

## Chautauqua Vignettes

To Iowans living in that incomparable Golden Era ushered in by the Twentieth Century the word "Chautauqua" is full of meaning. To many still dwelling in the Hawkeye State it was a mode of living during three short summer months that often won for them a college education working as tent boys, superintendents, managers, and even "talent." To the tens of thousands who attended Chautauqua each summer it meant an escape from the humdrum existence of many small communities. In Iowa during its heyday Chautauqua was witnessed by hundreds of thousands each season. In the United States and Canada, during the peak of the circuit-Chautauqua, it has been estimated that nearly 40,000,000 persons annually attended Chautauqua in 10,000 communities.

Iowa was one of the first states to become identified with the Chautauqua movement. As early as 1876 a Chautauqua Assembly was organized at Clear Lake with Reverend J. R. Barrie as its first superintendent. Beginning with 1879 the Reverend J. A. Worden (who had served as an apprentice to Reverend John H. Vincent, the founder of chautauqua in New York) directed the Clear Lake Chautauqua. Of the Clear Lake



Chautauqua Hugh A. Orchard declares: "It became a mecca of religious and popular instruction, a favorite spot for out-of-door recreation and pastime, and a congenial meeting place for kindred spirits from a wide territory." The Clear Lake Assembly flourished for a period of ten years and then, unfortunately, passed into limbo. Meanwhile, camp meetings had been going on contemporaneously with the early Clear Lake Assembly and Epworth League Assembly, and out of these the Clear Lake Chautauqua was once more revived around the turn of the Century.

Other Iowa communities made relatively early starts at what developed into local Chautauquas. The Waterloo Chautauqua grew out of a real estate venture known as the Cedar River Park Association established in 1893. The first Burlington Chautauqua was proposed in 1896, not for intellectual and spiritual benefits, but to pay off a debt. An Independent Chautauqua was established at Mediapolis in 1904 and continued for forty years before it passed away—the last Chautauqua in Iowa. Of this same vintage was the Fairfield Chautauqua, one of the oldest and most successful in the Hawkeye State. Between 1900 and 1910 scores of Iowa communities organized their own Chautauqua, frequently competing in the same county, or within a few miles of each other.

Although Chautauqua in its Twentieth Century



sense was non-denominational, or at least inter-denominational in character, it was usually the clergy, and more frequently the Methodist ministers, who took the lead in organizing a Chautauqua in their community. Thus, on February 24, 1904, at the close of a prayer meeting in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Fairfield, Reverend J. S. Tussey submitted a plan for organizing a Chautauqua which was unanimously adopted. Fifteen shares of stock were subscribed by those present at the meeting and a campaign was launched to sell 300 shares at \$10 per share to provide sufficient capital for the project. A month later it was reported that 208 shares had been sold and the sponsors felt justified in organizing the Fairfield Chautauqua Association.

The purpose of establishing a Chautauqua in any Iowa community is best described in the first Fairfield brochure, which was patterned after the Columbus Chautauqua Association of Columbus Junction. Ten thousand copies of a similar brochure were ordered printed for the first Fairfield Chautauqua. The objectives of this Chautauqua were outlined in the articles of incorporation:

The object . . . shall be to hold an annual public assembly and to employ talent to entertain and instruct the public in science, philosophy, music, art, and such other subjects as may be determined by the program committee from time to time . . .

The grand aim of this chautauqua movement is to elevate the masses; to give the community at large a mental, moral,



social, and spiritual uplift, by drawing them together in social assembly and bring them into contact with the most cultured minds, eloquent orators, and brilliant artists of the American platform.

*Editorial Support — Fort Madison*

Newspaper editors played an equally important role in promoting and publicizing Chatauqua. On July 26, 1905, the Fort Madison *Democrat* informed its readers that Charles L. Wagner of the Slayton Lyceum Bureau of Chicago, together with L. T. Kersey, the Iowa representative of the Bureau, met with interested Fort Madison citizens to study the possibility of organizing a Fort Madison Chatauqua Assembly. The group assembled in the court house, where, after full and spirited discussion, it was unanimously decided to hold a Chatauqua in Fort Madison the following year. In recording the meeting the local editor wrote:

The gathering was informal and the questions informally discussed. Mr. Wagner was present, and was asked to outline the work and give the people some knowledge of procedure, and how the assemblies are arranged for, manner of conducting them and the probable expense. All of these points were happily outlined and many questions were asked and intelligently answered to the satisfaction of all.

Mr. Wagner spoke of the origin of the now very popular Chatauqua assembly. There were about 200 now in existence, of which Iowa has the largest number with Illinois a close second. They were largely furnished through bureaus, from where the best talent could be booked, and programs made out.



The proposition seemed fair and as a sample he said if one thousand tickets could be sold at two dollars a-piece, the bureau would furnish the best possible program of the best talent, at no further expense, and would also furnish a superintendent to oversee and arrange for and give the necessary assistance to carry on the ten-day assembly.

He approximated that the running expenses the first year would be about \$500, proceeds from tickets \$2,000, to which the gate-receipts would largely increase the profits.

He briefly outlined the probable program, a rich literary feast of lectures, addresses, music, and entertainments of various kinds, making some thirty numbers for the ten days' feast.

The following year, on August 4, 1906, the Fort Madison *Democrat* chronicled the formal opening of Chautauqua in beautiful Highland Park. The grand event had been a matter of discussion for months, and residents of Fort Madison, as well as folks from the country round about, were on hand to hear the ten-piece Cleveland Ladies Orchestra under the direction of Professor A. Metzdorf play an hour and a half program of "some of the best, the sweetest music" ever given in Fort Madison. The pulse of the audience was recorded in part as follows:

The opening number by the orchestra was "Stars and Stripes March" which was cheered to the echo. This was followed by an overture, "Merry Wives of Windsor," a beautifully rendered number.

A cornet solo was a rare treat and heartily encored. A quartet of ladies with cornets, trombone and trumpet



played "Trumpet Flowers" so beautifully that the audience called them back in a very hearty encore. This was followed by a trombone solo and so well executed that the lady in response to a hearty burst of applause beautifully rendered "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep."

Having heard the orchestra's first program, the *Democrat* felt confident that "their following entertainments will be eagerly looked forward to." Ten days later the editor labeled the first Chautauqua season a "decided success."

There was some opposition at first and for a few days the outlook was quite discouraging. The management, however, was not discouraged. The people became more interested and it is a pleasant fact to know that the enterprise has paid out, but the amount in the treasury cannot be estimated until later. There have been some mistakes made that can be corrected and some improvements can be made in another season's production. The present indications are that a Chautauqua will be organized, incorporated, board of directors and required officials be elected, and a Chautauqua be made a permanent thing. This is as it should be and the splendid treat afforded our citizens this year should be a yearly occurrence which will edify the people and be a splendid thing for the city.

#### *Keith Vawter and Chautauqua*

The experience of Fort Madison is typical of other Iowa communities. Actually, most local Chautauqua assembly managers had found it increasingly difficult during the 1890's to meet the expense of operation and to secure entertainment. On the other hand, small communities were anx-



ious to establish a Chautauqua but did not have the facilities. This situation provided an opportunity for an organization that would serve the existing Chautauquas as well as the communities which wanted Chautauqua. Keith Vawter, an executive of the Redpath Lyceum Bureau, was the first man to capitalize on the situation. He proposed to build a program of outstanding "talent" and sell it to local assembly managers.

In his *Fifty Years of Chautauqua*, Hugh A. Orchard writes:

Up to this time it should be remembered there had been no serious thought of attempting any radical alterations in the general plan of chautauqua operation. The practice of outdoor assemblies, managed by local citizens, had been thoroughly established after years of use, and was succeeding very well at every point where the patronage was great enough to justify the high costs that were inevitable under such a plan. The transition that marked what finally amounted to nothing short of a revolution in chautauqua management did not all come about in a day . . . .

At the beginning, Mr. Vawter had in mind chiefly the matter of delivering chautauqua talent, at greatly reduced cost, by booking a whole program unit uniformly throughout a select group of towns. He chose the state of Iowa as the territory where the experiment should be made. This field afforded him the opportunity to serve several local chautauqua managements already organized and active, and to promote a sufficient number of others to provide a means for applying his idea. While negotiating contracts this first season he offered what may be called a basic program, designed to be delivered uniformly to all towns visited, and carried a list of additional talent from



# VAWTER CHAUTAUQUA SYSTEM

KEITH VAWTER · Manager

Cedar Rapids and Kansas City

## Memorandum of Agreement, By and between the VAWTER

CHAUTAUQUA SYSTEM (Incorporated), of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, party of the first part,

and H. H. Preston of Iowa City, Iowa.  
party of the second part;

**Witnesseth**, That first party hereby employs second party, and second party enters such employment, under the following rules and regulations, and such rules and regulations as may hereafter be made by first party.

Second party is to work as Diplomat, Advance Man, or Superintendent, and do such other work as may be required in connection with first party's Chautauquas for the season of 1916. He is to work seven days each week during the term of this engagement and such hours each day as the nature of the employment may require or the Department Superintendent in charge may direct.

Said work to begin on or about June 1st, and continue for one or more weeks at first party's option. It is explicitly understood and agreed that second party may be discharged by first party at any time, within first party's judgment, for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or failure to comply with rules and regulations of first party, and second party shall have no claim against first party except for services actually rendered up to the time of such discharge.

Second party shall pay his own hotel bills.

First party agrees to pay second party's railroad fare from the point where second party begins work and throughout said engagement to last point where second party works for first party, also telegrams, telephones, express, drives where necessary, and other necessary incident-

als, in addition to a weekly salary of Thirty-five and no/100----- (Dollars) which shall be payable Monday following each week's service. Any days off for any reason beyond first party's control shall be deducted pro rata.

It is further agreed that the first party shall withhold Two Dollars and Fifty Cents (\$2.50) each week from the above mentioned salary of the second party, to be forfeited by the second party as liquidated damages in case he does not stay on the job until the close of the season.

It is agreed that this contract may be assigned to the Redpath-Vawter Chautauqua System.

In Witness Whereof, We have hereunto signed our names this 11th day of

April 14, 1916

VAWTER CHAUTAUQUA SYSTEM,

*H. H. Preston*

By.....

Second Party

*Courtesy Howard H. Preston*

Iowa was in the heart of Chautauqua land. Almost every thriving rural community enjoyed these stimulating programs and several of the larger cities, such as Burlington, Fort Madison, Iowa City, and Waterloo, supported Chautauqua programs for a generation and more at the opening of the 20th Century. The Redpath-Vawter System is a name synonymous with the word chautauqua, but there were other Iowa companies such as the Midland Chautauqua Circuit, the United Chautauqua Company, and the White & Brown Company, all of Des Moines.

One of the key personalities in assuring the success of the chautauqua was the Superintendent. The above contract between Vawter Chautauqua and Howard H. Preston reveals the general nature of the Superintendent's work. Frank Luther Mott, Howard H. Preston, and D. C. Nolan are but a few of many Iowans who served in this capacity.





INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF

IOWA

Shares One

# Iowa City Chautauqua Association

OF IOWA CITY, IOWA

This Certifies that *J. E. Reizenstein* is the owner of *One* Share of the Capital Stock of

The Iowa City Chautauqua Association

transferable only on the books of the Corporation by the holder hereof in person or by Attorney upon surrender of this Certificate properly endorsed.



In Witness Whereof, the said Corporation has caused this Certificate to be signed by its duly authorized officers and to be sealed with the Seal of the Corporation

this *19* day of *May* *1909*

*John W. Dettmold*  
SECRETARY

PRESIDENT

SHARES

\$10.00

SHARE

Courtesy Jacob Reizenstein  
One of the big jobs of the Superintendent was to see that his company not only received the money due it during the current season, but also to sell enough stock to prominent citizens of the community to insure the return



of Chautauqua the following year.



Chautauqua Parade in Fort Madison — Sheaffer Pen Company Had Its Beginnings in Jewelry Store at Sign of Big Clock



Afternoon  
Program  
Begins at 3:00

# PROGRAM

Evening  
Program  
Begins at 8:00

Children's Chautauqua at 9:30 a. m. and 4:30 p. m. each day except Sunday  
Story Hour for the "Wee Tots" at 3:30 p. m.

## AFTERNOON

**PHILIPPINO ROYAL STRING BAND**—Grand opening concert—novel instruments, weird and delightful music—artists from the Philippine Conservatories, instrumental and vocal numbers.

Admission, Adult 36c, Tax 4c, Total 40c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

## FIRST DAY

**PHILIPPINO ROYAL STRING BAND** in half hour's program of wonderful music. **BOB SEEDS**—Famous Farm Philosopher—hear him tell "How God Made the Soil Fertile"—a message from Nature to all people.

Admission, Adult 54c, Tax 6c, Total 60c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

## EVENING

## SECOND DAY

**LYCEUM ARTS TRIO** in entertaining, musical program—vocal—spoken and instrumental.

**HAZEL DOPHEIDE**—An out-standing reader in the delightful play, "The Money-Maker"—a program you cannot afford to miss. Introduces six characters.

Admission, Adult 36c, Tax 4c, Total 40c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

**LYCEUM ARTS TRIO**—Introducing the big xylophone, readings, vocal numbers, violin solos, costume characterizations.

**CONGRESSMAN ROYAL C. JOHNSON**, of South Dakota, in a great and timely address—a keen thinker, a forceful speaker, a thorough-going American.

Admission, Adult 54c, Tax 6c, Total 60c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

## THIRD DAY

**MILANO SEXTETTE**, of New York, in a foretaste of the big musical treat announced for the evening.

**MADAM N. N. SELIVANOVA**, of Russia, in a stirring, thought-provoking lecture, "Russian Women of Today as They Face Bolshevism."

Admission, Adult 36c, Tax 4c, Total 40c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

**MILANO SEXTETTE**—A premier Company of leading soloists from the New York Grand Opera in a popular program, featuring great arias, choruses, solos, etc., including the famous laughing song, Italian dialect songs and selections on the big piano accordion.

Admission, Adult 68c, Tax 7c, Total 75c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

## FOURTH DAY

**THE WALES PLAYERS** in a miscellaneous program of readings, sketches, etc.

**LECTURE**—To be announced.

Admission, Adult 54c, Tax 6c, Total 60c  
Child, 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

**CLARE VAUGHAN WALES COMPANY**—Presentation of the beautiful Bible story of "Esther," in costume, a visualized sermon, set forth by carefully prepared enactors, with Mrs. Wales as Esther. Costumes historically correct. A worthy presentation of a beautiful episode.

