

CHAPTER V

CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN CAMDEN—CHURCHES, LODGES, CLUBS, 1817-1955

The pioneers who settled around Camden, as well in other parts of Ohio, were men of nerve, of intellect, and determination. It was necessary to have such traits of character or they could not have broken up their old associations of life, and dared the dangers and hardships of a new settlement in an unknown territory. Neither were they ignorant nor uncultured because they had been brought up in a land of schools, churches, and even a few colleges and academies. These men, too, had received a certain amount of culture in all the elements of civilization.¹ It was these characteristics that prompted the pioneers in Camden to build churches and to organize lodges and clubs to further the culture of themselves and their children.

One of the earliest and most important influences in the lives of the Camden settlers was the church. It provided a stabilizing influence for the rough and turbulent times. It furnished these settlers with moral, spiritual, and intellectual stimulus and inspired them with confidence to face the unknown.² Many early pioneers in Ohio had journeyed westward primarily to improve their economic position, and in doing so had cast aside religious ties. In the regions where they felt no restraint many became rough and some became very wicked.³

1 Henry B. Curtis, "Pioneer Days in Central Ohio", Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, Vol. I (Columbus: Fred J. Heer) p. 249.

2 Arthur Hamilton, "The Importance of Religion in the History of Ohio", Churches in the Buckeye Country, Ohio Sesqui-Centennial, 1803-1953, (The Religious Participation Committee of the Ohio Sesquicentennial Commission, 1953), p. 3.

3 Rev. I. F. King, D.D., "Introduction of Methodism in Ohio", Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, Vol. X (Columbus: Fred J. Heer, 1902) p. 172.

But a great spiritual awakening caused this religious situation to change by the time Ohio became a state because by that time the Great Revival which started in Northern Kentucky was spreading through southern Ohio.⁴

This astounding and powerful revival has been traced to the labors of two McGee brothers in 1800 in Cumberland County, Kentucky. One was a Presbyterian preacher and the other a Methodist. Every Sunday they labored together: preaching, praying, and exhorting alternately. Their views in theology were supposed to be entirely antagonistic so they aroused the curiosity of multitudes who came to their meetings. Crowds flocked from all parts of the country to hear them. Nothing was discovered in the McGee's preaching of a "doctrinal character except the doctrine of man's total depravity and ruin by sin, and his recovery therefrom by repentance and faith in Christ. All were exhorted to flee the wrath to come and be saved from their sins."⁵ The group who came to hear the preaching became so vast that no church could hold them, so they resorted to field and woods. People came in carriages, wagons, carts, sleds, horseback, and many came on foot. As the crowds came, the excitement increased, and the work of conversion continued. Several brought tents, pitched them on the ground, and remained for several days. That was the beginning of the camp meetings.⁶

Between 1800-1801 Cane Ridge Camp Meetings in the upper part of Kentucky which attracted large crowds and converted many souls, took place. These meetings were scenes of great religious emotionalism. It was estimated that there

⁴ William T. Utter, The Frontier State, 1803-1825, Carl Wittke, (ed.) The History of the State of Ohio, Vol. 6 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1942), II, 323-324.

⁵ King, op. cit., p. 173.

⁶ Ibid.

were in attendance at times during the meetings from twelve to twenty-five thousand people.⁷ Ministers of all denominations flocked in from near and far, especially the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptist ministers united in the work.⁸ Several such meetings were held in other camps and thousands were converted. Young men, who later came to Ohio to preach, became convinced that it was their duty to break down the stronghold of sin in the West.⁹ The ministers of the various sects were in close agreement on the essentials of Christian living but because the Methodist theology was a little more liberal and their organization more efficient they soon became the dominant church on the frontier.¹⁰

Circuit riders first brought the gospel to the widely separated cabins, and Itinerant ministers were common in all sects, but Methodists were more systematic in their efforts. A young preacher would stop at a cabin and inquire if any Methodists were in the neighborhood. After he located a few, an evening service was arranged and an organization or "class" was formed. Before the circuit rider left the next morning he made arrangements for another preaching sermon when he came that way again. Within a few years a thriving church with its own pastor was developed in that community.¹¹

In a similar way on May 31, 1817 Cassien's first church, the Methodist Episcopal, was organized. On the same date James Moore, Sr., and his wife, Mary, gave in trust to William D. Moss, George Wilson, James Johnson, and Thompson Moore a lot near the old cemetery on the west hill on which to build

⁷ Charles A. Johnson, "Early Ohio Camp Meetings, 1801-1816", The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1952), p. 33.

⁸ W. F. Strickland, Peter Cartwright, The Backwoods Preacher (Cincinnati: Cranston and Curtis, 1856), p. 353.

⁹ King, op. cit., p. 174.

¹⁰ John Herrold Lancaster, "Methodist", Churches in the Buckeye Country, Ohio, p. 47.

¹¹ Lancaster, op. cit., p. 47.

a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.¹² The Camden Methodists, no doubt, met in various members' homes until 1825, but in that year a church was built on the land donated by the Moores. The congregation in 1836 purchased land on the southeast corner of Lafayette and Mendrix Streets and erected a new church. This building was used until 1849 when a new one was begun. Two years later the new church was completed at a cost of twelve hundred dollars. That structure was used until the erection of the present brick building, 1868. It was during the ministry of J. W. Shorten that this church was built after the gallery of the old one collapsed. The dedicatory services were held May 26, 1869 with Bishop Joyce of Chattanooga officiating.¹³ Not until after Rev. J. T. Bail had completed three years of service in Camden in 1895 was the church cleared of all of the debt which its trustees had assumed after building the \$1500 brick structure.¹⁴

Many of the early ministers after hearing a stirring sermon at a camp meeting were converted, and having found pardon for their sins felt strongly that God had called them to preach repentance to sinners. While thus inspired they received a license to exercise their "gifts and graces" as local preachers. One example in particular was Jeremiah Ellsworth who was the minister in Camden for three years, beginning in 1864.¹⁵ George W. Kennedy was another example of one who heard the call from God and answered. He served in Camden in 1855 and 1856.¹⁶

¹² Preble County News, Golden Jubilee Edition, April 3, 1952. The article was written by Rev. James Michoff, Camden. Most of the material came from a former minister of Camden, Rev. Norman Sweet, Columbus, Ohio, who is interested in church history.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Hamilton, Ohio, 1895, p. 471.

¹⁵ Minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern Press, 1889), p. 113.

¹⁶ Minutes, 1890, op. cit., p. 109.

This lack of training for the ministry was not typical of all the early ministers, because several of them were educated in universities and had prepared themselves for their work. Camden had the privilege of being served by some of the better educated men. Rev. Eli Kirk who served Camden in 1860 and 1861 attended Ohio Wesleyan University at Delaware, Ohio from 1855-1857.¹⁷ Fletcher Hypes who ministered in Camden from 1867 through 1869 was graduated from Ohio Wesleyan in 1857 at which time he entered the ministry.¹⁸ Rev. M. C. Baker had a thirst for knowledge that could not be satisfied at the public schools, so he finished his education at Augusta College, Kentucky. Rev. Baker preached in Camden for three years, beginning in 1871.¹⁹ Camden was fortunate, too, in having Alfred Uriah Beall, born in Preble County in 1827, who was not a formally educated man, but he was a "judicious reader of the best literature." When he spoke his vocabulary was extensive, his selection of words discriminating, and his analytical power extraordinary. When he prepared papers for the conference or made contributions for the press, which he frequently did, he very clearly perceived and presented the points at issue. Rev. Beall was also very careful of his personal appearance. When he ascended the pulpit he was faultless in attire. Rev. Beall was a frail man but for over forty-three years he did the work of an itinerant minister, serving Camden in 1857 and 1858.²⁰

Within the last fifty years several remarkable and outstanding Methodist ministers and their families have come to Camden. Rev. Charles Gowdy who came in 1908 and stayed seven years and then moved on amidst remonstrances from the congregation, surely had a most extraordinary personality. He was well-liked

¹⁷ Minutes, 1871, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁸ Minutes, 1899, op. cit., p. 596.

