

The Remembrance Album of Harriet Pruden effectively fuses an authentic 19th century pioneer-settler poetry collection with 21st century narrative, revealing an endearing story spanning eight decades; a true American love story from the Old West.

The Remembrance Album of Harriet Pruden

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The Remembrance Album
of Harriet Pruden

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This is a work of historical fiction, though the vast majority of the people and all of the poems are real. The narrative and incidents are the author's conjecture based on his interpretation of the poems and on extensive research into the available history of the people involved.

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Cover photo: the remnants of the embroidered bouquet on the cover of Harriet's album.

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Chapter One

Athens, Ohio - 1831 to 1836

A.G. Brown: My name is Archibald Green Brown. I was born the same year my family moved to Ohio, 1798. There was no Athens or Ohio University in those days, just some scattered settlers' cabins, one of which was ours. The site on which Ohio University sits had been, just a few years before, the favorite hunting ground of the local Indians (most of the Indian wars in Ohio were over by the early 1800's, though it was not until 1818 that the Miami tribe gave up their last piece of ground). In 1830, when this story begins, there were only twenty-four states in the Union, with a total population of thirteen million, less than a million in Ohio. Andrew Jackson, 'Old Hickory,' was two years into his Presidency. I had graduated from Ohio University and was then studying law, was the County Recorder, had founded and run Athens' very first newspaper, *The Athens Mirror*, and was acting Justice of the Peace.

I remember well Miss Harriet and the circumstances surrounding the creation of her commonplace book. It was in 1831 that I was asked to be the master-reader for the compilation of Harriet's book. I was busy in those days and would never have agreed to teach private lessons on poetry had it not been for Harriet Pruden. She was the most

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enchancing young lady in Athens back then. Not only was she exceedingly beautiful, she was also most kind and considerate.

Harriet was the daughter of a prominent Athens family and was sixteen years old in 1831. She talked constantly of visiting the Wild West, seeing the fierce Indians and exploring the boundless open space. Harriet had the 'wanderlust.'

Mrs. Mary Pruden approached me with the idea of creating a commonplace book for her daughter. It was to be in the form of a keepsake or remembrance album, with the purpose of convincing Harriet to stay in Athens. Harriet had fallen in love with a young carpenter, one Emanuel Light. He was working in Athens but was from Logan, some thirty miles north of Athens. Unlike Harriet, Emanuel was not well-to-do and like many poorer people of the time, intended to head west to become a settler and claim some of the new lands waiting to be tamed. Harriet, at that tender age, had announced that she would marry Emanuel and accompany him into the vast West. This created quite a stir in Athens. Truly she had no idea of the hardship and toil associated with a settler's life. She envisioned living in the Far West as an exciting adventure. At one point she confessed to me that though she loved her family, she had no intention of complying with her parents' plans for her. Her intention was not to marry a rich gentleman and live in the East. She found the whole idea boring and limiting. No, she wanted adventure and excitement. She wanted to be a part of the country's "Westward Expansion." Lewis and Clark were her heroes and embodied her own dreams. She and Emanuel wanted to follow in their footsteps.

Virtually everyone in Athens felt Harriet was making a huge mistake. She was young and innocent and Emanuel was like Odysseus' syren, as he was leading her into harm's way. We all talked with her and tried to convince her it was just a passing infatuation. Life in the Far West as a settler was for people who had no choice but to head to the territories. Harriet would politely listen but would not give up her dream. Once it became clear that the talking was going nowhere, Mary Pruden came up with the idea of creating the Remembrance Album for her daughter. She felt that perhaps a concerted effort by all her friends and family would show Harriet just how loved she

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was and might convince her to change her mind. If it did not work, then at least she would have the book to remember everyone by. Sentimental poetry was very popular in those days and Harriet was a great fan of verse, hence the format for her book. Because of my fondness for Harriet and knowledge of the tradition of commonplace books, I agreed to participate in the project. I insisted that Harriet's commonplace book be based upon classical examples which date back to the Renaissance. The poetry, often in the form of apothegms, would strive to teach the reader (Harriet) important, time-honored truths about the world. It would be compiled as a communal act and would be led by a master-reader who would lead the group to correct understanding of texts. Further, I hoped that Harriet would pass the book down to succeeding generations of her family as many older commonplace books had been.

The class was formed and we met weekly for a few months to compose the poetry and begin the album. We read the pieces aloud and refined them. I checked them for spelling and punctuation and recommended books from the shelves of the University library for the students to use for reference. We had a grand time.

Harriet was overwhelmed by her gift. So much so that we thought we had actually convinced her to stay in Athens. Ultimately the young couple would leave, but the commonplace book did give Harriet pause. It delayed their departure for quite some time. Towards the end of 1836, the young couple finally eloped.

