

THE CLUB'S VICTORIAN ROOTS

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**The Chicago Literary Club
November 16, 1998**

(Originally presented with the title "Our Victorian Roots," this paper has been revised and edited for publication on the Club's Web site).

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The Club's Victorian Roots

Founded in 1874, the Chicago Literary Club came into existence during that period of English history known as the Victorian Age. This period is popularly described as beginning in 1837 when the young Victoria (she was then eighteen) became queen of the United Kingdom and Ireland and ending with her death sixty-three years later, in 1901. It was a period marked by great changes in the sciences, in industry, transportation and communication, and in social thought and government. These changes occurred in varying degrees throughout the entire English-speaking world, leaving their indelible stamp on economic and cultural institutions, social customs, and day-to-day living.

Within months after its founding in March 1874, the Club's membership was eighty. Of this number, thirty-three are mentioned prominently in the third volume of Bessie Louise Pierce's scholarly work, *A History of Chicago*, the third volume covering the period 1871 (the year of the Great Fire) through 1893. Leaders in the business and professional community, active in civic affairs, these men were instrumental in forging into existence what Ms. Pierce refers to as "a modern city." Wary of generalizing about an age that in its complexity defies generalization, I nevertheless offer a view of these gentlemen as Victorian in thought, outlook, and behavior.

A Victorian Gentleman

We are fortunate, as members of the Chicago Literary Club, to have available to us, at the Newberry Library, a richly detailed history of the early years of the Club—not only in the form of Frederick Gookin's published history of the first fifty years, but also in minutes of the meetings and in correspondence and other archival materials. Eighteen months ago, several

of us—Hubert Catchpole, Ralph Fujimoto, Herman Lackner, Manly Mumford, John Wilson, and I—were reviewing the Club's papers and archival materials at the Newberry Library. In the course of this review, I came across a newspaper article that was without a date or any identification of the newspaper from which it came. The article had simply been clipped and included with our materials because its subject, Arba Waterman, was a member of the Club. The headline of the article was "Judge Arba N. Waterman, Who Insists Women Are Unreliable as Witnesses."

This article, which included a photograph of Judge Waterman, reads in part as follows: "Judge Arba N. Waterman reiterated yesterday the expression of his belief, given in his court on Saturday, that women are unreliable in the witness box. With the gallantry to be expected from one of his good blood and scholarly training, the Judge explains that his aspersion was not gratuitous—that it was essential as an explanation of the course he took in the case before him—and proceeds to certify that women are less reliable than men as witnesses chiefly because of their lack of business experience." The article also contains the following customary qualification: "That [women] are the superiors of men in moral fibre he has not the slightest doubt." And after a brief description of the Judge's life and background, the article concludes with this statement: "Moreover, [Judge Waterman] is happily married," a statement that leaves unspoken the assumption that Mrs. Waterman was also happily married.

My immediate thought was that Judge Waterman was almost a caricature of the Victorian gentleman, and then it occurred to me that he must not be unique among our early members in this regard and that it might be interesting to review the Club's early years and membership with that idea in mind. Before proceeding, however, I would like to add one more example of the then-accepted view of women. It comes from an article in the October 8, 1894, edition of

The Daily Tribune that inadvertently found its way into our archives as a result of its being on the same page as an article about the death of David Swing, a prominent Chicago minister who was also a member of the Literary Club. The sub-headlines of that article read in part as follows: "In a Sermon in the Cathedral at Baltimore the Catholic Prelate Declares He Hopes the Day Will Never Come When Women Will Have the Ballot. [He] Urges Women 'To Stand By The Home'."

In their public lives, both Judge Waterman and the Catholic prelate were expressing, and reinforcing, a prevailing Victorian sentiment. Women in their day—at least middle- and upper-class women—were relegated to the home. The condition and status of women would change greatly during the Victorian era. Suffrage, however, would come slowly. In the United States, the Nineteenth Amendment, granting women the right to vote, did not become law until 1920. The battle lasted even longer in Great Britain, with full suffrage for women coming in 1928. In our own city, some sixty-five years later, in 1994, the Chicago Literary Club, one hundred and twenty years after its founding, would admit women to membership, with full voting rights.

