WARREN, Carro Frances (Mrs. Leon H. Lempert) (Carro Morrell Clark)

Born at Unity, September 6, 1867
Women in Publishing

The Story of How Carro Morrell Clark Made a Dramatic Success of Publishing Nearly Thirty Years Ago

William E. Harris

THE publishing business is not a profession that, off-hand, one might expect would attract women in search of a career. An increasing number of women, however, have entered this field during the last decade. Yet of those who might be cited, the career of none seems more colorful or interesting than that of Miss Carro Morrell Clark, the pioneer woman publisher in America. Herself an author, she organized her company in Boston a little more than twenty-seven years ago and during twelve years of active publishing, she presented to the general reading public probably the two most spectacularly selling books of her day.

“Quincy Adams Sawyer,” brought out two months after the C. M. Clark Publishing Company entered business, was one of the principal reasons that caused Miss Clark to embark upon her unusual career. And it rewarded her faith in its worth by going thru edition after edition, finally reaching the enormous figure of nearly two hundred thousand copies within the first year.

The success this book attained probably was due at least in part to the wave of popular enthusiasm which also marked the appearance in December 1898 of Westcott’s “David Harum” and—several years later—that of Irving Bacheller’s scarcely less well known “Eben Holden.” The famous Charles Hoyt farces, too, were of this general period. Apparently a large reading public desired to see described in print the rural New England landscape with which they were then largely familiar. Yet, that “Quincy Adams Sawyer,” the extraordinarily popular tale of Mason’s Corner folks written by the late Charles Felton Pidgin, possessed its own fresh country atmosphere and intimate, likeable characters, is amply proved by the fact that it preceded such recent successes as “The Green Hat” and “Abie’s Irish Rose” being translated into terms of both the drama and the screen. “Quincy Adams Sawyer,” however, went one step further, since it was eventually made into a musical play as well. Moreover, the right of performance is still advertised by the Century
Play Company in New York and the piece is occasionally revived by stock companies throughout the country. The book has recently been reprinted in a popular edition.

Miss Clark, who was born in Unity, Maine, of parents descended from original settlers in the Kittery Grant, began at the age of eight to write stories. These were intended for other children and were eventually published in the family newspaper, a country weekly. Shortly before the year 1892 she came to Boston, with no particular undertaking in mind, but merely seeking what might lie in store for a girl having ambitions extending beyond the conventional limitations of farm life. In that year she opened a bookstore and stationery shop in the Back Bay. She was the sole owner and manager of this enterprise. September 1900 saw the opening of the C. M. Clark Publishing Company. She continued the management, however, of her earlier venture as well for the best part of a year. Miss Clark’s entry into the publishing business occurred quite by chance. She happened to know Charles Felton Pidgin, at that time head of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor at the Massachusetts State House. He was an author by avocation, having already written in 1883, in collaboration with Mary M. Gay, “The Letter H,” a drama in prolog and three acts. On his invitation Miss Clark went to hear the reading of a new manuscript entitled “Quincy Adams Sawyer.” The country characters and atmosphere carried her back to her own early beginnings in Unity, Maine, a small village not far from South Berwick, the home of that other New England woman writer, Sara Orne Jewett. Moreover, Miss Clark was attracted by the rather unique love story and quaint but natural Yankee humor. She decided to embark on an experiment and enter the publishing business, in order to bring the lovable character of Quincy Adams Sawyer before that public which ought to recognize him most easily. For the fictitious village of Mason’s Corner is rather concretely described as being located in the Southeastern portion of Massachusetts.

Against the advice of experienced men in the profession she was about to enter. Miss Clark ordered paper for an edition of 3000 copies, an almost unheard of thing in those days and nearly as much so at the present time, in the case of a new and unknown author. On November 3, 1900, however, “Quincy Adams Sawyer” made its appearance and within a month was accounted a best seller. The following year it was presented as a play, the dramatization curiously enough being done by the late Justin Adams and the first performance occurring in North Adams, Massachusetts. Considerable note was taken at the time of this accidental prevalence of the name of Adams. Another early performance, according to Charles F. Atkinson, producer of the play, took place in the dining room of the old Derby House at the foot of Bowdoin Street, the same room in which Charles Hoyt is reputed to have written several of his farces.