It was my honor to write the first entry in the album. I chose a quote from Pollok's *Course of Time* as it subtly conveyed my own feelings that Harriet and Emanuel should be together. I hoped that the couple would stay in Athens and be married. I liked Emanuel and hoped he would eventually be accepted by the Pruden family. He would then not need to take our Harriet away. Of course, I could not say this directly, being in the minority. Most people wanted nothing to do with young Mr. Light, especially Harriet's mother.

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Virtue

From Pollok's "Course of Time"

"For as by nature, sin is dark and loves
The dark, still hiding from himself in gloom
And in the darkness hell is still itself
The darker hell, and the severest ever
When all is wo, so virtue, ever fair!
Doth by a sympathy as strong as binds
Two equal hearts, well plowed in wedded love
Forever seek the light, forever seek
All fair and lovely things, all beauteous forms,
All images of excellence and truth;
And from her own essential being pure
As flows the fount of life that spirits drink,
Doth to herself give light, ner from her beams
As native as her own existence
Can be divorced, nor of her glory shorn."

A.G. Brown, Athens, Ohio Jan 25, 1831

(AG Brown married Priscilla K. Crippen January 8, 1824. They had no children.)



Mary Pruden: I was at my wits end. We had tried everything to convince Harriet that this infatuation of hers was just that, an infatuation! Of all Harriet's suitors why she chose that carpenter, was beyond me. He was a nice enough boy but he had little promise in my eyes. He would never be able to care for Harriet in the style to which she was accustomed. Moreover, he was leading her into harm's way and was seriously threatening her purity. Up until then she had been such a joy, always happy, pious and compassionate. My husband Silas and I raised all our children to judge others by their character. We taught them to treat all good people with respect regardless of their station in life. That did not mean we

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wanted or expected Harriet to become involved with a person from such a different social standing.

There were many young men in Athens with great promise whom Harriet could have had, but they all lacked the desire to wander off into the opening West, and thus they were all rejected by my daughter. She would say, "Mother your own parents were pioneer settlers right here in Athens as were you and Father. Why would you deny me my chance?" My Father, Alvin Bingham (known by most as Old Judge Bingham) and my mother moved here around 1800, so Harriet was right. That only increased the fear I felt for her. She did not understand the dangers on the frontier.

As part of America's newly emerging middle class, my husband and I adhered to the tenets of The Cult of Domesticity of True Womanhood. It taught that women like Harriet were weak and delicate and belonged safe at home, not gallivanting around in the wilderness. Settling the new westerly lands was for others, not for the Prudens –especially not for the Pruden womenfolk. After all my praying and crying and arguing, she would not be deterred. It was late in 1830 when it became clear to all of Athens that Harriet was determined to venture west. Shortly after she announced that she would leave us was when I decided to create her Remembrance Album. I hoped it would have the effect of changing Harriet's mind and bringing her to her senses. It worked, for a while. The great number of people who wrote verses to her touched us all deeply. She was truly Athens' favorite daughter and it shows in the absolutely heartfelt verses written to her. As I had hoped, the album became a tangible reality that reminded Harriet of what I constantly told her: friends are the most important thing in life. She would never find as many true and dedicated friends as she already had at home. The album drove that point home. She stayed with us an additional six years.

Mr. Light was from Logan, over the hills, and so was not always in Athens but did often find work here. There were good stretches of time when he was away. I did my best to get her interested in other potential husbands during those times. You surely cannot blame me for trying.

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I purchased the blank album at Judge Currier's mercantile after Christmas in 1830 and embroidered a beautiful bouquet of daisies on the regal purple covering. My daughter, Rebecca, and I organized the friends and family who would participate. It was agreed to in advance that we, as a group, would try to dissuade Harriet from her chosen course by demonstrating our collective love for her and by sending messages in our poetry, expressing our concern for her well-being. We managed to keep the class and book a secret from Harriet. We presented it to her, as I recall, in April of 1831. It had only a few poems in it at the time; many of the students continued to work on their pieces. They would later enter their poems while socializing at our home during the many parties and gatherings. The album was left on a table in the foyer for that purpose.

Professor Brown did such a good job of being master-reader and overseeing the album's creation. The few months of classes were a joy to all concerned. Each session was a delight to attend and the outcome was most pleasing. We sometimes met at the library at the University which was quite a treat for the girls and ladies in the class. Women were not admitted to any university in those days.

