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## From then till now; anecdotal portraits and transcript pages from memory's ...

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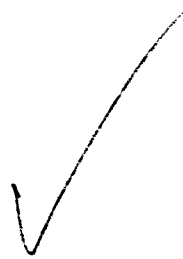
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not inherit his father's marvelous physical capacities and, overcome by a lingering illness, he recently committed suicide.

A military play entitled "Youth" was about to open at Pope's Theatre; one of the scenes was at a dock where a regiment of English soldiers, attired in red coats and white helmets, were supposed to be boarding a transport. An offer had been made to the captain of our company to provide so many men each night to march on board the steamer, go back into the wings, return and keep on marching, at twenty-five cents a head. I think Mr. Charles R. Pope, the manager, could have had the whole regiment, if he had wished, at that figure. I was faithful in attendance every night and also took part in the little shooting affray where the Bedouins were supposed to jump an outpost. Because of my reborn liking for the drama I now began to hang around Pope's and the Olympic, hoping for a chance to "supe" if anything should turn up. I took part in a number of crowds quite successfully and enjoyed the smells and sights and scenes behind the stage. I walked on with Joe Murphy in both "The Kerry Gow"—where Mr. Murphy actually shod a horse on the stage—and "The Shuan Rue"; I was a Roman soldier and one of the milling mob when Mr. McCullough played Shakespeare. I loved the experience. McCullough had a fine presence and a fine voice—he enjoyed listening to it himself; he dominated every scene, but he lacked subtlety of expression. He stirred his audience to applause and I believe that he shed actual tears, but they were the tears of John McCullough—not of the character he was impersonating. He did not touch strongly the heart-strings of his listeners. The last of the old-time school of loud and resounding center-stage actors, this was his final appearance; his mind had shown signs of a breakdown as the years advanced and he died in an asylum for the insane.

Later Mr. Duncan B. Harrison appeared in an English military drama entitled "The Paymaster." I was one of the two sentries who patrolled the back of the stage. On the night of the third performance I spoke a line, not written by the author; at the same time I not only supported Mr. Harrison and his stage manager but also, as it happened, the stone wall of a prison supposed to be three feet thick and eighteen feet high. The words I spoke in a loud whisper, unheard by the audience, were "All right, never mind, I've got it!"—and it happened thus:

The Paymaster, Mr. Harrison, unjustly accused of purloining the regimental funds by a cabal of villains, had been locked in a cell and was about to appear before a hostile court-martial. The company was most economically run and the property man—who had histrionic ambitions and was really not a bad actor—played the part of an old Irish sergeant, supposed to be guarding his former friend, the Paymaster. On this night the property man turned up too drunk even to stand at attention—I doubt if he could have sat at it. The stage manager, a very irascible gentleman, snatched off the sergeant's tunic and accoutrements, picked up his musket and entered the painted cell.

There was the prisoner leaning forlornly over a table with his head on his arms. Harrison looked up and gave the cue, which was something like: "What you, Terence?"

The reply should have been—the part demanded a rich, Irish brogue—"Your father, Mr. Edward, when he lay dying on the field of battle, took this cross from off his breast and pinned it upon mine." But what the stage manager actually said was this: "Your father, Mr. Edward, when he lay dying on the field of battle, took this breast from off his cross and pinned it upon mine!"

He then backed into the stone wall which, not being properly stayed, tottered forward; he caught it on the point of his bayonet. It was then that I came to the rescue, catching hold of one of the cleats and speaking my smothered lines. If there had been a pause, the audience would have stopped the play right there; but the scene, being in the hands of experienced actors, was saved. They headed off the laugh, going right on; before the end of the act, the people out in front had apparently forgotten the incident entirely.

Mr. Edwin Booth and Mr. Lawrence Barrett, with their company, came to St. Louis. Mr. Barrett, although a capable and experienced actor, never stirred me nor captured my interest to any great extent; but I wish I could record being on the stage with Mr. Booth even in the very humblest capacity—I had no such luck. From the gallery, I witnessed every performance that I could. It was a revelation to me, a gratification to every artistic sense I possessed, to see and to hear the greatest American actor of all time—that dignity and grace, that voice that no man ever heard and quite forgot. The tragedy of his Hamlet—the tower-

ing power of his Richelieu—but why recount? In the little hall bedroom of my boarding house, I could close my eyes and summon that presence and its effect back to me. For years—preferably alone—I went to see him whenever I found the chance; always the thrill for me was there.

