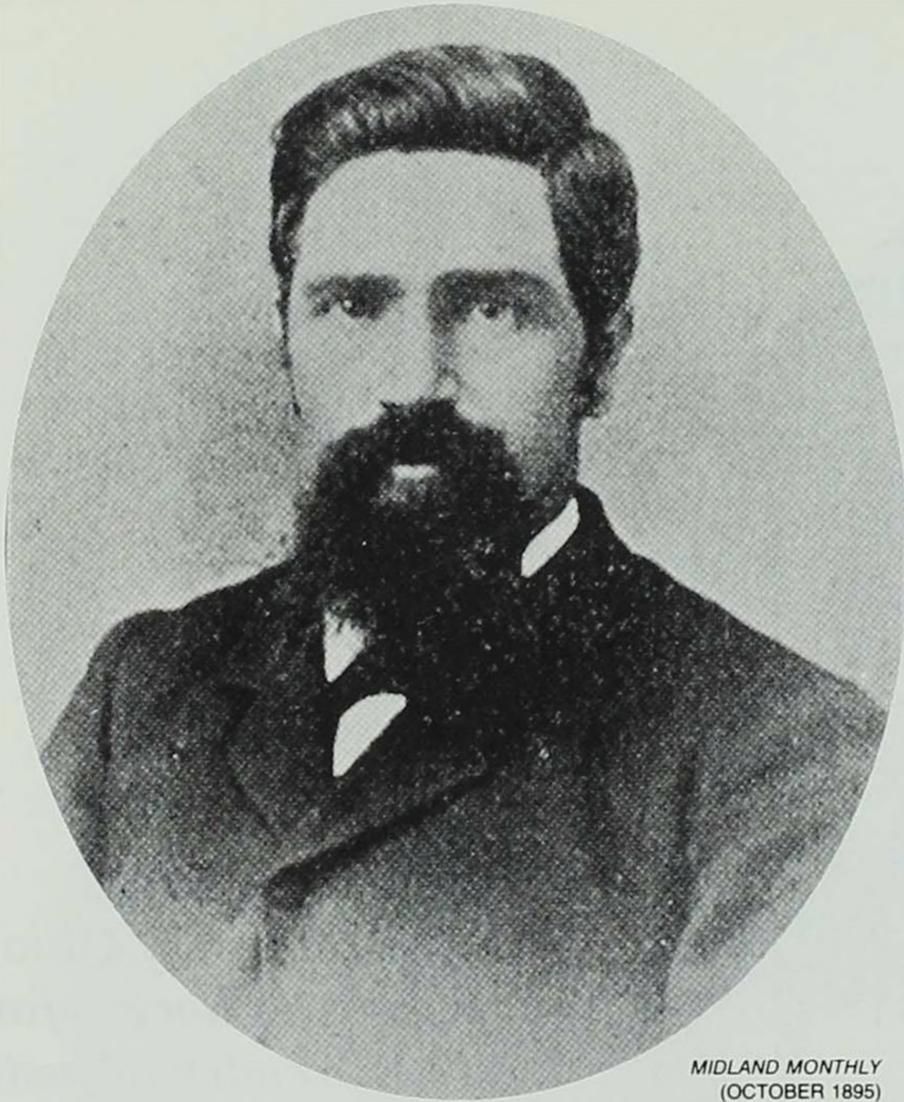


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
("PALMETTO STATE SONG")

*"The States of Ohio
and Iowa have refused
to surrender to justice
fugitives charged with
murder, and with
inciting servile
insurrection in the State
of Virginia."
—South Carolina
secession convention*

tion of causes justifying secession, was the election by the Northern states of a president "whose opinions and purposes are hostile to Slavery." Two specific constitutional justifications were given. The Northern states had defied the Constitution and Acts of Congress by not returning fugitive slaves to the South. And, despite constitutional provision for extradition between the states, "the States of Ohio and Iowa have refused to surrender to justice fugitives charged with murder, and with inciting servile insurrection in the State of Virginia." South Carolina's declaration of independence thus marked the culmination of Harpers Ferry. Barclay Coppoc and the rearguards from Ohio completed the contribution of John Brown, Edwin Coppoc, and the others to the severance of the Union.

AT THE END OF 1860 Ann paid a visit to Edwin's grave in Ohio. While there she wrote to comfort her sister in Springdale, whose son had been killed in an attempt to free slaves in Missouri: "Dear Sister, I have thought what sorrow is like thine! It is even greater than mine! But on thinking the matter over I see there might be a sorrow even greater than ours. If our sons had gone into some horse-theft, murder, or robbery, and had been shot or slain in the enterprise, it would have been countless times worse, but although going against our will, still the motive for action has to be looked at. They went to liberate their fellow men, not for their own advantage." Then Ann foretold what lay in store for the generation of Barclay and Joseph Coppoc: "And who knows but that under the



MIDLAND MONTHLY
(OCTOBER 1895)

“That I have a son [Joseph] who feels it is his duty to assist the noble image of God to a land of liberty I am happy to acknowledge.”
—Ann Raley

present peculiar crisis, some of the best of our flock may be required as a sacrifice for our country and cause!”

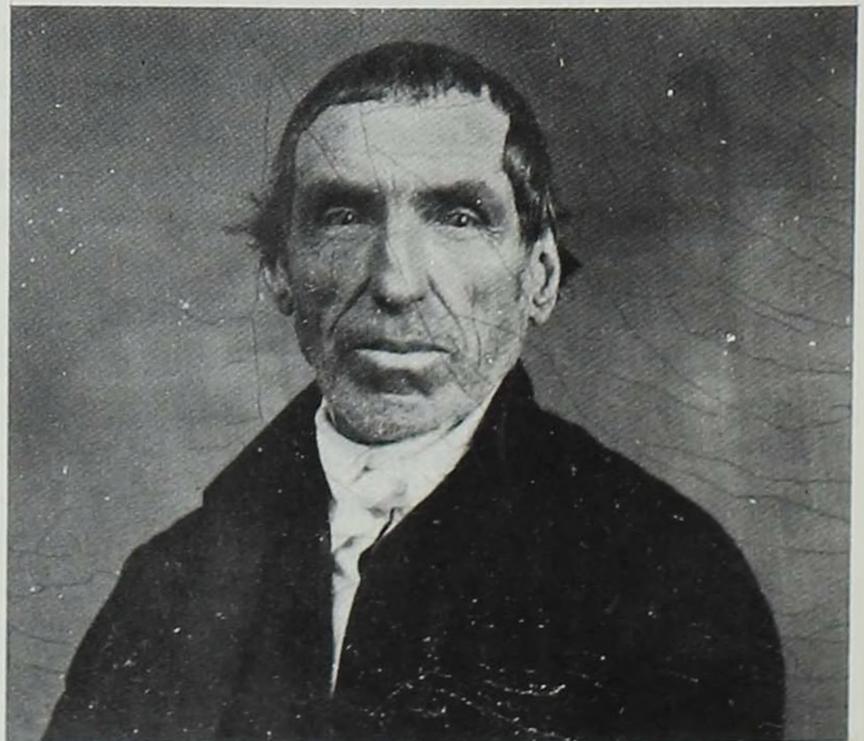
When the Civil War came, twenty-two-year-old Barclay joined a Kansas regiment as a lieutenant, and came home to Springdale to enlist recruits. He left Iowa and took a train at Hannibal, Missouri. Crossing a river there, the train plunged into the river when the bridge was set on fire by Confederate guerrillas. Barclay died of his injuries the following day and was buried at Leavenworth, Kansas. His rifle was recovered from the train wreck and taken to Ann by a Springdale youth. “She was a Quaker woman, and expressed her dislike of keeping weapons,” he recalled later, “and I asked her to let me have it if she disposed of it, which she did.”