Archibald, Professor Brown that is, thought I had missed the hidden message of his entry. He said that it was a warning to Harriet to protect her virtue when in actuality it was a sympathetic voice to Harriet and *him*. It was not that hard to discern, considering especially the use of the phrase, "wedded love." Needless to say I was not pleased with his entry. We were, after all, trying to keep Harriet's mind off getting married to young Mr. Light. However, Harriet and Professor Brown were close friends and I knew he sympathized with her. In the end I knew it was all in the Creator's hands and beyond my power to influence.

May cloudless beams of grace and truth
Adorn my daughter's ope'ning youth;
Long happy in her native home,
Among it's fragrant groves to roam,
May choicest blessings her attend

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In Parents Brothers Sisters Friends;
May no rude wish assail her breast
To love this world by all confest
Is only given us to prepare
For one eternal bright and fair
This world shall then no force retain
It's syren's voice shall charm in vain
Religion's, aid true, peace will bring,
Her voice with joy shall praises sing
To him whose streams of mercy flow
To cheer the heart oer charged with woe
And whilst retirements sweets we know
Forever praise redeeming love

Mary Pruden

*(Of Mary's twelve children seven died before she did in or
around 1838. Is it any wonder she wanted Harriet to stay at
home?)*



Mary Perkins: I am Mrs. John Perkins. My father-in-law, Dr. Eliphas Perkins, had one of the first log cabins in Athens. That was back around 1800, along with the Bingham's and Currier's. So yes, we are one of Athens' founding families. Athens is the second oldest town in Ohio. The Miami and other Ohio Indians had mainly surrendered the state and moved west after the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. This left the land ready to be claimed and claim it we did.

Many years later, when we began this album, we were settled and prospering. In 1831 Athens was twenty-seven years old, and considered a small town in the West, but was working hard to be more than a fledgling community. There was no need for Harriet to venture forth as her elder generation had. In those days a proper young woman was

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supposed to concern herself only with piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness. Such were the times.

I was happy to contribute a poem to Harriet's album. First, being a close and personal friend of Silas and Mary's I wanted to do my part. Second, I felt, once upon a time, I had been Harriet. That is to say, when I was sixteen I also was a beauty. In those days I little understood that life was not just a continual merry time of adventure and love. Now I know better, having learned the hard way. Having babies continuously for a dozen years will do that to one. I missed my gay years of youth but my experiences have taught me to rely on my faith in the hereafter, and if "true wisdom" is "early sought and gained," then those certainties "in age will give thee rest," which is all we can ask. That was my message to Harriet.

Harriet was an uncommon beauty and had a fine character and poise. She was the epitome of grace, as had I been in my day. Moreover she was without prejudice and she made friends with people from all walks of life. Harriet believed in the spirit of freedom and in fighting for what is right. She was very interested in the Underground Railroad, the fight good-hearted people were waging to help runaway slaves get to Canada or free states like Ohio.

“Now in the morn of life, when youth
With vital ardour glows
And shines in all the fairest charms
That beauty can disclose.
Deep in thy soul, before its powers
Are yet by vice enslaved,
Be thy Creator's glorious name
And character engraved;
Ere yet the shades of sorrow cloud
The sunshine of thy days;
And cares and toils, in countless round,
Encompass all thy ways:
Ere yet thy heart the woes of age,
With vain regret, deplore,
And sadly muse on former joys
That now return no more.

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True wisdom early sought and gain'd,
In age will give thee rest,
O then, improve the morn of life,
To make its coming blest!"

Mary Perkins Feb 21, 1831



Adeline L. Currier: I also am a member of one of Athens oldest families. My father, Judge Ebenezer Currier, came to Athens in 1806. He is known as one of Athens' pioneer merchants. My family and Harriet's were good friends and often socialized. Harriet and I were fond of collecting the latest poetry. We would gather it from books, newspapers and magazines. We were also fond of pestering Professor Brown to loan us the latest books he collected for his own personal library.

I must say I did not approve of Emanuel Light. He and Harriet met in the winter of 1830 and fell in love. He was then a carpenter from Logan, Ohio, his family was originally from Virginia, and he was taking my good friend away from me. Somehow he convinced poor Harriet to go with him to the wilds of Northern Indiana and become a settler! Northern Indiana was well named; the natives were heavily armed and everywhere. There were Potawatomi, Ottawa and Chippewa (or Objibwa), and they considered themselves one people. In 1762, under Pontiac, they had captured ten of thirteen British forts. The Potawatomi had conducted the Fort Dearborn Massacre in 1812. The destroyed fort had been in the small settlement of Chicago, very close to where Mr. Light intended to take my friend.