Mr. Pidgin followed this book with “Blennerhassett,” a romance recalling the life of Aaron Burr, and its success was even more spectacular than that of “Quincy Adams Sawyer.” Miss Clark states that 80,000 copies were printed immediately, sixty thousand of them being disposed of before publication. Miss Clark herself sold in New York and Philadelphia $21,000 worth of the book from dummy copy. Within a week “Blennerhassett” became the best selling book in New York and Boston, and shortly after throughout the United States. Towards Christmas editions of twenty thousand copies were being printed and nearly 125,000 had been sold within two months.

Following the success of “Quincy Adams Sawyer” and “Blennerhassett” there came three western stories by Frances Parker that enjoyed big sales, “Margie of the Lower Ranch,” “Hope Hathaway” and “Winding Waters.” “Miss Petticoats” and “On Satan’s Mount” by Dwight Tilton also gained wide popularity, and a volume by Mildred Champagne, at that time a regular correspondent for the Boston Post, was published.

As an evidence of the transition in publishing methods from that time to the present day, it is amusing to note that the interest in “Hope Hathaway” was, perhaps, in part increased by the offer of the publishers to give free of charge to each
March 24, 1928

Carro Morrell Clark

reader of the book, priced at $1.50, “eight stirring pictures by Charles M. Russell, the cowboy artist.” Others of the books were made especially inviting by the offer of “9 beautiful posters and your choice of the following popular novels, cloth bound and illustrated.”

“Love Stories from Real Life” by Mildred Champagne on the other hand, al­ tho richly bound in red silk cloth and gold with each story fully illustrated, contained a “detach­ able page entitling the purchaser to a beautiful poster of Beatrice, the college girl heroine, size 14x28 done in four colors.”

Miss Clark’s advertising was not confined to cleverly conceived bargain offers. She ascribes the success of her “Quincy Adams Sawyer” to the fact that she supported her decision to experiment, with heavy advertising of the best quality. It was rather a surprising thing a quarter of a century ago, to find full page advertisements in all the leading magazines for a single book by a literally unknown author. However, Miss Clark felt certain that “Quincy Adams Sawyer” was a true picture of New England rural life and as such merited support. In looking back upon the methods she employed, after the lapse of more than twenty-five years, she expresses the opinion that had the quality of the book been otherwise, the advertising would have been in vain.

But pioneer not only in a field at that time entirely unexplored by women, and notable, as she was in the manner in which she adopted new and courageous meth­ ods, Miss Clark possessed another unique capability. Probably save for some of of fantasy and the strength of interesting narrative to the tales of those familiar flowers she has found masquerading as children in an old-fashioned garden. She first began writing these stories for a little nephew and was urged by her sister to publish them. Now after nearly eight years’ interval she plans to add several titles to the series.

And so while to­ day it has been given to many women to achieve a career for themselves outside that of home-making, Miss Clark, who in private life is the wife of Leon H. Lempert and has a notable New England ancestry, enjoys the distinction of having realized two professions. Even after a period of nearly thirty years this accomplishment remains a remarkable tribute to the zeal and energy of America’s first woman publisher.
TOWARDS convention-time each year, we begin to lose all sense of proportion. The forthcoming meeting looms large before us and the work is so engrossing that it becomes difficult to remember that an executive secretary has other duties.

* * *

The Anonymous Club has favored this office with a letter. An answer, thru this page, has been requested. Our apologies for not answering sooner are most sincere.

