

The PALIMPSEST

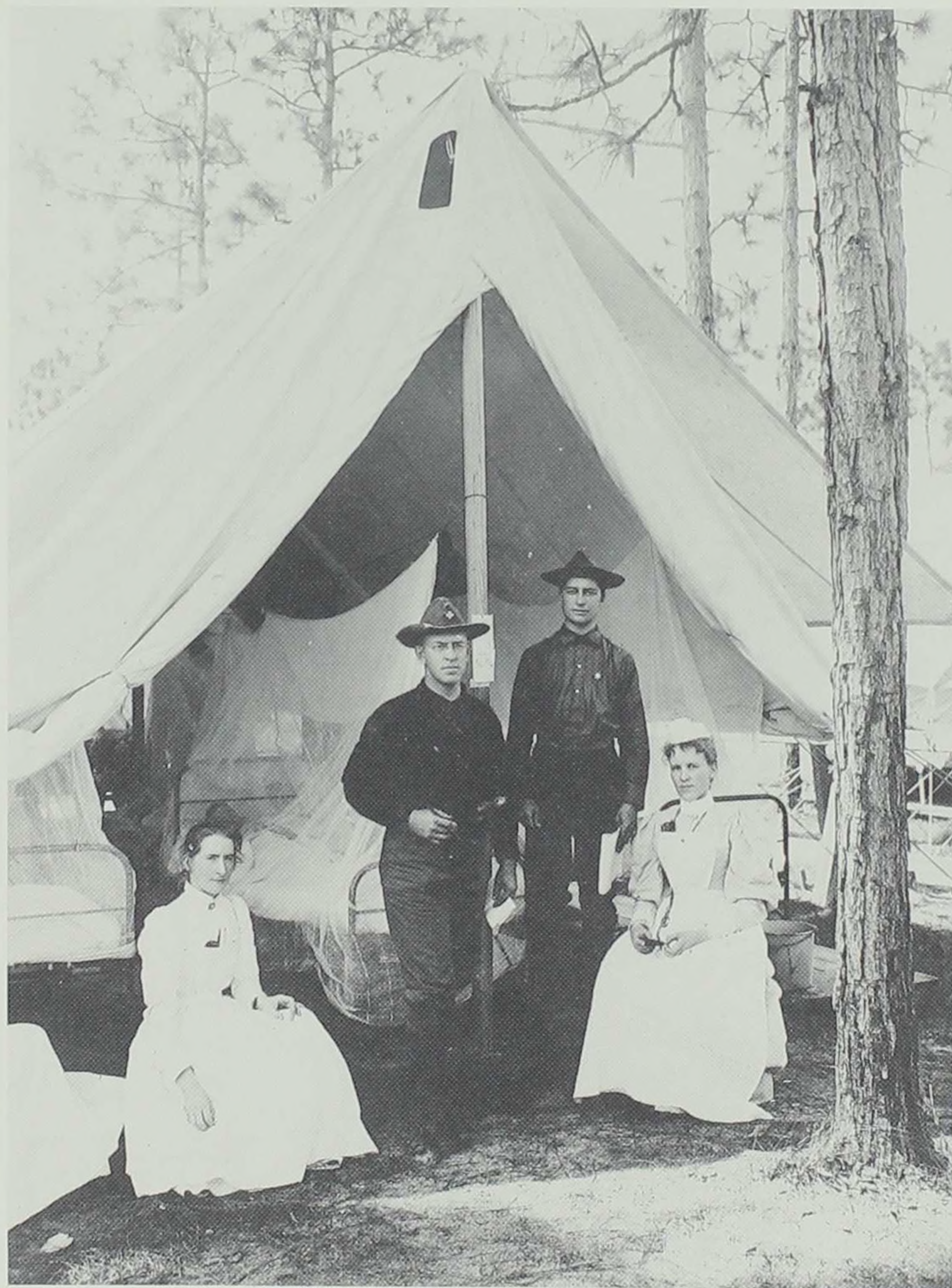
Volume 70, Number 1

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

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Inside —



At Camp Cuba Libre in Florida, nurses pause outside a hospital tent. Inside, mosquito netting drapes their patients. The story of Washington's Company D (Iowa 50th Volunteer Infantry — Spanish-American War) begins on page 32.



The Meaning of the Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest (*pāl'ĩmp/sěst*) 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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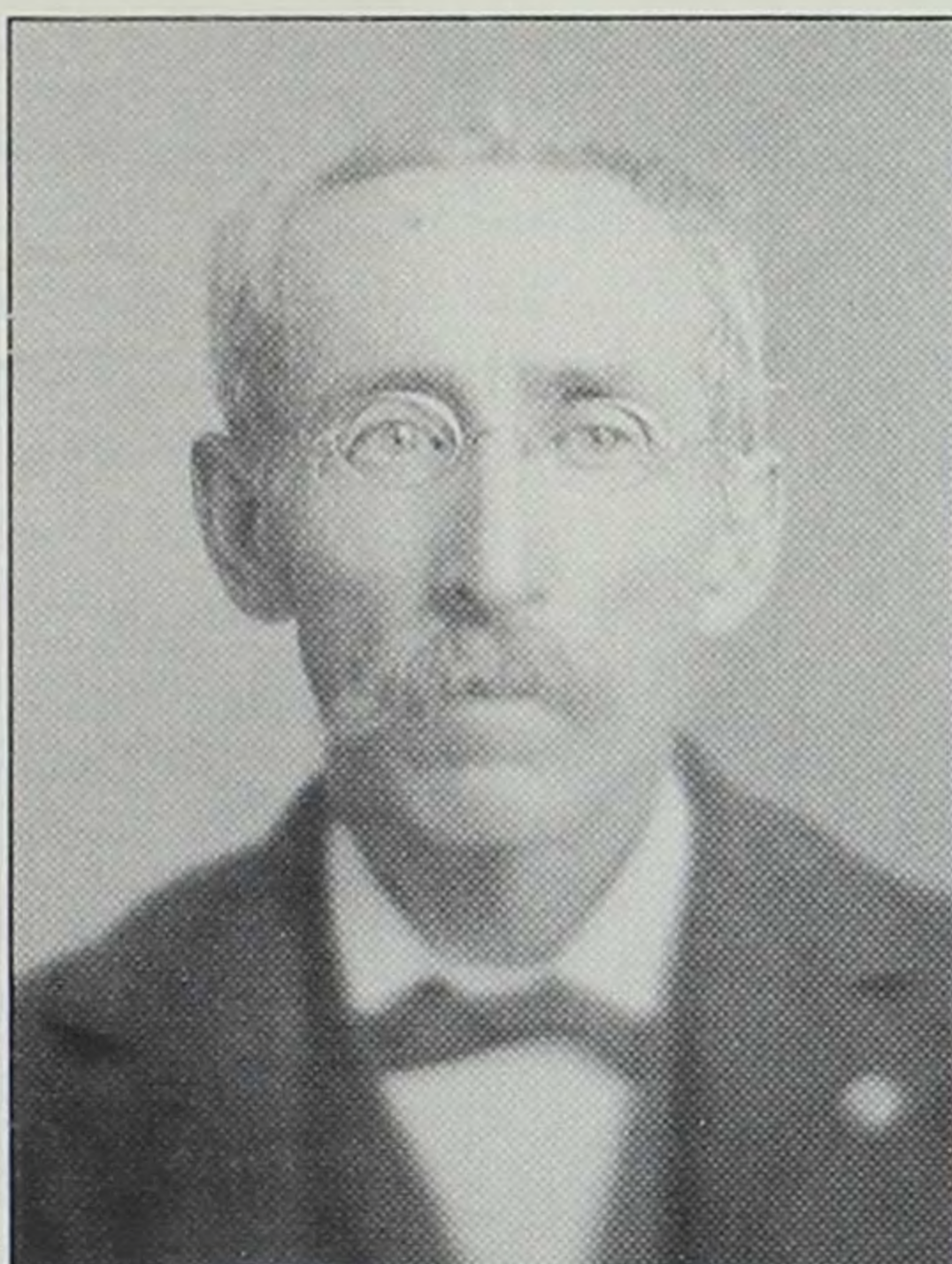
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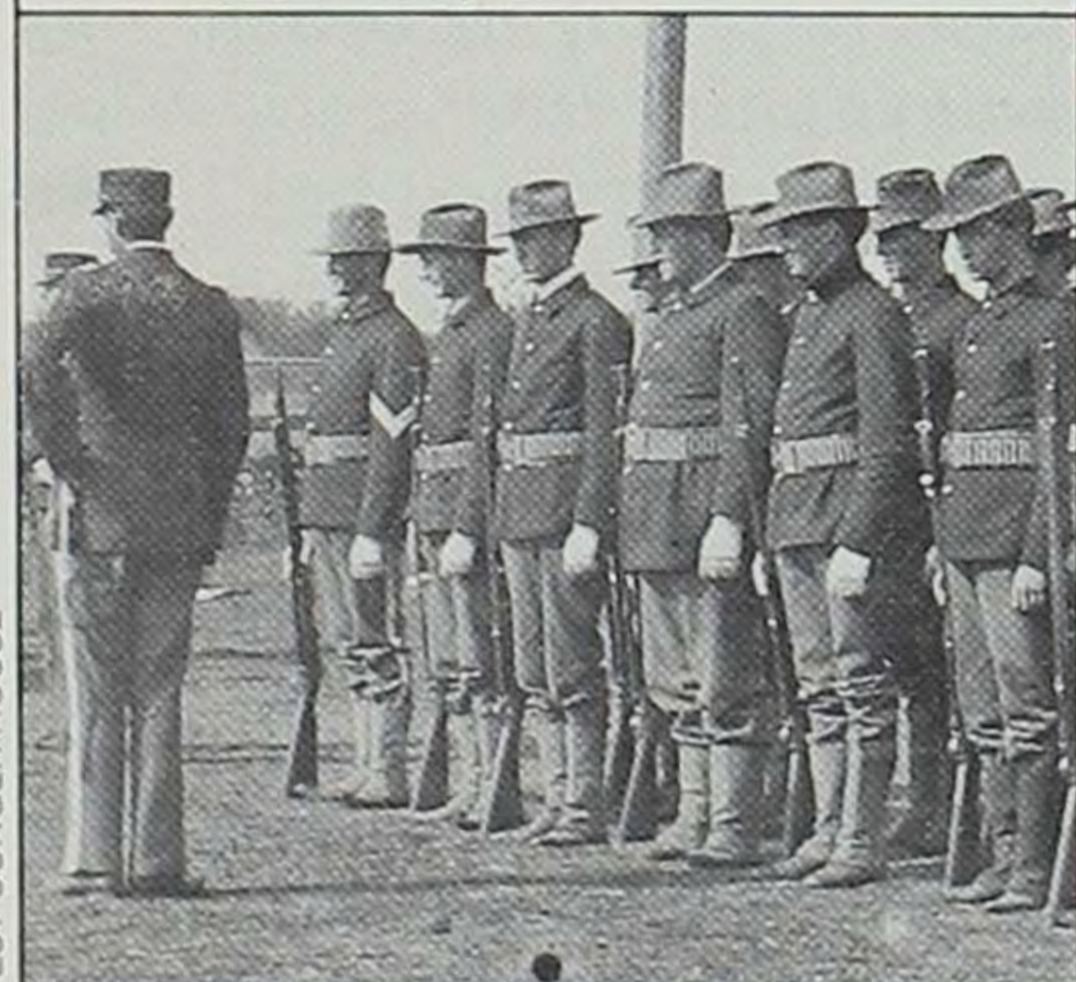
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Alford Chilcote soars 14



1860s insanity 2



Waiting for war 32

COVER: "Who says that gardens do not pay?/They raised a splendid crop of slugs/Of caterpillars and of bugs." The gentle humor of Bertha Shambaugh's frog poems and watercolors begins on page 18.

The PALIMPSEST

IOWA'S POPULAR HISTORY MAGAZINE

Ginalie Swaim, Editor

VOLUME 70, NUMBER 1

SPRING 1989

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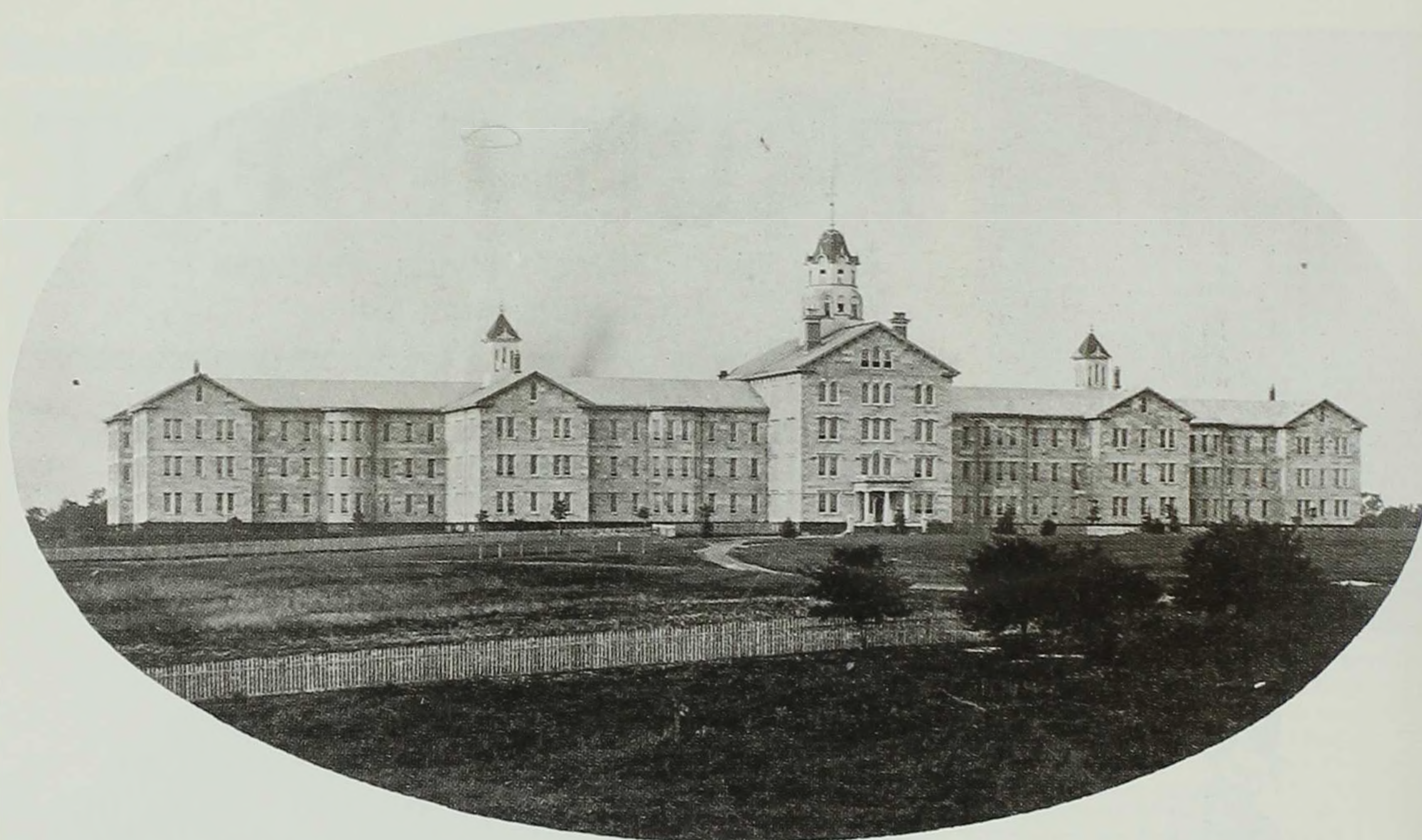
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'My life is not quite useless'

The 1866 Diary of an Asylum Bookkeeper

by Sharon E. Wood

ONE MONDAY, in the summer of 1866, Rhoda Amanda Shelton reported for work in her new job as a bookkeeper. She busied herself immediately with the tasks at hand — preparing bills, making out a report for the auditor. But now and then, a surge of loneliness swept over her. At the end of that first long week, she confided her thoughts to a companion, one to which she had often turned in far more troubling times. Taking up the same diary she had used during her months as a Civil War nurse, she opened it to a section of blank pages near the back and began to write: “The shiftings of my varied life have brought me at last to be

bookkeeper in a Hospital for the Insane.”

For the next two months, from July 2 through September 11, twenty-three-year-old Amanda Shelton lived and worked at the Iowa Hospital for the Insane just outside Mount Pleasant. Though her position was officially that of bookkeeper, she spent much of her time in the wards with the patients, reading, talking, hearing their stories. By mid-August she was given her own set of keys to the women's wards. She recorded her observations in a diary now held by the Special Collections department of the University of Iowa Libraries.

Shelton's diary is remarkable. It preserves a

Left: Iowa Hospital for the Insane (Mt. Pleasant), c. 1865

rare glimpse of daily life inside a mid-nineteenth-century hospital for the insane in prose which is lucid and reflective. It also offers a portrait of Shelton herself: wryly humorous, perhaps a bit moody, but full of warmth and utterly unflappable.

Amanda Shelton was not typical of the generation of women who came of age during the Civil War. She was instead part of a vanguard. A college-educated woman, she was one of the first dietary nurses recruited by Annie Wittenmyer for Civil War service. Later she worked as a teacher and school administrator, and she may have written articles for magazines as well. Her employment did not end with her marriage to Samuel F. Stewart in December 1870. Eight years later, with two daughters under five, she was operating a private school for sixty students in Chariton.

In the last third of the nineteenth century, thousands of young middle-class women followed Shelton's path into paid employment. They created new professions like nursing and social work, and altered forever existing jobs like clerical work and teaching. The entry of women changed America's workforce; but as Shelton's diary reveals, employment changed women as well. For working-class women like seamstresses, shoebinders, and cigarmakers, employment was drudgery. But for women in jobs such as Shelton's, work offered psychological rewards, answering a powerful need to feel useful and important.

As the daughter of a Methodist minister, Shelton was brought up in a household that valued both education and service. She was born in 1843 in Coolville, Ohio, just a few miles from where the Ohio River flows past Parkersburg, West Virginia. Her parents, Lucy and O. C. Shelton, spent the early years of their marriage in that region before moving with their four oldest children to Mount Pleasant, Iowa, sometime between 1846 and 1856.

O. C. Shelton did not serve as pastor of the Methodist church in Mount Pleasant. Amanda's diary refers to his work on the "Birmingham circuit" — perhaps indicating that he was a circuit-rider, a preacher assigned to churches in several different communities who traveled a "circuit" between them. If so, he

may have chosen to establish a permanent home in Mount Pleasant because of the educational opportunities it afforded his children. Four of the five Shelton children, including Amanda, attended Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant.

Amanda Shelton and her older sister, Mary, were recent college graduates in 1864 when Annie Wittenmyer recruited them to be among the first dietary nurses of the Civil War. Before Wittenmyer began running her "light-diet kitchens," hospitalized soldiers received the same rations as those in the field. Wittenmyer solicited donations and volunteers to provide appropriate food for soldiers suffering from dysentery, smallpox, or battlefield injuries. While Mary Shelton worked as Wittenmyer's personal assistant, Amanda helped organize diet kitchens at Nashville and other army hospitals.

War service changed Amanda Shelton forever. She sometimes worked near the battlefield or arrived shortly after the fighting had ended, witnessing destruction and pain beyond imagination. Long days in the hospital made death commonplace, but the loss of her own brother in October 1864 brought grief she never forgot. Hostile and uncooperative army officers tested her patience and organizational abilities; filth, disease, and loathsome injuries tested her compassion. If she had ever been timid or squeamish, her months of war service purged these from her. She discovered the exhilaration of useful and demanding work.

Shelton's tenure at the Iowa Hospital for the Insane began a little more than a year after her war service ended. How she spent the intervening time remains unrecorded, but the young woman who took up her diary again in the hot summer days of 1866 was "heart-sick" and lonely. "There is so much of sorrow and disappointment that I dare not dwell upon the past," she wrote. Two weeks later, sitting on the portico of her family home in Mount Pleasant, she recalled past evenings when she had thought "rapturously of the *future*." Now "waves of the present seemed to surge over" her.

Shelton's melancholy may have stemmed from continuing sorrow over the loss of her brother and many close friends in war. It may

have been complicated by other troubles to which she vaguely alluded in a bitter reference to those "unworthy of the name 'friend.'" The diary provides only the slightest clues on these matters. What it does reveal is how the opportunity to devote herself to useful work effected a remarkable change on Shelton's state of mind.

From her very first days at the hospital, Shelton began visiting the wards, spending time with patients and assisting the matron (Martha Ranney, wife of medical superintendent Mark Ranney) with sewing classes and other activities. Some young women might have found the company of insane residents frightening or distasteful, but the tact and composure Shelton had developed in army life served her well in this new circumstance.

Indeed, Shelton's attitude toward the patients is notable for its empathy. To her, they were not mere medical cases, nor pathetic objects of charity. As often as not, they were just interesting people — the attractive young man whose singing she found "truly charming," the poetess who was "quite a genius," and more than one old acquaintance who just happened to have gone insane. One patient even became a regular dining companion and a partner for games of croquet: Isaac Allen of Tama County, who had been elected attorney general of Iowa in 1864, then resigned his office in January 1866, "a case of mental overwork and neglect of physical health," according to Shelton. In Shelton's observation, the distance between the sane and the insane was not great at all, leading her to muse of her own condition, "What more sanity is in store for me?"

Shelton took on the duties of teacher, companion, and advocate of the patients, creating a role for herself far beyond that of bookkeeper. As her term of service drew near its close, her journal entries came to reflect an outlook quite different from that which had marked her first days. Her life no longer seemed empty; she did not spend time dwelling on the "sorrow and disappointment" of the past. Instead her entries reveal a new-found zest for her work, a feeling of belonging, and an eye toward the future. Shelton even began to note which patients might make good characters in stories she thought she might write, jotting down plot

ideas on blank pages in her diary.