Evidences of the Resurrection Examined

A signal event in the Club's history that bears on this inquiry took place on May 17, 1875. On that date, Judge Henry Booth, a founding member of the Literary Club, presented his paper *Evidences of the Resurrection Examined*. According to Gookin, Judge Booth reached the conclusion that the evidence was inadequate. What his arguments were we have no way of knowing. This paper, like most of the early papers, has not been preserved. Gookin states, however, that several members present that evening, some of whom were clergymen, were offended by the paper: "The discussion that followed became decidedly acrimonious and so

heated that [the chair] had to intervene and bring it to an abrupt end." Gookin goes on to say that this incident led "a little later" to the adoption of our current by-law provision that reads as follows: "No paper at the time it is read shall be open to adverse criticism in the Club."

In preparing this paper, I examined the minutes of the May 17 meeting. They list the members present that evening (a total of thirty-four), recite that Judge Booth presented his paper, and conclude with a report of the Committee on Officers and Members. The minutes are silent, however, with respect to the arguments set forth in Judge Booth's paper or any discussion that may have followed. I then looked for the minutes of the subsequent meeting at which the admonitory by-law provision had been adopted, but found nothing. I later discovered that the provision in question had become a part of our Club regulations more than a year earlier, having been adopted at the first regular meeting held May 4, 1874. I also found that Judge Booth, instead of avoiding future gatherings as one might reasonably expect of a member who brought acrimony to our proceedings, had attended the following two meetings of the Club, held on June 7 and October 4, as well as many meetings thereafter, and had also been nominated for chair of the Committee on Officers and Members following the delivery of his paper at the May 17 meeting.

This information is recited here because of the long-standing belief—initiated by Gookin?—that this incident had threatened the existence of the Club, then barely a year old. One may plausibly ask, was this incident and its outcome exaggerated by our early historians? I am unable to answer that question. I suggest, however, that the presentation of such a paper at that time in the Club's history would not have been regarded as unusual.

It is clear in this regard that the pace of scientific discovery in the Victorian period had created new tensions in the religious community. Advances in the fields of anthropology and

geology raised genuine doubts about the story of the Creation told in the Bible. The publication in 1858 of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species through Natural Selection* added to these doubts. Many held fast to a literal interpretation of the Bible, while others sought to reconcile biblical teachings with the new scientific discoveries. The debate that raged publicly in England found its counterpart in Chicago in the early years of the Club's history, and several members of our Club played important roles in that debate.

In the foremost ranks of religious liberalism was Dr. David Swing, pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church from 1871 to 1875 and a member of the Club from 1874 until his death in 1894. A forceful intellect and popular theologian, charges of heresy were brought against him in 1874 for having taken exception to the doctrines of “foreordination” and “perdition.” These charges ultimately led him to resign his pastorate. Within a week, however, of his resignation, plans were underway for a new church. These plans were supported by many leading members of the community, including Wirt Dexter, solicitor of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, Nathaniel K. Fairbank, a manufacturer, and Franklin MacVeagh, another prominent businessman—all members of the Club.

Doctrinal disputes with his denomination also caused trouble for another member of the Club. Dr. Hiram W. Thomas, a Methodist minister, had delivered a sermon in 1874 on the heresy trial of Dr. Swing. That sermon, along with his association with the Philosophical Society of Chicago, were most likely important factors in his being transferred from Chicago to Aurora in 1875 by the governing body of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He returned to Chicago two years later, but was censured by the church in 1878 and subsequently expelled from the ministry. I add to this narrative the fact that our first president, Robert Collyer, had been expelled from the Methodist ministry almost twenty years earlier: one commentator said

that he had been “deposed”; another, that he had been ‘unfrocked.’”

Unlike Swing, Thomas and Collyer, many in England and elsewhere went beyond any attempt to reconcile faith and science and took the position that religion was "intolerant of liberty of thought and an obstacle to human progress." Judge Booth was apparently in this camp and in 1873 had expressed his views in a lecture before an open forum of the Philosophical Society. This organization had been formed in October 1873 with the objects of mutual improvement of its members and the general diffusion of knowledge through the consideration of issues of moral philosophy, social science, natural science, speculative philosophy, and current history. Lectures and discussion were restricted only by the Society's motto: "What Is True?" The first president of the Society was Professor Joseph Haven, who became a member of the Literary Club in 1874. The next president was Dr. Hiram Thomas, who was succeeded by Judge Booth. Of the fifteen vice presidents of the Society in its first year, five were to become members of the Literary Club, including Collyer, Julius Rosenthal, Rabbi Bernard Felsenthal and the Reverend Charles H. Fowler, who was then president of Northwestern University. David Swing and Arba Waterman were also members of the Society.

