

History Early Club

By MISS OLIVE GASS
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an organization for Educational Improvement that pre-dated our first Woman's club. It was called a Literary Circle, and consisted of both men and women. It was organized about 1856 and consisted entirely of genuine Nebraska pioneers—and it is a credit to them that amidst all of the sordid surroundings and poverty of those early days, they were trying to preserve the intellectuality and knowledge brought with them from their homes in the east. We are fortunate in having preserved for us, in our public library the first secretary's book of this Literary Circle. The names of the members were as follows:

- Mr. and Mrs. Ezra Bradford.
- Mr. and Mrs. Perry P. Gass.
- Mr. Jonathan Wise.
- Mr. Parker Wise.
- Mr. Burwell Spurlock.
- Miss Nancy Spurlock.
- Miss Margaret Duke (Bennett.)
- Miss Ella Duke (Cooper.)
- Mr. I. N. Kanaga.

It was more than twenty-five years after this Literary Circle disbanded before the first Woman's club was organized. The organization of Plattsmouth's first Woman's club was made in 1894 and it continued to function until 1906. The first president was Mrs. B. M. Stoutenborough. We held our meetings weekly. The meetings were held generally at the homes of the members, but often we met at some public hall. The dues were \$1.00 a year. The average membership was fifty (50). We voted on applicants by "secret ballot." Our colors were pink and white. The average amount paid into the treasury was \$100.00 a year. The money was used for maintaining the work of our departments.

Our motto was "To some the landmark of a new domain." We maintained a circulating library fund, independent of the Y.L.R.A.

The subjects selected for study were as follows: Parliamentary Law, Temperance, Literature and Biography, Art, Music, Household Economics and our Public Schools. A committee was appointed for each month to visit the schools.

Our club brought many talented speakers and singers to our town. One of these speakers of special interest to Nebraskans was the wife of William Jennings Bryan. In May 1895 Mrs. Bryan gave a talk on "Gladstone" at our club. The meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Sam Waugh, who also gave a reception to Mrs. Bryan.

For entertainments we had parties, gave plays and celebrated birthdays of great men. We also celebrated leap year. At such times we ladies invited a favorite boy friend to the party. We called at his home for him and generally returned him safely to his own gate.

We had special meetings to celebrate the birth of our great men and women. At a celebration of George Washington's birthday, each member as she entered the hall where the celebration was held, was presented with a tiny flag and to these flags were tied the programs with ribbons of the national colors.

One quite pretentious entertainment was called "The Convention of 1910." The following is a report of this convention written at the time of the occurrence in 1896.

"FAIR SENATORS"

Members of the Woman's Club Assume the Role of Politicians in 1896.

"The entertainment given by the Plattsmouth Woman's club at the Waterman Hall last evening was well attended by an audience composed largely of ladies, but there was also a large sprinkling of members of the sterner sex, who made as much

merit in appreciation of the smart sayings and keen drives of the participants of the program as the ladies.

"The program of the evening consisted of enacting a mimic or farce senate of 1910, upon the theory that woman suffrage had taken the place of man suffrage.

"Mrs. Belle Stoutenborough, president of the Woman's club called the assemblage to order and announced that the parliamentary department of the club would give the entertainment. Upon the platform arranged behind mimic desks, sat the members of the senate, the following being the participants: President of the Senate, Mrs. Travis; Secretary of Senate, Miss Jamison; Secretary of Treasury, Mrs. Elson; Sergeant at Arms, Miss Emma Tresham; Senate Reporters, Edna Adams, Ida Conn; Senator from New York, Mrs. Westcott; Senator from Nebraska, Mrs. McLennon; Senator from Massachusetts, Miss Gass; Senator from South Carolina, Mrs. Rawls; Senator from Ohio, Miss Wright; Senator from Kansas, Mrs. Unruh; Senator from Pennsylvania, Mrs. Cummins; Senator from Missouri, Mrs. Davis; Senator from Indiana, Mrs. Butler; Senator from Rhode Island, Mrs. Howland; Senator from Texas, Mrs. Clark; Senator from Colorado, Mrs. Burton; Senator from Illinois, Mrs. Streight.