The Anonymous Club expresses a desire to enlist the aid of the executive secretary "in bringing about certain reforms in the booktrade." The A. C. assures us that we cannot get active cooperation from booksellers, because "they owe too much money to the publishers—that firms like so-and-so and so-and-so" (sorry we can't give the names even tho our correspondent did) "cannot afford to antagonize the publishers." That, were it true, would be a most sorrowful state of affairs. Of course it cannot be true because of economic conditions. The booksellers need the publishers but the reverse is also true. And neither need antagonize the other.

The A. C. has used this argument as preamble to a statement about publishers who have cooperated with a certain only too well-known direct-mail price-cutting business. There is a difference of opinion concerning the justice of such cooperation. Some people do not agree with the majority of the booksellers who feel that the competition is such that it ought not to receive the support of those who have in the past received the bulk (if not all) of their income from the retail bookstores. That the Anonymous Club is unaware of all that is going on in the trade is obvious from its letter. It does not seem possible that anyone following this matter closely has not heard that it is the policy of several of the larger bookstores to cut their orders as protest against further cooperation with competition of the same type. Most of these booksellers have said that they will continue to do this until they can be assured that the publishers will consider the welfare of the bookstore.

The attitude of this office should be well known by now. Until such time as the majority of our members feel that it is to their best interest to change their present feeling in this matter, the executive office will continue to do everything possible to prove that publishers who cooperate with the booksellers' competitor are being most unfair to their own best customers and themselves.

* * *

Back to the convention. This week, there is a picture of the solarium at the Hotel Ambassador, Atlantic City, New Jersey. Here one may sun oneself, particularly if one is in the booktrade and knows that the A. B. A. Convention will start on May 14 and run to May 17—and has made plans to attend it.
March 29, 1928

Dr. H. L. Truworthy
Unity, Maine
Dear Doc:

Did you ever hear of Carro Morrell Clark? She was a Unity girl. She organized a company in Boston a little more than twenty years ago. She went up to Boston and opened a book store and was one of the pioneer women publishers.

Will you please inquire and send me anything you can find out about her? Has she any people living in Unity? If she was born in one of the houses in the village, I wish you would send me a snapshot of this house.

I am writing sketches of distinguished Maine born people and I want this information for that purpose.

Very truly yours,

HED:ME
April 28, 1928

Mrs. Leon H. Lempert,
Care of Publisher's Weekly
62, West 45th Street,
New York City

Dear Mrs. Lempert,

Reading in the Publisher's Weekly about your venture into the publishing business we were much delighted to learn that you were born in Maine. We are endeavoring to secure as complete information as possible about all authors who were Maine-born and in this case there is an additional interest to us in the fact that you were a pioneer in your line of business, among women.

We wish to write an article about this fact for publication in our Maine Library Bulletin, later, and shall greatly appreciate whatever special information you can send.

I have spent many summers on the shores of Unity Pond, and therefore I have special interest in anyone who was born in Unity. I know nearly all of the people in the town very well.

It will be a great favor if you will secure copies of any books or pamphlets you have written, autograph them and send them to the Maine State Library, together with a bill for the same. We have now a complete list of the books of those authors, who were born in Maine and who are now living, including Edwin Arlington Robinson and Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Very truly yours.

HED:ME
H. L. TRUWORTHY, M. D.
UNITY, MAINE

UNITY, MAINE: 25th: 1928

A. D., Dunnaack,

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter in regard to Curro Clark, I am now to say that I am very glad to have received your letter.

She was born in So. Maine, where her father and mother live. She has brothers and sisters in New York and in Toronto. She went to School in Maine and at the School she,
H. L. TRUWORTHY, M. D.
UNITY, MAINE

UNITY, MAINE

When she first went to Boston she
started some sort of a shop—later
going into the trade business.
At the present time lives in Rochester,
N.Y. Sorry not to be able to be
of more assistance.

Yours truly

H. L. TRUWORTHY
May 27, 1928

Mr. Henry E. Dunmack
Maine State Library
Augusta, Me.