Admission, Adult 54c, Tax 6c, Total 60c  
Child, 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

## FIFTH DAY

**BLAND'S ORCHESTRA**—Under the personal direction of Prof. Bland in a snappy prelude program.

**DOCTOR SUDHINDRA BOSE**, of Calcutta, India, on "India and Her Awakening." Teacher of political science in a leading American University.

Admission, Adult 36c, Tax 4c, Total 40c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

**BLAND'S ORCHESTRA**—Big musical program by versatile band under inspiring leadership, including big variety of novelties, vocal solos, quartets—something for everybody from jazz to standard classics, all done with dash, fire and precision.

Admission, Adult 54c, Tax 6c, Total 60c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

## SIXTH DAY

**EDWARD CLARKE CONCERT COMPANY**—A Chicago Company of high-grade artists, including Edward Clarke, bass-baritone; Rachel Steinman Clarke, Polish Violinist, and Earl Victor Prah, pianist—a delightful musical treat.

Admission, Adult 36c, Tax 4c, Total 40c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

**EDWARD CLARKE CONCERT COMPANY**—A continuation of the musical pleasure of the afternoon—thorough satisfaction. **EX-GOVERNOR M. G. BRUMBAUGH**, of Pennsylvania—A brilliant mind and witty, a famous story-teller and a statesman in a fine lecture, fitting the hour.

Admission, Adult 54c, Tax 6c, Total 60c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

## SEVENTH DAY

**THE TEMPLE CHOIR**—Making a specialty of choral work—a worth-while program. **PRINCESS NEAWANNA**, of the Ojibwas—an eloquent plea for a vanishing race—hear the Indians' side. Special exhibit of Indian curios.

Admission, Adult 36c, Tax 4c, Total 40c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 20c

**GREAT CLOSING CONCERT BY THE TEMPLE CHOIR**, featuring great choral numbers, male quartets, ladies' quartets, mixed quartets, special solos, duets, etc. A fitting finish for a week of solid satisfaction.

Admission, Adult 54c, Tax 6c, Total 60c  
Child 18c, Tax 2c, Total 60c

All Sunday Programs will be appropriate to the day.  
Pageant, "Modern Crusaders," will be given by the "Juniors" at 4:30 p. m. on closing day except when closing day is Sunday, when it will be given on Saturday.

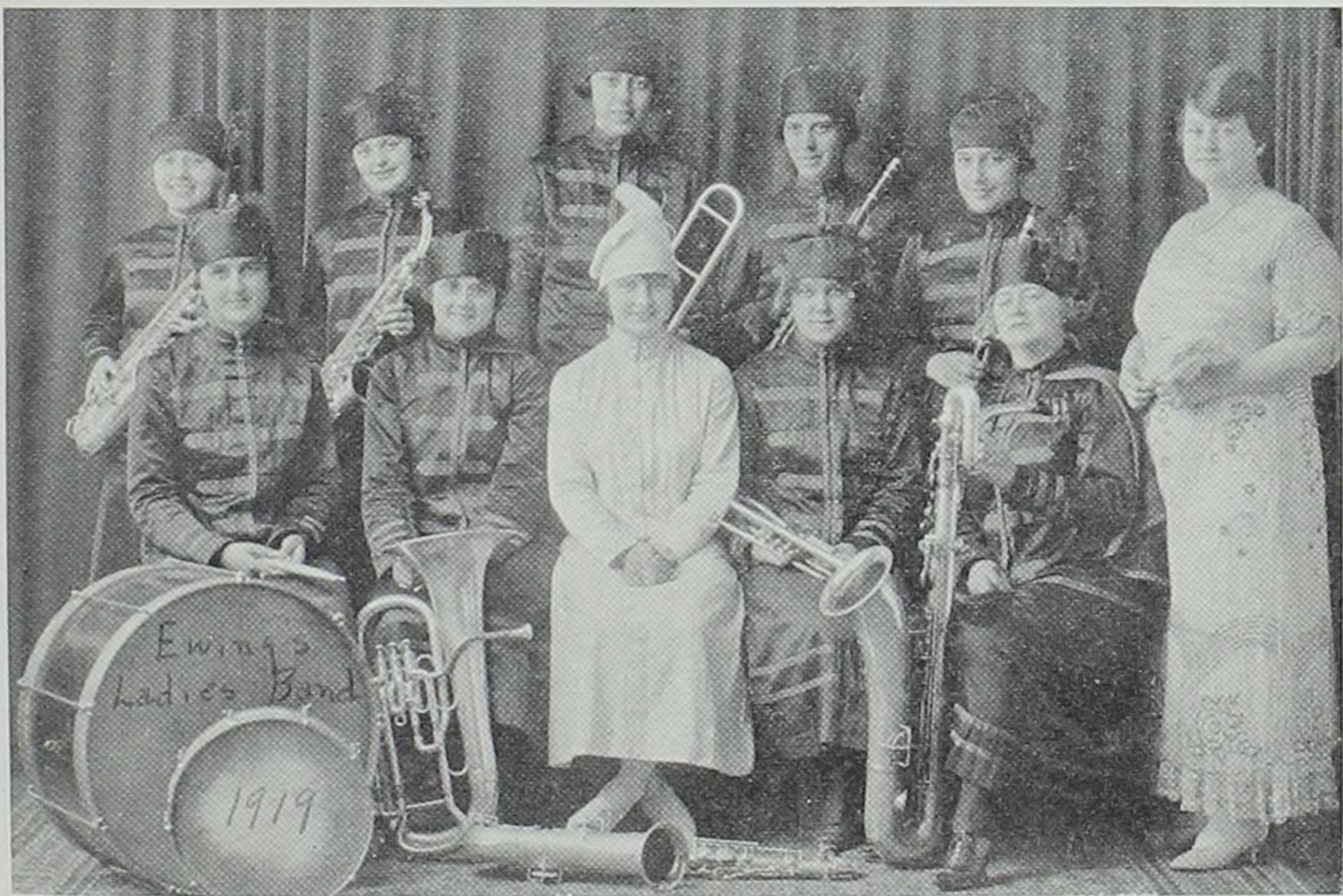
Knoxville Chautauqua Program — July 15 to July 21, 1920.





*Photo courtesy Lillian Leffert*

The Highland Ladies Orchestra of Highland Park College pictured with William Jennings Bryan and ex-Governor Buchtell of Colorado.

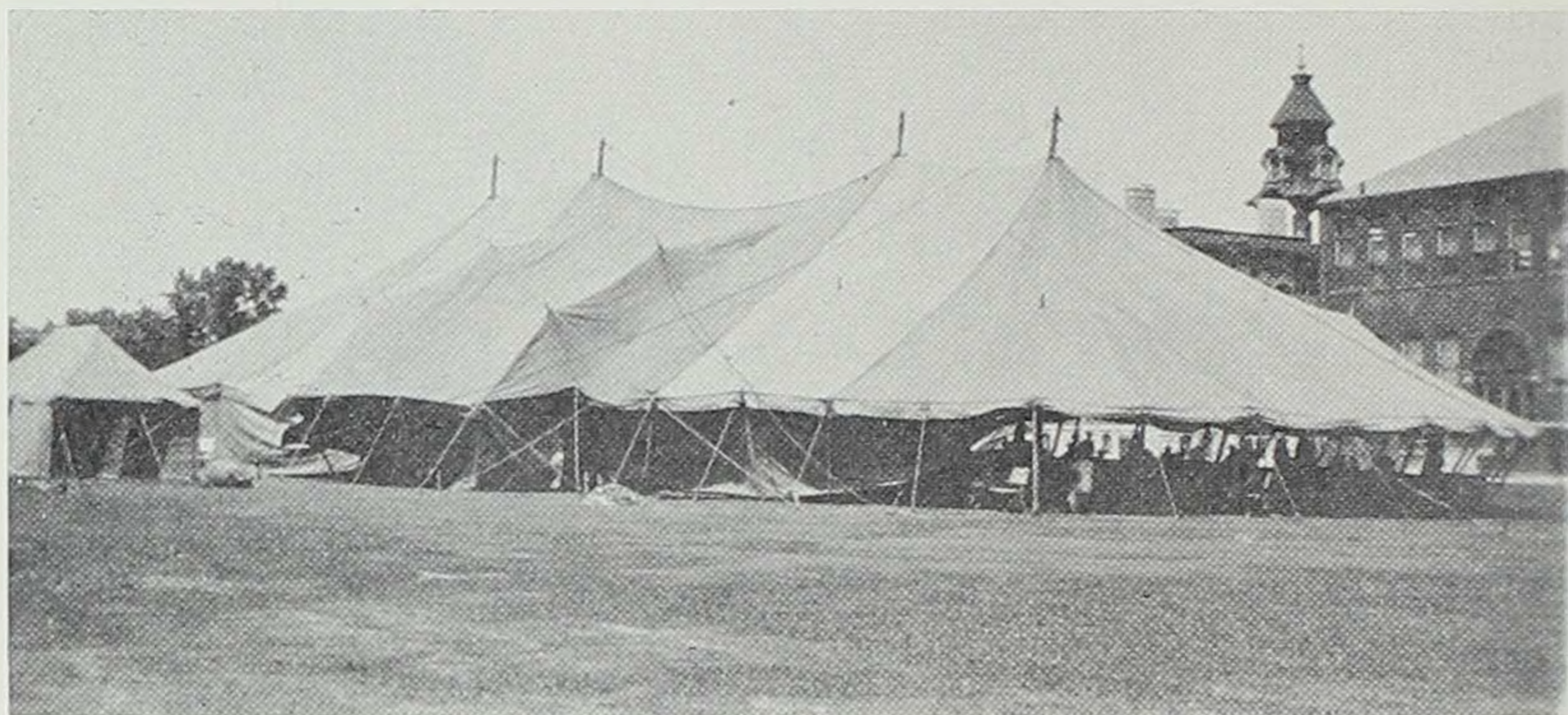


*Photo courtesy Mrs. Floyd E. Cooley*

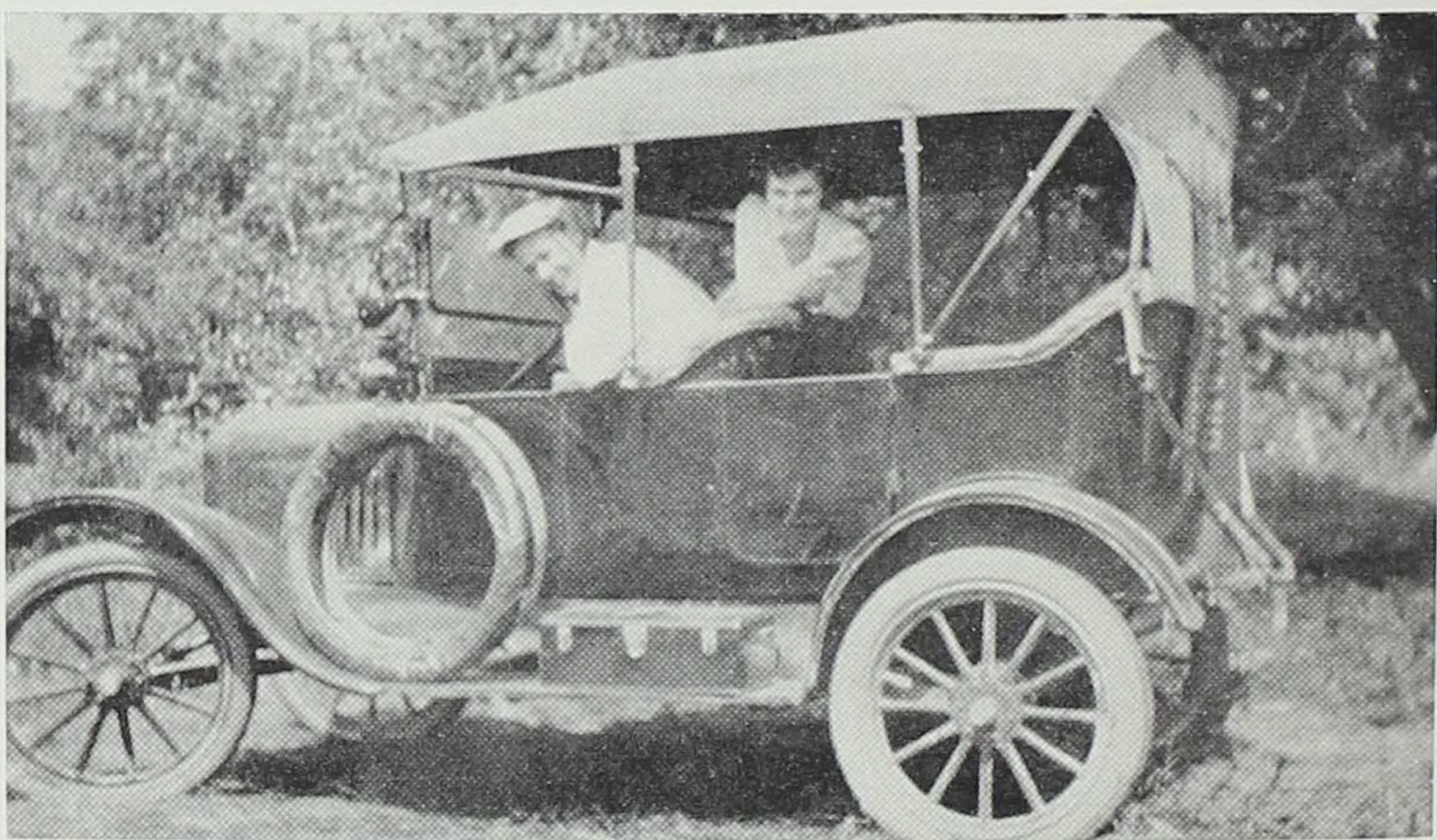
Ewing's Ladies Band played in 1918 and 1919 on a 3-day circuit for S. M. Holladay of Midland Chautauqua in the upper Midwest states. A majority of the musicians were from Iowa towns — Knoxville, Pleasantville, and Keota.