"Mrs. Travis presided with great dignity and decorum, and her address at the close was a decided hit. The question discussed was the enfranchisement of men, and each of the senators addressed themselves to the question about as closely as members of congress of today are in the habit of doing. Nearly all of them had their speeches so well committed that they made impromptu efforts out of them.

"Miss Gass was for the bill, and was so firm in her convictions that she would ever be ready to be led a sacrifice to the altar, while Mrs. Howland became so fervent in her advocacy of the measure that she broke completely down and gave vent to a flood of tears. Mrs. Clark was opposed to re-enfranchisement. She was ready to sacrifice her daughter to maintain the supremacy of her sex, as she had already sacrificed her mother to attain it, and might even imitate another senator by offering up her husband's relatives on the altar of her devotion. Mrs. Streight brought the discussion to a climax by a speech of great power, in which she declared her willingness to shoulder a gun for the cause of woman suffrage, and just as she had declared that she was ready to fight man or beast, some one discovered a mouse near her feet, and she collapsed, amid screams of terror from her sister senators. The affair came to a close with the singing of an original song, and a rhythmic speech by the president of the senate. All the speakers did well, and deserve mention. Early in the evening the audience was favored with a nicely rendered violin solo, by Miss Kauble."

Woman's Club Banquet, 1898

Story of an old time banquet of Woman's club in 1898:

"The Journal has received a copy of an old clipping, taken from the files of the Plattsmouth News, which is of interest to older residents of the city. The clipping was sent from Seattle, Washington, by R. O. Fellows, one of the old residents here. The story is that of the banquet of the Plattsmouth Woman's club, held some thirty-three years ago.

"The banquet was presided over by Mrs. Fellows, then president of the club, the organization being in its fourth year of existence.

"Of the participants in the banquet program, but two are still residents here, the others having removed or passed away.

"The address of welcome was given by Mrs. H. C. McMaken, one of the active leaders in the club work at that time, while the invocation was by Mrs. S. A. Davis, now a resident of Lincoln.

"C. A. Rawls, then recently returned from Cuba, where he served as lieutenant and captain of Co. B, Third Nebraska Infantry spoke on the new island republic, its people and many beautiful scenes and costumes.

"Carl Tucker who had charge of the club's music department at that time gave a vocal and piano number. Miss Catherine Agnew and Miss Mayme Sullivan, as well as Miss Louise Miller of Queen City, Mo., were heard in vocal selections, two of the numbers being 'The Swallows' and 'Bendemeer's Stream.' A. D. Eignbroadt, now of Lincoln, favored the ladies with a cornet solo. Miss Olive Gass was one of the speakers as was Byron Clark, then engaged in the active practice of law here, but who is now the solicitor for the Burling-

ton at Omaha. Mrs. C. P. Stoutenborough who was a pioneer in the club work, was also on the toast list to discuss the work of the women in their club activities.

"Miss Maude Maury gave the recitation 'Vashti' and Calvin P. Atwood, then a senior at the University of Nebraska, responded to the toast, 'Education.' Stephen A. Davis was also a speaker of the banquet, his toast being 'The Old Man' the contribution of the men guests present at the banquet.

"The ladies of the Episcopal church served the banquet and that the event was one of length was attested by the fact that the banquet party did not leave until after the midnight hour."

Second Woman's Club

On Tuesday, May 7th, 1929, the second Woman's club of which Mrs. Clara Westcott was president, gave a banquet in honor of the founders of the first Woman's club of 1894. An account of the banquet which appeared in the Plattsmouth Daily Journal is given here:

Last evening the Plattsmouth Woman's club held their fifth annual banquet at the Fellowship room of the First Presbyterian church and on this occasion the spirit of fellowship reigned supreme, while the club ladies rolled back the pages of time to pay honor to the splendid group of ladies who had in the past founded the organization from which the present large and active club had sprung.

The meeting represented the yearly gathering, the change of officers, and the yearly reports of the various departmental heads, but this feature, important as it was, took the background, while the club ladies and their guests honored the group of ladies who had formed the original club here in the year 1894, and had the pleasure of having nine of these splendid ladies with them, one coming from the far away Pacific coast to again break bread and meet many of the friends and to recall many others that will come no more.

