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Article Title: Missionaries of Culture: Chautauqua in Nebraska's State Penitentiary, 1889-1894

Full Citation: James Peckman, "Missionaries of Culture: Chautauqua in Nebraska's State Penitentiary, 1889-1894," *Nebraska History* 71 (1990): 142 – 150.

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1990PrisonCulture.pdf>

Date: 4/2/2014

Article Summary: Evidence indicates that the prison Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) did change the lives of some of the prisoners. Because of the intense individual attention and follow-up that distinguished the Lincoln prison ministry, the national Chautauquan leadership saw Nebraska as a test case of the potential of Chautauqua in the prisons.

#### Cataloging Information:

Names: John Heyl Vincent, Lewis Miller, T H Leavitt, Mrs T E Calvert, Mrs M D Welch, Kate Kimball, H W Hopkins, P W Howe, J D Stewart, Theodore Flood, William Jennings Bryan, Mrs T H Leavitt, W Ellenwood, Phillips Brooks, F W Smith, Frank Beard, Jesse Hurlbut, W E Hardy

Keywords: Chautauqua; Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC); Grove Society; Nebraska State Penitentiary; "Look Forward Circle" ; Lincoln Hall in the Grove; Massachusetts Reformatory; *Chautauquan* [magazine]; *Prison Mirror*; Colorado Penitentiary; Crete Chautauqua Assembly

Photographs / Images: Nebraska State Penitentiary about 1901; William Jennings Bryan Chautauqua 1911 program, Woodbine, Iowa; Front and inside of program for Beatrice CLSC meeting; John Heyl Vincent, cofounder of the Chautauqua movement; Lewis Miller, cofounder of the Chautauqua movement; Dr Jesse Hurlbut, general superintendent of the national CLSC; Kate Kimball, secretary of the national CLSC

# MISSIONARIES OF CULTURE: CHAUTAUQUA IN NEBRASKA'S STATE PENITENTIARY, 1889-1894

By James P. Eckman

An inmate in the state penitentiary of Nebraska who identified himself as "Charles E. B." wrote in the *Prison Mirror* in 1890 of the transforming power of Chautauqua in his life. He was responding to the caustic and cynical abuse of fellow inmates, who had made light of his involvement in the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) reading program sponsored by several Chautauquans from Lincoln. He said:

Tell them that the benefit you get is in new morals, in new ideas, in being able to look every man in the face without his clapping his hand on his pocketbook for fear that you are going to hold him up — for your reading will show in your face, in the pride and pleasure you give your wives, mothers, sisters, fathers and brothers when they learn that their dear ones are coming home to them changed men to lead an honest life. That is what I have found to benefit me, and I am as hard as any of you I guess.<sup>1</sup>

The CLSC in the Nebraska State Penitentiary pioneered the effort of Chautauqua to penetrate America's prisons. Although short-lived, the work reflected the ideology of culture that defined the CLSC. The powerful appeal of this ideology won many converts; its power behind prison walls was tested in Nebraska.

Founded by Methodists John Heyl Vincent and Lewis Miller in 1874, the Chautauqua movement had evolved from an institution committed to train-

ing Sunday school teachers to one committed to the promotion of an ideology of culture. This ideology of culture reflected an accommodational Protestantism that championed politeness, respect for learning, appreciation for the arts, the pursuit of science, "rational recreation," and an affection for literature.<sup>2</sup> To Vincent, the ideologue of the movement, this concept had regenerative power.

Vincent's ideology of culture also explained the formation and development of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, founded in 1878 in Chautauqua, New York. He wanted some means to carry on the developing habits of study and thought begun in the summer Chautauqua assemblies. He thus developed a four-year cycle of readings that included inexpensive books written by university professors on all major fields of human knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

To muster sufficient self-discipline and to serve as a means of encouragement, local CLSCs developed throughout America after 1878. In Nebraska the formation of the local CLSCs reflected the continuing desire for closeness and belonging that permeated the changing society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Along with the desire for self-improvement, uplift, and personal order, the quest for subcommunity explained why many Nebraskans gave one night a week for the discipline and rigor of a local CLSC. In an age before the civic and country clubs became

symbols of prestige and honor, being a member of a CLSC was to be part of an elite corps of people with shared motives, values, and agendas. These little subcommunities strove for the balance, on the one hand, of accommodating to the changing culture of late nineteenth-century America, while on the other hand, finding in the CLSC the security and purpose so necessary for a well-ordered life. When the CLSC member completed the four-year cycle of reading, Chautauqua awarded a certificate during the local summer assemblies in a ceremony that was comparable in pomp and circumstance to that of a college graduation.<sup>4</sup>