The title of the lecture delivered by Judge Booth before the Philosophical Society in 1873 was *Inspiration*. It obviously dealt with the theological doctrine that every word of the Bible was divinely inspired and must, therefore, be taken literally, and may have provided the basis for the paper he presented to the Club two years later. Along this line, it is interesting to note that the second lecture Booth delivered to the Philosophical Society, on November 2, 1875, bore the title *Examination of Evidences of the Resurrection of Christ*, and that his third lecture, delivered to the Society a year later, on November 7, was entitled *Evidences of the*

Resurrection reconsidered. Unfortunately, these lectures have not been preserved (if, indeed, that was a practice of the Philosophical Society), so that we cannot know what direction these examinations and reconsiderations took. We should understand, however, that they were part of the great public debate on religious matters that opened up during the Victorian era and found its way, on at least one occasion, into the proceedings of the Chicago Literary Club.

The Early Meetings

Our records regarding the early history of the Club are reasonably intact. Then, as now, postcards were used to announce the meetings. The cost of a postcard in those days was one cent. A penny postcard now costs twenty cents. Dues were then ten dollars. Today the equivalent of that ten dollars would be approximately what we now pay: one hundred fifty dollars. Dues notices were issued with some frequency, and the appeals for payment were more insistent than they are today. On January 31, 1876, for example, the treasurer wrote to members as follows: "I make a special request to the members to pay the semi-annual dues at once. So many members are in arrears that the Club is unable to meet its obligations." Another notice went out on September 15 of the same year. It read in part as follows: "The Treasury of the Club is empty, with rent and several other debts accruing September 30." On June 10 of the same year, incidentally, John M. Binckley, one of the seven founding members of the Club, was dropped from the rolls for nonpayment of dues.

The first three meetings of the Club were devoted largely to organizational matters. At the fourth meeting, held June 15, 1874, President Collyer read his address, *Literature and Great Cities*. This address was picked up and reprinted in full the next day by one of the Chicago newspapers. What caught my attention in reading the newspaper article were the numerous references the reporter made to the dinner that accompanied the meeting. He wrote

that "it seemed proper to inaugurate [the Club's] serious labors by a social meeting in which speeches should be made, and a feast should be eaten." The reporter also made reference to the "banquet" laid out for the members. He then wrote: "At 8 o'clock, a full attendance being present, the members sat down to the feast." The word *feast*, at least as used here, seemed to have a satirical ring, and I was curious to discover what had been eaten that evening.

Fortunately, the menu survives in our archives. I include it here for whatever impression it may make on members of the Committee on Arrangements and Exercises.

The meeting that evening was held at the old Sherman House. The bill of fare, with the name of the Club printed at the top, listed ten courses. The first was "Soup," which was mock turtle. The next course was "Fish," consisting of broiled California salmon, with shrimp sauce. The third course was labeled "Cold." It consisted of buffalo tongue, glace; boned turkey, with jelly; chicken salad; and pressed corned beef. After "Cold" came "Broiled," which included leg of mutton with capers, turkey with celery sauce, and capon with egg sauce. The fifth-course entry on the menu was "Roasts." The roasts were barron of beef, lamb with mint sauce, and turkey with cranberry sauce. By this point it would seem as if the end of the meal were in sight. Not so, however, as the next course was identified as "Entrees." The entrees were spring chicken, aux champignon; lamb chops, a la Venetian; sweetbreads in cases, au gratin; and rum omelette, with strawberry sauce. Next on the menu, after the entrees, was "Game," consisting of broiled squabs on toast. Following that, there was a separate listing of five vegetables. Then came "Pastry." Here there were four choices: lemon cream pie, champagne jelly, assorted cake, and Swiss meringues. If that sounds to you like dessert, you are mistaken, for the tenth and final course was identified as "Dessert" and consisted of ice cream, pineapple ice, strawberries and cream, mixed nuts, and bananas.

Was this—the "feast"—a typical Victorian meal? I wondered. Yes, I discovered, it was. In a book entitled *Daily Life in Victorian England*, there is a menu that resembles the one which I have just described. The author informs us that "the [Victorian] dinner party had become a ritualized event." She also tells us that "Although formal dinners involved vast amounts of food, no one was expected to eat everything" and that etiquette books admonished the host and hostess not to urge the guests to have more food—advice, in my opinion, most likely intended to shield the host and hostess from manslaughter charges. Finally, the author tells us that "no one ever mentioned what was served; [since] the conversation was to focus on other topics." And, indeed, I am confident, given the backgrounds and wide-ranging interests of our early members, that the conversation at these meetings was lively, inspired, and soared well beyond the mere mention of food.

