

The
PALIMPSEST



State Superintendent Visits Polk County Rural School

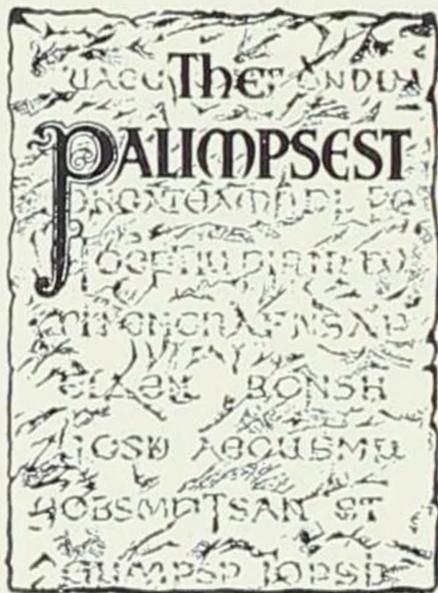
Agnes Samuelson-- A Dedicated Educator

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The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the 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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DOROTHY ASHBY POWNALL

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Illustrations

All illustrations were furnished by Agnes Samuelson. The reproductions on the back cover are from Miss Samuelson's historic plates collection and represent her Swedish background, her professional career, and her patriotic love of historic America.

Author

Dorothy Ashby Pownall's interest in the career of Agnes Samuelson dates back to her newspaper days as a reporter on the *Des Moines Capital*. Mrs. Pownall was a feature writer on the *St. Paul Daily News* before going to Des Moines, and for ten years was editor of the woman's page of the *Iowa City Press-Citizen*. She has contributed articles and poetry to newspapers and magazines including the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Saturday Evening Post* and *Good Housekeeping*. She is a member of Iowa Press Women.

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THE PALIMPSEST

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Home, Sweet Home

In a rambling house on a shady street in Shenandoah, Iowa, lived the Samuelson family. Meet now the father, Sven August; the mother, Alvida Mathilda, and the seven lively children, Agnes Mathilda, Ellen Maria, Mabel Olivia, Carl August, Frank Delbert, John Henry and Hazel Edna.

In that era, the early 1900's, no one in that close-knit, modest family dreamed that Agnes Mathilda, the eldest daughter, would one day be recognized as one of our national leaders in education, friend of governors, legislators, university presidents, authors, church leaders and many other top figures in related fields, as well as men, women and children in all walks of life.

Naturally, in those early days, Agnes picked gooseberries, pitted cherries for her mother's jam, hovered over her own little flower garden and shared the chores with her brothers and sisters.

The Samuelson children loved their home, across the street from the lumber yard. They thought it a pretty place, surrounded by rose bushes, fruit

trees, flower beds and a broad expanse of lawn. They welcomed the visits of the itinerant salesmen who brought coffee, tea, extracts and liniments.

Their parents were God-fearing industrious folk, married in 1885 at the home of the bride, Alvina Mathilda Johnson, near Shenandoah. Sven August Samuelson came to America with his parents, Carl John (1824-1903) and Sophia (1822-1907), and his three brothers, Andrew, Axel, and Charles. They settled on a farm near Lockridge in Jefferson County, Iowa, in 1869. The log cabin, built by Carl for his family, stood for many years as a symbol of pioneer life.

In Upland Cemetery, near Lockridge, is an interesting monument, comprised of the bell from the church which called the pioneers to worship. A number of Samuelson relatives are buried here.

Agnes Samuelson's father was a section foreman on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad in his early days in Shenandoah. Later he became interested in business and was one of the founders of the Shenandoah Building and Loan Association, and had an insurance agency as well. At the time of his death he was associated with the Samuelson-Linquist Implement Company. To eke out his modest income, Mr. Samuelson also sold steamship tickets for the Cunard Line, for passengers who emigrated from Sweden.

Persons who settled in this country often sent overseas for their relatives, and August Samuel-

son handled their transportation arrangements. Frequently these newcomers stayed in the Samuelson home until their relatives could come for them. Thus Agnes and her sisters had their first teaching experience — translating for the strangers and teaching them some words of English.

It was a good home. Mother Samuelson always had pots of blooming plants in the window of the house at 810 Fifth Avenue in Shenandoah. There was “wall-to-wall” carpeting of colorful stripes woven from balls of carpet rags. “A new rag carpet was an event,” Miss Samuelson recalls. Not so delightful to the children were the woolen stockings their mother knit for them. “They were scratchy,” the educator admits, “but with heavy underwear and snug outer garments, they kept us warm in zero weather.”

An exciting event of the winter was the appearance of half of a butchered hog, suspended from the swing in the back yard. “That meant pork roasts, chops, head cheese and liver for the family,” comments Miss Samuelson. “Quite different from today’s purchase of food from markets or farmers for storage in the big, deep freezer.”

Both parents placed education and religion at the top of their list of “musts” for their children. All of the young Samuelsons attended school and church regularly. They received top marks for school work and attendance, but no special notice was taken of these accomplishments — there were

no stars for excellence; no rewards for good report cards. The parents took these satisfactory records for granted.

There were plenty of home chores for these boys and girls. Carrying wood for the fires kept the boys busy. Cleaning kerosene lamps was a Saturday morning task for the girls. Churning butter and operating the old-fashioned washing machine were routine before-school assignments.

But there was lots of fun, too. The boys rode broomstick horses with all the vim of Kentucky Derby jockeys. The girls played house and sewed for their dolls. These youngsters had no Little League, but the neighborhood boys played their own brand of baseball. On summer evenings there were games of hide and seek, run, sheep, run, and tag, and indoors everyone enjoyed amateur theatricals, dominoes, jackstraws and riddles.

Like all children of that day, the small Samuelsons played April Fool jokes, hung May baskets, enjoyed Hallowe'en fun and got a great thrill when they marched with schoolmates in the annual Memorial Day parade, carrying flowers to the Rose Hill cemetery. They all loved music, and evening might find the family grouped about the organ.

They looked forward to the yearly Sunday School picnic at Porter's Lake, near Shenandoah. Piled in a hayrack, the children rode to Uncle John Johnson's farm for a tremendous picnic din-

ner, after which they presented a program and were rewarded with treats of homemade ice cream. Swinging out over the lake on a rope swing was a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

Topping most of the local events was the annual fair, to which the whole family trekked happily to admire the agricultural exhibits, home canning and fancy-work displays. And *look!* Blue ribbons on Hazel's entries from her sewing class! They watched the balloon ascension — an early exploration into space — were awed by the silver-tongued orators who held the grandstand crowds spellbound, and even had a few precious nickels in their hot hands for rides on the merry-go-round and the Ferris wheel.

All of the Samuelson children learned to read, speak and write the Swedish language fairly well. In the earlier years, services in the Lutheran Church in which the children were confirmed, were conducted in the language of the founders, but during World War I the English language was adopted for all church services. But along the way the Samuelson children were learning the language of their grandparents through home teaching, vacation Bible School, church meetings, conversations with elderly people who preferred to speak in their native tongue, books presented at Christmas programs and books in the home.

Memorable to Agnes Samuelson even today are all of the worship services, particularly the

"Julotta" service, held early Christmas morning. The family rose at dawn, to be at church at 5 a.m. The little church was fragrant with pine. Candles gleamed and a verse of scripture, fashioned from tinfoil, stretched across the wall above the pulpit. It said to the worshippers: "Ara Vare Gud i Höjden." ("Praise Be to God on High.") The services opened with the grand, old hymn, "Var Hälsad Sköna Morgonstund." ("All Hail to Thee, O Blessed Morn.")

This observance, and the children's program on Christmas evening, were the highlights of the holiday season, with emphasis always on the Christ Child, rather than on Santa Claus. At the Christmas program by the Sunday School children, each had a part in recitation, song or dialogue. The youngest ones opened the program by coming to the altar rail to say the words, "Se Gud's Lamn." ("See God's Lamb.") The children were rewarded by gifts of an orange, a sack of hard candy and a story book for each.

Pastor of this Lutheran Church for a number of years was the Reverend G. O. Gustafson, father of A. C. Gustafson, for many years the chief clerk of the House of Representatives of the Iowa Legislature. At each Christmas program, Pastor Gustafson gave a tänkesprak — a memory verse — to the children to be remembered during the year. Sometimes this verse was taken from 2 Timothy 3:15 — "Efter du af barndom hafver

kannat den Helige Skrift, kan hon dig undervisa till salighet geinom tron pa Kristus Jesus." ("And from a child thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ.")

At home, on Christmas Day, the family gifts might be placed in a decorated clothes basket, to be opened after the bounteous holiday feast, or arranged beneath the Christmas tree.

In Miss Samuelson's library are a number of cherished Swedish books, including religious volumes inscribed by her father and mother. A rare possession, also, is a beautiful hand-tooled Bible, illustrated with colored plates, a treasure which belonged to her maternal grandparents.

Sorrow has touched the Samuelson family several times. The father's death in 1906 preceded those of Ellen in 1914; Mrs. Samuelson in 1941, and Carl in 1946. The death of August Samuelson would have brought desperation as well as sadness to many families. Agnes became the principal breadwinner, but all of the children helped as they could. Ellen and Mabel taught in country schools when they finished high school. Mabel also gave music lessons to pupils in Shenandoah and Essex. Carl, Frank and John carried papers for the Shenandoah *Sentinel*. Hazel worked in the Henry Field Seed House. The industrious clan had no thought but to carry on.

The family moved to Iowa City in 1921 so that

the children might attend the University of Iowa. Carl received his medical degree in 1923 and was a practicing physician in Sheldon, Iowa, at the time of his death. John, an economics major, was awarded the B.S. degree in 1925, and Hazel, majoring in Journalism, received her B.A. degree in 1926. She was the first woman to be named editor of the *Daily Iowan*.

Agnes took time out in 1925 to receive her B.A. degree at the University of Iowa. Attendance at summer sessions; correspondence courses; two years' study at the University of Nebraska, and courses at George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, crowded among busy teaching schedules, all combined to assure her top honors, including election to Phi Beta Kappa, and to the awarding of her M.A. degree in 1928.

Hazel and Alex Miller were married in 1924. He served as county attorney in Polk County and later entered law practice with his father, Judge Jesse Miller. Hazel served for many years with the Massachusetts Protective Association and the Paul Revere Life Insurance Company, resigning to become national secretary and treasurer of the Women's Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mabel was married to Martin Ackerson of Superior, Wisconsin, in 1916. At that time she was organist and choir leader in the Bethany Lutheran Church in Duluth, Minnesota. They

lived in Iowa City in 1925, when Martin Ackerson, an army officer, was stationed with the ROTC at the University of Iowa. Their son, Frederic, was born that year, and slept in the cradle which had rocked all the Samuelson children and a few cousins, besides.

Colonel and Mrs. Ackerson and Frederic, then a high school senior, were at Schofield Barracks at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. Mrs. Ackerson and Frederic returned to Des Moines to stay with Agnes and Frank at 722 Polk Boulevard, headquarters for the Samuelson family.

Fred was graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1942 and from the University of Iowa in 1944, taking the accelerated course. Douglas, the son of Major Frederic and Mary Ellen Ackerson, was born in Washington, D. C., in 1958, and a second son, Norman, was born in 1961 in Baden Baden, Germany. Colonel Ackerson, Frederic's father, was returned to the mainland and served in a number of army assignments until his retirement in 1946. He died in 1960. Mrs. Ackerson now lives in Des Moines.

John Samuelson married Miss Edith Eide in 1950. They live in Des Moines where Mrs. Samuelson is with the Internal Medical Clinic, and her husband is with the United States Postoffice.

Frank Samuelson has been a membership clerk with the Iowa State Education Association for 23 years. He is active in church work, a member of

St. John's Lutheran Church, where he has served as usher and secretary of the Sunday School.

The mother of the Samuelson children died in 1941 in Des Moines. Many years had passed since she came to America as a young child. Her parents, Carl William Johnson and his wife, Breta Maia, emigrated from Arlingsas, Sweden, in 1868. The family, which included Mathilda's brother, John Frihof, had a rough time on their six-weeks' ocean voyage and their subsequent covered wagon trek across the country. They stopped first in Illinois, proceeding to Stanton, Iowa, and then on to Shenandoah. In their copy books the Samuelson children learned that Shenandoah means "Daughter of the Stars" and that the town was named for the Shenandoah Valley.

Agnes Samuelson pays this tribute to her mother:

Mother Samuelson's story is one for the books. Combined in her were all of the splendid attributes of the pioneer woman. She worked hard, but always her goals were love, excellence, dedication and service. She had the utmost respect for religion and learning, and her children are grateful that her fundamental qualities are reflected in their lives. They are unanimous in calling her *the greatest person they have ever known*.

DOROTHY ASHBY POWNALL

A Dedicated Teacher

Inspiring children to learn has been almost a religion to Agnes Samuelson. She regards the role of teacher second only to parenthood. She held that banner high during the years of teaching in rural schools and on into later periods when she served in important official and professional capacities for the state and nation.

Agnes Samuelson was determined to be a teacher, although she had opportunities to enter the business world before she launched upon her chosen career. She inherited from her parents their absorbing interest in learning, and was eager, upon her graduation from high school, to secure further education. Her immediate goal was to attend Western Normal College in Shenandoah. Since family finances were limited, she earned part of her tuition by baking bread and selling it to grateful neighbors for five cents a loaf.

Her first teaching assignment, at \$30 a month, was in 1905-1906, in the Pleasant View school, two miles north of Shenandoah. Her credentials were diplomas from high school and the scientific course at Western Normal College; a certificate based on examinations in the common branches and didactics, and attendance at a teachers' insti-

tute. The only legal requirement at that time was the license to teach.

She was well recommended for this first position. Prof. Ross Marriott of Western Normal College wrote that "Miss Samuelson is a thoroughly qualified teacher, ambitious to succeed, eager to advance, and determined to make the best possible of herself." He described her as "a natural leader and a *born teacher* — a lady in the truest sense." Other recommendations called her "earnest, faithful and ambitious," and pointed out her Christian graces and her ability to win the love and esteem of her pupils.

The young teacher walked the two miles to and from the Pleasant View school each weekend. During the school period she stayed at a farm home. Each day she swept her classroom, planned and heard the lessons, greeted and waved goodbye to half a dozen pupils, and at the close of day carried the cobs and wood for the morning fire.

Sometimes the precious fuel was used by tramps who found overnight shelter in the snug schoolhouse. One morning Agnes found this message on her blackboard: "I did not kidnap Pat Crowe but I would kidnap the teacher if I got the chance."