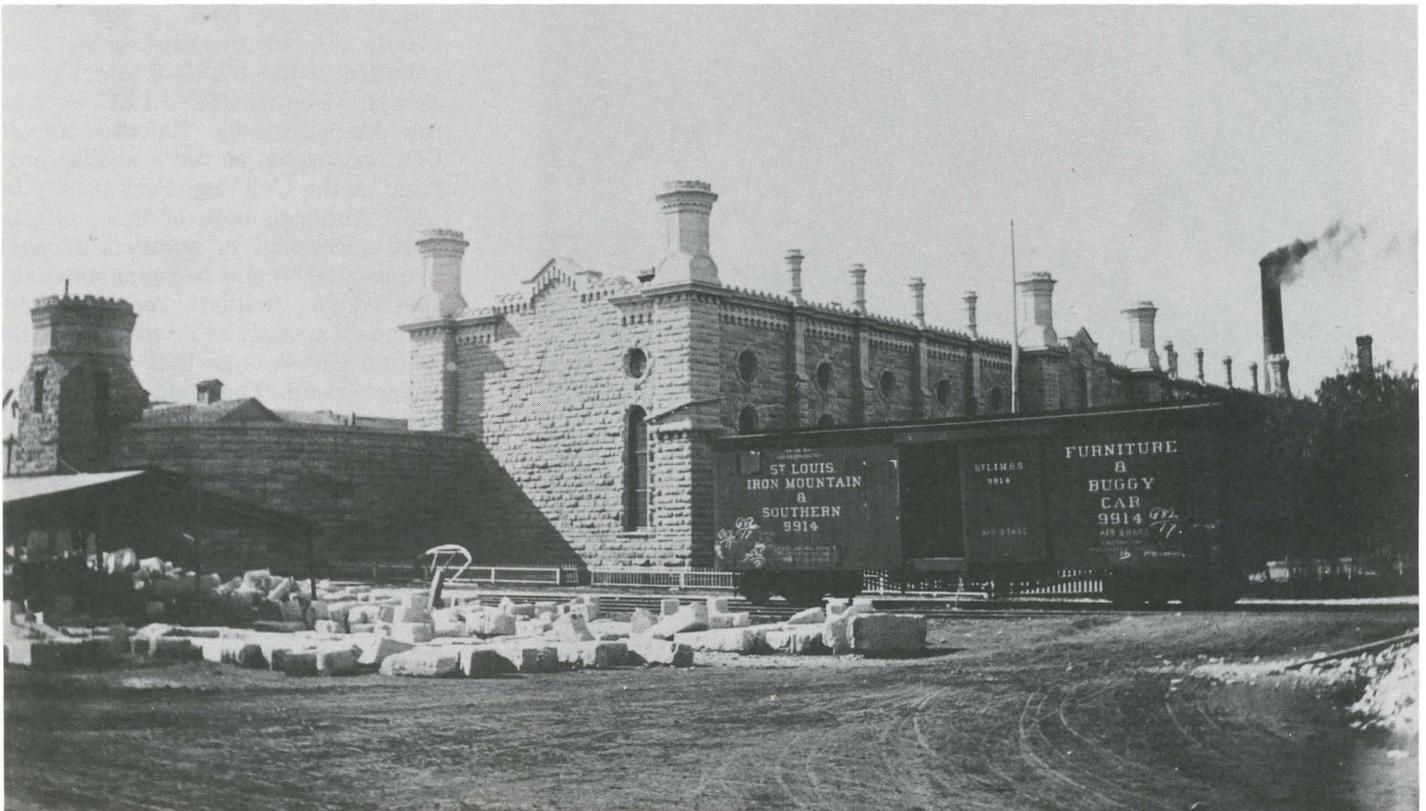
To pursue further study in an atmosphere of collegiality and support, CLSC graduates throughout America in the 1880s began gathering together in Hall in the Grove societies. (The name was derived from that of a group Vincent had formed in the early 1880s that honored all CLSC graduates.) On September 21, 1888, graduates of four Lincoln CLSCs (the Capital City CLSC, the Lincoln CLSC, the Plymouth CLSC, and the East Lincoln CLSC) formed a Hall in the Grove society. By agreement the members pursued studies in Greek history, geography, astronomy, and other disciplines. In addition, they took field trips to the University of Nebraska, where they witnessed laboratory experiments in chemistry and engaged in social activities.<sup>5</sup>

To spread the gospel of the CLSC, the Hall in the Grove society planted a

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## Missionaries of Culture



*Nebraska State Penitentiary about 1901. (NSHS-L741-1211)*

CLSC chapter in the Nebraska State Penitentiary in Lincoln, a venture that represented an early emphasis on reforming the individual criminal through a carefully designed program of individualized instruction. The individualized tutelage centered on the highly structured CLSC reading program. As T. H. Leavitt, organizer of the Lincoln work in the penitentiary, wrote in 1893:

The mere fact of giving a set of Chautauqua books to these men and then leaving them to take care of themselves is not Chautauqua prison work. The Circle should be organized, cared for, led and fostered by Chautauquans from outside, who will devote proper and constant attention to individual members, afford them helps over hard places, with such manifestations of heartfelt interest in their welfare as shall incite them to an effort to improve as best they can, the opportunities offered them.<sup>6</sup>

With this accent on the individual, the work in the Nebraska State Penitentiary foreshadowed the much

larger efforts of the Progressives of the early twentieth century. However, the Chautauqua movement did not specifically call for revolutionary change in the prison institution. Early nineteenth century reformers had viewed institutions like the penitentiary as attempts to promote the stability of society. The Progressives of the early twentieth century criticized the institution of the penitentiary as an abject failure and argued instead for treating the prison inmate as an individual, whose life history had to be understood and a specific remedy then recommended.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, the Chautauquans who entered the Nebraska State Penitentiary did so with a commitment to the institutional approach to reforming prisoners. But they thought that the CLSC reading program offered the best single program for improving the

inmates. Although the program was rigid and structured, the CLSC in the prison did allow for individual attention and prescription.