¹⁹ Minutes, 1885, op. cit., p. 109.

²⁰ Minutes, 1894, op. cit., pp. 402-404.

and respected not only by church members but by those outside the church as well. When he delivered his farewell sermon four hundred people were at the service to hear his usual forceful sermon.²¹ Little Ben Duvall, a man of small stature but of no small intellect, was a very challenging influence in the community during his short stay from 1929-1931. Another brilliant man, Philip Alano, was a very outstanding speaker. He didn't become too popular because of his frankness in voicing his convictions especially his views, which were not favorable, concerning Catholicism. Rev. Forrest Brown who stayed in Camden six years, 1935-1941, was both scholarly and a fine psychologist. He probably had more friends and exerted a greater influence over the public than any other minister excepting the current one, Rev. James Wisheff. Rev. Jim may have a few faults but they are totally eclipsed by his host of good qualities which are evident when he's either in the pulpit or serving in the community.

Not only ministers but the laity in a church have their marked influence on a community. One Methodist family, the E. C. Eikenberry family, has stood out during the last fifty years as a symbol of Christian service in Camden. This particular family has been very generous with its time, talent, and money. Mr. E. C. Eikenberry was excelled by none as a Sunday School teacher. He taught a class consecutively, besides other church work, for more than fifty years and retired just a short time before his death occurred in 1952. His wife, Anna, taught in the primary department without interruption for thirty-seven years when she had to retire because of ill health. Their foster-daughter, Enola Appelby, who was quite musical, employed her talent in the church by singing in the choir and helping with the church music for more than forty years. She only gave up her church work in Camden when she and Mrs. Eikenberry went to Florida to live after the death of Mr.

²¹ Preble County News, op. cit., September 10, 1914.

Eikenberry. A son, William Eikenberry, taught a young people's class for thirty-one years. He only gave up his class in 1954 because he and his family moved to Florida, too. The great influence that this family has had on the Camden community could never be measured.²²

The early Methodists were not organized many years until they had a rival church, the Presbyterian. If the churches were rivals for members they were united against such vices as card playing, dancing, drinking, and desecrating the Sabbath.²³ The early Presbyterian clergy were strict in theology but always ready to aid the settlers in any way they needed. The ministers who traveled over the young state unanimously agreed that the area was immoral.²⁴

Rev. P. H. Golladay of Oxford came to Camden (then Newcomb) on April 27, 1833 to gather the people of the Presbyterian faith together and start an organization. The next day thirty-three people met and organized a church. William McMechan and Christian Holderman were elected elders. By the following day six more people were accepted. This made thirty-nine members in the new church. Where these meetings were held for the next six years has not been determined for it was not until 1839 that the first deed for a lot to the church was recorded. From 1833-1836 the church organization had three ministerial supplies, Rev. P. H. Golladay, Rev. Mr. Little, and Dr. R. S. Scott. Dr. Scott was the first president of Oxford College for women. His daughter Caroline, became "first lady of the land", the wife of Benjamin Harrison.

22 This information came from Jessie Roberts, Camden, Ohio.

23 Rev. John Ferguson, "Some Memories of Camden," 1950.
Minutes, 1893, op. cit., p. 126.

24 Dr. James Haldane Brown, "Presbyterian," Churches in the Buckeye Country, Ohio Sesqui-centennial, 1803-1953, (The Religious Participating Committee of the Ohio Sesquicentennial Commission, 1953) pp. 56-57.

The ground for the first Presbyterian Church was purchased on South Main Street from James Moore for twenty-five dollars. On the lot south of what was known as the Neff & Fry Office in 1954, a rectangular frame building with a cupola was erected. It was surrounded with locust trees and in the rear of the church were stationed hitching racks. The building had a single entrance which opened into a shallow vestibule which was used for storing wood. In the main room were the high-backed pews which were divided by a center aisle. Those on the north were used by the men, while the women sat on the south. During services at night oil lamps placed around the sides of the building lighted the room. Music was furnished by the organist who faced the congregation and played on a low flat-topped organ. In 1837 a Sabbath School was organized, in spite of the fact that many people frowned upon such an organization.²⁵

After the railroad came through Camden the Presbyterians objected to the location of their church because it was too near the noisy trains.²⁶ There was some difficulty in deciding but finally in 1878 the members agreed to buy their present lot on North Main Street. It seemed out of town because at that time there were only three houses north of the church. A new frame building costing five thousand dollars was erected. Since 1878 the church has had only a few changes on the exterior, and the interior remains quite similar except for changes in the heating, lighting, and decorating.²⁷

One personality whose name was long connected with the Presbyterian Church was "Auntie" Reed, who was caretaker of the old church for many years. She also baked the communion bread which at that time was made according to

²⁵ Mrs. Frank B. White, "Historical Review of the Camden Presbyterian Church for 100 Years, 1833-1933". (Camden, Ohio).

²⁶ The railroad was built through Camden in 1851.

²⁷ Mrs. Frank B. White, op. cit.,

the Scripture of unleavened dough. The bread was slightly sweet and very tasty. Auntie Reed's small niece, Ola McChristy, always looked forward to communion Sunday because there was usually bread left. Sallie Bohn Ferguson, the wife of Dr. Ferguson, was another well remembered lady. Sallie had attended the female college at Glendale, Ohio, and there cultivated her gift of music. For several years she had charge of the choir and also was organist.²⁸ She really gave her life for others because her death occurred from the exposure she received from Christmas rehearsals with children at a time when she was suffering from a severe cold.²⁹

John Ferguson, the son of Dr. James and Sallie Bohn Ferguson, is a living tribute to the careful guidance of his parents and the guiding hand of the Presbyterian Church. After leaving the Camden School John Ferguson attended Miami and was graduated valedictorian of his class. The same evening Dean Hepburn conferred upon him both the degree of B. A. and M. A. He had done post-graduate work during his senior year. After further training Dr. Ferguson entered the ministry after being graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary. Most of his ministering has been done in Indiana except the years he spent in the Philippines. He received his call to Manila in 1922 to become pastor of the American Union Church in Manila while Dr. Benton, former President of Miami University, was president of the University of the Philippines. Because of illness Dr. Ferguson stayed only two years but in 1946 returned and served two more years. He is now retired as minister-emeritus of the Irvington Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis.³⁰

The doctrine of universal salvation from sin was preached in Ohio in the 1820's as an organized movement. The first Universalist Church in Ohio

28 Ibid.

29 John Ferguson, In Memory of James S. Ferguson, p. 14.

30 Preble County News, op. cit., June 10, 1903; January 2, 1922.

was in 1823 at Belpre. Permission to become a member of this church was given to anyone who manifested a wish to live a quiet and peaceful life; as much as possible to live peaceably with all men; and to pay particular attention to their moral character.³¹ Rev. T. S. Guthrie, a Universalist minister in Eaton in 1863, created interest in that faith in Camden and was responsible for starting the Camden church. He commenced preaching occasional sermons in the Bank Springs Church which was two miles north of Camden. Many citizens of the town attended the services; some out of curiosity because they had never heard a Universalist preacher. So much interest was created that in April, 1868, Payne's Hall in Camden was secured and Rev. Guthrie was engaged to preach regularly. James A. Mitchell organized a fine choir with Mrs. Mary D. White-side as organist. In October of the same year a meeting was held in the house of Mrs. Olivia Carroll for the purpose of organizing a church. At that time D. R. Pottenger, Olivia Carroll, Maria Yost, Martha Barnett, James Barnett, Ira K. Place, Ellen Pottenger, Olivia Pottenger, and Susan Pottenger organized a church under the name of "The First Universalist Church of Camden, Ohio". After the permanent organization was effected, there were enough people who joined that it was deemed advisable to buy a lot and erect a church. A lot was procured on the northeast corner of Lafayette and Central Avenue. Members and friends responded liberally to the building fund which made it possible to commence the brick church in the spring of 1869. It was completed about the first of December of the same year. Rev. Guthrie supplied the pulpit regularly until October 9, 1870. J. W. Tucker, D. D., of Camden, a very able and scholarly preacher, was their minister from April, 1877 to April, 1878.