This one-room school had no shade trees and no community activities — just plain teaching of the three R's to a handful of youngsters. But there *was* a raise to \$32.50 for the spring term.

In her spare time, of which there was precious

little, the eager teacher read books and articles dealing with the role of education, rural school management, child psychology and related materials. She even found time in those early days for an extension course in the History of Education under the direction of the late Professor Forest C. Ensign of the University of Iowa.

After the working day, she welcomed the hospitable refuge of the farmhouse, often fragrant with baking gingerbread and spicy applesauce. For a few hours she could forget her busy schedule and those lively, wriggling boys and girls.

Her experience in this one-room school prepared her well for her next assignment, a two-teacher village school, located in the postoffice in Page Center. This was the Keystone school where Miss Sadie Beach taught the first four grades and Miss Samuelson's pupils were fifth through eighth graders. There were seven eighth grade graduates that spring. Always interested in adding to the teaching materials of the school, Agnes was delighted that spring when proceeds from a box social permitted the purchase of a set of reference books.

During her entire eventful career, Agnes Samuelson was a champion of rural education. She was well acquainted with the one-room school, but as transportation facilities improved and school consolidation programs were proposed, she kept abreast of the times. She marched neither with

the ultra-conservatives who shunned all change, nor those in the opposite camp who wanted to scrap anything with a traditional flavor.

While Miss Samuelson worked tirelessly for better teaching materials, she also looked about her and saw that nature provides vast resources for the observant teacher and pupil. The flowers of the fields, the rocks, the nearby brook, the birds in the schoolyard trees and the farm animals known to most of the children were topics for interesting lessons.

Said this school teacher, "We need not worry about laboratory facilities in the country school, for there, of all places, the child finds himself in God's laboratory, in the great outdoors, with its natural museums of field, forest and stream."

One might say that Miss Samuelson fell into her next position. On the first weekend after assuming her duties at the Lone Rock school, in 1907, she was thrown from a buggy, and carried her broken right arm in a sling for six weeks. Nothing daunted, she learned to write with her left hand and made the best of her handicap. Her new pupils were understanding and cooperative, paying more than ordinary attention to their studies and helping with the school chores.

Transportation to Lone Rock by livery team proved too expensive for her meager budget, so at the end of the winter term, in 1908, she transferred to the Snake Creek school, near Yorktown.

Now each Monday morning she scampered with several other teachers, into the caboose of the early freight train. They were a gay lot, all of them laughing, joking with the trainmen and playfully jostling each other for the choice seats in the "vista dome" of their quaint conveyance. On Friday evenings they returned in state on the passenger train.

Agnes Samuelson taught the three R's diligently but her teaching influence went far beyond these rudimentary requirements. She was determined to pass on to her pupils an appreciation of their American heritage; an understanding of the value of time; respect for their government; information about leaders in American history. She exposed them to good books.

In her classes she emphasized good manners, proper health habits, character building and the responsibilities of loyal American citizens. *Her* pupils learned *all* of the words to "The Star-Spangled Banner." In one of her talks she said, "To send a child forth equipped with mental and physical skills is not enough. We must build integrity as well."

The child always was her first consideration and she maintained:

Childhood is the pivotal reason for the school. His eyes may be focused to see the beauty of the world; his hands trained to do useful work; his feet guided to tread the paths of righteousness; his ears tuned to the harmonies of

life; his mind developed to its utmost capacity and his heart to beat in tune with the wave-lengths of the universe.

The school is the only public institution which exists solely because of children and is devoted exclusively to their interests and the well-being of our Republic. It is, therefore, essential to our national survival and sustenance. It is our most democratic institution, as the plant belongs to all, is supported by all. Here the children meet on the same level, regardless of creed, background or political affiliation.

From the Snake Creek school our teacher took a pleasant jump to the Silver City High School, where she was both teacher and assistant principal. There was a nice boost in salary, too — from \$360 a year to \$450. She recalls that there was never a dull moment in this challenging position from 1908 to 1911.

In that period, in this Mills County High School, there were no extra-curricular activities for the students. Their days were filled with study and recitations in Latin, history, English, science and mathematics, with no electives. Although preparing for classes and teaching every period of the school day added up to a heavy load for the teachers, no extra demands were made upon them for outside services. All of their time belonged to the students. One year, Miss Samuelson taught an evening Shakespeare class at the request of her pupils. She recalls appreciatively the cooperation of her colleagues, from the school janitor to members of the school board.

But this was not a period of all work and no play. On Saturday nights the teachers forgot books and classes as they strolled down Main Street, trading and chatting or dropping into the corner drug store for a soda or a sundae. They applauded at band concerts in the park. They participated in home talent plays in the Opera House and ate oyster stew after a winter bobsled party. Trips to a nearby city afforded change of scene and there were taffy pulls, masquerade parties and charades.

And every Thursday evening Miss Samuelson joined with other young women of the town who met to sew together, vying with one another in their "fancy work" prowess. Prospective brides deceived no one when they brought handkerchiefs to hem. Everyone knew their "hope chests" were brimming with household linens and dainty lingerie, collected in secret. Some homemakers embroidered pond lilies on piano scarves. Miss Agnes put her tiny stitches into chrysanthemums on a full panel for a dress.

The three years flew by, and, at their close, Agnes Samuelson decided to take time out for studies at the University of Nebraska, in Lincoln. Just before the Wabash train pulled out for Shenandoah, the high school students arrived at the station en masse, with banners and songs, to bid their devoted teacher good-bye. As she stood on the back platform of the train, she watched until

her car rounded a bend, half glad, half sad to see the waving flags and what seemed to be a large, white sheet in the hands of her admirers.

It was the happy experience of Agnes Samuelson to return to this community, some years later, to deliver the high school commencement address. On this memorable occasion she was serving as State Superintendent of Public Instruction for Iowa.

Her philosophy regarding her chosen career is stated eloquently in these paragraphs written in 1948 for the Journal of the National Educational Association. Many reprints were requested for school bulletin boards over the nation. Titled "TEACHING IS MY CHOICE," the article makes these statements:

TEACHING gives me opportunities to roam through the galleries of history and to come in contact with the aspirations, struggles and achievements of the past. I learn to appreciate the heritage of the ages.

TEACHING keeps me in touch with the throbbing present with its lessons from the past and its implications for the future. It gives me perspective.

TEACHING challenges me to inspire the growing personalities who look to me for guidance with the will to write new chapters in the story of human progress. My work has future values.

TEACHING empowers me to help boys and girls to become responsible citizens of our free country. I participate in building the greatness of our Republic.

TEACHING brings me into partnership with fathers and mothers and all other people concerned with the

growth and development of children. Schools help children to acquire the knowledge, skill, abilities, ideals, insights, attitudes and creativeness needed for abundant living. The achievements of my pupils reward me.

TEACHING makes it possible for me to share in the successes of other services and enterprises which sustain and enrich life. They are all nourished and made effective by education. My work reaches all areas of human endeavor.

TEACHING satisfies my urge to adventure into new fields of learning. It has unlimited possibilities for creative work, laboratory experiments, and pioneering activities. I can try my hand at invention.

TEACHING enrolls me among the great immortals, known and unknown, who have envisioned the place of education in human history and labored to make the fruits of learning available to all people. I can help today's children get ready for the long pull ahead.

TEACHING provides me with a thrilling and significant role in the drama of constructing the defenses of peace in the minds of men. Education has given me the chance to help promote world understanding through UNESCO. I can help win the battles of peace.

TEACHING offers me the prospect of accelerated improvements in professional standards, economic returns, social status, public esteem and security. These developments will enhance the skill and nobility of the profession and enlarge the usefulness of schools. I can look forward to greater satisfactions, rewards and avenues of service in teaching.

When Miss Agnes Samuelson's first college professors described her as "A Born Teacher," they were prophetic indeed. In the language of today, she was indeed *a dedicated teacher*.

DOROTHY ASHBY POWNALL

Broadening Horizons

Home after two years as a co-ed at the University of Nebraska, Agnes again boarded the caboose of the freight train with the other young school ma'ams from Shenandoah, headed for Yorktown, in Page County. She had been appointed superintendent of the Yorktown public schools. Her new duties were to take charge of administrative affairs and to teach ninth and tenth grades. One year she taught the eleventh grade, also.

Her exciting student days at the university had opened new avenues for exploration. She determined to pass on to her high school pupils her thrilling discoveries, and each week she carried back and forth a suitcase full of books lent by the Shenandoah Public Library. She shared with her classes her recent studies in the fields of astronomy, botany and literature. She was eager for these boys and girls to become interested in the earth and sky, and to acquire good reading habits.

The Yorktown board of education co-operated by providing new library, laboratory and other instructional facilities. When the need of a microscope was mentioned, one board member is said to have declared: "I don't know a microscope

from a shotgun but if she needs one for her work, get it for the school. I didn't have a chance to get an education, but I want our kids to have good schooling."

Following the custom of the times, Miss Samuelson wrote mottoes and Bible verses on her blackboards for the pupils to memorize. Her classes became particularly interested in poetry, and each Friday morning recited their favorite selections at the opening exercises. One of the high school girls even pinned copies of verses on kitchen cabinets and memorized them as she washed the dishes. Thus they learned famous quotations from Tennyson, Lowell, Longfellow, Whittier and many others. No one considered such pleasant activity a chore.

In this teaching schedule also were included the cultivation of a small garden, the organization of a literary society, a program of flag etiquette, and the orientation of a foreign student.

The foreign student was from Sweden. What a friend Agnes Samuelson must have been to him. Here was someone who could speak his language and who could brief each classroom on his personal and educational qualifications. All of the pupils were prepared to receive him cordially and to help him in every possible way. He could not speak English.

As he stood in line with the primary pupils, he asked shyly, "Hvad skall jag göra med min

mössa?" ("What shall I do with my cap?") The teacher translated and the children showed the newcomer where to hang his cap. Before long the boy from Sweden had advanced through the eighth grade, learning English rapidly.

Agnes Samuelson served as superintendent of the Yorktown schools from 1913 to 1915. Then she campaigned for the office of superintendent of the Page County schools, visiting every school board in the county, driving over muddy roads in spring, and snow-packed roads in winter. Petitions were filed with the county convention of school board delegates from teachers and other friends over the county.

When her Yorktown pupils, teacher associates and other friends received word that Miss Samuelson had been named by the county school board convention as the next superintendent of schools for Page county, they planned a very special welcoming reception for her return. As she stepped from the train, after the meeting in Clarinda, the county seat, *everyone* was at the station. A high school spokesman, Dorman Morsman, greeted her with the announcement that she was not to walk, but to ride in grand style through the town.

With other admirers, he escorted her to an old two-wheeled cart without shafts or poles. Primary pupils were on hand to pull the ancient vehicle through the streets with a long rope. Who cares for a ticker-tape parade in New York? Here was

a thrilling homecoming for the new superintendent. Even the train was held in the station for a few moments, so that the passengers could enjoy this joyous demonstration.

Her eight years' experience in small schools intensified Miss Samuelson's interest in graded and ungraded schools. Her new position as county superintendent gave her a broader perspective regarding the place of rural education in the total educational program. It also had provided contacts with schools in rural, town and city school districts. For the next eight years — 1915-1923 — one of her goals was stressing the interrelation of rural and urban education. She also looked forward to real adventuring on behalf of small schools.

During the summer following her appointment as County Superintendent, Agnes Samuelson did not sit at home, counting the days until her new duties would begin. To prepare herself more fully for her new responsibilities, she attended summer school at the George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee. Her associates were other teachers particularly interested in rural education on county, state and college levels. During this summer period, Miss Samuelson also took courses in school health problems and in administration of vocational education.

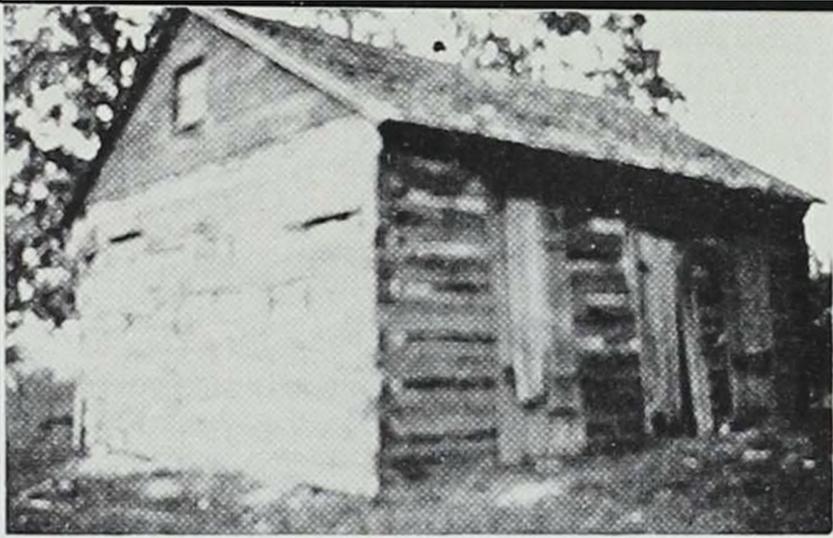
She has described this particular era in her educational career as "putting a telescope to one eye to gain a broader perspective and deeper insight

into rural education and its place in the American scene, and placing a microscope to the other eye for practical helps which had proven effective elsewhere."

The official duties of the County Superintendent are prescribed by the Code of Iowa and are revised by the Iowa Legislature from time to time. The supervision of the county school system was a full-time assignment for the new County Superintendent. Among her responsibilities were the interpretation of school laws; the planning of county teachers' institutes; conducting eighth grade examinations and grading the papers; issuing high school tuition certificates and compiling an annual statistical report to the State Department of Public Instruction. Her office, in the Clarinda Courthouse, was open six days a week. Saturday was an especially busy day. "Never a dull moment," she recalls.

Then there were the school visits. The Code of Iowa required the county superintendent to visit each rural district at least once a year. Since there were about 120 one-room schools in operation in Page county, Miss Samuelson tried to visit all of these by the holiday season. Then she visited as many town schools as possible in the winter. In the spring she made trips to districts with new teachers or those who needed special help. She tried to make her visits in pleasant weather when she could avoid mud or snow drifts.