Though there was some joking in the press about our being an eating club disguised as a literary society, the literary exercises in the early years were the featured part of the evening. In addition to essays, there were two other kinds of exercises—"informals" and "conversations." The informal was a group of short papers by three or four members, presumably on a common subject. Each informal had an editor. A conversation, on the other hand, was a discussion on a previously chosen topic. Each conversation had a leader who made an opening statement on the topic. The conversations—and many of the essays—tended to focus on important political, social, and intellectual issues of the late Victorian period.

In the first several years, there were conversations on the following topics: "The Press, its Function and Influence," "Civil Service Reform," "The American Public School," "The Government of Large Cities," and "The American College." Program listings for

conversations and titles for essays were often styled as "questions," suggesting a common understanding of the nature and importance of the subject addressed. Some examples are "The Sunday Question," "The Chinese Question," "The Transportation Question," "The Labor Question," "The Indian Question," and "The Railroad Question."

Two subjects received repeated attention. One was socialism, which at the time was as much a subject of discussion in America as in England. The subject was first addressed in a conversation, held on October 13, 1879. The title was "Socialism in the United States." Subsequent essays on the subject were "Socialism in Chicago," "Socialism," "The Advance of Socialism," and "Is the Despotic Socialism of General Booth a Safe Way Out of Darkest England?" The other subject singled out for attention was bimetallism, first introduced in a conversation of that description that took place on December 8, 1879. This conversation was followed over the years by essays entitled "An Argument for Silver," "The Silver Question," "Gold and Silver as Money," and "Recent Silver Legislation."

Were these likely subjects for a club whose object was "literary and aesthetic culture"? An outsider probably wouldn't think so, and in 1877 a correspondent from *The Boston Globe* wrote of our membership that "many have as much claim to literary culture as a cabbage has to be ranked with a rose." In this connection, however, the makeup of the membership must be taken into account. According to the March 9, 1890, edition of the Chicago newspaper *The Inter Ocean*, the membership of the Club in that year included "seventy-five lawyers, as many men of business, fifteen clergymen and as many physicians"—men, in other words, deeply involved in business and professional pursuits, whose interests and activities were touched by the broad social political and economic issues of that day. Only one member of the Club was reputed to be a "man of leisure," which was assumed to be a necessary

condition for the cultivation of literary tastes and culture. This is not to say, however, that literary subjects were absent from the proceedings. The title of Robert Collyer's first essay was "Literature and Great Cities," which was reprinted in full the next day in one of the Chicago newspapers. Some years later, Henry Tolman responded with an essay entitled "Comparative View of the Development of Literature in All Languages." Theodore Sheldon, however, seems to have missed the point altogether with a paper entitled "Transfer of Land by Registration of Title."

The appearance of Collyer's first essay in the newspapers was not an unusual occurrence. In the early years, reporters were frequently in attendance at the Club's meetings. Indeed, some of the early members were newspapermen themselves—some of them prominent editors and managers. Nor were later attempts to bar reporters wholly successful. The subjects presented and discussed by an association composed of so many leading citizens of the city—as well as the men themselves—were of widespread interest and curiosity, and one way or another the proceedings were often picked up by the newspapers.

The Newspapers

At the beginning of the Victorian period in England, few people read a daily newspaper. That situation, however, changed rapidly with the reduction of printing costs and, later, in 1855, with the repeal of the newspaper stamp duty. In America, popular journalism was born with the advent of the penny newspaper. In Chicago, from 1870 to 1892, the number of daily newspapers increased three times, with corresponding increases in readership. The leading English dailies were the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Evening Journal*, and *The Chicago Times*. There were also at the time five principal German-language papers, one Norwegian, three Bohemian, one Polish, one Italian, and two Swedish. On the *Tribune*, Club member

Henry Demarest Lloyd held the position of literary and later financial editor and Robert W. Patterson, Jr. became managing editor in 1883. Club members Joseph Kirkland and James Runnion were also later associated with that newspaper.

Apart from an occasional article of general interest about the Club and apart from a reprint of some of the essays presented by members, most of the newspaper articles in our archives report the deaths of Club members. For the most part, these are not obituaries, but, rather, news articles about the deaths of noteworthy men. The lead headlines usually express the death of the subject with a pronounced Victorian sensitivity. "Expires" and "succumbs" are favorite words. Quite often the event of death is treated with even greater delicacy, sometimes verging on the poetic. In the case of G. P. A. Healy, for example, the headline reads: "The Famous Portrait Painter Lays Down His Brush Forever." My favorite, perhaps, for its understatement, for its sure expression of finality, is that written for another Club member. It reads, simply: "W. H. Smith Is No More."