The psychological rewards Amanda Shelton found in her work are reflected most clearly in one of the final entries she made in her diary, dated September 9: "When I come to write so many thoughts and incidents come crowding upon me that it is hard to choose those which may be of interest & use in the future. My visits to the wards are always a source of great pleasure to me. The patients and attendants all seem glad to see me — and the former often tell me how much they love me. This is gratifying for I feel that my life is not quite useless."

Shelton's diary ends abruptly with the September 11 entry. Having prepared the hospital's financial statements and presented her books to the visiting trustees, she may have felt that the time was right to leave. Just as with her



Women like Amanda Shelton and this unidentified secretary at the Mt. Pleasant asylum sought satisfaction and gainful employment in the labor force. No photograph of Shelton has been uncovered.

Civil War diary, her asylum diary gives no clues about where she went next nor how she was employed. Sometime in the next few years, she worked as a teacher and school administrator. She may have been superintendent of schools in Eddyville; she certainly taught at a normal school and ran her private school in Chariton. For a while, she lived with

her husband and daughters in Des Moines.

In 1889, Amanda Shelton Stewart moved with her family to Evanston, Illinois, where her daughter Lucy attended Northwestern University. Her husband, Samuel F. Stewart, was part-owner of the *Iowa Homestead* as well as other publications; and he served as Chicago agent for the *Homestead* for many years. After the Spanish-American War, Stewart was appointed to the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission as a special examiner. This work took him to New York for a number of years, and Amanda probably accompanied him. She died in Evanston in 1914.

Amanda Shelton's diary is remarkable not only for its portrait of Shelton herself, but also for the view it gives of the day-to-day life of the Iowa Hospital for the Insane. The mid-nineteenth century was a period of transition in the diagnosis and treatment of insanity, and the activities Shelton records in her diary hint at the way Dr. Mark Ranney, the asylum superintendent, carried out the current theories.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, alienists (physicians who specialized in treatment of the insane) emphasized what they called the "moral" causes of insanity. Moral causes were emotional disruptions, like failure in business, excessive religiosity, or "war excitement." Treatment centered on providing patients with an orderly existence, free of disturbances, and on keeping them occupied with healthful activities. As medicine and medical education became more professionalized, alienists began to look for physical causes, believing that insanity was a disease which could be treated with drugs or surgery.

In 1866 (the year Shelton worked at the asylum), diagnosis and treatment of insanity was poised between these two theories. Some of the patients hospitalized at Mount Pleasant were diagnosed as having lost their sanity to physical causes like injuries of the head, masturbation, disordered menstruation, or "general ill health." Others were allegedly driven mad by excessive study, fright, or spiritualism. Over the next few years, the proportion of cases attributed to physical causes rose gradually, then dramatically. But during Amanda Shelton's stay at the hospital, both theories of insanity were used by the staff physicians and

Right: Mark Ranney, medical superintendent at the Iowa Hospital for the Insane. Below: From the hospital's 1866/67 report.



ALLEGED CAUSES OF INSANITY.

Connected with general ill health.....	109
Pueperal condition.....	42
Disappointments.....	21
Sun-stroke.....	4
Epilepsy.....	99
Injuries of the head.....	15
Excessive study.....	8
Hereditary.....	32
Vaccination.....	1
Concussion.....	1
Spiritualism.....	8
Bodily injuries.....	6
Business anxieties.....	27
Jealousy.....	4
Exposure to cold.....	6
Fright.....	5
Masturbation.....	35
Political excitement.....	1
Meningeal inflammation.....	2
Domestic troubles.....	58
Religious excitement.....	45
Ill treatment.....	9
Blindness.....	1
Use of tobacco.....	5
Uterine disease.....	3
Novel-reading.....	1
War excitement.....	8
Over-exertion.....	21
Spermatorrhœa.....	1
Scarlet fever.....	2
Typhoid fever.....	7
Disordered menstruation.....	13
Change of life.....	6
Pecuniary anxieties.....	7
Intemperance.....	24
Disease of the brain.....	2
Paralysis.....	2
Hemiplegia.....	5
Apoplexy.....	2
Hysteria.....	3
Measles.....	4
Senile dementia.....	4
Original defect.....	6
Disappointment in love.....	5
Loss of health in military service.....	13
No satisfactory cause assigned.....	345
	1025

by physicians who referred patients to the state hospital.

Shelton's diary is most revealing of the "moral" treatment practiced at the asylum. Bells rang to call residents to the assigned activity of the hour. Every Wednesday evening, patients, attendants, and guests from town mingled at the hospital dance. The practice of holding dances was common at most "modern" asylums. Dancing was considered good exercise and a healthful way of working off nervous energy, but as Shelton's diary reveals, not all patients were permitted to participate. Asylum directors were cautious about activities which might tend to excite rather than calm the patients. Shelton was therefore cautious when conversing with patients, sometimes changing the subject abruptly when she feared the topic might become distressing.

Farm and garden work occupied the days of many of the male patients. Not surprisingly, a large proportion of the men had been farmers before being sent to the hospital. Their work not only produced food for the asylum, it functioned as therapy, providing regular, familiar activity. The flowers Shelton gathered so often, and the blackberries Mr. Clark brought her, probably came from gardens cultivated by the patients.

Women, in turn, spent time sewing, weaving mats, and performing other kinds of domestic work considered appropriate to their sex. Biennial reports from later periods list the hundreds of articles produced each year by the patients and hired seamstresses: shirts, aprons, bed linens, even straitjackets — though in theory a well-run asylum would resort to such restraints only rarely. For exercise, women patients strolled the asylum grounds.

The role Amanda Shelton created for herself at the hospital was anomalous. The asylum employed many women, but none had duties like those Shelton assumed. The medical staff consisted of Dr. Mark Ranney, the superintendent, and two assistant physicians, Dr. H. M. Bassett and Dr. George W. Dudley. In addition to patient care, Ranney had charge of the hospital's physical plant. His wife, Martha Ranney, who was employed as matron, oversaw the "domestic" side of running the hospital. She directed the staff of laundresses, kitchen



Dining Room, Ward No. 2 West (at Mt. Pleasant)

workers, and maids, as well as keeping track of foodstuffs and household supplies. The two supervisors, L. E. Schofield and Mary Barney, were in charge of the attendants, men and women who had direct physical supervision and care of the patients.

No one among this large staff had duties which included the kind of "social work" Shelton performed. The matron was supposed to give special attention to the needs of female patients, but the enormous work of managing the extensive household staff probably precluded much effort in that direction. When Mark Ranney decided to give Amanda Shelton her own set of keys to the women's wards, he was acknowledging the usefulness of her work. And it may have set him thinking about ways to provide better care for female patients. A little more than five years later, Ranney became only the second asylum superintendent in the country to add a woman physician to his professional staff.

[Note: In the following transcription of the complete diary, punctuation has been changed only when needed

for clarification. Datelines have been set in italics.

Two views of asylums: Engravings are from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, "Blackwell's Island Lunatic Asylum" (February 1866). Interior photos, of the Iowa Hospital for the Insane (Mt. Pleasant), probably date to the 1880s, the decade during which the facility expanded.]

*Insane Hospital
Mt. Pleasant
July 8th*

The shiftings of my varied life have brought me at last to be bookkeeper in a Hospital for the Insane. I came here last Monday — and although I have worked hard making a report for the Auditor of State and preparing the bills for private patients and those from other states — I have been a little lonely. This is a lovely Sabbath morning. Miss Bell (who is visiting the wife of the Superintendent) and I went into the garden and gathered flowers for bouquets for the wards and our private rooms.

A *very* sweet one adorns my mantle shelf. The patients seem to realize that it is the "Lords" day. A wonderful calm pervades the whole house. My table is placed near the window which overlooks Mt. P. and as I sit here with the sound of the old college bell in my ears, memories of past years float through my mind. But there is so much of sorrow and disappointment that I dare not dwell on the past. So many of my old friends are with the dead — and so many of the living have proven unworthy of the name "friend" that I feel heart-sick to think of it.

Afternoon

I quit writing this morning to go to the cupola with Miss Bell and Miss Wheeler. As the day is not sunny we did not find it unpleasantly warm and the air was delightful. We looked over the vast expanse of prairie dotted with groves, villages and farmhouses — but all was hushed — save the songs of birds and the ringing of the worship commanding bells.

When we came down again Miss Bell came to my room and talked until dinner.

Just after I was seated in chapel I saw Mary, Jennie and Mary Allen at the door. I invited them in and they remained through the service. When I looked over this body of afflicted

ones I felt that I had great cause to render thanks unto our Divine Father for his loving kindness to me — and with the thought came the sweet peace which faith always brings with it. At the close of service an epileptic patient had a severe fit.

I do not intend to stay here long. But think a few months experience will do me good.

*Friday July 13th
1866*

It is too warm to think and *vastly* too warm to write — but I must "make a few entries." The patients have been dreadfully restless all day. A Mr. Green in one of the "strong cells" has made noise enough himself to excite the whole establishment — but this evening he informed us he would like to have his ears insured as he *never* heard so much noise in his life. He stands at his window and calls out to everyone he sees.

Tonight as he stood in the door he advised Miss Bell not to wear her dresses so long as it was "wicked sinful, wasteful, nasty etc." He



also wished us to bring him a Methodist Hymn Book — promising to sing all evening for us if we would.

He has one tune for all words and sings in a yell — and we declined the entertainment he offered. One man sits at our table. His name is Allen. They inform me that he has been Attorney General of Iowa.

A case of mental overwork and neglect of physical health.

Miss Bell and I go into the wards & converse

with the patients every evening. They are always glad to see us.

*Iowa Hospital
For the Insane
July 22d 1866*

This is the second Sabbath I have spent at home. I walked in last evening expecting to see Mrs. Porter who was visiting Mary but they had gone to Burlington.

Jennie, Ma, Charlie were there. I enjoyed the moonlight as I sat on the old portico on which I used to sit and think rapturously of the *future* when the waves of the present seemed to surge over me. And the shade of the trees which Pa had planted when I was a school girl was inviting & I gave myself up to its enjoyment. Dr. Ranney called round for me just in time to get here to tea. I read to Miss Bell for an hour or so and then we took a long walk in the mingled moonlight & twilight.

When we finally came to our accustomed seat on the back door step we found the two Supervisors — Miss Barney and Mr. Schofield listening to a patient in a near ward singing. We also sat & listened. It was truly charming. His voice is rich and he applies it readily to the comic or sad. Whatever he sings his voice seems made for that one piece. His cousin is in the same ward. Their name is Noland. The mother of Daniel (not the singer) dined with us

one day. Poor woman she seemed inclined to moralize saying repeatedly we did not know what we would come to before we died. She had in her youth laughed at silly & insane people — little dreaming that she would ever have a crazy son.

The one who sang was a "fast" young man & intemperance brought him here. They are both recovering. In a book which Jennie gave me to read I find that Mrs. Francis



S. Lache [?] of Ind who is a patient here is mentioned as a poetess, & friend of the authoress. I heard her singing the other morning. She made part of the words herself as she sang. I believe she is quite a genius.

*Wednesday
July 25*

I have just come up from the dance. It was so funny to see the way in which some of the patients hopped about. The female attendants are mostly very pretty girls and dance gracefully.

Many of the patients who are not allowed to dance are permitted to look on. The man who sang so sweetly the other night was there — but did not dance. His face tells a sad history of dissipation & sin. Last night I walked home. Mary had been to B. with Mrs. Porter — had enjoyed her visit with Mrs. D. and Ella very much. Pa was at home and brought me out this A.M.

Miss Bell & I went this afternoon into the wards where the excitable patients are kept. They came round us chattering and grinning in a delighted manner. One who sometimes crows and often swears & raves politely informed us that we were nice girls and she intended to have us murdered. "Deed I do girls!" She exclaimed. I changed the subject by asking her if she would not like some red rags to put in the mat she was making.

Oh yes! she exclaimed and reached her bony hand to shake hands over it & informed me that Andy Johnson was her stepson and she would have him give us each a farm.

She invited us to come again saying she liked us very much.

*Insane Hospital
July 31 1866*

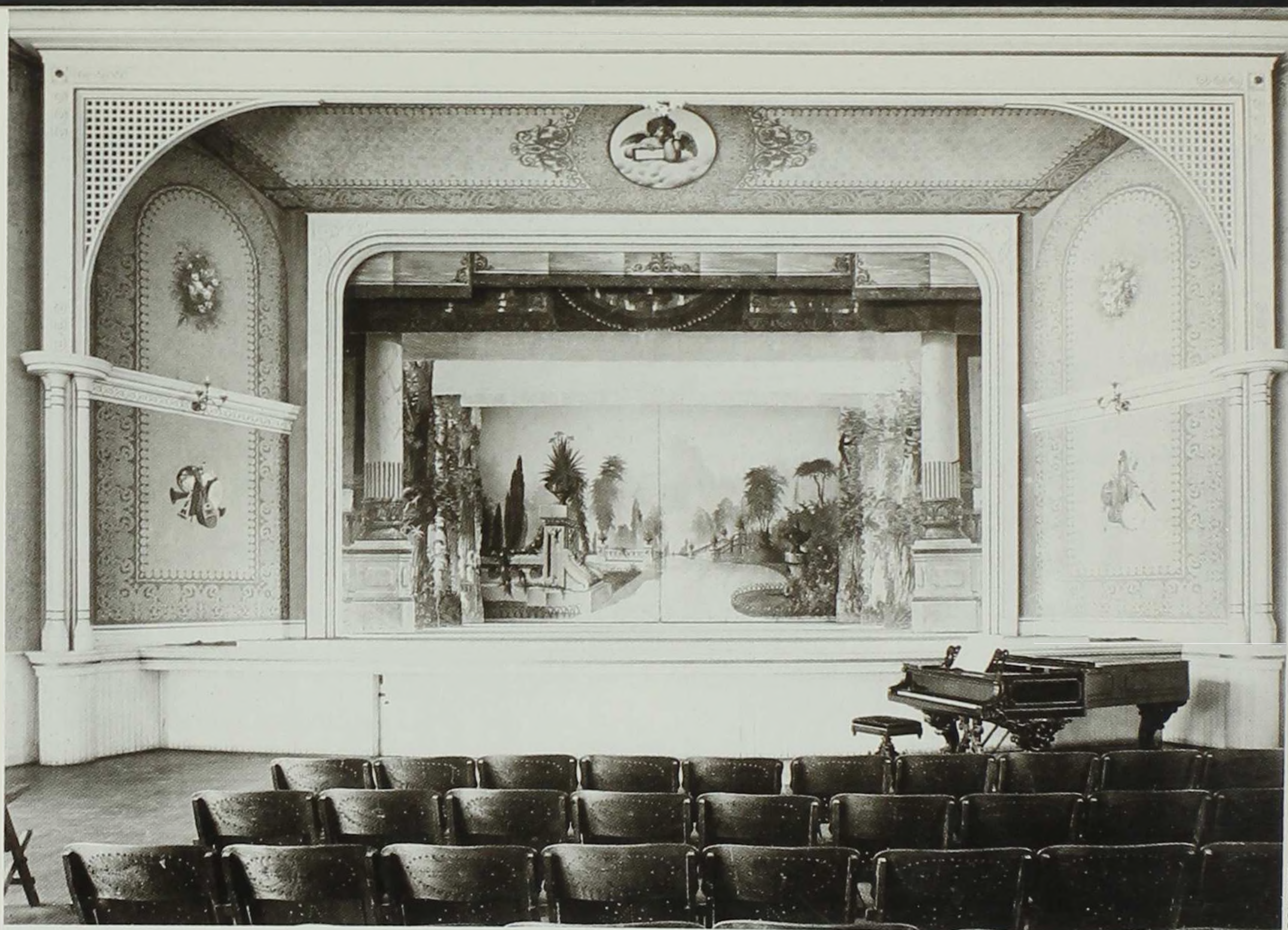
Last Saturday I went home expecting to find my *very* dear friend Ella there. But to my disappointment she did not come. I remained until Sabbath afternoon and then came by way of Mr. Corkhills & Carrie came with me as far as the gate. Ma and Charlie have gone with Pa and we had a good quiet time at home. This P.M. Miss Bell and I went through the wards again. An old woman by the name of Margaret Shaler proposed to tell our fortunes by our



hands. It was very funny. Her history is strange — she has never been married but has had two children. She says she thinks God will forgive her as she was never more than half witted. One by the name of “Joe” who thinks herself a man amused us exceedingly. Poor creature she is scrofulous and a bone an inch long is sticking out of her cheek. However she does not seem to feel pain but runs after and teases a cross woman who amuses herself by swearing, and trying to open the doors and when she fails kicking them until her feet are bruised & bleeding. There is one horrible creature in one of the strong cells. The Attendant opened the door to let us take a peep at her. She was perfectly naked and had wallowed in her own

Ward No. 1 West (at Mt. Pleasant)

filth until she was horrible to behold. When the door was closed she beat the floor with her limbs and roared like an enraged animal. I asked if they allowed her to have sticks — not thinking it possible for a human being to use flesh & bone in such a way. But they say she has worn the skin off her joints. Oh! it is dreadful. One woman wants us to stop and hear her tell the truth. When I have time I propose to do it. Miss Bell just came in & asked me to read a little from my journal. I did so and then went to the window and looked up into the “starry deep” and thought of the concentrated agony in this house. Amid what strange scenes have I stopped and looked into the dark sky thickly



COURTESY MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE, MT. PLEASANT

studded with stars! What more sanity is in store for me?

I am learning to play croquet — play chess with Miss Bell quite frequently.

Wednesday Aug. 1

At last the hot days and nights have been succeeded by moderately cool weather. The patients are more quiet and cheerful and the languor which we all felt has given place to a lively interest in life and its duties. This morning as I sat in my Office writing Mr. Clark — the patient who brings me flowers so often — came in with a bouquet and a paper basket that would hold a quart, full of blackberries.

"Will you accept some fruit and flowers?" he asked as he laid them on the table. I am very grateful to him and wish for some way of showing it, beside the simple "thank you."

Mr. Pratt came out after tea and we played "croquet" until called in to the dance. A pretty little girl that I have often noticed as I passed through the wards came & sat down by me and entered into conversation by saying simply "I think you are *very* pretty." I was amused by the child's idea of that which is pretty — but thanked her and let her talk. She went on to say

Amusement hall, Iowa Hospital for the Insane

she had often noticed me and thought I looked so kind — she would like to live with me when she got over the fits for which she was being treated. Her Mother is poor and cannot support her. Our "tete a tete" was interrupted by a patient asking me to join him in the march with which they close the dance. I accepted and he asked me if my name was Shelton. He said he used to know Pa when he preached on Birmingham circuit and he recognized me from my resemblance to Pa. His name is Wm. Smith. He said with tears in his eyes that trouble brought him here and that he was nearly well now. I changed the subject lest it might do him harm — but shall learn his history as far as I can.

Hospital Aug 3/66

I find my life here almost as full of incidents as army life. I walked home last night and found Mary & Jennie alone. Came out here before breakfast this A.M. Did nothing this fore noon but read in "Bleak house" and gather a basket of flowers.

After dinner Miss Bell and Dr. Bassett sat in my office for an hour chatting — Just as

Dr. Dudley did after breakfast — and then Miss B & I went into the wards. The first person we visited was a Mrs. Hilton. I found that she was as I had expected an old acquaintance of mine. The history of my meeting her would fill the rest of the book and I must deny myself the pleasure of writing it. Although it has been nearly eight years since I have seen her — as soon as I said “my name is Shelton” She replied “Miss Amanda Shelton. I remember you — you taught my Anna to be kind to me.” I talked with her a long time and she seemed sane except when she spoke of her children. She thinks they are in the building and badly treated. I assured her they were not here — and she said she would believe anything I told her as she knew I would not tell her a falsehood. I do not know that there is hope of her recovery — but will do all I can for her. I have told her history and all seem to take an interest in her. Yesterday while the patients (female) were sitting under a tree in the back yard one — a Miss Regna — ran round the corner of the house and was not missed until she had secreted herself in the grove. They searched for her until late at night and left a description of her at the depot. She wandered about all night and found the depot this morning. They told her the train did not leave until two oclock on which she wanted to go — and sent word here that she was there. I saw her when she was brought in, and again on our tour through the wards. She was excited. She fears her children are starving. Her home was burnt

down & all she had with it which caused her insanity. She said to us “I am a feeble woman but I must work for my children.”

She has one of the saddest faces I ever saw. She has tried to kill herself by cutting at the *back* of her neck with a *case* knife.

Played croquet after tea with Mr. Allen & the rest of our table full.



Aug. 4th

Did not wake this morning until the second bell rang. Spent the morning reading until eleven — then went to Mrs. Ranneys room and helped prepare sewing for “the class” until the dinner bell rang. As I went down stairs I heard a strange noise in the hall and saw a young man in a terrible fit. His mother — a widow — and he her only son — had brought him to consult with the Dr. As are all epileptics — his case is hopeless. After dinner Miss Bell & I went to see Mrs. Hilton again and found her a little better than yesterday. Miss Session [?] tells me that her husband married again and he and Mrs. H. No. 2 have parted. The family are in Agency. I had not been long in my office after my return from the wards when Miss Hardenbrook came. I went over the building with her. After tea I was anxious to go home but was disappointed — we (Dr. R & I) had business to attend to which kept us until nearly ten (it is now *after* 10). While Mrs. R and I were gathering flowers the Moulsons came out. I did not see them — or rather anyone but Mrs. McFarland. Gathered flowers instead of croquet.