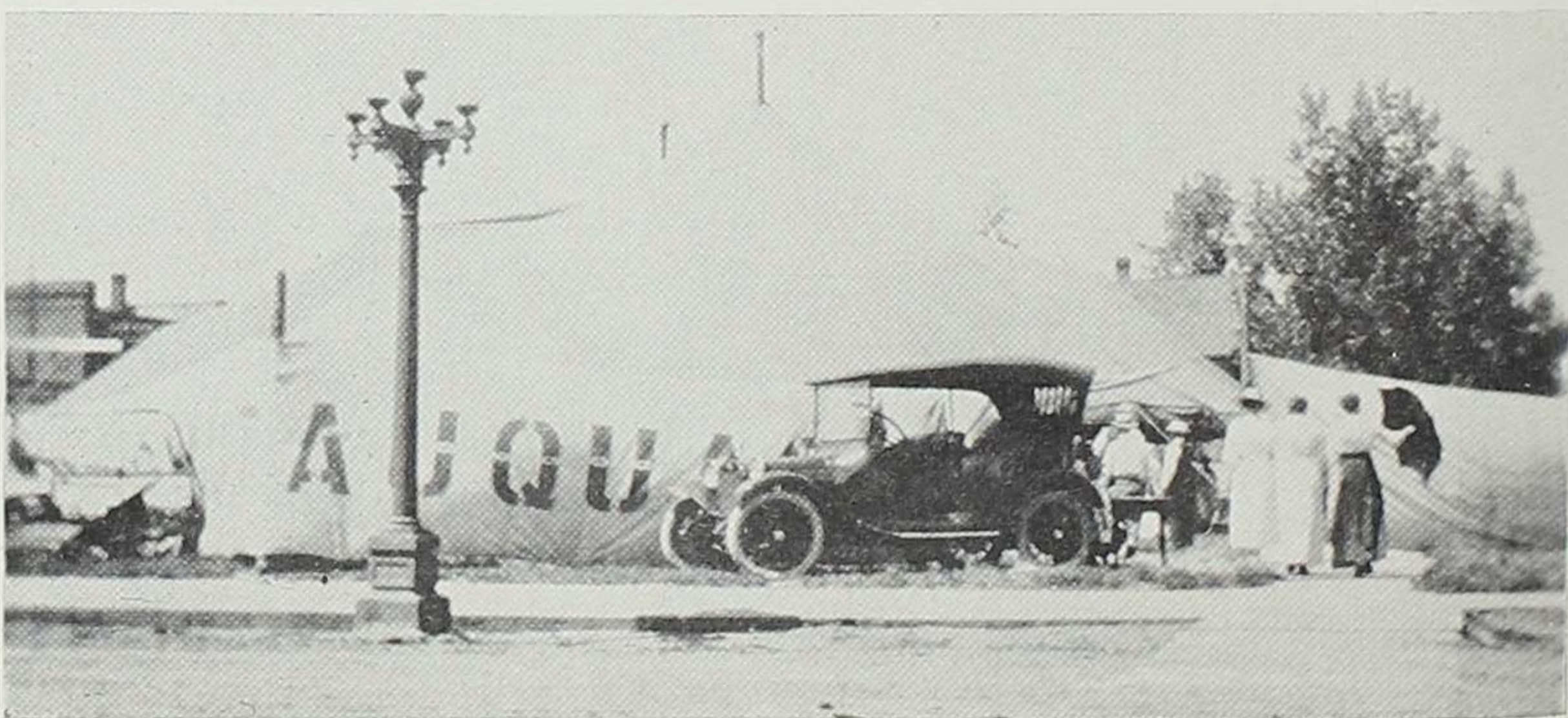
CHAUTAUQUA SNAPSHOTS BY



Chautauqua tent with tent-boys' pup tent to left.



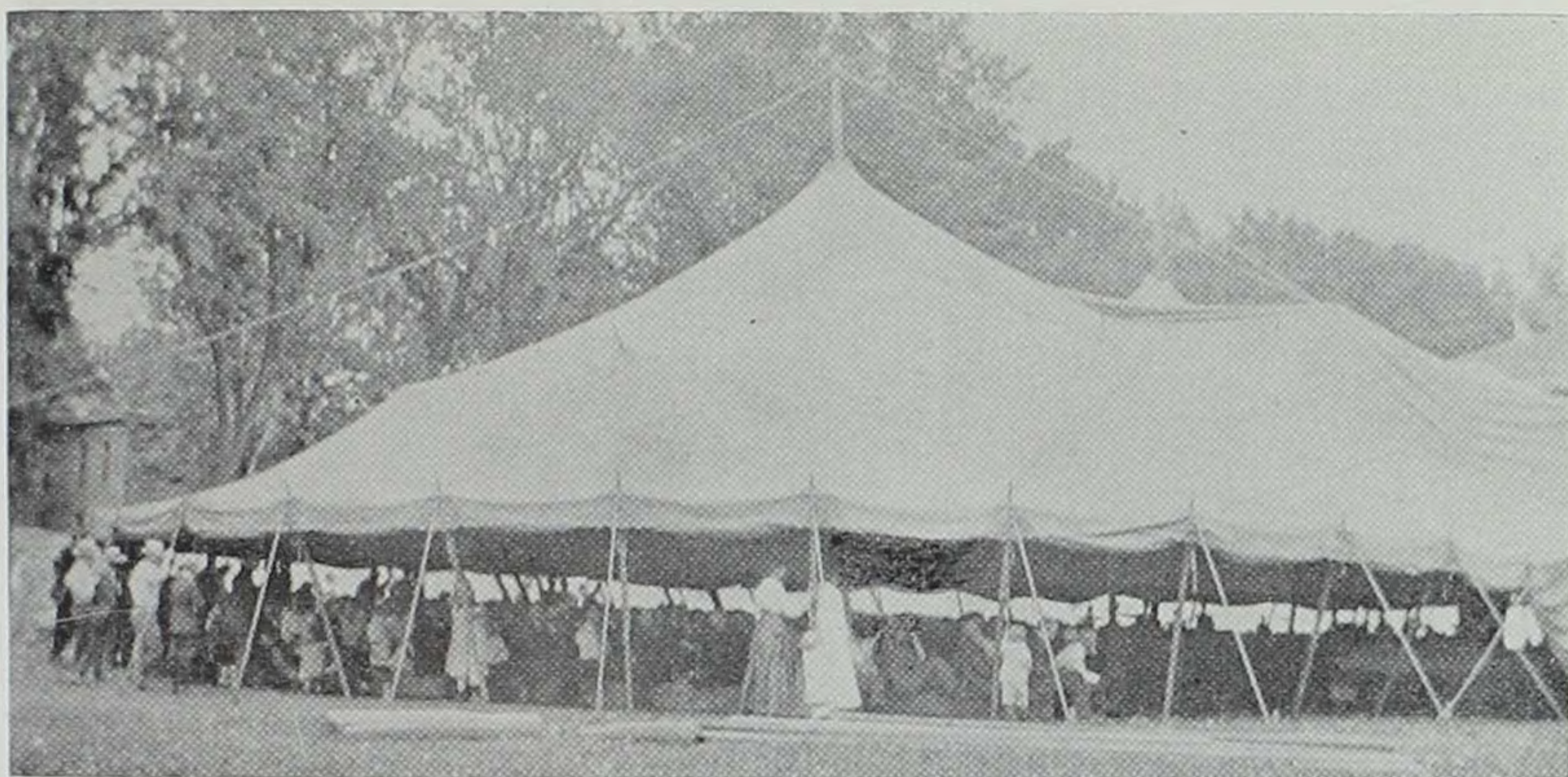
Charles B. Booth made the circuit in his car, sometimes arriving just in time to go on.



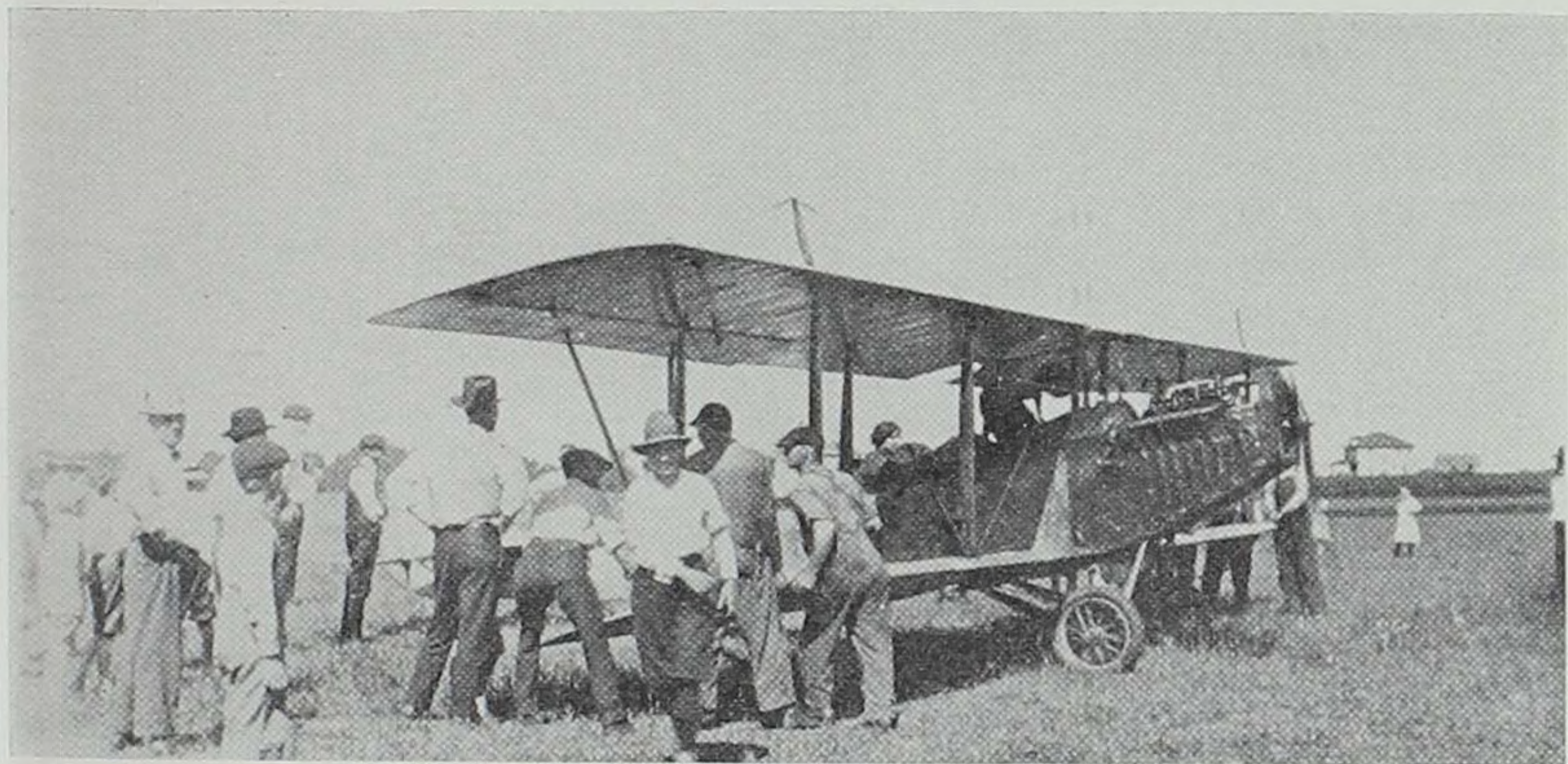
Canvas wall surrounding Chautauqua tent with Booth's car in foreground.



FRANK LUTHER MOTT



Bryan Day at Ackley, Iowa



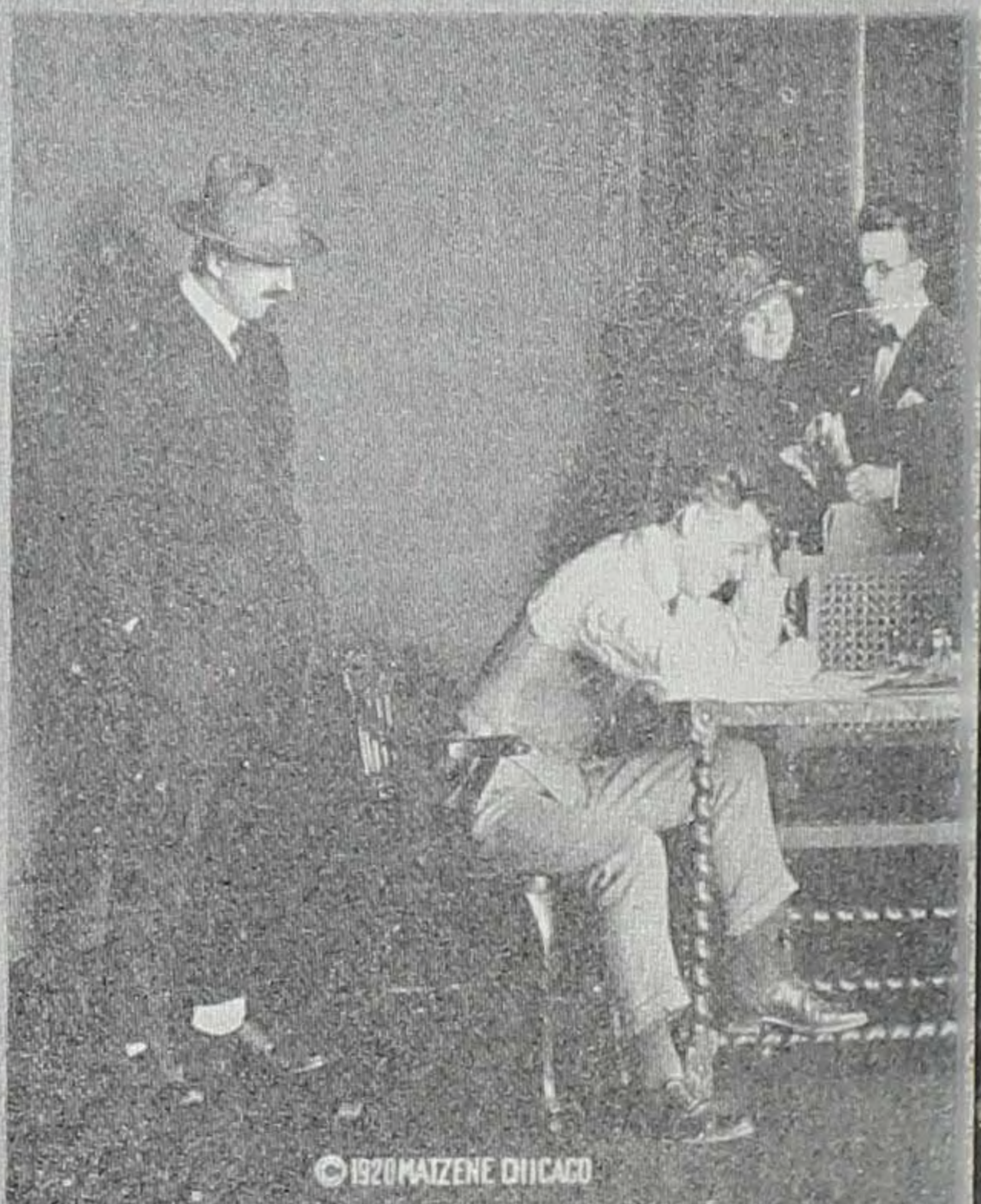
Ready for trip from Canton to Hawarden, Iowa. Mrs. Nielsen was in rear seat for her first flight. Few people in these towns had ever seen an airplane in 1917.