Ann’s only surviving child was her youngest, Joseph. Always bellicose, Joseph had failed to follow Quaker pacifism. He had undoubtedly been one of the armed Springdale men pre-

pared to fight for Barclay during Virginia’s attempt at extradition. And in May 1860, the Quaker Monthly Meeting reported: “Joseph, disowned for bearing arms.” Although religion was the fount of Ann’s life, all four of her sons had been expelled from Quakerism for refusing to live up to its principles. Joseph enlisted as a third corporal in an Iowa infantry regiment. After steady promotion he was transferred as a captain to a Louisiana “colored” regiment. For once fortune smiled on a Coppoc — Joseph ended the war unharmed and a major.

After the war, Ann Raley at last had the opportunity to visit Barclay’s grave in Kansas. She returned to live a quiet life at Springdale. Now in her mid-sixties, she had lost none of her zest. In January of 1868 the women’s rights movement launched a national publication, a weekly named *The Revolution*, and Ann greeted the initial number enthusiastically. She wrote: “I have received *The Revolution*. As it is a bloodless one and just such a one as I have been wanting for years, I send two dollars to further it on, with the expectation of having the pleasure of reading something in the ensuing year . . . that will not insult my dignity as a woman. I rejoice in the prospect.”

A decade later, in 1878, Ann was portrayed in a Davenport newspaper article as “almost blind, and pinched by poverty,” yet thankful to “God that she and her family have aided by their sufferings, the *cause of human liberty*.” Later that year her invalid husband died, and



COURTESY MERLIN MATHER

Ann’s second husband, Joseph Raley, died in 1878.

for some years Ann lived on alone at Springdale.

After Joseph Coppoc had left the army, he had become a Baptist minister. He served in various places in Iowa, and was finally pastor at Van Horne in Benton County from 1881 to the spring of 1884. Inspired by a magazine article, "God's Country," Joseph and his family moved to Goose Creek in northern Nebraska. Apparently Ann, now in her eightieth year, accompanied him, and there she spent her last months. In July of 1885, Joseph sent a telegram to his friends at Springdale. His mother had died, and he was setting out to bring her body home.

Ann was buried in the tiny Quaker cemetery at Springdale next to her second husband and near her daughter Lydia and her son Levi who had died so long before. The words on her gravestone give no hint of the depth of Ann's conviction or fire. The inscription is simple:

ANN L. RALEY
1804-1885
THE MOTHER
OF THE
COPPOC BOYS.



COURTESY THE AUTHOR

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND NOTE ON SOURCES

I wrote the story of Ann for my father. I wish to thank my wife, Patricia, and librarians Karen Laughlin and Susan Rogers, State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City) for their endless kind help.

Ann's letters were published in *Muscatine Daily Journal* (16 Dec. 1859; 20 Feb. 1860; 1 March 1860), *Muscatine Weekly Journal* (9 March 1860), other Iowa newspapers, and *Chicago Press and Tribune* (17 Feb. 1860), and *The Revolution* (5 Feb. 1868), p. 67. A copy of Ann's unpublished letter to her sister Hannah Ball is in the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch. Much information has been obtained from Quaker records, federal censuses, Iowa newspapers, *The New York Times*, histories of Cedar County, Iowa, and Ohio and Nebraska county histories. L.R. Withere'll's articles on Edwin and Barclay Coppoc in *Davenport Gazette* (26 Jan. and 2 Feb. 1878) and C.B. Galbreath's "Edwin Coppoc" and "Barclay Coppoc," *Ohio Archaeological And Historical Quarterly* 30 (1921) were especially useful. The deputy clerk, Court of Common Pleas, Columbiana County (Ohio), Probate Division, detailed Ann's inheritance for the author. Much information about the Quakers at Springdale comes from Lawrie Tatum, "Extracts of Early History of the Settlement of 'Orthodox' Friends at Springdale, Iowa and Their Meetings" (1892, rev. by William Mather 1910) in the Mather-Bush Papers, SHSI (Iowa City). The manuscripts of Governor Letcher's two requisitions are held under "Letcher" and a copy of the affidavit of Jont. Maxson about Barclay's rifle is held under E.R. Harlan correspondence, SHSI (Des Moines). Governor Wise's comment on Edwin is in Wise Family Collection Correspondence (Nov. 22, 1859-Feb. 17, 1928), Library of

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An anthropologist searches for the Louisiana-Iowa connection in old letters and diaries. Can you help him?

IOWANS IN CAJUN COUNTRY

An Overview & A Request

by Rocky Sexton

THE CAJUNS of Louisiana, contrary to popular belief, are not simply the swamp-dwelling descendants of Acadians exiled from Canada in the late eighteenth century. Cajuns are instead the result of a centuries-long acculturation process among Europeans, Africans, Americans, and Native Americans. Settlers of Iowa were one group involved in this melting pot, and the setting for this acculturation was the prairie region of southwest Louisiana, an area very similar to the Midwest.

During the early nineteenth century, southwest Louisiana was only sparsely populated, by Acadians and other groups such as African-Americans and Native Americans. In the 1870s, settlement of the area was encouraged in publications extolling the climate, soil, and other favorable conditions. There was, however, no immediate response to such inducements.

The situation began to change in the early

1880s upon completion of the Louisiana Western Railroad. At this time, the Watkins Syndicate, an investment group headed by Jabez Watkins, purchased one and a half million acres of land encompassing much of southwest Louisiana. To organize agricultural endeavors and promote settlement in the region, the Watkins Syndicate recruited Seaman A. Knapp, an Iowa farming expert, writer, and professor of practical and experimental agriculture. Through the efforts of Knapp and others, a propaganda blitz was directed toward northern states. *The American*, a weekly newspaper promoting the region, was published in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and widely distributed. Circulars and advertisements were placed in farm journals throughout the North. The support of journalists and farm leaders was cultivated through carefully arranged inspection tours of southwest Louisiana. Knapp was especially helpful in directing these recruiting efforts towards Iowans, given his position as



JESUS EST SEIGNEUR

**MILLER
FRENCH BAPTIST
CHURCH**

This church sign, from Acadia Parish in Louisiana, exhibits the varying influences that have formed the human landscape of contemporary southwest Louisiana. Migrating Iowans were among those influences. On the sign, the Baptist denomination and surname Miller are not usually associated with Cajuns. The term "French" and the barely visible statement "Jesus est Seigneur" (Jesus is Lord), however, demonstrate a Gallic background.

president of Iowa State College in 1884 and his earlier successes in breeding stock and editing the *Western Stock Journal and Farmer*. (In 1885 Knapp himself took a leave of absence to establish a rice plantation in Louisiana.)

