

CLUB PAPERS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

BY

ANNIE J. PRENTISS

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF ANNIE J. PRENTISS
a Founder of NO NAME CLUB of Lawrence, Kansas

Anne Julia Soule, known as Annie, a daughter of Amasa and Sophia (Low) Soule, was born September 26, 1843 in Bath, Maine. As a girl of twelve she came to Kansas Territory in 1855 with her mother, sister Emily and brother Silas from Chelsea, Massachusetts, to which the family had moved following their failed attempt to establish a communal colony near Freeport, Maine in the mid-1840s. In Kansas they joined Annie's father and eldest brother, William Lloyd Carrison Soule. Amasa was considered a "Come-outer" by his associates--"a radical; a reformer."

In Kansas the Soules shared a two-room log cabin with the Col. Saunders family near Blue Mound south of Lawrence. A stairway to the loft above was built later so that each family could have an upstairs room as well as the meager first floor accommodations.

That first winter in the poorly chinked cabin was miserably cold and was followed by a hot, sticky summer in which illness, such as malaria, was prevalent in the family. Considering this as well as the insecurity of the Territory at that time, Sophia packed her trunk and took the girls back east where they could continue their education. Annie remembered later that she and Emily were quite a curiosity at school not only because they had been to Kansas but because they shook occasionally with the ague. Emily never came back to Kansas to live until after her retirement at age 80.

Annie returned to Kansas in 1859 with her mother. Here she attended school and became a teacher in Lawrence and nearby communities. It was during the next year that she met her future husband, Sylvester Bemis Prentiss, physician, missionary and teacher. In the Baptist Church which Annie had visited a few times during the summer of 1860, Dr. Prentiss had a Sunday school class of girls in which she was included. This church met in the hall over Ford and Filmore's dry goods store on the east side of Massachusetts Street, south of the later Perkins building. "Doctor", as he was known, was devoted to his class, spending much time, thought and prayer in behalf of its members, not being satisfied until each had become a Christian.

Prentiss, who had come to Kansas in 1855, had four children when he married Annie Soule on June 21, 1866. The two elder ones, Joseph Lyman

(known as Lyman) and Louisa B. Prentiss, children of his marriage to Louisa Brooks, were already married by the time their father took his third wife. Lyman became a physician like his father and had three sons. Louisa, only two and one-half years younger than Annie, married William Adams Simpson of Lawrence. She later became a member of the No Name Club of which her step-mother, Annie Prentiss, was a founder. Louisa and Will had six children.

The children of the doctor's second family were Ella A. and Frank Prentiss. Their mother, Mary Converse Prentiss, died in 1865. Ella was twelve and Frank seven at the time of their father's third marriage. Ella married Olie B. Neill at the age of twenty-four and had two daughters. Frank's career as a pharmacist was cut short by a stroke of paralysis which impaired his speech and left him with a shuffling gait. Annie looked after him until his death in 1930 but with the help of his sister, Ella Neill, and Ella's younger daughter, Anne, during the last several years of his life.

Annie and the Doctor had two children. Little "Hattie May" lived only two months and eleven days, the date of her death being July 30, 1868. Their son, Charles Addison, was born May 29, 1870. Upon reaching maturity, he changed the spelling of his surname back to the original "Prentice."

It is interesting to note that each of the wives of Dr. Prentiss was twenty-two years old at the time of marriage. The first two, however, were far less hardy than Annie. She lived to be nearly eighty-eight, the date of her death being July 22, 1931. The Doctor had died October 9, 1892 at the age of seventy-five.

Doctor and Annie Prentiss had two foster children in addition to their own. They were Annie's nieces, Emma B. and Kate S. Soule, aged eight and six years, who had come from Denver, Colorado in 1880 to live with their aunt and uncle in Lawrence. They were the daughters of Annie's brother Will and his first wife, Mary Benson Soule, who were divorced in Lawrence in 1878. It is said that Mrs. Prentiss seemed to care for these children as much as for her own son Charlie. Emma married Eugene C. Allen of Lawrence in 1890 but Kate lived on with the Prentisses until 1904. That summer she married George E. Kelley, a farmer of the Coal Creek-Vinland area south of Lawrence.