The idea for this work in the Lincoln prison came from John Heyl Vincent during a CLSC round table discussion held at the New York Chautauqua in 1889. Vincent, while speaking of the opportunities to spread the gospel of Chautauqua, suggested introducing the CLSC plan into the prisons. As he closed, he wondered aloud, "Now who of these Chautauquans present, when you go to your homes, will look into this matter and see if it is not practicable to do something?" Two women from the Lincoln Hall in the Grove society, Mrs. T. E. Calvert and Mrs. M. D. Welch, who were attending the 1889 assembly in New York, soon presented the challenge to the members of the Lincoln Hall in the Grove society.<sup>8</sup>

*Chautauqua*  
1911  
BANNER PROGRAM

Art  
Oratory  
Music  
Recreation  
Literature  
Science  
Government  
Fellowship

Wm. J. Bryan

Woodbine, Iowa  
July 22---July 28

The Lincoln Hall in the Grove society did not accomplish the first entrance of the CLSC into a United States prison. In 1885 CLSC work in the Massachusetts Reformatory at Concord began, as did a similar program at the Colorado Penitentiary in 1887. Although both of these efforts were successful in numbers of participants (sixty and twelve inmates respectively), neither received the national exposure or interest from the mother Chautauqua that the Lincoln endeavor did. The keen attention of Kate Kimball, executive secretary of the national CLSC, to the ongoing work in the Nebraska prison made the difference. For her, the Lincoln work was a forceful experiment of the power of Chautauqua in a hitherto untouched segment of American culture. The CLSC, she argued, embodied an ideology that appealed to the intellectual powers of man: "It cultivates a taste for better reading. Better reading means better thinking, thinking at least an attempt at better living." Man, as a free agent, Kimball maintained, chose to join a CLSC with only one inducement — that of self-improvement. Self-improvement thus characterized the dynamic of the transforming ideology that Kimball saw in the CLSC prison work. Finally, she claimed, the CLSC in the Lincoln prison fostered a social dimension among the inmates. The prison CLSC nurtured a personal interest among the fellow classmates in the prison, for each member had a common interest in the welfare of the circle. Too, she asserted, the CLSC provided a network of support that insured "help and guidance in higher things," even after the authorities released the inmate from prison.<sup>9</sup>

At neither the Massachusetts nor Colorado prisons were local CLSC members involved so intimately with the inmates as in the Lincoln venture.

*William Jennings Bryan was popular with regular Chautauqua audiences as well as with CLSC members. (NSHS-B915-300a)*

In fact, in 1887 due to lack of interest among inmates and lack of solid leadership from the local CLSCs, the Colorado authorities merged the Chautauqua work with the larger evening school; no distinctive CLSC work therefore remained. Over time the Massachusetts prison CLSC experienced the same problems. Thus, the labors of the Lincoln Chautauquans in the state penitentiary represented a significant test case of the dedication of committed Chautauquas.<sup>10</sup>

The CLSC work in the Nebraska State Penitentiary began as part of the Sunday worship service in the prison in September 1889. The leadership, all of which came from the Lincoln Hall in the Grove society, received permission and the qualified support of the prison warden, H. W. Hopkins, and the prison chaplain, Rev. P. W. Howe. After the usual religious exercises of the morning, T. H. Leavitt, along with other members of the Lincoln Hall in the Grove society, presented the work of Chautauqua to over 400 convicts assembled in the prison chapel. At the end of Leavitt's presentation, he asked if any of the prisoners would be willing to start reading in the CLSC program. Of the 400, forty-eight remained behind to commit themselves to the regenerative powers of Chautauqua's ideology.<sup>11</sup>

In 1889-90 the organization of the CLSC in the Nebraska state prison reflected a depth of commitment that often involved not only time but money. Through gifts and donations collected among the Hall in the Grove society in Lincoln, the prisoners had access to the required Chautauqua books. For each group of four there was one set of books; one copy of *The Chautauquan* circulated among every three inmates. The total cost amounted to about thirty dollars a year. From 1889 to 1894 at the biweekly meetings of the Lincoln Hall in the Grove society and in the Lincoln newspapers, Leavitt, working with Rev. J. D. Stewart, CLSC field secretary, made frequent and successful appeals for donations and volunteers for the

work at the prison. Cooperating with Theodore Flood, editor of *The Chautauquan* magazine, Leavitt often obtained the books at a reduced price. With the materials in hand and under Leavitt's direction, the CLSC members held the CLSC class in the prison the second and fourth Sundays of each month.<sup>12</sup>

In one of the earliest meetings in the prison, November 17, 1889, William Jennings Bryan, a member of the Capital City CLSC, addressed the prison class, which then numbered twenty-five members, and the other prison inmates. His address, entitled "Reading," represented the optimism and appeal of the CLSC's revolutionary ideology of culture. Speaking without notes, Bryan extolled the virtues of the love of reading, which enabled each Chautauquan to study history, which provided the lives of great men as positive models for life; and facilitated an understanding of the sciences. To cherish the skill of reading meant exposure to fiction, which was the most didactic of the fields of knowledge. As he quoted from memory the poems of Homer, William Shakespeare, Alexander Pope, John Milton, Thomas More, and William Cullen Bryant, Bryan encouraged the men to pursue poetry and to "study intelligently the book of books." Reading, the core of the CLSC program, offered the key to the new life that Chautauqua advanced; and Bryan's address provided the motivation to take the first step.<sup>13</sup>

In a written report of the prison work in 1889, filed by T. H. Leavitt, Chautauquan idealism pervaded the account of Bryan's address.

