

Clubs

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[1918(?)]

HISTORY OF CURRENT EVENTS CLUB

by

Mrs. J. Porter Hines

Once upon a time there lived in a beautiful colonial home typical of the old South a woman who was of herself a fitting character of the old South; genial, charitable, hospitable, and one who loved her neighbors. This love was so intense that she never tired of the company of those she most admired, and in order that she might draw them the closer to herself she advocated their forming themselves into a social club. That the vulgar type of social gossip might be crushed first, last and always she planned that the current events of the day might be discussed during the hours of meeting. She told her dream to her dearest friends and neighbors who were eager for membership and so it is to the memory of Jennie McClure Simms that the Current Events Club owes its birth.

The club has passed its sixteenth milestone, ten of these years I have had the extreme pleasure of having my name upon the roll of membership.

One member has been chosen each successive year to sit at the head of and to preside over this intelligent body. According to by-law--number twenty-- officers elected must serve for entire term but are not eligible for the same office for a second term. The hour glass has more than half run its course and so by some miraculous chance I was elected to preside while this club is passing its seventeenth milestone.

I have not the time to dwell upon the membership of this club, yet I wish to throw a flash light, my own flash light, upon its presidents that I have known-----

One year and twelve months Mrs. Kirby presided just so
Of this high office it seemed she just wouldn't let go
But Mrs Gardner the politician as all politicians will
Ousted Mrs. Kirby and her own self the chair did fill
Next Mrs. Joe Perkins by name but known best by her genial smile
A hand that was most perfect, beautiful her manner her face and her smile
Mrs. McGinnis, they tell me once grew tired and asked to resign
but the club reelected her a member she was so fine.
Mrs. Duvall who always has the club meet with her the last in the Spring
Doesn't clean house but once a year I bet anything
The only charter member Mrs J. W. Goodrum is such
Of the club's history she might tell you much
In nineteen fifteen Mrs. Meredith graced the chair
Of her splendid dignity you can hear anywhere
Mrs. Love had her troubles, the study was America old and new

HISTORY OF CURRENT EVENTS CLUB continued-----

Nations were at war and America must get in we all knew
Mrs. Denhardt our only shirker five months was all she served
But she presided when a liberty bond was purchased so some credit she deserves
Mrs. McElroy who to Mrs. Denhardt's unexpired term fell heir
May be small but she is mighty--her motto is do we dare
Last you all know her she has stepped down but not out
Impossible to fill Mrs. Helms place but to try it is the task I am about.

Members of the Current Events Club I ask your hearty cooperation. In
union there is strength. So let there be unity--unity in our work and unity
in our love for one another. The program committee has prepared a strong
work for us this year. Lets make it a banner year. A year to live long in
the hearts of each and every one of us and when I have passed my eleventh
milestone may I hear from you the words--well done---it is finished and
never more.

CURRENT EVENTS CLUB ORGANIZED IN JANUARY 1902.
Park City Daily News February 2, 1931

On January 1, 1902, a neighborhood club was organized at the home of Mrs. Jennie McClure Sims, on Park street. This club was called The Park Street Literary Club, the object being "united effort toward intellectual growth."

The following were charter members: Mrs. Jennie McClure Sims, president; Mrs. Mattie Middleton McGhee, vice president; Mrs. Mamie Cook Small, secretary; Mrs. Lelia Miller Drake, treasurer; Mrs. Neely Wilkins Dickerson, Mrs. Belle Vick Small, Mrs. Temple Adams Mercer, Mrs. Johnnie Massey Clay, Mrs. Stella Cox Gilbert, Mrs. Nona Johnson Sims, Miss Lena McGhee, Mrs. Mattie Massey Goodrum.

While this club has primarily been literary, the social feature has not been neglected and it has always responded to benevolent causes. A few months after the organization of the club it was decided to change the name to Current Events Club. The club motto is "Thoughts shut up want ate, and spoil like bales unopened to the sun," the club flower, the pansy, and the colors are purple and gold.

Mrs. Sara Elizabeth Duncan was president for the second year, beginning January, 1903. In 1904, Mrs. Neely Wilkins Dickerson was club president. During these years the club studied Current Topics, subjects assigned by a committee, a month in advance. In 1905 Mrs. Stella Cox Gilbert served as president. This year the club had its first year book.