Play Director for Midland Chautauqua had Morning Schedule



TALENT PERFORMING AT KNOXVILLE



*Milano Sextette*

© 1920 MATZENE DIICAGO

*Music*  
*On the great mu*



JULY 15 TO 21, 1920



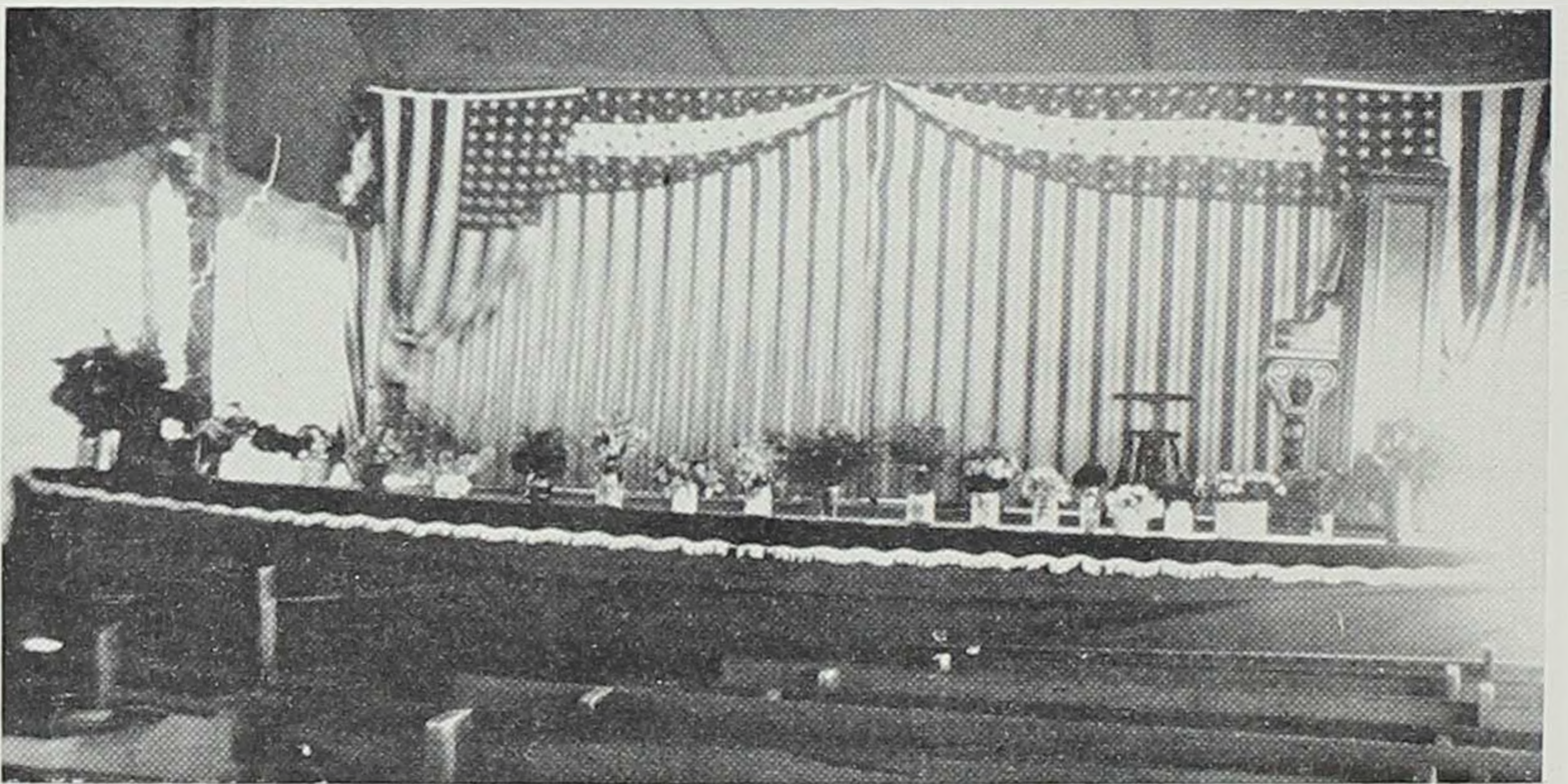
**ANS**  
musical program



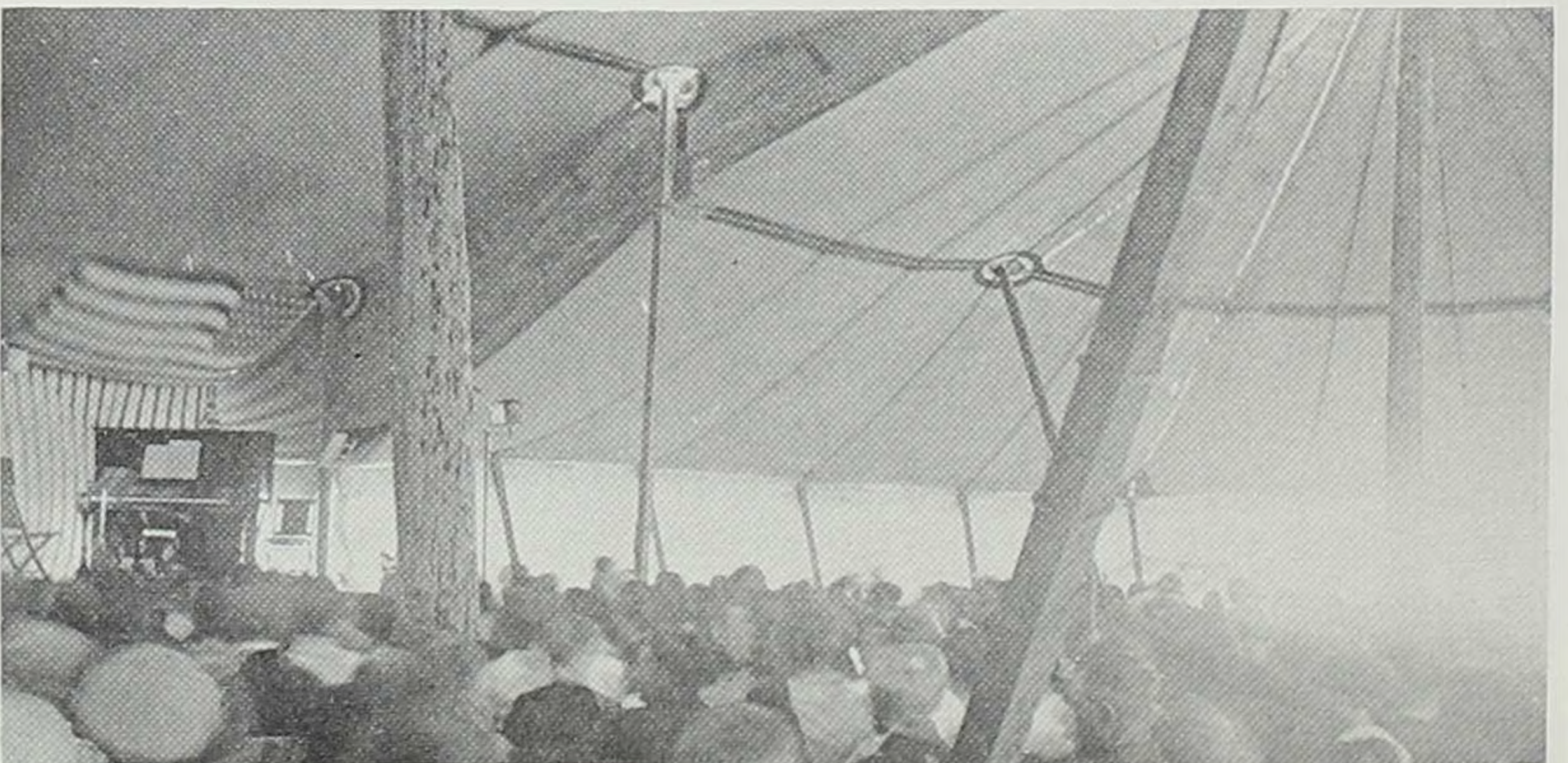
CHAUTAUQUA SNAPSHOTS BY



The Booster Parade Always Brought Out Crowd



Stage of "Five Day Set-Up" in 1915



Chautauqua Crowd Awaiting Opening Number



HOWARD H. PRESTON



Chautauqua "Talent"



The Howard Prestons Remarried on Chautauqua Lot.



Children's Program Participants



Talent Waiting for Train



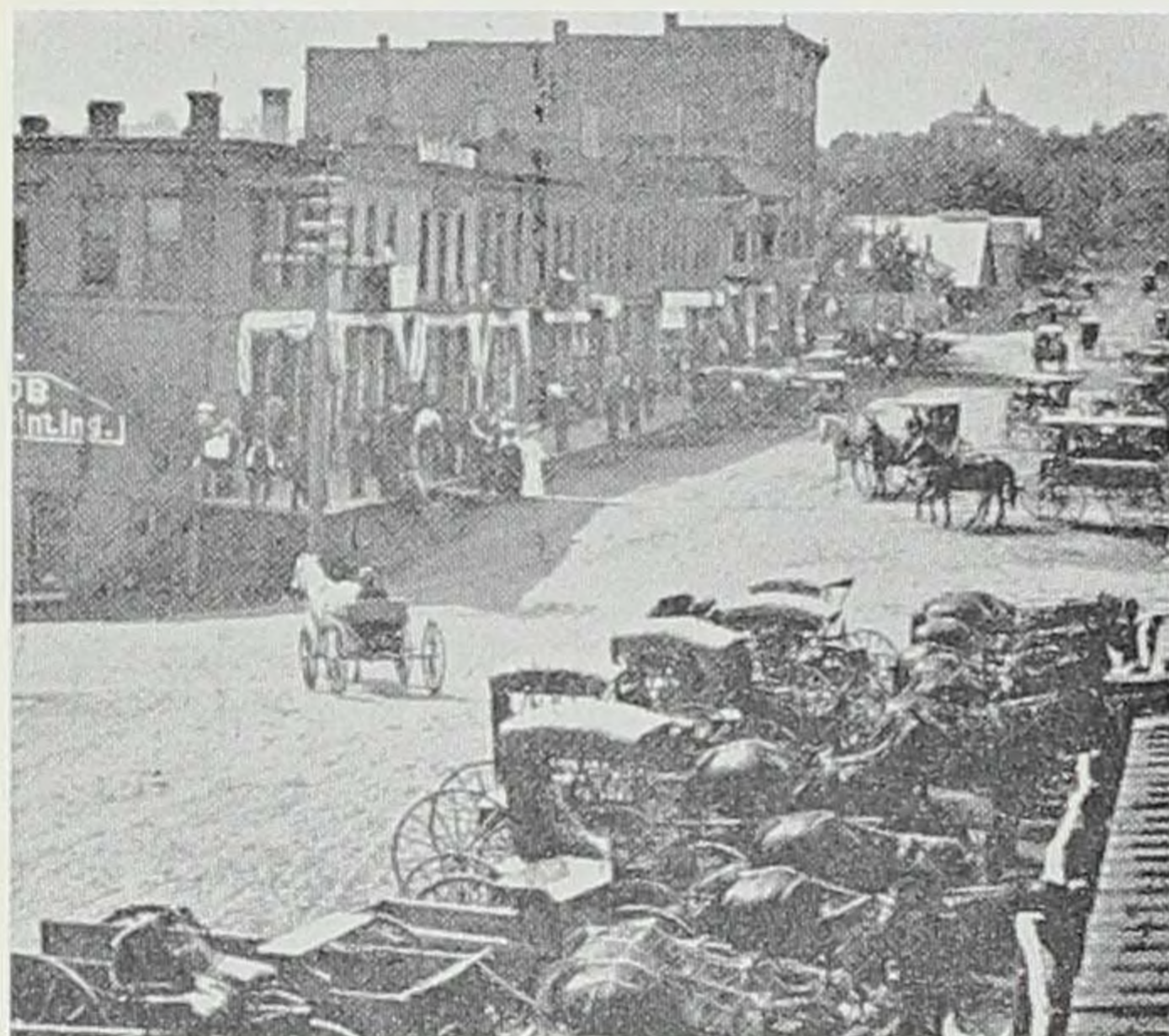
*Farewell Dinner*  
Farewell Dinner — Battle Creek