Saturday Aug 11

I have not written for a week because my time has been mostly occupied. Last Sabbath morning I went home and found Ella there. I returned to the Hospital in the evening & then went home again on Monday night. Jennie & Ella walked out in the afternoon — so I had



company. Miss Hardenbrook was with Mary. It rained on Tuesday so that I could not come out until after dinner. Ella came with me and remained until Thursday.

She seemed to enjoy the visit very much. On Wednesday night Mrs. Pratt came out to the dance.

Ella loves dancing as well as I & we enjoyed the evening very much. Thursday P.M. Jennie sent Frank Gibson out for Miss Bell & me to go in & spend the afternoon & evening. Of course we went. Our melodeon had come and we had plenty of music & a nice time generally.

In the evening Mr. Maxfield, the McDonell girls & Miss Billings called and remained until after we left. I was to have gone home tonight but there was such a promise of rain and we played "croquet" so long that I deemed it best to wait until tomorrow. I am glad it happened so — as I thus witnessed something new and



strange to me. A woman was brought here on Wednesday and died Thursday night. It is necessary to bury those who die, after night, as it excites most of the patients to see signs of a burial. Just after dark I was sitting on the portico watching the storm which has just now burst upon us coming up, when I saw a coffin carried into the office. Dr. Dudley asked me to go in. I did so and found that the coffin had been placed upon the centre table & three or four of the attendants from each side of the house, the surgeons and Supervisors were standing solemnly & respectfully about the room. Dr. Ranney read the Funeral service of the Episcopal Church — repeated the Lords prayer and all that is left on earth of Mrs. Hulley was carried to the cemetery. The turf is hardly placed over her yet — but from

the darkened heavens comes upon her last resting place a heavy shower. I am reminded of a verse Lou Johnson repeated as she looked out upon the rain which was falling on the newly made grave of her mother.

"Happy is the bride the sun shines on,
Happy the corpse the rain falls on."

God grant that in the other world to which Mrs. Hulley has gone, she may enjoy the fulness of a Saviours love.

Aug. 23 1866

Two deaths today. One old lady who has been insane 20 years & a middle aged woman who has only been deranged a few months. Mrs. Mickerson the old lady was laid out in Miss Barneys parlor — the other woman in her room — on the floor. I am becoming acquainted with the patients & attendants of the "west-wing." Spent the evening in No. 5 reading aloud to the ladies. They thanked me & asked me to come again. Have had some confidential chats with Dr. Dudley — also Miss Barney. I have keys to the Ladies side of the house. Dance did not come off tonight because the musicians did not come.

Iowa Hospital
Sept 9 1866

No day *could* be more appropriate for writing in my journal than a rainy Sabbath. But when I come to write so many thoughts & incidents come crowding upon me that it is hard to choose those which may be of interest & use in the future. My visits to the wards are always a source of great pleasure to me. The patients and attendants all seem glad to see me — and the former often tell me how much they love me. This is gratifying for I feel that my life is not quite useless. This week the Trustees were here and I was kept very busy making out the statement of the financial standing of the Institution.

No fault was found with my books — though I myself know them to be very far below my standard. One of the patients by the name of Knowland escaped the night before last. He was nearly well.

He was a "fast" man & his insanity was temporary — resulting from drinking to excess. He



danced beautifully. While dancing the "Spanish dance" he proposed to Mrs. Ream to run away with him. He said he would make keys out of tin. *He* got away but she did not. Mrs. Darwin and Mrs. Pratt called to see me on Friday & remained over night with us. The lady Supervisor is to be married soon. Her history is a strange one and will make a good story. Her husbands *first* wife is a patient here.

Jennie is not attending school now but is preparing for a teacher of music & painting.

Sept. 11th 1866

This gloomy weather unfits me for *everything*. I cannot write or read to my own satisfaction.

Last evening I went into No. 5 and gave Melissa a lesson in chess. She in return tried to teach me to waltz. While we were trying one of the patients, a Miss Newberry, came out in her chemise and sailed gracefully (?) up and down the long hall. Finally she caught me and tried to whirl me in the "dizzy mazes" but there was too much of the corporeal — then too my skirts hampered me while her *one* garment left her

limbs free. When I went in I found Miss Lache sitting in the lounge in the recess looking out while she sang sweet old fashioned airs playing an imaginary accompaniment on the window. I remarked that her piano was rather low toned — that I could not hear it. Yes she replied and I do not understand tuning it. At the sewing class in the afternoon she insisted that she was the mother of 14 children. Oh! How it storms! □

NOTE ON SOURCES

The primary source for this article was the diary of Rhoda Amanda Shelton, Shelton Family Papers, Special Collections Department, University of Iowa Libraries. Additional sources include the *Iowa Wesleyan University History and Alumni Record* for 1905 and 1942; *Iowa School Report, 1878-79*; the 1860 manuscript census for Henry Co., Iowa; Obituary for Samuel F. Stewart, *Evanston Review*, 22 Jan. 1931; Obituary for Lucy Shelton Stewart, undated, Evanston (Ill.) Historical Society; and the *Fourth Biennial Report, Iowa Hospital for the Insane, Mount Pleasant*. Useful secondary sources on the care of the insane in the nineteenth century are Gerald N. Grob, *The State and the Mentally Ill* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966); and David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971). The author wishes to thank Terry Ofner, State Historical Society of Iowa, and Patricia Kelly, Evanston Historical Society, for their assistance in researching this article.



GAR Campfires

by Edith W. Harwood

WE CALLED THEM "The Old Soldiers' Campfires," and the first one I encountered began as a disappointment. The place was Wapello, Iowa, a small, county-seat town, built on the bluff side of the Iowa River. The time was nineteen hundred and seven. I was ten years old and a campfire meant to me just that, a roaring bonfire outdoors. So, when I found myself being ushered into Myron Hall over the Express Offices for what promised to be an ordinary and probably dull program — with speeches from a platform instead of songs under the stars — I felt I had been a victim of a double-cross for sure! But as I looked and listened I forgot my disenchantment. This was not a perfectly ordinary program after all. Something very different and special was in that hall. And the next year, and the next, and the next — for many years, in fact — the "campfires" that were held each autumn

became events to anticipate, to enjoy, and to remember.

The "Old Soldiers" were old indeed, for they were veterans of the Civil War. It had been many years since they had been mustered out of the Grand Army of the Republic to take up life again — to marry, to rear children, to seek their various fortunes. They were old, but not so old that they could not enjoy an annual day of fellowship and of reminiscence, climaxed by the evening campfire.

I was a fortunate child, for my grandfather was one of these soldiers. His name was Alford Chilcote, and he lived in the neighboring Iowa town of Washington, some thirty-odd miles northwest. His regiment had been the Twentieth Wisconsin, but he had been "adopted" by the members of the Nineteenth Iowa Infantry, who largely made up the Washington GAR Post. His yearly trek from Washington to Wapello for the campfire heightened its signifi-

With flag and drums, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) leads a Maquoketa parade, May 30, 1934.

cance, and wove into the fabric of my family's life a special, recurring pattern, still cherished in memory.

Although the GAR post at Washington always sent a sizable delegation to the affair, Grandpa did not come over with them. He and Grandma arrived by train here in Wapello the afternoon before. Besides the valise containing their night clothes, Grandpa's good black suit, and Grandma's best black dress, they always carried a cloth-covered basket. In it we found tomatoes, ornamental gourds, a mold of freshly churned butter, and a dozen fresh eggs.

After breakfast the next morning he would strike off alone, bound for the courthouse lawn, spacious under old trees — there to meet, and greet, and “chin with” the comrades, who all day long, by ones and twos and larger groups, arrived to join the conclave. They came from nearby towns — Grandview, Columbus Junction, Morning Sun, Toolesboro on the Mississippi, Mediapolis, Washington — and from surrounding farms. They came by train, by spring wagon, buggies, a few by car. Some were accompanied by wives, sons, or daughters, who had to find their amusement elsewhere; that day the courthouse lawn was strictly reserved for the veterans. The benches filled, the lawn became dotted with groups that assembled, disintegrated, reassembled, as the hours wore on. Sack lunches and restaurants took care of the noon meal, and in the evening the Ladies' Aid of one of the churches served a chicken pie dinner.

Our family did not go to the Ladies' Aid meal, but ate at home. After supper we would see Grandpa, dressed in his best, slowly walking back and forth in front of the house, hands clasped behind his back, head down. Grandma would admonish my two brothers and me not to bother him; he was “thinking over his speech.” My mother, who “gave readings” and was always a part of the evening's entertainment, would also be getting dressed up for the occasion.

By eight o'clock the selected hall was well filled and only the front platform's tiers of chairs were empty and waiting. Then, from the

GAR Hall above the Post Office at the far end of the only business street would come the sound of fife and drums, and then the tramp of marching feet. The honored guests were approaching. By the time they reached the door we were all standing. Then they were marching in: the flag bearers, the fife and drum corps, then two by two in perfect step, the soldiers. They wore no uniforms, no insignia other than the small bronze buttons in the lapels of their good black suits, but there was no mistake about it — they were soldiers. Tomorrow knees might be throbbing with rheumatism, backs stooped, but not tonight. Chins up, arms swinging rhythmically, treads even, they came down the center aisle, climbed the steps, and took their places on the platform. The invisible bond of their shared experience was in that hour apparent, setting them unmistakably apart from the rest of us. Under the spell of the pulsing drum beats, the high leading voice of the fife, all history seemed to move down that center aisle: Shiloh, Vicksburg, the Battle of the Wilderness, Bull Run, Prairie Orchard, Lincoln, Gettysburg, the Emancipation Proclamation, George Washington, Paul Revere, the Spirit of Seventy-Six, and Glory Hallelujah all rolled into one!

Then the drums were still, the flag set in its place, the invocation given by a local minister. When we were seated the platform chairs were filled. How many were there? I don't know. There seemed to be quite an army, but I realize that my memories are viewed through the lens of a child's eyes, and magnified accordingly. With the exception of a very few, I can't remember names or faces. From Wapello there was Dan McKay, whose short goatee, trimmed moustache, and broad-brimmed hat made him the perfect prototype of the southern colonel (“uncle” to every child in town because on circus and carnival days he stood on downtown street corners and distributed quarters for spending money to all comers under the age of ten). His brother Bee (short for Willoughby) McKay was also there. Captain J. J. Kellogg, from Washington, a natural-born comedian and wit, perennial master of ceremonies, only had to step to the center of the stage and raise an eyebrow to set up a roar of laughter and applause. The audience well knew what was

coming, and they were never disappointed. There were many beards and bushy moustaches, and bald heads gleamed under the high bright lights. The current president of the Women's Relief Corps and my mother were the only women on the stage. Mother looked remote and unfamiliar, separate from the rest of our family group.

The program began. The Relief Corps lady made a speech of welcome and was duly answered. We sang: "Mine eyes have seen the glory/Of the coming of the Lord/He is trampling out the vintage/Where the grapes of wrath are stored." Everybody joined in the chorus: "Glory, glory hallelujah!" And we sang: "Just before the battle, Mother,/I am thinking most of you," and "Tenting to-night, tenting to-night/Tenting on the old camp ground." Someone, usually a gifted high school senior, "delivered" (that's the word) the Gettysburg Address, and there would be a vocal solo.

The old soldiers themselves made speeches. This part of the program, if the truth were told, I suspect would bear out my first fear of boredom. Probably certain soldiers were selected to do the honors for the rest, but it always seemed that anyone who had anything he wanted to say could have the floor as long as he wished. And most of them were definitely not public speakers. They talked very little of their battlefield experiences. They were interested in the affairs of the present, and, as do the rest of us, they had their opinions on almost everything. Some of them were dull indeed. Not that it mattered. No performers ever had a more willingly captive audience.

There was a great deal of what my grandfather, who had the unusual gift of viewing all things (himself included) with a humorous eye, called "flag waving and eagle soaring." Once, when it was his turn to speak, he electrified himself and everyone else by allowing that humor to show; he finished his speech by declaiming dramatically, "And may the old eagle soar, sir, and soar, sir, till he gets so sore he can't soar anymore, sir!" It brought down the house, and thereafter, at Grandpa's turn to speak, someone always called out, "Soar the old eagle, Alf!" I think he tried it once, but it was anticlimactic. Such flights of spontaneous oratory are not good warmed over.

When it came my mother's turn to speak I always found myself with clammy hands and a fast-beating heart, sick with stage fright for her. What if she were to forget? She never did. With her readings we returned to the 1860s. She always gave something new, and then "by request" her encores, until I almost knew them by heart myself:

All quiet along the Potomac, they say,
Except, now and then, a stray picket
Is shot, as he walks on his beat to and fro,
By a rifleman hid in the thicket.
'T is nothing — a private or two, now and then
Will not count in the news of the battle;
Not an officer lost — only one of the men
Moaning out, all alone, the death-rattle.

...
All quiet along the Potomac tonight —
No sound save the rush of the river:
While soft falls the dew on the face of the dead —
The picket's off duty forever.

Another was "Night on Shiloh," the story of a picket who investigated the shining object he noticed on the breast of the enemy sniper he had just killed, to find a locket. Opening it, he sees the picture of "my brother's fair bride." The old, sad story of the war of brother against brother.

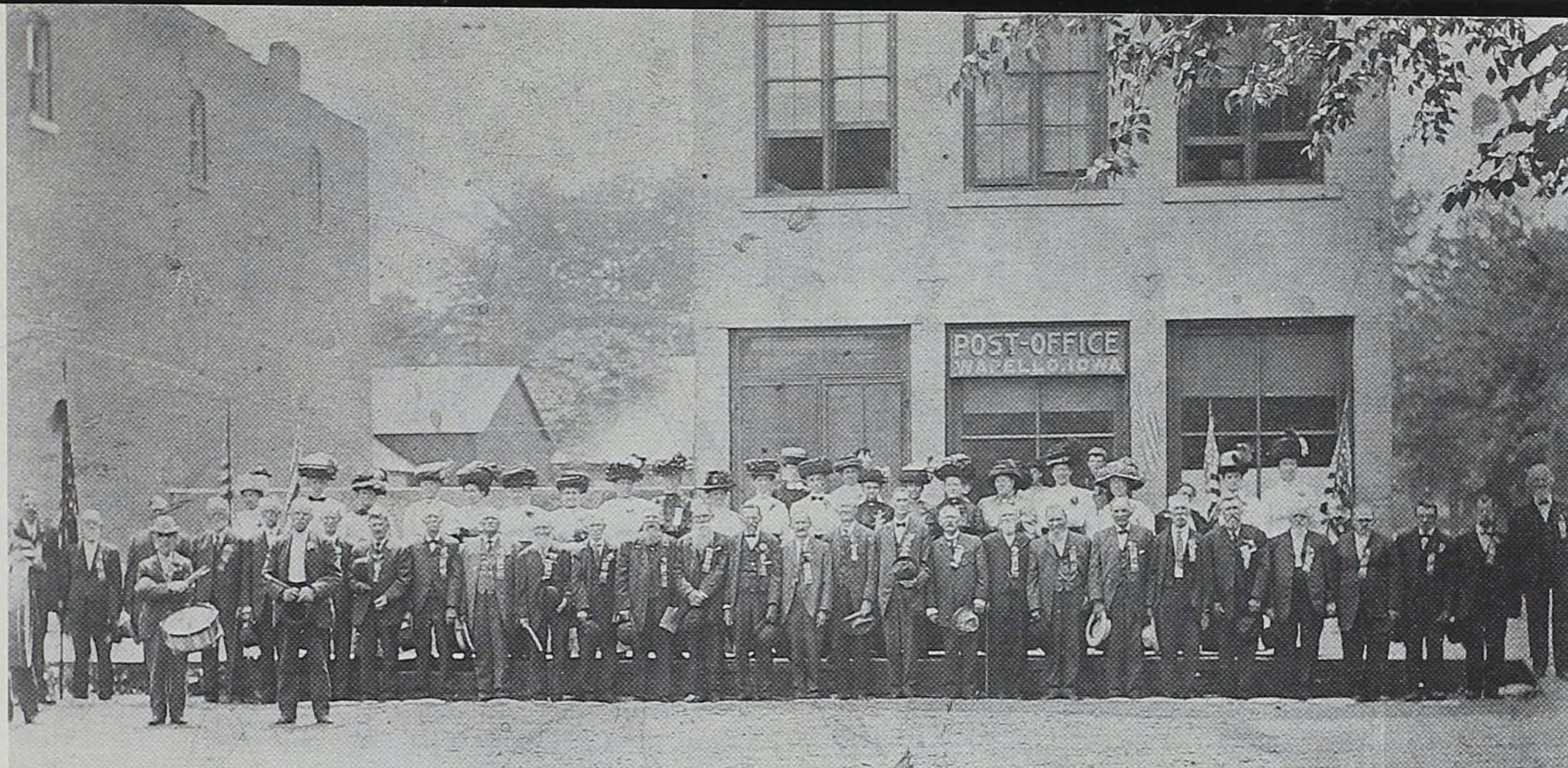
There was the simple story of an aged farmer whose three sons were all reported "lost in battle." Warily the farmer goes out to the pasture one evening to bring in the cattle. He finds that the cattle are already being driven through the gate by the youngest son:

Loosely swung in the evening air
The empty sleeve of army blue;
And worn and pale from the crisping hair
Looked out a face that the father knew.

For Southern prisons may sometimes yawn,
And yield their dead unto life again;
And the day that comes with a cloudy dawn
In golden glory at last may wane.

The great tears sprang from the father's eyes;
For the hearts must speak when the lips are dumb;
And under the silent evening skies
Together they drove the cattle home.

But the best-loved and most often called for



GAR headquarters were above the Wapello Post Office.

was a courtroom dialogue between one Abe Bersey and a presiding judge:

"Your Honor, I plead guilty, I'm a bum.
I don't deny this cop has found me drunk;
And I don't deny that through the whole long
summer
The sun-warmed earth has been my only bunk.
I ain't been able fer to earn a livin'
A man with one leg planted can't get a job —
And I've a strong misgivin'
About bein' cooped up in a Soldier's Home."

Then follows Abe's recollection of the "hellborn frightful roar of battle," and how he had saved a famous colonel, "Old Sweetie," who had fallen wounded from his horse. The judge listens to Abe's war story, then pronounces the sentence:

"Such shiftless, worthless creatures
Should never be allowed to roam and beg;
Of course your case has some redeeming features,
As in your country's cause you lost your leg.
But yet, I feel the world needs an example
To check this tendency of men to roam.
The sentence is that all your life — your bunk
Will be the best room in my humble home."
The soldier stared, dumb, silent as a statue.
Then in a voice of trembling pathos said,
"Judge, turn your face a little — that voice was
like an echo from the dead."
Then forward stepped he, grimy hand extended,
While tears adown his sunburned face did roll,
And said, with slang and pathos strangely mingled,
"Why Colonel Sweetie, darn your brave old soul!"

Unabashed sentimentality every one of

them; "tear jerkers" they would be called today, and so they were. Off would come Uncle Bee's glasses, out would come his handkerchief; all through the audience men and women wiped away surreptitious tears. And all my stage fright for my mother turned to pride.

There was a solemn little ceremony in memory of the ones who hadn't come back or who had left the ranks by more recent death. Taps were sounded in the hall, to be answered from somewhere outside in the darkness by a second bugle, high, clear and unutterably lonely.

The program was over. There was a great scraping of chairs; hands that had been clasped in greeting were shaken all over again in farewell "until next year." And soon we were walking home together beside the quiet Iowa River. It had been a good day. We were content, replete, and, looking back, adults and children alike, we were strangely innocent. That is the only word I can find for it. All day we had remembered, we had talked of, we had celebrated in memory of a war. We had been touched even at times to tears — but we were uncommitted. After all the years, even to the "Old Soldiers," the reality of war had been engulfed in legend. It belonged now to "far away and long ago."