Dear Mr. Dunmack:

We were away from home and didn't receive your letter of April 28th until just recently thus the delay in answering. I shall be glad to autograph such copies of my books as I happen to have and forward them to you very shortly. Under another cover I am sending one of the publisher's catalogs. I have not written any thing in the past eight years.
On account of ill health which has been most discouraging to my publisher, for of course a series must be kept a line by new titles at least one yearly. I hope to do something this year. I know there are one or two titles out of print. Those that I am forwarding please ask the Library to accept with my compliments. I was the first person to ever personify flowers as you will see my first book Betty Married has beenvoting for some time.

Very truly,

Carro M. Leupkin.
These are all the titles I have at present time.
Perhaps you could get the others through the publisher.
S. M. Lempert
July 11, 1928

David McKay
604-8 So. Washington Sq.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Sir:

Will you please send us one copy each of the following books by Carro Frances Warren.

Little Betty Marigold.
Little Polly Primrose.
Little Coldie Goldenrod.
Little Danny Dandelion.
Little Peter Pansy.

Make your bill in duplicate to the Maine State Library.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

HED: ME
July 12, 1928.

Mr. Henry E. Dunnack, Lib'n.,
Maine State Library,
Augusta, Maine.

Dear Sir:

In re your order returned herewith, regret that we are entirely out of all these titles of the Garden Series and do not expect to have them again.

We can furnish the following volumes:

LITTLE TOPSY THISTLE AND HER FRIENDS
LITTLE SALLY SUNFLOWER AND HER FRIENDS
LITTLE BETHE BUTTERCUP

Should you be able to use the above volumes kindly advise.

Yours very truly,

DAVID MCKAY COMPANY
July 11, 1928

Mrs. Leon H. Lempert  
35 Southern Parkway  
Rochester, New York  

Dear Mrs. Lempert:

We are very grateful indeed for the five books you have autographed for the Maine Author Collection. We are ordering today the other five titles from David McKay, Philadelphia.

Any information you can send us of a biographical nature will be of very great value. We are making a big scrap book and arranging the authors alphabetically, and making an effort to secure all possible information about each author,—where they were born, pictures of their birth-place, where they went to school, pictures of the school house and church they attended in their childhood days. You can see how valuable this information will be to students of Maine literature in the years to come. We are not giving this information to the press or public.

If there is anything you can do further to assist us, we will be under very great obligations to you, and I am sure the state of your birthplace in the coming years will greatly appreciate your interest in furnishing us all available information.

Very truly yours,

HED: ME
August 24, 1928

Mrs. Leon Lempert,
35 Southern Parkway,
Rochester, New York.

My dear Mrs. Lempert;

We are all so sorry that you and Mr. Lempert should have happened to visit the library when we were all away! I think that Mr. Dunnack has written thanking you for the valuable and interesting addition to our genealogical section which your husband gave us, but I feel that I wish to write you, also, and tell you how much I regret that I did not have the pleasure of meeting you and your husband.

I was much interested to read in the Publisher's Weekly last spring the article about your career. I remember "Quincy Adams Sawyer" and Blennerhasset—I was so thrilled by the latter that I wrote a letter to the author—and I recall even now some of the advertisements of those books. I wish I could have known then that C. M. Clark was a Maine woman; I am glad to know it now, because I have a special interest in Maine, and in Maine persons who have done things.

I hope that you will visit us again and that I shall be fortunate enough to be here when you come.

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
BY MCP
August 28, 1928

Mrs. Leon Henry Lempert
35 Southern Parkway
Rochester, New York

My dear Mrs. Lempert:

It is a matter of very great regret that I missed meeting you and Mr. Lempert on your recent visit to the library. I hope that it may be possible for you to come this way again so that I may have the privilege of personally meeting you.