In today's obituaries, the cause of death is frequently omitted or, if included, is described in a few words (a "heart attack," for example) or with a reference to a "long illness." This, however, was not the practice in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. After headlining death in the softest—almost whispered—tones, the article itself would launch into a full-throttle description of the cause of death that would often include a recital of the decedent's last moments, hours, or even days. Let me give a few examples of what I refer to.

Judge Mark Skinner was a member of the Club from 1874 until his death in 1887. The newspaper article announcing his death reads in part as follows:

The immediate cause of his death was heart trouble, complicated by general debility.

The Judge had been for many years a sufferer from gastric derangements, and had consequently been in feeble health before the organic disease of the heart was fully developed. Two years ago his health began to fail decidedly, and during the last year he was a great and almost constant sufferer. During his visit in Florida last winter he was subject to severe attacks of heart complaint at Pensacola and Jacksonville.

And the article continues in the same vein for another paragraph or so.

Circuit Court Judge George Driggs was a member of the Club from 1888 until his death in 1892. According to the newspapers, he died at four o'clock in the morning of "acute oedema of the pharynx." I quote from the account given of his death:

The circumstances of his death were distressing. He was suffering acutely from tonsillitis and sleep had long been a difficult matter. So greatly was his throat congested that it was impossible for him to breathe while reclining. His respiration was extremely difficult and painful, and he was worn out by sleeplessness and fasting. Suddenly the fatal congestion ensued. The mucous membranes of the pharynx became oedematous and the respiratory passages were entirely closed, and before any means of relief could be found Judge Driggs was dead of asphyxia. There was only a gasp and a paroxysm of pain, and the end came.

The death of Henry B. Stone was chronicled by *The Daily Tribune* on July 6, 1897. Mr. Stone, a former vice president of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad and president of the Chicago Telephone Company, became a member of the Club in 1883. On the day of his death, he was celebrating the Fourth of July with his family at a summer resort near New Bedford, Massachusetts, setting off fireworks for the amusement of his children. According

to the newspaper account, "One large dynamite bomb was obstinate and refused to ignite."

The account continues as follows:

Mr. Stone stepped from the piazza on to the grass to examine the bomb, and was bending over it, when it exploded with terrific force, striking him full in the face. The charge cracked Mr. Stone's jaws, blew away the nose, and tore out his eyes. Pieces of the bomb also penetrated his brain. The unfortunate man fell backward on the grass and expired almost instantly in the full view of his entire family, who became frantic at the terrible sight.

It is difficult to reconcile these gruesome accounts with Victorian standards of taste and sensitivity. Death of a loved one would have been painful enough for the deceased's family and close friends. The clinical recitation of the cause, associated symptoms, and circumstances of death is unimaginable. The study of the obituary as a journalistic art form is beyond the scope of this paper, and I leave it to others to explain how such reporting fits within the Victorian framework I am attempting to construct this evening. For my own part, I can only suggest that the reading public had an appetite for this kind of information and that the press was willing to satisfy that appetite in order to sell newspapers.

The Haymarket Riot

Another phenomenon of the Victorian period involves the tremendous changes that took place in the lives of members of the working class. In England during this period, large numbers of men and women moved from the countryside to find jobs in factories that increasingly relied on machinery to produce goods. These new workers suffered intolerable hardships and soon began to form organizations to improve their condition. In the United

States, industrialization became widespread after the Civil War. Public opinion at that time was generally hostile to the labor movement. Chicago, perhaps as much as any city in the country, typified the deplorable conditions of working-class men and women as well as labor's struggle to rectify these conditions. A detailed description of that struggle as it played out in our city is not possible within the scope of this paper. It is sufficient to note that the "labor question" dominated the public's attention for a considerable number of years starting about 1873. During this period, mass meetings, protests and strikes—often accompanied by violence—were commonplace. Socialists and anarchists entered the struggle on the side of labor. This had the effect of pitting various factions of the labor movement against one another on fundamental questions of ends and means. It also had the effect of unifying the employers and strengthening their resolve to resist labor's legitimate demands.