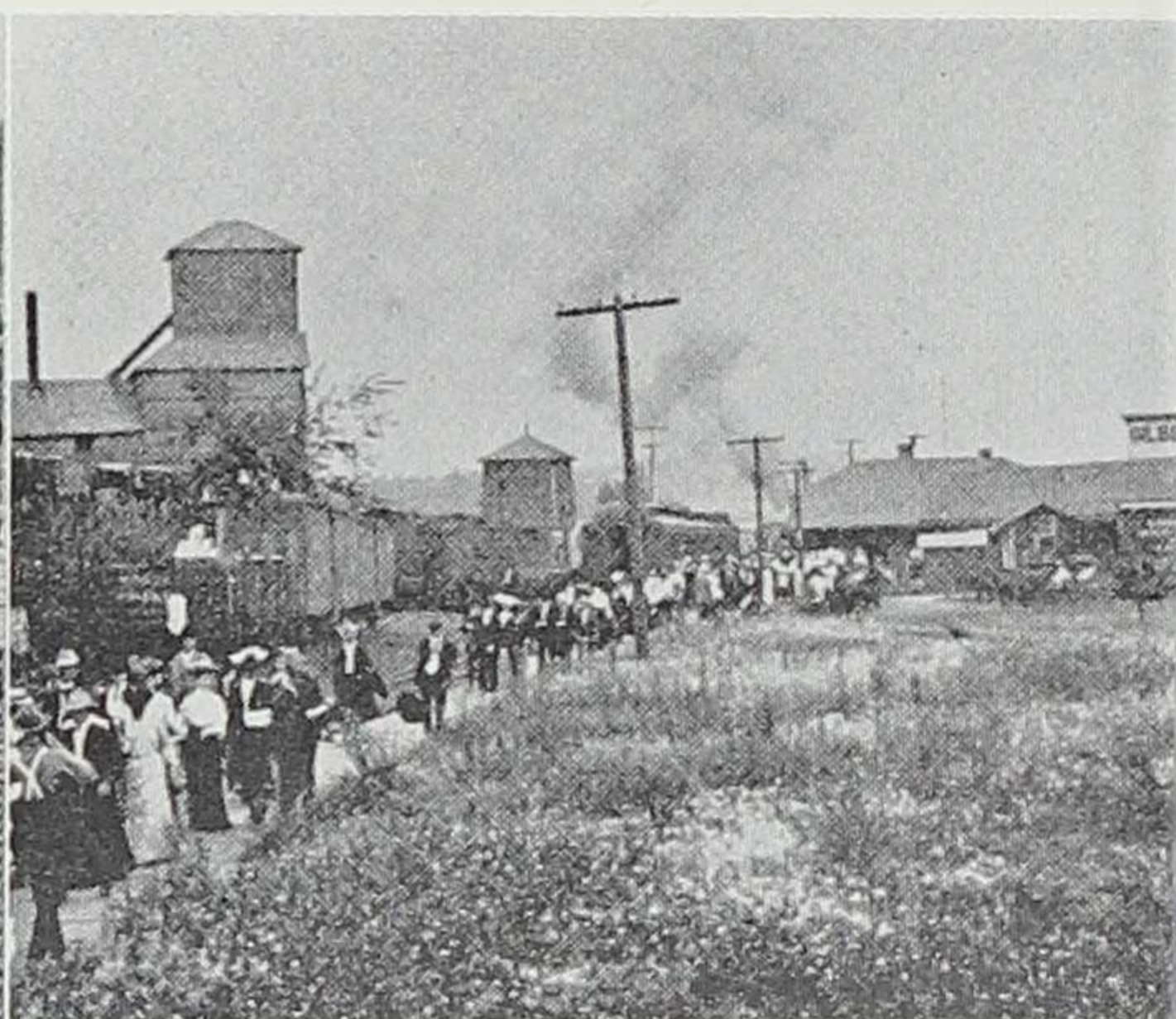
Crew of Summer Chautauqua When "Off Duty"



COLUMBUS CHAUTAUQUA — COLUMBUS JUNCTION



A Saturday Crowd in Columbus Junction



Coming to Chautauqua (by train)



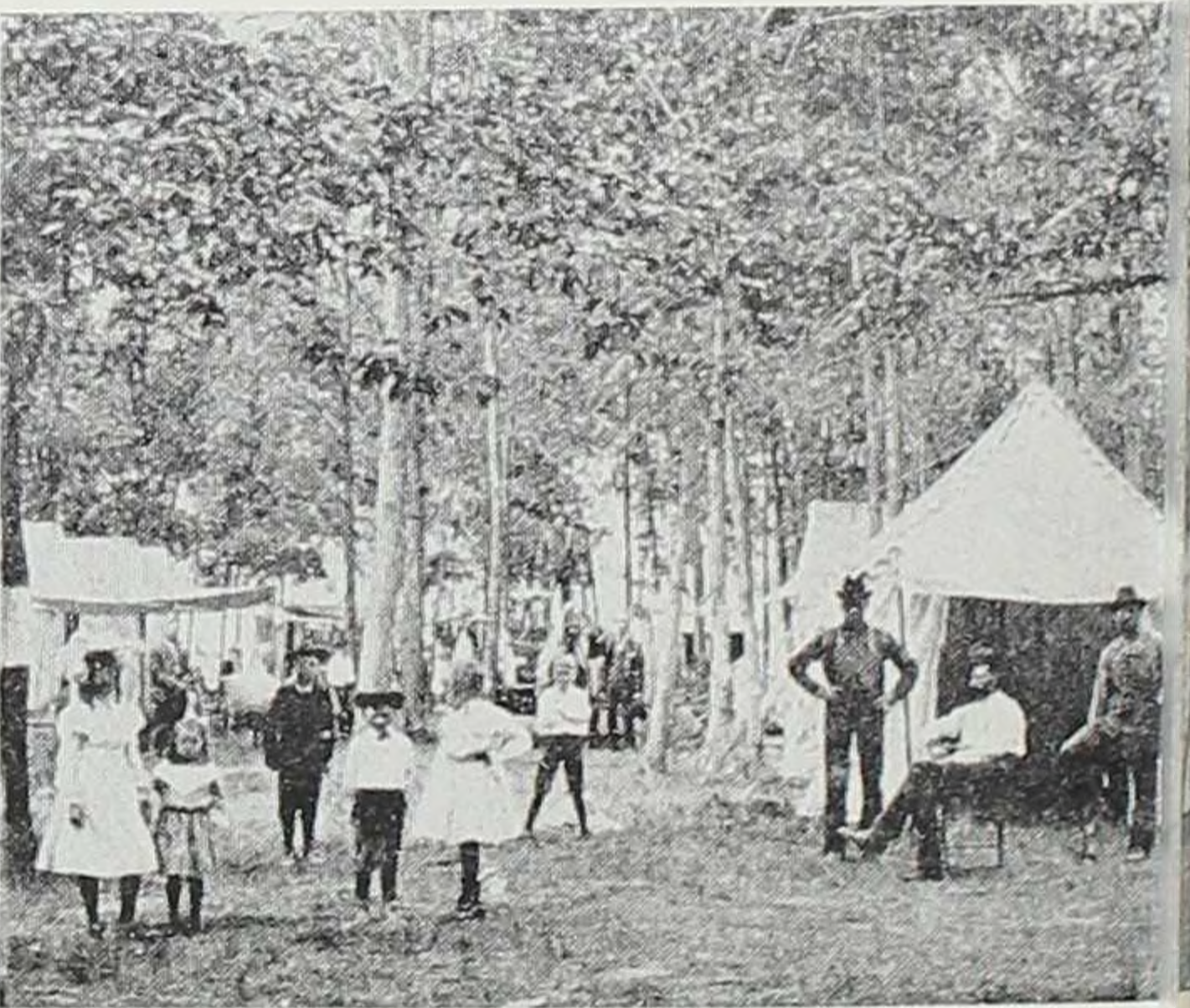
Enjoying the Chautauqua



A Glimpse of the Big Tent

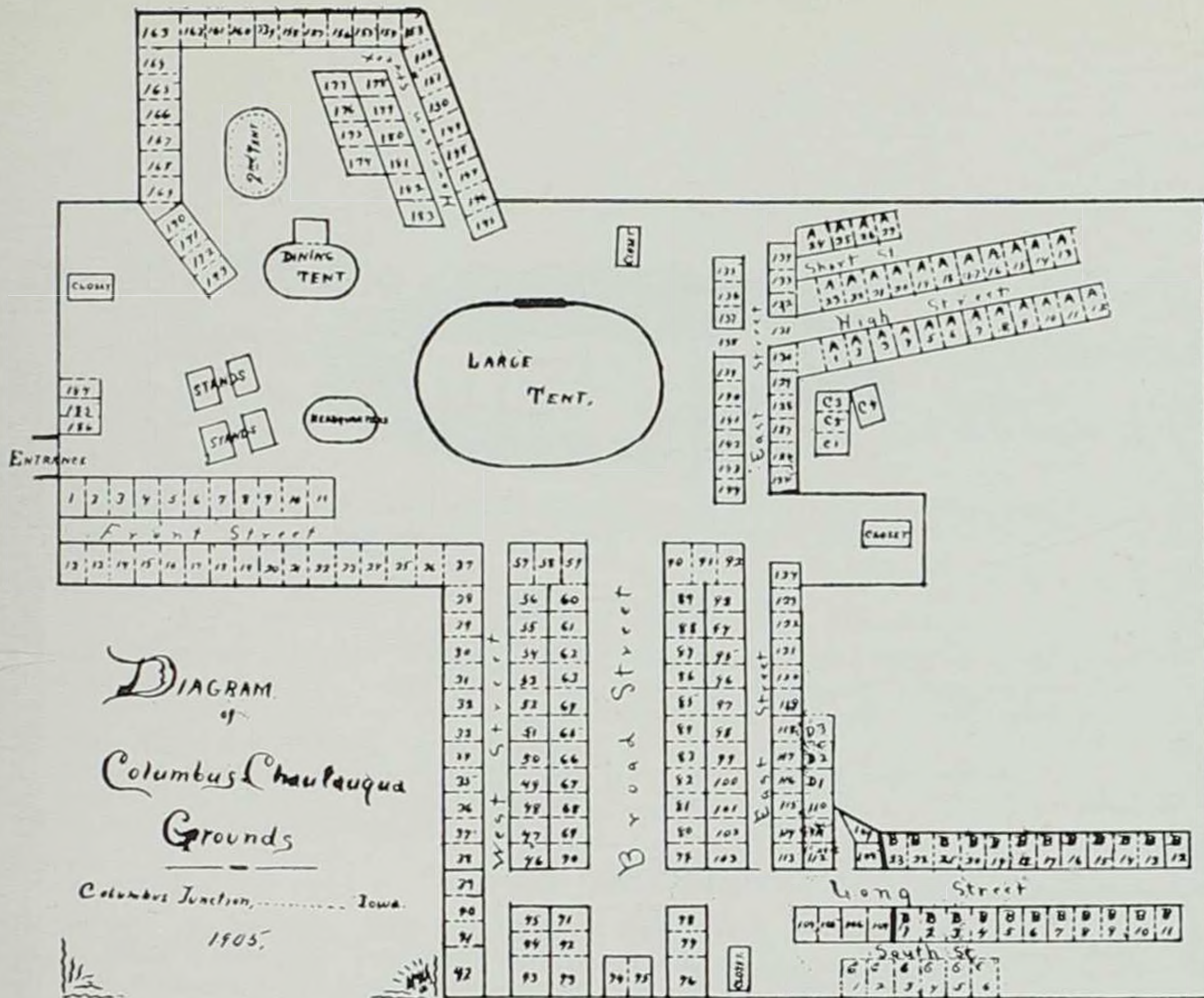


Just inside the Entrance



A Wooded Avenue





MAP OF THE GROUNDS

Map of the Columbus Chautauqua Grounds

# DIRECTORY OF TENTERS

Tent Number Follows Name. Residence Columbus Junction Unless Otherwise Given.

## A

- Albaugh, Myrtle, 105
- Albaugh, Glenn, 105
- Allen, Mrs. C. B., Morning Sun, 62.
- Allen, Harry, Morning Sun, 62.
- Allen, Will, Morning Sun, 62.
- Alexander, Mrs. J. K., New London, 54.
- Alexander, Ellen, New London, 54.
- Anwyl, Evan, 5.
- Aronholt, Mrs. Geo., Marsh, 170.
- Aronholt, Arthur, Winfield, 170.
- Acheson, A. R., 94.
- Acheson, Mrs. A. R., 94.
- Acheson, Ivan, 94
- Anwyl, D. N., Crawfordsville, 16.
- Anwyl, Mrs. D. N., Crawfordsville, 16
- Anwyl, J. J. Crawfordsville, 132.
- Anwyl Mrs. J. J. Crawfordsville, 132.
- Anwyl, Roy, Crawfordsville, 132.
- Anwyl, Hazel, Crawfordsville, 132.
- Anwyl, W. E., Crawfordsville, 132.
- Anwyl, Mrs. W. E., Crawfordsville, 132
- Akeson, Tillie, Lone Tree, A-21.
- Akeson, Anna, Lone Tree, A 21.
- Allen, Mrs. E. B., Grandview, A-8.
- Allen, Myrtle, Grandview, A-8.
- Allen, Lynn, Grandview, A-8.
- Allen, Mrs. C. B., Morning Sun, 62.
- Allen, Harry, Morning Sun, 62.
- Allen, Will, Morning Sun, 62.
- Adams, Rev. F. W., Morning Sun, 59.
- Adams, Mrs. F. W., Morning Sun, 59.
- Adams, Margaret, Morning Sun, 59.
- Adams, Olive, Morning Sun, 59.
- Adams, Harriet, Morning Sun, 59.
- Arthand, Wm., Winfield, 51.

- Arthand, Mrs. Wm., Winfield, 51.
- Arthand, Glen, Winfield, 51.
- Acheson, R. A., Ames, 31.
- Acheson, Mrs. R. A., Ames, 31.
- Acheson, A. D., Ames, 31.
- Albright, E. H., Danville, 50.
- Anwyl, E. G., 149.
- Anwyl, Mrs. E. G., 149.
- Anwyl, Neil, 149.
- Archibald, F. D., Wapello, 146.
- Archibald, Paul, Wapello, 146.
- Archibald, Leland, Wapello, 146.
- Anwyl, Thomas, Ainsworth, 131.
- Anwyl, Mrs. Thos., Ainsworth, 131.
- Anwyl, Fred., Ainsworth, 131.
- Allen, Sam, day police.
- Armbright, Henry, helper.
- Atkins, Fred, Lone Tree, B-1.

## B

- Burroughs, Edith, Wilton, B-13.
- Babbitt, Madge, Conesville, 127.
- Babbitt, Glenn, Lone Tree, 127.
- Baker, Mrs. H. W., Wapello, 119.
- Berkshire, May, Wapello, 119.
- Berkshire, Zolla, Conesville, 119.
- Bowie, Mrs. E. W., Atalissa, D-3.
- Bowie, Inez, Atalissa, D-3.
- Bowie, Edna, Atalissa, D-3.
- Brown, Martha, Morning Sun, 60.
- Brown, Mrs. J. W., Lone Tree, 54.
- Bridges, Mrs. D. M., Grandview, 86.
- Bridges, Ruth, Grandview, 86.
- Bell, Nettie, Marsh, 170.
- Butler, C. F., 148.
- Butler, Martha, 148.