³¹ Rev. Harriet Ormley, "Universalist," Churches in the Buckeye Country, Ohio Sesqui-centennial, 1803-1953, p. 62.

This denomination was active until 1910 when the church doors closed because the membership had dwindled to such a few members.³²

After the Universalist Church closed, the building remained the property of the Mission Board of the Universalist Church at Columbus. But in the spring of 1918 the building was bought for \$800 by Rev. Sylvester Lowman. At that time Rev. Lowman was pastor of a Brethren Church in Dayton. Before the church was sold the Methodists had been using it for a gymnasium so all excess properties had been removed but these later were all returned.³³

When Mr. Lowman bought the church building there were only two Brethren members in Camden, Jake and Wona Shank. By May, 1918, the Camden Brethren Church has been organized and the church ready for dedication. On the same Sunday a young lawyer from Dayton, Ora Bowman, came over and helped to start a Sunday School. As soon as the church was organized the deed of the church was turned over to a Board of Trustees. In seven months' time the membership had risen to eighty-five members. After the church seemed to be well established Rev. Lowman gave up the charge and turned it over to a young man from Virginia who was living in Dayton and attending the U. B. Seminary. The church continued to grow for a few years, but then came a decline which was caused by some unfortunate experience with their ministers. One minister had very strong Ku Klux Klan inclinations and affiliations which drove some of the members away. Another minister was so unethical as to leave his wife and run away with a practical nurse to Texas. This likewise caused the membership to fall off so much that in 1931 the church was closed.³⁴

Rev. and Mrs. Lowman came back to Camden in 1933 to take over the church and make their home in the town. Immediately plans were made to build

³² History of Preble County, Ohio, (Cleveland, Ohio: H. Z. Williams and Bro., 1881), p. 306.

³³ "Rev. Lowman's Day Book, 1937-1950" (Rev. Lowman, Camden, Ohio).

³⁴ Ibid.

additional Sunday School space on the east side of the church. Rev. Lowman, who was a carpenter as well as a preacher, bought two old barns, tore them down and all the usable lumber was put into the new addition. There were always more men available to work than were needed even though they were paid but a dollar a day and they boarded themselves.

Again in 1948 the Brethren people felt the need of expansion so four more Sunday School rooms were added to the south side of the church at a cost of \$4500.00 besides the donated labor. Rev. Lowman retired in 1949 from the Camden Brethren Church. At no time during his ministry did he receive a stipulated salary. When he came it was all faith work. He agreed that he would receive each Sunday's collection and the same arrangement prevailed during his entire period of service. Never were the collections large, but in 1935 they would be as low as two dollars and sixty-nine cents. Rev. Lowman had faith enough in his people to know if they didn't have much they would share what they had. In the vestibule of his church he built a "Faith Cupboard" where people could leave foods such as butter, eggs, canned goods, and vegetables. One family gave a dozen eggs regularly each week for at least eight years. The Faith Cupboard was a great help to add support to the meager cash income. The Brethren Church has had a great influence over the lives of many people. While Rev. Lowman was pastor in Camden he took more than two-hundred and fifty people into the Church.³⁵

Another church which has touched the lives of many people around Camden in a few years is the Catholic. After there appeared a need for a church to serve a growing Catholic population plans for St. Mary's was started. A tract of five lots was purchased at the north edge of Camden on Route 127 in the fall of 1941. Construction of St. Mary's was started in the following spring by

³⁵ "Rev. Lowman's Day Book, 1937-1950," (Rev. Lowman, Camden, Ohio).

Brother Bertram Bailey of the Dominican Order who donated his time and labor. With the cooperation of the local Catholics and their friends the church was completed in approximately ninety days. The nucleus of their building fund was \$6000.00 which was given by an unidentified donor. On July 17, 1942 His Grace the Most Rev. John T. McNicholas, Archbishop of Cincinnati, dedicated the new structure. The church was white frame of colonial design with a seating capacity of about two hundred. For several months there were no pews in the church and chairs were graciously loaned by the Board of Education and Mr. R. C. Hein, the undertaker. A special drive was conducted to solicit funds for the purchase of pews. One generous benefactor contributed \$500.00 and five members each gave \$100.00 apiece. With smaller donations from other members the pews were purchased for approximately \$1200.00 and installed in November, 1942.³⁶

Their motto "For God and Country", and their watchword, "Ever Forward, Ever Upward" have been ably carried on by Father John Reichart, Father James Lunn, Father William Scanlon, Father Charles Moore, and Father Richard Redman.³⁷

Camden's youngest church, the Baptist, came to Camden as a Mission in 1950 under the direction of the new Zion Baptist Church of Hamilton, Ohio. It became organized in 1951 as the Camden Baptist Church with thirty-four members. This group first held its services in the Dover Theatre on South Main Street, and then moved to the large garage just east of the Grade School Building. The Baptist congregation used this as their meeting place until their new church was constructed on North Liberty Street. They moved into their new building in 1952 but not until 1953 were their dedication services held. The church has become an active organization in the community in 1955 under the direction of Rev. Howard Meadors with eighty members on its roll.³⁸

³⁶ Horrigan, Peters, Woodard, First Anniversary of St. Mary Mission Chapel (Camden, Ohio, 1944).

³⁷ Horrigan, and Peters, Second Anniversary of St. Mary Mission Chapel, (Camden, Ohio, 1944).

³⁸ This information was furnished by Mrs. Harold Meadors, Camden, Ohio, June 2, 1955.

Churches have always had a great moral as well as spiritual effect upon the people of a community. The early churches were staunch opponents of saloons and liquor. The Annual Conference of the Methodist Church urged their ministers to promote the cause of temperance in any way they could and they should be "unawed by the frowns of the enemies and unseduced by the smiles of their friends."³⁹ Presbyterians were equally as opposed to saloons. Church leaders and members openly opposed drinking and they organized union temperance societies. The advocates of temperance were working in Camden as early as 1854,⁴⁰ but in 1874 the ladies of Camden formed themselves into "Home Guards of the Ladies' Temperance Praying Society". It was their intention to raise funds to send a female delegate to Washington, D. C. to pray and plead with the President of the U. S., his cabinet, Senate, and House of Representatives to put a stop to the manufacture and importation of any alcoholic spirits.⁴¹

While the money was being raised the ladies were preaching, praying, and picketing. They even took their chairs and sat out in front of the saloons and sometimes sang songs and preached as they sat watching the customers enter. In cold weather they heated bricks to keep their feet warm. As men entered the saloon, the women called out their names and made remarks about their going into such places. If a man tried to hide his identity by keeping his head turned or lowered, or by pulling his cap over his face, the ladies sized him up from all angles until they recognized him so they could broadcast his name.⁴² Before the required amount of money was raised to send the delegate to Washington the three saloon keepers in Camden "surrendered without firing a gun".⁴³ The saloon keepers, Ramsey, Fornshell, and Howard

⁴⁰ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., January 19, 1855.

⁴¹ Ibid., March 19, 1874.

⁴² This information came from an interview with a former Camden woman, Mrs. Elizabeth Eckert, Hamilton, Ohio.