For the occasion the banquet room was truly a bower of beauty and the purple and white notes of the decorative scheme were in evidence in the beautiful bell-like dome beneath which was spread the table for the charter members, the great bank of lilacs purple in hue and fragrant as they are nowhere else in the world save Nebraska, while on the tables the purple candles with the tulle bows of purple added to the beauty of the snowy naper.

The guests, as Mrs. J. A. Capwell played the professional, took their places, and soon every available seat in the banquet hall, arranged for 102 was occupied, save the seats the guests of honor were to occupy.

Mrs. E. H. Westcott, the efficient and able president of the club in the past year and also the president for the ensuing year, presided in her usual gracious manner. Mrs. Westcott spoke of the work of the founders, the happiness that all felt in having the charter members with the club on this occasion and then brought one of the clever features of the evening into life.

At the west of the room was arranged a large replica of a book, purple and white, upon whose front the monogram of the Plattsmouth Woman's club appeared, and as the list of the charter members was called, the book opened and the members who were able to attend the banquet were escorted to their seats of honor.

Mrs. A. H. Duxbury and Mrs. John A. Griffin serving as the courtesy committee in escorting the ladies to their seats.

The charter members who were here were Mrs. Kate Davis of Lincoln, a grand lady and for many years a loved resident of this community; Mrs. M. V. Traver of McCook; Mrs. William McLennon of San Francisco; Mrs. Charles S. Sherman of Lincoln; Mrs. Isaac King of Superior; while four of our own loved ladies, Mrs. C. A. Rawls, Mrs. Elizabeth Streight, Miss Olive Jones, and Miss Olive Gass completed the roll call.

With the seating of the guests of honor came also the pleasure of having several of the former presidents of the club present at the table where the officers of the club were seated. Mrs. Raymond P. Westover, Mrs. Catherine Flynn of Omaha, Mrs. John F. Gorder, Mrs. L. L. Turpin, being present; Mrs. Earl Stanfield of Arapahoe and Mrs. Allen J. Beeson of Los Angeles were unable to be at the happy meeting.

The dinner was then served, a very charming repast that the ladies of the Q. Z. Society of the Presbyterian church had arranged and served with their usual skill and excellence. The menu was as follows:

- Grape Ice
- Potatoes a la Dutchess
- Chicken Loaf
- Asparagus en Rosettes
- Spring Salad
- Rolls - Marmalade
- Strawberry Shortcake with Whipped Cream
- Coffee - Mints

During the reception of the charter members and the course of the banquet the Woman's club chorus under the direction of their leader Mrs. James T. Begley, gave a num-

ber of the delightful old songs, extended the greetings to the honored guests and gave a song for each of the gentlemen, who were present in a very goodly number. This feature of the music department is certainly a part of the club work that deserves more than a passing comment and is a worthy addition to the musical organizations of the city.

Another of the distinguished guests was Mrs. Nelson Berger of Nehawka, president of the Cass County Federation, who extended greetings and congratulations to the Plattsmouth club and its members and guests.

The business session opened with the routine matters of the club and then was followed by the report of the year's work given by Mrs. Westcott while Mrs. Rae McMaken, vice-president, presided over the meeting.

The report of the club was a revelation to many of the guests not familiar with the large scope of the club work and its community activities and it was not wondered when the report was completed that the local club had won second place in the first district and only surpassed by the largest club in the state, that of Lincoln. Each of the departments of the club and their work was touched upon by the president and the heads of the department and committee chairwomen were greeted as they were brought to their feet by the president.

Mrs. Westcott also paid tribute to the two members who have passed away in the past year. Mrs. E. C. Harris and Mrs. Henry G. Soennichsen.

The club, through Mrs. J. E. Willes, chairman of the Better Homes department, paid a tribute to the services of Mrs. Erle Teepell, who is soon to leave the city for her future home at Atlanta, Georgia, telling of the fine work that this estimable lady has performed for the club and of her splendid personality that has won her a host of friends. Mrs. Teepell responded very feelingly of her love for this community and her regret at the parting with the friends of her stay here in the past three years.