The prisoners were very much moved by the exercises. Unconsciously they reached out for something beyond — there had suddenly sprung into existence a want. The old shell of indifference and sluggishness was broken; a ray of light streamed in and a desire to 'push the clouds away' and find a new life this side [of] the great unknown, was created . . . [T]hey were touched, they felt the contact, the sympathy.

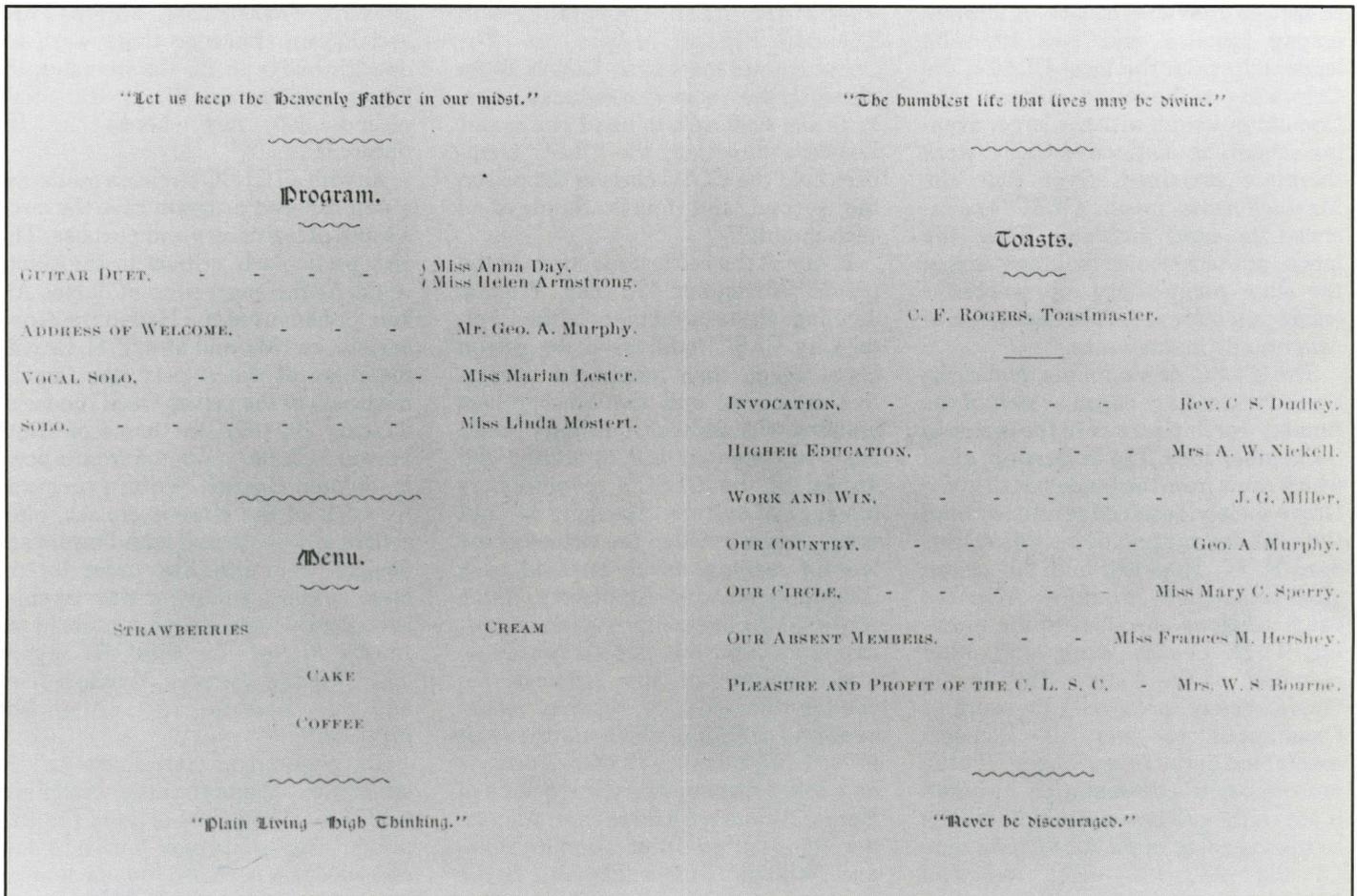
As the prison librarian made his rounds later that day through the prison, many prisoners requested the very books from which Bryan had quoted:

Dickens, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and Bryant. Because there were not enough books to fill the demand, the prison contractor, W. H. B. Stout, placed 500 new books in the library.<sup>14</sup>

As with all CLSC circles, a motto and a well-ordered program gave the circle a sense of legitimacy and purpose. This was particularly critical in the prison work. At the suggestion of James Aitken, president of the Hall in the Grove society, and Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Leavitt, members of the society, the inmate-members of the prison CLSC chose on January 10, 1892, the name of "Look Forward Circle," adopted from a poem by Johann Goethe. Written programs for each of the class exercises, often artistically decorated with flowers and designs, contained the order for the class session, complete with opening exercises, which always contained the Lord's Prayer. As with the regular CLSC circles, the prison circle reflected the passion for order and purpose.<sup>15</sup>

To give further structure to the effort, Leavitt and the other organizers from Lincoln in 1889 divided the first prison class of twenty-four into four classes of six each. So that each member of each class had access to the required books and *The Chautauquan* magazine, the leaders circulated the materials equally. During the thirty-five-week study period, each inmate would therefore have access to all the required reading material.<sup>16</sup> When the inmates finished with the books and magazines, prison officials placed them in the prison library. Between the meetings held the second and fourth Sundays of each month, these classes, which met several times a week in the prison, provided a means of mutual encouragement and edification among the class members.<sup>17</sup>