⁴³ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., March 19, 1874.

signed a pledge which was read at a meeting of the citizens at the M. E. Church. The pledge was to include the druggists, but Mr. J. H. Bohn & Son would not sign it, but drew up and signed one of their own. The liquor men, especially Mr. Ramsey, alleged the second pledge virtually allowed them to sell as heretofore. After a week's suspension of business Mr. Ramsey opened up again. The women were much displeased and continued to picket the Ramsey House, Mr. Ramsey's saloon, and said they'd accomplish the end sought if it took ten years. A few mornings after Mr. Ramsey had reopened, Mrs. Craig and Mrs. Yost, two prominent members of the league entered the Ramsey House. As they entered Mr. Ramsey requested the men who were present to leave as he was going to close and go to the country. The men left but when he asked the female visitors the same thing they just sat quietly by the store. He found the ladies meant to stay so he locked the door and went to the country where he stayed nine hours, until seven P.M. When he returned he let his captives free. This experience did not stop the efforts of the League.⁴⁴

A few days later, at early dawn, when the pickets came on duty at the Ramsey House they found before them a coffin labeled in large letters "Ramsey Prayed to Death". None were more astounded than Mr. Ramsey when he arrived to find the same spectacle, and he remarked, "However much I may differ from the Crusaders, I do not approve of that style of joke being perpetrated on anyone." A few days after the coffin episode, between eight and nine in the evening, a half dozen eggs were thrown several feet above the heads of the pickets who were on duty, and one egg went through the glass transom over the office door. Occupants of the saloon said it was a set up job by the League to create a sensation in their favor, but the Leaguers affirmed it was whiskey

⁴⁴ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., March 19, 1874.

that did it. As an admonition to those in the League who daily assembled in front of the Ramsey House to hold meetings, Mr. Ramsey painted in large letters on the door of his saloon, Mathew 6:5,6,7,8. Ramsey insisted he would continue to sell liquor as long as Mr. Bohn refused to sign the original pledge.⁴⁵

The League soon won a moral victory because within a few days the Camden Council passed the McConnell Ordinance.⁴⁶ This news was especially joyous to the League. Amidst the thundering tones of cannon and the ringing of bells, Mr. Ramsey surrendered in the presence of a large group of citizens by emptying one keg of "nervine" and one keg of "bitters" in the gutter. In return the League presented Mr. Ramsey with a nameless amount.⁴⁷

The liquor problem was not solved for long in Camden because in a short time Mr. P. Fornshell opened a beer garden just outside the corporation.⁴⁸ This did much to further the cause of drunkenness. The liquor problem increased and became very disturbing. Ministers spoke from their pulpits, using such texts as "Nor drunkards shall inherit the Kingdom of God".⁴⁹

The Murphy Movement⁵⁰ was introduced in 1877 into this community. A Union Temperance Society was organized in the Camden M. E. Church with Rev. J. S. Pumphrey as President and Dr. R. Homsher and Mrs. Anna Whittaker as Vice

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ This was an ordinance "to restrain and prohibit ale, beer, and porter houses and shops and places of habitual resort for tippling and intemperance." "Recorder's Book", Camden, Ohio, p. 60-62.

⁴⁷ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., April 23, 1874.

⁴⁸ Ibid., July 16, 1874.

⁴⁹ Camden Herald, op. cit., June 2, 1877.

⁵⁰ The Murphy Movement started in Pennsylvania 1876 and flourished in Ohio in 1877. Francis Murphy attempted the reform by securing signatures to personal pledges to abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks. Signers wore blue ribbons. Before the movement subsided it was claimed by its originator that signatures secured numbered 10,000,000.

Presidents. They planned a campaign to get people to sign the Murphy pledge which read as follows:

With Malice toward none, and charity for all, I, the undersigned do pledge my word and honor, God helping me, to abstain from all intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and that I will, by all honorable means encourage others to abstain.⁵¹

All those who signed the pledge wore a blue ribbon to remind themselves and others of their sacred obligation to abstain from intoxicating liquor. In three months time four hundred names appeared on the list who had taken the pledge.⁵²

Camden was at one time visited by the great temperance worker, Carrie Nation, but it was during the time Camden was "dry". Camden citizens did not witness her wielding her notorious hatchet nor did they see an exhibition of her fanatical temperament. As Camden was saloonless she made her crusade against tobacco. She did not grab cigars or cigarettes from the mouths of local smokers, yet Mrs. Nation stopped long enough in her lecture in the opera house to get, as she termed them, "those rascals in the wings of the stage that blew cigarette smoke in her direction." Many Camdenites thought it was very peculiar for her to be so good natured when she was talking to those who were addicted to the enemies she fought. She laughed and talked with the men whom she was trying to reform and seemingly was in her element. Some local people concluded she lacked culture and even enjoyed being with those who frequented bars. Perhaps she was quite right in her psychology of thinking that "molasses catch more flies than vinegar." Regardless of her means of attack, all those who knew her spoke of her as a motherly old soul who was anxious to do what she could to save mankind from its errors.⁵³

⁵¹ Camden Herald, op. cit., June 2, 1877.

⁵² Ibid., June 16, 1877.

⁵³ Preble County News, op. cit., December 17, 1908.

Besides the moral and spiritual inspiration that the people received from the early church it likewise served as a center of social life. A majority of the social functions centered around some church activity. The occasion for getting together may have been the Christmas program at the church.⁵⁴ Or it may have been a Halloween Social where one could "buy a lunch for a dime, help out the aid and have a good time."⁵⁵ A surprise on the new minister, too, was an opportunity for a fine social gathering.⁵⁶ When the church sponsored some out-of-town talent such as the Miami University Orchestra and Prof. Chapman, the elocutionist, a large aggregation of people assembled.⁵⁷ If the weather was permissible sometimes a church group strolled out to Backbone, where they rambled up and down the hills, hollows, and valleys, gathering numerous fossils.⁵⁸ Many other such occasions found the church people meeting together and enjoying the group fellowship.

The revival or protracted meetings and the camp meetings were all looked forward to not only as a time for devotion but as holiday occasion. Such group associations helped to overcome the monotony of rural existence and offered relief from farm drudgery. It was a chance to meet new friends and renew old acquaintances.⁵⁹ Camp meetings were more the exception than the rule around Camden, but in 1850 one such meeting was recorded. The meeting passed off without much noise or confusion even though on Sunday there was an estimated crowd of 8,000 people on the grounds. The meeting didn't result in much good if the value were judged by the number of people added to the church membership. A "boarding tent" furnished the food for the large gathering but the

⁵⁴ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., December 31, 1874; March 2, 1876.
⁵⁵ Preble County News, op. cit., October 29, 1903.
⁵⁶ Eaton Weekly Register, op. cit., January 8, 1874.
⁵⁷ Ibid., July 16, 1874.
⁵⁸ Ibid., July 16, 1874.
⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 41-42.

crowd had been underestimated and the food was quite deficient for such a large number. But what they lacked in quantity was made up in quality.⁶⁰

The church picnic, which was an all day affair, was one of the special events of the year and was looked forward to with much anticipation. Sometimes the group walked out to Backbone, and other times they went north of town to Pierce's Grove.⁶¹ This grove in August, 1877 was the scene of a Union Sunday School picnic. Not only the Camden church people were there but the Somerville churches also were invited to attend. Two hacks were kept busy most of the forenoon taking people to the picnic grounds who didn't have vehicles of their own. Speeches were made by two of the ministers and a prominent layman, Dr. R. Homsher. In the afternoon the combined hands of Camden and Somerville entertained the group. It was a very enjoyable day for all those who attended.⁶²

At a later time, May 29, 1911, again all the churches held a very successful Union Sunday School picnic at Pierce's Grove under the sponsorship of the Men's Bible Class. At ten o'clock every store closed and a large part of the populace went to the grove. Every conveyance possible was pressed into service to transport people to the scene of the festivities. At noon about three hundred people partook of the bountiful dinner. The Camden K. of P. Band furnished a number of concerts during the day. Another pleasing feature was free ice cream and lemonade for everyone. The town was completely depopulated in the afternoon when the attention of the picknickers was centered on various games. Ladies and gentlemen both participated in races which afforded much amusement. The ball game between the vets and the youngsters

⁶⁰ Eaton Democrat, op. cit., September 10, 1850.

⁶¹ Preble County News, op. cit., July 3, 1903.