We slept soundly that night, lulled by the lapping of the river against pilings, sustained by pride in the past and faith in the future. How could we know, how could we dream, that August 4, 1914, toward which our spinning world inexorably sped, would be any different from any other tomorrow? □

Bertha Shambaugh's Frog Folk

by Jean Berry

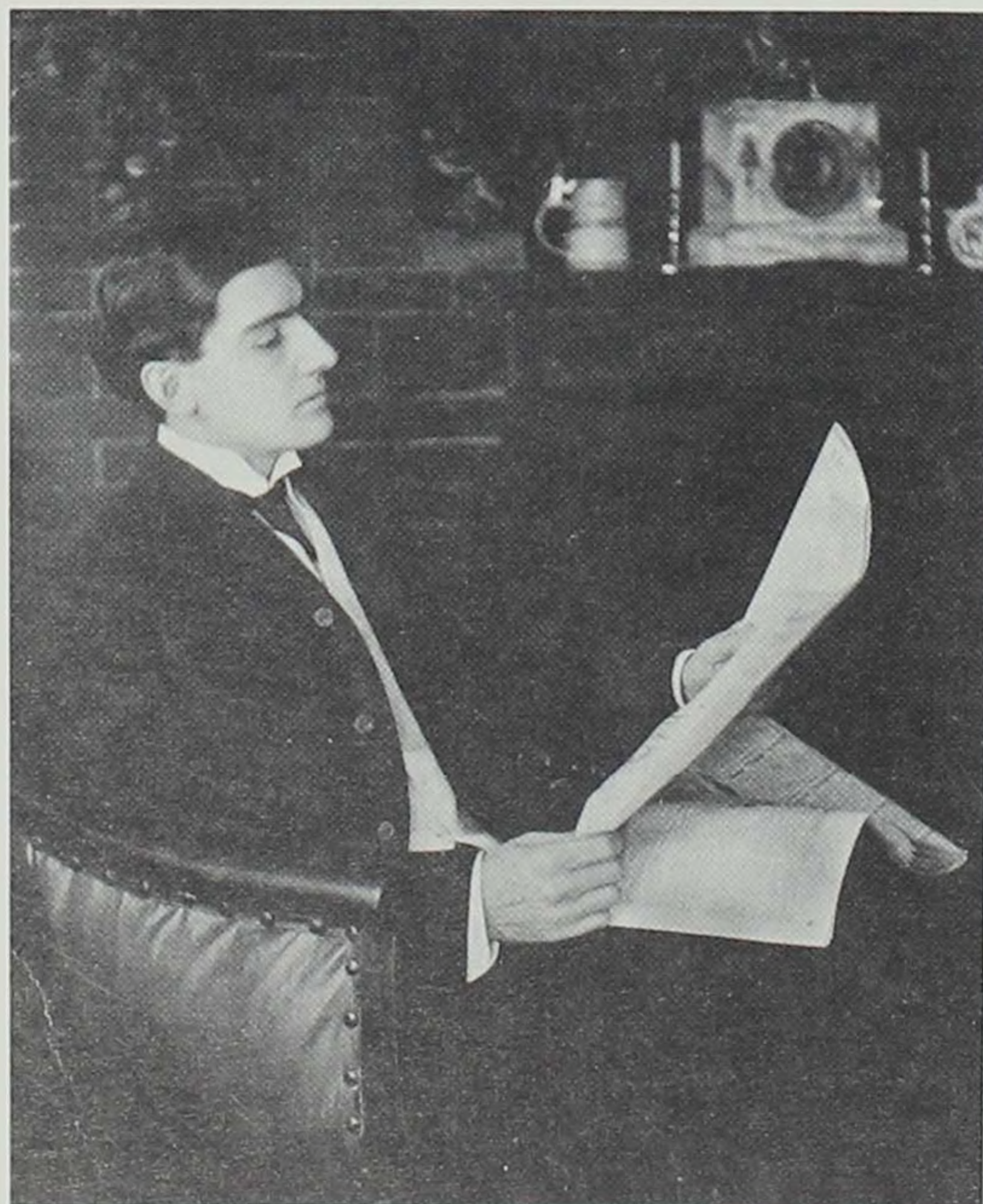
AROUND 1910 Bertha Horack Shambaugh created in watercolor and verse the "Frog Folk" — a whimsical community of frogs whose habits bear amusing resemblance to our own social customs at the turn of the century. Bertha was about thirty-nine at the time of this project; yet her active, childlike imagination, and her love for her young nieces and nephews (frequent and adored guests in her home), allowed her to create this fantasy world with pencil and brush.

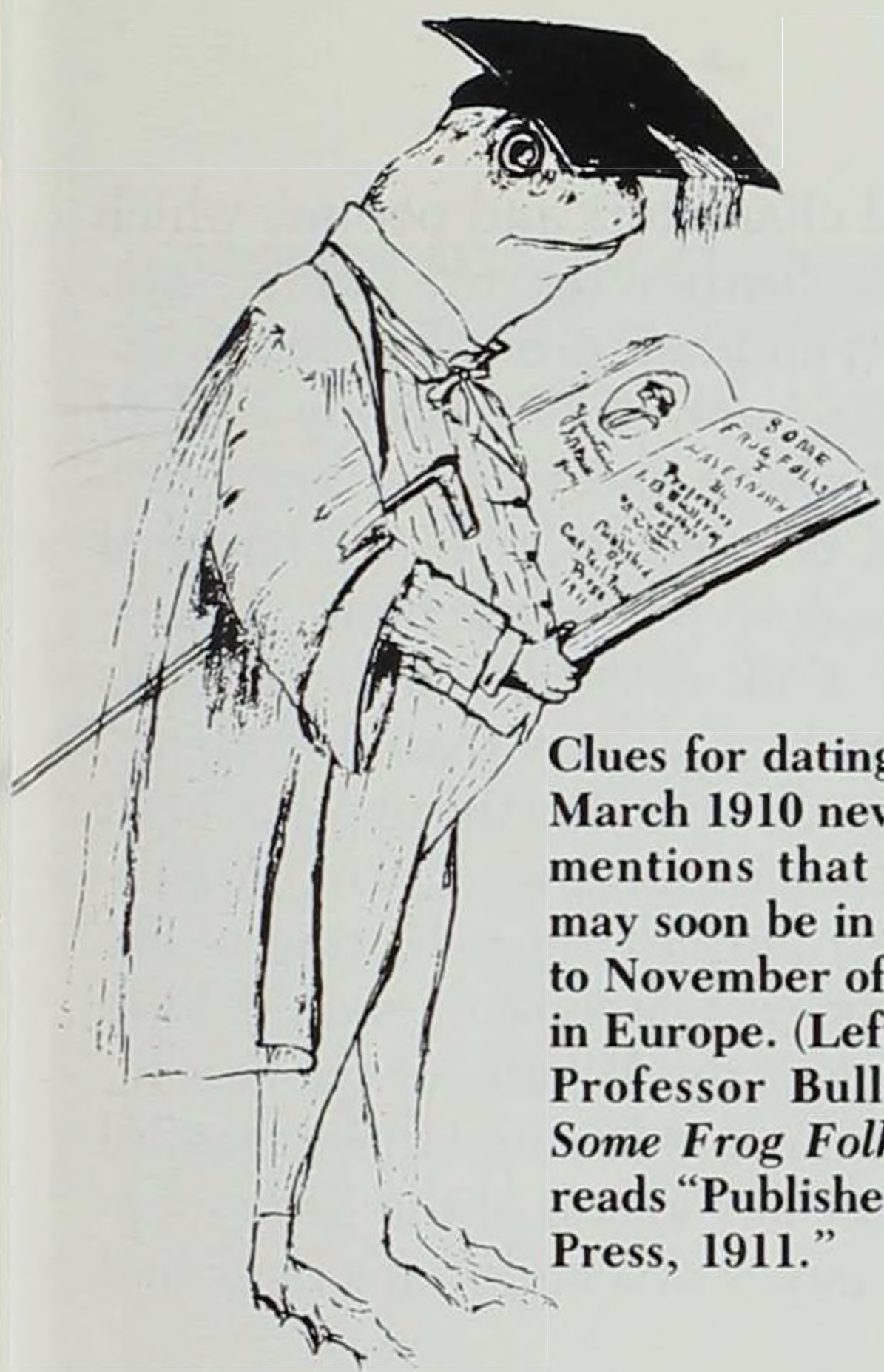
The Frog Folk poems and illustrations were one of the many "literary endeavors" that Bertha's niece Katharine Horack Dixon remembers were always spread out in the upstairs workroom of the Shambaugh house on Clinton Street in Iowa City. Bertha's hope that the Frog Folk would become a children's book

is suggested in her playfully composed "Minutes of the Town Meeting of Frogville," wherein Mr. Bull Frog resolves that "the charming lady who has so delightfully set us forth in picture & verse, be urgently requested to give her productions to the world."

The Frog Folk collection consists of fifteen poems plus numerous illustrations in various stages of completion — from gridded, preliminary pencil sketches to delicate, detailed watercolors. The collection is housed at the State Historical Society of Iowa, as part of the Shambaugh Papers. As a volunteer in 1987, my assignment to match the hodgepodge of uncaptioned pencil sketches with the poems was sometimes a challenge. It required determining that a certain hobble skirt and sparkling jewels worn by Madam Toad at her dinner

Benjamin Shambaugh at home (c. 1904) and Bertha Horack Shambaugh (1910). For another portrait, see back cover.





Clues for dating the Frog Folk: A March 1910 news story on Bertha mentions that her "Frog Folk" may soon be in color. From April to November of 1910 she traveled in Europe. (Left) The title page of Professor Bullfrog's new book, *Some Frog Folks I Have Known*, reads "Published by Cat Tail Pond Press, 1911."

party were the same ones worn by an unidentified figure in a pencil sketch; or that a drawing of garden tools and seed packets could only have been intended to illustrate "The Garden of the Wood Frogs." It was like fitting together the pieces of a delightful puzzle.

The Frog Folk illustrations clearly show Bertha's interest in science and nature, which had long been evident. At age eleven she had produced meticulous drawings from life of native wildflowers and had read a paper, "The Anatomy of a Grasshopper, with Original Drawings," before the local Agassiz nature society. When she was seventeen, she read a paper on *Lepidoptera* before the state Agassiz society. "One of the best in the session," reported the *Swiss Cross* (a popular science magazine), "with a number of original plates finely executed in pencil."

We trust that the bumblebees, the clover, the cattails, and the frogs illustrating her poems have also been faithfully executed. Bertha's fanciful notion of dressing her little creatures in gowns and suits and giving them tiny umbrellas, top hats, canes, and purses probably did not interfere with her scientific integrity. Ever a perfectionist, she complained in a note pencilled alongside a sketch: "I am baffled by the legs of the Sporting Frog. . . . There ought to be 4 joints."

Bertha's interest in the natural sciences had

brought her to the State University of Iowa in 1889, where Thomas Macbride, eminent scientist and world authority on slime molds, was her botany professor. Macbride's influence as a mentor must have been profound, but in one of her Frog Folk poems Bertha couldn't resist a playful reference to his special scientific interest: "The spotted Toads of Slimemold Ditch/ Have suddenly grown very rich."

Bertha was born in 1871 to a family who prized education, literature, music, and gentility. As a young girl her pursuits seem to have been mostly creative, a direction she continued to follow after marriage. (Her niece recalls that as a young matron Bertha "embroidered a lot, but I don't think she mended.") Her parents, Katharine and Frank Horack, encouraged their daughter's interest in science and photography. As a high school student she was given a camera, and we can imagine the unconventional Bertha lugging it, complete with tripod, about Iowa City to photograph schools and bridges, a lime kiln and a mill, even a tavern. Her documentation of the Amana Colonies in 1890 and 1891 through more than a hundred photographs testifies to her use of photography to capture a society that was fast disappearing. Frequent use of her photographs as bases for sketches and paintings underlines her zeal for reproducing precise detail.

Although Bertha gave up photography soon after her marriage in 1897 to Benjamin Shambaugh, she employed her irrepressible creativity in other areas to augment and display his considerable talents. Benjamin Franklin Shambaugh soon became a University of Iowa institution, climbing rapidly through the academic hierarchy to head the political science department in 1900 and to assume the newly created office of superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa from 1907 until his death in 1940. Benjamin's infectious interest in Iowa history fostered a similar response in Bertha, and much of her time was spent in research, map and chart making, editing, and designing book covers for Historical Society publications. At home her creativity showcased Benjamin as the impeccable host of perfectly executed dinner parties, for which the guest list, decorations, menu, and table conversation were largely a result of Bertha's care-

ful and inventive planning. Her every effort seemed bent toward promoting her husband's image.

Benjamin, in turn, encouraged her literary and scholarly endeavors, publishing her carefully researched *Amana: the Community of True Inspiration* as a Historical Society book in 1908 and its revision, *Amana That Was and Amana That Is*, in 1932. He also urged her to complete and publish the Frog Folk as a children's book.

Yet the Frog Folk project was to be an unfulfilled dream. Its potential is most evident in "The Frogs and the Bumble-Bees," for which there are five completed watercolors. Three other poems each have one or two finished watercolors, a total of nine. It is evident that several delightful, fully executed pencil drawings await only the touch of the artist's brush to bring them into exquisite color.

One poem for which illustrations regrettably are incomplete is "The Burglar Alarm." One of Bertha's funniest, cleverest creations is Dame Leopard Frog in nightcap and bug-bedecked wrapper, ready to vanquish with frying pan and broom whatever intruder might show himself.

Like the Pooh books of Bertha's contemporary, A. A. Milne, her poems, while not of his quality, would appeal to children yet entertain adults. On this adult level, it is tempting to read into Bertha's poems and drawings a reflection of events in her own life. As his editorial notes reveal, Benjamin thought that the "social stunts" of the grown-up frogs "afford rich opportunities for satire and illustrations" in "Madam Toad Gives a Dinner." Bertha seems to agree, poking fun at one of her own innumerable dinner parties honoring visiting lecturers. The bumbling Mr. Toad with his grudging hospitality (and inability to find his tie) is quite unlike the socially adept Benjamin, but perhaps Bertha knew a Mr. Toad who needed to be instructed in the niceties of entertaining. Two unfinished pencil sketches from this series point up a custom of the time: the gentlemen frog guests retreat to the library for stories and shop talk, a drink of swamp root and a smoke, while the lady frogs adjourn to the parlor for "blistering" gossip.

It may never be known why the Frog Folk remained unfinished and unpublished, unlike

the Cooky-Land characters and poems, which advanced a little further toward publication. (Bertha designed and had printed several copies of a prototype book of *The Happy Folk of Cooky-Land*.) Perhaps she was too busy with other aspects of her life to give the hours of attention to complete the watercolors. Admittedly, the Frog Folk drawings and paintings show more competent artistry than the poems. Perfectionist that she was, Bertha may have felt in the end that they weren't worthy of publication. In addition, faithful reproduction of the delicate, many-hued watercolors would have been difficult and costly. Whatever the reason, we can wish that she had finished these magical drawings and that her vision of the little creatures filling the pages of a children's book had become reality.

THE SPOTTED TOADS HAVE MONEY NOW

The Spotted Toads of Slimemold Ditch
 Have suddenly grown very rich.
 They made their money in a week
 By selling oil in Willow Creek.
 (Of course there are no oil wells there
 But H²O there is to spare.
 It freely flows o'er sand and rock
 And that's what counts in selling stock.)
 Of well — no matter when or how,
 The Spotted Toads have money now.
 Old names and ways they have forsook
 And Slimemold Ditch is now "The
 Brook";
 The Slough's a Lake and to keep pace
 Their home is now a Country Place.
 Of late they've bought a family tree
 And ordered a new pedigree
 At great expense — but contracts read
 "Full satisfaction guaranteed."
 And Madam Toad wears diamonds now
 Upon her fingers, breast, and brow.
 Their friends they number by the score
 Who knew them not in days of yore.
 All Frogville bows and bends the knee
 And Toad-folk toady eagerly;
 No Puddle-ite asks when or how
 The Spotted Toads have money now.





*This doesn't to the host apply
 His still was looking for his tie
 And left the room somewhat awry
 When guests were ushered in*

MADAM TOAD GIVES A DINNER

Some days ago — perhaps a week
 Professor Frog of Willow Creek
 Arrived in Cat-tail Pond to speak
 (Professors often do).
 And Madam Toad a dinner gave,
 Which honor Mr. Toad would waive
 But did at length agree to brave
 (As all good spouses do).
 The Madam set about with skill
 Her list to make and spouse to drill
 Some fundamentals to instill
 And precepts to enact.
 And every Lady-Frog can guess
 Which task gave Madam real distress
 And which was crowned with most success
 (Or least — to be exact).
 Professor Frog was fancy free
 Tho' Lady-Frogs would willing be
 This grievous state to remedy
 They would — for woe or weal.
 With Widow Wood Frog who concedes
 She's getting rather tired of weeds
 To head her list Dame Toad proceeds
 With altruistic zeal.
 Miss Tree Toad is invited too
 (In case the Widow wouldn't do)
 And Spring Frog's name is placed hereto
 (In case the Widow would).
 Thus solving problems most implexed
 The newly wedded Green Frogs next

The Madam to her list annexed.
 (A bride is always good.)
 "The Bull Frogs in the Pond are new,
 The Croakers we're indebted to.
 There's really nothing else to do,
 I'll add them to the list."
 "And now my dear," the Dame did chide,
 "Remember you must take the bride."
 And meekly Mr. Toad replied,
 "I will if you insist."
 "The caterpillars in cocoon
 Must not be eaten with a spoon.
 Don't pass the salted flies too soon.
 And do cheer up a bit."
 Thus Madam Toad with tact and skill
 Her plans did make and spouse did drill
 (And which proved well and which proved nil
 'Tis best here to omit).
 Well, everything was ready quite
 On the appointed party night
 The Madam's plans to expedite
 And program to begin.
 (This doesn't to the host apply
 Who still was looking for his tie
 And left the room somewhat awry
 When guests were ushered in.)
 . . . Young Green Frog talked of exercise
 And Bull-Frog talked of catching flies.
 Spring Frog said nothing and looked wise
 While Croaker sat and ate.

The Lady-Frogs with interest glow
 (Dame Croaker thought the service slow
 And what was borrowed and what no
 Began to speculate).

The guests the Madam's taste exalt
 (Dame Croaker hopes she finds no fault
 But thinks the butterflies lack salt
 The June-bug pie a mess).

Anxious beads Toad's brow bedew;
 He failed to ask if there were two
 Or if one Grasshopper must do,
 And how was he to guess.

At length the Lady-Frogs adjourn
 With eagerness to talk they burn
 Of friends and enemies by turn.

(And blisters soon they raise.)

Alone the Men-Frogs stories swap,
 The Swamp root corks begin to pop,
 And wreathed in smoke they soon talk shop
 In scientific phrase.

The Bull Frog's motor boat arrives,
 The Men-Frogs then hunt up their wives.
 In grieved surprise the Madam strives
 To hold the parting guest.

"I pray you do not hurry so.
 It can't be late. Oh, surely no!
 How quickly pleasant time does go!"

(Any Frog can add the rest.)

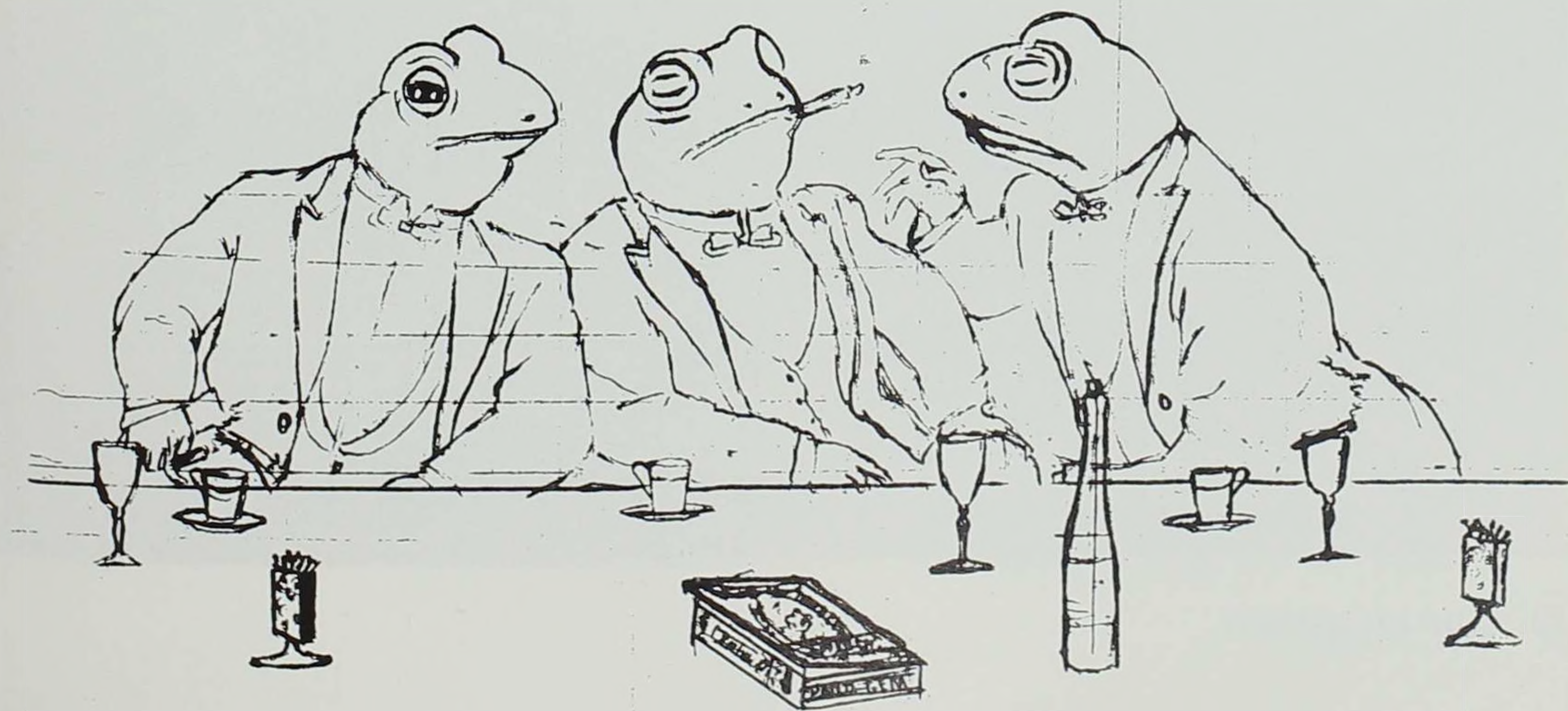
"'Twas sweet of you to think of us
 Your dinner was most sumptuous."
 The guests with accents unctuous
 In chorus bid adieu.

"'Twas good of you to come to dine,"
 Quoth Madam in tones saccharine.
 "The pleasure was, believe me, mine."
 (And Toad believed it too.)



Bertha Shambaugh's Frog Folk often mimic her social world. Frog ladies wear fashionable silks and jewels; frog gentlemen wear tuxedos and smoke their cigars with an air of the good life. A frequent hostess for visitors to the University of Iowa, Bertha fashioned personalized table decorations for every guest and every event, making dinners at the Shambaugh house memorable occasions. Author Hamlin Garland delighted in the "comical little effigies" of characters in his *The Middle Border*, which she created out of ears of corn and bits of fabric. When children were guests, they received the same courtesies that dignitaries received, yet individualized by Bertha's appreciation of what children enjoyed.