I tried to convince her not to go, it was inviting certain doom. Harriet was, in 1831, a fresh green leaf with so much promise. She was in the spring of her life and was an idealist and optimist and not afraid to chase down her dreams. This, in a time when we middle class women were not allowed to have dreams of our own. This poem was written to try and

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show her that nothing lasts forever, especially some fragile thing like her or a leaf. We were taught to be prepared for sorrow and misery because of life's uncertainties. To minimize uncertainties, remaining in a secure environment was only prudent and wise. Women like Harriet were most definitely not supposed to become adventurers; it was socially unacceptable. The rough life outside the home of the middle class was the man's domain only in those days; all the women's journals of the day said so.

I found it ironic that even the class formed to create this album (which I mention in my poem) paralleled life's fleeting nature. It remains one of my favorite memories because of the great pride and pleasure we all took in meeting, composing and compiling our poetry to Harriet. It was over so quickly; like all earthly pleasures it lasted but a short time.

The Leaf

It came with springs soft sun and showers
Mid bursting buds and bursting flowers.
It flourished on the same light stem,
It drank the same clear dew with them
The crimson tints of summer morn
That gilded one, did each adorn.
The breeze that whispered light and brief
To bud and blossom kiss'd the leaf,
When o'er the leaf the tempest flew,
The bud and blossom trembled too.
But its companions passed away,
And left the leaf to lone decay,
The gentle gales of spring went by,
The fruits and flowers of summer die,
The autumn winds swept o'er the hill;
And winters breath came cold and chill.
The leaf now yielded to the blast,
And on the rushing stream was cast,
Far far it glided on the sea
And whirled and eddied wearily,
Till suddenly it sunk to rest,

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And slumbered on the ocean's breast.
Thus life begins its morning hour,
Bright as the birthday of the flower -
Thus passes like leaves away,
As withered and lost us as they.
Beneath the present roof we meet
In joyous groups and gaily greet
The golden beams of love and light,
That kindle to the youthful sight,
But soon we part and one by one,
Like leaves and flowers, the group is done.
One gentle spirit seeks the tomb,
His brow yet fresh with childhood's bloom.
Another treads the path of fame,
And barter peace to win a name,
Another still tempts fortune's wave,
And seeking wealth, secures a grave
The last grasps yet the brittle thread -
Though friends are gone and joy is dead,
Still dare the dark and fretful tide,
And clutches at its power and pride
Till suddenly the waters sever,
And like the leaf he sinks forever

Transcribed by your friend
Adeline L. Currier
Athens 3rd Mo. 17th 1831



A.L.C.: Yes, it is me again, Adeline Currier. This is the second poem I wrote to Harriet back on March 17th in 1831. I did not author this piece however. It was written by John Gardiner Calkins Brainard and was just published when I entered it into Harriet's album. In the old album this poem follows Martha Light's poem, *The Cloud* (see page 109), but mine was written some forty years before. We definitely had different opinions

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about clouds! As I previously mentioned, in my day we sought stability and certainty as they promised security. A cloud, being transient and ever-changing was not a symbol of security. Where Harriet was going was so uncertain and dangerous, well, you can understand why we were concerned for her. I hoped this poem would bring her some comfort in the wilderness.

A Fragment

"Yon cloud, 'tis bright and beautiful - it floats
Alone in God's horizon - on its edge
The stars seem hung like pearls - it looks as pure
As 'twere an angels shroud - the white cymar
Of purity just peeping through its folds,
To give a pitying look on this sad world
Go visit it, and find that all is false,
Its glories are but fog - and its white form
Is plighted to some coming thunderquest.
The rain, the wind, the lightning have their source
In such bright meetings. Gaze not on the clouds
However beautiful - gaze at the sky,
The clear, blue, tranquil, fix'd and glorious sky."

A.L.C.....Athens March 17th 1831

(Adeline was born November 2, 1813 in Athens County. She married Oscar W. Brown in 1833 and died March 3, 1893)



Iounne Brown: Frankly, Harriet was too attractive for her own good. Men were drawn to her like moths to a flame. I felt once she had matured a bit she would forget this foolishness about becoming a pioneer and settle down in Ohio. However, in 1831 she was a wide-eyed beauty and as such was distracted by love and youthful ideas. She envisioned a grand adventure

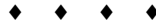
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with a gala ending where she and her beau would live happily ever after, seldom a reality for settlers. She was quite the romantic in those days. I chose this poem for Harriet's album to remind her of a time-honored truth.

Sympathy

How lovely is yon star of night,
That shines amid the shades of even,
And revels in its pearly light,
The brightest, purest gem of heaven;
But brighter far, the tearful eye,
That wakes and weeps at misery's sigh
How sweet the flower's at early dawn,
When first they meet the orient beam,
Glist'ning amid the dews of morn,
Like sun-rays brightning on the stream
Yet sweeter far, the friendly voice,
That bids the heart rejoice.