During the 1880s, there was considerable agitation on the part of labor for an eight-hour workday. As sentiment for action on this issue grew, May 1, 1886, was picked by the nation's labor forces as the date to make known their determination in this regard. Chicago was a focal point of this effort, and the city's mood was somber as the chosen date approached. May 1, however, passed largely without incident, as did Sunday, May 2. Then, on May 3, the police were summoned to the McCormick plant to quell fighting between strikers and nonunion workers who had taken their place at the plant. A mass meeting to protest police tactics against the strikers was called for the next day. The situation reached a flashpoint in Haymarket Square on May 4, 1886.

The bomb that exploded that day, resulting in the deaths of ten persons and injuring sixty-two others, alarmed the entire city. The press cried for vengeance, and the cry was taken up by leading members of the community. David Swing, then pastor of the Central Church,

voiced his alarm from the pulpit. The eminent attorney Charles C. Bonney, another member of the Literary Club, also spoke publicly against the bombing. The Chicago Citizens' Association, which had sprung into existence after the fire of 1874 (yes, there was a major Chicago fire that year), offered its support in whatever capacity it might be needed and appointed a committee of prominent businessmen to meet daily during the crisis. Edward G. Mason, president of the Club in 1878-79, was a member of that committee.

The grand jury that returned the indictments in the Haymarket Riot sat under Judge John G. Rogers, also a member of the Club. The case was assigned to another judge for trial, on motion of the defense attorneys, who felt that Judge Rogers was prejudiced against the defendants. (Judge Rogers, incidentally, resigned his membership in the Club in 1886.) On August 19, the jury reached a verdict of guilty, and the next day the court imposed the death penalty on seven of the eight defendants. Among the defense attorneys was Sigmund Zeisler, who also assisted in the appeal of the convictions to the Illinois Supreme Court. Zeisler became a member of the Club in 1893 and remained a member until his death in 1931. On May 3, 1926, he presented a paper to the Club entitled [*Reminiscences of the Anarchist Case*](#). By his own account, Zeisler states that he was at that time the sole surviving major participant in the Haymarket Trial: that the presiding judge, all twelve jurors, all counsel for the prosecution and defense, all of the police officers, all seven justices of the Supreme Court of Illinois who heard the appeal, and all nine justices of the United States Supreme who had refused to intervene in the matter—all were dead. Zeisler's paper was selected for publication by the Club, and five hundred seventy copies were printed. It has become an important source of information for those studying the Haymarket Trial, and copies may be found at the Newberry Library, the Chicago Historical Society, and in Widener Library at Harvard University, as well as, I am sure, in countless other libraries throughout the country. Zeisler's

concluding words in his paper were to the effect that the majority of thinking men now saw the Haymarket Trial as a grave miscarriage of justice and that this would be the verdict of history.

Once the immediate hysteria surrounding the incident and its aftermath had subsided, concern began to be expressed regarding the fairness of the proceedings that led to conviction and the imposition of the death penalty. Club members Henry Demarest Lloyd, the crusading newspaperman, and Lyman J. Gage, a prominent banker who would later become secretary of the U. S. Treasury Department, played important roles in this regard. Both urged clemency for the convicted men. Gage organized a group—known today as the Economic Club—to discuss and provide leadership on the complex issues presented by the incident, and Lloyd visited the condemned men in jail and pleaded in person with Governor Oglesby for the commutation of their sentences. Among those joining Gage and Lloyd in public appeals for clemency were Club members Benjamin F. Ayer, an attorney, and Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch.

For five of the Haymarket defendants, the pleas for clemency were unsuccessful. Four of them met their death by hanging in Cook County jail; the fifth avoided hanging by exploding a detonating cap in his mouth. The remaining three were later pardoned by Governor John Peter Altgeld, bringing a momentary close to the turbulent labor drama that had dominated Chicago for nearly a decade. By that time the attention of the city had turned to the Columbian Exposition of 1893.

The Columbian Exposition

Any extended consideration of world's fairs or expositions begins with a reference to the Great Exposition of 1851. Housed in the Crystal Palace, a greenhouse-inspired glass building

constructed in Hyde Park, this first international trade show was largely the work of Prince Albert. It displayed to the world Britain's vast wealth and many technological achievements. It was considered by Queen Victoria and the prince consort to be the highlight of their reign and became a symbol of the Victorian Age. In large measure it served as an inspiration for the Columbian Exposition of 1893, which itself was a thoroughly Victorian enterprise.