A sensitive and skilled hostess, Bertha didn't miss the humor of such situations, parodying her turn-of-the-century social world. A 1910 news story on her reports: "In her leisure moments she has indulged in a sportive fancy, combining the work of her pen and pencil, wherein Frog Folks are made to take on the foibles and eccentricities of mere man, a work that may be produced in colors soon."







THE SPORTING FROG

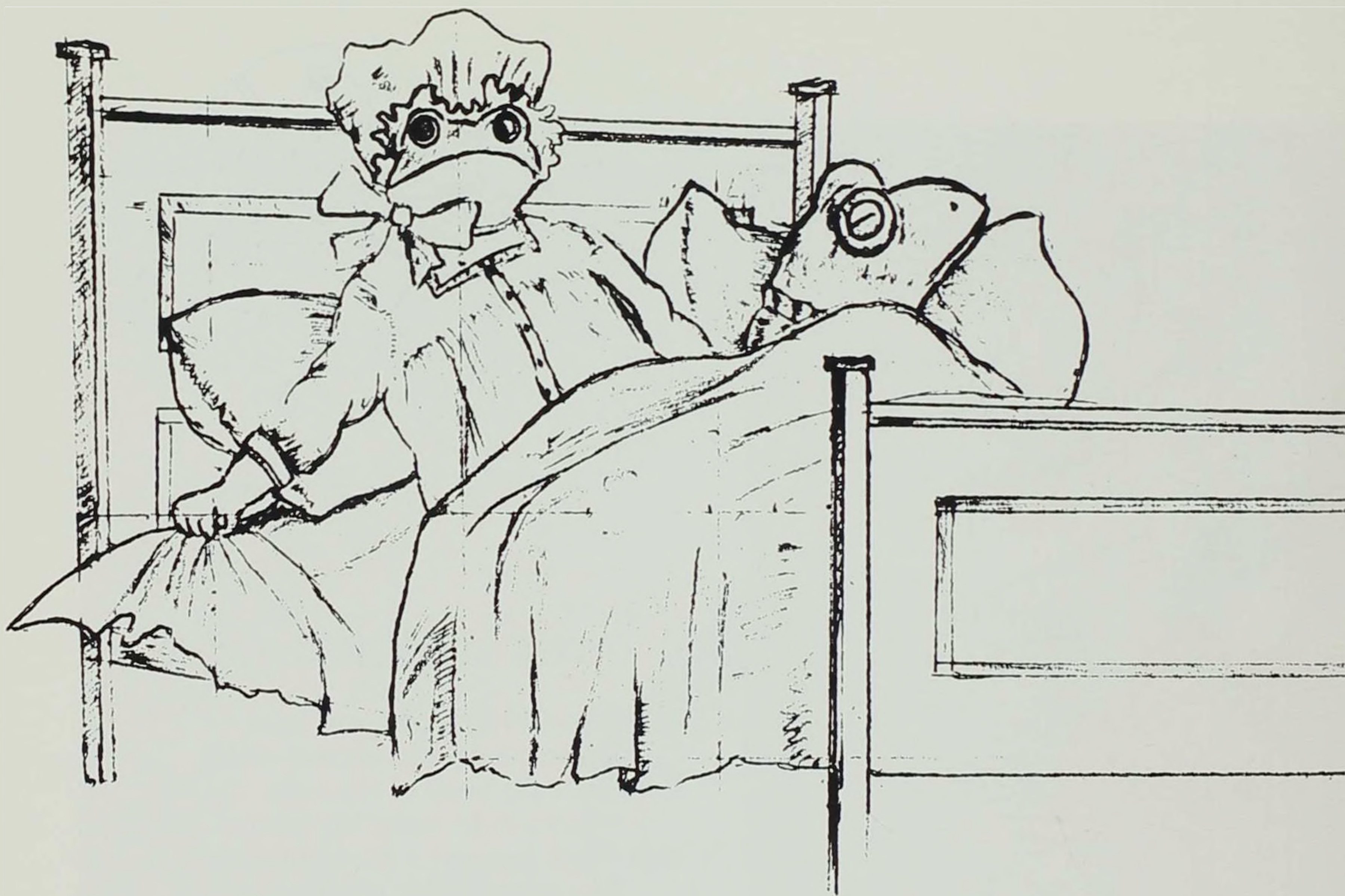
Old Green Frog is a hunter bold
 A Sporting Frog of truest mold,
 Who feels the need of exercise
 Whene'er he notes the buzz of Flies.
 And when he hears a June-bug hum,
 By stress of work is overcome.
 "An outing may avert real ills
 And save," he thinks, "some doctor bills."
 So off he starts before 'tis day
 And hops, oh my, the longest way
 To find a place where some frog keen
 Had once a caterpillar seen.
 He climbs the roughest quarry ledge
 And wades all day through prickly sedge
 To follow up a Bug so wee
 It must have strained his eyes to see.
 He'll climb and swim and wade and hop
 And never for a moment stop
 To rest his bones or take a bite
 Till driven homeward by the night.
 And for the waiting Froggies there
 He draws forth with triumphant air
 A Worm, a Squash-bug, and a Bee.
 "'Twas quite worth while" — they all agree.
 And then he tells them by the by
 He almost got a Dragon-fly.
 To sight a Beetle he succeeds
 Which crippled fell among the weeds.
 When audience at length has fled
 This tireless hunter goes to bed
 In dreams his game to manifold
 This Sporting Frog of truest mold.



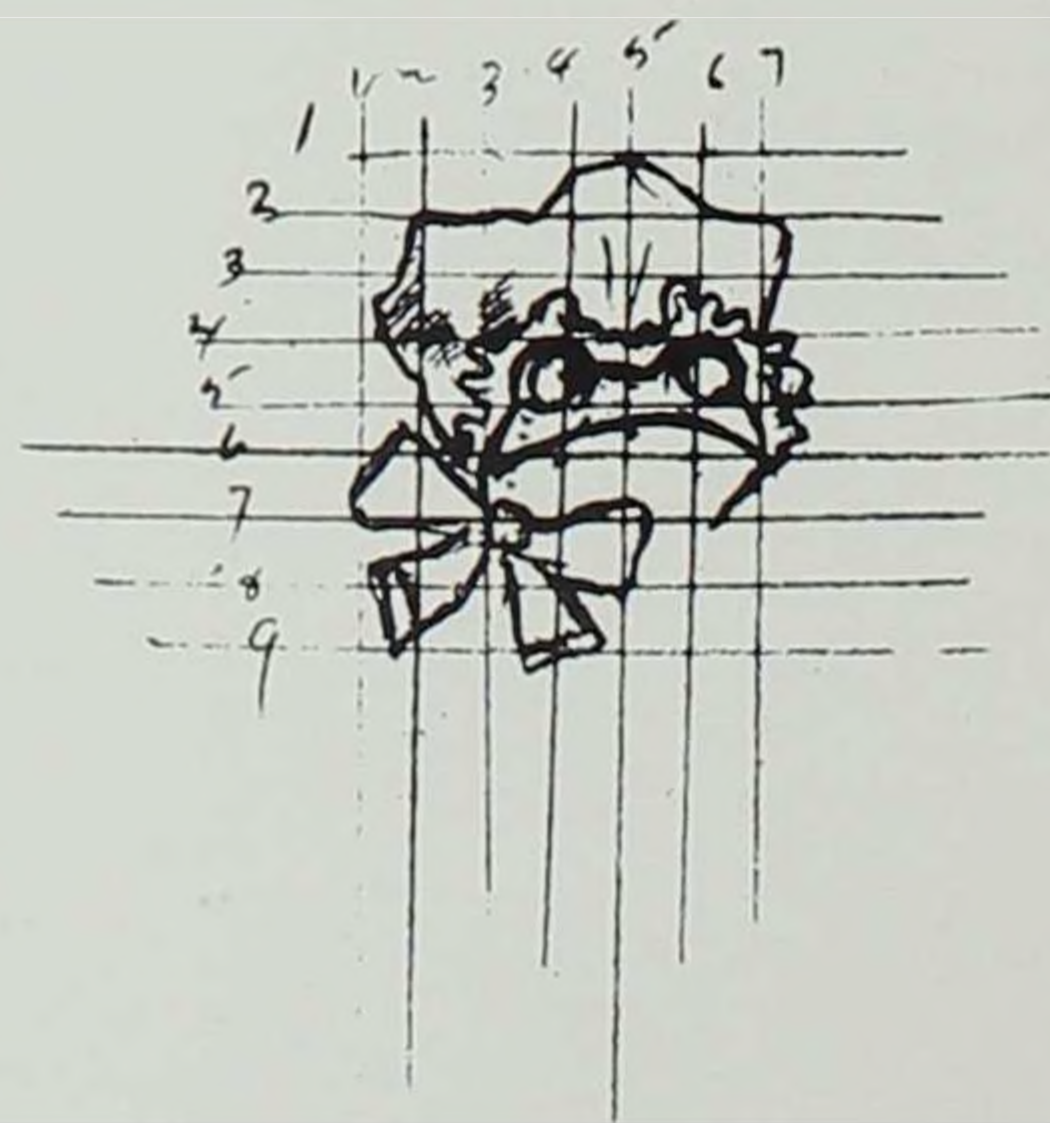
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Illustrations for "The Burglar Alarm" apparently never progressed beyond pencil sketches. Awakened, Mrs. Frog brandishes a frying pan and broom. Mr. Frog (in pajamas fastened by "frogs") fearlessly investigates, carrying a golf club as a weapon — or perhaps as an instrument of authority. (Leafing through the Shambaugh photograph collection, one recalls Benjamin's habitual use of a cane or walking stick.) Another pencil sketch shows a cluster of curious neighbors in nightclothes.



THE BURGLAR ALARM

Dame Leopard Frog awoke one night
A noise she plainly heard.
So presently with main and might
Poor Mr. Frog is stirred.

"A cricket on the roof maybe,"
Does drowsy Frog surmise;
"At worst a spider possibly
In the store-house after flies."

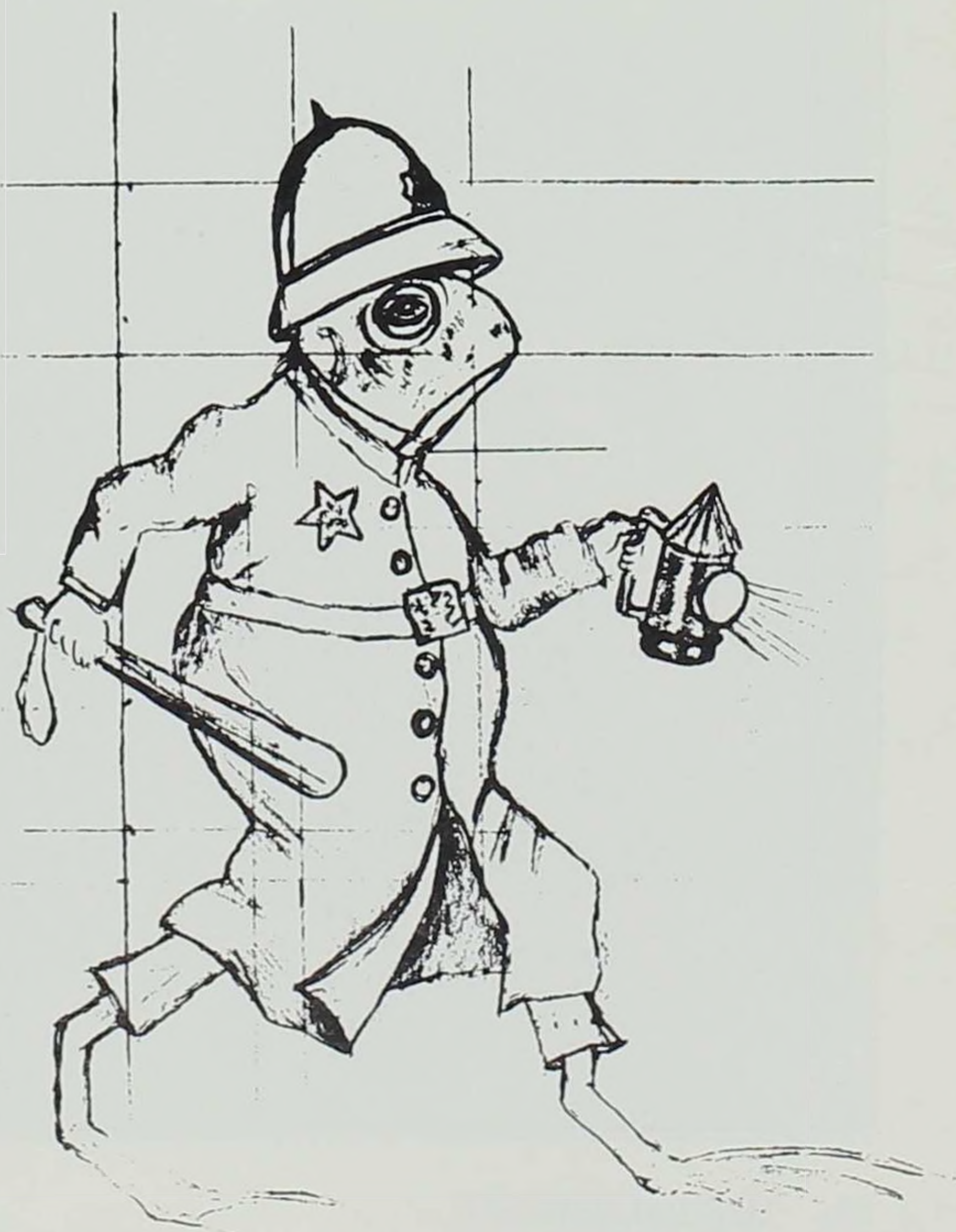
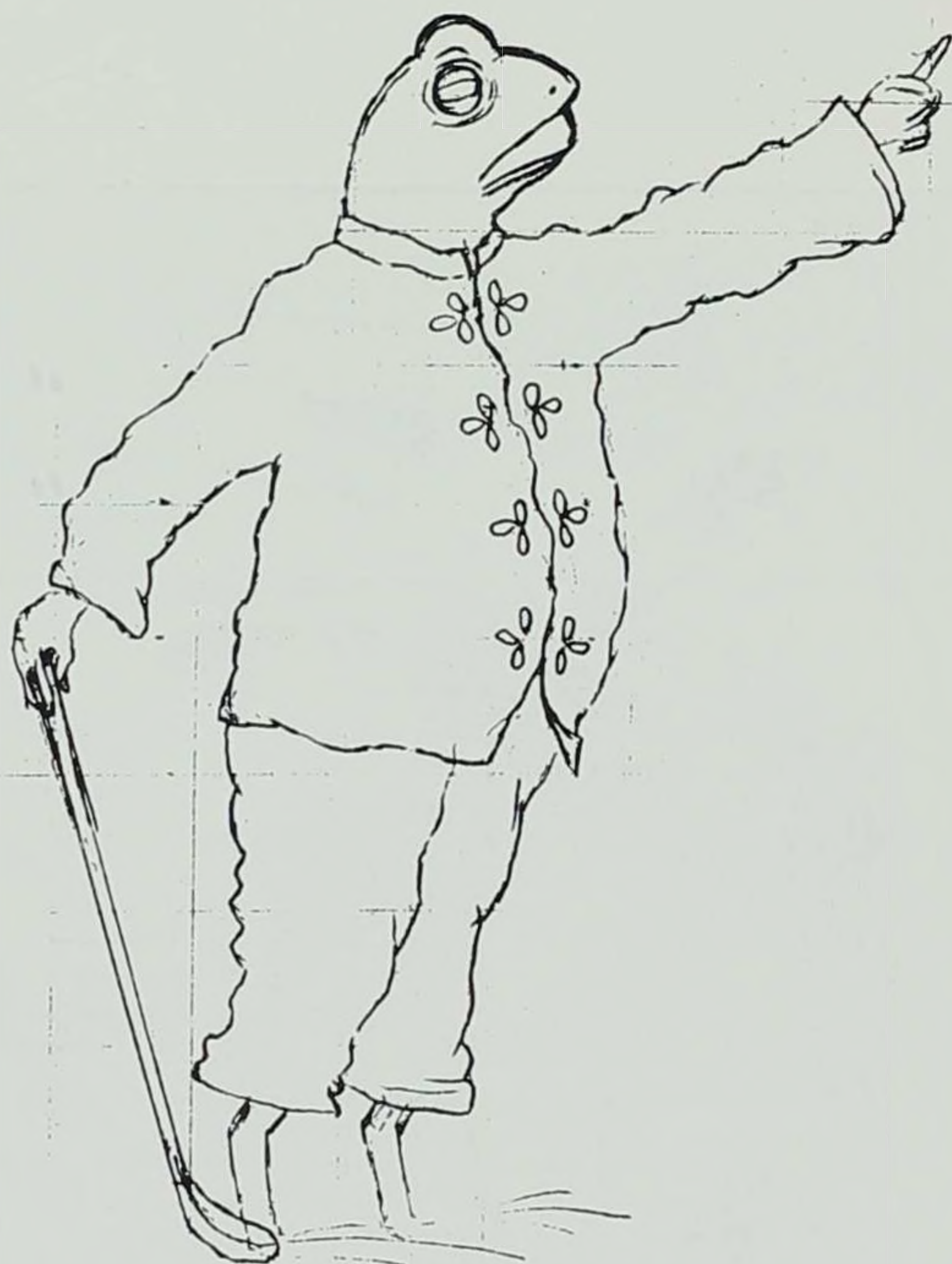
But Mrs. Frog — she thinks of snakes,
And talks of turtles too,
Till drowsy Frog at length awakes
(As decent spouses do).

His shoes and hose elude his quest;
He stubs an aching toe.
The things he says, it is not best
That pious folks should know.

He rouses up Policeman Toad,
Which takes much time and skill.
Soon neighbors gather in the road
In, well — in dishabille.

At length the bravest of the band
Set forth in gallant style.
The rest — in safety — take command
And give advice meanwhile.

And did success the quest surround?
Ay, valor has its meed!
A field-mouse on the step they found
A-cracking pumpkin seed.





This poem is the only one with a seemingly complete series of watercolors. In illustrating her poems, Bertha Shambaugh combined her interest in science and nature with her artistic talents, realistically painting wildflowers and native grasses. Here, she playfully includes a rare four-leaf clover. The too-curious frog boys could have used some good luck.

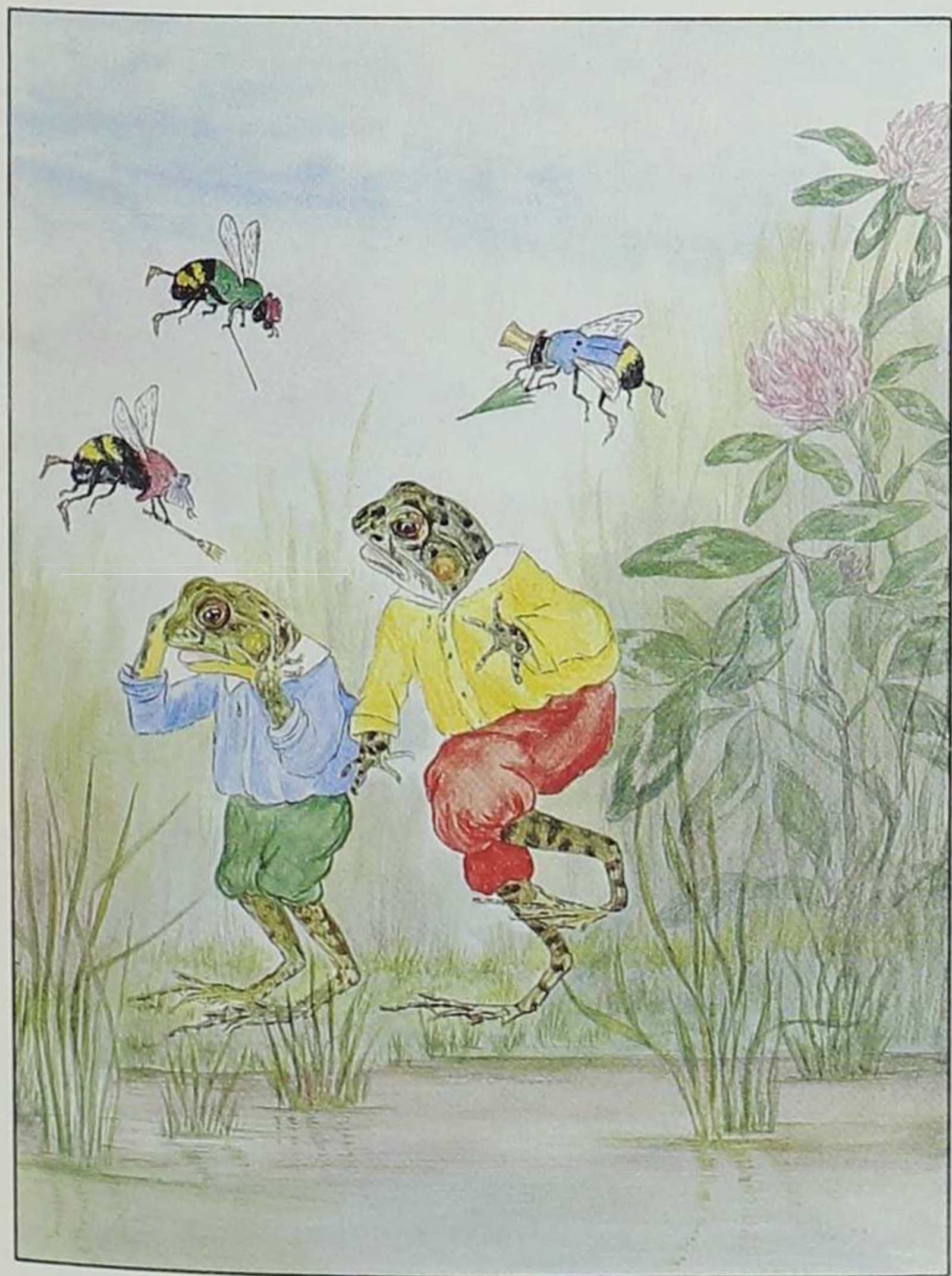


THE FROGS AND THE BUMBLE-BEES

A big and burly Bumble-bee
And his busy buzzing family
Live in the clover tall and rank
That grows upon the Frog Pond bank.
Old Grandma Toad oft times declares
When Frog-folk mind their own affairs
It matters not who lives nearby,
A Bee or Bug or Butterfly.
Forgetting quite what Grandma said,
Two Froggies to the clover sped.
They thought 'twould be a splendid joke
Into the Bumble's nest to poke,
And so they did — and presently
Out tumbled Mr. Bumble-bee;
And Mrs. Bee with much ado
With Grandpa Bumble-bee came too,
And Aunts and Uncles by the score
Out of the clover patch did pour.
Two little Froggies lame and sore
Next day their troubles pondered o'er,
And they recalled with aching head
The things that Grandma Toad had said.