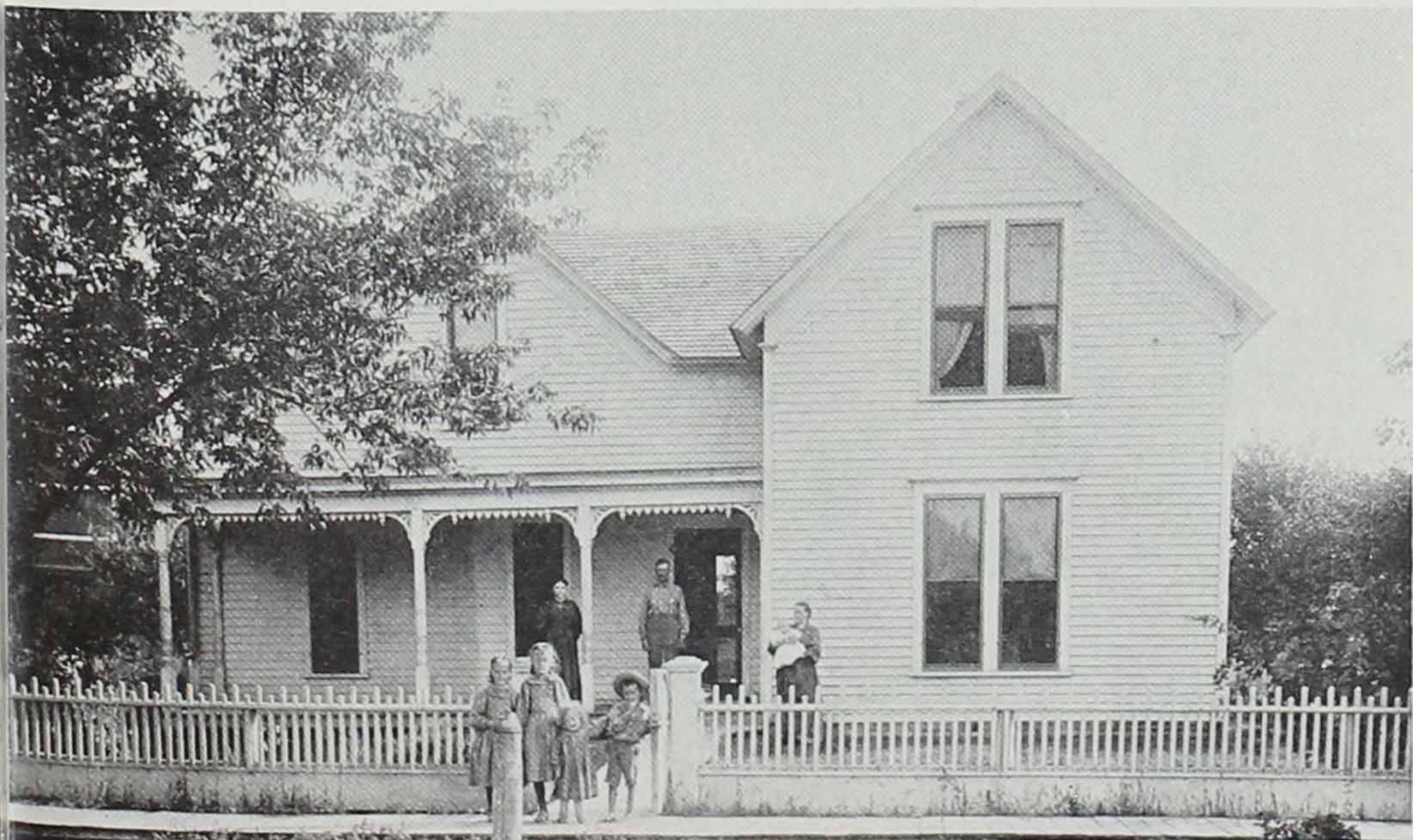
Log Cabin near Lockridge, built by Agnes Samuelson's grandfather in 1869.



Wedding picture of August and Mathilda Samuelson, parents of the educator.



Home of the Samuelson family in Shenandoah. Mabel, Ellen, Frank, and Carl are in the foreground. John is in his mother's arms. Father and a family friend are on the porch.



EARLY DAYS IN SHENANDOAH

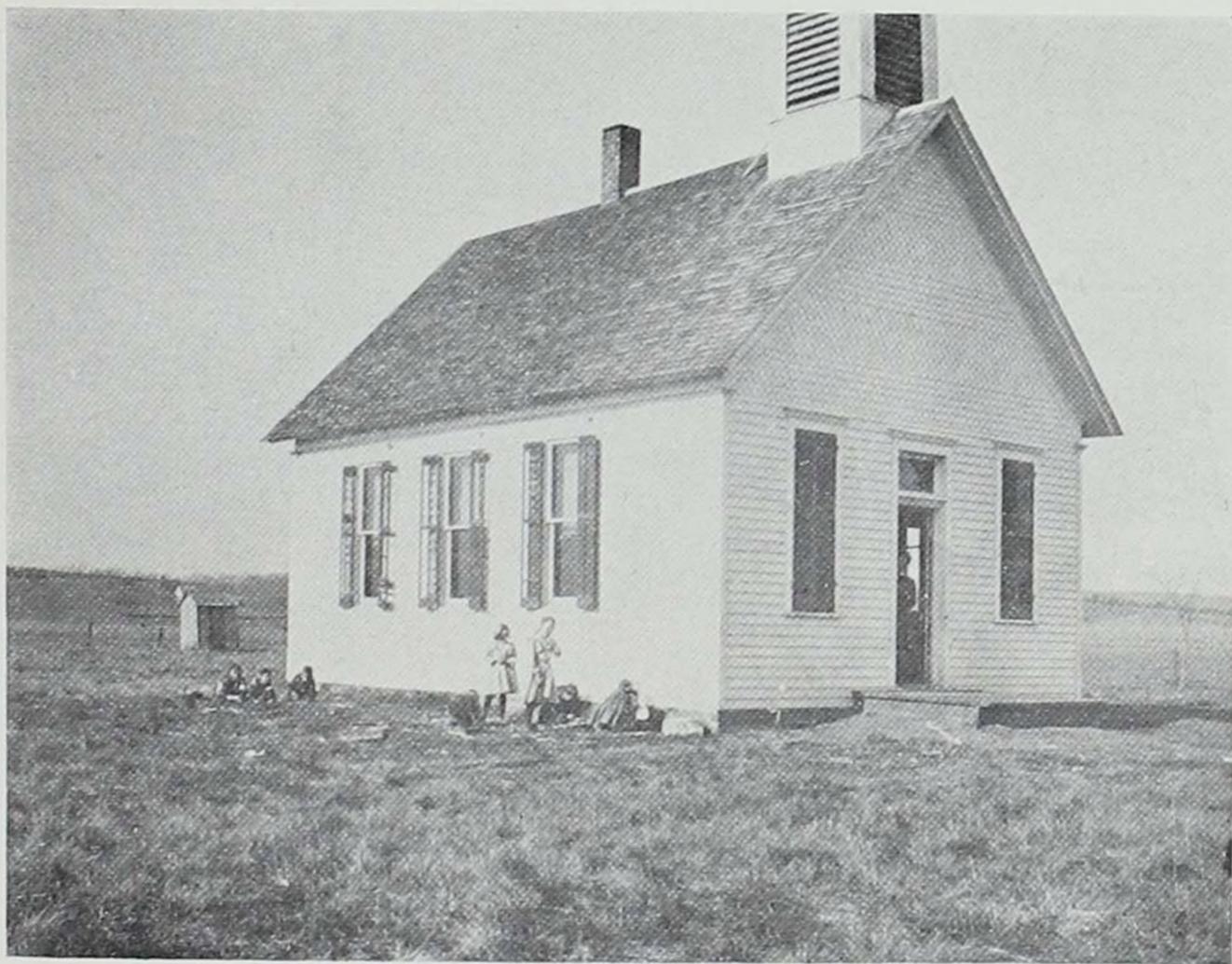


Here are Baby Agnes Samuelson; the pretty little school girl; and the sweet girl graduate from Shenandoah High School in 1904.

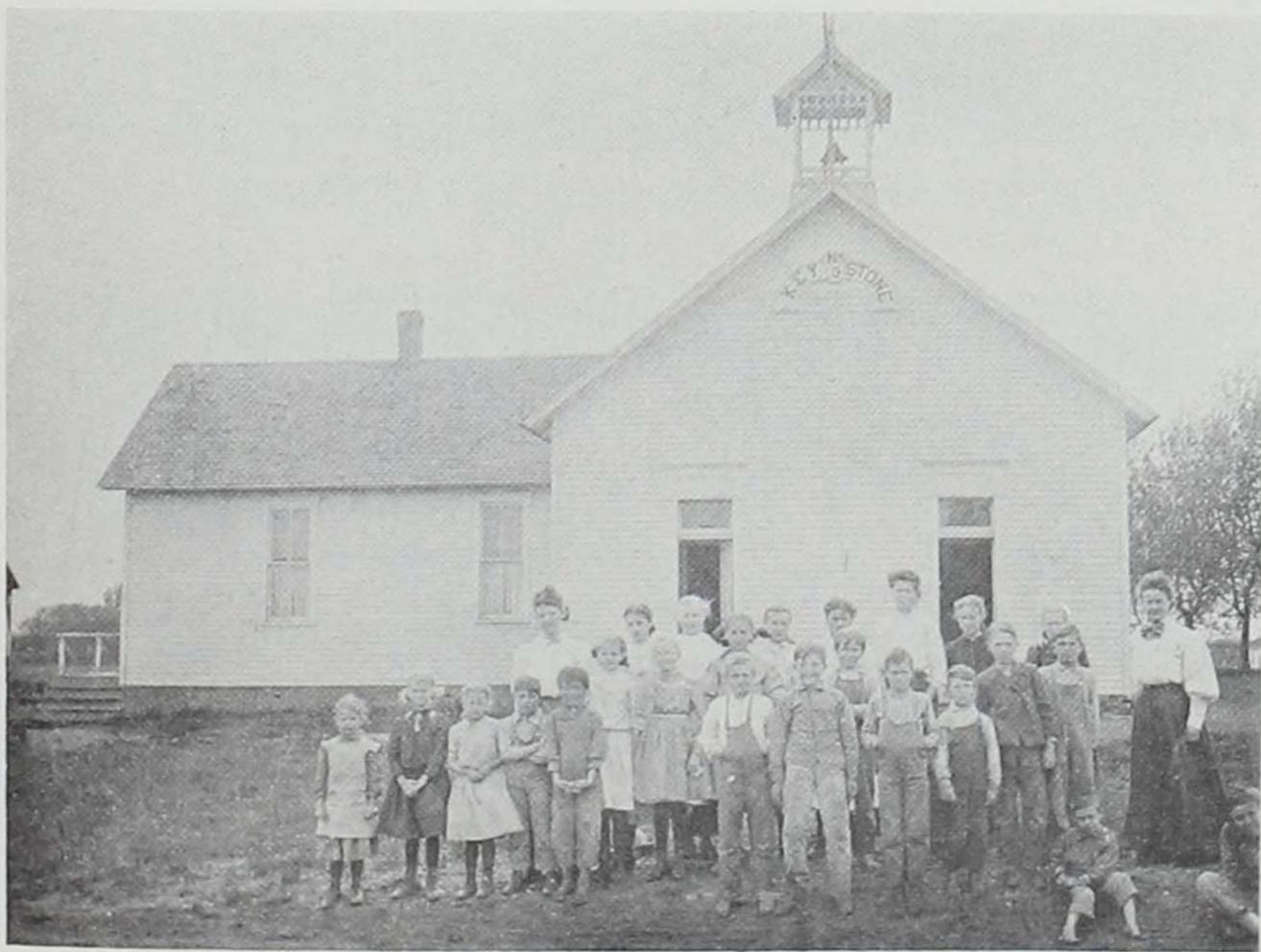


Looking prim and proper, Agnes Samuelson is seated, fourth from the right, in this picture with public school friends in 1898 or 1899. Her teacher, Miss May Grabill, is seated second from the left.

INTO THE TEACHING FIELD



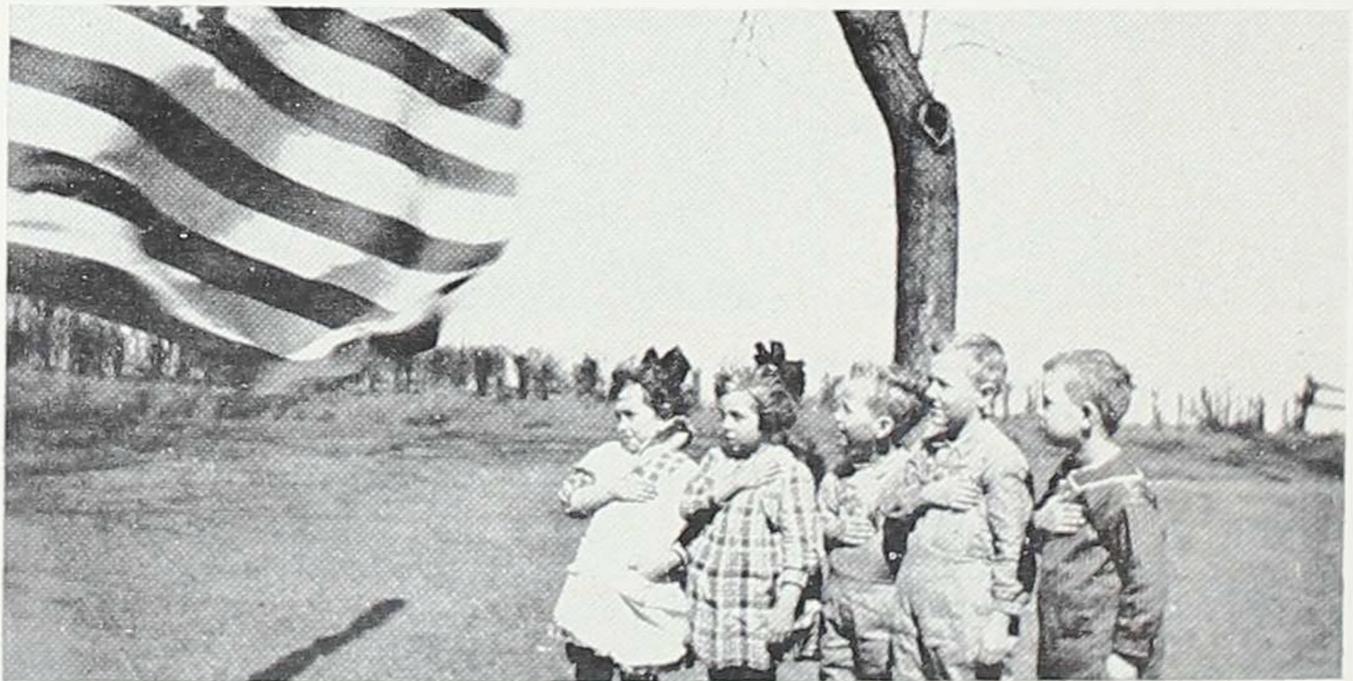
This is Pleasant View School where Agnes Samuelson taught her first pupils in 1905 and 1906.