You have placed us under very great obligations for your generous contribution to our Maine section. We are especially grateful for the genealogical data in manuscript form, the Clark Family Tree Diagrams, and the book Old Home Week. All of these items are of very great interest and will add greatly to the value of our Maine section.

May I add this personal word, that I have spent many summers in Unity on Lake Winnecook and have spoken several times at the old Academy in Freedom so that your old home territory is familiar ground to me.

Under separate cover we are sending you a copy of the Maine Book, the Fort Book, and the Maine Pageant. These are all Maine items and may be of some interest to you.

Very truly yours,

HED:ME
School and church where Carro Warren Clark-Lempert attended in childhood. Freedom Academy and Congregational Church, Maine.


Present home of Carro Warren Clark Lempert at Rochester, N.Y.
SAUNDERS, MARSHALL. Author of "Beautiful Joe."

JIMMY GOLDCOAST. The Story of a Monkey and His Friends. 12mo, cloth $1.50

At last Marshall Saunders has given us another book. Not since "Beautiful Joe" has she herself felt so keenly the spirit of a book as in this latest and most appealing story of a family, told by their pet monkey.

Quite as prominent as "Jimmy Goldcoast" are Nonnie, the beloved darky servant, and Polly, her parrot. These three all play an important part in the rescue from waywardness of a certain young man, who finally becomes a great power for good.

Those who know Miss Saunders' many books, need no reminder of the indefinable charm and fascination of her stories. Insight, tenderness, and humor have never been combined in quite the manner of which she is capable. In the beginning, her books capture the reader, heart and mind, teaching him a hundred things he would otherwise never know, and going on to delight him with pictures so real that he feels certain he must have "passed this way before." That her stories are now read all over the world, literally by the millions, and in almost every language, should be a great gratification to all who have loved her work these many years.

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It is a fine little book to introduce into the hands of our youngest readers. It should be in every school.—S. Ervin Manness, Editor of the School Exchange, Newark, N. J.

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Miss Warren lives in Rochester, N. Y., which is known the world over as the “Flower City.” She is very fond of children and is never quite so happy as when planning some surprise for her many little friends. Her home is one of books and flowers, and during the summer season she spends much of her time in a truly “Old-Fashioned Garden” that occupies the greater part of their spacious grounds.

The country in every direction from Rochester is a nesting place for wild birds and a vast field of wild flowers. This gives Miss Warren splendid opportunities to enjoy those parts of nature of which she writes.

Miss Warren descends from long lines of New England’s famous men and women, being a direct descendant of Rev. William Blackstone, who was first owner and settler of the peninsula where now stands the city of Boston. Other descendants were William Cullen Bryant, Joseph Warren, of Bunker Hill fame, and the Hon. Lot M. Morrill, Maine’s one-time noted statesman.

Miss Warren is a D. A. R., having had six lineal ancestors in the Revolutionary War. In private life she is Mrs. Leon Henry Lempert. Her husband, a busy architect, finds time to accompany her on many of her hunts for wild birds and flowers, and is himself a writer of verse, also a great lover of books: Their interests being much the same makes Miss Warren’s home life most congenial.
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You will surely want to find out where “Mr. Potato Man” got his many eyes.

Then, too, you’ll want to learn how Creaky Cricket broke his tiny leg, and how the cat nearly caught Billy Bullfrog.

Who said the Grasshopper had twenty legs and was own cousin to little Miss Katydid?

You will just have to read Beth Buttercup to find out all about these funny little people who live in the fields.

Many pretty pictures in colors and black and white.

Price, 75 cts. Net, at all Booksellers
Familiar flowers in an old-fashioned garden are found masquerading as children and making a story for real children out of their own doings. It is a pretty conceit and well carried through.—*Denver Republican*.

*By CARRO FRANCES WARREN*

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LITTLE POLLY PRIMROSE
LITTLE GOLDIE GOLDENROD
LITTLE DANNY DANDELION
LITTLE PETER PANSY
LITTLE TOPSY THISTLE
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