The ideology of the CLSC matched the accommodational Protestantism that marked the larger Chautauqua movement. The theology that defined the CLSC work was man-centered in its orientation; it underscored man's



Front and inside of program for Beatrice CLSC meeting. From NSHS Collections.

freedom and ability to save himself. To T. H. Leavitt, leader of the CLSC prison work in Nebraska, the CLSC represented the key to liberating a man from the bondage to his unwise choices of the past. Christianity and culture, therefore, went hand in hand. History, literature, and the sciences constituted the framework through which CLSC students experienced the power of this liberation. Since Chautauqua taught that all truth was God's truth, these disciplines developed valuable insights into God's perspective on knowledge and its liberating potential. Indeed, one inmate wrote, "I have received my inspiration from the Chautauqua

course of reading, and the influences which the people who surround us have thrown over us." Another inmate summarized the benefits as receiving a whole new belief system that included "new morals, new ideas" and the capability to "lead an honest life."<sup>18</sup>

As with the CLSC programs outside the prison, the exposure to culture that constituted the core of the CLSC often involved the use of professional educators or pastors as guest speakers. Leavitt considered the use of these resource people as "auxiliary helps to enlist and maintain interest in the subject matter of the studies," and to serve as positive role models for the men in

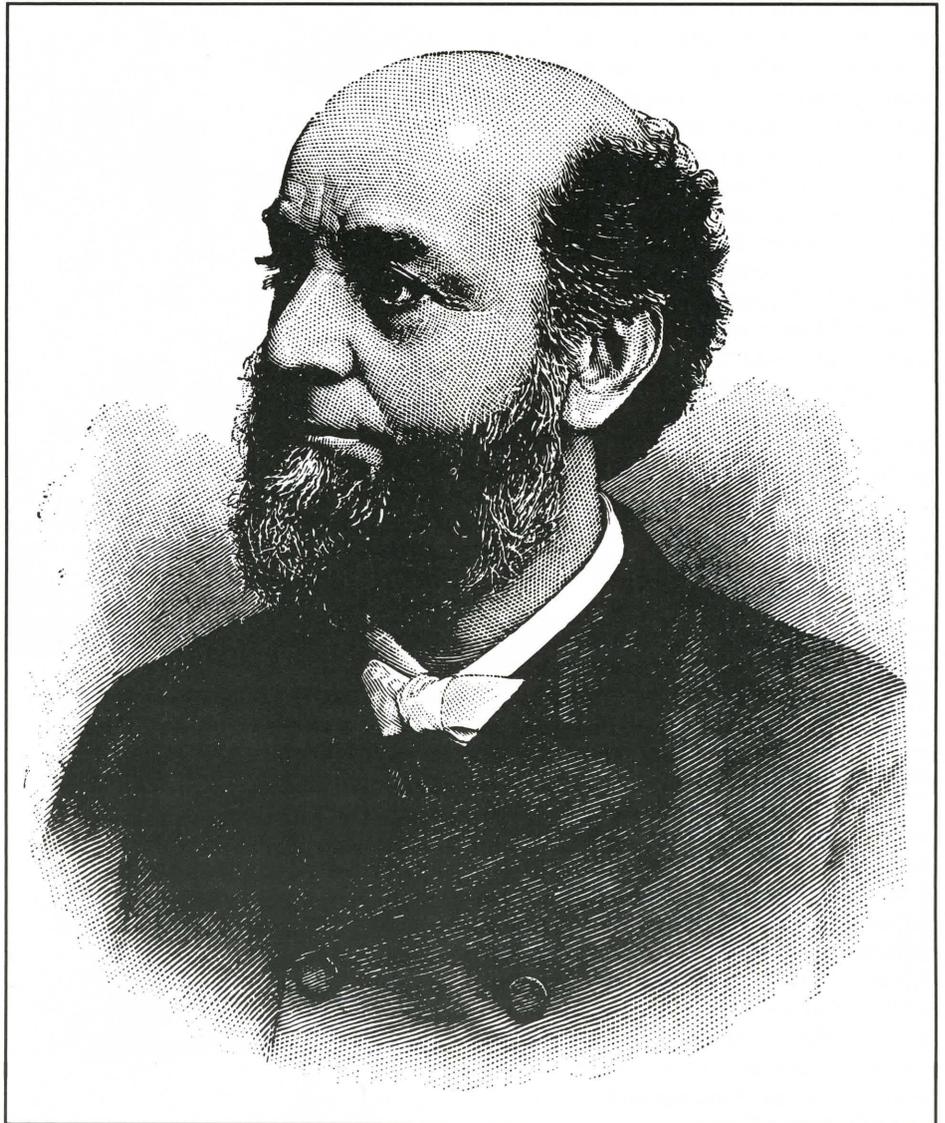
prison. For example, in May 1890, Professor W. Ellenwood of Wesleyan University addressed the men on the topic "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" On the last Sunday of September 1890, Rev. J. D. Stewart, Congregational pastor from Aurora, Nebraska, and CLSC field secretary, addressed the men on the love of knowledge and the inspiration toward godly living that resulted. Furthermore, Leavitt, in his report published in the *Prison Mirror* in 1895, mentioned, without referring to anyone specific, the use of several professors from the University of Nebraska. In each instance, the topic featured a discussion of reading and its benefits.