Miss Samuelson, right, was principal of the Page Center School in 1907.



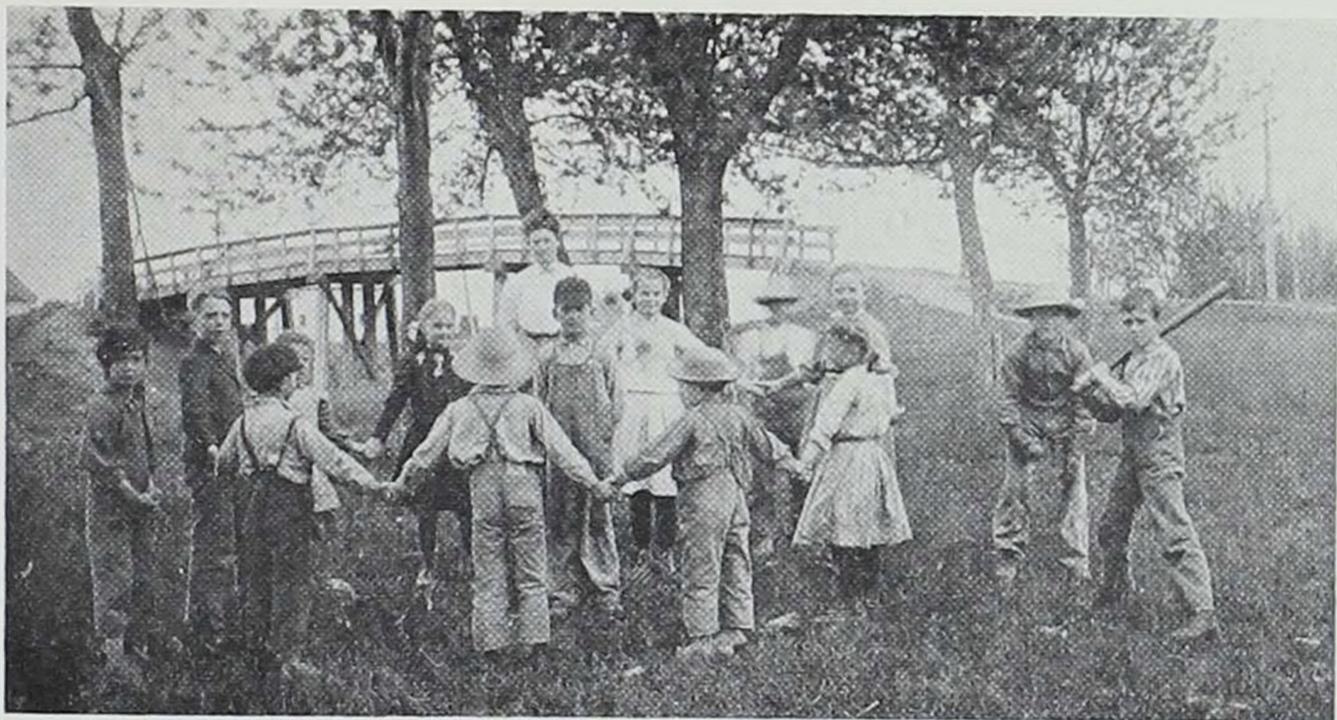
Lucky ones might ride to school in the country. None objected to walking, books and lunch buckets in hand.



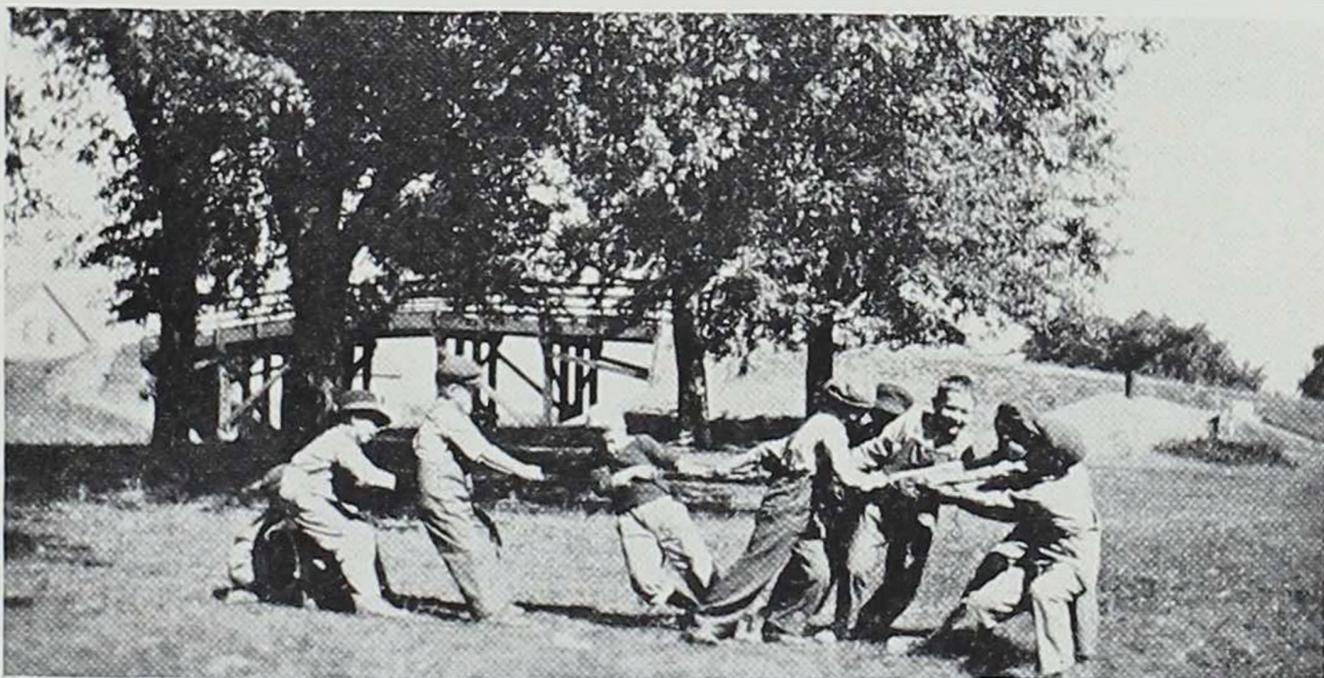
The morning flag salute was an impressive ceremony.



How about a game of croquet at recess time?



Teacher supervises a game of "ring-around-a-rosy," but a couple of athletes seem to prefer baseball.



A tug-of-war starts the day right before the school bell rings.



Off for home after a strenuous day with the Three R's.

TEACHER AND GRADUATES

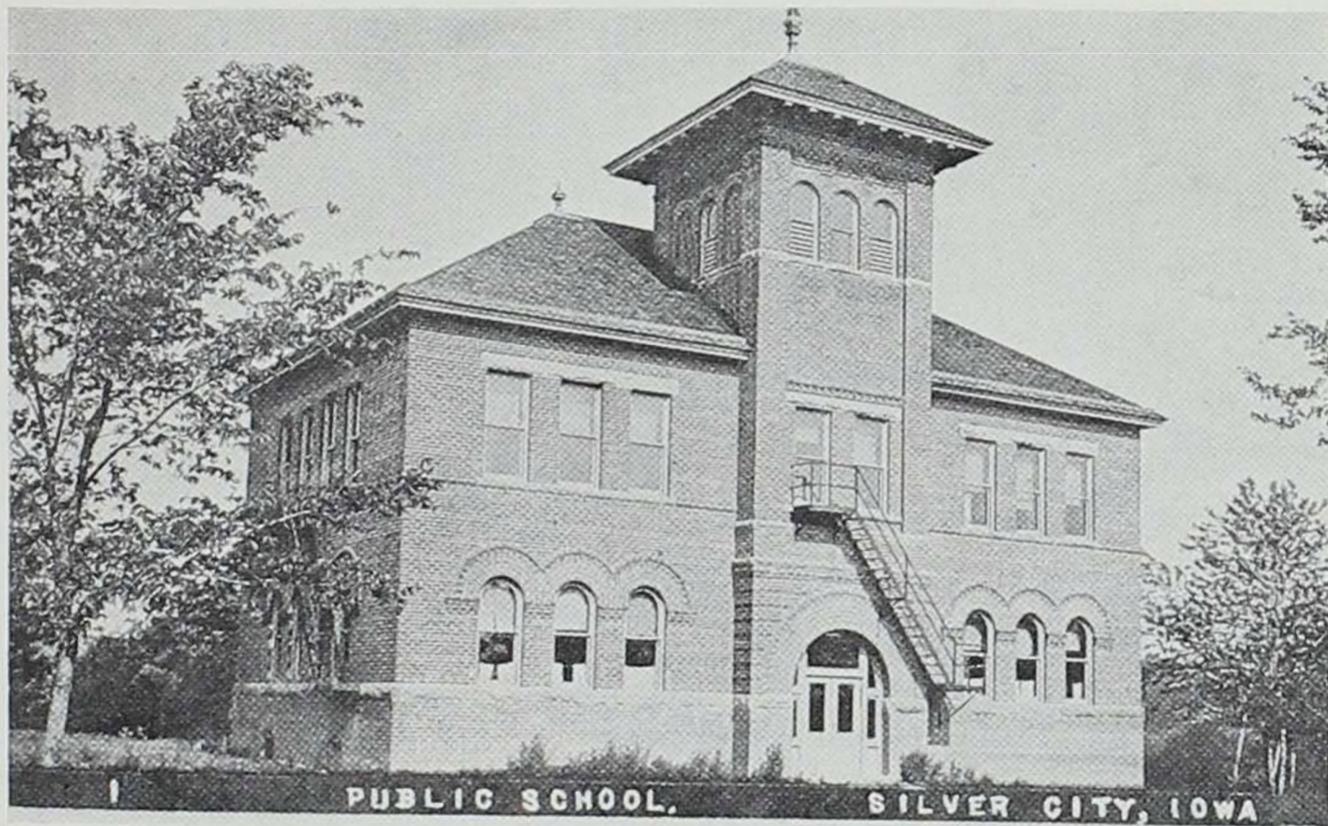


There was just one boy in this eighth grade graduating class at the Page Center School in 1907. Miss Samuelson stands at the left.

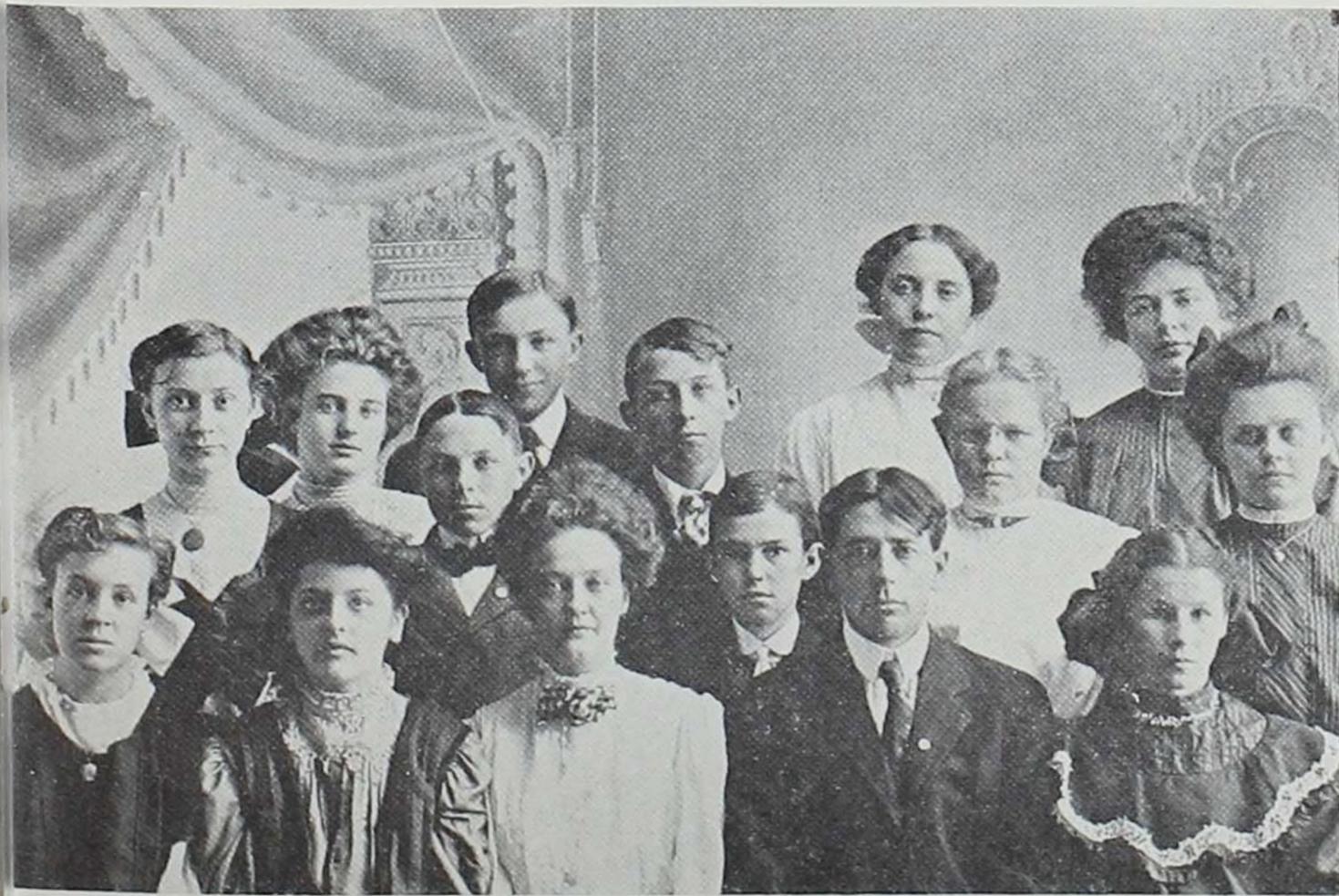


Three graduates had received their diplomas from Silver City High School when this picture was taken. Their assistant principal, Miss Samuelson, is at the right in the front row. Behind her is Supt. J. N. Cunningham.