I met him in 1893 upon my joining the Players in New York. The members were all his guests under his own roof. He spoke twelve words to me; I treasured them. "I am glad to welcome you as a member of our family," said he; I stammered a few words of acknowledgement. . . . That stormy night when he died in June of that year, I was there and went out into the rain, benumbed as every member of that family was benumbed by a sense of personal loss. But to this I will come. . . .

While on the subject of acting and the stage, I might mention that there was an amateur organization in St. Louis from whose boards were graduated many good actors. It is strange that I did not meet Edgar Smith whom I saw play the part of Richelieu and do it very well; but it is stranger still that I did not meet one who later became an intimate friend—Augustus Thomas. I saw him play in "Editha's Burglar" which he had written from a story by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Della Fox played Editha, the little girl, and Thomas played the burglar; Della was soon to be known in the theatrical world, the most popular musical comedy actress of her day. She was not more than eleven or twelve when I first knew her. I also met her sister Lily, some five or six years older—I think she was the prettiest girl that I had ever seen up to then. Their father was a well known photographer and had invented a process of duplicating little photographs like postage stamps. Lily was his favorite subject and these little pictures of her were in great demand. Afterwards she married a Mr. Roth who was connected with the Schuberts in New York.

The great John L. Sullivan, champion heavyweight of the world, was then touring the country, meeting all comers. There was an offer of two hundred dollars for any man who would stand up to him for three rounds. An immense German named Fred Zachritz, a professional strong man, had, according to the newspapers, accepted the challenge. I went to see the affair; although no fight took place, I shall not forget it. Mr. Sullivan

made a speech and I distinctly recall the impression he made on me. Although a popular idol throughout the country, the local feeling was distinctly hostile to him. Stripped to the buff, he came down to the footlights at the left of the stage, while on the right stood the blond German mountain of a man, who appeared to be most ill at ease. Sullivan had hot Irish eyes. He was slightly out of training, but under the flesh of those great shoulders and those rounded beefy arms were the quick muscles of the boxer. As he began to talk, he cast a side glance at his would-be opponent—a glance full of anger and contempt.

"This Mr."—Sullivan deliberately forgot the name—"and I are not going to meet to-night; his friend, the Chief of Police, won't let us. But if he'll come some place where we can get together, I'll pay his fare and I'll add a hundred dollars more if he is standing up when the third round is over." That was all there was to it. Mr. Zachritz backed off the stage and Mr. Sullivan took on one of his sparring partners, for whom I felt sorry.

When I did meet John L. in the days that were to come, he was ex-champion, gray, old and fat and wore pince-nez glasses. I wonder how his style of fighting when he was in his prime would show up opposed to the modern ring tactics of the champions who were to follow him. I say "in his prime," for most certainly he had gone a long way downhill when the ex-bank clerk, James J. Corbett, took away his crown in 1892. Corbett I met on numerous occasions; nothing about him suggested the prize-fighter; as a raconteur and companion I can say that he possessed a distinct charm for his listeners.

There was an open air theater in St. Louis, known as Urigh's Cave where opera bouffe and the old-fashioned musical comedies and Gilbert and Sullivan operettas were given during the summer season. Beer was served at tables; the attendance, for the most part, was composed of Germans. I met a number of actors and actresses, but the names of only two of them can I recall—the delightful Hattie Delaro and Phil Branscome, the tenor; he had really a fine voice and many found him good company.

One evening, there, I met, most casually, two Englishmen; they were Maxwell and Preller, the latter a thickset, red-faced

It was from this house, quiet on this occasion, for the opera season was long over, but so full of memories of fine music, that I had gone to the Players on the night of June sixth, 1893, and found that saddened crowd of Mr. Booth's intimate friends—Laurence Hutton, Brander Matthews, Mr. Bispham, Stanford White, John Malone, Barton Hill, Thomas Bailey Aldrich. It was storming and raining outside; the lightning and thunder seemed to be centered over Gramercy Park. I had stopped there, really, to get a cab to drive me home. Something held me. A little after one o'clock in the morning of June seventh, Doctor Smith came down the staircase:

"Gentlemen," said he, "I am sorry to announce to you that our beloved founder has just passed away."