Sometimes, as was the case with Phillips Brooks of Boston, the exposure to professionals was by letter. In May 1890, Hall in the Grove secretary, F. W. Smith, read Brooks's letter to the inmates lauding the CLSC work in Nebraska's penitentiary and calling on the men to recognize the "unity which exists between all knowledge and all good impulse."<sup>19</sup>

Other guest speakers in the CLSC prison classes reflected the high regard which the national Chautauqua had for the Nebraska prison work. Frank Beard, close friend of John Heyl Vincent and frequent entertainer at the local assemblies, visited the prison class twice in the early 1890s. He presented his famous chalk talks, mixed with "words of solid good sense and kindly counsel." In addition, Kate Kimball, executive secretary of the CLSC, visited the prison circle in 1891. Dr. Jesse Hurlbut, general superintendent of the CLSC, also visited the "Look Forward Circle" in 1891. According to a report in *The Chautauquan*, Beard, Kimball, and Hurlbut all "came away with a determination to see that it [the CLSC work in the Lincoln prison] did not languish for want of support."<sup>20</sup>

That this attempt at role modeling met with some reasonable success was evidenced by the responses of various prisoners. One inmate reported that the continued "counsel and example of outsiders that we have in noble Christian ladies and gentlemen" served a powerful effect in his life. "You cannot help but become enthusiastic and energetic in this work," he concluded. Another prisoner, upon being exposed to the Chautauqua class, stated, "If there is anything that makes me believe in Christianity and in trying to lead an honest life when I go out, it is the fact that Mr. — — and his fellow workers are prompted to engage in trying to help us, by its [Chautauqua's] teachings."<sup>21</sup>

Because the "Look Forward Circle" class was made up of prisoners, the membership varied from year to year. The first class in 1889 was composed of



*John Heyl Vincent, cofounder of the Chautauqua movement. Courtesy of General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church.*

forty-eight members; the one in 1890 had fifty-seven; and with the class of 1892, membership had increased to sixty-eight. Participation had grown to such an extent that the leadership established a waiting list. Of the sixty members in 1892, eleven were black, one was an Indian.<sup>22</sup> But the prison circle experienced tremendous turnover. For example, in a letter to Kate Kimball, T. H. Leavitt reported that

membership was quite volatile. Very few of the men, according to Leavitt, had the endurance to finish the whole program of reading and complete all the examinations. Despite the few who actually received CLSC certificates, Leavitt gave little evidence of discouragement.<sup>23</sup>

The evidence that Leavitt believed helped prove the success of Chautauqua in the prisons came from the ongo-

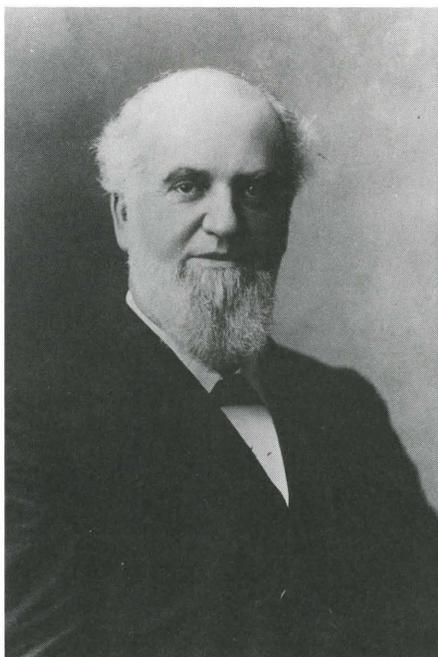
ing follow-up work that he and other members of the Hall in the Grove society conducted. Chautauquans maintained that they could work within the institution of the prison; through sustained contact after release, their goal was to focus on the individual prisoner and his needs. In fact, this followup after the state released the prisoner characterized the uniqueness of the CLSC prison work in the United States. Leavitt wrote in 1895 that only in Nebraska has "the Chautauqua idea developed beyond the educational feature"; Chautauqua meant not only pursuing helpful aid "inside of prison walls, but outside after the prisoner is released."<sup>24</sup> To this end, Leavitt summarized the approach the Lincoln Society of the Hall in the Grove followed in its prison work:

An effort has been made . . . to learn something of the present character and condition of each member of the circle, their purposes and capabilities, for maintaining themselves and their families after their release, and when they go out, to aid them to reach their homes or to secure employment and proper boarding places and companionships.<sup>25</sup>

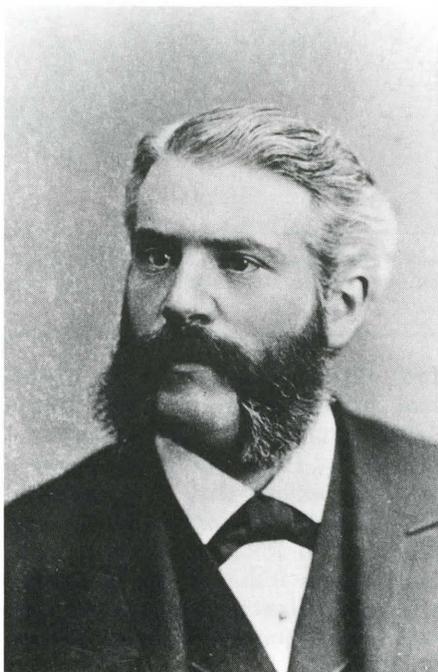
Leavitt's correspondence with the men after their release from prison indicated the ongoing power of Chautauqua in the men's lives. He reported that many of the former prisoners who had been involved in the CLSC "were occupying responsible and lucrative positions" of employment. Many became members of various Protestant churches. A former inmate's letter, from which Leavitt frequently quoted, said,