Iounne Brown Athens, March 28th 1831



S B: I am the eldest son of Silas Pruden and the only offspring from his first marriage with my mother, Rebecca Carmichael. My name is Samuel Baldwin Pruden. I was born January 17, 1798 in Morristown, New Jersey. In 1831 Harriet was an enchanting, spirited young woman with all the idealism of youth. Life had not yet had the chance to beat her down. She had yet to discover its oh-so-fleeting nature. I begin my poem with the famous quote addressed to virgins by Robert Herrick (1591-1674), to make the most of their youthful years, those days and that happiness does not last long. I wanted to show sympathy with Harriet, but instead warned her that the idealism of youth quickly fades.

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Youth

“gather the rosebuds while ye may
old time is still a flying;
and that same flower that blooms today
tomorrow shall be dying.”

“What are all thy boasted tomorrows?
Tender sorrows, transient pleasures,
Anxious hopes and jealous fears,
Laughing hours, and mourning years
Deck'd with brightest tints at morn,
At twilight with'ring on a thorn,
Like the gentle rose of spring,
Chill'd by every zephyr's wings;
Ah! How soon its colour flies,
Blushes, trembles, falls, and dies
What is youth? A smiling sorrow
Blithe to-day and sad tomorrow;
Never fixed, forever changing,
Laughing, weeping, douting, changing;
Wild, capricious, giddy, vain
Cloy'd with pleasure, nursed with pain;
Age steals on with wintry force
Ev'ry rapt'ous hope to chase,
Like a withered sapless tree,
Bowed to chilling fates decree;
Stripped of all its foliage gay,
Drooping at the close of day;
What of tedious life remains?
Keen regrets and careless pains;
Till death appears, a welcome friend,
To bid the scene of sorrow end.”

S.....B..... Athens, March 28th, 1831

*(Samuel died in 1863 after spending forty-eight years in Athens
during which time he was engaged in wool-carding and various*

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mills including oil, grist and sawmills. He was also a salt manufacturer. In addition, he served as an associate judge for one term.)



Elvira P. Crippen: I am the daughter of Amos and Amelia (Steadman) Crippen, yet another of Athens' earliest families. I considered Harriet one of my very best friends. I still remember skipping rope and playing hide and seek in the groves as children. Harriet was an explorer even then. She was always dragging me off to the hills to play "Discover." I suppose I didn't find her decision to go west too surprising, what with that background.

When she confided to me that one day she would even see the Pacific Ocean and California, then a part of Mexico, I had no doubt she would at least try. However, when she said she would travel there overland, through miles and miles of hostile, unknown territory, well, that was sheer folly, I thought. Plenty of folks were heading to the territories back then but it was unthinkable for this well-to-do, young lady to even consider such a move. It was inviting disaster! Harriet's parents, from personal experience, knew the toils associated with settling new lands and wanted a more secure life for their daughter. Harriet was not raised to be a settler; she was expected to marry a gentleman and live in an eastern civilized town. Why she would choose to tempt fate in some godforsaken wilderness, when she need not do so, was beyond most of us.

Though I hoped for the best, I had a bad feeling. People disappeared in the West, leaving loved ones behind to fret. I was worried for my friend and wanted her to know she could count on me if ever in need.

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To Harriet

Oft as thine eye shall fondly trace
The simple line I sketch for thee,
What ever the time what ever the place
Then think on me!
When pleasure sparkles in your eye,
And every scene is fair to see,
When swift the happy moments fly
Oh, think on me!
Thy life, thy bliss, may heaven defend,
But should'st thou by it's stern decree;
Ere want a true and faithful friend
Apply to me!

Elvira P. Crippen Athens April 8, 1831

*(Elvira married Prince S. Baker September 8, 1836 in Athens.
They had no children.)*



R.C. Pruden: Other than myself, Harriet was the favorite of father's seven daughters. My name is Rebecca, the fifth of twelve children, thirteen if you count Samuel. I was born May 6, 1808, in Washington County, Ohio.

Fate does indeed work in mysterious ways. For instance, Harriet's album might never have come to pass had my sister Aschah and I not visited relatives in Gambier, Ohio late in 1830. Gambier is in Knox County and is home to Kenyon College. Gambier these days is part of the Mt. Vernon metropolitan area. Mt. Vernon was the home of John Chapman, better known as Johnny Appleseed. He left Mt. Vernon in 1828 and relocated to Indiana to begin his horticultural adventure.