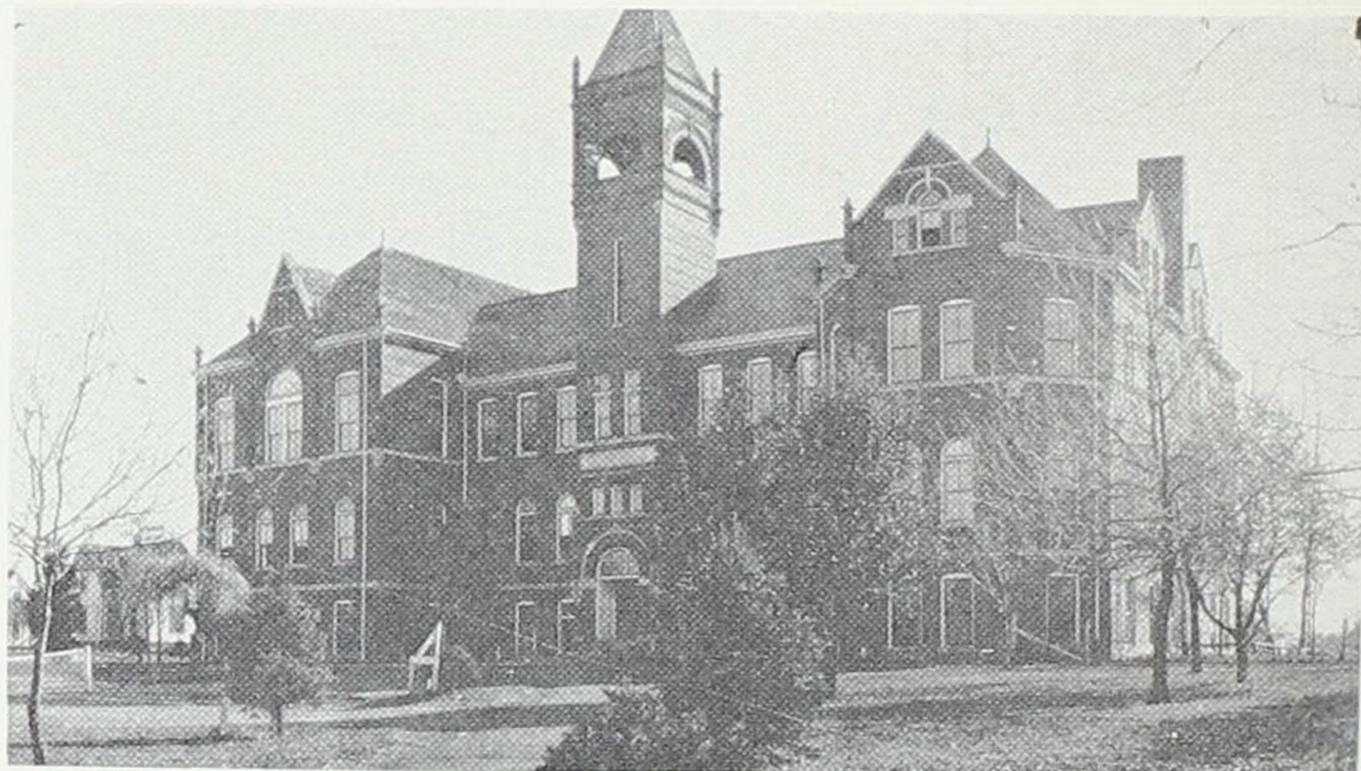
IN SILVER CITY



Agnes Samuelson became assistant principal and teacher of Silver City High School in 1908.



Here is Miss Samuelson, center in the front row, with some of her Silver City High School pupils.



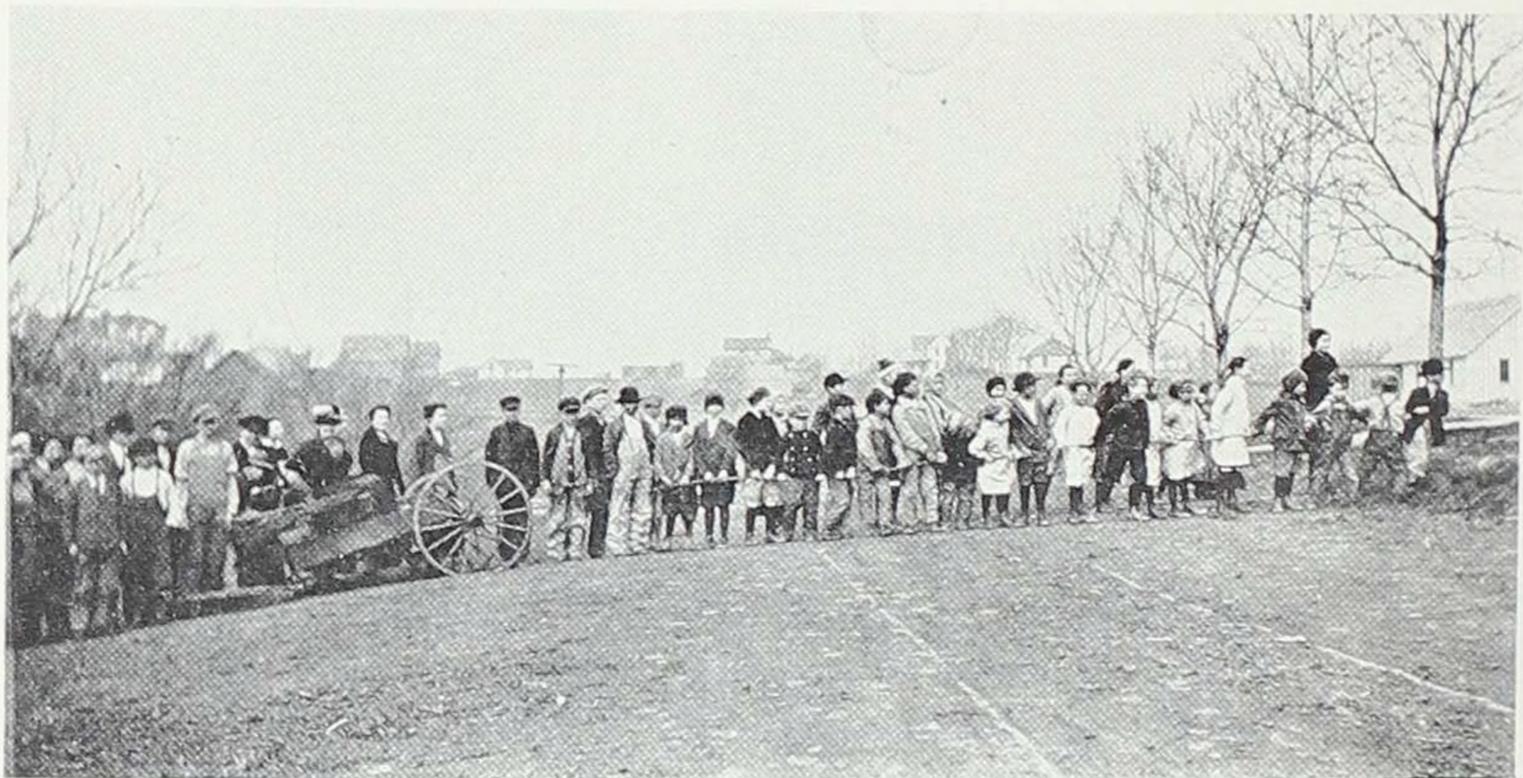
Above is Western Normal College, Shenandoah, from which Agnes Samuelson went out to her first teaching position. She is shown, center, with University of Nebraska co-eds, and below, with her Iowa friend, Jessie Field Shambaugh, at George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee.





With two Silver City friends, Agnes Samuelson, upper left, admires a chic spring chapeau. Below, she poses with members of the Silver City "Fancywork Club," each holding a well-equipped sewing bag.

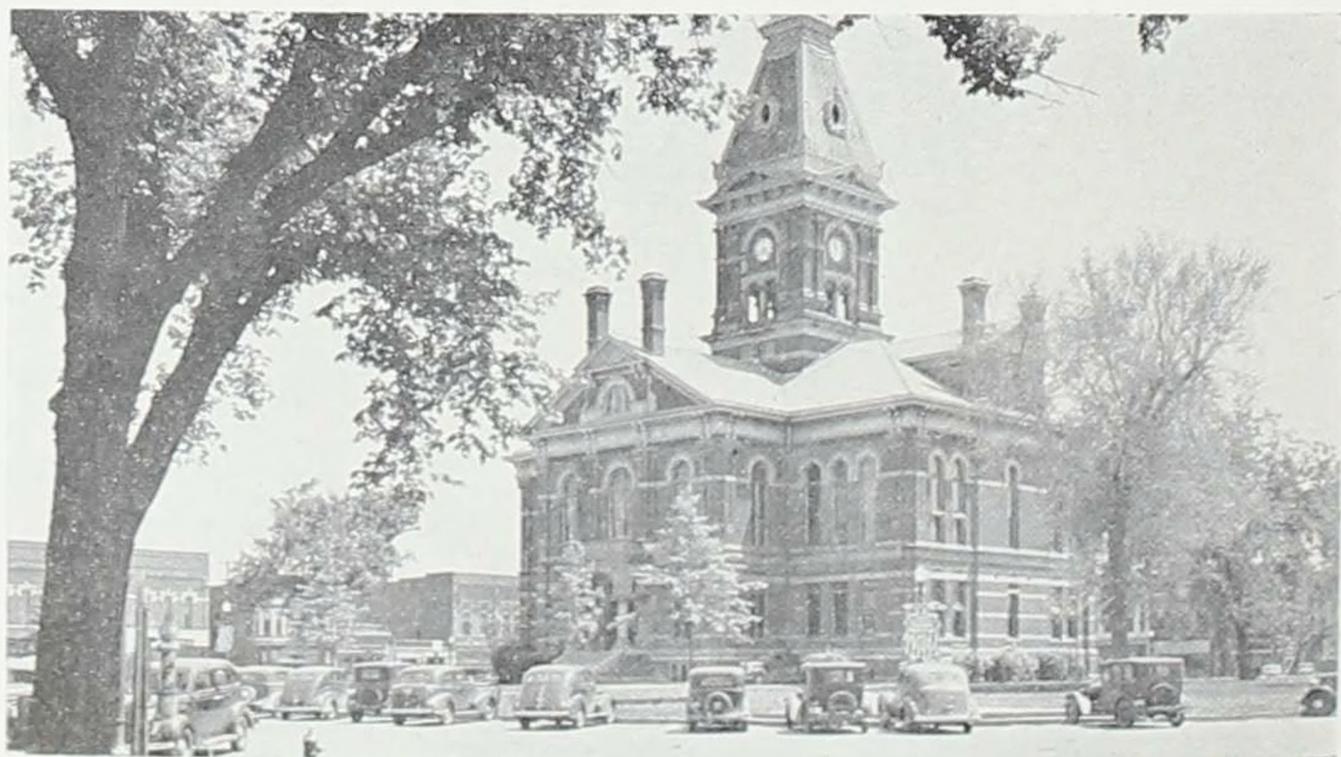




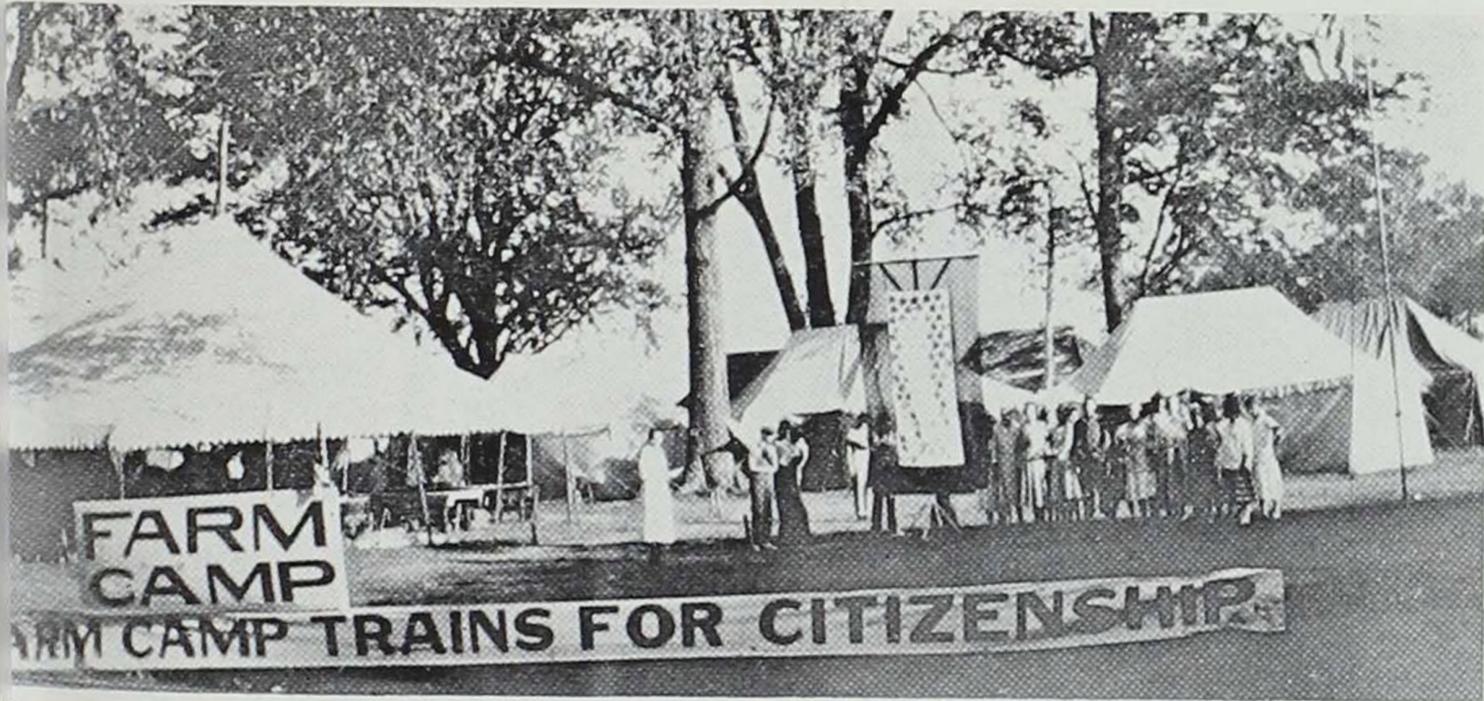
Cheering pupils and townspeople give Miss Samuelson a "chariot ride" after her election as superintendent of Page County schools. Her chariot is a two-wheeled cart, pulled by her admirers through the Clarinda streets.