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On February 20, 1990, the three elder of the Kelleys four daughters, Martha Smith, Katharine Kelley and Anne Hemphill, were privileged to attend the 114th anniversary meeting of No Name Club at the "Boots" Adams Alumni Center at Kansas University. We appreciated the opportunity to be with you

at that time and are now happy to present to you this sketch of the family of Annie J. (Soule) Prentiss and her husband, Dr. S. B. Prentiss.

Anne E. Hemphill

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Charter Member of No Name Club is Honored
at Golden Anniversary

To be present at the fiftieth anniversary of the club of which she had been the founder half a century ago was the pleasant experience of Mrs. Annie J. Prentiss last Tuesday when the members of the No Name club held their anniversary luncheon at the Colonial Tea Room. In honor of the occasion Mrs. Prentiss (age 82) had written a song which was sung by those present. She also reviewed the history of the club and read the verses which she had composed for the eighteenth anniversary of the organization.

The club, founded in the centennial year, 1876, is the second oldest in Lawrence (Kansas), only the Friends in Council having preceded it. The name was suggested by the husband of one of the members, after they had met for several times without being able to agree upon a suitable cognomen, and was taken from that of a famous men's club in New York City.

At roll call each member gave an original verse dealing with the golden anniversary and the part which Mrs. Prentiss had played in the club, for she is today quite as active a member as she was in the earlier days of its history. Two former members, Mrs. Nellie Beeler and Mrs. C. W. Baker of Kansas City, were among those present.

The luncheon was a gala event, the decorations being appropriate to such an occasion. Yellow Jonquils were at each place and the nut cups were also in yellow. Candles in glass holders, tied with tulle bows of the predominating color were on the tables, and on the table where the guest of honor was seated was placed a large birthday cake, adorned with fifty golden candles.

--The Lawrence Daily Journal-World
1926



OUR CLUB

Written by Annie J. (Soule) Prentiss (Mrs. Dr. S. B.) for
the thirty-seventh anniversary of the NO NAME CLUB in 1913.

NO NAME for a club
That for thirty-seven years,
Through famine and plenty,
'Mid doubts and 'mid fears,
Has weathered the gales
And is brighter today
Than of old, 'though the heads
Of a few have grown grey.

There's a feeling of sadness
Creeps over us now
As we notice the wrinkles
On cheek and on brow.
For the years have to many
Brought sorrow and pain,
And we smile through our tears
As we greet you again.

Thirty-seven! Do you know
What those figures may mean
In the changes around us?
Look back o'er the scene.
Not a telephone then, (in 1876)
Not a bi-plane or motor,
And through all our fair land
Not a woman a voter.

Who had seen a hope
In those far away days
Of electrical wonders.
Why even x-rays
Were unknown, and for lightning (electricity)
For cooking a steak,
We'd have laughed at the mention
And called it a fake.

What would we have said
If one, noted for truth,
Had told us we'd yet see the time
When our youth,
With a sprinkling of elders,
Bare headed would go
Day and night by the score
To the new nickel show? (movies)

Moving pictures have come
In the last twenty years.
They have harnessed the lightning
'Til now it appears
In the house, on the street,
And its bright rays are shed
'Til it seems to be dimming
The stars overhead.

Could we ever have guessed
 In those slow, plodding days
 What wonders would grow
 From electrical rays,
 'Til by means of a cable
 We'd talk through the ocean
 And wireless telegraphy
 Would cause no commotion?

As we look on the wonders
 On sea and on shore,
 We are sure the inventors
 Can find nothing more.
 There are airships and mono-planes
 Cleaving the sky;
 Tunnels under the cities,
 And rivers where lie

Tracks for railroads to carry
 The freight of a nation;
 Tubes for shooting the mails;
 Sure it beats all creation!
 As we think of these wonderful
 Things it does seem
 We will waken to find
 It is only a dream.

These are only inventions,
 The physical side!
 Even science, religion
 And morals have vied
 With each other in bringing
 Forth things that are new,
 And Fletcher is teaching
 The world how to chew!

(See encyclopedia: Horace Fletcher,
 food, expert.)

Our explorers have found
 Both the poles, but we're weary
 When hearing the claims
 Of a Cook or a Peary.
 So we drop them to study
 The moon and the stars,
 And to find out for sure
 What they're doing on Mars.