In any case, while we were visiting there, friends began a commonplace book for me. It was a popular pastime amongst

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the college students. Once we returned to Athens and mother saw my album and how much I treasured it she decided we should start an album for sister Harriet. My album was the inspiration for Harriet's.

One hundred and seventy-five years later my album is still with the family and is much loved. It now resides with my great-great nephew in Michigan, and, like Harriet's, my album also went on quite an adventure.

The poem I wrote to my sister brings back bittersweet memories. Harriet and I were very close. We enjoyed reading poetry together and she often confided in me. I disagreed with Harriet that the unknown West would be a grand adventure. I remembered our elders' stories of the toil and dangers they experienced when they were living as settlers. It was, to me, not an appealing lifestyle and I was worried for my sister's well-being. Emanuel wanted to take Harriet to Northern Indiana, a dangerous place in the early 1830's. That area was still flush with Indians. Emanuel was singing the syren's song, putting dangerous ideas in Harriet's head and leading her down a perfidious path, so he was barely tolerated by the family.

I knew that only "he who reigns above" could guard her in her chosen direction or welcome her in the next world. Reading my poem again after all these years I recall how fetching and sweet Harriet was. I hope I conveyed that.

Selected for Sister Harriet

O, thou who in thy early spring
Art bright, and sweet, and gay -
Who, blithe as birds, dost lightly sing
As free from care as they;

Around whose brow fair hope hath bound
A wreath of charmed flowers,
And led thee, like a victim crown'd,
To her deceitful bowers:

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List, list not, to the syren's voice
Her words are light as air,
Today, with her thou may'st rejoice -
The next, weep with despair.

But place on him who reigns above,
The hope of thy young heart,
And thou shall triumph in his love,
When earthly hopes depart.
Then faith shall be thy earthly guide
To his own holy heaven
And love shall ope the portals wide,
And joys untold be given

R.C. Pruden Prudensville, April 9th, 1831

(Please see the Postscript for more on Rebecca and her book.)



A.C. Larak: I admit it, I was smitten with Miss Harriet Pruden. I had hoped to win her heart. Her mother, Mrs. Pruden, had an agreement with most of the professors at the University that they would help introduce her daughters to young men whom they considered to be with promise. Her mother was trying to distract Harriet from her interest in another young man, considered unworthy by the family. A.G. Brown insisted I accompany him to dinner at the Pruden residence one day after classes. I had no idea they were playing match-makers. All of the Pruden daughters were lovely, but Harriet stood out in my eyes. And it wasn't just the long flowing curls the color of honey, the wide brown eyes or her perfectly turned figure. No, there was something even more beautiful about Miss Pruden. She was engaging. She made whomever she was giving her attention to feel special. She always saw the best in people and was beyond kind or benevolent; she was angelic.

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Harriet was also intelligent. She could hold her own in any discussion of politics or current events.

Miss Pruden enjoyed my company and I was invited back for dinner parties and the like. She and I on occasion took walks or carriage rides around their land. It was then I would try to woo her. I believe she found me amusing but harmless. Nonetheless, I did manage to steal a kiss, once. Unfortunately that was as far as my charm would take me. We remained friends but I never again tasted those sweet lips.

I suppose I was resentful and jealous of this Emanuel character. I had much more to offer her: a good life in a nice house in a secure town. I just could not believe that she would prefer *him*. Her heart however was in the West. It got so I would sulk about in my own despair, which only amused Harriet. She said that I would always be her dear friend but no more. I blurted out that I would no longer be available for visits. That blunder is why I called myself "folly's notary." Life became much less gay and I found myself regretting my rash decision. I felt sorry for myself. When I heard of Harriet's announcement I joined the group which had formed to create her 'shrine,' the poetry commonplace album.

Solitude

I love at evenings silent tide
When busy care hath flown
In some sequestered dell to hide
And pensive muse alone.
Tis there in solitude refined
Reflection feels its part
Tis then the contemplative mind
With reasons charm is blest
Tis then the expanding soul ascends
And roves through fields above
Tis then the mystic essence blends
With unrepented love.
O Solitude, thy soothing charm
Can conquer fell despair
Can sad afflictions sting disarm

Richard K. Pate

And banish every care
While folly's notary pens thy shrine
And grandeur fills thy breast
Still be thy rich enjoyments mine
To bless lifes fleeting hour

Larak AC Athens April 19th 1831



Louisa M. Fuller: It is no coincidence that my poem appears just after Mr. Larak's. I entered mine a day after AC and in that location in the album to show my solidarity with him. Do not misunderstand me, I loved Harriet as much as anyone. I admired her spirit, but I was angry that she had toyed with AC's heart and then given him the mitten. Mainly I suppose that I was angry because I did not want Harriet to leave us. I felt AC Larak a much more realistic choice for Harriet. He was handsome, ambitious and his family was well-to-do. With AC she would have wanted for nothing. I could not picture Harriet as a settler, no one could. She loved parties, socializing and fine clothes. Could she really give all that up to live in the wilderness where she would be making her own clothes!?