Whatever I am or am to be, I owe to Chautauqua; the kindly influence which led me to feel that there were those who cared for me, that helped me to help myself, that stimulated me to read to a purpose, and encouraged me to hope and to try to be a man again.<sup>26</sup>

Taking the gospel of Chautauqua to the individual prisoners did not mean a neglect of the horrors of the prison institution itself. In fact, the Lincoln Chautauquans pushed for meaningful change of prison conditions. There is no evidence that they moved for abolition of the institution; instead, their concern centered on the inhumane circumstances in the state penitentiary



*Lewis Miller, cofounder of the Chautauqua movement . . . (below) Dr. Jesse Hurlbut, general superintendent of the national CLSC. Both courtesy of Chautauqua Historical Collection, Smith Memorial Library, Chautauqua, New York.*



near Lincoln. Instrumental in heightening the concerns about the prison situation was T. H. Leavitt. In 1893, for example, he worked for passage of legislation that would have provided much-needed appropriations to meet the expenses of the prison CLSC, but the legislation failed to pass. He also introduced in the state legislature two other bills that would have financed prison improvements, including matters that related to food service, work rules, and prison discipline. These too failed to gain adequate legislative support.<sup>27</sup>

Additional evidence of concern among the Lincoln Chautauquans about prison conditions surfaced when they formed the Nebraska Prison Reform Association in 1892. The association apparently had two goals: (1) to disseminate information about the prison itself, as well as the work of Chautauqua in the prison; and (2) to raise the consciousness of Nebraska citizens about "existing evils" in the prison. Specifically, the association desired to "mitigate to some degree the inhumanity of prison treatment as it has been carried out and to help all who wish to improve themselves with the aim of becoming better." Ultimately, the organization, which Leavitt directed, hoped to secure legislation that would provide support for the CLSC work, ameliorate the physical conditions in the prison, and "revise and improve the management of all our penal institutions."<sup>28</sup>

Caring, sensitive leadership of the CLSC prison work was the decisive force that maintained the outreach to the prisoners. Since its founding, T. H. Leavitt had filled that dynamic leadership role. However, in 1894 he relinquished his position as CLSC prison director to W. E. Hardy of Crete, who had become involved in the prison work in 1892. Hardy was the CLSC state secretary and president of the Crete Chautauqua Assembly. His interest in the prison continued into the 1893-94 season, during which time he proposed some procedural changes in

the method of conducting the biweekly class sessions in the prison. As a result of those proposals, he assumed leadership of the prison CLSC. Leavitt, in a confidential letter to Kate Kimball in 1895, hinted that there was something of a power struggle between him and Hardy; but so that the work could continue and because he was tired of the responsibilities, Leavitt in 1894 deferred to Hardy.<sup>29</sup>

With the 1894-95 reading season, the CLSC prison work died. When Kate Kimball requested information as to why the work had ceased, Leavitt related that Hardy had failed to take charge of the class exercises or had neglected to find someone who could. Evidence seems to indicate that Hardy was simply too busy with other projects to carry on the prison CLSC. Although Leavitt no longer felt he could assume leadership, he related to Kimball that he would attempt to get younger Chautauquans to carry on the ministry. He did not succeed.

Although short-lived, evidence indicates that the prison CLSC did change the lives of some of the prisoners. Because of the intense individual attention and follow-up that distinguished the Lincoln prison ministry, the national Chautauquan leadership saw Nebraska as a test case of the potential of Chautauqua in the prisons. But, as in any ardent endeavor with people, when the leaders become indifferent, the work dies. Such was the case with the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle in the Nebraska State Penitentiary.



Kate Kimball, secretary of the national CLSC. Courtesy of Chautauqua Historical Collection, Smith Memorial Library, Chautauqua, New York.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The article by "Charles E. B." is in a scrapbook of newspapers and letters, "CLSC Work in Prisons," in the Smith Memorial Library, Chautauqua, New York. The article by the Lincoln inmate appeared in the *Prison Mirror*, published by Stillwater prison inmates in Stillwater, Minnesota.

<sup>2</sup>On the founding of Chautauqua, see John Heyl Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement* (New York: Chautauqua Press, 1885); Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion, and the Arts in America* (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 1974); and Joseph Gould, *The Chautauqua Movement* (New York: State University of New York, 1961). On the concept, "ideology of culture," see Lewis Perry, *Intellectual Life in America* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), 263-76, and Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence: A Study of the First Years of Our Time, 1912-1917* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1964), 31-51. The term "culture" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries indicated a commitment to order, respectability, politeness, the arts, and the humanities.

<sup>3</sup>The best single account of the Chautauqua

Literary and Scientific Circle is Charles Robert Kniker, "The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, 1878-1914" (Ed.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1969). On the Nebraska CLSCs, see Eckman, "Regeneration Through Culture," 135-73.

<sup>4</sup>James P. Eckman, "Respectable Leisure, The Crete Chautauqua, 1882-1897," *Nebraska History* 69(Spring 1988):22-23; "Regeneration Through Culture, Chautauqua in Nebraska, 1882-1925" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1989), 156-57.

<sup>5</sup>"Minutes of the Society of the Hall in the

Grove," September 21, October 12, 1888, and March 1, 1889. "Society of the Hall in the Grove" file, Nebraska State Historical Society Archives.