NOTE ON SOURCES

Major sources used were articles and research by Mary Bennett (SHSI Special Collections Librarian), including "Bertha M. Horack Shambaugh: Her Use of Photography" (unpublished manuscript, 1980, State Historical Society Special Collections); interview with Katharine Horack Dixon (1982); "Images of Victorian Iowa," *Palimpsest* (March/April 1980); and "An Amana Album," *Palimpsest* (March/April 1977). Mary Bennett's interest in the Shambaughs, her enthusiasm for the Frog Folk, and her expert direction and advice were largely responsible for my pursuing this idea. Other sources include the House Books in the Shambaugh Family Papers in the University of Iowa Archives; Addie B. Billington, "Iowa Women Whom All Iowa Delights to Honor," *Des Moines Register and Leader*, March 20, 1910; and John C. Gerber, with Carolyn B. Brown, James Kaufmann, and James B. Lindberg, Jr., *A Pictorial History of the University of Iowa* (Iowa City, 1988).





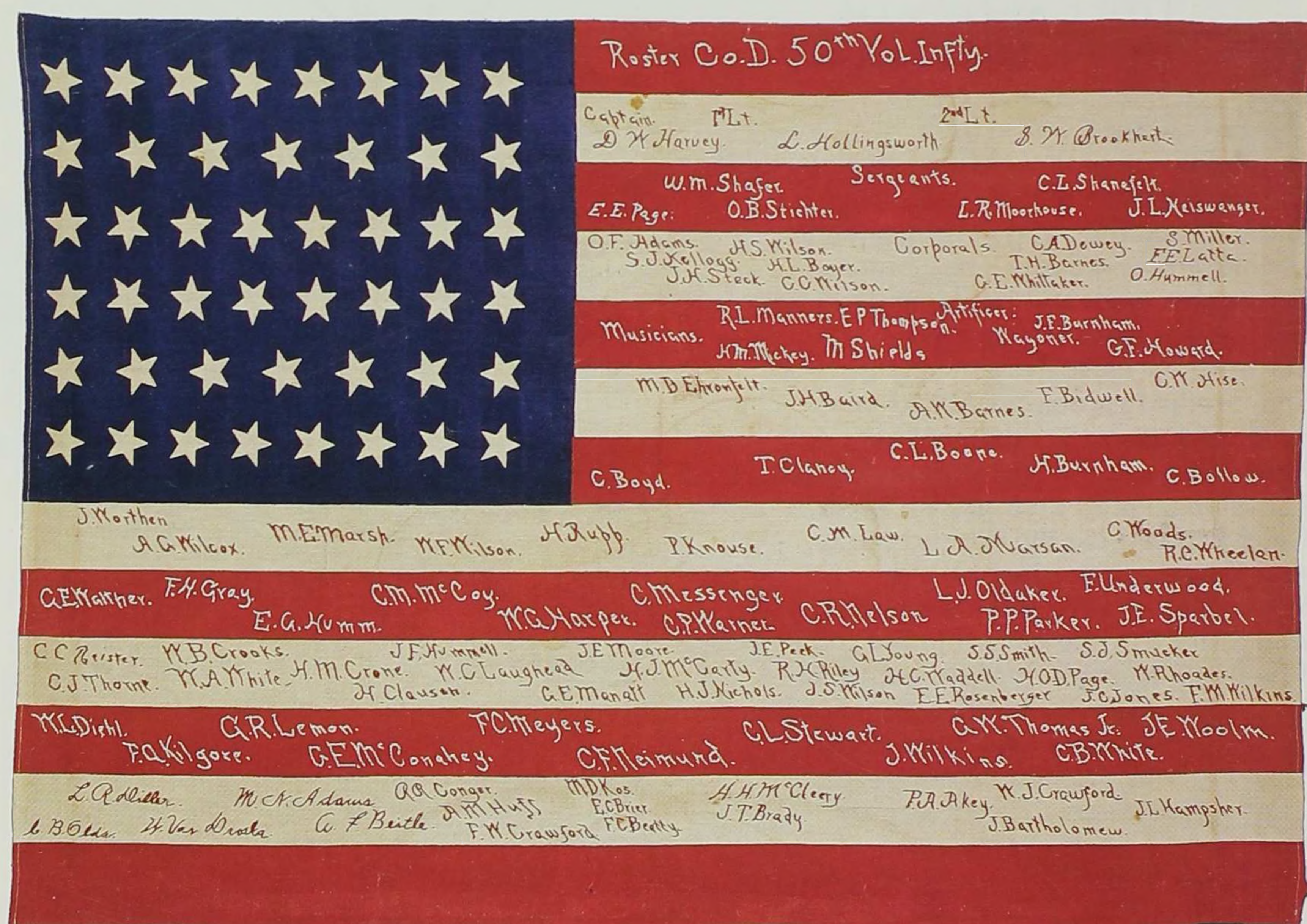
THE GARDEN OF THE WOOD FROGS

The cost of living was so high
The Wood Frogs thought that they would try
To have a garden of their own,
And bills and dues and debts postpone.
Of course they went to some expense
For garden seeds and implements,
For overalls and such supplies
The amateur most always buys.
They studied garden books and lore,
Seed catalogues they did explore.
Much time and thought without lament
These froggies on their garden spent.
Good Father Frog did dig and spade
And Froggie Junior lent his aid;
While Mother Frog did plant and sow
And Sister Froggie helped to hoe.
When rain and sun their aid have lent
These Frogs are filled with great content.
The morrow's cares have slipped away;
Who says that gardens do not pay?
They raised a splendid crop of slugs
Of caterpillars and of bugs.



Working with the Frog Folk collection brought to mind my brief acquaintance with Bertha Shambaugh in 1940, when I worked in the State Historical Society office (then in Schaeffer Hall) under the direction of Ethyl Martin, who had succeeded Benjamin Shambaugh as superintendent of the Society. Mrs. Shambaugh was assembling a tribute to her late husband in a book to be titled *Benjamin Shambaugh: As Iowa Remembers Him*. I typed her handwritten pages, after which it was my mission to hand-deliver the manuscript to her at the house on Clinton Street. At the time I did not know the illustrious history of the house — that it had been lovingly and carefully designed by Benjamin and Bertha in the early years of their marriage; that it had been the center of much of the intellectual and social life on the University of Iowa campus; that it had seen famous university visitors — from Jane Addams to Hamlin Garland to a Russian grand duke — seated in the hospitable dining room at Bertha's famous dinners. All of this Bertha recorded in the House Books, which occupy many volumes in the Special Collections of the University of Iowa Libraries. After Benjamin's death she was to write in the last House Book entry, "The House Book too is dead — it was only Benjamin who gave meaning to the record."

— Jean Berry



COURTESY CONGER HOUSE (WASHINGTON, IOWA); PHOTO BY MARK TADE

‘Martial Sons of Martial Sires’

by George William McDaniel

ON FEBRUARY 14, 1898, the citizens of Washington, Iowa, gathered in the Graham Opera House to hear John Philip Sousa and his band play a concert that included the recently published “Stars and Stripes Forever.” The next day, 1,400 miles away in Havana Harbor, the United States battleship *Maine* blew up, with the loss of 260 American lives. Within weeks the United States and Spain were engaged in a brief, romantic war that one official called “a splendid little war,” and Theodore Roosevelt, the war’s most famous hero, called “a bully fight.” With Sousa’s martial music ringing in

their ears, Washington men would soon carry the Stars and Stripes into that war.

This is the story of Washington’s Company D, told through newspapers. The people of Washington received a day-by-day account of the war-time experiences of their sons, brothers, and husbands because Company D correspondents sent articles for each issue of the town’s three weekly newspapers and one daily. (Other men’s letters sometimes appeared as well.) These accounts reveal the

Above: A symbol of the hometown support in the Spanish-American War: The hand-stitched names of Washington’s Company D fill the stripes of this 45” x 31” flag.

men's expectations of what it meant to be soldiers, their impressions as they traveled through the south, and their emotions as they waited in a Florida army camp for their own part of war and glory to begin. Their expectations, impressions, and emotions were overlaid onto a legacy handed down to them by the generation that had fought in the Civil War. Many in Company D had hoped for war with Spain so they could help free the oppressed Cubans as their fathers had freed the slaves.

Indeed, the stated reason for this "splendid little war" in 1898 was Spanish oppression and cruelty in the administration of its colonies, especially Cuba. But there was another reason: by 1898 growing American imperialism "needed" a war. Throughout the nineteenth century a feature of American life had been constant expansion as wave after wave of people pushed westward. By 1890, however, they had "filled" the continent, or so the census bureau seemed to say in its report that year when it declared the frontier closed. It had been the nation's manifest destiny to conquer the continent, and now many Americans believed that that same destiny manifestly meant that they should move onto the world stage.

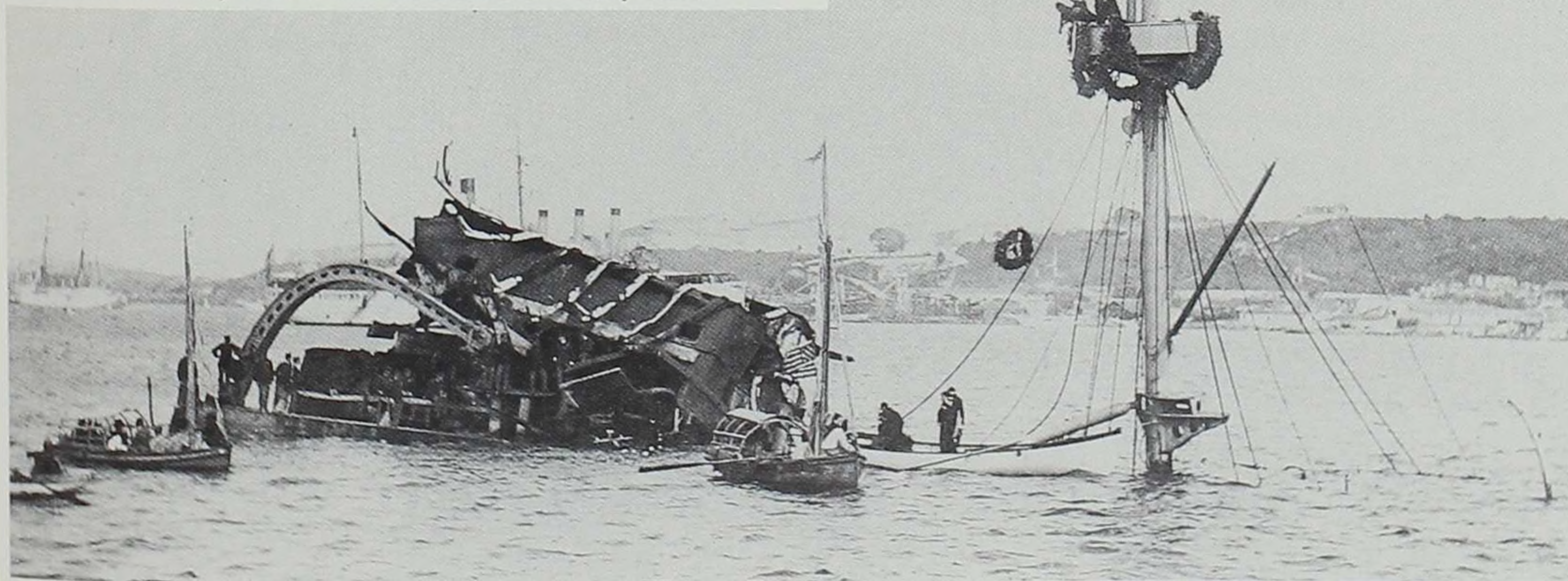
Thus Spanish colonial policy and American expansionism clashed, creating the conditions necessary for war. The destruction of the *Maine* provided the catalyst for war. The papers immediately blamed it on a Spanish mine, urged Americans to avenge the deaths of

American sailors, and gave the nation a new battle cry: "Remember the *Maine*!"

A few days after the *Maine* had blown up, the *Washington (Iowa) Evening Journal* polled its readers and found that, like most Americans, they believed the explosion to be the work of "those treacherous Spaniards." Most seemed to favor turning loose the "gods of war." Local ministers discussed the possibility of war from their pulpits. Downtown at the New York Store the merchant used dry goods to create a replica of the *Maine* with a flag, a picture of President McKinley, and the premature declaration that "War had been declared." And in mid-March the *Journal* ran an ad: "Twenty able-bodied, intelligent young men to join Company D. Call and leave name at east side restaurant with Capt. D. W. Harvey."

MEANWHILE, the citizens of Washington reflected on the last time local men had gone off to war. Company D members had grown up hearing stories of the Civil War. Many were sons of Civil War veterans, and the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was an active part

Men peer at the wreckage of the battleship *Maine* in Havana Harbor, where two hundred and sixty died.



of the social life of Washington. In early April the GAR held a typical "campfire" at the Graham Theater. Speakers reminded the packed house of the glory that Washington soldiers had achieved on Civil War battlefields and assured the audience that this new generation would not fall short of this record. Everyone sang "America" and heard the old favorite "Barbara Fritchie" recited once again. Another recitation suggested a theme that would dominate the experience of Company D. Entitled "Two Voices," the dialogue between the blue and the gray declared that if war came this time there would be no North or South. The evening closed with the singing of "Tenting Tonight" and taps.

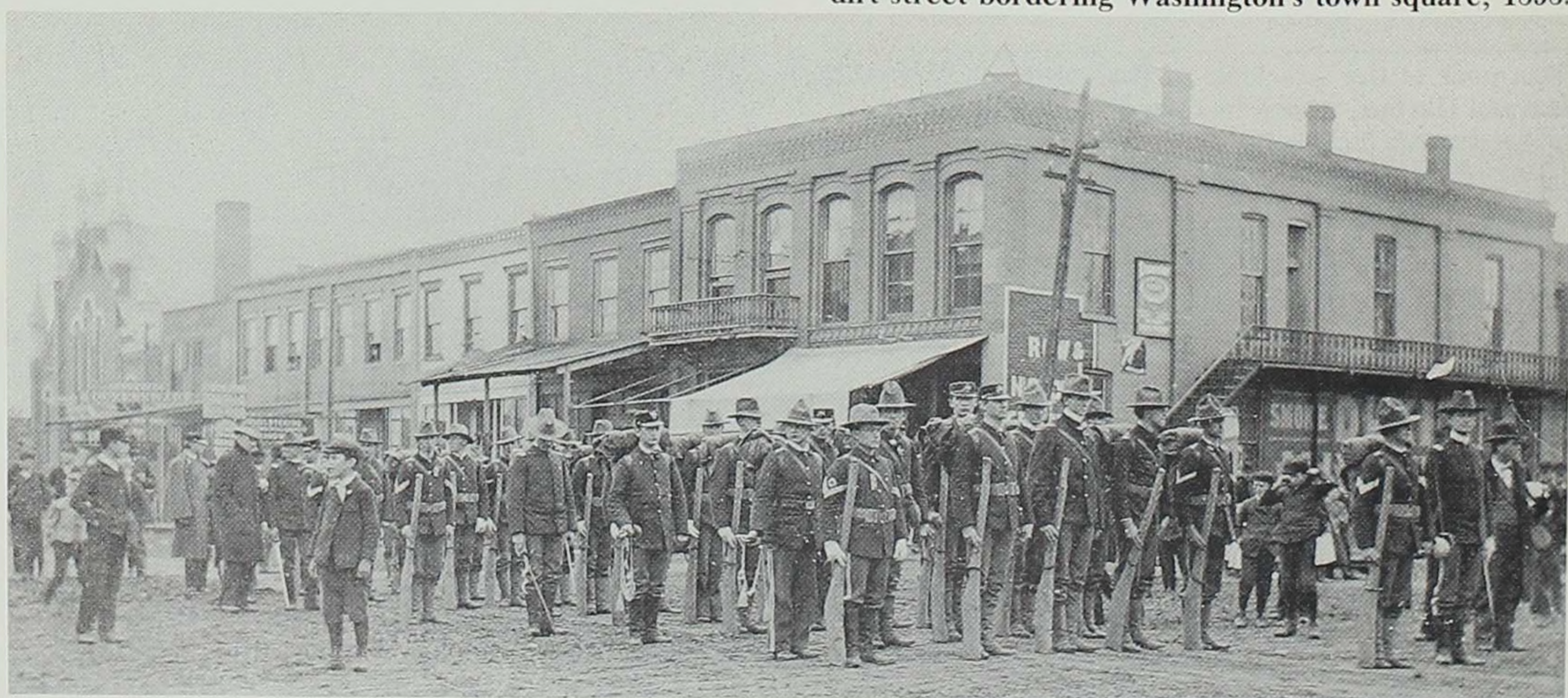
Across the nation, public outcry for war increased steadily. On April 11, President McKinley responded, calling for war. In Washington, Iowa, the fervor grew. On April 21, merchants and shoppers watched as the GAR raised the American flag on a new pole they had just installed in the town square. Two days later, a telegram arrived for Company D: they should be ready to go to Des Moines at a moment's notice. On April 25, Congress declared war with Spain. Iowa was asked to supply 125,000 men. Governor Leslie Shaw began preparations to call the Iowa National Guard to duty.

By now Company D consisted of nearly forty men and their officers; their average age, twenty-three. In the American tradition they

were citizen soldiers — merchants, lawyers, clerks, blacksmiths, teachers, reporters, skilled laborers, students, and a very few farmers. (In the labor-intensive agriculture of the late nineteenth century, few farmers could spare an evening in town for drill — much less leave for a war of unknown duration.) That weekend in late April was filled with constant activity. The soldiers received physicals, put their personal lives in order, and packed for a somewhat uncertain future. Drilling on Sunday provoked concern among some residents, but the *Press* reasoned that since the men might have to fight on Sunday their drills did not "desecrate" the day. Many Washingtonians, however, paused long enough on Sunday to attend church. Methodist pastor William G. Thorne had scheduled a sermon on "Alms Giving" but had a difficult time avoiding the issue of war (his own son had enlisted the day before). The *Democrat* noted that many "strong men wept and with reason. These are dire times. May the God of war be with our boys."

The *Democrat's* prayer echoed a common theme. Many viewed the war as a religious crusade, a fight for the forces of Christianity against evil. For some this evil was best represented by Roman Catholicism, the predominant religion of Spain. Earlier in April a guest lecturer at the Covenant church had discussed the "Rise and Fall of Romanism" and

Curious boys mingle among Company D, lined up on a dirt street bordering Washington's town square, 1898.



COURTESY CONGER HOUSE

compared the Spanish-American situation to a case of Roman power against Christianity. In early May another lecturer at the Baptist church sounded a similar theme.

Determined to give the new soldiers a proper send-off, the old veterans organized a banquet for Monday night. Seemingly the whole town gathered in the National Guard Armory. Following a sumptuous banquet the old veterans repeated the stories that the young soldiers had grown up hearing. There were toasts and songs and presentation of a flag. Accepting the flag for the company, Lieutenant Smith W. Brookhart assured his townspeople that if necessary they would defend it with their lives.

Despite the cheers, songs, and toasts, the *Press* described the evening as "a sort of solemn, sacred Last Supper." One mother was in tears all evening because her only child, just eighteen years old, had enlisted that day. The old soldiers remarked on the similarities to the banquet that had sent them off in 1861. No doubt they also remembered, though they did not speak of, the horrors they had found in war. But no one could have stopped them from going off to their great adventure in 1861 and now they knew that these "martial sons of martial sires" (as the *Press* called them) could not be stopped from going off to their own adventure.

The next morning school was dismissed, and an estimated five thousand people escorted Company D to the train. Marching alongside were the men of the GAR, carrying the flag they had received at their 1861 farewell. Leading the parade was E. T. Hebener, a local monument carver. He had been the fifer in the Mexican War and Civil War, and now the old man saw another generation leave for war.

All along the way to Des Moines, crowds assembled to greet Company D. In Keota a ragged formation of twelve men with double-barrelled shotguns fired one barrel as the train arrived and the second as it left. In Oskaloosa the citizens brought coffee and sandwiches aboard. In the late afternoon the train arrived at the state fairgrounds, renamed Camp McKinley.

Company D quickly settled into the confusion and discipline of an army taking shape.

Shiloh veteran Captain J. J. Kellogg strides alongside other GAR paraders in support of Company D's departure for the Spanish-American War.