Beginning in the 1880s, hundreds of midwestern families, attracted by the promise of cheap land and a warmer climate, began moving into southwest Louisiana. Benton County, Iowa, provided many of the founding citizens of Vinton, Louisiana. At the same time, Benton County experienced a substantial loss in population — nearly a thousand people between 1880 and 1885. By the 1890s, the number of migrants to Louisiana had reached the thousands, and settlement continued well into the twentieth century.

An immediate contribution by midwesterners was the application of northern agricultural technology for raising grain to Louisiana's undeveloped rice industry. Prior to this time, rice was generally grown in small, non-irrigated plots, and harvested and processed by hand. Midwesterners introduced seeders, binders, and threshing machines to the area. They also developed irrigation systems to ensure a steady supply of water to the rice fields. Within a few years, rice became the major product of the region and many towns developed as shipping points.

The Louisiana towns of Vinton and Iowa (still pronounced "Ioway" by natives there) are documented as having been settled by Iowans. Other settlements such as Morse and Milton



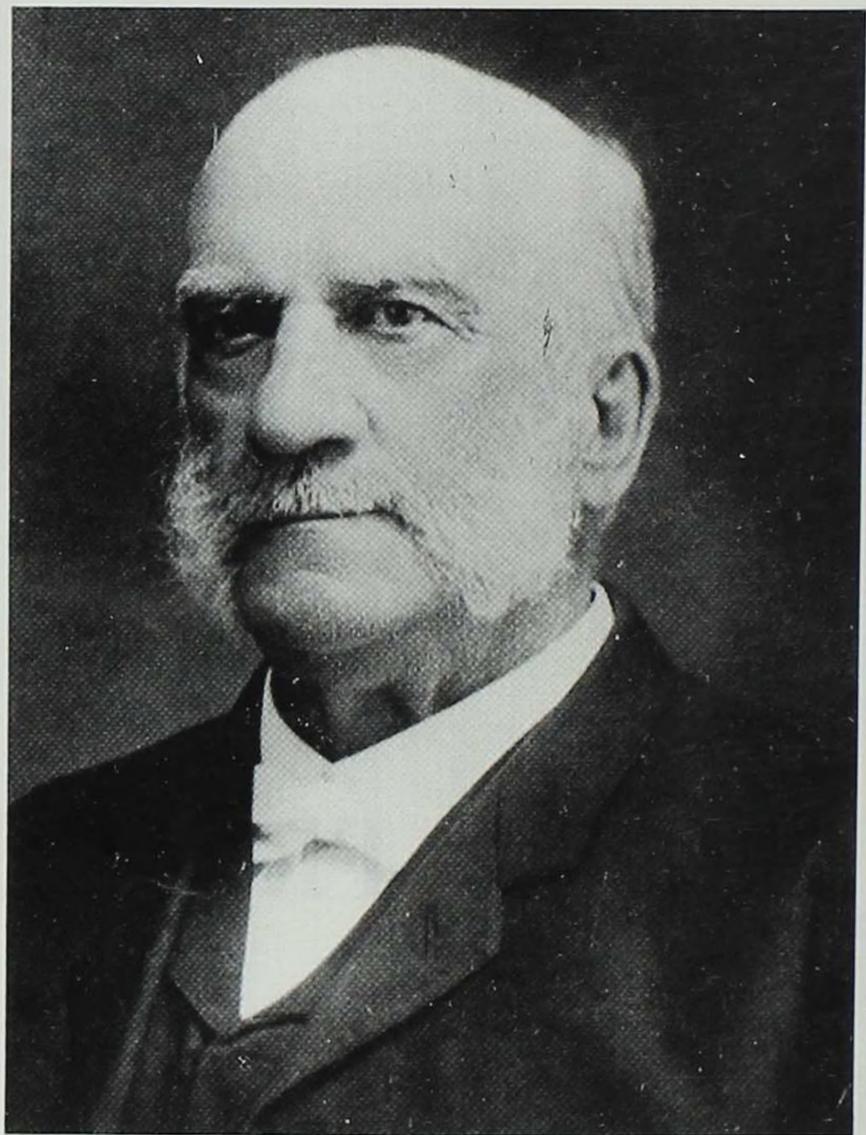
COURTESY THE AUTHOR

Many of the "I houses" in Louisiana (a term designated by cultural geographer Fred Kniffen) are nearly identical to midwestern houses typified by this house in Johnson County, Iowa.

may also indicate Iowa place names and family names used for new Louisiana towns. (The fact that Vinton, Morse, and Milton are in eastern Iowa suggests that eastern Iowa provided a large number of Louisiana-bound settlers.)

In the following years, the newcomers mingled with the existing population, and today many Cajuns bear non-Acadian names such as Smith, Gatte, Matte, Hoffpauier, and Miller (see additional names at the end of this article). Likewise, many Cajuns of southwest Louisiana are Protestant rather than Catholic. The presence of Methodist, Baptist, and other denominations throughout southwest Louisiana suggests an influence attributable to settlers from the Midwest and other areas.

Midwesterners also contributed to the architecture of southwest Louisiana. Unlike other areas where Acadian and Creole architecture dominated, the Louisiana prairies still feature many buildings representing styles familiar to the Iowa landscape. Particularly common are



COURTESY IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY/UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Seaman A. Knapp, agriculturalist and 1884 president of Iowa State College, recruited Iowans to move to Louisiana. In 1885 he took his own advice, and established a rice plantation there.

frame houses that are one room deep, two rooms wide, and two stories high. Cultural geographer Fred Kniffen has named these structures "I Houses" because of their builders' origins in Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana. In many ways, Iowans and other midwesterners apparently made a lasting impact on the economy, culture, and landscape of southwest Louisiana.

My dissertation topic is settlement and acculturation in Acadia Parish, which lies near the center of prairie Louisiana. In the current phase of research, my particular interest is to study in detail the settlement and interaction of various groups in the area. I am requesting of *Palimpsest* readers any information about families who left Iowa or other states to settle in Louisiana. Of particular significance are letters, journals, and diaries containing references to Louisiana. Such information can provide personal perspectives into the cultural history of both Louisiana and the Midwest. If



Abandoned farmstead, rural Acadia Parish, Louisiana, with outbuildings identical to midwestern structures. The typical prairie landscape shows large, open areas bordered by tree-lined canals and bayous (creeks).

you wish to correspond about this topic, please contact me at the following address: Rocky Sexton, Department of Anthropology, Macbride Hall, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242. Thank you.