Electric lights with carbon filaments had just been installed in the club house. For some time they had been flickering; on the upper floors the light was very dim. No sooner had the words recorded been spoken than the lights went out entirely; the house was left in darkness. Candles were brought immediately.

When I had entered I had noticed a few reporters sheltering themselves beneath the balconied portico at the club entrance; they had been informed and had hurried away to their offices. I left the house of mourning, walked to the corner and took a belated cab.

The funeral services were held at the Little Church Around the Corner; scores of people could not get any nearer than the doors. A most dramatic incident occurred which no one knew of until afterward. At the very hour that Mr. Booth's body was being taken from the church the building in Washington that had once been Ford's Theatre, where his mad brother had shot Abraham Lincoln and which had since been turned into an auxiliary of the Patent Office, collapsed, killing and injuring over sixty people.

On the thirteenth of November of that same year, a memorial meeting was held at the Madison Square Garden at which Henry Miller presided. Henry Irving was one of the speakers; but little could be heard of what was said in that vast assembly hall.

At the hundredth anniversary celebration of Mr. Booth's birthday, which fell on November thirteenth, 1933, I spoke of the evening of his death and the dramatic happening. Walter

Oettel, our old steward, who had been very close to Mr. Booth during his long illness, spoke also. We were the only two living persons who had been there that night; I was the only member.

Oliver Herford I first met at the Players. He does not come in so often now, but how faces used to light up in those days when he put in his appearance. His humor was delicious, his sense of fun contagious, some of his pranks and doings and sayings have been repeated often. I shall not apologize to him for recording a few that come to my mind.

There was a gaunt and brilliant painter of great attainments and greater possibilities who could hold forth on any subject under the sun for hours. He admitted no vocal defeat, allowed no interruption. No man could talk so much and fail to say a deal that was worth while, but he could repeat himself in variegated colors better than the average run of insistent, social monologists.

The wide dining veranda, afterwards added to the club, was not in existence then; the back windows looked out on a rather ill-kept yard and a small, squirty fountain. In front of one of the windows was a little iron balcony from which one could reach the yard below. The painter had been flinging his bat for one whole afternoon; his voice resounded up the stairway and into the grill room. Oliver appeared with a large and very well done placard with a pointing hand. Plain for all to read was: "Escape in case of Simmons." The index finger pointed out the window.

"Every man," declared Herford on one occasion, when two or three of us were seated at the table with him, "should have a hobby, no matter what his calling or profession. I have taken up a most interesting one—collecting candle ends." He put a hand into one of his coat pockets and drew out half a dozen; the other pocket was fairly bulging with them. "No one else has ever thought of it," he said.

A few weeks after this, the reason for his making such an unusual collection came out; he told it on himself. He had received a letter from the company that supplied illumination to his studio stating that, unless the bill for such service was paid on a certain date, the light would be turned off. For weeks, like the little child in Stevenson's poem, he had dressed by yellow candlelight. On the first of the month the collector had called

the questions of supply, of material, of personnel, of aviation training, and the still more difficult one of the production of planes confronting them, photographic observation had been regarded as a small side issue. At the end of the fourth month of the war, there were in existence no complete files of papers or correspondence pertaining to it.

This was the day of huge and astounding programs. Undismayed, America was proposing to create, as if by the wave of a wand, a gigantic system of instruction, production and supply simultaneously with experimentation. It was as if the small general store at Struthers Junction was to be turned over night into a John Wanamaker's.

There were many English and French officers who had been sent over by their respective governments to aid in organization; profiting by their own experience, they were ready to make useful suggestions, especially in regard to the newest of all branches—air service. Many of these picked men were wandering around Washington with practically nothing to do. Two of them actually seemed grateful for the chance to impart some of their knowledge to me on the subject of which I knew very little, but of the importance of which I was fully cognizant. I studied carefully all the literature and textbooks on the subject I could find; I borrowed from the Intelligence Department all the British reports that were on file—and still unread—in their office. The French Mission to the United States had presented a collection of French aviation photographs; these I unearthed and from them had lantern slides made.

If the overworked officers—each one of whom thought what he was doing the most important work in the world—could have combined and had their way, they would have sent me to Alaska or the Philippines. I was doubtless a pest, but I kept at it and found, at last, some open and responsive ears. As a result of which, I was handed this Order:

WAR DEPARTMENT  
Office of the Chief Signal Officer  
Washington

August 2, 1917

OFFICE MEMORANDUM No. 83.