The idea for a world's fair commemorating the four-hundredth anniversary of the landing of Columbus in America had been under consideration for some time. By 1889 New York, Washington, and St. Louis, as well as Chicago, were presenting proposals to Congress. On April 21, 1890, the Senate, following the lead of the House of Representatives, officially designated Chicago as the site of the fair. The name of Lyman Gage, so prominent in the Haymarket episode and its aftermath, appears again in connection with the fair. He was Chicago's principal emissary to Congress in seeking the fair for the city and was chosen president of the organization responsible for its early planning. Club members Charles L. Hutchinson, who would serve as president of the Art Institute for forty-two years, and Martin A. Ryerson, an early benefactor of the Art Institute and a member of its board of trustees, were among those who had served on the Chicago Citizens' Committee to secure the fair for the city.

Numerous other Club members played prominent roles in the Columbian Exposition. John Wellborn Root and Daniel Burnham were named supervising architects for the fair, and Burnham was later appointed director of works, with responsibility for choosing the fair's architects. While Burnham's principal choices for the buildings on the Court of Honor were all easterners, he later added a group of local architects, including William Le Baron Jenney, who designed the Horticultural Building, and Louis Sullivan, who was the architect of the

Transportation Building. Lorado Taft contributed two large sculptural groups to the outside of the main entrance to the Horticultural Building, and works by G. P. A Healey, by then a world-renowned portrait painter, were exhibited in the Fine Arts Palace.

Club members also played important roles in several collateral matters. The land for the Exposition's downtown headquarters was obtained from the city through the efforts of Charles Hutchinson, and the building was taken over by the Art Institute when the fair closed. With the Art Institute planning to move from its old building (on the site now occupied by the Chicago Club), the Literary Club, which leased quarters in the building, decided to seek a new venue. Another interesting sidelight involves the efforts of a group of men that included Club members Edward E. Ayer and Judge Sidney Corning Eastman. Seeking to preserve for the city the outstanding collections that were housed in the fair's Columbian Museum, this group obtained a charter for an organization called "The Columbian Museum of Chicago." Ayer and another Club member, James Ellsworth, were among the first to pledge funds for the endowment of the museum. Both of them later went to see Marshall Field to enlist his support and eventually secured a pledge of one million dollars. The new museum was first housed in the Fine Arts Palace and bore the name the "Field Columbian Museum." In addition to his efforts in the founding of what we now know as The Field Museum, Ayer gave to the museum his collection of Indian artifacts, then valued at \$75,000.

A third episode involves Judge Lambert Tree, who became a member of the Club the year of its founding. Together with his wife Anna, who was a painter, the Trees commissioned Chicago's first building designed to meet the unique work requirements of artists. The original seventeen Tree studios were built in 1894 with the express purpose of convincing artists who had come to Chicago for the Columbian Exposition to stay and form

an artists' community. Today, over one hundred years later, the Tree Studios are one of the most distinctive features of Chicago and its River North neighborhood and are unmatched in any other city in the United States. Several of our members, incidentally, are currently involved in efforts to secure landmark status for the entire Tree Studios complex.

The Club's records reveal that four papers were presented on the subject of the Columbian Exposition. I mention two of them here. On October 30, 1893, Lorado Taft presented a paper entitled *Some Surprises at the Art Palace*. Nearly two years later, on April 15, 1895, Daniel Burnham presented a paper entitled *The Uses of Expositions*, the last official mention in the Club's records of the great Chicago world's fair.

Arba Waterman Revisited

As I approach the conclusion of this paper, I feel compelled to return briefly to Arba Waterman. My earlier reference to Judge Waterman as having ruled in his courtroom that women are unreliable as witnesses suggests a dimensionality that is unfair and requires correction.

Waterman was a member of the Literary Club from 1883 until his death on March 16, 1917. He was born in Greenboro, Vermont, in 1836. He was educated in the East, and, after graduating from Albany Law School in 1861, came to Joliet, Illinois. In 1862 he enlisted as a private in the 100th Illinois Infantry. Promoted through a succession of grades to lieutenant colonel of his regiment, he served under General Buell and later General Rosecrans. In the battle of Chickamauga, his horse was shot out from under him and he was severely wounded. He later fought in the Atlanta campaign under the command of General Sherman but was forced to retire from further service in 1864 as a result of the wounds previously sustained by

him.