Additional Louisiana towns with possible links to Iowa:

Edgerly	Jennings
Egan	Lyons Point
Estherwood	Midland
Hathaway	Millerville
Hayes	Silverwood
Iota	Welsh

Non-Acadian surnames common to southwest Louisiana:

Abshire	Matte (Mott)
East (Istre)	Miller
Gatte (Gott)	Shexsnyder
Hoffpauir	Smith
Leckett	Wilson

**NOTE ON SOURCES
AND ADDITIONAL READINGS**

For the most comprehensive study of southwest Louisiana to date, see Lauren Post, *Cajun Sketches: From the Prairies of Southwest Louisiana* (1962). Other works that discuss midwesterners in Louisiana include Fred Kniffen, "The Physiognomy of Rural Louisiana," *Louisiana History* 4 (1963), 291-99, and *Louisiana: Its Land and People* (1968); Harry Hansen, ed., *Louisiana: A Guide to the State* (1971); and Milton Newton, *Louisiana Atlas* (1974). Examples of promotional publications include Daniel Dennett, *Louisiana as it is: Its Topography and Material Resources, Reliable . . . Information for any who may desire to settle or purchase lands in the Gulf States* (1874); and *idem*, *Southwestern Louisiana: A Description of the parishes of St. Landry, Lafayette, St. Martin, Iberia, Vermillion and St. Mary* (1870). On rice cultivation, see Edwards Phillips, "The Gulf Coast Rice Industry," *Agricultural History* 25 (1951), 91-96. See also Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55 (1965); Lawrence Estaville, "Were the Nineteenth Century Cajuns Geographically Isolated?" in *The American South*, eds. Sam Hilliard and Richard Nostrand (1986); and James Chauvin, "A Socioeconomic Profile of Acadia Parish (M.A. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1969), pp. 34-35. Material on Seaman Knapp is from Earle D. Ross, *A History of Iowa State College* (1942).



COURTESY THE AUTHOR

Flames silhouetted the gables of "Old Main" at Buena Vista College one September night in 1956, destroying a symbol of the past but energizing the college towards its future, under the leadership of President John A. "Jack" Fisher.

WATERSHED YEARS

John Fisher at Buena Vista College

by William Cumberland

THE NIGHT of September 27, 1956, is firmly imprinted in the history of Buena Vista College and Storm Lake, Iowa. That was the night that a numb, horrified crowd of nearly five thousand watched in the early autumn darkness as fire consumed "Old Main," the chief administration and class-

room building of Buena Vista College. The spiraling flames penetrated the darkness and warmed the air of the September night. Those flames could be seen for miles across the flat landscape. Observers could hear in the hot crackling of the wooden floors and aging staircases the death knell of the college. However,

COURTESY THE AUTHOR

President John A. Fisher and Dean William D. Wesselink, supported by faculty, staff, student body, and community, would use the catastrophe as a step into the future. Old Main would become a symbol that would link the old and new Buena Vista.

Founded in 1891 as a four-year liberal arts college by the presbyteries of Sioux City and Fort Dodge (affiliated with the Presbyterian Church), Buena Vista College attracted only minimal regional and national attention over the years until it became the recipient of an eighteen-million-dollar gift from oil philanthropist Harold Walter Siebens in 1980. While this gift, and its subsequent use under the administrative leadership of current president Keith Briscoe, has assured a distinguished future for the college, it by no means clouded a respectable although struggling past. The watershed in the college's history was not the Siebens gift (important as it will always be) but the "Great Fire" of 1956. At that time Fisher and Wesselink determined to push forward when they might have quit.

A brief look at Buena Vista's first sixty-five years reveals continued optimism in the face of constant struggle. The institution's founders, who transferred what was essentially a preparatory and junior college from Fort Dodge to Storm Lake in 1891, had visions of creating the "Yale of the Midwest." Reality, however, consisted of a steady parade of presidents (many of them clergy), the inability to raise operating funds let alone an endowment, underpaid professors, and inadequate dormitory, library, and scientific facilities. For three decades Buena Vista centered around a solitary building — Old Main, completed at the end of the college's first troubled year in 1892.

Misfortune came early and persisted. The halls of the main building still smelled like fresh lumber when the college's first president, the Rev. Mr. Loyal Y. Hays died suddenly on May 16, 1892. In 1893 college officials were unable to locate the diploma to present to their first graduate, Jennie Gordon Hutchison. The acting president, the Rev. Mr. John MacAllister, offered his wedding certificate as a substitute — which the desperate graduate gratefully accepted. Shortly thereafter, it appeared that the new building would see few college

graduates because pressure from the Presbyterian Board of Visitors (who had the task of accrediting the denomination's colleges) forced Buena Vista to operate primarily as a commercial, preparatory, and two-year college until 1901. However, the aggressive and successful leadership of the institution's fifth president, the Rev. Mr. E. E. Reed solicited an endowment for \$50,000, built library resources, increased enrollment, and by 1904 had moved Buena Vista back into the ranks of four-year colleges. Growth in numbers, endowment, and prestige was slow, however, under the succession of presidents who followed Reed. Still the college was able to produce outstanding teachers, scholars, clergy, business leaders, and other professionals reflecting the college's motto, "Education for Service."

THE 1920S brought a short-lived prosperity. The campus was finally enlarged with the addition of a gymnasium (Victory Hall) and Science Hall. Together with "Old Main" their silhouettes huddled against the always-resplendent lake. However, "Old Main" ("it was always old," remarked an early student) was constantly in need of repair; Victory Hall was soon discovered to be too small; and Science Hall lacked equipment, and from 1928 until after World War II, also housed the library. In *World by the Tail*, award-winning novelist Marjorie Holmes described the humble campus where she spent two of her undergraduate years in the late 1920s as "the shaggy campus of Vista College. Its three humble buildings were like tired old men asleep in the moon."

Hard times returned again during the early years of the Great Depression and at one point Buena Vista College nearly merged with Coe College in Cedar Rapids. Instead, Henry Olson, former school superintendent at Greenfield, Iowa, took over the reins and managed Buena Vista College on a shoestring budget for the next twenty-three years. The feisty Olson stuffed sandwiches in his pockets and rode cattle trains to professional meetings. He devised a system of barter in which students contributed farm produce in exchange for tuition and the faculty accepted the eggs, meat, and



The GI Bill brought more students to Buena Vista College. By 1953 enrollment had doubled since pre-war years. Here, former pilot James H. Thompson takes a study break to admire baby Coleen with his wife.

potatoes as barter in lieu of salary. No student was denied admittance because of lack of funds, and no faculty or staff member went hungry.

The end of World War II and the GI Bill brought many changes to American higher education, including Buena Vista College. By 1953 more than a thousand graduates had walked along the corridors and stairs of Old Main since the college's opening. With federal funds and private gifts, two dormitories were added during the 1950s. Still lacking modern library facilities, the college obtained World War II army barracks to contain the growing, though barely adequate collection. In 1953 there was an endowment of less than \$200,000 and a faculty of thirty, yet the student body, now about four hundred, had doubled since pre-war years. While many of the faculty were quality teachers, only a few of them held doctorates, and fewer yet had published scholarly books and articles.

President Olson was and would remain a hero to many. Even his opponents agreed that

he had saved the institution from extinction, achieved North Central accreditation in 1952, and maintained institutional morale and faith through the depression and war years. He also had necessarily sacrificed quality in key academic areas in order to balance the budget, pay the debt, and hold tuition costs down in order to attract students. Board members, acting in conjunction with the church hierarchy, felt the college needed younger, more flexible leadership, in tune with changing trends in higher education. Pressured to resign in November 1953, Olson left the institution he had loved and nourished a disappointed and bitter man.

THE BOARD'S SEARCH for a new president led to the appointment of Professor of Education John A. (Jack) Fisher in May 1954. Fisher was forty-four and had been registrar, administrative dean, and chairperson of the division of philosophy, psychology, education, and religion at Coe College in Cedar Rapids. He was an active churchman



President John A. "Jack" Fisher welcomes students on the opening pages of the 1957 *Beaver Log* yearbook.