Friendship

A brighter rose never graced its tree
Than that which blossoms here for me;
Ne'er lingered joys delighted eye
Upon a milder evening sky,
Nor ever seemed beauty more serene
Than dwells on this enchanting scene.

Yet fairer than the fairest rose,
Than every flower that summer shows,
And milder than the pensive light
That lingers on the brow of night;

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Than all earths dearer scenes more dear
Exists a charm I find not here.

Oh! Sweeter far is Friendship's sigh
Than thy breath of purity!
Thy dew drops shining mid the ray
That hails the summers fervid day;
Than these there dwells a charm more bright
In feelings eye of weeping light.

Then wonder not the wing of thought
That brighter dearer charm has sought,
Though oft I gaze delighted gaze,
On all the stores that earth displays,
There lives no one so sweet and dear,
As Friendship's smile as Friendship's tear.

Louisa M. Fuller Athens, April 20th, 1831



Anonymous: My subject was friendship, as you can see. I counted myself among those who wanted to remember and be remembered by Miss Harriet. Her then upcoming adventure was most exciting and controversial. Harriet and her beau certainly livened things up in our otherwise tranquil little village.

If I ever catch the scoundrel who tore out the second half of my poem to Harriet, I'll give him a sound thrashing. I worked very hard on it, and don't mind saying it was well written.

Friendship

The smiling joys that around us play,
The airy hopes that rise
And throw around their vivid rays,

Richard K. Pate

To check our murmuring sighs -
Combine within a social brest,
Which friendship's glowing light has blest.
Who would be doom'd to live alone,
Exploring contemplations field,
None but the wretch that's doomed to moan,
And seek in solitudes shield,
(Bottom half of page and poem are gone)



Anonymous: What Harriet was doing was not just scandalous it was embarrassing for the whole village. She was carrying on with this unacceptable man and was actually considering going with him to live amongst the Indians and wild beasts! Some of us thought she had lost her mind. Up until that point Harriet had been the picture of perfection in a daughter. Her mother Mary, my good friend, was beside herself. If you ask me, that girl just needed a sound whipping, but that was not the Pruden way, hence Harriet's behavior was proceeding unchecked.

I thought the idea of the keepsake album would accomplish nothing as far as changing the girl's mind. I suppose it was worth a try though, and the class itself was quite enjoyable. Professor Brown was an excellent teacher and taught us all much about the rich tradition of commonplace books.

I composed this poem as an instructive statement for Harriet. I wanted to show her (despite her behavior) she had many friends who were trying to help her find a way out of her predicament. From my point of view, Harriet was letting down her friends and family. She was deserting the very people who had cared for her these many years. She was also carrying on in ways a proper young lady shouldn't. I did not sign the piece as I knew Harriet understood I did not approve, I wanted mine to be just an anonymous one of the many. The idea was to show her how many friends she had in Athens who did not

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want to see her leave. The point was not to chastise her, as I would have preferred.

Friendship

“Dwells there on earth a charm so sweet
As that which binds the human soul,
When we a kindred spirit greet
In confidence beyond control
Oh, no, its soft consoling power,
Dispels the lingering cloud of woe
Soothes us in many a pensive hour,
And bids our happiest feelings flow.
If sorrow wrings the heart with grief,
Or storms despair arise,
Fair friendship flies to give relief,
A ministering angel from the skies?”



Lucy Knowles: One of the many things Harriet and I had in common was a love of poetry and a total inability to write our own. As I am sure you can tell, most of our friends could rhyme well, so it was somewhat embarrassing. Harriet and I didn't mind, we usually just giggled at our ineptness.

It was beyond belief that she was really going to do this thing, going to live in the wilderness. It scared me to death. I couldn't bear to part with my dear friend; perhaps never to see her again, which is exactly what happened. None of us, to my knowledge, ever saw her again after they left Ohio and ran off to the vastness of the West.

I agreed with Mrs. Pruden that a heartfelt intervention might convince Harriet to change her mind and stay in Athens. In the end Harriet would not be deterred, she would see and explore the West, one way or another. All she needed was a male partner, as women were not allowed to venture off by

Richard K. Pate

themselves in those days. She found that partner in Emanuel Light.