When the war ended, he came to Chicago to practice law. He served as a member of the City Council as well as in other civil positions and in 1886 was elected a judge of the Circuit Court and was later appointed to the Appellate Court. Judge Waterman, like most of us, was not a literary man. He had, however, a lifelong interest in literature. He also had a deep interest in philosophy and was a member of the Philosophical Society. He was president of the Society for its 1886-87 season, the last year for which I have been able to account for the existence of that organization, and delivered a lecture that year entitled "The Philosophy of Life." Clearly he was a man who swung for the fences. Judge Waterman also published a three-volume history of Chicago and Cook County, in which he referred to membership in the Chicago Literary Club as being open to both sexes. (Surely, of all people, Judge Waterman should have known better.) His three-volume history, incidentally, contains an index but is without a table of contents, making it difficult to use, but easier, in any event, than Gookin's fifty-year history of the Literary Club, which, although it contains a table of contents, does not have an index.

The account of Judge Waterman's last years is as bizarre as it is sad. His mind having failed, a petition had been filed to have a conservator appointed for his estate. On the eve of the hearing, Judge Waterman failed to appear. A day or so later, two men posing as bailiffs entered Waterman's residence and forcibly ejected his aged housekeeper and his brother-in-law. Judge Waterman was found a week later in a sanitarium near Boston, having been taken and placed there by a former law partner who was eventually charged with unlawful attempts to take control of Waterman's estate. This associate was described in the newspapers as "a minister of darkness exhibiting the qualities of a loan shark." Judge Waterman never

completely recovered his health and died a year later, at age 81.

Judge Waterman's views on the fitness of women to serve as witnesses in court were characteristic of the age: he was a prisoner of his time, no less than we are of our own. In his defense, it may be said that women of that day were shut off from the business world and, for that reason, were unsophisticated in cases involving business matters. His relationship with his wife, by all accounts a talented and vivacious woman, appears to have been a relationship of equals. That he and Mrs. Waterman were deeply devoted to one another is beyond doubt. His admiration for his wife was described as "idolatrous" and, according to his friends, her death was a blow from which he never recovered. Although he did not achieve the lasting fame of some of his contemporaries in the Club, his service to his country and his many contributions to the city are noteworthy. He exhibited the passion of a Victorian gentleman for good literature and for the religious and philosophical questions that were being debated on both sides of the Atlantic, and exhibited as well a commitment to life's affairs that was defined by a deep sense of duty.

Closing

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, marking the sixtieth year of her reign, followed the World's Columbian Exposition by four years. On June 22, 1897, in an outpouring of respect and admiration, millions of people lined the streets as the royal procession made its way to St. Paul's Cathedral. Accompanied by a parade of British subjects from all corners of the globe, in an unimaginable display of pageantry, it was a celebration of imperial power not seen since the time of the Roman Empire.

Victoria died in 1901, the longest reigning monarch in English history, giving her name

to an age that spanned most of the nineteenth century. Two years before her death, on March 13, 1899, ninety-five members of the Chicago Literary Club met to celebrate the Club's twenty-fifth anniversary. William M. R. French, the first director of the Art Institute, gave a short address on his recollections of various events in the Club's history. Other members present that evening did the same, and letters from members who could not attend, including Robert Collyer, were read. The focus was distinctly on the past, and although anniversaries also provide us with an opportunity to reflect upon the future, there is no record that any of these ninety-five men did so that evening. One wonders, had they been so inclined, whether any of them would have foreseen a continuation of the tremendous changes that had taken place in their own lifetimes. One wonders, also, whether any of them would have foreseen that these Monday-night meetings would continue for another hundred years.

Note on Sources

For more than fifty years, the archives of the Chicago Literary Club have been located in the Special Collections Section of the Newberry Library. Especially well preserved are records of the Club's first twenty-five years, and much of the information included in this paper has been derived from those records, including the abundance of newspaper articles and clippings.

Archival materials regarding the Club may also be found at the Chicago Historical Society, most of which, but not all, duplicate materials found at the Newberry. In addition, the references in this paper to the Philosophical Society of Chicago were drawn from materials found at the Historical Society. The Historical Society was also a rich source of biographical information about prominent members of the Club in its early years.

Needless to say, Frederick Gookin's *The Chicago Literary Club: A History of Its First Fifty Years*, published in 1926, was an indispensable source of information. His history may be found at the Newberry Library, the Chicago Historical Society, and Widener Library at Harvard University, as well as other libraries throughout the country. (Gookin was a member of the Club for nearly sixty years, from 1877 to 1936. In addition to writing his history, he presented seventeen papers and participated in four conversations.) Also helpful was the third volume of Bessie Louise Pierce's extraordinary work, *A History of Chicago: The Rise of*

a Modern City, 1871-1893 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957).