⁶² Camden Herald, op. cit., August 18, 1877.

also drew attention. It proved to be a very interesting game and it took the last half of the ninth inning to decide the winner. Two outstanding features of the game were the way the boys showed up the older heads and the bum umpiring of Scott Fowler who insisted in favoring the vets in all close decisions.⁶³

The church does not hold such a prominent place in the community as a social center as it did at one time, but still in 1955 many social functions are sponsored by church groups. If one is a Methodist woman, she has the privilege of attending the monthly meeting of the W.S.C.S.,⁶⁴ the Jolly Mustlers, or the HL Class. The young people of the town are often invited to attend picnics, skating, and swimming parties sponsored by the Methodist Youth Fellowship. The Presbyterian likewise have their organized groups, namely, Kappa Chi, the Missionary Society, and the Men's Brotherhood. St. Anne's Altar, Children of Mary, and Holy Name Society are familiar organizations among the Catholics.

An interest in the civic improvement and proper development of young people has been clearly shown in the program of a local organization in Camden, the American Legion. Creative thinking and research are encouraged each year by offering to the high school student a medal for the best essay on some particular patriotic subject. Good citizenship and interest in government are developed by choosing a high school junior to attend Boys' State each year. Religious training at home and church is also stressed as a part of every Legionnaire's duty. The Legion's organization in Camden has been an asset in other ways, too. It was first organized after World War I with I. M. Pheanis as First Commander. In memory of the first Camden boy to be killed in World

⁶³ Proble County News, op. cit., July 6, 1911.

⁶⁴ W.S.C.S. is a Methodist world organization which means Women's Society of Christian Service.

War I the post was named Albert J. Justice Post, No. 377. This post served only a few years then became non-active. Again on August 5, 1936, fifteen men met together to organize a new post at the instigation of Trafford Boyd and George Pheanis. The name of Albert J. Justice Post was retained until October 4, 1945 when it was changed to Justice-Leibolt Post in memory also of Edward Leibolt who was the first Camden boy to be killed in World War II.

The Legion is both happy and proud now to own a hall of their own on South Main Street. In October, 1940 they bought an old shop from Mary Lamm for five hundred dollars plus the December taxes and the attorney fees for drawing up the deed. The building was considerably improved during the next year and was made into a very comfortable meeting place for both the Legion and the Auxiliary.⁶⁵

The American Legion Auxiliary is certainly worthy to be mentioned in regard to their help in Camden and its vicinity. Camden's Auxiliary was first formed when thirteen ladies met together in 1938 and organized on February 5 with Gladys Rodeffer as president.⁶⁶ Their post was called Albert J. Justice, Unit 377 but in 1945 the name was changed just the same as the Legion's name was. After they were organized their greatest problem was to find a meeting place, but this trouble was solved after the Legion owned a hall. The Auxiliary has always been active in doing worthwhile things. The sale of poppies, made by disabled soldiers, has been an annual affair, and the money is then turned back to the soldiers. Veterans at the Dayton Military Home and at Patrick Military Hospital, Dayton, are helped by the Camden Auxiliary. A rather grim but satisfying experience is the joy that is shared when the ladies take gifts

⁶⁵ "Albert J. Justice Post 377 Record Book, 1936-43", (Legion Hall, Camden, Ohio).

⁶⁶ The thirteen charter members were: Ruth Myers, Hazel Silvers, Gladys Rodeffer, Emma Dingledine, Gertrude Pheanis, Katie Bowers, Mrs. Medke, Mildred Porter, Susan Roan, Jessie Brock, Doshua Chaney, Mrs. Shred, Gladys Phares, Lola Cupp, Dorothy Glander.

to the tuberculosis ward at the hospital. These are for the men to send home to their families at Christmas time or other special occasions. The Auxiliary has placed special emphasis on trying to relieve suffering and trying to raise the morale of a handicapped group, but if a school child needs a winter coat or other needs arise in the community they are ready to help however they can.⁶⁷

Another group, Delta Gamma Chapter of Delta Theta Tau, has been ready to help the schools and community whenever it has been possible to do so. Many school children during the last twenty-five years have been made happier and more comfortable through the efforts of this organization. This very active philanthropic chapter is part of the largest non-collegiate sorority in the United States. Camden's chapter was organized in 1929 by a sister chapter from Lewisburg, Ohio under the direction of Irene McIntyre. One member, Shirley Duskey, has been continuously active for twenty-four and a half years. Through the years this organization has been ready to lend a hand where and when it was needed regardless whether the need was in Hazard, Kentucky, for the support of their school; or in California for their brace shop; or in Marysville, Ohio, for the education of some unfortunate girl; or in the Camden locality to relieve the anguish and worries of troubled families.⁶⁸

Immeasurable joy, comfort, and inspiration have come to the people of Camden and the surrounding community from the Camden Public Library. This library is a monument to the Philomathean Club⁶⁹ because in 1896 the ladies of that literary society were instrumental in starting the library. Anna Whittaker Roussel, one of the charter members of the Philomathean Club, conceived the idea. A case of one-hundred books which had been a circulating

⁶⁷ "Secretary's Minute Book of American Legion Auxiliary, 1945-1947", (Velma Cooper, Camden, Ohio). Some information came from Gertrude Pheanis, Camden, Ohio.

⁶⁸ "Delta Gamma's Secretary Book, 1929-1954," (Genevieve White, Camden, Ohio).

⁶⁹ The Philomathean Club will be explained in the following pages.

library was built. Many people contributed books and for a few years Amy Danser, Lora Shuey, Ola McChristie, Samantha Homsher, and Naomi Randall canvassed the community yearly, selling tickets at a dollar each. This money was used to purchase new books for the growth of the project. Mr. Frank Shuey, for several years, gave the last ten of every hundred books bought.⁷⁰ By perseverance the members of the club kept the library in existence until it was taken over by the Board of Education in 1906 and since that time has been supported by taxes from the school district. The name was then changed from Philomathean Library to Camden Public Library.⁷¹

The library was first housed in the Building and Loan room under the care of Oliver Brown, the Building and Loan secretary, who donated his services as librarian.

The town council in 1906 made an appropriation for the library which made it possible to employ their first librarian, Lottie Ramsey, and move into the McChristie rooms on South Main Street. In 1913 the library was moved to a room on the second floor of the Masonic Temple and in 1928 to the first floor of the same building where it still is in 1955 with nearly nine thousand books.⁷² Mrs. Amy Danser, who helped to get the library started, is still actively interested in it. She is yet secretary of the library board, an office which she has held for forty-five years.

The Philomathean Club which started the library is Camden's oldest literary club and Preble County's oldest women's club. This has always stood for self improvement, better community life, and has been charitable insofar as their finances would permit. In January of 1895 Mrs. Mary Craig sent out

⁷⁰ Samantha Homsher, "History of Camden Philomathean Club" (1920) Anna White, Camden, Ohio.

⁷¹ Preble County News, op. cit., April 19, 1906.

⁷² Homsher, op. cit.

a call to her friends to meet at her house to talk over the idea of organizing a literary society. Enthusiasm was shown and a club was organized with forty-five members. Mrs. Craig was chosen for the first president and Miss Ella Ball, secretary. The word "Philomathean" meaning "Lovers of Learning" was chosen as the name.⁷³ "From everyone according to her ability; to everyone according to her need" was the motto adopted.⁷⁴

Meetings have usually been held in the homes of members except in the year 1899 when the ladies rented Collett's Hall.⁷⁵ For each meeting the committee had a planned program with a full evening of speaking, discussing, reciting, or debating, and sometimes some music. Usually once a year the regular routine is broken by having a guest speaker such as Dr. Hepburn or Dr. F. B. Joyner from Miami University to address the group.