A Photographic Division of this office is hereby created.

Major James Barnes, Signal Corps, U. S. R., will assume charge of the Photographic Division.

The following officers of the Signal Corps have been detailed to this Division:—

Major James Barnes, Signal Corps, U. S. R.

Captain Charles F. Betz, Signal Corps, U. S. R.

First Lieut. Edward J. Steichen, Signal Corps, U. S. R.

First Lieut. Albert K. Dawson, Signal Corps, U. S. R.

First Lieut. Edwin F. Weigle, Signal Corps, U. S. R.

The Photographic Division will take charge of all matters of photography pertaining to the Signal Corps, in connection with both aviation and the general photography of military operations.

By direction of Chief Signal Officer,

C. MCK. SALTZMAN  
Colonel, Signal Corps.

Betz was an old soldier who had been jumped from a sergeant to a captain; he was entirely familiar with Army papers and procedure. Lieutenants Dawson and Weigle had been in Europe taking photographs at the front, as neutral photographers. E. J. Steichen, an artist and art photographer, was in the first rank of his profession in America and Europe. Without his aid and advice, which I gratefully acknowledge, the Photographic Division might, at any time, have gone on the rocks.

The gathering and selection of a trained, working personnel was no easy matter at this time. The membership lists of amateur and professional photographic organizations were procured and a card index prepared. At the same time, there was sent to all Army posts and recruiting centers a request that the Commanding Officers furnish the Photographic Division with a list of such enlisted men as claimed to have had photographic training of any sort; a publicity campaign was inaugurated through the daily press.

Our little force, now composed of sixteen office men and a dozen technical aides, was soon busy day and night. So many things were needed, so much had to be done, that to go into it all would merely burden these pages. Detachment camps and drafting bases had to be chosen, laboratories had to be constructed, a curriculum had to be planned, instructors had to be

found, military training had to be included for the sake of order and discipline.

In searching Washington for a building that could be adapted for use as a large laboratory, we ran across an empty, old brick structure, erected before the Civil War, on the War College grounds. I discovered that this section of land had been part of a military prison camp and that this particular building had been occupied by the Commander of the Prison. As we were going over the available space, one of the lieutenants informed me that among the rubbish stored in the cellar was a lot of lumber that might be useful. On inspecting it, I found that the beams were evidently part of a long galleys, with struts and supports ready to be fitted together; there was also what appeared to be flooring or boarding, fitted with heavy hinges, but no locks or bolts. In the corner of this storage room was a stoutly built wooden chair, with one leg broken.

There flashed across my mind a series of photographs which had not been accepted for publication in *The Photographic History of the Civil War*. They had shown the hanging of Mrs. Surrat and the other four alleged conspirators against the life of Abraham Lincoln. In my mind, I could see the various figures plainly, as if I had watched the whole thing in a moving picture. While the death warrant was read to the poor victim, one of the prison guards had held an umbrella over her head to keep off the sun. She had met her death sitting in a chair. The traps of the platform were not sprung, but were released by soldiers, standing underneath, who held wooden stanchions in their hands which they jerked away at a word. Mrs. Surrat never should have been hanged at all. . . .

There was not the slightest doubt in my mind that this old lumber—and perhaps the chair—had been used in this hanging. It would have been a find for a Madame Tussaud. I do not know what became of those gruesome reminders of a tragic occurrence, as the Photographic Division was ousted from this building a few days after it had taken possession.

This ousting was part of the confusion that existed everywhere. The divisions or departments with the greater pull, or imagined greater importance, would move in and the previous occupants would find their possessions outside. The same pro-

cedure followed overseas; some sections would be moved from their offices and headquarters two or three times a month.

With the help of an English aviator, a V. C., who had been so badly wounded that he could fly no longer, I began to learn a great deal of the detailed work of the Photographic Division and, at last, got a request through the War Department that the British Government send over a competent officer with a complete photographic outfit as an object lesson.

In less than three weeks, Major C. D. M. Campbell, head of the British Photographic Division and the one man responsible, more than any other, for the organization and early working of the Field Air Forces, reported in Washington. He had with him a most competent assistant. Sergeant Major Haslitt, who could click his heels more loudly and give a snappier salute than any other non-commissioned officer in the service.