Beginning with 1906, with Mrs. Elizabeth Yarbrough as president, a change was made in the club study. The club took up Shakespearean plays, alternating with current topics and magazine subjects. In 1907, with Mrs. Johnnie Massey Clay as president, the club entered the Federation. "The Life of Shakespeare" and "The History of England," was studied, alternating with current events and magazine subjects. In 1908 the club took up the study of "English Literature," "Our Island Possessions," and "The Consideration of the Hawaiian Islands as American Territory"; also the "Annexation and Natural Resources of Alaska," was studied, ending the year with the "Isle of Pines." Mrs. Leslie Small was the president. In 1909, the club took "A Trip to Paris," studied its "Lights and Sounds," the "Strong Men of Modern France," along with the "Illustrious Women of the Empire," and "Napoleon as the Man and Soldier," as well as many other equally interesting subjects. At the end of this year a change was made in the beginning of the club year. Instead of January, the club chose the first Tuesday in September and has continued this custom ever since. Mrs. Mansfield Kirby was president of the club in 1909.

The club had its first Bay View course in 1910, covering Belgium, Germany and Denmark. As I opened the 1910 Year Book the first subject that met my eye was "Some Great Men in Germany," then "German Military Heroes," and into my ears came the echo of devastated Belgium, and I felt how different would be our responses and feelings today if we were called upon to

study the same subjects. Mrs. T. T. Gardner was president that year. 1911 and 1912 found the club still in Germany studying its political, social and home life. This year's work was alternated with current topics, and the last part of the year spent in further study of Belgium and Denmark. Mrs. J. C. Perkins was president. In 1912-13 we took a "Holiday Trip Up the Nile," gazing at the Pyramids and Sphinx and almost lost ourselves in the "Buried Cities of Ancient Egypt." Mrs. A. A. McGinnis was president at that time. The year 1913-14 found the club bound for the "Never Never Land" in Australia, where it viewed the Aborigines, studied their home life, then crossed the Desert of Sahara into Africa. There they viewed "The World's Supply of Diamonds," and considered the "Past and Present of Morocco." Mrs. Alex Duvall was president.

During vacations we traveled rapidly and 1914-15 found us in Mexico finding out all about their "Ancient Races and Ruins." Then on to South America learning all we could of the "Geography of the Country," its home life, amusement and industries. Our work that year was made more pleasant by studying the lives of James Whitcomb Riley, Eugene Fields, James Adams and others. Mrs. J. W. Goodrum was the president. In the year 1915-16 the club began its work in Japan and by the first of the year we had learned the physiography of the country, saw the people in their homes, discussed their education, food, dress, manners and even the "New Woman of Japan." Tired of traveling abroad with foreigners we finished the year with American writers, beginning with the "Knickerbockers of New York," Irving, Cooper and Bryant. Then from the West we chose Bret Hart and Jack London; from the Middlewest, Mark Twain and Booth Tarkington, and from the South, Father Ryan and our own Mrs. Obenchains. Mrs. J. E. Merideth was president that year.

I really think we all loved our next year's work, with Mrs. George Love as president, very much, as we chose this time our native land--America. Beginning with the "Indians in History and Literature," revering our own flag and national airs, admiring our own artists, sculptors and musicians, helping "Clara Barton and the Red Cross Society," and in our hearts thanking our great inventors, Edison, Bell, and Wright, for the wonders they have accomplished. Then we paused to laugh over our own popular superstitions.

Music, as well said, to be the speech of angels, and the year 1917-18, with Mrs. E. H. Denhardt as president, was given to a study of some of our best operas.

I pass gently over the next year, 1918-19, with its study of "Woman's Part in the World War, from Royalty to Peasantry," and its memories of a blood-soaked, broken world. Mrs. W. D. McElroy was president that year.

1919-20 was a wonderful year with a literary study of the Bible, beginning with the "History of the Chosen Nation," and their migration to the Land of Promise, reading anew the sweet stories of Ruth and Esther, wondering over the Books of the Prophets, loving the life of Jesus from birth to crucifixion, sympathizing with the affliction of Job. Then on to St. John's Revelations, even considering the Kingdom of God. Mrs. T. O. Helm was president that year.

Modern Fiction and History was studied in 1920-21; with a program as varied as the title sounds. Mrs. J. Porter Hines was the president.

1921-22 found us in our own dear Kentucky and our hearts throbbed and eyes grew dim as we reviewed the privations of our pioneer men and women whom by their self-sacrifice and endurance, have made it possible for us to take pride in saying we are Kentuckians. Mrs. H. H. Cherry was the president that year.