The Philomatheans published a small literary paper, the Budget, for three different years; 1898, 1899, and 1900. Each year the paper made its appearance as part of the program at a regular meeting. Issues were sold and the proceeds went to the library fund although the ladies had no such mercenary idea when the Budget first appeared.⁷⁶

To the Philomatheans literary productions were a very important part of their lives, but to W. E. McChristie art was far more important. Mr. McChristie operated a business that made colored, life-like, beautiful enlargements from tintypes that had begun to fade. He started in a small business on North Second Street in the early eighteen-eighties, but his business grew so rapidly that in 1889 he erected the three-story brick building which still

⁷³ Camden Gazette, op. cit., January 17, 1895.

⁷⁴ Calendar, The Philomathean, 1895-1896 (Camden, Ohio).

⁷⁵ "Philomathean Minute Book, 1899-1904, p. 15.

⁷⁶ Housher, op. cit.

stands on the corner of Main and Hendrix. His business was known as the Nonpareil Portrait Copying House and his building was called The Nonpareil. Mr. McChristie gathered a staff of artists of real merit about him and had agents over a good part of the United States to take orders for enlargements from tintypes. The company did an extensive mail and express business. Their orders came from every state in the Union, and for several years it was recognized as one of the most widely advertised concerns in the United States. Improvement in photography banished the tintype, and enlarged pictures of ancestors strung about the house went out of style so Mr. McChristie was forced to leave Camden in 1911 and went in business on a smaller scale in Cincinnati. The loss of this business to Camden was quite distressing to the people because many were thrown out of work. Besides that several very desirable people who had come to town to work left after the business no longer existed. Occasionally in later years the family or parts of them returned. This was true of the McKinleys. Dr. McKinley lived here as a child with his parents. His father had come to work for Mr. McChristie, but left after the Nonpareil closed. But when Dr. McKinley started to practice medicine he returned to his childhood town and has practiced here ever since.⁷⁷

When modern school buildings with all their facilities and equipment are observed one often wonders how children of the pioneers accomplished so much in the way of education with their limited means of formal schooling. Habits of industry, energy, and perseverance were the secrets of their success. Early schools in Camden were very inadequate but in 1826 a group of young men had an urge to inform themselves to be able to contribute as much as possible for the benefit of society. They not only had a desire to become informed but they had a plan to help themselves. A number of people met at

⁷⁷ Freble County News, op. cit., December 7, 1910; August 17, 1933. "Roaming the Rural Routes", Dayton Daily News, February 29, 1936.

the home of a Mr. Douglas on October 4, 1826 to form a debating society. A committee was chosen to prepare a constitution by which the society might be governed. Lurton Dunham, Thomas Phares and Hugh Hart met at the Phares home and compiled the laws of the Polemic Society of Somers Township. In the preamble they stated the idea that "ignorance or neglect was the sole cause of individual or public misfortune" so they had resolved to have better understanding through discussion. The articles in the Constitution regulated their manner of addressing the president, objected to obscene language, gave rules for judges, laid the rules for behavior during debate, and definitely declared each member at the end of every two months should read an essay of his own composition.⁷⁸

Another common form of self improvement came through dramatics. It was also a way for the early settlers to escape the hum-drum life of every day living. The absence of extensive diversion made the long winter evenings tiresome and monotonous, thus encouraged many people to try their ability at acting. In Cincinnati, as early as 1801, a group of amateurs, "Thespian Corps", was portraying The Poor Soldier. By 1811 professional players had arrived in Cincinnati where they were welcomed with open arms by the local amateurs. The patronage at Cincinnati was so encouraging that thereafter each year Cincinnati "had a theatrical season".⁷⁹ Camden was close enough to Cincinnati to hear what was going on in the city thus giving the people a desire to see performances on the stage. The village was on a direct route to Cincinnati so often the traveling companies stopped overnight for a show in

⁷⁸ "Constitution of Polemic Society", (Nell Jones, Camden, Ohio).

⁷⁹ William T. Utter, The Frontier State, 1803-1825, Carl Witke, (ed.) The History of the State of Ohio, Vol. 6 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1944) I, 415-417.

Canden. No doubt some were among the best players, whole others were quite mediocre. Hidden Hand was presented in Candion before a large audience that "appreciated the excellent rendition of the thrilling drama."⁸⁰

Another popular production which appeared in many towns was Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin. It came to the village on July 19, 1897 under the management of E. F. Davis. The same company had been at the Grand in Cincinnati for the week of May tenth. Before the play was given in Candion there was a free street display of the cast of fifty people, three palace cars, twenty ponies, donkeys and burrows, eight original plantation jubilee singers, a pack of Siberian blood hounds, Little Eva's Golden Chariot which cost \$3,000, and Uncle Tom and his typical southern ox cart. The show was given for an admission fee of twenty-five cents, in a large tent that had a seating capacity of twelve hundred. At the performance the tent was filled and many people were compelled to stand. The company was a very good one and gave entire satisfaction to the audience.⁸¹

Not always was the traveling company that came to Candion satisfactory. Sometimes it proved to be mediocre or worse. Ellsworth the Great Magician who was accompanied by Jack Minton the Cleverest of Comedians turned out to be a rank affair. The "great magician" made a few passes with the magic wand and the alleged comedian got off some old jokes while the audience groaned in despair. Finally the show got so bad that the audience started to sing "Good Old Summer Time." The concluding notes of the dirge saw the auditorium cleared.⁸²

The Candion people not only had the opportunity to enjoy the plays presented by the traveling troupes but they had their own dramatic societies.

⁸⁰ Canden Herald, op. cit., November 24, 1877.

⁸¹ Canden Gazette, op. cit., July 22, 1897.

⁸² Preble County News, op. cit., February 26, 1903.

One group which was very active in 1877 was the Camden Dramatic Association. This group was composed of young adults,⁸³ who presented plays and miscellaneous programs. On one occasion they presented East Lynne, a beautiful and thrilling drama. They played to a capacity crowd which came not only from Camden, but people drove in from Laton, Somerville, and other neighboring towns. Those who were present gave great praise to all the performers, but one in particular, Mrs. W. B. Marsh, was given exceptional praise. It was reported that she portrayed the sad character of Lady Isabel and Madam Vine as well as many professionals.⁸⁴

Another very cultural movement, Chautauquas, the fore-runner of the Artists' Series, first came to Camden in 1914 through the promotion of the business men of town.⁸⁵ During the eleven years of Chautauquas in Camden each year called for a separate contract to guarantee the Chautauqua people the number of tickets, usually five-hundred. The artists appeared each afternoon and each night under a huge tent for five, six, or seven days, depending upon the contract. The program was quite varied. There were fine lecturers, bands, quartettes, soloists, stock companies, and various other entertainers. Only one entertainer stayed all week, and that was the Story Hour girl who met with the children each morning.⁸⁶ Chautauquas always brought some of the finest talent in the country to Camden. It was quite a loss to the town when people failed to support it.

Lodges, with their high ideals for their members, in serving both man and God have been an immeasurable influence in the community from the very time

⁸³ The society was composed of Ed Woodside, T. W. Whitesides, J. A. Whitesides, Ed Watt, Charles Jones, O. F. Brown, Mrs. Lee Marsh, Addie Thomas, Mary Craig, Lizzie Folkerth, Laura Tucker and Eva Patty. Camden Herald, op. cit., August 4, 1877.

⁸⁴ Camden Herald, op. cit., August 18, 1877.

⁸⁵ Preble County News, op. cit., August 27, 1914; September 10, 1914.

