

April 20, 1934

To the Editor of  
The New York Times  
New York City

Dear Sirs:

There are many thousands of people in these United States, and I am one of them, who will thank you for your recent understanding editorial on the A.A.E.P. - American Adult Education Pioneer - as you so aptly call the Chautauque movement. ~~That movement gave me my first educational stimulus.~~ Chautauque Lake lay only fifty miles or so from my home. Where the Chautauque Institution now stands a Methodist Camp Meeting was then held every summer.

*Memorandum*  
My parents, being good Methodists saw to it that we children had our annual outing at the Lake when the Camp Meeting was in session. What they wanted us to have there was the excellent training given in the Bible with all sorts of inviting accessories! I shall never forget a relief map of Palestine that ran for many rods along the lake front. We used to romp from Baalbec to Beersheba shouting out the points of interest and when we dared wading in the Dead Sea. No youngster who knew that map was ever wanting in Biblical Geography.

*a*  
I saw the Chautauque Camp Meeting gradually transformed to an educational institution in which there was as strong and universal a passion for knowledge as in any institution with which I have ever been connected. It was the founding of the Chautauque Literary and Scientific Circle by John H. Vincent, the man who had from the start given to the place its color and its vitality. The C.L.S.C. was presented at a meeting which is one of the most vivid memories of my life. I was still a High School girl and happened in at the gathering in the auditorium, as they called the meeting place under the trees, at the moment when Vincent was putting before his summer followers

*gr*

a plan for a reading course running over four years patterned after a College course and designed to give its outlook.

The plan had grown out of his sympathy for the hunger for more knowledge which he had sensed in most of the people who came to the summer gatherings. There was something within their reach to satisfy that hunger. I think of all the inspirational talks that I have ever heard that was far and away the greatest. It lifted his whole audience, and before the night fell almost everybody there had signed for that four years reading circle, I among them.

Interest in the C.I.S.C. spread in an amazing way, reached into the mountains and the plains stimulated as it was by the sympathetic and understanding administration which quickly developed. Circles of readers were formed in hundreds of towns. The four year's course led to a definite goal - graduation - a diploma given at Chautauque, itself, in a moving and sincere ceremony. You marched under a golden gate; you received your diploma from the hand of the beloved Doctor Vincent.

But that did not end it. Knowledge was endless - you had enlisted for life. Courses were ready for you in whatever your interest may have developed and you went on and on reading, seals being set on that original diploma for every specific achievement.

I came later to have an intimate knowledge of what the C.I.S.C. was doing for thousands of people. I had left college and gone on my own and finally came into the editorial rooms of the magazine which acted as the organ of the readers - The Chautauquan.

My duty was to help develop aids for the readers and the circles. Hundreds of these people lived where there were practically no books of references. The Chautauquan must make up for this limitation. So monthly

I prepared what were called notes on the required readings - translating foreign phrases - writing little biographical sketches - explaining allusions of all sorts - scientific - philosophical - literary.

Our efforts to aid brought us an enormous correspondence. There passed through our office day by day hundreds of letters which told of the determination that thousands of people were putting into a struggle for more knowledge, for a broader outlook.

The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle laid the foundations for adult education in this country. It laid them solidly, establishing the habit of reading good books.

2. More and more we are becoming a nation of readers, as I believe no little of it is due to the C.L.S.C. or if you prefer the A.A.E.P. ~~NOTE: THE CHAUTAUQUA LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC CIRCLE WAS THE FIRST TO BRING ABOUT THE CHAUTAUQUA MOVEMENT. IT WAS THE FIRST TO BRING ABOUT THE CHAUTAUQUA MOVEMENT. IT WAS THE FIRST TO BRING ABOUT THE CHAUTAUQUA MOVEMENT.~~

Chautauqua, the Chautauqua which is now in temporary embarrassment has always been the physical center of the movement, the Mecca to which its followers have turned. As the years have gone on many things of course have changed in the movement, but Chautauqua, itself, still has its lecture platform, its courses of study, its splendid music, its healthy and stimulating summer life. All of these things make it an institution that the country should not forget nor neglect. To let Chautauqua die would be like letting one of our Universities die. We owe it more than ever has been estimated. Its future should be made secure.