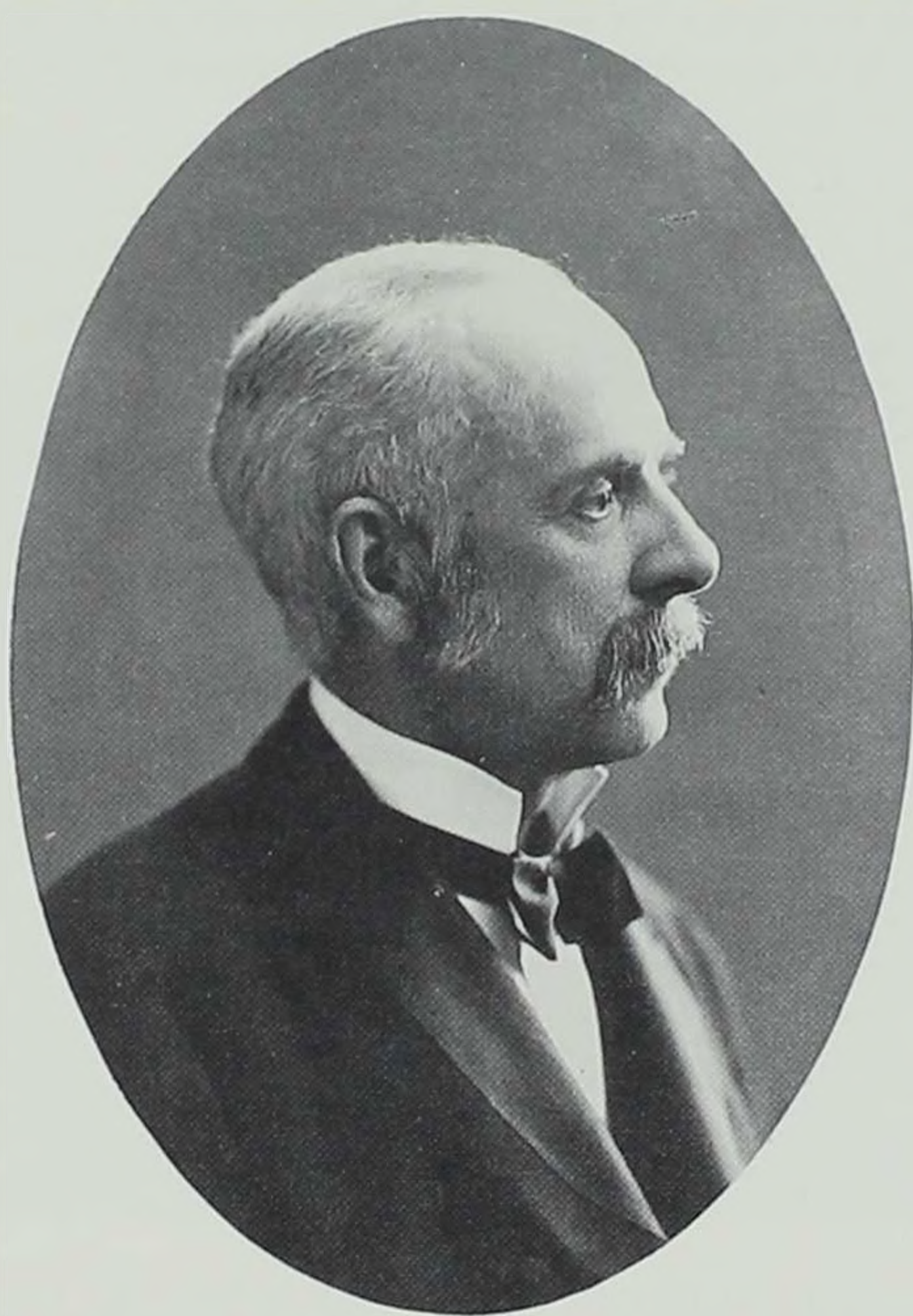


COURTESY CONGER HOUSE

The commander of the Iowa troops was James Rush Lincoln, long-time professor of military science at Iowa State College in Ames. Born in Maryland, Lincoln had been a Confederate cavalryman at Gettysburg and had been with Lee at Appomattox. Now he would lead the sons of those who had been his enemy. The first full day in camp Lincoln had the twenty-five hundred Iowa troops assemble in formation, a sight that thrilled Company D.

WITHIN A FEW DAYS a situation arose that threatened the sense of loyalty and unity among the Iowa volunteers. The Iowa National Guard was a volunteer organization consisting of local companies who elected their own officers. These local officers often spent a great deal of time and their own money to equip and train the troops. Although this did not always make for an efficient military organization, it did create loyalty within the company and often intense loyalty to the local officers. The various local companies had been organized into four regiments of the Iowa Guard. The problem was that the War Department had asked for only three infantry regiments from Iowa.

As commander of the Iowa National Guard,



As National Guard commander, Governor Leslie Shaw attempted to balance orders from the War Department with demands from Iowans.

Governor Shaw proposed to reorganize the four regiments into three federal regiments. Local companies would be split up and local officers might lose their commissions — certainly their commands. The proposal brought about a “spirit of unrest” among the men, the *Des Moines Register* reported. Shaw came to Camp McKinley and appealed to the troops. Blaming the War Department’s order, Shaw said that reorganization was inevitable and that “quite a number of officers now holding commissions will be forced to stay at home or take lower rank.” He promised transportation home to anyone unwilling to enlist under these conditions.

In a show of loyalty typical of most units, the men of Company D quickly decided that they would have their own officers or none at all. Back home, townspeople supported them in letters and telegrams urging them to stick with their officers or come home. A committee traveled to Des Moines to talk with Shaw, an action taken by communities throughout the state.

Bowing to this pressure Shaw announced he would organize all four Iowa regiments to be

sworn into federal service but that only three would go to war. Iowa’s congressmen quickly succeeded in getting the fourth regiment ordered to service.

WITH THEIR OFFICERS and organization intact, the next hurdle for Company D was passing their physicals. Most passed easily; those who failed often went to the back of the line and hoped for a different doctor. One man went through five times, prompting the doctor to ask how many brothers he had in the National Guard. When the man answered, “five,” the doctor said, “Well, if that is so, one of you shall go into the army.” When William White was rejected because he was underweight, his father, a Civil War veteran, asked Governor Shaw for a waiver of the minimum weight requirement. Either because of the father’s intervention or because, as Brookhart claimed, White quickly gained eleven pounds, White was sworn in. To the great joy of Company D all their officers passed the examinations, allegedly the only company in the regiment to achieve that distinction. Their joy was tempered, however, when two regimental officers from Washington, Major J. D. Glasgow and Lieutenant C. J. Wilson, failed. Glasgow reportedly “wept like a baby.” Eight others from the company failed, though the *Press* pronounced them as “patriotic and heroic as their comrades who were accepted.”

The following days were filled with drills, exercises, mock combat, target practice, reviews, and the other activities necessary to build an army. Nevertheless, with a great deal of time on their hands, the men quickly learned the universal lesson of armies to “wait patiently and ask few questions.” They claimed easy adjustment to this new habit of “lazing” around and found ample ways to amuse themselves. Relocated from the amphitheater, they clowned around in the exposition building, climbing into the glass showcases to portray various exhibits. A drunk who had wandered in and passed out was laid out for burial in a showcase. Impromptu wrestling matches and songfests were staged. Occasionally a regimental band would perform a concert. Like many of

the companies, Company D adopted mascots, a mongrel called "Pokerine" and a water spaniel named "Craps." Brookhart wrote it would take "a grand jury to find out the meaning" of the names, but the suspicion was that at least one was named for a favorite game played in a "dark corner" of their quarters.

Of the many visitors who entered the camp, including many there to make a fast buck, none were resented more than insurance men. Company artist Milan Shields made a banner that proclaimed: "Beware! Insurance agents will be hung without trial." Quickly established kangaroo courts rounded up insurance agents and assessed them fifty cents for the privilege of talking with the men. (The "fees" were spent on cigars or food.) When one suspected "insurance man" produced a policeman's star, however, the "court then adjourned *sine die*."

Other visitors were welcomed, especially those from home. The Washington depot agent arranged round-trip trains to Des Moines on Sundays, attracting eighty-five riders on the



Lieutenant Smith W. Brookhart assured his townspeople that Company D would uphold their expectations.

first day. The men also let it be known that they appreciated letters from home. A notice in the *Journal* announced: "If any of the girls in Washington wish to write to Co. D boys, have them write to the undersigned. We are being neglected. Other members are receiving two and three letters per day. [Signed] Shanafelt, Hollingsworth, Hugh Rupp, J. T. Brady, Ortus Adams."

AFTER THREE WEEKS of drills and examinations Company D and the other regimental companies were sworn into federal service on May 18. Now part of the Fiftieth Regiment Iowa Volunteer Infantry, most knew they would be going south soon — they hoped to Cuba.

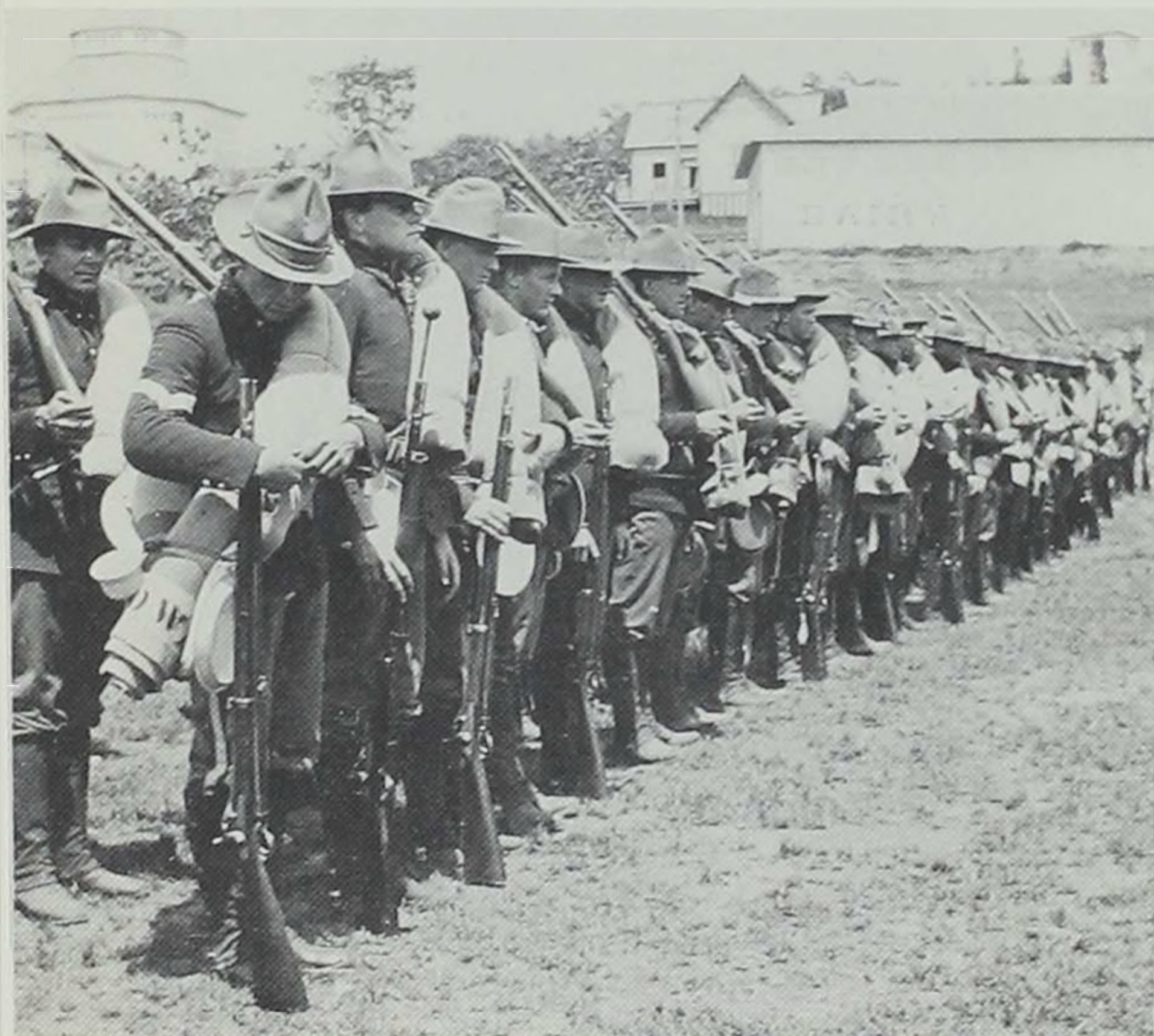
The camp was in a flurry. The men sent home anything that was not regulation and drew lightweight clothing from the commissary. Barbers shaved off beards (some newly grown in camp) and cut hair close to the head. On May 21 they would leave for Florida.

Roused awake at 4 AM, they marched to the railway station in a downpour — a presage of much of their stay in Florida. Despite cheers



Waiting for war — or at least word to head south — a soldier at Camp McKinley (Des Moines) washes dishes.

Soldiers in the Iowa 50th line up for inspection at Camp McKinley at the state fairgrounds in Des Moines. The dairy building is in the background.



and band music, despite their jubilation at being the first Iowans to go to the front, the men of Company D seemed quiet. A few shed tears.

After a celebration in Davenport and a layover in Chicago, Company D boarded their railroad car, ironically named the "Maine." A superstitious railroad man thought they were doomed because of the name. A soldier remarked that he hoped that they would not be as "unfortunate as the occupants of that notable vessel" (though actually the name would bring them special attention on the trip south).

The train rolled south through Indiana, and at every junction and station townspeople boarded with food, hot coffee, and encouragement. At one station a band played "Marching Through Georgia."

Indiana reminded the men of Iowa, though the soil seemed of poorer quality. But once they crossed the Ohio River into Kentucky, they began to feel they were in the South. The land was all hills and solid rock. The people, too, were different, with different speech patterns, and the Iowans were not immediately impressed. In Stanley Miller's opinion, they were in the country of poor white trash who

had no more idea of what civilization was than a "hog in Sunday School."

At every stop, people pulled up in wagons to sell pies, sandwiches, and vegetables. Company D began to notice old soldiers in gray, their first encounter with members of the Confederacy. Whatever private thoughts the old rebels may have had about so many soldiers in blue, publicly they encouraged the Iowans to "take care" of the Spaniards. Although impressed with the Confederate veterans' patriotism and expressions of unity, Company D noted fewer American flags flying in the South.

Another indication that they were in the South was the large number of blacks they began to see. In their correspondence home they mentioned that they had seen blacks working in the fields behind mule and plow, or hoeing corn, followed by a white overseer on horseback. The men remarked on the large numbers of "excited" blacks selling produce at stations during stopovers. Howard Wilson speculated that their excitement stemmed from seeing so many men in blue, knowing what their mission was, and remembering what it meant for blacks the last time northern soldiers were in the South.

To the Iowans the mountains and rushing streams were new terrain. At the first mountain tunnel they learned the hard way about train travel through tunnels: failing to close their windows, they emerged covered with soot and smoke. In another tunnel, their car was damaged when they scraped against rock. Some wondered if the railroad worker's suspicions about the name "Maine" weren't true.

Eager to see legendary Civil War battle sites, they were disappointed when they pulled into Chattanooga after dark, missing Lookout Mountain. Still Chattanooga proved to have other interests: Sam Kellogg reported "quite a merry time" when they stopped alongside a car filled with southern girls. Kellogg also wrote the folks back home about a southern landmark, the Swannee River. Comparing it in size to the Skunk River in Washington County, he remarked that the Georgia soil

Right: Company D passed Lookout Mountain at night, missing the legendary battlesite of their "martial sires." Another company in the 50th Iowa made the stop.

made the water dark red. The men thought it less beautiful than Stephen Foster's song had led them to believe.

At 6:15 that evening they pulled into Jacksonville, Florida. Writing home Private Claude McCoy probably spoke for them all: "It was a great trip for a young chap to make. Something I would never have seen if it had not been for the war."

THE DECISION to locate an army camp in Jacksonville, a town of thirty thousand, had been made only a few days before the Fiftieth Iowa arrived. The camp was well situated near rail terminals on sandy ground that provided good drainage, although heavy rains later that summer would force the camp to move to higher ground. Running water was piped out from the city water company and nearby lumberyards supplied all the camp's needs. On May 29 the new commander, Major General Fitzhugh Lee, arrived

to command the nearly 30,000 men of the Seventh Army Corps, of which the Fiftieth Iowa was a part. A nephew of Robert E. Lee, Fitzhugh Lee had served in the Confederate Army. Within a short time Camp Cuba Libre, as he named it, would become a model of how a camp should be organized.

Company D set up its "street" within the Fiftieth Iowa campsite. First priorities were shelter and food. Rubber blankets served as temporary tent floors until wooden floors were ready a few days later. Company D hired the first in a long line of cooks. They supplemented their mess fare from local food stands on the edge of camp, by provisions sent from home, and at Jacksonville restaurants on pay day.

It seemed that everywhere the Iowans turned there was a new experience awaiting them. Forests of tall pine were a new sight to those accustomed to the hardwoods of Iowa. Anticipating having their fill of inexpensive oranges, they were disappointed to find that an 1895 frost had killed most of the trees. Pineap-





Camp Cuba Libre, near Jacksonville, Florida quickly took shape, on terrain new to Iowans.

ples grew abundantly, however, and Howard Wilson was amazed to discover that they did not grow on trees but on short shrubs, like cabbage. They delighted in chasing lizards around camp and in catching alligators (shipping some north for family pets).

The people of Jacksonville seemed friendly, although it took a while for the Iowans to get used to the local accent. Company D men found the young ladies of the city to be very beautiful and not as "flip" as northern girls. Apparently Company D also made a good impression. The Jacksonville *Times-Union and Citizen* reported that the company had a "membership of fine-looking young men" who were "as merry a set of fellows as will be found in camp."

The "merry fellows" quickly began the daily routine of drills, inspections, exercises, and mock battles. In charge of instruction, Lieutenant Brookhart regularly took the men to the rifle range and established a company school for noncommissioned officers. The work began to pay off. In late June Brigade Commander General Bancroft praised Company D as the best drilled in the regiment. Former Confederate officers who frequented the camp agreed, adding that they made a better appearance than any other northern group.

THE OLD CONFEDERATES were only one reminder that the "martial sons of martial sires" were now in the land of the former enemy. Even before the northerners had arrived the local paper had urged its readers to welcome them so that an army could be assembled to "battle in the cause of humanity to drive a blight from the hemisphere." While not forgetting the past, the editor reminded his readers that "our future is a common inheritance, our past a common pride, and our country one and indivisible."

Individual southerners seemed to agree that there was no longer animosity over the war, and that they should put the past behind them and get on with life. As one Virginian remarked, "This war will settle all of that old feeling"; with a common cause "under the same flag why should we be enemies?" The northerners also took some initiative to smooth over the situation. On Decoration Day they joined in a "service perhaps no Union soldier has ever participated in before" — helping decorate Confederate graves.

The most visible event that brought North and South together was the June dedication of a monument to Confederate soldiers in Jacksonville. Planned long before Camp Cuba Libre had been established, it had now become an even larger celebration when "new Yankees"

from North Carolina marched beside men from Iowa and Illinois. On the reviewing stand, a nephew of Robert E. Lee sat beside a grandson of Ulysses S. Grant. The speakers emphasized the valor of the Civil War soldiers and hoped their trials would "cement more firmly our country and make our love for each other greater." The editor of the paper wrote that "from Appomattox this country took a new path — a course the compass of the present shows will dominate the Caribbean, and lead us across the Pacific."

Still there were tensions. The local celebration of Jefferson Davis's birthday was cancelled because of the presence of so many northern troops. A Virginia regiment arrived in camp flying the Confederate flag instead of the Stars and Stripes. Lisle Morehouse wrote home that they had better not do that on July Fourth or there would be trouble.

Most days were deadeningly the same. Day after day the correspondents reported "nothing new today" or "nothing of interest what-

ever occurred today." As early as June 6 Brookhart would write his wife that his was a lazy life and that "unless we go to Cuba soon and get some fighting to do, I am afraid my hitherto industrious habits will be seriously impaired." In his spare time he and a few others from Company D took Spanish lessons from a Cuban refugee they had hired.

Company D men occupied their time in a variety of ways. They were forever improving their campsite, building new tables for the mess tent, or adding more mosquito netting. Out of necessity one became a barber and did a good business. Company artist Milan Shields drew tattoo designs and James Burnham worked the needle and ink, reportedly doing a "landoffice business." Baseball games and regimental band concerts filled some hours. Many of the organized activities took place in the YMCA tent on the edge of the Fiftieth Iowa campsite. Hundreds of men each day took advantage of the services available there. The YMCA established a writing room in the tent and supplied paper and ink. Various church

Waiting for orders: idle soldiers at Camp Cuba Libre.



groups conducted services and gave out thousands of New Testaments. The YMCA tent became a place of entertainment and encouragement for lonely soldiers.

Camp humor flourished, as the men purposely spread outrageous rumors to catch the gullible, or poked fun at their comrades. A favorite Company D joke involved the Rough Rider who was hanged because when he had curried his horse, he had forgotten to "remember the mane."