⁸⁶ Ibid., August 31, 1916; July 29, 1915.

of their installation. Four fraternal organizations have started and continued in Camden without interruption. The oldest of these is Camden Lodge, No. 159. Michael Y. Kreider, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ohio, on May 18, 1848 established the Camden Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons with fourteen charter members. Jonathan Crowley was appointed First Worshipful Master, Andrew Weist the first Senior Warden, and Andrew Coffman the first Junior Warden.⁸⁷

Article twenty-three of the By-Laws showed plainly in the following words the feeling of the members concerning alcoholic drinks: "No spiritous liquor shall be admitted in the lodge room during the meeting of the lodge, nor shall any visitor enter the lodge room in a state of intoxication or conduct himself in a rude or disorderly manner. . ."⁸⁸

The Masons now have a Temple, but they moved several times before they had a permanent home. Their first meeting place was upstairs in the south part of the building known today as the McCord Flats, North Main Street. They rented the room for twenty-five dollars a year. It wasn't until 1911 that the work on their temple was actually started. The Temple was finally finished and on December 12, 1912, the dedication services were held. The building was modernized and remodeled in 1928 to make the lodge rooms more convenient and to make the first floor suitable to rent.⁸⁹

Among the gifts that the Lodge has received and appreciated was a gavel made from stone taken from the quarries of King Solomon and the handle of wood from the olive forest near Jerusalem. This gift was presented in 1945 by Charles Edmondson, a Major in the U. S. Army.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Camden Lodge No. 159, F. & A.M. - Centennial, 1848-1948 (Sept. 17, 1948, Camden, Ohio), p. 5. The charter members were Jonathan Crowley, Andrew Weist, Andrew Coffman, Charles C. Bruce, J. S. Showalter, Perry Mittell, J. H. Campbell, E. P. Austin, John Brower, Daniel B. Cory, Harrison Perhan, Isaac G. Eton, Samuel Clayton, and A. C. Deem. Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

This lodge has had a continual growth from fourteen charter members to a membership of fifty-four by the half century mark, of one-hundred-thirty-two at the centennial celebration and in 1951 there were one-hundred-forty-five.⁹¹

Soon after the Masons were instituted in Camden the Covenant Lodge No. 54, Somerville, Ohio, instituted in Camden on June 8, 1848 Western Star Lodge 109, I.O.O.F. Six years later on June 19 Western Star Lodge dedicated their magnificent lodge room which has remained their meeting place ever since.⁹² Camden was full of people from Eaton, Hamilton, and Middletown. At one-thirty the parade formed in front of the Odd Fellow's Building, headed by the Hamilton Drum Corps; Canton Sanders, Canton; Nonpareil and Subordinate Lodges from Eaton; and a good representation from the Middletown Lodge. The Daughters of Rebekah from Eaton and Middletown rode in the parade in wagons, carriages, and buggies. Acton's Cornet Band made an imposing scene in their new uniforms. Grand Master John Broderick and Department Commander J. C. Whittaker occupied a carriage. Their escorts on mounted steeds looked like Warriors Bold. After the parade from four-thirty until six-thirty the banquet room was open. A very fine supper was served by the Daughters of Rebekah, Camden Lodge.⁹³ Western Star Lodge observed the 77th Anniversary of Odd Fellowship in 1896 by attending divine service at the Presbyterian Church in a body.⁹⁴

Rules and regulations in the early days of the I.O.O.F. lodge were strictly enforced. A member was expelled for ninety-nine years for an infraction of the rules of the order. This sentence was later cut to eighteen months. If a member were absent from a regular meeting he had to give an

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹² The Odd Fellow Building was erected by Benjamin Myers in 1851.

⁹³ Camden Gazette, op. cit., June 21, 1894.

⁹⁴ Ibid., April 16, 1896.

excuse which was accepted or rejected by a motion before the Lodge. The secretary of the lodge held an enviable place because he received twelve and a half cents each meeting for his service.

From year to year the membership has changed and a few rules have changed but the principles of Friendship, Love, and Truth are adhered to now as much as in the early days of the order. These high ideals and lofty motives have helped to make Camden a better place to live.⁹⁵

Whenever an Odd Fellow Lodge appeared in a town it was usually followed by a Rebecca Lodge. This was true in Camden but the Rebeccas were much later than the Odd Fellows. Somers Rebecca Lodge was instituted July 27, 1880 with forty-eight members.⁹⁶ When the chapter first came to Camden if the wife, mother, sister, or daughter of an Odd Fellow wished to join the Rebeccas some Fifth Degree Odd Fellow in good standing presented their petition which was acted upon by those present. The Rebeccas did not vote on their prospective members. This has since been changed and now the Rebeccas do their own voting.⁹⁷ Somers Lodge has had a Team since 1949 when Isabelle Benson was Noble Grand. This has created much interest and enthusiasm in the lodge work.⁹⁸

In a meeting on January 3, 1921 the Masons who were present requested that their brethren and their families meet together with a view of organizing a chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star.⁹⁹ This wish was complied with and a group met under dispensation until the Oxford Chapter instituted the Camden Chapter on October 26, 1921 with thirty-one charter members. Mrs. Naomi Randall

⁹⁵ "History of Western Lodge No. 109, of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, 1848-1948", (George Pheanis, Camden, Ohio).

⁹⁶ "Rebecca Lodge Record Book, 1880-1905", (Vera Bousman, Camden, Ohio).

⁹⁷ "History of Western Lodge", op. cit.

⁹⁸ This information came from Isabelle Benson, Camden, Ohio.

⁹⁹ "Camden Lodge No. 159", op. cit., p. 9.

was the first Worthy Matron and Howard Pattison was the first Worthy Patron.¹⁰⁰ At different times the Worthy Grand Matron of the Grand Chapter of Ohio visited the Camden Chapter but on May 20, 1948, Camden had a very unusual but delightful experience when Worthy Grand Matron Zela Watkins and Worthy Grand Patron Gene Bocher both attended an inspection of the Camden chapter.¹⁰¹ A project with this particular chapter that has been constant and continuous has been to sell brooms made by the blind at Columbus. The large enrollment, one-hundred-thirty-two members in 1954, has helped to make this project very successful.¹⁰²

The same year that the Eastern Star was organized in Camden the Daughters of America were installed.¹⁰³ The D. of A. Society was started in Washington, D. C. on October 11, 1890. They were organized to teach patriotism by protecting historical places, by observing historical anniversaries, and by preserving historical documents and relics.¹⁰⁴ A team from the Pride of Richmond Council on June 25, 1921 instituted Somers Council, Number 213. Twenty people were received as charter members with Mary Austin Shields as first counselor. One of the high lights of this organization was in 1927 when the District Rally was held. Nearly three hundred attended the rally in the Town Hall which was very beautifully decorated. Elizabeth Gray, counselor for 1954, and the rest of the organization can always be counted on to help the village in any public project.¹⁰⁵

Four other fraternal orders, the Knights of Pythias Lodge, The Pythian Sisters, Order of Redmen, and Junior Order of United American Mechanics, have been at one time active in Camden but now in 1955 are non-existent. Very little

100 "Record Book of Eastern Star, 1921-1937," (Carrie Phares, Camden).

101 "Note Book of Worthy Matron", (Ruby Heavenridge).

102 This information came from Carrie Phares, the Secretary of Eastern Star.

103 "Record Book of Daughters of America," Camden, Ohio.

104 Ryan, Historical Facts on Preble County, p. 99.

105 "Daughters of America," op. cit.

definite information has been retained but a few facts have been obtained concerning these organizations. The K. of P. Lodge was chartered in 1887 with more than thirty members. It was in 1899, through the Lodge's sponsorship, that Arthur T. Wyndham, the famous English character actor, was brought to Camden.¹⁰⁶ The K. of P. Lodge was an active organization in Camden until November, 1927.¹⁰⁷ The Watsman Tribe Improved Order of Redmen celebrated their tenth anniversary in September, 1911 by having Corn and Venison (a supper) at five-thirty and a Street Trail (a parade) at seven o'clock. After the Street Trail, Past Great Sachem C. A. Robinson of New Castle spoke.¹⁰⁸ This lodge was discontinued a few years later. Preble 202 Junior Order of United American Mechanics was instituted with twenty-nine members of May 9, 1908, in Odd Fellow's Hall.¹⁰⁹ This lodge was active in Camden for approximately twenty-eight years. The Pythian Sisters was another one time active organization in Camden which on June 21, 1913 was disbanded.¹¹⁰

Have the cultural influences really been felt in Camden? The only criteria by which one can judge is by the accomplishments of people who live in or have lived in the town. Certainly there has been something that has prompted a desire in so many people in such a small community to do more and be more than the average person. From Camden and its vicinity have come at least twenty-two¹¹¹ doctors, among whom are Dr. Charles McKinley of Camden, the Drs. Wallace and Merrill Prugh of Dayton, and Dr. Vera Iber of Hamilton.