SHS/DES MOINES (ORIGINALLY FROM DES MOINES REGISTER AND TRIBUNE)

1948 freshmen Louise Kretzinger and DeeAnn Carlson stride away from Old Main, which over the years housed the chapel, science labs, music studios, classrooms, library, offices, student center — and occasionally faculty.

and while at Buena Vista, would become the first person to serve as moderator of the Synod of Iowa, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The new president was a solidly built, dark-complexioned, friendly man who enjoyed meeting people. He smoked huge cigars that seemed to emit an odorous, almost asphyxiating black smoke. He slept late and worked late, which soon aroused minor criticisms from some trustees and local residents accustomed to different work habits.

Fisher and his wife, Ruth Ann, had first visited the Buena Vista campus in March 1954. As

Ruth Ann looked at historic but decaying Old Main, she had said to Jack, "What a poor little place, but it's a gorgeous town." They agreed that "nobody in their right mind would come up here." Still, they were impressed by the scenic splendor and warm vitality of the community, and they felt they had a call to accept the presidency of the beleaguered institution.

The Fishers would reside in the stately but aging presidential home known as the Stuart-Miller House, which was directly across the street from Old Main. They would use their own funds for painting, wallpaper, and new

COURTESY THE AUTHOR

linoleum. Ruth Ann was a Coe College graduate and former executive secretary of the Cedar Rapids and Marion Council of Churches. A gracious hostess and veteran of numerous "sit-down dinners" in an era of few funds and little assistance, Ruth Ann helped her husband build solid relationships with community and church. She was also a strong supporter of the Faculty Dames women's club, in an era when that organization provided an important social outlet for many faculty and staff women and spouses. There persisted during the Fisher years a close community, inspired (as Ruth Ann recalled years later) by the fact that no one had much and "everybody was willing to share what they had with somebody else."

Tasks facing the new president included building the endowment, expanding dormitory space, renovating an ever-deteriorating Old Main, and creating new confidence in the college's future. Fisher immediately sought to build rapport with his faculty, hire new staff with doctorates, upgrade faculty salaries, and recruit a capable but more diversified student body. He also planned to expand the program of Christian activities and increase financial aid to worthy students. He devised a building pro-

gram and in 1954, working with long-time trustee Z. Z. White, secured a loan from the Federal Housing and Finance Agency for construction of a men's dormitory. More dormitories were vital. For more than sixty years, the majority of Buena Vista students had been forced to find lodging off-campus or commute to classes. As a result of the on-campus residency, the college community would be brought closer together.

A Ford Foundation grant of \$114,000 also helped Fisher establish the first phase of his long-range plan. The grant would begin to boost the traditionally low faculty salaries. Nevertheless, as Fisher pointed out, an endowment of \$100,000 at 5 percent would produce only \$5,000 a year. It would, he noted, take from one and a half to two million dollars in endowment funds for the college to carry out its program.

ONLY ONE YEAR into the Fisher administration, Buena Vista appeared to be making substantial progress. The new president felt his goals were slowly being realized. Fisher was optimistic



The chapel in Old Main. Until 1920, faculty were required to sit in the front rows of chairs.



COURTESY THE AUTHOR

An idyllic view of Old Main. Until 1920 it had been the only permanent building on Buena Vista campus.

that Buena Vista College could move beyond its image as a normal school and fully realize its liberal arts heritage.

Some very able members of the Buena Vista faculty at this time included George Reynolds, professor of history and political science, who established a solid pre-law program; Albert Hirsch, professor of language, a refugee from Hitler's holocaust and a profound and humane scholar; James Christiansen, professor of chemistry, who had formerly been in charge of a research section with General Mills in Chicago; Lester Williams, professor of religion and philosophy and dean of students, who had participated in archeological digs in the Near East; Gladys Kuehl, who brought national recognition to the college in the field of forensics; Will B. ("Bill") Green, who headed the music department; Jay Beekman, the legendary baseball coach; and Luman W. Sampson, dean from 1941 to 1947 and now professor of sociology and chairperson of the Division of Social Sciences. There was also William Wesselink, academic dean since 1947 (who later became vice-president for student affairs).

Fisher added to this core of veterans new ap-

pointments such as Ron Smith, a fiery but scholarly biologist; Robert Tollefson, a dynamic and globally oriented professor of religion and philosophy; Lanny Grigsby, a former star athlete who would secure two graduate degrees in mathematics; and William H. Cumberland, who would chronicle and interpret the institution's past.

Only two years into Fisher's administration, the college felt it was on the verge of achieving new academic respectability. The college newspaper, *The Tack*, announced in early September 1956 that many changes had taken place on campus during the summer — completion of the men's dorm, moving the student union into the basement of the new dorm, and repairing and painting Old Main.

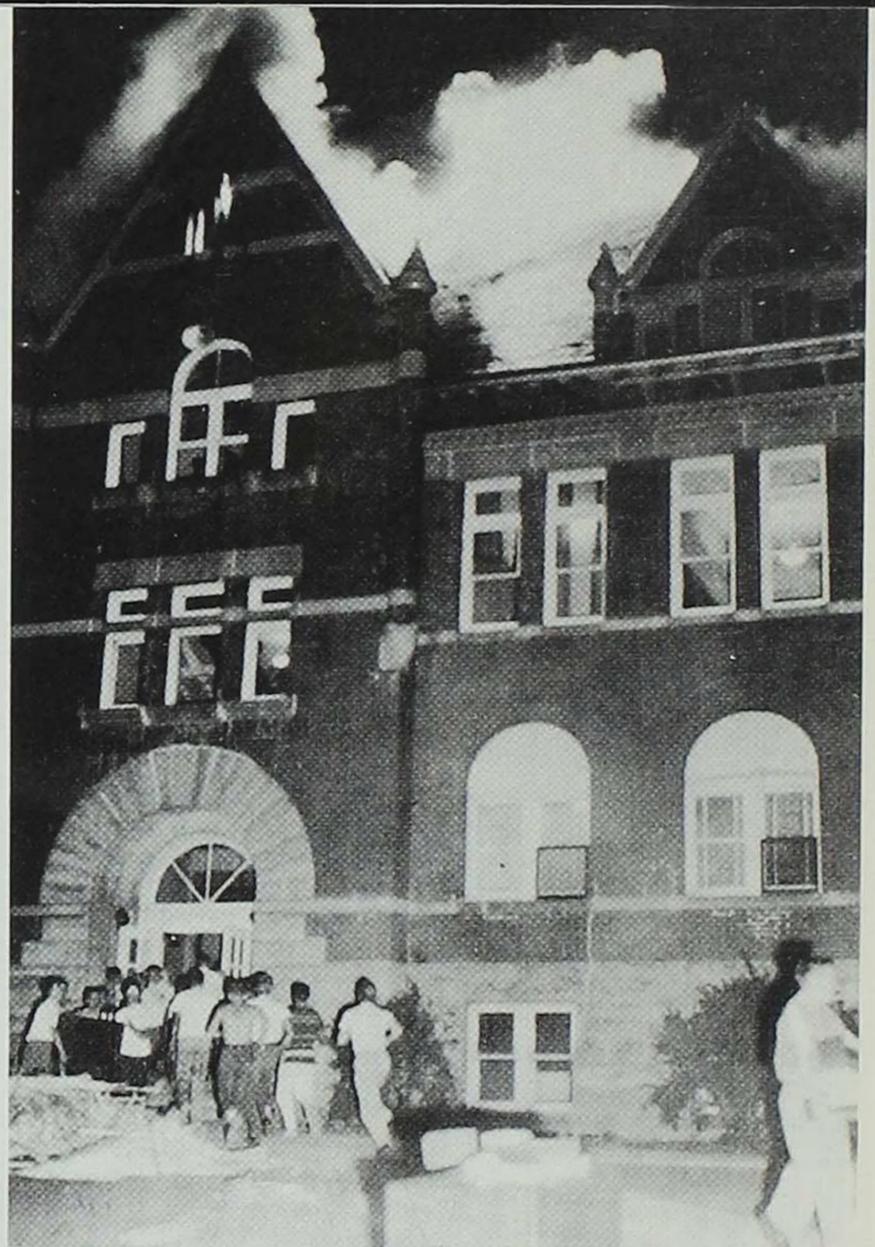
DESPITE the college's vision of the future, its past held meaning, too, and one building symbolized that past. Old Main had long been the gathering point, the educational, spiritual, and moral ark of the institution. Until 1920 it had been the