From Official Souvenir of Columbus Chautauqua



Afternoon  
Program  
Begins at 2:30

# Program

Evening  
Program  
Begins at 8:00

Children's Chautauqua at 9:30 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. each day except Sunday  
Story Hour for the "Wee Tots" at 3:00 p.m.

## AFTERNOON

**KEALAKAI'S HAWAIIAN SINGERS AND PLAYERS.** Delightful Program of Native Music—Weird, Enchanting, Melodious.

Admission 15c and 35c.

## FIRST DAY

## EVENING

**KEALAKAI'S HAWAIIAN SINGERS AND PLAYERS.** Half Hour of Hawaiian Music.

**ATTORNEY GENERAL H. M. HAVNER;** "Citizenship, Its Duties and Responsibilities."

Admission 15c and 35c.

## SECOND DAY

**MISS EDNA THOMAS, POLUHNI AND COMPANY.** Readings, and Music.  
**ALFRED H. O'CONNOR.** "Twenty Months in the Trenches."

Admission 15c and 50c.

**POLUHNI AND COMPANY. MISS EDNA THOMAS.** Concert: Vocal and Instrumental Music, Bells, Organ Chimes, etc., Readings from "Barbara Fritchie."

Admission 15c and 35c.

## THIRD DAY

**THE CROATIAN TAMBURICA ORCHESTRA.** Half Hour of Splendid Music.  
**STRICKLAN GILLILAN,** Foremost Humorist, "Sunshine and Awkwardness."

Admission 15c and 50c.

**CROATIAN TAMBURICA ORCHESTRA.** Superb and Novel Concert, featuring the Native Croatian Tamburica, Male Quartet, etc.

Admission 15c and 35c.

## FOURTH DAY

**BLACKMAN'S VILLAGE SINGERS.** Program: Instrumental Music, and Songs and Stories of Three Generations by the Splendid Mixed Quartet.

**COL. GEO. W. BAIN,** Dean of the American Platform. Lecture: "If I Had Life to Live Over."

Admission 15c and 35c.

**BLACKMAN'S VILLAGE SINGERS.** Half Hour of Favorite Songs.

**NED WOODMAN.** Cartoons and Home-made poetry by the unique cartoonist and entertainer.

Admission 15c and 35c.

## FIFTH DAY

**TEXAS GLEES.** Magnificent Concert, Featuring Double Quartet—Piano, Brass Sextette, Male Quartet, accompanied by Orchestra.

Admission 15c and 50c.

**THE TEXAS GLEES,** Delightful Half Hour.

**JOHN C. WELSH,** "U. S. Army and Navy." Marvelously Interesting and Instructive Travelogue, illustrated by moving and still pictures.

Admission 15c and 50c.

Programs will be changed on Sunday where necessary, so as to be in keeping with the spirit of the day.

Pageant "Good Fairy Thrift" will be given by the "Juniors" on closing day at 4:30 p.m., except when program ends on Sunday, when it will be given on Saturday.

West Branch Chautauqua Program — June 30 to July 4, 1917



## DAILY PROGRAM

### TUESDAY, JULY 29

- 2:30 P. M. Prelude.....The Chamberlin Duo  
 3:30 P. M. Lecture....."Who's the Biggest Man in Town"  
 .....William Rainey Bennett  
 7:30 P. M. Concert.....The Chamberlin Duo  
 8:30 P. M. Lecture....."The Psychology of Power"  
 .....Wm. Rainey Bennett

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

- 2:30 P. M. "Mrs. Plimpton's Husband".....A Clever Comedy  
 .....The Randall Entertainers  
 7:30 P. M. "Mother's Millions".....Drama of Big Business  
 .....The Randall Entertainers

### THURSDAY, JULY 31

- 2:30 P. M. Concert.....The Elias Tamburitza Serenaders  
 7:30 P. M. Prelude.....The Elias Tamburitza Serenaders  
 8:30 P. M. Lecture....."The Old Town in a New World"  
 .....Charles H. Plattenburg

### FRIDAY, AUGUST 1

- 2:30 P. M. Magic Land.....Children's Program  
 .....Laurant & Company  
 7:30 P. M. Magic and Mystery.....Laurant & Company

### SATURDAY, AUGUST 2

- 2:30 P. M. Concert.....The Metropolitan Concert Company  
 7:30 P. M. Lecture....."Revolt in the Desert"  
 .....Charles Abdule Elias  
 8:30 P. M. Concert.....The Metropolitan Concert Company

## TICKET INFORMATION

Adult's Season Ticket.....	\$2.00
Child's Season Ticket.....	1.00
Adult's Single Admission.....	.50
Child's Single Admission afternoon Aug. 1.....	.10
Child's Single Admission all other programs.....	.25

### NOTE:

Adults.....	Persons over 14 years of age
Children.....	Persons 6 to 14 years of age
Children under 6 years with parents, admitted free	
Season Tickets.....	Transferable in immediate family

## AT THE TENT



## KNOXVILLE

## INDEPENDENT CHAUTAQUA

FOURTEEN OUTSTANDING PROGRAMS



JULY 29,-AUGUST 2, i

## Chautauqua 1930 Attractions

### Chautauqua Organization

#### OFFICERS

President.....	S. L. Walker
Vice-President.....	A. F. Keeton
Secretary.....	W. J. Casey
Treasurer.....	E. L. Job

#### CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Program.....	Rev. Dow G. Pinkston
Ticket.....	Catharine Edwards
Publicity.....	A. A. Kurtz
Grounds.....	T. H. Jones

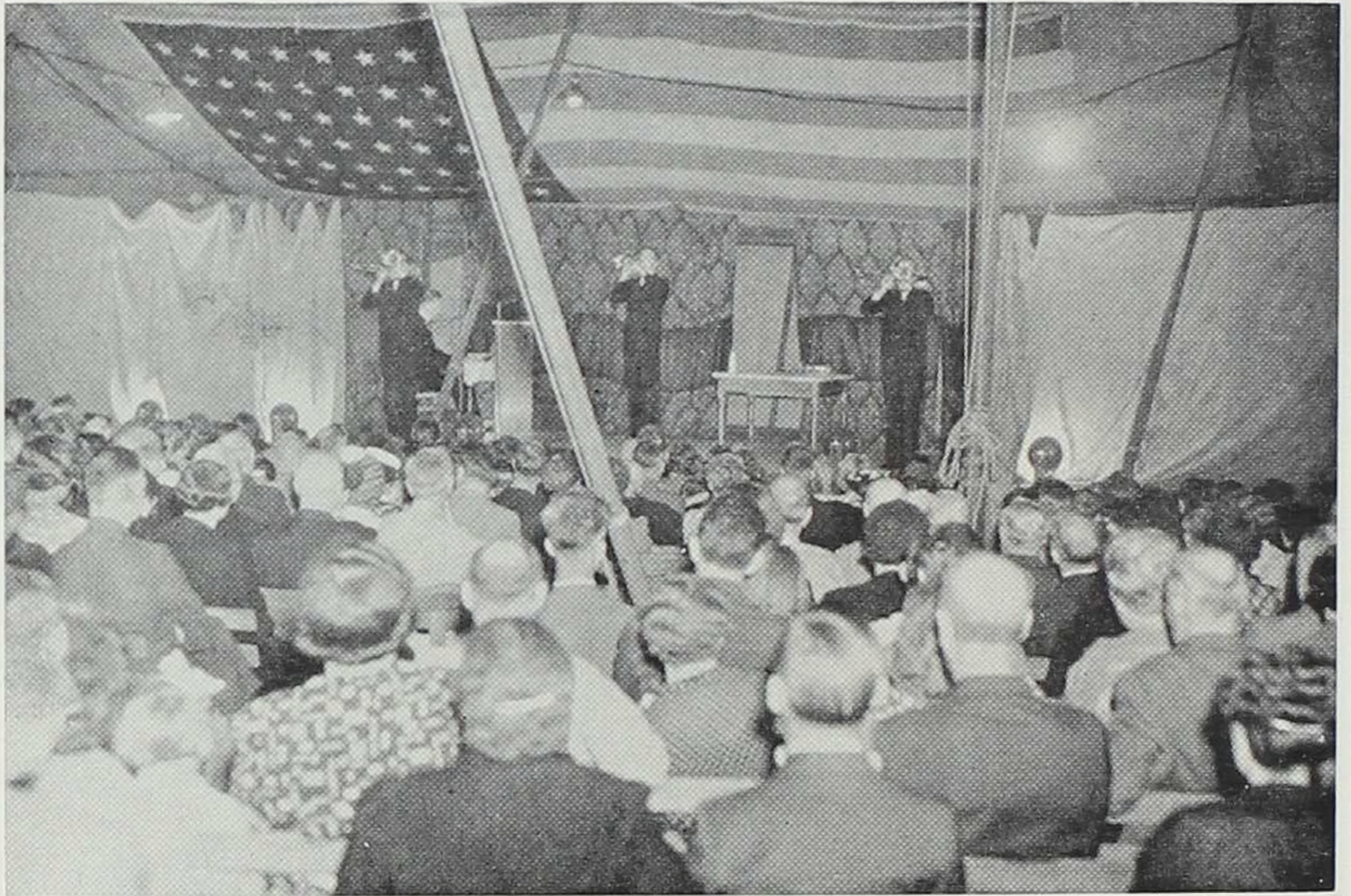
Keep This Program for Reference

IOAR INDEPENDENT  
CHAUTAQUA CO.  
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

Knoxville Independent Chautauqua Program — July 29 to August 2, 1930



WHEN FAIRFIELD THRILLED TO CHAUTAUQUA



Opening the Program



*George Yates Photo — Des Moines Register*

Waving Handkerchiefs — The Chautauqua Salute



which further selection might be made by the local parties wherever it was deemed advisable.

For this basic program he quoted a definite contract price. This price was far below that at which the same attractions could have been secured by independent local managements. The low price quoted was made possible by the savings in railroad transportation and the unbroken employment of talent without costly open time interfering. In towns where additional attractions were desired such attractions were added to the basic program at an agreed added cost.

It so befell, however, that many adjustments had to be made this first year to humor prejudices and to satisfy certain whims that inevitably make their appearance, as resistant [sic] forces, wherever important experiments are being tried out. Thus at some of his first year towns, Mr. Vawter contracted to deliver his entire program at a given price. At others he contracted for cooperation by local citizens with a provision for receiving first money up to an agreed amount. At others he laid the foundation of the guarantee that remained for many years a feature of chautauqua contracts, by securing block subscriptions for season tickets, or straight guarantees for the sale of a specified number of such tickets in advance.

Under the above arrangement Vawter assembled a nine-day program which featured the Chicago Lady Entertainers, the Giant Colored Quartette, and the Temple Male Quartette, each group presenting the musical entertainment in successive three-day sessions. In addition to these, Vawter featured eminent lecturers, moving pictures, and entertainment by Edwin M. Brush, Magician. A joint debate on the fourth day pitted



Judge Martin J. Wade against Congressman J. Adam Bede on the subject: "The Political Issues of the Day."

The year 1904 might therefore be said to usher in the golden era of Circuit Chautauqua in Iowa. The Midland Circuit of Des Moines opened in 1905 and the Western Redpath Chautauqua was organized in 1908. By 1916 a score of Circuits had been established in the Middle West to compete for community favor.

#### *Chautauqua Talent*

An almost incredible amount of "Talent" was made available to Iowa communities by the Chautauqua Circuit. The quality of the program varied, of course, depending on the size of the budget available. The stream of notable Chautauqua personalities — lecturers, musicians, actors, jugglers, and magicians — would read like a veritable "Who's Who in America." Popular Iowa statesmen such as Albert Baird Cummins, Jonathan Dolliver, William S. Kenyon, George G. Wright, and Lafayette Young vied with such political luminaries as Uncle Joe Cannon, Champ Clark, Ignatius Donnelly, Irvin I. Lenroot and Robert M. LaFollette. Outstanding clergymen appeared upon the Chautauqua platform — S. Parks Cadman, Newell Dwight Hillis, Rabbi Emil Hirsh, Bishop Edwin Hughes, Reverend Sam Jones, and the incomparable Billy Sunday — to mention a few. Of bands, orchestras, quartettes, glee clubs,



and solo artists, there seemed to be no limit. One of the most famous Chautauqua male quartets was the Weatherwax brothers of Charles City, Iowa.

At Cherokee between 1907 and 1931 there were no less than 101 different musical groups. Among those appearing the most popular was Bohumir Kryl's Band, which appeared five times in Cherokee. Jackson's Original Virginia Jubilee Singers, Dunbar's Quartette and Bell Ringers, the Music Makers Quartette, the Thavius International Band, and Vierra's Royal Hawaiians each delighted Cherokeans twice. During this same period Captain Richard P. Hobson lectured on three occasions while encores at Cherokee were made by Dr. F. G. Smith, Dr. William Edgar Geil, W. I. Nolan, William Jennings Bryan, Governor J. Frank Hanly of Indiana, Dr. Frank W. Gunsaulus, Opie Read, John A. Gray, Paul S. Dietrick, Dr. James L. Gordon, and Julian B. Arnold. A total of 131 different lecturers faced Cherokee audiences. Between 1907 and 1931 fully fifty-three different entertainers appeared on the Cherokee Chautauqua, the most popular of whom seem to have been Alton Packard, cartoonist; Joseph Rosani, juggler; the Ojibway Indians and John B. Ratto, impersonator. It should be pointed out that the failure of some celebrities to return might be attributed to a conflict in schedule or inability of Cherokee to afford the same expensive "Talent" twice.



Although there were many brilliant stars among the Chautauqua speakers of yesteryears, a few stand out, not only for drawing the biggest crowds, but also, and no doubt as a result, for receiving the highest pay. Heading this list were such men as William Jennings Bryan, Booker T. Washington, and William A. (Billy) Sunday — himself a native Iowan. About 4,500 heard Bryan speak at Fairfield in 1906. Booker T. Washington was believed to have drawn 1,000 more than Bryan that year. This was said to be the highest paid admission for a public speech ever paid in Fairfield.