<sup>6</sup>T. H. Leavitt, "Chautauqua Work in Prisons," *Prison Mirror*, n.d., from "CLSC Prison Work." Other Chautauqua assemblies did send volunteers. Concerning "White Ribboners" volunteers of Crete, see Eckman, "Respectable Leisure," 26-27.

<sup>7</sup>See David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971) and *Conscience and Convenience: The Asylum and its Alternatives in Progressive America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980). Rothman's brilliant work has established the framework for studying prison reform in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

<sup>8</sup>The only account of the CLSC work in the Nebraska State Penitentiary is found in a series of articles by T. H. Leavitt, an accountant for the Burlington and Missouri Railroad and Lincoln CLSC leader, that appeared in 1895 in the *Prison Mirror*. The series was the published form of a report read by W. E. Hardy, another Lincoln CLSC activist, at the Chautauqua Congress in Chicago July 17, 1893. These articles (including a March 28, 1895, description of the founding of the work in the penitentiary) are in "CLSC Work in Prisons." There is also a brief account of the prison work near Lincoln in a series of letters that Leavitt wrote to Kate Kimball throughout the early 1890s.

<sup>9</sup>Kate Kimball, "Chautauqua Work in Prisons," *Prison Sunday*. "CLSC Work in Prisons," n.d., n. p.

<sup>10</sup>The work of the other CLSC groups in the nation's prisons is found in Leavitt's article in the

*Prison Mirror*, March 28, 1895. See also Harrison John Thornton, "Chautauqua and the Midwest," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 23 (December 1949):156-57.

<sup>11</sup>*Prison Mirror*, March 28, 1895; letter from T. H. Leavitt to Kate Kimball, July 11, 1893, "CLSC Work in Prisons"; *Nebraska State Journal*, January 20, 1890.

<sup>12</sup>*Prison Mirror*, March 28, 1895. "Minutes of the Lincoln Society of the Hall in the Grove," February 1, 1890; January 30, 1893; October 6, 1893. Letters from Leavitt to Kimball, August 22, 1892; September 7, 1892; April 20, 1893, "CLSC Work in Prisons."

<sup>13</sup>*Nebraska State Journal*, November 25, 1889. *The Chautauquan* 10 (January 1890), 488-89. Also see letter to Vincent from F. W. Smith, Lincoln Hall in the Grove secretary, November 25, 1889, "CLSC Work in Prisons."

<sup>14</sup>*Prison Mirror*, April 4, 1895. The author was probably Mrs. M. D. Welch.

<sup>15</sup>*Prison Mirror*, March 24, 1892; April 4, 1895. A letter from Leavitt to Kimball, dated December 31, 1891, mentions James Aitken as the originator of the name of "Look Forward Circle."

<sup>16</sup>This organizational plan was part of a written report (filed by Leavitt with Kate Kimball) outlining the functioning of the CLSC prison class. "CLSC Work in Prisons."

<sup>17</sup>See article on Nebraska prison CLSC in *Prison Mirror*, December 18, 1890, by "Charles E. B."

<sup>18</sup>*Prison Mirror*, February 19, 1890; March 24, 1890; April 18, 1895.

<sup>19</sup>*Nebraska State Journal*, May 22, 1890; *Prison Mirror*, April 4, 1895.

<sup>20</sup>*Prison Mirror*, April 4, 1895. Letter from S. E. (Mrs. T. H.) Leavitt to Kate Kimball, August 24, 1891, "CLSC Work in Prisons." *The Chautau-*

*quan* 13(1891), 793-94.

<sup>21</sup>*Prison Mirror*, February 19, 1891. Mrs. M. D. Welch, "Report of the 'Look Forward Circle,'" Lancaster [?], Nebraska, July 1, 1892, "CLSC work in Prisons," 3. See also testimonies (January 9, 1891; March 20, 1891) of the positive influence of the CLSC on prisoners in the "Minutes of the Society of the Hall in the Grove."

<sup>22</sup>*Prison Mirror*, December 18, 1890; March 24, 1892; March 28, 1895; April 4, 1895.

<sup>23</sup>Leavitt to Kimball, June 26, 1893, "CLSC Work in Prisons."

<sup>24</sup>T. H. Leavitt, article in *Prison Mirror*, n.d., "CLSC Work in Prisons." The individual attention CLSC workers gave became a mark of the later Progressive approach to prison reform. See Rothman, *Conscience and Convenience*, 43-81.

<sup>25</sup>*Prison Mirror*, April 25, 1895.

<sup>26</sup>T. H. Leavitt article, *Prison Mirror*, April 25, 1895. See also the *Nebraska State Journal*, October 12, 1890, for a laudatory report on the effect the CLSC workers were having on men's lives.

<sup>27</sup>Leavitt to Kate Kimball, April 20, 1893. See also the "Minutes of the Society of the Hall in the Grove," January 30, 1893.

<sup>28</sup>T. H. Leavitt article, "CLSC Work in Prisons," n.d. "Minutes of the Society of the Hall in the Grove," October 6, 1893, for purpose of the Prison Reform Association. Ida M. Tarbell, "Bishop Vincent and His Work," *McClure's Magazine*, August 1895, 250; Harrison John Thornton, "Chautauqua — Adventure in Popular Education" [1948], 422. Efforts to determine the life and impact of this organization proved fruitless.

<sup>29</sup>Leavitt to Kimball, June 30, 1895, "CLSC Work in Prisons."