The meeting was then turned to the charter members and Mrs. Kate Davis was called upon to serve as the toastmistress and for some time the delight of the large banquet party was unbounded as members of the charter list told of the old days and the trials and privations of the members of the club of that day. The toastmistress had been the treasurer of the first club and gave some delightful thoughts of the past and in her clever way related of the banquet held June 16, 1899 and the long toast list and program that had marked that event. Mrs. Davis also told of the home talent play the ladies had arranged. "The Senate of 1910," and which was given here and later in Omaha in the hopes of raising funds for the club's activities.

Mrs. Davis called upon all the charter members who responded and from distant points sent greetings in letters and poems, and among the letters received was a very clever remembrance of the charter days sent by Mrs. Elizabeth Travis of Denver, one time president of the club and relating old time incidents, Miss Margaret Wright a former teacher in the local schools and short greetings from other of the old time members.

In the list of charter members present, Mrs. M. V. Traver, of McCook, gave a very charming response of the former club work here and left the inspiring thought of woman's greater scope, the creation and maintaining of a Christian home and which was given with the vision of the eighty years of life of Mrs. Traver.

Mrs. Elizabeth Streight, who is now eighty-seven and the second oldest resident of the city in point of continuous residence, was called upon and gave a very charming greeting. Mrs. Isaac King of Superior when called upon gave as her response a very interesting paper on "The Progress of Woman" which had been prepared and delivered to the first Woman's club here away back in the days of 1894-1895, and which to the old friends was a familiar greeting from the old friend, Mrs. C. E. Westcott who had prepared the paper—(see elsewhere in this issue)—and being unable to be present as she now resides in Los Angeles, sent the paper as a greeting and a reminder of the time of the first movement for women's organization.

Another of the former members to be heard was Mrs. Charles S. Sherman of Lincoln, who gave a very short response and, told of one of the reasons for the club's success in the past and this because of the fact that the founders had eliminated all cast and prejudice from the club and held their doors open to all women, no matter in what station of life they might be cast. Mrs. C. A.

Rawls and Miss Olive Jones, local ladies, briefly acknowledged the greetings of the friends.

The newly elected officers of the club were then inducted into office with the singing of the litany, Mrs. L. L. Turpin serving as the installing officer. The officers installed were: Mrs. E. H. Westcott, president; Mrs. A. H. Duxbury, vice-president; Mrs. G. L. Farley, recording secretary; Mrs. Golda Noble Beal, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Bert Coleman, treasurer; Ms. L. L. Turpin, Mrs. L. W. Egenberger, Mrs. Rea McMaken, auditing committee.

Dr. O. C. HUDSON

Dr. L. S. PUGELIK
and
Dr. W. V. RYAN

Congratulations
TO THE
Woman's Clubs
on Their Golden Jubilee
J. A. CAPWELL
Attorney at Law

Congratulations
TO THE
Plattsmouth Woman's Club
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CONGRATULATIONS
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Celebrate with
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Franchised by
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Extends Congratulations and Best Wishes to
Plattsmouth Woman's Clubs on Their 50th Anniversary

At the close of the meeting, a great many enjoyed the opportunity of meeting the charter members and extending the feeling of happiness that all felt at having these ladies present.

Congratulations
—TO—
The Plattsmouth Woman's Clubs
on their Golden Jubilee Celebration
W. H. PULS, Agent
Farmers Mutual Insurance Company

projects and other activities of Plattsmouth's first Woman's club. As a charter member of this club, I say, "God speed" to the Senior and Junior members of the Plattsmouth Woman's clubs of 1940.

GREETINGS
TO THE
PLATTSMOUTH WOMAN'S CLUB
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Congratulations
May the Plattsmouth Woman's Clubs, now celebrating the Golden Jubilee, enjoy many more years of successful and unselfish service to the people of this community!
CHICKS NOW ON SALE
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New Transportation Mode
The horse and buggy days are gone forever. The modern club woman rides in a Ford V-8, the economy car!
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DEPENDABLE MEAT AND GROCERY STORE
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CONGRATULATIONS
We wish to Congratulate the Plattsmouth Woman's Clubs on the Fine Work they are Doing!
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to the Plattsmouth Woman's Clubs on their Golden Jubilee Celebration . . . and Many Thanks for Your Patronage!
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