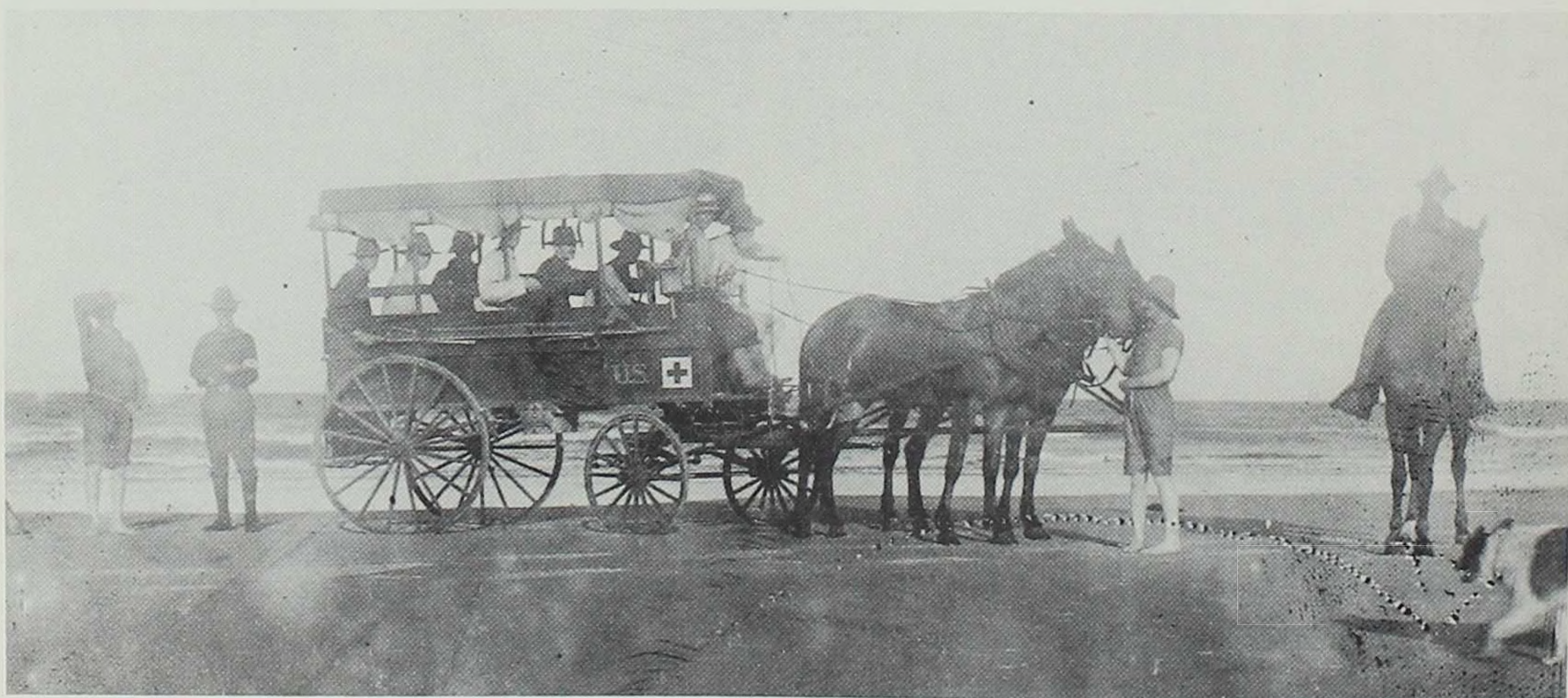
Faced with many uncertainties in the weeks ahead, they seemed determined to fully enjoy occasional outings. Before the summer was over most of the company had taken the eighteen-mile train trip down to historic St. Augustine, founded in 1565. (In contrast, the Iowans were barely a generation beyond the founding of their own town.) The favorite off-duty place was Pablo Beach, seventeen miles away — especially for boys accustomed to swimming in the Skunk River or Crooked Creek. They reveled in the breakers and salt water, collected sea shells to send home, and delighted in the porpoises. Claude Reister wrote, "I enjoyed myself more yesterday [at the ocean] than I ever did before in my life."

In one of his first dispatches home Stanley Miller had discussed the fear that the men had of yellow fever (malaria) but that the Florida locals feared typhoid and pneumonia more. Throughout June all the correspondents regu-

larly reported that the health of Company D was good. The only man in the hospital from Company D was Sidney Smith, who first had the mumps and then the measles.

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, Company D awoke to firecrackers, but rain postponed the afternoon parade in Jacksonville. Pooling their money, the men planned a banquet, complete with cigars. As they ate, news reached them that the Spanish fleet had been defeated the day before, at Santiago harbor in Cuba. With that the real celebration began, and continued long into the night. One remarked, "If Washington people had laid low and listened I believe they could have heard the yelling done by Company D."

The people of Washington, Iowa, may well have heard the celebration, at least in spirit. Since spring, the four newspapers and their correspondents had enabled them to follow war news closely, and in various ways they supported their men in Florida. Small boys had taken to wearing military caps and parading around town with tin horns and flags and banners proclaiming: "Remember the *Maine*, to hell with Spain." The local theater presented slide shows of battle scenes to the accompaniment of hisses for the Spanish and cheers for the Americans. The city water standpipe was painted red, white, and blue. And storekeeper



For land-locked Iowa soldiers, the novelty of the ocean made Pablo Beach a favorite spot to while away time.



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J. D. Glasgow, rejected from service, sold "Remember the *Maine*" cigars for five cents.

Several churches held fund-raising activities. In early September St. James Catholic Church raised \$166 at an ice cream social. Perhaps remembering the anti-Catholic lecturers who had been in town at the beginning of the war, the *Democrat* noted the interest of Father Bernard Jacobsmeier in Company D. This concern, the paper noted, had made the pastor many friends, especially "from well-meaning but mistaken people who have such a prejudice against Catholics."

The women of Washington organized sewing projects and fundraisers. An auxiliary of the GAR, the Women's Relief Corps quickly sewed seventy-nine "housewives" (vest-like jackets with pockets for personal items) and sent them off to Florida. The women met in a member's home, amidst patriotic decorations and souvenirs. Made up largely of the wives or mothers of Company D men, the Ladies' Aid Society had formed in late May to raise funds and support the war effort. Other groups and individuals helped the Ladies' Aid Society raise money. The owner of the New York Store gave a portion of one day's receipts to the society, and the Fourth of July Committee donated left-over celebration funds. Local promoter Frank Brinton shared his proceeds from a

Hometown fund-raiser at the C. J. Wilson home in Washington (now the Conger House). At the evening social, guests strolled below flags and paper lanterns, stopping at the frappé stand or at the "Florida orange tree" (far right) with oranges tied to the branches.

showing at the Graham Opera House of moving pictures of the war.

The Ladies' Aid Society also planned elaborate and well-attended evening receptions and dances set in patriotically decorated lawns. At one, held at C. J. Wilson's house, a costumed Uncle Sam strolled through the grounds lit by Chinese lanterns. Vendors sold Florida oranges, candies, ice cream, flowers, and lemonade. For a nickel, one could see Jap Neiswanger's pet goat Dewey, born May 1 and named after the admiral who had defeated the Spanish fleet in Manila on that day.

The Ladies' Aid Society provided Company D with bandages, magazines, newspapers, sugar, soap, and food. Although several national tobacco companies regularly supplied tobacco for Camp Cuba Libre, the soldiers complained of the poor quality and asked the Ladies' Aid Society for certain brands. Although citizens criticized the group for sending tobacco and contributing to the vice of smoking, the *Democrat* defended them: "We'll bet a forty-dollar day that those same



News of the defeat at Santiago inspired Iowa Falls citizens to proclaim: "America rules the world."

critics wouldn't shoulder a gun if the Spanish invaded Washington County." The soldiers' letters home show their gratitude for such support. Their bond with the home front was an important factor in company morale.

AS SUMMER WORE ON, the soldiers in Florida grew increasingly restless. The victory over the Spanish fleet at Santiago and the surrender of the Spanish garrison there on July 17 spelled the virtual end of the war. The possibility of active service had now become remote. Company D was filled with rumors about its future. Every day it seemed a new "kite," or rumor, took flight. One day they were headed for the Carolinas, the next, to Pennsylvania, or Puerto Rico, or Cuba for guard duty. They learned to take such "kites" in stride. Stanley Miller reportedly was writing his memoirs, "Side-tracked in the Florida Swamps, or the Experiences of a Soldier in the Seventh Army Corps." A current riddle asked: "Why is the Seventh Army Corps like the seat of a man's pants?"

Because it was never intended for the front."

The war officially ended August 12 when the Spanish and American governments signed a protocol that provided for a peace treaty to be written. General Fitzhugh Lee sent a telegram to Camp Cuba Libre calling for a cease fire and cessation of all hostilities. Company D took the news in good humor. Hugh McCleery wrote that they were happy with the Florida territories they had captured and would hold on to them as best they could. Hometown newspapers noted the event with some relief. The *Press* called it the end of a four-century epoch of Spanish presence in the new world. "War ends, with its anxieties," the *Press* wrote, but added, "peace comes in with its duties no less arduous."

FOR THE MEN of Company D, peace did not end the threat of death. By mid-July death by disease had begun to visit the Fiftieth Iowa. Although on July 8 the Jacksonville paper had complimented the Fiftieth Iowa for the cleanliness of its camp, within days the rainy season began,

frequently flooding their camp. They would eventually be forced to move the camp to higher ground, but not soon enough. The first death from typhoid in the Fiftieth Iowa came on July 18. Still at the end of the month Brookhart could write that Company D had the best hospital records in camp.

During the first weeks of August the sick call list began to grow, and along with it more reports of deaths in the Fiftieth Iowa. On August 23 Company D lost its first man; a twenty-three-year-old clerk, Albert Huff of Kalona, died of typhoid. Huff's body was brought back to Kalona for the funeral, attended by nearly three thousand people. At home, concern increased for the eleven others in the hospital. One week later "taps sounded" for Ralph Conger. At age thirty-seven Conger could have avoided service, but he had sold his harness and saddlery business and enlisted, to fulfill what he felt was his duty. The day he had left for Florida he had said that he did not fear bullets but did fear fever and the southern climate. The sorrow hit Washington hard, for Conger was from that town. It seemed that all of Washington turned out for Conger's funeral. The citizens were now aware of the danger that Company D faced.

The danger was real. On August 30, Stanley

The rains came in mid-July, flooding tents and sending soldiers to higher ground — then to the hospital tents.

Miller reported that one month before, the company had ninety-six men; now only forty-five turned out for review. Of the rest two were dead and the others were too sick for duty. Pressure mounted at home and in the company to get the Iowa men out of there. The *Democrat* declared that it was "not right nor sensible nor patriotic to hold our troops in that Jacksonville pest hole any longer." Samuel Kellogg wrote home, "I will be glad to leave this country for I don't like it. All it contains is malaria and fever."

Most of the enlisted men from Iowa who wrote Governor Shaw claimed that up to ninety percent of them at Camp Cuba Libre wanted to be brought home. Although the men had been willing to fight to liberate Cubans, they had no desire to go to Cuba for peacetime guard duty. (Company D had received a taste of this kind of duty when they had spent a week in August on provost duty patrolling the "tenderloin" district of Jacksonville rounding up drunks.) Several of Shaw's Iowa correspondents in Florida implied that their officers, who received higher pay and had greater career opportunities, wanted to stay in Florida with the hope that they could still be sent to Cuba.

Back in Iowa, pressure mounted on Shaw. Brookhart, home on leave, reported to his townspeople that although the camp was on





Downed by typhoid and pneumonia. Original caption: "Note milk cups under bed. Flies not shown."

high ground, the city sewage dump and swamps were but seventy-five yards away. In Brookhart's opinion six more weeks would be very bad for Company D. The group voted unanimously to appeal to all appropriate officials in Des Moines and Washington, D.C., and the mayor fired off a telegram.

Individual citizens also wrote Shaw, none more eloquently than Wesley Shanafelt: "The only boy I have is down at Jacksonville . . . liable to be stricken down any day with fever. . . . I was willing and thought he ought to go to war but as there is no enemy now to contend with but disease I am very anxious to have him . . . brought out of that sickly hole as soon as it is possible." Signing himself a Civil War veteran, Shanafelt added that he had "always . . . been *to date* Republican."

Shaw was in a spot. He knew that although

the war was over, there was still a need for an army and he was reluctant to have the War Department think that Iowa was unwilling to do its part. Yet privately, he was angered by the War Department's claims that the men were receiving adequate health care. Shaw had visited the camp in August and had seen the sick unattended in their beds, with dead soldiers lying in the cots next to them. For a day or so he wavered, apparently unsure of just what the Iowa soldiers wanted. Then he took action. He asked the Secretary of War to bring the Fiftieth Iowa home.

The order was issued almost immediately. Company D was relieved of all duty except guard duty as they waited to hear their departure date. Stanley Miller knew only that there were "good times a-comin'." At home the Ladies' Aid Society continued to send money every few days for care of the sick and transportation home. The *Press* urged citizens to make

plans to welcome the boys: "get your kissers ready for instant use, and don't disappoint fond expectations."

At the Washington depot, five hundred citizens greeted the first group of ten invalids, released from camp on September 4. Two days later another dozen started out, and even more greeted them at the depot. In camp the others began to pack up their belongings; anything that was not to be taken home was burned to prevent the further spread of disease. At guard mount on the morning of September 13 the band played "Home Sweet Home," and then the Fiftieth Iowa started north. Two of their numbers were too sick to travel.

The trip home retraced their route of nearly four months before. This time they passed through Chattanooga during the day; Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge were visible from the train windows. In Chicago, large crowds greeted them during a brief stop-over. The company let out a great shout as they crossed the Mississippi into Iowa. At DeWitt the train stopped long enough for the sickest to be taken off and sent directly home to Washington. The rest would report to Camp McKinley in Des Moines.

Three days later, Company D was given a thirty-day leave and started for Washington. There, the GAR with its torn battle flag had led the welcoming parade, now waiting at the

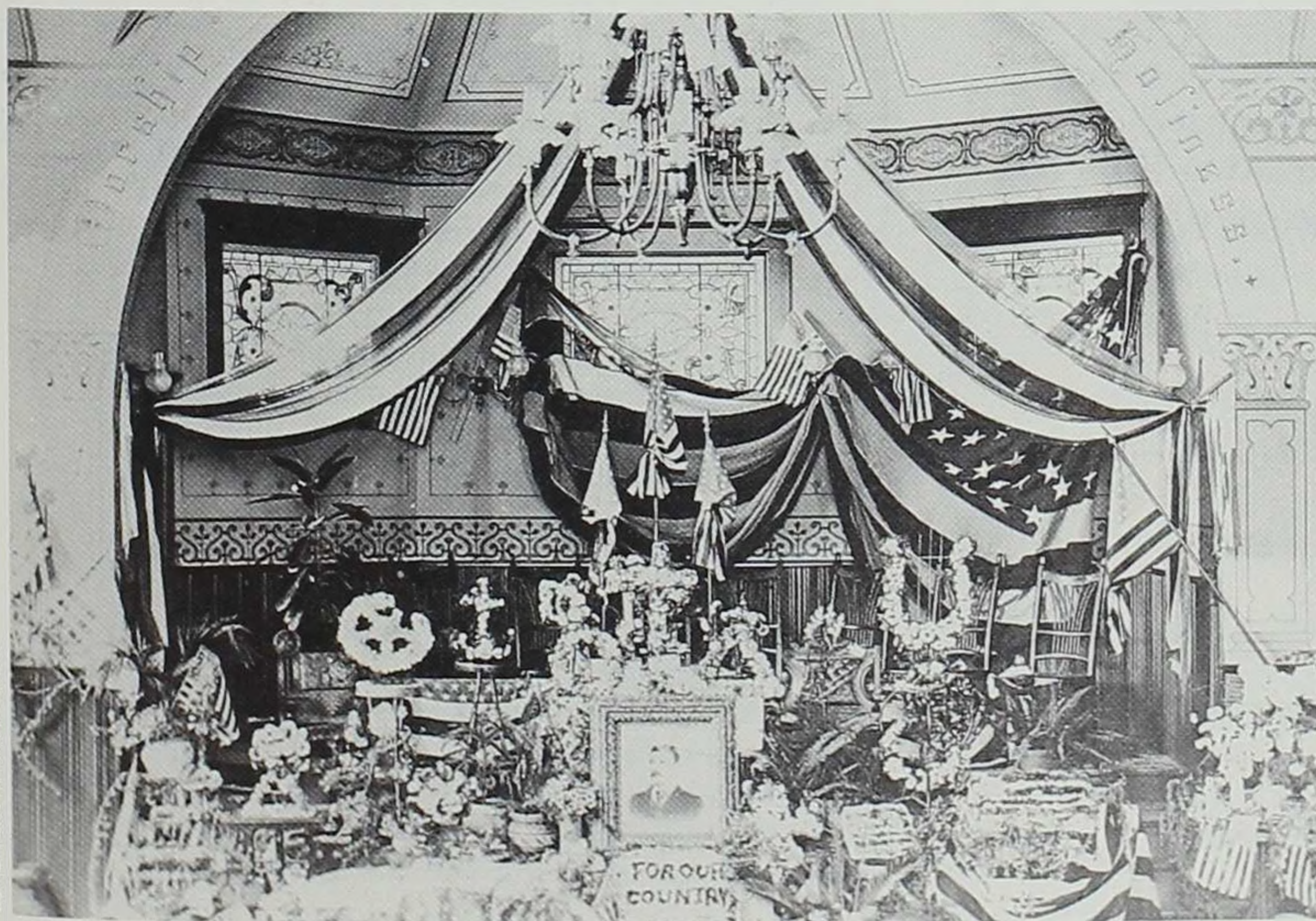
depot. The planned return march through town was forgotten as the boys quickly melted into the crowd.

During their thirty-day leave some continued to wear their uniforms, reportedly because the girls liked it. Most, however, quickly put on civilian clothes and began to get their lives back to normal, returning to jobs or college. A local merchant exhibited the mascot "Craps" and some of the alligators in his window. (Other alligators lived for a time in the fountain basin in the park before they met an unknown end.)

At the end of the leave Company D returned to Des Moines. There was some semblance of army life, but the men were really only marking time. The army gave them rigorous physicals, apparently to have complete medical discharge records on file to avoid future disability claims. Many of the men rented rooms in town rather than staying at the camp, with the promise of remaining orderly. They played games — football, skinny, or old sow.

Mustered out on November 30, the former Company D, now civilians, arrived home on December 1. That evening the Ladies' Aid Society gave yet another banquet. Everyone sensed that this would be their last time together. The speeches were convivial as man after man rose to tell stories and toast the good qualities of his comrades. A solemn tone

"For our country" reads a tribute to Ralph Conger at his funeral in Washington. Conger's death was a tragedy of the war Company D never fought.



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descended at the memory of the three who had lost their lives to typhoid (Fred Crawford had died after arriving in Washington). The evening ended with music and dancing.

THE MARTIAL SONS of Company D had spent their youth listening to the war stories of their martial sires. Sufficiently removed by time from the realities of the Civil War, the sires had made war seem like a romantic adventure, a defining element in their lives. Thus when war came again, the sons had eagerly gone off to fight their own glorious cause, to free the Cubans from their oppressive masters, and to act out their fathers' stories.

They came back from the war not heroes but survivors. Their experience in Florida had been one of frustration and boredom. When they had realized that they would not see active service, their enthusiasm had waned. Threatened by death from disease they had asked to be brought home. Almost defensively, Stanley Miller wrote that although they had not seen active service they had endured hardship nonetheless; surely the martial sires knew what the sons had done in the "war for humanity." Still, they regretted the lost opportunity to "prove more vividly to their fathers" that they could have met the test.

The martial sires could probably have told them what war was really like if they had chosen to, although it was not certain that the sons would have listened. In August Governor Shaw had written of the "transition from boyhood to manhood" and the "great school" they

had been in. The *Press* hoped if the young men had learned anything about war, that it was in breaking the "illusion," and that the "tape-worm of 'military glory'" had been "extracted from every one of them." The *Press* concluded that undoubtedly they were all "cured of the notion that soldiering is a 'glorious' thing."

The evidence would seem to suggest that they had been cured. The men of Company D quickly returned to the lives they had interrupted six months before. When a new Company D was organized the next year, only twenty-six of the veterans would re-enlist. Most would leave the National Guard within a year to pursue other interests.

Twenty years later, in 1919, some of them would gather to form the Albert M. Huff Post of the Veterans of the Spanish-American War. As veterans, they acknowledged that the war of twenty years before had brought more to the government in spoils than it had cost. Nevertheless, for the men of old Company D the proudest boast seemed to be that they had come home from the war and made good. □

NOTE ON SOURCES

The sources for this article were letters written by members of Company D and published in Washington's four newspapers. Regular correspondents were Hugh McCleery (for the daily *Evening Journal*); Lisle Morehouse, Sam Kellogg, and Walter F. Wilson (*Gazette*); Smith Wildman Brookhart and Howard Wilson (*Washington Press*); and Stanley Miller (*Democrat*). These newspapers were all available on microfilm, which underscores for me the importance of the State Historical Society's preservation work through the Iowa Newspaper Project. For the use of photographs and artifacts, I am grateful to the Conger House in Washington, where Jacki and Tony Ross and Mike Zahs were very helpful.

CONTRIBUTORS

A native of Urbana, Illinois, **Jean Berry** received a B.A. degree in German and English from the University of Illinois in 1939 and later took courses in library education at the University of Iowa. Besides volunteering at the State Historical Society and other civic organizations, she is a brailist for the Iowa Commission for the Blind.

Except for a brief seven-year period, **Edith W. Harwood** has lived in Iowa all of her life (mostly Louisa and Washington counties). After graduation from Coe College in 1925, she worked for her father, a pharmacist, in his drug store and later married. "Being of a curious disposition," she writes, "I have never stopped studying, researching this and that" and sharing such projects through exhibiting and teaching. She has published her writing in various house organs.

George William McDaniel is assistant professor of history and chair of the Department of History and Geography at St. Ambrose University in Davenport. He has published a number of articles on Smith Wildman Brookhart in the *Annals of Iowa* and the *Palimpsest* and is revising for publication his doctoral dissertation on Brookhart's senate career. He has served as president of the State Historical Society of Iowa and now serves on its Board of Trustees.

Sharon E. Wood is a doctoral candidate in American Studies at the University of Iowa. She is researching a dissertation on women in Davenport, 1870-1910, and would like to hear from *Palimpsest* readers who have letters, diaries, or other material relating to early Davenport women.

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). Standard length is within ten to twenty manuscript pages, but shorter or longer submissions will be considered. Include a list of sources used and 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.

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