#### *Crusading Women*

Although Woman Suffrage was still in the offing, there was no dearth of lady orators and speakers among the "Talent." Mrs. Maude Balington Booth, of the Volunteers of America, drew a crowd of approximately 5,000 in 1906 — the same number as Billy Sunday. "When Mrs. Booth was introduced," the *Fairfield Journal* of August 22 records, "the entire audience united in giving her a Chautauqua salute (waving of handkerchiefs). She acknowledged this gracefully with a tribute to the Chautauquas of Iowa, saying that 'in no other place were there more or better Chautauquas or more appreciative audiences.'" Mrs. Booth, who was widely known as "The Little Mother of the Prisons" throughout the Nation, was said by the *Iowa City Republican* to be 'the



highest priced woman speaker on the Chautauqua platform.' At Iowa City she brought a large and enthusiastic audience to tears on several occasions by her dramatic powers of description.

Most of the female Chautauqua lecturers had achieved their fame as Suffragettes, Temperance Crusaders, or Anti-Saloon League Advocates. When Carry Nation (whose presence would have made any saloon keeper quake) arrived in Iowa City in 1910, she found it contained, in addition to the State University of Iowa, — twenty saloons. For days the citizens of Johnson County had looked forward to her appearance in eager anticipation. "To many people," the *Iowa City Daily Press* of August 16 declared, "tomorrow will be the greatest day in the history of Chautauqua — for Carry Nation comes." The following day the *Press* noted:

This is Carry Nation day, and several hundred people are assembling from city and county to listen to the words of this remarkable woman, whose public speeches are interesting to many who are opposed to her views or methods, personally.

Iowa Citizens were prepared for Carry Nation's visit by a dispatch from Cedar Rapids carried in the *Iowa City Republican* of August 16, 1910.

Carry Nation raised particular Cain at the Montrose Hotel in Cedar Rapids Sunday, and gained much publicity thereby among the peaceful and bibulous Parlor Cityites.

First shot out of the box, Carry asked if there was a bar in connection with the hotel.



"First door to your right, down the corridor," said the clerk.

Carry didn't faint, not she. She felled the clerk with an imaginary swing of her hatchet, ordered her baggage taken out of the hotel, told the cigar girl that she might as well serve booze as sell tobacco, and informed a young man in the lobby that he was going to hell.

Then she decamped.

When she spoke in Iowa City, the following day Carry Nation declared that hell would be populated by the following classes: Republicans, Democrats, Masons, Smokers, Drinkers.

Her remarks about the Masons went straight from the shoulder and drew forth thunderous applause from the masculine portion of the audience, which was at least 65 per cent Masonic.

"The Masons swear to pull out their tongues and cut out their bowels," said Mrs. Nation. "They go off to their lodge at night, and the Lord only knows where they are lodging."

During the course of an interview with a reporter from the *Iowa City Daily Press* in her room at the Burkley Imperial, Carry Nation befriended a gigantic dog which had followed the reporter into her room.

Really, you know, the more I see of men, the more I think of dogs — if the men are smoking cigarettes or drinking whiskey.

I like dogs because they don't use tobacco or strong drink.

This is a splendid dog. I know he don't drink or smoke. I wish I had him at my home in Arkansas. I'd keep him all the time . . . .



It isn't for me to say what I'm accomplishing. Anybody that sees the world knows. You can tell. People always ask me what I think. What's the use? They can see for themselves.

I went into the work, because God told me to go.

I have smashed hundreds of saloons, and have been in jail 34 times, for the smashing and one thing and another besides.

I've spent 11 years in this crusading, and there are millions of good people with me sympathetically and otherwise. I know the cause of temperance and prohibition is spreading and that the world is getting better along that line — but there's a lot left to be done yet.

Chautauqua folks could weather the cyclonic attacks of Carry Nation — but there were other storms that were not so easy to weather. One of the most dreaded scourges of any Chautauqua season was the big rain and windstorms that frequently tore the Big Tents to shreds, endangering lives as poles came toppling down. At one such storm in Iowa City the Big Tent managed to stay up because the "side poles had been let down in order that the wind might not belly the canvas out from underneath." According to the *Iowa City Republican* of August 17, 1908, the "Tenters" did not fare so well:

#### LINEN PARADE AT CHAUTAUQUA

Fantastic Sight Seen Last Night During  
the Storm Which Blew Down Many Tents.

An extensive linen parade was in evidence during the storm early this morning at the Chautauqua grounds, for



many tents were blown down and campers were forced to seek shelter from more fortunate neighbors. In the lightning flashes night-robed figures could be seen hurrying around or standing confused by the elemental fury.

The tent of Andrew Howell and wife was blown from over their heads while they were asleep, and Mr. Howell used his clothing and called for numerous hats to protect himself and wife from the drenching storm.

The D. C. Abrams tent was blown down in the blast and the occupants treated to an unceremonious shower bath.

George Reddick's tent suffered, the big iron stakes being pulled up from the ground, and the canvas settling down in a nice, damp, clammy mass.

Such experiences, as well as descriptions, have left indelible memories on many veteran Chautauqua workers and fans.

### *College Students and Chautauqua*

Thousands of college students, both men and women, earned their way through school working on the Chautauqua circuit.

Howard H. Preston recalls four summers spent with the Redpath-Vawter Chautauqua System between 1913 and 1916. Born at Battle Creek, Iowa, in 1885, Preston spent the first two summers as a Property Man followed by two summers as a local Manager or Superintendent. Preston was a graduate student at the State University of Iowa during this period, and was hard at work on a book published by the State Historical Society of



Iowa in 1922 entitled the *History of Banking in Iowa*.

On June 12, 1916, at the beginning of his fourth summer in Chautauqua, Preston married Lucy Helen Steele in a ceremony performed in Cedar Rapids. He was proud of his association with Redpath-Vawter—"an Iowa organization—biggest and best in the field." The circuit he followed covered four states—South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa—closing at Griswold, Iowa. He gained many impressions and some inside glimpses of the administrative aspects of Chautauqua but remembered more vividly the human interest incidents—the "crew," the "talent," a tent blown down and torn in a storm, getting essential baggage aboard the Great Northern's crack "Oriental Limited," the spirit of the organization, "the program must go on," and the camaraderie of the Chautauqua folk.

Senator D. C. Nolan's days as a college student on Chautauqua left equally vivid memories.

In the spring of 1924 after a summer selling Wearever aluminum and correspondence courses for the American Institute of Business, Ray Newton, owner of the United Chautauqua Company of Des Moines, gave me a job as one of his superintendents for the 1924 Chautauqua season at the very attractive salary of \$25.00 a week and travel expenses, plus a bonus of \$15.00 for every contract renewed for the coming year. Ironically, in order to encourage greater effort to secure renewal of the contracts, the Chautauqua management had an extra superintendent



available to take the place of the first superintendent who failed to renew a contract for the following year.

Leaving Creighton University a few days before the end of the school year, I went to Devils Lake, North Dakota, where the United Chautauqua Company was organized and given its final rehearsal before the opening of the season. The Chautauqua was a "four-day" program for the season which required seven superintendents and crewmen together with tents and other equipment so that throughout the season while four towns were being played (to enable the "talent" to work every day) the other three superintendents and crews would be tearing down, moving on, and setting up in the towns ahead on the circuit. All of the other superintendents were school superintendents or professional Chautauqua people. For some unknown reason I drew the first town on the circuit which was Leeds, North Dakota. My assistant was "Scripts" Beebe of Logan, Iowa, who was attending Simpson College at the time.

Our program on United Chautauqua in 1924 was a routine. The "first day program" consisted of music, humorous lecturer, and cartoonist; the "second day program" consisted of an afternoon of music and a lecture, and the evening program was the presentation of the play "Peg-O-My-Heart"; the "third day program" consisted of an afternoon lecture, instrumental music, and vocalist, and the evening program was made up of a full musical program; the "fourth day program" consisted of acts of magicians for entertainment of the children and also an inspirational and educational lecture in the afternoon, and the evening program, which closed the Chautauqua for the town that year, was the presentation of the play—"The Bubble."

Bank failures had struck the Dakotas in the 1920's and as the Chautauqua was mainly for small towns, most of



the people in the Dakotas were living off of their "produce" checks. I was sure that my association with the Chautauqua would terminate at Leeds, but after much effort I got the contract renewed with barely enough time left to get to my next town of Hunter, North Dakota, for my opening night.

The circuit covered by the United Chautauqua in the summer of 1924 commenced at Leeds, North Dakota, came down across North and South Dakota, across southern Minnesota, up through central Wisconsin, and into the upper peninsula of Michigan, down the east shore of Lake Michigan, and finished in northern Indiana. I had two towns in North Dakota, three towns in South Dakota, two in Minnesota, three in Wisconsin, one in the upper peninsula of Michigan, two on the east coast of Lake Michigan, and one in northern Indiana. The superintendents and their crews traveled by railroad because of the long jumps between their respective towns, whereas the talent traveled by automobile because of the relatively short distance to the next town on the circuit.

### *Chautauqua in Western Iowa*

Chautauqua was as commonplace in western Iowa as it was in the eastern section of the Hawkeye State. Senator D. C. Nolan recalls his first Chautauqua experiences in Panora and later at Guthrie Center. Dean Bruce E. Mahan was introduced to Chautauqua while a lad in Bedford. As a youth he was deeply impressed with the splendid setting and programs of the Clarinda Chautauqua which he felt was outstanding in southwestern Iowa. Storm Lake tried without success to establish its first Chautauqua at Elm Park



prior to 1903. Success finally crowned their efforts when the Reverend W. J. Carr of the Methodist Episcopal Church, aided by three other enterprising citizens, organized the Storm Lake Chautauqua and held the initial meeting at Shady Park in 1903. This was said to be the first Chautauqua in Northwest Iowa and proved a great success. Among the many lecturers heard at the Storm Lake Chautauqua were William Jennings Bryan, Robert LaFollette, Booker T. Washington, Billy Sunday, and John Vance Cheney. So popular was the Storm Lake Chautauqua during its heyday that the Assembly Grounds resembled an "army camp" with as many as two hundred families tented down for the sessions. The auditorium itself was said to hold at least two thousand people.

Storm Lake's bustling neighbor — Cherokee — refused to be eclipsed by her rival. Although Cherokee did not have a lake, she did have "beautiful Fountain House grounds and Riverside Park" located at the edge of the city. The first Cherokee Chautauqua was held in 1907 with gratifying success. The following year, in 1908, Cherokee spent "almost \$3,000" for "Talent" alone. "We heard a great many complimentary things about last year's program," the officers declared, "but we feel that the coming program is stronger." Among the luminaries in 1908 Cherokeans heard:

Captain Richmond P. Hobson, "The American Navy"



Dr. S. Parks Cadman, "Lincoln"

Sylvester A. Long, "Lightning and Tooth-Picks"

Governor Albert B. Cummins, "The Trusts and Representative Government"

Dr. Nancy McGee Waters, "Daniel Webster" and "Young Man's Religion"

Congressman David A. DeArmond (Missouri), "Through the Eyes of a Stranger"

In addition to outstanding speakers, the Cherokee program of 1908 featured Rosani—the Prince of Jugglers; Alton Packard—cartoonist, humorist, satirist; the Lyric Glee Club—hailed as the "best male quartette" on the Chautauqua platform; and the Virginia Jubilee Singers—back for a return engagement at Cherokee. Finally, the Royal Hungarian Orchestra had been secured for the entire ten days, an "expense rarely assumed" by Chautauqua boards. According to the program, the Royal Hungarians comprised "one of the finest" orchestras in the country. "Several have been connected with the greatest symphony orchestras in the United States and Europe. This is the orchestra that won the first prize medal at the famous Columbian exposition." The Cherokee Chautauqua Board felt these performers alone were worth the price of a season ticket.

#### *Columbus Junction Chautauqua*

In 1905 Columbus Junction was a flourishing town of 1,200 located at the junction of the Chi-



cago, Rock Island and Pacific, and the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern railroads. Columbus Junction thus had unsurpassed facilities for shipping and travel, there being over twenty passenger trains daily. Firmly entrenched in a rich farming country below the junction of the Iowa and Cedar rivers, Columbus Junction was truly an ideal place for a Chautauqua. Frequent railroad service made it possible for Chautauqua superintendents and "talent" to move easily from one location to another.

Chautauqua that flourished in Iowa prior to 1910 must be identified with the horse and buggy days and the iron horse. Transportation was primarily by train, both for the "talent" and the heavier rolling stock—tents, chairs, stage scenery, etc. That such transportation was adequate is attested by the handsome 32-page *Official Souvenir* issued by the Columbus Chautauqua in Columbus Junction in 1905.

Looking backward to its beginnings four years previously, the *Official Souvenir* of 1905 declared:

During the four seasons of programs, there has never been a time when the outlook was discouraging. . . . The community as a whole for miles about lends every assistance to the management and the management works as a unit. As the great Chautauqua in New York takes pride in being the mother of so many successful Chautauquas, so the Columbus Chautauqua takes pride in being considered the originator of the Chautauqua idea in southeastern Iowa and the direct cause for so many sister insti-



tutions. The aim has always been to give the very best in the world of thought that it was possible to secure, and denominational lines and political distinction have been disregarded entirely. The Chautauqua in time will try to establish well-rounded courses of study so that teachers and others may spend a vacation enjoyably and at the same time get in return valuable aid in their work. Every year sees the white tented city on the Iowa bluffs growing larger, and the 1905 assembly has surpassed all former records.

Among the notable speakers at Columbus Junction in 1905 were Governor Robert LaFollette, William Jennings Bryan, Dr. George E. Vincent, and Professor P. G. Holden. Lighter entertainment was provided by Cartoonist Alton Packard and A. W. "Sunshine" Hawks. Music was provided by the Dunbar Quartet and Bellringers and the Williams Jubilee Singers. The American Vitagraph, by Frederick Held of Brooklyn, was featured the first two days but probably no one dreamed in 1904 that this would one day be a potent factor in causing the decline of Chautauqua.

#### *The Albia Chautauqua*

The Albia Chautauqua Association published an impressive 36-page "Home-Coming Booklet" for its Seventh Annual Assembly held August 9-16, 1911. In his Foreword the secretary of the Association, Fred Townsend, declared the booklet was "solely of a public nature, keeping out all private advertisements." He urged readers to particularly write friends and "old timers" to attend



Home Coming Day on August 10 when the Honorable Lafayette Young would be the principal speaker. There followed a brief history of Iowa, the story of Kishkeekosh County, a short history of Albia, and a kaleidoscopic summary of churches, schools, the public library, and business, professional, and political men associated with the city, county, and state government. Over sixty pictures made the booklet an attractive keepsake.