In 1923-25 we studied Asia--"No Longer the Changeless East, but the Continent of Ceaseless Change." "India's New Nationalism," "Hindu Manners, Superstitions, Religion and Education," were some of the subjects. We also viewed "Japan as a World Power," and even tried to enter "Siberia." Mrs. R. C. Blodgett was the president. Not satisfied with foreign countries, we chose South America for 1923-24, with Mrs. J. L. Harman as president, and spent some time in Peru, with its people; saw Lima, the "City of Kings," then to Bolivia, the Hermit Republic; spent some time in Venezuela, the land where it is always sunshine, lastly going to Panama, the "country of the great ditch." Somewhat worn with sightseeing we found ourselves back in America in 1924-25. This year our subjects were as big to handle as they were varied in character-- Henry Ford and his first auto; Woman's Place in Politics; Canada's Future, and The Air Service. Mrs. Birdie Reed Ellis was president.

1925-26 finds us ready to travel again, with Mrs. J. Mott Williams as president, so back to India, Africa, China, Japan, Germany and Italy we went, but as we journeyed from one country to another we had some wonderful books read to us, among them "The White Monkey," "Resurrection," "The Rover," "So Big." We also had a "Motor Trip from Coast to Coast," and came home ready to study American Art and Artists in 1926-27. That year we had poets, historians, novelists, cartoonists and even movie stars. Mrs. W. S. Ashby was the president.

1927-28 brought "Modern Tendencies in Literature." We began "Before Breakfast," "Spreading the News", of "The Irish Movement," and "The Riders of the Sea," found "The Land of Heart's Desire," while the others saw "The Six Who Passed While the Lentils Boiled." Mrs. E. L. Hendrick was the president that year. The call of nature made us take up birds and bird life in 1928-29, with Mrs. T. A. DeVore as president. Audubon and our own Kentucky Cardinal came in for their full share of admiration while we listened to warblers, watched birds of prey, and dug into the past to find out about prehistoric birds, and grieved over the disappearance of so many of our native birds.

September 1929, found our club "All on Board" bound for "A Trip to Europe," with Mrs. Porter Y. Ewing, president. Landing at Antwerp we visited Notre Dame, saw the wonderful carvings and Flemish Art. In Holland we watched the Wind Mills and visited the Isle of Marken. We wandered through the castles of The Rhineland and were "On to Berlin." We wandered for a short time in the "By-ways of Switzerland" before going on to Rome, where The Coliseum, The Catacombs, and The Art Galleries kept us longer than we expected. But April found us in Paris.

We went to Spain, saw the beautiful gardens of the Shakespearean Country, Edinburg, Ireland, seeing Belfast, Dublin and Cork. By the middle of June we were on our way to America.

1930-31 gives us the study of "Famous Women and Modern Fiction," with Mrs. G. W. Williamson; president. The following are the present members: Mesdames Bowman Davenport, George M. Williamson, Fred Blackwell, Philip Slover, Will Craig, J. Porter Hines, W. S. Ashby, R. C. Blodgett,

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Will Davenport, H. H. Donhardt, Alex Duvall, B. R. Ellis, P. Y. Ewing,
T. T. Gardner, J. W. Goodrum, J. L. Harman, E. L. Hendrick, W. D.
McElroy, A. A. McGinnis, J. E. Meredith, J. Mott Williams and G. E.
Townsend. The honorary members are Mrs. E. E. Beckwith and Mrs. A. A.
Foster.

The 29 summers and winters which have measured their tread over our club life have brought us past the bloom of sweet sixteen to where we are no longer maidenly young. But at 29 we are not matronly old. As the years have come and gone only a few have remained with us always. Far more have dwelt with us awhile, and then have gone to other climes. Some, alas, have crossed the Great Divide. But in every case it might be said, I believe, that our members have remained with us long enough for the forming of friendships sweet and warm. This has indeed been one of the greatest and most abiding joys of our club life, and, I am sure, I express the wish of every member when I say I hope it shall always be so, for what is to be more desired than a friend, for--

"When we have lived our lives and wandered
All their byways through,
When we have seen all that we shall see
And finished all that we shall do.
When we shall take our backward look off
Yonder where our journey ends,
I'm sure that you shall be glad as I
Shall be glad that we were friends."

Signed, Mrs. J. W. Goodrum.