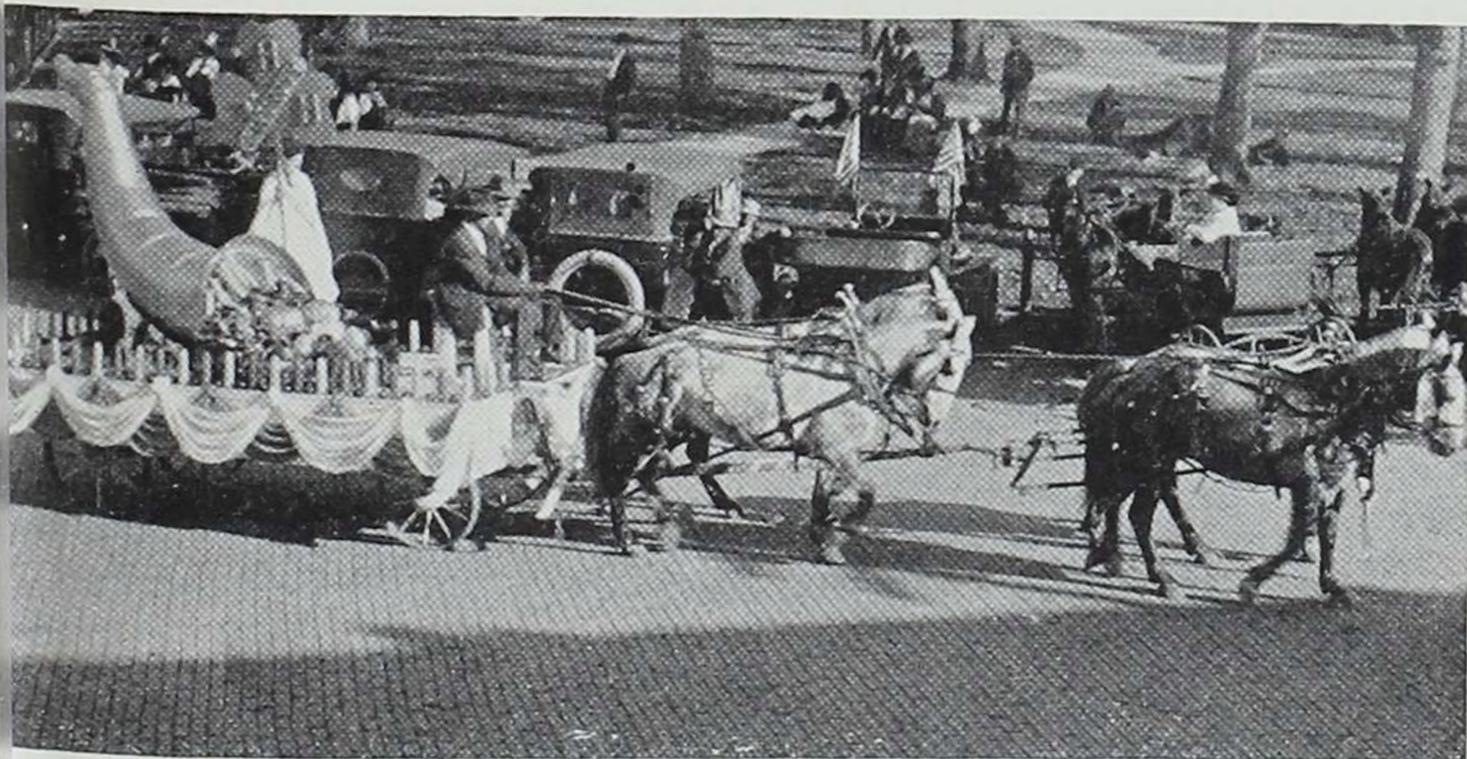
Entertaining other superintendents at her home.



Page County courthouse, Clarinda, where Agnes Samuelson served as county superintendent of schools for more than eight years.



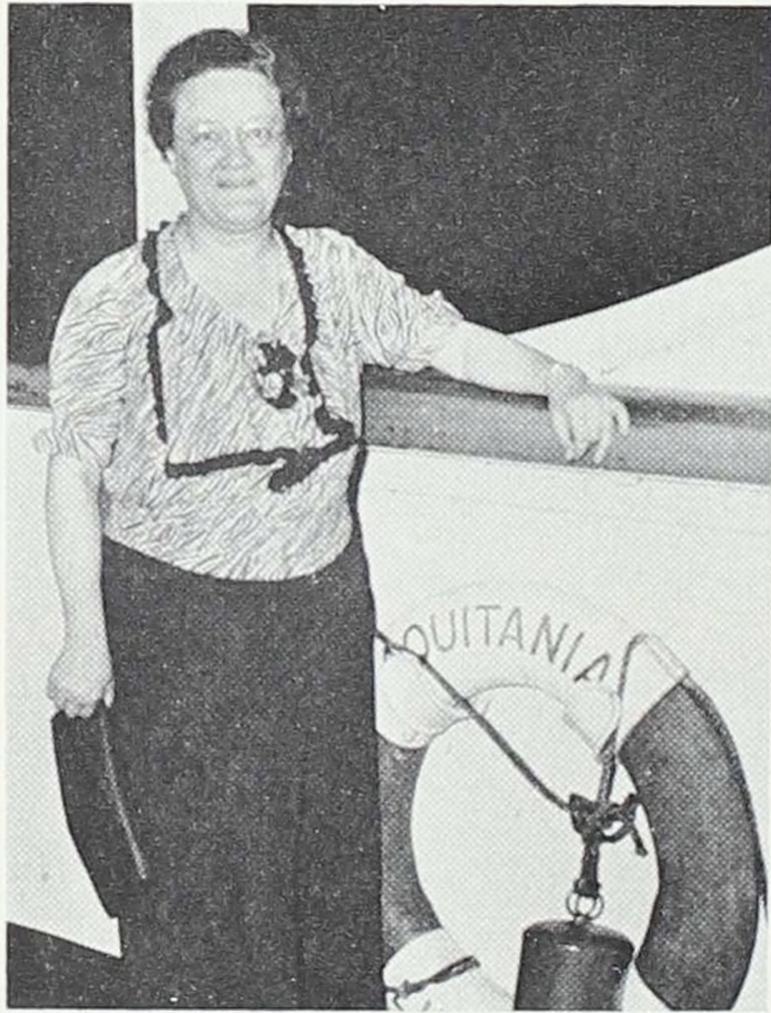
Agnes Samuelson was director of the Farm Camp, sponsored by the Clarinda Chauqua Committee.



At her suggestion, thirty rural school districts entered floats in the "Education Day" parade at the Farmers' Institute, during Miss Samuelson's Page County superintendency.



Visiting consolidated schools in horse-drawn buses was included in the superintendent's schedule.

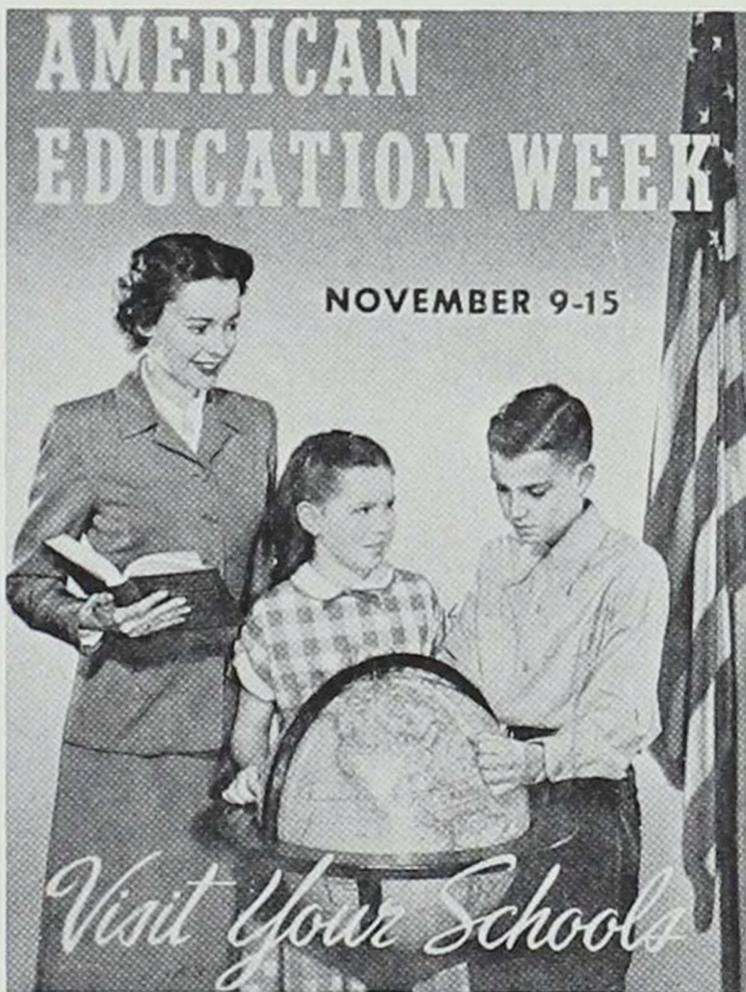


Miss Samuelson, president of the National Education Association, was its envoy to a conference of the World Federation of Education Association in Oxford, England. She is pictured on shipboard at the start of her voyage.

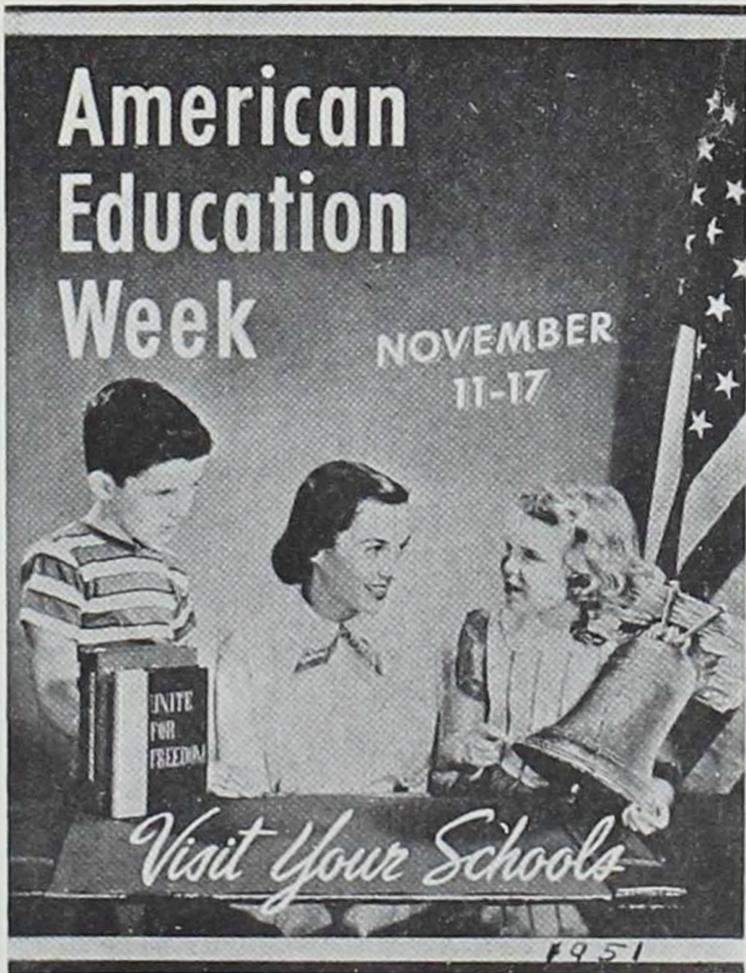


Conferring in Boston with past presidents of the N. E. A. is Miss Samuelson, second from the left, front row. She is the only Iowa woman ever to be named president of this organization.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK... *November 7-13*



AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK... *November 5-11, 1950*



These are some of the posters planned by Agnes Samuelson for American Education Week during her sojourn with the N. E. A. in Washington, D. C.

BUSY DAYS IN WASHINGTON



Agnes Samuelson, right, confers with R. I. Grisby, acting Commissioner of Education, along with representatives of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the American Association of University Women.



Packing books for overseas relief are Agnes Samuelson, left, and some of her associates.