Ah, the myst'ries have not
 Been all cleared away.
 We must leave to the next
 Generation to say
 And to do many things
 Left undone, 'though 'tis said
 There is nothing new
 Under the sun.

Typed and edited Jan. 27, 1989 by Mrs. Prentiss' grandniece and
 namesake, Anne E. (Kelley) Hemphill (Mrs. Herschel W.)

Poem

for the 18th anniversary of the No Name Club

'Tis our Festival, so we are gathered today
Just to talk of the past, shake each hand if we may,
Make a bow to our President, notice the scribe (secretary)
Then smile at the critic to serve as a bribe,
Refer to the days now so far in the past;
For of all the old circle we three are the last.

But don't for a moment blame old Father Time
As he traveled along on his errand sublime,
For bleaching our hair or expanding our brow,
'Tis the wisdom we've gained from the Club, we avow;
Just as butter and cream will absorb the perfume
From coffee and spice or from roses in bloom.

Then stand by the Club, taking us as a sample,
And follow with courage our shining example.
Eighteen did you say? You are surely mistaken.
Yet we know, after all, for the pains we have taken
Some excuse must be given for writing this page,
So we'll try to believe we're becoming of age.

There is something, do doubt, when we make our debut,
Either past or of that we're intending to do,
That should claim our attention and show in a word
Our improvement each year by the essays we've heard.
But how shall we tell it? We're Modesty's self.
If we followed our own inclinations, a shelf

Would conceal every effort we ever have made
And all our ambitions be kept in the shade,
Notwithstanding, we bravely come forward today
And claim for ourselves, as we certainly may,
That for us every country has opened her pages
From misty beginnings down, down through the ages,

'Til we know the Prime Minister's latest decision,
And that our Chief Executive's held in derision
By some, though the reason may not be quite clear,
Nor if things are so bad as they're made to appear.
In political circles, from our point of view,
They'd be settled no doubt in a meeting or two

If we were allowed in the nation or state
To give our decision before it's too late.
What haven't we learned? We have tried to beguile
Our friends into digging far down by the Nile
In old Egypt for mummies and pottery rare;
And the old heathen Rulers, though few seemed to care

Whether Pharoah or Ptolemy's rule was the wiser,
 Or who after Joseph was made the advisor.
 No doubt the young members will need to be told
 How we dabbled for years in the histories old,
 Followed countries unnumbered from war into peace,
 Then paused for a year on the annals of Greece;

Found many antiquities under the sod,
 Ranged city and plain where their heroes have trod,
 Then brought to the view of our Club here at home
 What the tourists have found on their visits to Rome;
 Talked art like an artist, read verse like a poet,
 If we erred, not a soul but the critic would know it.

And even at times we have tried to appease her
 By quoting direct from the Latin of Caesar.
 In our travels we managed, if only by chance,
 To pick up some facts in the region of France.
 We have handled the dishes and tapestry rare,
 Seen Paris and much that's remarkable there,

Talked of Germany's poets and artists and wine,
 Of old castles that stand on the banks of the Rhine.
 Read of nobles and peasants and even the Kaiser.
 Is it strange that each year we are still growing wiser?
 If anyone says we were taken with Russia,
 Put her out or appoint a committee to hush her.

At the steppes of that country we paused on our trip,
 And they took us all in when they gave us the Grippe. (influenza)
 South America's wonders have held our attention,
 Her coffee and diamonds too we might mention.
 But the coldest reception, now don't call us silly,
 Was ours when we entered the region of Chile.

Then Central America's climate we know;
 We went through that land in a lesson or so,
 Found ruins excelling the "Castles in Spain",
 Saw century plants in the place of our grain,
 Old Mexico's Aztecs and later invasions,

--Annie J. Prentiss

Reminiscences of Early Times

(for the No Name Club)

by Annie J. Prentiss

What shall I say, I cannot write a poem
If all our future should be hid from fame,
Or if, through fault of mine, our club forever
Felt what a loss it was to have "No Name."

And yet I would refer as, looking backward
We see the progress made on Kansas soil,
To woman and the part she took in forming
The state which nobly now repays her toil.

It does seem strange to go back to the fifties,
Both men and women of that time are grey,
And they who now are on the stage of action
Smile, shrug their shoulders, say "they've had their day."

Perhaps they have, for now the shadows gather
And evening comes, and in the firelight's glow
Like war-worn veterans they meet, recounting
Trials and triumphs of that "long ago."

The woman had not only pioneering
Which even now means toil and sacrifice,
Then there were cartridge making, bullet moulding,
Watching from nightfall for the sun to rise;

No chance to hear from friends beyond the border,
No safety for our loved ones here, oh, no!
We hardly dared to call upon our neighbors
Fearing the dreaded, border ruffian foe.

They who were here when the old territory
Was battleground for every form of sin,
Know well the struggle, they can tell the story
And how they fought that Freedom's cause might win.

Then when the conflict seemed forever ended,
When slavery was driven back, and when
Our farmers could return to plow and harrow
Without a body-guard of fighting men;

When they could go to sleep at night unhindered
By dread of what an hour might bring forth;
What wonder that they grow almost exultant,
Knowing through suffering the state's true worth.

Then, without breathing-time, came the great conflict
When the whole North took up our cause, and when
Kansas came forth and gave, so history tells us,
More soldiers than she had of voting men.

Then to the homes in all our land came terror,
The loss of friends and loneliness and grief,
Days filled with anguish, nights of nameless horror,
Sunrise and sunset bringing no relief.

Then after years of warfare were accomplished
Forth in her might the Nation came once more,
Throughout the land had slavery been banished,
The states united, free from shore.

~~But just before the war cloud burst upon us,~~
In January eighteen sixty-one,
Another star was added to our banner,
We celebrate today what then was done.

No state's admission came through fiercer contest
And none so friendly stood in Freedom's cause,
With temperance emblazoned on her ensign
High are her aims and righteous are her laws.

How fitting that we meet as "Friends in Council,"
Light "Zodiacal" shining clear as day,
While winds "Etesian" (are they Kansas zephyrs?)
Swept from our midst all mystery away;

That the "Round Table" grown to grand proportions
Invite today our still increasing force,
"Chatauquans" filing in with books unending,
Beginners and the "No Name" club of course.

And so together, sharing in the triumphs
We come as friends, a glad and hopeful band
Seeing the promise of a grander future
Than any other state or any land.

Then with our voices, pens or with the ballot,
Wherever we may serve with brain or heart,
True to our state, and to our country loyal
Let us go forward and perform our part.

And now to those who thirst indeed for knowledge,
Seeking as for "hid' treasure" naught debars,
The motto of our state shall be our watchword:
Through clouds triumphant we shall reach the stars.

Reminiscences of the No Name Club

By Annie J. Prentiss

When our literary society was organized, we called it simply a reading circle, not seeing a necessity for a more definite name as there was but one other club of ladies in town, but before many years the rapidly increasing number of organizations made a name almost imperative, but no name could be found quite satisfactory and so at last one of the ladies suggested "No Name" as having belonged to us so long that we might adopt it; and so, although we have sometimes tried to improve upon it, we have settled down to the conclusion that "No Name" is good enough for us.

We first met in February 1876 when the Centennial (of our nation) was recalling to all so much of our own country that we made the United States history the basis of our studies. Following that we took up English history and literature for about two years. Then, if I remember rightly, we studied France, taking up Greece, Egypt, general literature and art, and one year was very pleasantly occupied with American authors. I must even confess, though I do it reluctantly, that we have spent two years of our time in the study of Russia and everything relating to that country, pronouncing such names as baffled the critic completely; but this is not the worst, though this is only a conjecture, for the thought has sometimes come to me that, with Pandora-like curiosity, we may have unwittingly introduced the present prevailing epidemic in our efforts to discover whatever pertained to the Russian country. Be that as it may, many of our members are becoming rapidly satisfied with their present experience and would gladly lose their "grip" on the Czar's domains.

This year is one of persistent study of Germany and the German people with an essay for every week and a conversation conducted by three ladies, very interesting and instructive, and a great help in learning to speak easily without notes.

In addition to the real work of the club, we have from the beginning made the roll call, answered with quotations, a feature of our society and our scrap book has called forth current events and informal discussions which are very enjoyable.

This meeting comes quite unintentionally and yet perhaps fortunately upon the twenty-ninth anniversary of the admission of Kansas into the Union, and we hope it will not seem inappropriate to make some reference to that event and to the early times in Kansas although we will all admit it is not a wholly original subject.

The Forty-niners--Old and New

(May be unfinished)

You have heard of the old Forty-Niners who sold
All their treasures at home for bright yellow gold.
There were fierce disappointments and sickness and death,
Terror of Indians, famine and want,
Not one in a thousand attained what they sought.

We are the new Forty-Niners who stand
For permanent things, not of silver or gold.
Our treasures are knowledge, deep hid' in the mind,
A wealth we are sure not a burgler can find.

At our meeting today as a gay set of diners
Let us all be rejoiced that we're new Forty-Niners!

--Annie J. Prentiss

Speech of a Member

I would like to add a few words to the very interesting talk of Mrs. Prentiss, for she has not told you what she is to this club. Its founder, its loyal supporter, its tried and true friend under all the changes that a quarter of a century has brought to it. She has shared with unfeigned interest all of good cheer that has come to it, has smoothed over any roughness, poured oil on any turbulent wave, or rather what might possibly have grown to be a turbulent wave. Her sweet, gentle word has always been spoken for the right, her counsel is always for the best; the most lenient, the greatest degree of charity, the kindest interpretation and the most forgiving spirit.

Her very cheerful disposition has been such a boon to us always, I cannot tell you how highly we prize its influence and how much it does for us. Mrs. Prentiss has never failed to rejoice with those of us who have had cause to rejoice, or to sympathize with and cheer those in sorrow. She has visited our sick, doing all in her power to alleviate pain and suffering, has strewn flowers over our dead, and spoken words of hope, trust and comfort to those of us who have mourned.

We wish we might in some way convey to her how highly we all esteem and love her, and have gotten a little souvenir of this occasion which she will please accept, believing it is heavily freighted with good wishes, with tender thoughts and generous impulses.

---Words spoken probaaly by Mrs. Wood
when Mrs. Prentiss was presented with a silver
teaspoon for the 25th anniversary of the No Name club.

(Fiftieth Anniversary)

As we come to the close of fifty years
And review the work we have done,
We recall events of the long ago,
The study and work and fun.

Then we think of those who have gone away,
Those we never can see again,
What a sadness tempers our festival
With the joy so mixed with pain.

Every year that has gone has seen some change,
And changes are yet to be.
'Tis a world of shifting scenes we know,
There are wonders we all can see.

--Annie J. Prentiss

Song for the 50th Anniversary, No Name Club

February 23, 1926

(Tune: Old Oaken Bucket)

We sing of the club, of the club that has No Name,
The club that has lived for the last fifty years;
Of the times we have argued and studied the question
And tried to decide what our title should be.
The studies, the essays, the scorn of the critic
When we gave the words that no Webster would own,
The lunches, the banquets, the happy reunions,
The papers we've written at home all alone.
The club we all love and club we all stand by
And even the members that gave us No Name.

--Annie J. Prentiss

Founders' Day

'Tis a wonderful thing to belong to a club
That has lasted for fifty long years;
To review all the names of the members of old,
Though sometimes we're looking through tears.

Of those who took part in the circle's first years,
Mrs. Hendry and Kennedy too,
Whose knowledge of history made us ashamed
With the essays we never could do.

Three Woods, Mrs. Busch, Mrs. Roberts and all
The bright lights of the earlier days;
Mrs. Wilson, the critic who frightened us then;
Mrs. Goodrich, McAllaster, Newlin we praise,

We were friends. Then our first leader
Rev. Barnes, Mrs. Smith, only with us a year,
Mrs. Simpson and Stuart, and all we hold dear,
Mrs. Welsh and Miss Jennie and dear Mrs. Baker,

Mrs. Henry and those who have joined with us later.

I just can't think of a thing to say
As we celebrate our Founders' Day,
But just to wish you as many more
And as happy days as we've had before.

