

The Beginning Of The Chatauqua Circle.

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I was asked to tell of the founding of The Chatauqua Circle. It all happened naturally.

A few years before the formation of our circle, and in fact until quite recently, there was little demand for graduate work, and no schools catered to that class of students, by offering summer courses as you find so many doing now. A graduate was a graduate, and was allowed to work among the teachers anywhere. Things have changed, and are quite different now. But it is about then, and not now I am to write, because out of that situation some things have arisen that have been quite helpful to the individual.

There was no requirement, and therefore no arrangement for advance work. But scattered all over this country, were men and women, who longed for mental improvement and culture, and these eagerly accepted the timely offer of the Chatauqua Lecture Course with its attendant Home Study Course, and a Lecture feast at Lake Chatauqua, during the summer.

The movement became so popular that thousands pursued the graduation. about it. ©

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Bishops, senators, governors, presidents, teachers, laymen, laywomen, in fact all who had a desire for study, and for personal uplift. Bishop Vincent of the M.E. Church headed the movement, and his enthusiasm was shared by the most humble Chatauquan. The universities would not condescend to the masses, so the masses made an institution of its own, and its diploma was held in very high esteem.

I had the honor and the pleasure of being a pupil. I pursued the course for three full years, and eagerly looked forward to the work of the fourth, and to graduation time at the Lake., and had hoped to pass through the Gate. while those who had finished in other years, tossed roses at our line. An ambition for me, and a pleasure for all. But my plans miscarried. I have never regretted however, the time and love I spent on that wonderful course.

The Big Fire destroyed my books, I very much regret, and the foresight of the colleges, and the positive requirements of the educational systems have opened new doors, and closed the old ones.

and yet the Chatauqua Lecture Course still stands out in bright lustre, as the pioneer in carrying the schoolroom to the people.

How did I learn the story? One of the very finest women we have had among us told it to me, and got me interested in the movement. She was herself a graduate, and thought it a wonderful thing. That was years before the organization of our Circle. The lady was Mrs. Ariel Bowen, the first wife of Dr. J.W.E. Bowen, a lady of unusual attainments of heart and mind.

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There are thoughts that never die. ONE such was how nice it would be to form a Chatauqua study club of a number of ladies, and build and climb and improve among ourselves, and make our own Chatauqua with the ideals of the parent-body. Then we could feel that the things we acquire without the urge of the schoolmaster were our very own, because we acquired them of our own free will.

over ~~The idea was slow in its growth but very insistent. Several ladies were approached on the matter. At length after serious thought and planning a meeting was held at the home of Mrs. C.C. Cater's on Jackson St. These five were present: Mrs. C.H. Johnson, Mrs. John Bell, Mrs. Walter Covington, Mrs. C.C. Cater, and Mrs. J.R. Porter. These ladies took kindly to the idea, and talked favorably over the plans for forming such an organization. We had several such meetings at planning was done as the idea grew, and finally on the afternoon of September 8 1913 a permanent organization was formed at the home of Mrs. T.H. Slater.~~

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The officers elected were: Regent Mrs. J.R. Porter.
Sec. Mrs. J.B. Greenwood Treas. Mrs. K. Graves.

Committee on constitution and by laws.
Mrs. C.H. Johnson, Mrs. John Bell. Mrs. J.D. Bibb.

I have led you up to the birthday of The Chatauqua Circle. She has had 21 since, and is of age. Let her talk for herself.

Mrs. J.R. Porter. Ist. Regent.