Major Campbell's coming was a godsend. He was a little chap who did not weigh much over a hundred and twenty-five pounds. He had been a successful photographer in a small town and knew the art and scientific work from the ground up; he was not a military man and had had no army training before taking up this work of which he had become the head. Not only had he invented many aids to the photographic work, but he had advanced the training of aviation marksmanship also.

In the big crates he brought over with him were samples of all the British cameras then in use, lantern slides for several sets of lectures and the complete photographic equipment of an air squadron, from plates and paper to all the chemical materials. He had also brought the Campbell Photographic Gun which, instead of shooting bullets, recorded on a film the precision of aerial gunners.

It had been difficult to convince the burdened General Staff of the importance of aerial photographic reconnaissance, or to bring home to those at the head of the combatant divisions of infantry and artillery the now recognized fact that the camera was a weapon of war and that nearly nine-tenths of the information for the offensive or defensive was due to the work of cameras under trained direction in the air, backed by special, trained laboratory forces, which could handle quickly, accurately and scientifically the work recorded and distribute



the results to the various headquarters and, under certain conditions, to the actual commanding officers at the front.

The day after Major Campbell's arrival, a lecture was arranged for in the auditorium of the War College, at five o'clock in the afternoon. I shall not forget that day.

Major General Hugh Lenox Scott was Chief of Staff. No finer officer of his type ever lived; his record was one of complete fulfilment of duties assigned to him, and his tact and judgment in handling difficult situations had gained the highest and most deserved praise. He had been graduated from West Point in 1876 and belonged to the older school; its splendid traditions were firmly in his mind.

I sought him out and obtained an interview. General Scott listened to what I had to say with great patience.

"Well," said he, when I had finished, "when we have a lecture here, the various departments are notified and at the appointed hour a bell sounds and all the younger officers, who can be spared, go to the auditorium. I will see that you have an audience; there may be twelve or fifteen; I don't think I can promise more, to be very frank."

"I want only five," said I.

The general looked at the pile of letters and papers on his desk. "Who?" he asked.

"Yourself, sir, and the heads of Artillery, Infantry, Intelligence and Aviation."

General Scott then said something that, in those crowded hours, must have been repeated a hundred times by Commanding Officers appealed to for a few minutes of their time, aside from desk and paper work. "I've got a war on my hands," he said. "One of my aides will be there. Your friend, the English Major, will have some good listeners."

The interview was over. I visited the other departments with about the same result. For the moment I felt dismayed. Eleven officers attended that first lecture; they were mostly lieutenants and captains but, to my joy, just as Major Campbell was about to begin, I saw a Colonel and a Lieutenant-Colonel come in the door.

Campbell could not understand the sparse attendance. I suppose he blamed it on me. He was not a good talker, in fact, quite the reverse. He spoke in a county dialect that was hard

to understand; it verged on the oldest of them all, the sheer Cockney of London. But his photographs, his knowledge of the subject, his tables of facts and figures transferred to slides and thrown on the screen, carried the day. No one left the room and, at the finish of his talk, he was assailed by all sorts of questions; the readiness of his answers was convincing.

Two days later the lecture was repeated "by request" and the house was packed; officers were detailed to appear there from all over Washington. I noticed three of my five big-wigs present. It appeared that, so far as aerial photography was concerned, the ball had been started rolling.

It was about time; the Division which had been assigned to my charge was, if unsupported, in danger of overreaching itself. The work was complicated and made harder by the fact that the directing head had two entirely different problems to handle, two separate forces to organize. The public was crying for pictorial information. A contingent of American troops was already overseas; besides this, there was the necessary—but then little understood—matter of military propaganda to be organized, launched and set afloat. It was soon apparent that the aviation and the ground or news photography would have to be separated. (How I longed for a man like Matthew Brady of Civil War days to help me out.) This separation was accomplished, but I continued as technical head of both for some time. There was now on the staff, besides myself, three majors, three captains, thirteen first lieutenants and thirty (photographic) second lieutenants.

Cameras and personnel for the ground service were easy to obtain and by the middle of September two detachments of news and publicity photographers, numbering twelve or fourteen men, had been despatched abroad; a program for camera production had been laid out both for moving picture machines and still picture cameras.

Carl Akeley was then building the best of the former, but political pressure came into the field; every manufacturer and inventor had a lobby man at Washington. This was a minor fight, but there were some mean tactics employed. Photographers were approached; offers were made for them to jam their apparatus and make adverse reports; two or three trouble makers were dropped from the service.