Ambitious Albia did not limit itself to the usual chautauqua tent, but had constructed an "Auditorium" with a seating capacity of 2,000 at the City Park. "Chautauqua patrons and visitors," it was pointed out, "need not fear rains and storms, for they will be protected by a commodious and substantial building and be safe and secure from inclement weather."

The Albia Chautauqua Association was organized in the winter of 1904-1905 for the purpose of giving the people of Monroe County an "annual opportunity of seeing and hearing the best lecturers, musicians, and entertainers in the country. In spite of three "hard luck" years (induced perhaps by the panic of 1907) the Association had "kept moving ahead" and in 1911 was out of debt and in excellent working condition. It was believed that the Albia Chautauqua could be "maintained for many years and be a permanent source of profit and pleasure to our people."

The program in 1911 was an unusually good



one, featuring Champ Clark and Billy Sunday together with a half dozen recognized speakers. In the amusement line, the program listed Rosani, the "celebrated" juggler, Norton's Band, the Mlle. Cage Concert Company, and the Eureka Glee Club. Arrangements had also been made with J. E. Benton, owner of the Scenic Theater in Albia, to show movies on every night except Sunday. The Scenic itself would be closed during Chautauqua week.

Most of the citizens of Albia know the quality of the pictures shown at the Scenic, that they are always of the highest class, and will appreciate the public spirit shown by Mr. Benton.

#### *Vawter Salesmanship at North English*

The magical growth of the Vawter Chautauqua is revealed in a letter by Keith Vawter to the people of North English in 1913:

Dear Folks:

This is our first year in your community. You may not know very much about our kind of Chautauquas. You may not realize how much time, labor and money we are spending to make your Chautauqua a big success. Time and a trial will prove our statements.

Operating Chautauquas is our specialty. We made our first experiments (costly ones, too) in circuit Chautauqua ten years ago. We are veterans now. Experience has taught us just what are the correct things to do. We have made possible a really good Chautauqua in a small town. This is our seventh consecutive season in a large number of the best towns in Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri.



Your Chautauqua will be a great success if a good program and proper advertising will make it so; but program and advertising are only the beginnings of a successful Chautauqua. It takes local boosting, and you, dear folks, must do the local boosting. By boosting I mean that you begin right now to talk the thing to your neighbors; tell them you are going to attend on a season ticket and that you want them to enjoy the whole thing with you. Tell everybody that the program is superb clear through and that they can't afford to miss a single number. Take my word for the program now. It will take care of itself later.

We want your Chautauqua to be one of the very best of the summer. You help us get out the folks and we will do the rest. Will you do it? I hope to meet you face to face at Chautauqua and we will then know that we are both good fellows.

Cordially yours,  
KEITH VAWTER

The enthusiastic Vawter was as good as his word as the attractive five-day program of 1913 attests. Four dynamic speakers — Governor Robert S. Vessey, Albert L. Blair, journalist, Chaplain W. H. Lougher, and George R. Laid, an authority on George Washington, lent variety and inspiration to the audience. On the musical side, Vawter presented the Mendelssohns — a versatile male quartet, and Ruthven MacDonald — “by common consent Canada's greatest baritone.” In addition, the 1913 program presented the Dunbar Singing Orchestra and Victor's Italian Band — composed of “twenty-two finished artists.”

In his 1913 Chautauqua program Vawter em-



phasized that he was presenting "everybody's Chautauqua" for North English, and not conducted in the "exclusive interests of any society, faction or class."

THIS IS A CHAUTAUQUA. It is not a camp-meeting, a teacher's institute nor a vaudeville show. But it combines the best elements of modern thought and up to the minute entertainment, both musical and literary. Every person in the community, whether he likes deep thought or simply entertainment for the moment, will find it here. Whether he enjoys classical or popular music, he will get much in every program that will make him glad he is alive and able to be present.

As superintendent of the North English Chautauqua in 1913 Keith Vawter had selected H. L. Jordan, a man with rich experience who knew Chautauqua's needs and would take pleasure in arranging for them.

"Mr. Jordan is here for the good of the cause," Mr. Vawter assured his readers. "Call on him freely for any assistance you may require that will add to your pleasure and comfort. He will be found always on the job, painstaking and courteous. The business men will find him a keen young man, full of honor and always on the square."

In his program Keith Vawter gave proper emphasis to the children's program — always an attractive feature of any Chautauqua. In 1913 the children were to be organized according to the "Seton Indian work" into two tribes.



Indian names and dress will be adopted and the Indians of J. Fenimore Cooper of Leather-stocking fame will be taken as the type. Honor, fairness, courage, clean living will be emphasized. Interesting legends of the Hiawatha character will be told.

Then there will be the Indian songs and games, bow and arrow practice, out of door jaunts, natural history observations, health talks, war whoops and a merry lot more to fill the young hearts to the brim and put the rosy blush of health in the cheeks.

Every child between the ages of 6 to 14 is eligible. The only requirement is the ownership of a regular child's season ticket which will also be good at all sessions.

Two years later, in 1915, the North English Chautauqua featured "Playground Ball" for boys and girls with special honors being awarded to those who excelled in the following "stunts":

- Bouncing a Rubber Ball 100 Times Without a Miss.
- Basket Ball Throwing (two out of six trials).
- An All Up Indian Club Race.
- Hand Stand.
- The Mastery of Playing Twenty Games.
- 60 Yard Dash in Nine Seconds.
- Running High Jump.
- Rolling a Hoop a Full Block.
- Ability to Tie Four Kinds of Knots.
- Cleaning the Teeth Every Day.
- Swatting 25 Flies Each Day of Chautauqua.
- Making a Paper Drinking Cup.
- Naming five Birds, five Trees, five Flowers, etc.
- Playing a composition on the piano.

Lest the children at North English should think the program would end with the above Mr. Vaw-



ter assured them there would be many more events — and that all should be ready for the “grandest time yet.”

One can gain some idea of the salesmanship involved in selling chautauqua from the brochures, or official programs, which were issued by competing circuits each year. These programs varied in number of days and the “talent,” depending upon the size of the community and the amount of money invested in chautauqua, and the period when they were issued. Thus, the official Chautauqua programs were far more impressive during the heyday of chautauqua than those issued during the declining years. The program issued by the Midland Chautauqua Circuit of Des Moines for the Knoxville Chautauqua of 1920 was a large twenty-page brochure containing over thirty pictures of the “talent” engaged. This program stands in sharp contrast with the more modest White & Brown Chautauqua program issued for Knoxville in 1925, and the still more modest leaflet issued when Knoxville shifted to Loar’s Independent Chautauqua Company between 1926 and 1930. The latter dates represent the period when Chautauqua was virtually dead, relatively few Iowa communities boasting Chautauqua after 1930.

*C. W. Wassam — the Oral Cyclone*

One of the most popular and busiest lecturers in Iowa was Professor C. W. Wassam at the



State University of Iowa. Dr. Wassam appeared on the chautauqua platform for fourteen years between 1914 and 1928, during which time he made 1,100 addresses in twenty-five different states ranging from Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee in the east to Washington, Oregon, and California in the west. Fully 219 of these 1,100 talks were delivered in Iowa, 143 of them in the four years — 1914-1917. Although he lectured in Iowa in seven other years, the tremendous popularity of this "oral cyclone" who spoke with the rapid-fire of a gatling gun, forced him to accept engagements in many other states. He concentrated, however, on the Midwestern states — Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota and Illinois — perhaps to remain close to his family.

Professor Wassam's most popular lectures were "The Secret of Power" and "The Stuff that Wins." In the former he emphasized that strength was always greatest where the strain was greatest and the greatest weakness was at that point where there has been the least strain. He elaborated and illustrated these points in his lecture for more than an hour.

Every man has some weak spot in his makeup. Some have more than others. In order to be fit for a command of great power, which is the heritage of man, those weak places must be discovered and made strong. In the battle of life the other fellow is searching for your weaknesses. Remedy them in order that they do not crack under the strain.



One great trouble with us today is the fact that we are trying to live too many days in one. Have faith in yourself. Live one day at a time. You couldn't do any more no matter how hard you tried. Take one problem in hand at a time.

Don't shirk the hard things in life. You will have to face that problem you have been putting behind you sooner or later. It is inevitable. Bolster up your weak spot and go to it.

In seeking that control of power, above all you must have optimism. Forget henceforth to repeat in your conversation that times are bad or that business is rotten. You can't make it any better by wearing a long face and I know you can get better results than by looking rotten yourself.

The popularity of this human dynamo is attested by the fact that he was called upon for return engagements in seventy-five different communities in seven states.

#### *Peter Janss and University "Talent"*

In 1962 Peter W. Janss, well-known Des Moines attorney, recalled with enthusiasm his experience in 1925 with White & Brown Chautauqua of Des Moines while a student at the University of Iowa. The White & Brown circuit was made up of two or more groups following separate schedules of locations. The territory embraced a far-flung area covering Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and North Dakota and South Dakota. Harvey Carter, now an attorney in Allison, played with Peter Janss in "Friendly Enemies."



The plays given by another White & Brown Circuit during the six-day session in Knoxville in 1925 were "The Nervous Wreck" and "The Fool." Although the expense of presenting Chautauqua programs in such a vast empire was immense, it should be pointed out that there was no dearth of college and university faculty, as well as the more gifted college students — singers, players, musicians — who were eager to participate in what was to them a thrilling lark that carried them from one new community into another.

This was a period when a five-day, forty-hour week was unheard of, and transportation cost was at a minimum. As Peter Janss relates:

The next year Harvey Carter, Margaret Blackburn and I, along with other people from Albert Lea, Minnesota, formed a company which played a show entitled "The Bubble" on Swarthmore Chautauqua out of Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. The play was written by the Chautauqua owner's son and you can guess its quality . . . but we rewrote it as we went and had a lot of fun. I don't know whether our audience enjoyed it or not. That year we traveled all the way from New York to Pennsylvania, Vermont, North and South Carolina, and parts of West Virginia and Kentucky, if I remember correctly. Seven of us altogether traveled in an old high-wheeled Cadillac touring car and a top-heavy Ford pickup and carried with us all of our scenery and clothes to move from one stop to another either after the night show or early the following morning to be ready for an afternoon program the following day. Our harrowing experiences on mountain roads, leaky tents, six rows of wild-eyed children in front and



wind storms kept us fully occupied at all times. But we were young and we had a lot of fun.

*The Chautauqua in Retrospect*

The impact of the "Talent" on the "tenters" or "campers" is attested by more than one participant in those exciting, happy Chautauqua days. This was especially true in the smaller communities. As one enthusiast recalls:

In 1905 the first Chautauqua held in Van Buren County was opened in Anderson Park at Farmington. Among the headliners were William Jennings Bryan and Speaker of the House [United States] Champ Clark. From this time until 1923 Chautauqua was important in the town's calendar of yearly events, drawing campers from all parts of the county who attended every session from the time the morning program opened until the last word of the evening session had been uttered. During the pre-after-program hours, the campers listened to the practicing jubilee singers, the Swiss Bell Ringers, trios, quartettes, a part of Chautauqua enjoyed as much as the formal programs. Each year the Farmington sponsors journeyed to Des Moines to the Redpath Bureau to select talent. The twenty-first annual session, the last, was held in 1925.

The first twenty-five years of the Twentieth Century was marked by a migration of the best of music, drama and thought from the larger centers of population in the United States to the small towns and villages of rural America. Chautauqua was a main-spring in causing this exodus. Indeed, the rich cultural programs of Circuit Chautauqua are said to have virtually substituted the electric light for the kerosene lamp.



The bringing of the best of music to smaller Iowa communities did much to democratize music, resulting in a complete revolution in musical taste and appreciation. Is it any wonder that the renowned Walter Damrosch should have declared in 1928, after a careful analysis of the request for music that had come to him over the years from all sections of the country that "Iowa is the most musical state in the Union." No greater tribute could be paid to the Hawkeye State.

The Circuit Chautauqua has also been styled as a virtual "Little Theater Movement." The church, the temperance movement and other social reforms, all were influenced by Chautauqua. On one occasion William Allen White is said to have remarked: "The Progressive Party was formed from a dozen chautauqua speeches in Iowa and Kansas." Although this was doubtless somewhat of an exaggeration, the Chautauqua influence can not be ignored. This is especially true when we consider the acceleration in the number of communities adopting Circuit Chautauqua after 1904. In contrast with the scores of thriving Chautauquas in 1916 are the twenty Independent Chautauquas comprising historic "firsts" established in Iowa prior to 1904. This list was compiled by Hugh A. Orchard in his admirable volume — *Fifty Years of Chautauqua — Its Beginnings Its Developments Its Message and Its Life*. Thirty-one states are included in his list and Iowa stands



second only to Illinois. The town and the known date of establishment follows:

Albia . . . . .	—	Fairfield . . . . .	—
Allerton . . . . .	1899	Fort Dodge . . . . .	1903
Ames . . . . .	1904	Malvern . . . . .	1904
Atlantic . . . . .	—	Mediapolis . . . . .	1904
Centerville . . . . .	1904	Peterson . . . . .	1897
Clarinda . . . . .	1896	Sidney . . . . .	—
Clear Lake . . . . .	1876	Storm Lake . . . . .	1904
Colfax . . . . .	1895	Tama-Toledo . . . . .	1903
Columbus Junction . . . . .	—	Washington . . . . .	1903
Creston . . . . .	1904	Waterloo . . . . .	—

The well-known American humorist — Opie Read — had a high regard for the institution in which he too won fame. According to Read:

To the ruralite it introduced the statesman and the magician, the nightingale of song and the woodpecker of syncopation. He that induces his brother to think has given him more than bread; and he who brings the quiet laughter of true humor, lifts a mortgage from the heart. I have seen all that; I have heard great orators, real philosophers in places where the swamp frog hushed his croak to listen. Ah, and pre-eminent is the fact that the chautauqua is purely American.

One might continue at length to sing the glories of Chautauqua. To many in rural America, and Iowa was distinctly rural in its atmosphere, Chautauqua served as a veritable elixir of life. It was, indeed, a tonic for the body, mind and spirit and a well-spring of inspiration for young people standing on the threshold of life. Dr. Frank Gunsaulus



once remarked that sixty-six per cent of all students of the Armour Institute of Technology were recruited from the ranks of Chautauqua patrons. Truly, countless college presidents and captains of industry, professors, ministers, lawyers, doctors and other professional men and women of this generation, could be numbered among the legion of Chautauqua enthusiasts of yesteryears.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN