

# Lincolnite has enough ideas to go another hundred years

By Bill Graf

In three months she will be 100 years old, but she says she has enough ideas to keep her going for another 100 years.

However, Alice Loomis says she is ready to "step off into the next world, because it will be just as interesting."

Born on Jan. 21, 1880, Loomis began her teaching career after graduating from Peru Normal School in 1896.

But after four years of teaching in a grade school she went back to college.

During the next 30 years she received a B.S. degree from Kansas University, an M.A. from Wisconsin University, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University.

She said she received her doctorate in child education because "adult education hadn't been discovered yet."

She added that she was happy that the continuing education programs evolved.

"I think that's the only common-sense point of view. I see so many hopeful signs of organizations and people who are hunting for a part of the real goal. The real goal is the unification of mankind with diversity and yet unity."

BECAUSE ADULT education as well as several other educational programs "hadn't been discovered yet," Loomis said she had to develop many of her own bibliographies for research projects.

However, her innovation didn't end when she left the universities.

From the time that she graduated from

Peru until her retirement most of the positions she held didn't exist before she created them. And many of the jobs that did exist were reserved for men.

"Once I was involved in designing a correspondence course for foundry workers. They wouldn't have anything to do with a woman. They were pretty tough chaps."

"So I wrote the course and signed it A. Loomis."

She said "When I was working toward my B.S. in Manhattan, Kan., I was one of two assistants doing laboratory work. They decided that they only had room for one assistant so they let me go because they said that a woman would get married in a couple of years and leave," she said.

"It didn't bother me, one door was closed but another was open."

LOOMIS SAID she never considered herself a feminist.

"I have always said I was a human being. And I dealt with men as human beings, so I never had any trouble dealing with men or women."

Of all the changes that she has seen during the last century, Loomis sees as the most important the increased concern to find the truth.

"Doctors, lawyers and politicians have lost their crowns. More people are asking, 'Why?' More people investigate to find the common good."

She added that because of this change she is only encouraged and pleased but also amused.

Loomis said Lincoln has become more world conscious in the past century and that the morality of the Midwest has changed considerably.

"It used to be that the school systems wouldn't hire a teacher if she had been seen dancing."

"WHILE I WAS responsible for hiring teachers at Nebraska University, I would hire someone even if they liked to dance, but I always tried to do it legally," she said.

A change she has been working for in recent years has been the treatment of senility.

In an article written for a publication

put out by the Nebraska Commission on Aging, Loomis wrote about the problems and myths surrounding senility.

"Decreasing mental ability with the passing years has been recognized by laymen and measured by scientists, but constructive work in this field has lagged."

Too often, she said, "Older people are written off as senile and beyond help, when a closer look could reveal a way to return them to their full potential. Many diseases are confused with senility."

Deteriorating vision and hearing can be mistaken for senility. Cut off from the sights and sounds that give meaning to the world, a person can begin to withdraw inward," she explained.



Alice Loomis, a 99-year-old Lincoln resident, said she had to pioneer many jobs previously not available to women. Photo by Bill Graf.

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