



## CHICAGO FMB CHAPTER TO HEAR AUTHORITY ON MIDWEST LITERATURE

Prof. John T. Frederick, distinguished critic and radio reviewer, will address the Chicago chapter of Friends of the Middle Border and guests at its first annual meeting February 6, announces Mrs. A. H. Hilsabeck, chairman.

"We feel complimented to have Professor Frederick to talk on 'Middle Border Literature,'" Mrs. Hilsabeck writes The Bulletin. "His recently published 'Out of the Midwest' is the best anthology of Midwestern literature, and sustains admirably his reputation built up as an authority in this field while editor of the 'Midland Monthly' and professor at Iowa, Notre Dame, and Northwestern. He has long been interested in FMB, and is a member of its advisory committee on literature."

The Chicago FMB chapter will open this meeting to the public, seeking to bring together many Chicagoans of Western backgrounds and others interested in cultural developments—literary, musical, historical, and others—of the region. Several committees are being appointed for this purpose, and to develop a year-round program of activities.

"We would like to get in touch with anyone in the Chicago region who might be interested in joining our FMB chapter," says Mrs. Hilsabeck. "We know there are many people who would be glad to support this movement which is so American in its conception and development. Our annual dues are nominal—only two dollars a year."

Mrs. Hilsabeck is immediate past president of the Friends of American Literature, and a member of the executive board of the Annual Writers Conference. She lives at 1365 East 64th Street, Chicago, (telephone: Midway 8258).

## COMMANCHE NOT CUSTER'S HORSE

The Editor of the Bulletin bows low to C. I. Leedy, city auditor at Rapid City, S. Dak., who has called attention to an egregious error. A recent issue referred to a photo of Gen. George A. Custer and his horse Commanche.

"Commanche wasn't Custer's horse at all," writes Mr. Leedy. "If there is in existence a photograph of Custer and Commanche it's a phony."

Commanche, be it known, was a clay-bank gelding, purchased by the Government at St. Louis in 1868, and served as Capt. Myles Koegh's mount at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, June 25, 1876. Wounded in seven places, Commanche survived the engagement—and was the "only survivor." Carefully nursed back to health, the horse remained with the Seventh Cavalry at Fort Meade, S. Dak., and at Fort Riley, Kansas, where he died in 1891 or '92 aged 28 years. Professor Dyche, of the University of Kansas at Lawrence, mounted the hide and it is still preserved in the museum there.



"SHERIFF" ELMO SCOTT WATSON

## WELCOME, CHICAGO FRIENDS.

To the Chicago chapter of Friends of the Middle Border—and all other chapters in prospect—Greetings!

Five years ago, FMB was started as an indigenous project in regionalism. We believed and we still believe that what we call the Middle Border can make its greatest contribution to American civilization by being its best self. The spirit of self-reliance is our great heritage from the pioneer, and we seek to foster it and to make it fruitful in our day and the days to come. That is why we have chosen as our mottoes, "From what we have we make what we want," and, "What is past is prologue."

So, Friends in Chicago and elsewhere, we welcome you. With your help, we believe that our organization can increasingly realize its purpose which, to quote a young Dakotan now soldiering in Europe, "is what I understand we're fighting for."

JAMES A. VAN KIRK,  
Serving Director,  
Friends of the Middle Border.

## DOUGLAS C. MCMURTRIE DIES

Douglas C. McMurtrie, typographer and historian of printing, died September 29, aged 56, at his home in Evanston, Ill. He was author of numerous books including "The Book, the Story of Printing and Bookmaking" and "Wings for Words," the life of Johann Gutenberg, inventor of printing.

Mr. McMurtrie's interest in the history of printing in the West led to association with FMB as member of an advisory committee shortly after the organization's founding in 1939. He was an active member of the Westerners of Chicago.

## CHICAGO 'WESTERNERS' MAKE HISTORY LIVE AT MONTHLY ROUNDUPS

"Chicago's most unique club" is how one newspaper writer describes "The Westerners," a group of Western history enthusiasts who dine monthly at the Merchants and Manufacturers Club in the Merchandise Mart and forget the clock while reliving history.

It has no officers, but is rounded-up by "Sheriff" Elmo Scott Watson, a member of the faculty of Northwestern University. His "deputies" are Franklin Meine, author, and authority on Mississippi River humor; Leland D. Case, editor; and Herbert Kellar, historian.

### Membership Limited to 50

Resident membership is limited to 50—and is "stag only." But any male outside of the Chicago region may become a corresponding member upon payment of \$3 annual dues, which will bring him the right to attend roundups. The Westerners' publication, "The Brandbook," and membership in Friends of the Middle Border. Since its inception last March, The Westerners have been affiliated with FMB through its Chicago chapter.

The October roundup will be devoted to "dime novels," with Albert Johannsen, emeritus professor of geology at the University of Chicago, leading the discussion. His is one of the finest collections in America of this "bad boy of literature."

"Custer's Last Stand" was all but reenacted at the September dinner, with a panel of "alleged experts" stirring up controversies started in the blood and sweat of the Battle of the Little Big Horn, June 25, 1876. "Sheriff" Watson had frequent recourse to his gong—an authentic brass bell from Captain McDougall's mule pack train, secured from a Pine Ridge Indian by Fred B. Hackett. The discussion broke up just before midnight, but with the question whether Custer disobeyed Terry, or Reno did Custer, unsettled.

### Digests of Recent Talks

Here are digests of recent talks:

**Jesse James**—by Don Russell, editorial writer, "Chicago Daily News" (March).

Scarcely anyone in America would fail to recognize the name of Jesse James, and yet it cannot be proved by historical evidence that he ever robbed a bank or held up a train. He was never tried for any crime, and for many attributed to him he was not even indicted.

Jesse Woodson James was born Sept. 5, 1847, near Centerville, now Kearney, Clay Co., Mo., the son of Dr. Robert James, a revivalist preacher. His older brother Alexander Franklin James, was born Jan. 10, 1843, and both James and Frank joined Quantrill's guerillas early in the Civil War. Jesse was once captured by Federal troops and beaten.

Between 1866 and 1882 a series of bank, stage coach, and train robberies occurred in the "guerilla fashion" of quick-riding, quick-shooting attacks. Members of the

(Continued on page 3)