

## Louise Pound 1872-1958



Doctor Louise Pound, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Nebraska, died at her home in Lincoln June 28, following a heart attack, two days before her eighty-sixth birthday. She was a member of the sponsoring committee of the American Name Society and served on the Board of Managers from 1952 to 1956. She refused with regret the nomination as *ANS* president in 1956. An interest in names was a part of her linguistic study. "The Naming of Characters in the

Works of Charles Dickens," the masters thesis of one of her students, Elizabeth Hope Gordon, was Number I in University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature, and Criticism, 1917.

Dr. Pound published "American Indefinite Names" in *American Speech*, VI (April 1931), 257-9, and as senior editor of the journal from 1925 to 1933 accepted many articles from contributors on the nomenclature of persons, places and things. She reviewed in *American Literature*, VII (March 1935), 119 *Florida Place-Names of Indian Origin and Seminole Indian Names* by William A. Read; and *Arizona Place Names* by Will C. Barnes, VII (January 1936), 489-90. The *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XXI (Summer 1945), 452-6, carried her review of George R. Stewart's *Names on the Land*, first edition.

Louise Pound completed fifty years of teaching at the University of Nebraska in 1945, with occasional summers as visiting professor at California, Chicago, Columbia, Stanford and Yale. She taught all the courses offered in the English department at the University

of Nebraska: Old English, Middle English, phonetics, and English literature and literary history. She was a pioneer in teaching American literature and language when few universities here or abroad had undertaken such studies.

*Who's Who in America*, 1956—7, summarized Louise Pound's achievements as scholar, author, teacher, editor, folklorist, public servant, and sportswoman, in nearly five inches of fine print. The twelve-page Bibliography in *The Selected Writings of Louise Pound* (University of Nebraska Press, 1949) listed her publications to that time. In the Foreword to the volume, the late Arthur G. Kennedy of Stanford commented upon "the surprising range and multiplicity" of her publications and "the true quality of her research and production." She continued to contribute articles on linguistics and folklore to the time of her death. "Studies in Nebraska Folklore," a collection of her articles in *Nebraska History* and other journals, is in preparation at the University of Nebraska Press.

A section in *The Selected Writings* consists of "Professional Societies, Activities and Honors," though the story of each is continued for eight years thereafter. In 1955 she was the first woman elected to the Nebraska Sports Hall of Fame. In the same year her professional career was climaxed by her election, at 82, as the sixty-fifth president of the Modern Language Association, the first woman thus honored.

Mr. William Riley Parker, MLA Secretary while Dr. Pound was President, wrote for the April 1955 issue of PMLA, Vignette XXVI, an appreciation which can not be bettered in picturing the erudite scholar whose human qualities overshadowed her brilliance. Dean Roscoe Pound's tribute to "My Sister Louise," on the front page of the Boston *Sunday Globe* of June 30, 1957, on her eighty-fifth birthday, gave full value to her academic, literary, civic, and sports achievements. But he placed above these Louise's "championship of every worthy educational enterprise." Both parents, Judge Stephen Bosworth Pound and Laura Biddlecombe, were of Quaker descent. Both had been school teachers for a time before they married, he said. Mrs. Pound taught at home her three children, Roscoe, Louise and Olivia, because in the pioneer community "at first there were no schools at hand." The children were then able to enter the Latin School, preparatory to the State University, where they were taught by the professors. Certain it is that Dr.

Pound felt more pride in the accomplishments of her students than in her own. Her influence extended far beyond the classroom. Students from abroad as well as from many parts of the United States found her ready to suggest suitable subjects for study and definite sources for development of them. She took most satisfaction in the positions in which she could further the professional careers of young people, such as her appointment to the Advisory Council of the Guggenheim Foundation, 1928-32.

The American Association of University Women was closest to her heart. Her first appearance on an AAUW program was in June 11, 1901, when she spoke to the Lincoln branch on "Graduate Work in Heidelberg, Germany." She had just received her doctorate there *magna cum laude* after only two semesters of resident study. She was a member of the committee on fellowship awards 1935-37 and national vice president 1937-45. The Nebraska Division of AAUW in 1946 established the Doctor Louise Pound International Study Grant and since 1950 desewing women scholars from abroad have been enabled to prepare themselves better in the United States for work with women and children in their homelands, and further international understanding.

The many letters received by Olivia and Roscoe Pound following the death of their sister speak often of the encouragement and wise counsel given the writers in their professional work — "above that of anyone else." Another recurring thought was that of the continuing influence of Louise Pound, expressed in the following words by Mrs. Robert Lasch:

"For all of us, her students and her friends, she is truly immortal. Every day for as long as we live we will see her influence expressed in innumerable ways and the ideas that she implanted in us reflected in turn by our children and students."

Louise Pound Memorial Committee  
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