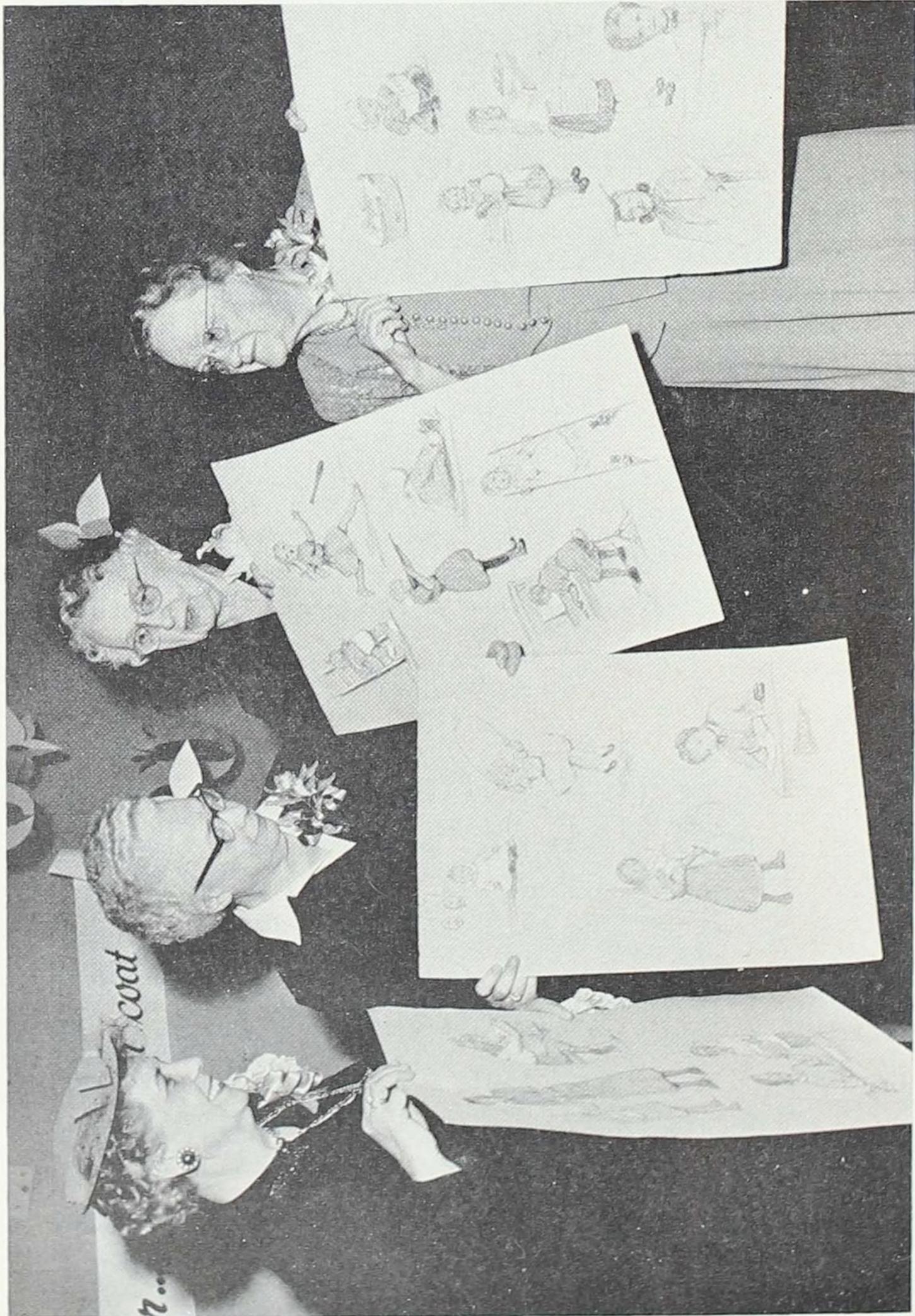
MILESTONES IN A BUSY LIFE



Agnes Samuelson, left; has been named Iowa Superintendent of Public Instruction; center, president of the National Education Association; right, facing new challenges in retirement.



Miss Samuelson receives praise and best wishes from Dr. William G. Carr, executive secretary-elect, N. E. A., and Dr. Willard E. Givens, executive secretary of the organization, upon her retirement from the N. E. A.



Miss Samuelson, right, was honored by the Des Moines Business and Professional Women's Club at a "This is Your Life" program in 1955. Also recognized for achievement were Miss Helen Irwin, Dr. Helen Johnston, and Miss Jessie M. Parker. The posters held by the women illustrate phases of their careers; pictures on Miss Samuelson's include one of a young girl holding a pan of bread, a reminder of her youthful plan for earning school tuition.

The outbreak of World War I found Agnes Samuelson engaged in a variety of community activities. She was a charter member of the Page County Chapter of the American Red Cross. She directed patriotic activities in the schools and spoke at Liberty Loan drives. She recalls marching around the Clarinda square with other hilarious celebrants when news of the armistice was announced.

She became a member of the Women's Auxiliary of the Sergy Post of the American Legion Auxiliary in Clarinda, and later was given an honorary membership in the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. She wrote sketches, patriotic plays, and a "Peace on Earth" pageant in which Clarinda citizens and pupils participated. At Christmas time, back in Shenandoah, she helped with the children's program in the church school, which she served as Sunday School superintendent.

Miss Samuelson assisted in the organization of the Page County Y. W. C. A. and was a member of its board for several years. One of her prized possessions is an autographed copy of the American version of the Bible, presented by Helen Gould Shephard in a National Y. W. C. A. program for memorizing certain passages of scripture in the Old and New Testaments.

She was in demand as a speaker at many Iowa and Nebraska gatherings, and wrote many play-

lets for school-community meetings. One of the most elaborate, "Ye Kain't Haul 'Em," was presented at a rural conference at Iowa State Teachers College. County superintendents took part in the production, a satire on the problems faced by the superintendents in connection with the establishment of consolidated schools.

Parents and pupils alike profited when she secured a favorable vote on the adoption of uniform text books for the schools of Page County. Bulletins and lesson helps dealt with such topics as teaching citizenship, teaching patriotism, and teaching manners and morals. When an Iowa law was passed requiring the teaching of home economics, manual training and agriculture in the schools, it was her duty to see that equipment was purchased, and demonstrations held for teachers without training in these subjects.

Among her outstanding achievements as county superintendent were several events which brought the rural schools together on a county level.

There was great fun as well as instructional activity at the Farm Camp, sponsored by the Clarinda Chautauqua committee, with Miss Samuelson as Camp Director. Faculty members from Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts taught courses in home economics, manual training and agriculture. Teachers and other adults were tent leaders. An assembly, chosen by the camp group, governed the daily affairs, much

like the pattern of the Boys' State and Girls' State today.

Another highlight of her Page County superintendency was "Education Day" at the Farmers' Institute, when thirty rural districts entered floats depicting farm and school life. Her association with the farmers in the area always was pleasant. When the Page County Farm Bureau was organized, the preliminary meeting was held in her office, with Miss Samuelson participating in the initial planning.

There are many who still talk about the great "Play Day" — May 11, 1923 — when 2,000 pupils and teachers marched in a parade, led by the Clarinda band, and later participated in a program of track events, folk games, contests, Maypole drills and township dinners. Climax of the program was a flag drill in which 1,800 pupils rhythmically waved their flags as the band played "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." Old-timers recall that 10,000 people watched these thrilling events. The celebration was a cooperative affair, with Miss Lula E. Sweigard of Iowa State Teachers College in charge of the program, Miss Samuelson serving as general manager, and the Clarinda Community club furnishing the grounds, band, labor, prize ribbons and other services.

It was natural that her understanding of rural schools and people would attract the attention of educators at the college level. So after eight years

and two months' service as superintendent of Page County, she resigned her position to accept the invitation of Prof. I. H. Hart, Director of the Extension Division of Iowa State Teachers College, to become an Extension Professor of Rural Education. Now her work became state wide.

Saying goodbye to her associates was not easy, but the sadness of parting was alleviated by farewell dinners, and the presentation of a silver loving cup from the Clarinda teachers and a gold watch from her Page County colleagues.

From 1923 to 1926 Agnes Samuelson traveled over the State of Iowa, holding conferences, advising teachers, principals and superintendents, conducting teaching demonstrations, and speaking at study center meetings and eighth grade promotion exercises.

Although hers was often a six-day week, she found special satisfaction in bringing help to teachers; securing up-to-date teaching materials; pointing the way to aid the slow learner, the rapid learner and pupils with average ability. Her goal, as always, was toward improvement of instruction for the pupils and more realistic consideration of the status of the teachers.

In this period the rural schools were criticized by those who saw only the imperfections, and were eulogized by others who saw only achievement and whose judgment sometimes was clouded by nostalgic memories. To be overcome by educa-

tional leaders were objections to change; increased costs; transportation difficulties and satisfaction with the status quo. The fact that Iowa was rated first in literacy in the nation led some to believe that the state's schools must be the best.

Agnes Samuelson's concern was for rural education to become an integral part of the total educational program, and that rural educators be given equal status with their urban counterparts. Since that time, much has been gained along these lines, with Miss Samuelson contributing a great deal to the improvements. In this era, much of the school legislation was related to the rural schools. It consisted largely of state aids to consolidated schools; support of extension services; help to normal training high schools, where students were being prepared for teaching in one-room schools, and emergency budgetary assistance to mining camp schools.

Of the ever-changing scene, Miss Samuelson says:

Statesmanship and leadership were imperatives for moving from one type of school organization to another — from the one-room school to the consolidated school and from the consolidated school to the community school. These same qualities will be needed in the establishment of the intermediate school unit of tomorrow — already due. In each period the developments have been made in response to new needs and changing conditions, affecting all aspects of American life. Who can foresee what the space age will bring?

DOROTHY ASHBY POWNALL

New Adventures

Agnes Samuelson was familiar with every facet of public school administration and teaching when she became State Superintendent of Public Instruction for Iowa in 1927. Her assignment now was the general supervision of the public schools of the state, other than those under the authority of the State Board of Education and the Board in Control of State Institutions.

She was the friend of school officials, teachers, parents and children, all of whom realized that this gentle but determined woman had but one goal: To give the best possible educational opportunities to every child, regardless of racial, religious or economic background, and to raise the status of the teaching profession.

Governors, legislators, research experts, community leaders and citizens from all walks of life were among those who cooperated with her during the years 1927 to 1938. During that period she served three administrations in the State House — two Republican and one Democratic. For her third term she was elected without opposition when the Democratic party placed no name on their ballot for the office of state superintendent. During these exciting years she saw vast changes in the

public school curriculum as well as improved teacher certification, progress in vocational and adult education and aids to the handicapped. During her administration, the Junior College was established in Iowa and great advances were made by the government and general public of the importance of the teacher and school in every community.

Highlight of these years was her election as president of the National Education Association in 1935 in Denver when she challenged her enthusiastic followers to "see to it that Education, like Ignorance in Pilgrim's Progress, does not come 'hobbling after' everything else" and that the cry must be to "sharpen our purposes, lop off the petty things around the fringe, and become more articulate spokesmen for education in recovery and reconstruction programs."

As president of the N. E. A., she followed her dedicated policy of preaching the gospel of Grade A education in every state in the union. She also represented the national organization at the conference of the World Federation of Education Associations in Oxford, England.

To that august body she brought this greeting from the National Education Association:

Teacups have made neighbors out of strangers. While we differ in tradition and language, and our governments' relation to education, we are alike in the purpose which draws us together — our desire for a better understanding

among nations, and our belief in education as a means to this end. It takes time to build a substantial foundation for enduring peace, but the important thing is to move in the right direction. The N. E. A. joins hands with all of you in interpreting the necessity and meaning of world friendliness to the present generation, to the end that peace may prevail and human progress be achieved.

Climaxing her trip to Oxford was a flight to Sweden, the homeland of her grandparents. She points out the difference between the swift, comfortable plane ride and the journey of her forebears to America:

It is well to remind ourselves of the courage of our intrepid predecessors, who pulled up stakes and endured the hardships of rugged ocean voyages, exhausting cross-country travel in lumbering covered wagons to settle in America. The Bible was always carried with them as they sought a new life as strangers in a strange land. Their appreciation and adherence to the vital values of home, education, religion and freedom helped to strengthen the sinews of free government and enhance the civilization we love to call Iowa.

A tireless missionary in her field, Agnes Samuelson wrote prodigiously in scores of publications of national and international circulation. She lectured at educational conventions, club meetings, Parent-Teacher, patriotic, religious and farmers' gatherings.

An outstanding event in this period was the Citizens' Conference on Education, called in 1934

in Des Moines and attended by representatives of 31 organizations and many private citizens concerned with educational planning for Iowa. Members of the legislature, state officials and others vitally interested in school problems participated in the program.

A result of this conference was the organization of the Iowa Council for Better Education. Its founders were Frank Miles, editor of the *Iowa Legionnaire*; Charles F. Pye, executive secretary of the Iowa State Teachers Association, and Agnes Samuelson, Superintendent of Public Instruction. The council celebrated its 25th anniversary in June, 1962.

It consists of organizations interested in education. Each group has its own educational program. The I. C. B. E. at its five meetings each year identifies and interprets educational problems and programs, distributes helpful materials and hears talks and discussions relating to education. Information is disseminated regarding issues and new trends. Recommendations of the State Board of Public Instruction and the State Board of Regents are explained.

In a talk to a convention of the Iowa State Teachers Association, early in her new post, Miss Samuelson outlined some of her objectives. They included: Equal educational opportunities for all children of the state; a fully qualified teacher in every classroom; an attractive, sanitary and whole-

some school building and environment for every child; courses of study adapted to the needs of children in accordance with the objectives of education; thorough instruction in the fundamental tools of learning; a persistent program of complete health service, including mental hygiene and pre-school opportunity; a program of guidance and character education to assist children in intelligently choosing careers and achieving significant lives; uniform practice in child and financial accounting; a continuous evaluation of the efficiency of instruction and of the economy of operation of every school district; educational facilities to assist adults in adjusting to changing social and economic conditions and to eradicate all illiteracy in the state. She also recommended a public relations program.

During her term of office many changes affecting Iowa schools were made. Besides improvements in teacher certification, there were changes in tuition laws for non-resident pupils. Statutes relative to the closing of schools with small attendance were altered so that adjoining districts might contact each other for elementary school facilities.

Miss Samuelson's administration was distinguished by two surveys which did much to equalize educational opportunities for children and to improve teacher certification requirements. One survey concerned children with handicaps which prevented them from attending elementary or sec-

ondary schools. After a survey which identified these children, the Iowa legislature appropriated funds to help local school districts bring the children to school or provide home teaching for them.

Extensive information also was collected in a survey of the state's teaching personnel which laid the groundwork for better certification requirements. The taking of a school census biennially was authorized and the use of a uniform system of financial records among all school districts was established. The teaching of Iowa history was added to the list of required subjects in Iowa schools, and money was assured for the support of school libraries.

Agnes Samuelson's administration survived the period of financial depression, during which time teachers' and college faculties' salaries were reduced and many school positions eliminated. Her department administered the Federal Emergency Relief Program for Education in Iowa, when work relief was provided in the fields of adult and vocational education; rehabilitation, and the establishment of emergency nursery schools. During this time she conferred with President and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt at Warm Springs, Georgia, regarding the program.

As always, Miss Samuelson had the rural schools in mind. Emphasis was focused on rural education by establishing rural school choirs; special awards for superior rural schools; Iowa letters

awarded for scholarship, and high school tuition certificates given. Important research was carried on in school financing, and a uniform financial system organized. Publications were issued outlining facts for legislators and others. New plans were made for classifying and approving schools and new curriculum materials were developed.

In Superintendent Samuelson's final biennial report in 1938, she recommended increase of minimum requirements for entering the teaching profession in Iowa; establishment of a sound statewide teacher retirement and annuity plan; the meeting in full by the state of its financial obligation to school districts; creation of a school fund in sufficient amount to assume a significant portion of the cost of operating the elementary and secondary schools; expansion of a statewide plan for the education of handicapped children; clarification of the definition of school funds; increase in the resources of the Department of Public Instruction; provision for strengthening the office of County Superintendent; investigation of the possibilities for school district reorganization; appointment of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and closer coordination between vocational and other instruction.