¹⁰⁶ Camden Gazette, *op. cit.*, January 26, 1899.

¹⁰⁷ This information came from Scot Helton, N. Main St., Camden, Ohio. Mr. Helton belonged to the K. of P. Lodge in Camden until 1927, but now is a member in Eaton, Ohio.

¹⁰⁸ Preble County News, *op. cit.*, September 14, 1911.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, May 14, 1908.

¹¹⁰ This information came from Jessie Roberts, Camden, Ohio, June 3, 1955. Mrs. Roberts was Secretary of the Pythian Sisters when they disbanded.

¹¹¹ The following names are of medical doctors who have been reared in Camden or the vicinity: James Coombs, Vera Iber, DeWitt Chadwick, Charles Jones, Leo Reisenback, G. W. Homsher, Robert Hauver, Elmer Brubaker, Charles McKinley, T. D. Dillman, Lurton Dunham, Azel Pierce, H. L. Ramsey and Jessie Brown. Clinton Jackson and Hazel Bennett, veterinarians; and Eugene Jefferies, a dentist, are all former Camdenites.

1. "Joe Douglas was Judge of the City Police Court several years ago. He was also, a U.S. Commissioner for a number of years. His office as U.S. Commissioner was in connection ^{now} with the U.S. Court of Southern West Virginia" From letter Aug. 21, 1956 to Mrs. Frank White from County Clerk, Huntington, W. Va.
2. Edna McChristie was a teacher of piano and not vocal. Information from Anna White, Aug. 15, 1956.
3. John Ferguson wrote several songs. One " O come with me over the far away hills/" Information from Mrs. Anna White, Aug. 15, 1956.

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The lodge was discontinued a few years later. Probable 202 Junior Order of United American Mechanics was instituted with twenty-nine members of May 2, 1908, in Odd Fellows Hall. This lodge was active in Camden for approximately twenty-eight years. The United Sisters was another one time active organization in Camden which on June 21, 1915 was disbanded. The only have the cultural influences really been felt in Camden? The only criteria by which one can judge is by the accomplishments of people who live in or have lived in the town. Certainly there has been something that has prompted a desire in so many people in such a small community to do more and be more than the average person. From Camden and its vicinity have come at least twenty-two ¹¹⁵ doctors, among whom are Dr. Charles McKinley of Camden, the Drs. Wallace and Merrill Tracy of Dayton, and Dr. Vera Lee of Hamilton.

105. James O. Thompson, "The Negro Problem," 1899

THIS INFORMATION CAME FROM BOB HARRIS. M. HARRIS IS A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH.

Mr. Wilton belonged to the K. of P. Lodge in Camden until 1927, but now is a member in Boston, Ohio.

106 People County Court, 1011

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This information came from Jessie Roberts, Queen, Ohio, June 3, 1940

1955. Mrs. Roberts was secretary of the Hyman Sisters when they disbanded.

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in London or the vicinity: James Goodwin, York Road, Lewist Greenwich, Charles

James Lee McIsaac, 44, Manager, Hotel Duquesne, Charles

1. William J. Sullivan, James Sullivan, and James J. Sullivan

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(2)
In the field of music, Cyrena Pecoock from the class of 1910 has gained international fame. At different times she has been prominent in the Chicago Grand Opera, the San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera Company.¹¹² Dollie Malone, another singer, sang with the St. Louis Philharmonic Society.¹¹³ Glenn Cross, one time assistant professor at Miami, has sung with the Cincinnati Zoo Opera.¹¹⁴ Pauline Williams, a well remembered music teacher,¹¹⁵ Will Fowler, a song composer,¹¹⁶ and Dean Pottenger, an orchestra leader, were all lesser lights, but well known musicians during their time. The legal profession, too, profited by Camden's contribution. Percy Murray who was graduated from Camden in 1895,¹¹⁷ became Judge of the U. S. District Court of the Panama Canal Zone. The present Common Pleas Judge of Preble County, John Kiracofe, was a Camden graduate of 1921.¹¹⁸ No less than twelve¹¹⁹ other Camden men practiced law. Edna McChristie, Referee of the Court of Domestic Relations in Cincinnati, was a former Camden vocal teacher and song writer.¹²⁰ Miss McChristie is one of the outstanding people in her field. At least three Camden men have entered full time religious service: Lester Bonner, Charles Albert Flowers, and Dr. John Ferguson, who has been mentioned before. Writers of national fame such as Sherwood Anderson and Clayton Pryor who was an Associated Press Correspondent in Paris, France, at the time of his death, were Camden men.¹²¹ Ann Whittaker Roussel, a writer of poetry, in 1930 compiled and edited an anthology of peace poems, Cease Firing, which were published by

112 Preble County News, op. cit., May 15, 1913; November 14, 1915, September 21, 1916.

113 Ibid., April 30, 1903. 114 Ibid., July 12, 1945.

115 Ibid., July 6, 1905. 116 Ibid., May 5, 1904.

117 Camden Echo, 1949. 118 Ibid.

119 The following men have been in the legal profession: Russell Lamm, Ralph House, Felix Marsh, Donald Ferris, Byron Kuth, Joe Douglas, Isaac Craig, Frank Craig, Joseph Billman, Albert Haines, Hampton Hall, and John W. Shaeffer.

120 Preble County News, op. cit., April 13, 1914.

121 Ibid., March 4, 1915.

the John C. Winston Company.¹²² At least twelve nurses,¹²³ among whom was Vera Marshall, who became Superintendent of the State Hospital at Columbus, Ohio, came from this community. Another nurse, Willie Etta Tucker, daughter of Dr. Tucker, graduated from Murray's Training School for Scientific Nurses. She received a gold medal for her high attainment in the science of anatomy, physiology, materia medica, and the theory and practice, and for her proficiency in practical work.¹²⁴ Camden is proud to have had two appointments to Annapolis. Corwin P. Rees received his appointment after he returned from the Civil War in 1865, and graduated with honors.¹²⁵ William Patton received his appointment in 1912¹²⁶ and is now a Captain in the Marines. Nell Jones just retired and returned to Camden after having served as Assistant Chief of the Cataloguing Division of the Copy-right Office of the Library of Congress at Washington.¹²⁷ No less than three score people from this community have attended institutes of higher learning and prepared themselves to teach in one field or another. O. T. Corson probably gained widest recognition, but John Schwartz was superintendent of Butler County Schools and a very highly respected Bowling Green Normal School instructor.¹²⁸ Thomas Pierce was appointed superintendent of all schools in Hamilton County outside of Cincinnati.¹²⁹ Raynard Jones, a graduate of 1900, during his short life of thirty-eight years, became well known as a Professor of Sanitary Engineering in the University of Kansas, as Health Director of the State of Kansas, and as Associate Professor of Civil Engineering of John Hopkins University.¹³⁰ Cultural influences surely have been felt in Camden.

122 Anna White, "Anna Whittaker Roussel", (Anna White, Camden, Ohio).

123 The following are nurses: Vera Rodeffer, Doris Schwing, Parkins twins, Betty Porter, Helen Porter, Vera Marshall, Lorene Seibert, Annabelle Weist and Mrs. Scott Marshall.

124 Camden Gazette, op. cit., January 23, 1896.

125 Preble County News, op. cit., July 2, 1903.

126 This information came from Mrs. Harry Patton.

127 This was told by Nell Jones, Camden, Ohio.

128 The Tech, July 30, 1919.

129 Preble County News, op. cit., July 23, 1914.

130 Ibid., July 16, 1914.