only permanent building on campus. At various times it housed the science labs, library, chapel, music studios, and student center. Occasionally, its upper floor provided lodging for hard-pressed faculty. Stately elms, evergreens, and maples, planted by every class since 1906, lined the nearby campus walks and framed the red brick building and its beckoning, majestic arch of white stone. Through the years ivy had advanced up the south side of the building.

Then at 10:15 PM on September 27, 1956, fire threatened to destroy Fisher's efforts for the future and the college's heritage from the past. Smoke was discovered billowing out of the beloved but decaying Old Main. The flames spread rapidly in the building with its highly combustible, oil-mopped floors. By the time the fire departments of Storm Lake, Alta, and Newell arrived, the blaze could be seen in Spencer forty miles away. The exact cause of the fire would remain unknown, although there was speculation a smoldering cigarette could have been left on the roof by a worker. Apparently there was no electrical short or outage because the lights remained on during the early stages of the fire.

President Fisher, Dean Wesselink, and Public Relations Director Don Kelly were attending a meeting of Iowa private colleges at Lake Okoboji when Ruth Ann Fisher called to notify her husband that Old Main was burning. Jack Fisher turned to the group and asked, "What would you say if your 'Old Main' was burning?" Several responded, "Let us know how you did it," for they too were troubled with aging buildings. But it was serious business, and as Fisher and his staff sped home, the future of the institution was in doubt. To many Storm Lakers, Old Main was Buena Vista College, and they felt a sense of horror as they heard the sirens and watched the red glow in the sky — knowing that the fire had to be on the campus.

Speech professor Gladys Kuehl was enjoying a function of the Phi Alpha Pi sorority at the Cobblestone Inn (a dancing and dining landmark on the lake shore) when a phone call about the fire quickly broke up the party. Kuehl (whose office was in the basement of Old Main) and the others rushed back to the cam-



As flames lit the sky, Buena Vista students rescued books, records, and equipment from Old Main.

pus. "Pianos, musical instruments, chapel seats, and stage properties came hurtling down from above," she recalled. Kuehl's old davenport and chair set, bought when she was first married and later donated for plays, fell from the east wing of the third floor, the speech and drama department. Professor Les Williams and his colleagues felt sickened as they watched their offices burn, along with their lifetime collections of books. Grace Russell (whose father had built Old Main) and Phoebe Lafoy (former dean of women) watched in anguish and horror. Eight times they heard the mournful twang as pianos, including the baby grand from the second-floor chapel, fell through the flames.

Members of the faculty, administration, student body, and community sought desperately to salvage what they could. Even as the building became untenable, the students "without regard to themselves saved all of the school records and virtually all of the stock of books in the bookstore," according to the *Storm Lake Register*. "Filing cabinets, safes, heavy cabinets of addressograph plates — all were carried to safety." Furniture, instruments, and ma-

chines too heavy to carry through the flames were thrown out of the windows. Brigades were formed to cart away records and books from the burning building. Still, tradition was maintained. One freshman, mindful of his beanie, put down his books and "buttoned" when a senior passed by. Plummeting pianos and desks added to the danger but did not halt the salvaging. Indeed, it was not until the roof of Old Main began to collapse that the students, ordered by the police, gave up the struggle.

Because the fire had started on the top of the building and worked its way down, it had moved more slowly than if it had started in the basement or main floor. This had given the salvagers extra time. Ruth Ann Fisher believed that had the male students not been concentrated in the new dormitory, where they could quickly organize their salvaging efforts, many invaluable student and administrative records would have been lost. A legend persists that the following day the students were unable to lift the heavy files they had so easily carted out

of the burning building the previous evening.

The blaze raged for more than three hours before it was brought under control. Finally, as the great fire ebbed and reality replaced an earlier numbness and shock, Fisher and his staff "joined in a circle on the canvas-covered and equipment-cluttered gym floor to bow their heads in prayer." They were, as the *Storm Lake Register* continued, "a student body and faculty united by one thought . . . loyalty to Buena Vista College."

THIS WAS John Fisher's finest hour. He could have surrendered to the despair he surely felt and temporarily suspended classes and operations. Rather, he announced that classes would continue as usual. And, at 1:15 A.M., he began his plans for Buena Vista's future.

As Fisher looked at the charred skeleton of Old Main, he could see the Christian flag still hanging in the Little Theatre. Fisher would never forget that moment. He would speak of it



The wreckage of Old Main could have spelled discouragement and despair to Fisher. Instead, the president ordered classes to continue and rebuilding to begin, noting "A college . . . is much more than a building."

often as a new Buena Vista began to rise phoenix-like from the ashes of the old. Nor would he forget custodian Buck Allison, who, at considerable personal risk, crawled through the ruins to retrieve both the Christian flag and a badly charred American flag. A moment later, what was left of the top floor of Old Main crumbled. The flag would become a memento of the past and a symbol for the future. Today, more than three decades later, the Christian flag is displayed at baccalaureate and other major functions, and the American flag remains encased in glass in the Centennial Room of Siebens Forum.

Professor Luman W. Sampson was grateful that his honor scroll had made it through the fire undamaged. The honor society, initiated by Sampson in 1936, had become another revered tradition of the college. And yet, as Sampson knew, the loss from the fire was too great to be replaced. "Not only was there the material loss of the building," he said, "with its classrooms, offices, studios, pianos and a considerable amount of equipment, but also the loss of this landmark of memories for all those who had entered the building in the years it had stood as the symbol of Buena Vista College."

Fortunately there had been no loss of life or serious injury, nor had the fire spread to the homes across the street. In the days that followed, the bonds that united Buena Vista would be strengthened. Old Main had many mourners, and faculty and students poured out many eloquent words on its behalf. Certainly, President Fisher realized that the fire now mandated a new building program, thereby threatening the growing intellectual climate he had hoped to foster. Sensibly he reminded the college and community: "We regret the passing of a building that for many years has housed a considerable portion of the activities of the College. A college, however, is much more than a building and so the students, faculty and staff have not seen fit to interrupt the normal routines necessary to fulfill the purposes of the College. We believe in the future of Buena Vista."

Fisher did not permit the tragedy to disrupt classes or the ordinary functioning of the college for a single minute. Storm Lake churches



A bittersweet message on a 1956 homecoming float. "Resurgo" represented the resurgent spirit on campus following the fire at Old Main.

offered their buildings as temporary classrooms. Jack Fisher's home became his office and planning center for a new Buena Vista. Some professors found office space in the men's dormitory. A small cottage near the football field housed forensics and advanced speech classes. Events were held as scheduled.

Among those events was homecoming, at which Buena Vista bowed 13-7 to the powerful Simpson College team. One of the most poignant floats in the morning parade down Storm Lake's main thoroughfare was the one designed by the sophomore class. Three young men riding on the float lifted the Christian flag in a pose reminiscent of the three marines who had hoisted the American flag on Iwo Jima. The message was "resurgo," the resurging spirit of Buena Vista College.

Willis Edson, a former trustee for fifty years, had walked painfully to the campus to view the ruins. "Not a single brick or stone in those walls was out of place," he mused. "What kind of men built those walls so long ago?" Although Old Main had cost \$25,000 to construct in 1892, the building's value for insurance coverage was \$111,500. The Presbyterian Board of Education promised \$33,000, and the Church promised \$100,000. But replacement would cost nearly \$400,000.

In death, Old Main may have provided its most valuable service. It steeled Buena Vistas to make the greatest effort they had yet made

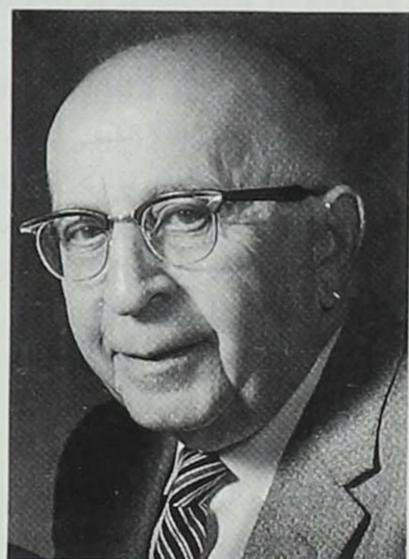
on behalf of the college and to fulfill the vision of the founders.

Obviously, the project of raising funds and constructing a new main building and a new chapel dominated the last part of Fisher's six-year term at Buena Vista. Lumberman and trustee Paul Dixon drew the plan for the new building, but Fisher, assisted by Wesselink, designed its interior office and classroom space. Wesselink remembered that "many long hours were spent at Jack's kitchen table drawing up the floor plans." Although they were not architects, little of their work had to be altered.

Construction of the new administration building started early in 1957 and was completed by the time classes opened in the fall of 1958. The half-million-dollar structure with its spacious, functional rooms seemed a luxury to those who had wrestled with the creaking stairs and falling plaster of "beloved" Old Main. About the only similarity was that the new building still offered a sweeping view of the lake and campus. The new Georgian colonial structure was ultimately named Dixon-Eilers Hall in honor of Trustee President Paul Dixon of Sac City, and Trustee Tom D. Eilers, president of the World Insurance Company of Omaha, Nebraska.

Nevertheless, Old Main refused to die. The stone archway was so rich in memories that Wesselink disassembled it piece by piece, numbered each stone and brick, and reassembled it southeast of the new building. Students and alumni, assisted by administration, headed the reconstruction project. In the mid-1980s the arch was again moved, this time above the new underground Siebens Forum in the center of the campus. Academic processions continue to pass through the arch, a symbol linking the past and present.

As prominent banker George J. Schaller, once a student in the college's commercial department, watched the resurrection of the college, he saw more than ever its importance to the Storm Lake community and its possibility of a promising future. Having acquired a fortune in banking and real estate, Schaller presented a challenge gift of \$125,000 in late 1958 to construct a new chapel. Fisher used the gift to formulate his Design for Learning Plan,

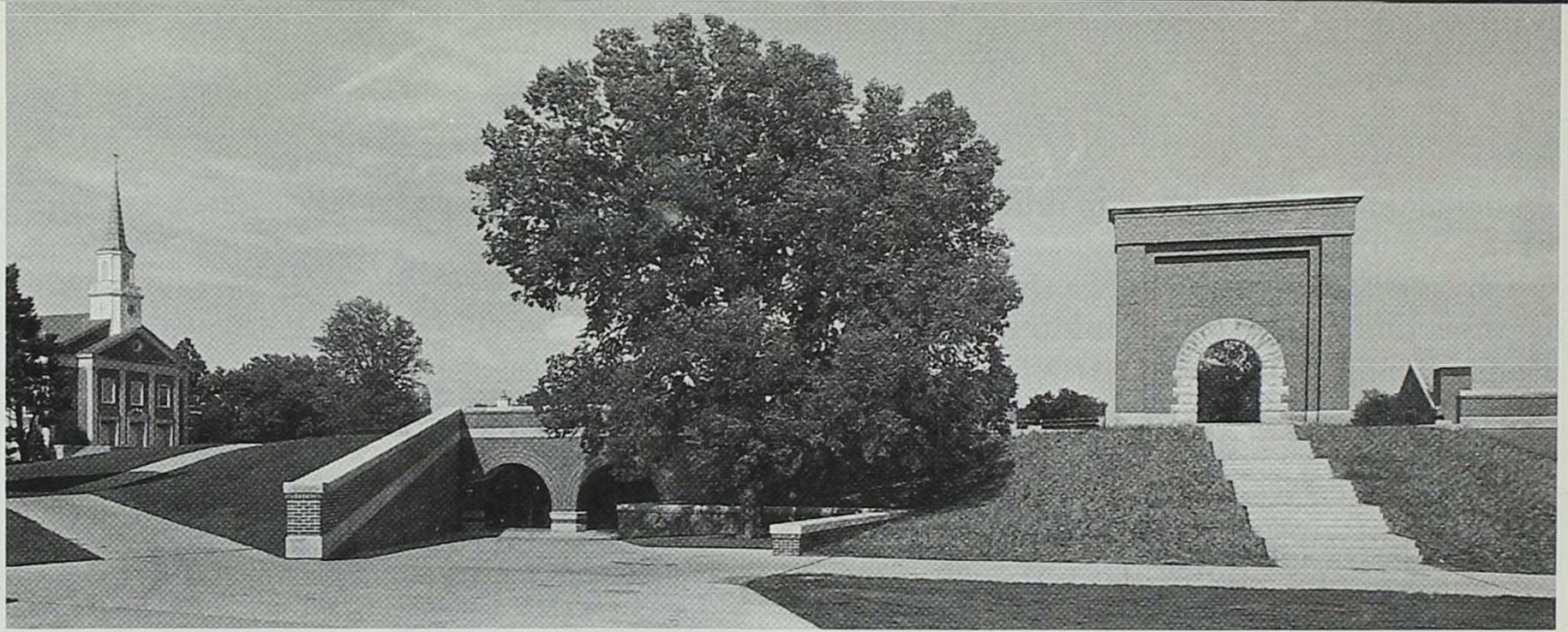


COURTESY THE AUTHOR

Clockwise from upper left: Fisher's predecessor Henry Olson guided the college through the throes of the Great Depression. William D. Wesselink, Dean of Faculty during Fisher's presidency, worked with Fisher on building plans. Albert Hirsch, language professor, and George F. Reynolds, history and political science professor, were among many outstanding faculty during Fisher's era.

expanding his pre-fire building program to include a library, chapel, campus center, and more dormitory space.