Much progress has been made in all of these areas since this report was presented, but Miss Samuelson is convinced that one problem is yet to be resolved — the continued heavy reliance of

schools upon property taxes. "Giant strides should take the place of snail's pace in this field," she advises. She points out that many districts have had to undergo excessive burdens to meet changing conditions and increasing enrollments.

In 1938 some type of vocational education was offered in 187 different Iowa communities. This program included instruction in agriculture, home-making, trade and industrial education and adult classes. Vocational education, organized under the provisions of federal and state education acts, is of less than college grade, and is given for the specific purpose of equipping boys and girls and men and women for useful and effective employment.

Also significant during Miss Samuelson's terms of office was vocational rehabilitation which assisted disabled persons to become self-supporting. In 1938, 5,272 persons participated in this program.

The census of the teaching personnel of Iowa was the outstanding project of the Board of Educational Examiners. This activity served as the basis for legislation relating to teacher certification.

About one-third of Miss Samuelson's time was devoted to ex-officio duties. She was president of the Board of Educational Examiners and of the Board for Vocational Education and Rehabilitation. She also served as a member of the State Library Commission and of the State Historical,

Memorial and Art Department of Iowa located at Des Moines.

Of her State Office Miss Samuelson recalls:

The work of the chief state school officer is no game of paper dolls or marbles. There was no magic wand to produce whatever history can chronicle, and no rabbits to be pulled from hats to astonish the onlookers. The task was hard work, long hours, overwhelming details, official duties, criticism, impossible demands and all the distractions incumbent upon public service.

Many happy memories offset the drawbacks. They are remembered as the thrills of developing programs, starting new services which continue to flourish, working with people in promoting a greater state through education, seeking improved educational advantages for Iowa's children and adults and feeling at home in every county in the state.

When she was presented with a life membership in the National Educational Association in 1936, Dr. J. W. Crabtree, secretary-emeritus of the organization, called her "a patient, wise, skillful teacher, a devotee of learning, loyal to the interests of the teaching profession, friend of youth and mankind." He expressed the "grateful appreciation of 5,000 life members and 200,000 active members of the N. E. A."

Teacher, philosopher and keen business woman — small wonder Agnes Samuelson was recruited in 1939 by the Iowa State Teachers Association (now the Iowa State Education Association) to serve as executive secretary. Her attention now

turned particularly to the upbuilding of the teaching profession, the strengthening of the organization and the encouragement of greater concern for education among the Iowa citizenry.

Immediate problems concerned reconstruction programs to offset the effects of war, depression and inflation. Priority need was for funds. Association dues were raised. Longtime plans for improvement of Iowa schools were made, and in 1940 a Six-Point Program for school advancement was adopted and promoted through bulletins, radio programs, newspaper publicity and community discussions.

The Fifty-first General Assembly passed bills in five of the six areas of this significant program. Great public interest was evidenced in the School Code program and thousands of printed leaflets were prepared and distributed to organizations and individuals. Again radio announcements, newspaper stories and articles in *Midland Schools*, the Journal of the association, spread the belief in the need for better educational opportunities and for the advancement of the teaching profession in Iowa.

Midland Schools also focused attention upon war activities, legislation, research, classroom helps and "The Blueprint for the Future," a plan which set forth areas of service necessary to building a better organization. Included among the association's successful projects was the purchase,

later, of Salisbury house in Des Moines, as headquarters for the I. S. E. A.

World War II took many teachers from Iowa schools. The state contributed 3500 teachers to the armed forces; 6800 left the teaching field for industry. Emergency certificates were issued to solve, in some measure, the current problem. Many teachers did not resume school careers after the war. Again the urgency for advancing the status and standards of the profession was evident.

Miss Samuelson served on a number of committees during the war period. She aided in the sale of bonds and stamps and represented the association at many patriotic conferences. Through voluntary subscriptions, Iowa teachers purchased and equipped two ambulances, and for this service received a citation from the U. S. Treasury Department. All participated in programs of rationing, civil defense, victory gardens and physical fitness. They contributed generously to war related programs, and bought bonds and stamps.

The activity of the Iowa State Teachers Association continued untiringly as Miss Samuelson moved on to Washington, D. C., where, from 1945 until her retirement in 1952, she was a staff member of the National Education Association which she had previously served as president. In her new post, she was assistant editor of the N. E. A. Journal and associate director of American Education Week. She pioneered with others

in the establishment of the N. E. A. Division of Rural Service, an area which has exerted dynamic leadership in the improvement of rural education over the country during the past 25 years.

Many years had passed since the ambitious Shenandoah school girl overcame difficult obstacles to secure a college education amidst many and varied teaching positions. Among showers of congratulations on her new position came this letter from one of her University of Iowa professors, the late Forest C. Ensign:

I'll say the little girl whom I knew as a country teacher in Page County has traveled some distance. I wish even one percent of my students of these past years might have had the talent and opportunity to render the service to education which you have already done. Our schools and our educational ideals would be much farther along, were this the case.

But it is especially gratifying to me to look back over the years and realize that I, at least, had the opportunity to watch your progress, to cheer you along the way, and perhaps to afford a little inspiration, as you have risen, step by step, apparently quite unconscious that you really were rising.

Miss Samuelson's duties as assistant editor of the Journal were directed toward pages devoted to the state associations, articles relating to the Parent-Teacher Association field and the activities of American Education Week.

American Education Week is observed nation-

ally during the week which includes Veterans' Day. It is sponsored by the National Education Association; the National Congress of Parents and Teachers; the American Legion and the United States Office of Education.

Its annual observance emphasizes the principle that the education of the people is the government's continued obligation to its security and perpetuity. Its initial purpose to improve health conditions and eradicate illiteracy was established as the result of defects noted in soldiers during World War II. The purposes have broadened to include current needs and conditions, with the continuing theme, "Bring the people to the schools and the schools to the people."

One of Miss Samuelson's important tasks was to work with schools and organizations in developing this observance over the United States. Her activities included planning and attending meetings, preparing posters, radio scripts and other helps for the groups in charge. They, in turn, issued booklets, planned parades, exhibits and other demonstrations to promote better education. Particularly popular were many of the colored posters originated by Miss Samuelson.

So significant and impressive were many of these materials that they are being requested by overseas educators in Canada, Ceylon, India, Israel, Guam, Liberia, Malta and the Philippines.

Among Miss Samuelson's many interests during

this era was participation in rehabilitation programs to aid needy teachers and schools overseas. She worked with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, cooperating with the American Junior Red Cross, in sending boxes of supplies to destitute schools and homes abroad. As a member of Pi Lambda Theta, honorary society for women in education, she was its Washington chairman for the collection of educational books for a Teachers College for Women in the Philippines. Cooperating in this project was the Emergency Library Service of the Congressional Library.

A real thrill for the Iowa educator was the Lord and Taylor Awards luncheon at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, during the closing year of her service on the N. E. A. staff. She accepted, on behalf of the association, a tribute to the teachers of America for their work in teaching human relations to children.

This program was broadcast over radio networks and was carried internationally on the Voice of America. The participants also took part in a broadcast before the luncheon, and Miss Samuelson appeared on television to report the awards.

Her Swedish ancestry is cherished by Agnes Samuelson and her joy was great when in 1950 she received the annual award from the Women's Auxiliary of the American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia, given to "the women of

Swedish-American heritage for outstanding accomplishments and helpful service to others."

During her stay in Washington, D. C., Miss Samuelson represented the president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers at many conferences and conventions. She also served that organization as chairman of education and wrote articles for its publication, the *National Parent-Teacher*. She has been honored with life memberships in the national and Iowa P. T. A. groups.

As a member of the visual aids committee of the N. E. A., she aided in the supervision of the production of educational films. Busy though she was with official duties, she also had time for church work, teaching an adult class in the Augustana Church and receiving a Bible as a farewell gift from her church group when she left for Iowa.

A delightful surprise awaited the educator when she attended the N. E. A. convention in Detroit in 1952. She was called to the platform by Wesley Erbe, president of the Iowa State Education Association, and presented with a gift, "in recognition of her service to the teaching profession in Iowa and the nation." Many tributes were paid to her upon her retirement — "retired," — she reminded her Des Moines friends, "but not tired."

She says, "I look upon the years ahead not as 'retirement from' but as 'adjustment to' another period of living."

DOROTHY ASHBY POWNALL

Living in the Present

A favorite quotation from Walt Whitman furnishes a clue to Agnes Samuelson's attitude toward retirement:

"Youth, large, lusty and loving,
Youth, full of grace, force and fascination —
Do you know that old age may come after you
With equal grace, force and fascination?"

Miss Samuelson may enjoy her rocking chair occasionally — they have become fashionable — but for the most part her days are filled with exciting and challenging activities. She is called upon to speak at educational, church, civic, P. T. A., club meetings and workshops. One of her favorite themes is the contemporary scene — the destructive, distressing and dangerous elements, versus the favorable, constructive and encouraging signs and forces with implications for education.

During these so-called retirement years she also has appeared on television, given radio talks, and conducted seminars. She has written many articles and has served on key committees for many important organizations.

She has found time to serve on the Iowa Commission for Senior Citizens and the Polk County

committee which held a preliminary conference for the national conference on education sponsored by former President Dwight D. Eisenhower. She was a member of the committee which studied the overall organization of the Augustana Lutheran Church, and has been a member of the Board of Higher Education for that church body, as well as the Simpson College Board of Trustees.

Reminders of her extensive travels and friendships are found in beautifully planned albums of postcards collected in this country and Europe, and in photographs of colleagues with whom she has been associated. Scores of programs in which she participated are found in her scrapbooks. She cherishes, also, a collection of commemorative plates, and many letters from educators, government officials, parents, former students and other friends. These she affectionately calls her "dividends."

She has given generously of her time to advise various groups, including the Des Moines Branch of the American Association of University Women, the Des Moines Public Library, the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs and the Iowa Council for Better Education. She also has spoken at conventions of the Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers.

She enjoys federated club meetings, church functions, P. E. O. programs and the Des Moines Professional Women's League. This group pre-

sented her as one of the stars in a "This is Your Life" program. Others honored were Miss Helen Irwin, now International president of the Business and Professional Women's Clubs; Dr. Helen Johnston and Miss Jessie Parker, Miss Samuelson's successor as State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Recently members of Miss Samuelson's family honored her with a reception in Des Moines, commemorating her years of service to the state and the nation. Relatives and friends from distant cities and states joined Iowans in paying tribute to this devotee of education. Family ties are still strong in this congenial group. The story of the family is being written by Miss Samuelson during these retirement years.

Letters from many notables are among her "dividends." Former Governor Leo Heogh wrote her in 1957, "I have enjoyed working with you, one of Iowa's most ardent supporters of good education."

And in a letter of appreciation, written at the time of Miss Samuelson's retirement, Willard E. Givens, executive secretary of the N. E. A. said:

You have given brilliant leadership to American public education in many capacities. Your wisdom and judgment have been invaluable in furthering the best in education through action.

Does Agnes Samuelson remember the mud

roads, district squabbles, long hours and that old, red caboose? Of course she does, but she likes to point out some of the changes she has noted in a single life span:

Once the hard, backless wooden benches. Now the adjustable, movable chair desks.

Once "boarding around." Now professional salary schedules.

Once the names of all the bones in the body. Now the rules of health and hygiene.

Once only dates in history. Now an understanding of American and world problems.

Once scales and finger exercises. Now good music to play in the school orchestra.

Once stitches on a sampler. Now a modish garment to be worn.

Once fox and hound problems. Now studies in space exploration.

Once jawbreakers in spelling. Now words most commonly used.

Once the birch rod discipline. Now pupil participation, study of child development and the importance of mental hygiene.

Once the curriculum of reading, writing and ciphering. Now flexible units of study based on the changing needs of modern living.

When Miss Samuelson thinks of the "good, old days" we may be sure it is with affection for schools, pupils and the vital profession of teaching to which she has given a lifetime of dedicated service.

DOROTHY ASHBY POWNALL

SOME AWARDS TO A DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR

HONORARY DEGREES

Doctor of Letters, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, June 4, 1935
Doctor of Education, Simpson College, Indianola, Iowa, April 20, 1936
Doctor of Education, MacMurray College for Girls, Jacksonville, Illinois, June 1, 1936
Doctor of Humane Literature, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, October 17, 1936
Doctor of Laws, Tarkio College, Tarkio, Missouri, June 2, 1937

WHO'S WHO RECOGNITIONS

Who's Who in America	International Who's Who
Who's Who in American Education	Distinguished Leaders in the Nation's Capitol
Who's Who in Iowa	Biographical Encyclopedia of the World
Who's Who of American Women	Who's Important in Education
Who's Who in the Western Hemisphere	World Biography
Principal Women of America	

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Phi Beta Kappa	Tegner Society and Palladian Literary Society, University of Nebraska
Pi Lambda Theta	
Delta Kappa Gamma Society	

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

National Education Association	Iowa State Education Association
State Historical Society of Iowa	NEA Board of Directors
National Congress PTA	Women's Auxiliary of the American Swedish Historical Foundation
Iowa Congress PTA	

HONORARY MEMBERSHIPS

MacRae Cooper Auxiliary of the V.F.W., Clarinda	Altrusa Club of Des Moines Future Farmers of America
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ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Journal of Education	A.A.U.W., Des Moines Consultant
Des Moines Public Library	Education Consultant Iowa Federation
National Advisory Committee on Education	Women's Clubs
National Youth Administration	Education Chairman, General Federation of Women's Clubs

CIVIC AND SERVICE AWARDS

Distinguished Service Scroll, Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers
Annual award from the American Swedish Historical Museum
Certificate of Accomplishment, University of Iowa

CHURCH AND Y.W.C.A. ACTIVITIES

Teacher-SS Superintendent, Emanuel Evangelical Church, Shenandoah
Evangelical Lutheran Church, Shenandoah, Iowa
Leader of adult Bible class, Augustana Lutheran Church, Washington, D. C.
Member Synodical Committee, Augustana Lutheran Church of America
Member of the Board of Higher Education of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
Helped organize Y.W.C.A. in Page County and served as Board Member
Member of the residence committee for the Des Moines Y. W. C. A.

An Educator's Hobby

Historic Plates



STOCKHOLM. 1253 — 1953
Slottet Tre Kronor



(Left): NEA CENTENNIAL, 1857 — 1957
(Right): INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, General
Federation of Women's Clubs, Washington, D.C.



(Left): FANEUIL HALL, Boston, Mass.
(Center): NEW YORK CITY, Gateway of America
(Right): INDEPENDENCE HALL, Philadelphia