--Annie J. Prentiss

Fifty Years Ago

The Ladies' Reading Club, organized last winter, held its last meeting before adjourning for the summer, on Friday at the residence of the president, the Rev. Mrs. Barnes. The object of this society is to gain a better knowledge of the history of our own country, especially during the last one hundred years. Carefully written essays were prepared by the following ladies and delivered at this meeting: Mrs. William Simpson, Mrs. A. W. Smith, Mrs. S. M. Barnes, Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Culbertson, Mrs. Rankin, Mrs. Cherry, Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Emery, Mrs. E. Wood, Mrs. J. M. Wood and Mrs. Prentiss. The last two papers were worthy of a much larger audience and we may only hope that every orator during the coming week may do as well as Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Prentiss. These papers will be held as the property of the Circle and will probably be read by their descendants on the Centennial anniversary of the organization of the society in 1976.

--Lawrence Journal World

The Joy of Existence

Long ages before the era of man,
When the first forms of life on the earth began,
An atom appeared or an animalcule,
At least the first form in the learned Darwin school,
And surveying himself and the earth and the sea
Said, "O, what a joy it is only to be."

Then his size seemed increased as the world came to view,
This grand habitation so wondrous and new,
For he thought the whole planet intended for him,
And his cup of enjoyment seemed filled to the brim.
But his happiness ceased as he said with a sigh,
"All the rocks and the mountains are higher than I,

And what is life worth if it be not to grow,
And to beat all the rest of creation below."
Well, the years and the ages flew by, as they will,
Yet the next era found him unsatisfied still,
Though from form microscopic he'd grown to a frog,
And croaked gaily his joy as he sat on a log.

Still each day and each year made more strong the desire
For a life that was grander, a mission still higher,
'Til Nature again with her transforming power,
Gave the wings of a bird to the frog as his dower.
Then o'er mountain and plain, among flowers and trees,
He flew while he warbled a song to the breeze,

And his voice was more musical far than before.
By the notes you would know that the frog was no more,
Yet mark still the change as the years speed along,
For the sweet little song bird, forgetting his song,
And almost neglecting his pinions to try,
Turns eagle, then ostrich, as seasons pass by,

'Til mid far away India's forests so grand,
The roar of a lion is heard through the land;
And no one would know, unless Darwin were teacher,
As his ear caught the tones and he looked at the creature,
That Nature herself, in the height of her skill,
Could a bird to this forest king change at her will.

Yet this was but pastime to what she could do
For her powers were great, though her chances were few.
If you doubt it look forward a few ages more
And the change comes near home, and it seems some grades lower,
For the lion is now but an innocent calf,
Passing many gradations, I can't tell you half,

Not having been there; but I've had information
From lineal descendants of his whose high station
Has never allowed me to doubt of the truth,
Though I own that my own education in youth
Was in laws of progression so strangely amiss
I can hardly believe such a wonder as this.

Well, in pasture and meadow, with grass, oats and corn,
He lived carelessly joyous 'til ages were gone;
But at length came a vision through his stolid head
Of existence far higher than what he had led.
Then soon the transformer, old Time, made him feel
That age has some influence even on veal.

For a dog whose fidelity no one could doubt,
Was the next grade of being that Nature turned out,
And he barked and he growled, with the greatest delight,
For with instinct endowed he was nearing the height.
Time passes and next on life's stage claims attention
A donkey, whose ears may seem worthy of mention,

And his voice old dame Nature herself seemed to stun;
It appeared to unite all earth's powers in one,
And without even feeling a pang of remorse,
She soon metamorphosed him into a horse.
Then on, for perfection seemed always the goal,
And a monkey appeared as the next on the roll,

Ascending the mountains and climbing the trees
'Til he seemed to grow wiser and tall by degrees.
Then to ape and baboon and to chimpanzee too,
Up the scale of creation toward manhood he grew,
Until as gorilla he paused for awhile
And admired himself with a satisfied smile,

For he seemed to believe nothing could be much higher,
And was sure for awhile he had gained his desire.
But he saw with surprise as the ages rolled on
That the last link, the spinal extension, was gone.
Then the powers of reason from instinct arising,
The way he could argue was surely surprising.

He could weep and could laugh, and then growing quite rash,
He sported a cane, a cigar and mustache;
Then cast his first vote when complete was the plan,
And he stood forth, the king of creation, a MAN.

-- Annie J. Prentiss