The monumental problem of virtually raising the college from the ashes never deterred Fisher from exploiting developing technology and pioneering new methods of study. Encouraged by Bill Parks, a rather flamboyant professor of business administration and a former Boston attorney and Boston University teacher, the college introduced IBM data-processing machines in 1959. *The Tack* boasted, "Buena Vista is believed the first college in the United States in such a program of instruction." Installed under the IBM Educational Contribution Program, each machine included a card punch to record data on cards, a sorter to arrange facts, and an accounting machine to



The Old Main arch still graces the Buena Vista campus, on the west side of the "Forum," or Harold Walter Siebens School of Business, a 100,000-square-foot underground facility. On far left: Schaller Chapel.

print results. Parks was to teach the courses in the new program, but he soon left the college and the machines were left to gather dust. A young undergraduate, Charles Slagle, tinkered with the new technology; years later as a member of the faculty, he would introduce the first computer course at the college.

FISHER had been president for six years when in the spring of 1960 he decided to accept a new challenge at Jamestown College in North Dakota. His six-year tenure had seen Buena Vista survive and march into a new position of respectability. The area press began to acknowledge that Buena Vista College "isn't the one-horse college as some of us may have thought, but it's a fully accredited school that can take its place among the colleges of the state and the nation." Fisher had generated more financial support for the institution than any of his predecessors, and the new equity of the institution had nearly tripled during his administration. The size and quality of the faculty had been increased, student enrollment had grown, the liberal arts heritage had been maintained, and Fisher and Wesselink had led the college community as it hacked a path through adversity. Fisher's successors Wendell Q. Halverson and Keith G. Briscoe would have a model to follow.

After Fisher's death at age sixty-four in 1974, his widow, Ruth Ann, returned to Storm Lake to live. There she could see a new generation of students study in a growing physical plant, benefit from gifts and an endowment (which under Briscoe's leadership would reach thirty-

five million dollars by 1990), and discover new programs, technology, and curricula hitherto unrealized or deemed unreachable in this small college. A young, vigorous faculty, mostly armed with Ph.D.'s, would arrive. The horizons of the institution moved far beyond northwestern Iowa as its commitments became global. Buena Vista faculty would watch revolutions in Bucharest, walk across Tiananmen Square, lecture in Tokyo and Sappuro, Japan. New languages would echo across the campus and Buena Vista students would study and travel abroad. There seemed to be no boundaries to the progress of Buena Vista College.

The burning of Old Main remains etched in the memories of those whose lives have been touched by Buena Vista. It is where the college's modern history begins. It is the reference point between the old and new Buena Vista. It was the moment when the future of the institution was forged. President Jack Fisher did not stand alone as he rallied his forces in the September dawn of a wrecked campus, but it was his moment of courage, his daring hope, his faith and his decisiveness that inspired both campus and community. The big man with the cigar had left his mark. There would be no turning back. □

NOTE ON SOURCES

This article is adapted from the author's new centennial history of Buena Vista College, available from Iowa State University Press this spring. The book is a large-scale revision of Cumberland's earlier college history.

Sources used here include issues of *Buena Vista Today* and *The Tack*; college catalogs, yearbooks, press releases, and minutes of the board of trustees; letters and interviews; William H. Cumberland, *The History of Buena Vista College: Education for Service* (1966); and the *Storm Lake Pilot-Tribune* and *Storm Lake Register*.

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Acton, the fourth Lord Acton, is an independent member of the House of Lords who lives between Oxfordshire, England and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He is a writer, a barrister, and a trustee of the Linn County Historical Society. Acton was born in England, raised in Zimbabwe, and studied modern history at Trinity College, Oxford University. Among his frequent contributions to the *Palimpsest* is "An Iowan's Death at Harpers Ferry" (Winter 1989), the story of Steward Taylor.

William Cumberland is professor of history at Buena Vista College, Storm Lake. His article "Watershed Years" is adapted from his upcoming centennial history of the college, available from Iowa State Press this spring. Cumberland has written extensively on Iowa history, including *Wallace M. Short: Iowa Rebel*.

Jack Lufkin is a historical curator in the Museum Bureau of the State Historical Society of Iowa and is on the advisory team of the upcoming traveling exhibit "Field to Factory." The exhibit will be open to the public April 14 through June 30 in the State Historical Building, Des Moines. It chronicles the Great Migration of blacks from the South to the East and Midwest. The exhibit is on loan from the Smithsonian Institution.

Diana Pounds is the service director of University Relations at Iowa State University. Her article in this issue is adapted from her 1990 master's thesis in journalism, "Booze, Ballots, and Wild Women: Coverage of Suffrage and Temperance by Three Iowa Newspapers, 1870-1875."

Rocky Sexton is beginning the doctoral program in anthropology at the University of Iowa. He earned a B.A. in anthropology and history at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and an M.A. in anthropology from Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge. His research interests include cultural anthropology, ethnohistory, and material culture studies, with a geographical focus on the southern United States.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Fascinated by photos

Received the fall issue of *The Palimpsest* and have read virtually every word. Well, almost.

Found "Interpreting the Image" (Part 3) of particular interest and have been reviewing old photos of the [Manning Hotel] in that light. Fascinating.

Thanks also for your most satisfying graphics and a type style and a size that do my old eyes good. I long ago gave up trying to translate 8 pt. Bodoni Ital!

Chuck Grisham
The Manning Hotel and Motor Inn
Keosauqua, Iowa

The *Palimpsest* welcomes letters from its readers. Please include your complete address and phone number. Letters that are published may be edited for clarity and brevity. Write: Editor, *Palimpsest*, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

SUBMISSIONS

The editor welcomes manuscripts and edited documents on the history of Iowa and the Midwest that may interest a general reading audience. Submissions that focus on visual material (photographs, maps, drawings) or on material culture are also invited. Originality and significance of the topic, as well as the quality of research and writing, will determine acceptance for publication. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced, and follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* (13th edition). Please send two copies. Standard length is within ten to twenty manuscript pages, but shorter or longer submissions will be considered. Although the *Palimpsest* presents brief bibliographies rather than footnoted articles, footnotes should appear in the original submission. When using newspaper sources, please cite page as well as date of issue. Include a brief biographical sketch. Because illustrative material is integral to the *Palimpsest*, the editor encourages authors to include photographs and illustrations (or suggestions). Please send submissions or queries to Ginalie Swaim, Editor, *The Palimpsest*, State Historical Society of Iowa, 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.



"QUEEN OF THE FAMILY. The most important office in the world" (from L.P. Brockett's *Woman: Her Rights, Wrongs, Privileges, and Responsibilities*, 1870). In this *Palimpsest*, author Diana Pounds explores the "woman's sphere" (depicted above) and the supposed threat to it by woman suffragists in the 1870s. The woman's sphere was the well-ordered home in which children were raised, husband was comforted, and morals were maintained. On the front cover, a poster circa 1915 depicts the ongoing struggle for woman suffrage, finally achieved in 1920.

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