I searched and searched for just the right poem to give to Harriet for her album. I settled on one of Mr. Thomas Cambell's latest pieces. I know Harriet felt the same as I. We would miss each other terribly.

By the way, back in the 1800's, 'Lethe' was an oft-used word. Lethe is a mythical river in Hades whose water caused forgetfulness of the past for those who drank of it.

Absence

Tis not the loss of love's assurance
It is not doubting what thou art
But tis the too, too long endurance
Of absence that afflicts my heart

The fondest thoughts two hearts can cherish
When each is lonely doomed to weep
Are fruits on desert isles that perish
Or riches buried in the deep

What though, untouched by jealous madness
Our bosom's peace may fail to wreck
The undoubting heart that breaks with sadness
Is but more slowly doomed to break

Absence! Is not the soul torn by it
From more than light, or life or breath.
Tis Lethe's gloom, but not its quiet -
The pain without the peace of death

Athens April 21st 1831 Lucy Knowles

(Lucy Curtis Knowles was born March 10, 1818 at Little Hocking, Washington, Ohio and died January 15, 1899 in Alabama. She married John Wilston.)

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J.D.: I chose an entry with a time-honored truth both to and about Harriet. She was a most benevolent dear-heart and so my choice of a portion of Mr. James Beattie's essay seemed appropriate. Mr. Beattie lived in the 18th century. He was a poet, philosopher, man of letters and a favorite read in my own family.

Harriet seemed intent, in 1831, on leaving us soon. I hoped the album would accompany her and bring her comfort in the far away savage lands.

Benevolence

True benevolence is not a meteor which occasionally glare,
but a luminary, which in its regular course diffuses all
around its benign art influence.

The heart that feels for others woes,
Shall feel each selfless sorrow less;
Her heart who happiness bestows
Reflected happiness shall bless.

Would you experience the most exalted and rapturous
sensations of which your nature is capable, give full scope
to the impulses of benevolence; try what it is to heal the
broken heart and to diffuse joy and gladness through the
mansions of sorrow. Let thy flock cloth the naked, and thy
table feed the hungry,

And from the prayer of want and plaint of woe,
O never never turn away thine ease;
Forlorn, in this bleak wilderness below,
Oh! What were man, should heav'n refuse to hear?

J.D.



Richard K. Pate

A breeze full of balm from the West
O'er the face of a sleepy lake blowing.
It puffed a wave on its shore,
And the stillness to billows was broken;
The gale left it calm as before;
It slept as if never awoken.

Not thus with the dull tide of life;
One cheek may be sorrowed by weeping,
While free from the tempests of strife,
Another in peace may be sleeping
The wave once disturb'd by the breeze,
Can tranquilly sleep again never,
Till destiny chill it and freeze
The calm it had broken forever.

June 17, 1834 Mary A. Currier



John Brough: I was Ohio's governor during a part of the War between the States and am still proud of my contribution to the Union effort. That was almost thirty years after I wrote this poem to my dear sister-in-law, Harriet Pruden. I married her sister, Aschah Pruden, in 1832. Sweet Aschah died tragically young at twenty-five years of age, in 1838.

In 1831 I was a typesetter working for A.G. Brown at his newspaper, *The Athens Mirror*. Mr. Brown introduced me to the Pruden family. As I hope you can tell from the tone and message of my poem, all of Athens was extremely worried for Harriet. We felt she was listening to a syren's song and heading for trouble and woe. On the other hand, one did not have to leave home for parts unknown to early seek the grave; just ask Aschah. Death was always just around the bend in the 19th century; no matter one's station nor location. Harriet did get to satisfy some of her dreams. She saw a part of this country in its then raw state before it was settled and

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populated. She experienced the virgin territory as few people ever had.

Have you determined what I meant by, "The glittering, treacherous bait?" Two things drove Harriet to leave Athens, one glittering, the other treacherous. The first was the glitter of Emanuel's promised wedding band. The second was the treacherous nature of the West. Harriet could resist neither.

To My Sister

Sister - I might not stain a leaf
In this dear book of thine,
Or trespass on thy time, ere brief -
With sentiment of mine;

Nor yet pay the sage of time
Or seek advise to give,
But that we part, to meet again,
Perhaps, not while we live.

Sister - the brightness and the bloom of youth
Sit joyous on thy brow
And candor, innocence and truth
Are inherent virtues now,
The world, to thy young guileless mind,
Seems beautiful and fair;
Nor would thy keenest searchings find
Deceit or baseness there.

Thus listen to its syren songs,
Credit its treacherous smiles,
Dwells one the flattery of its tongues
And revels mid its wiles.
Thou hast not dream'd guilt lurks beneath
A covering so fair,
Or what the slanderer's deadly breath
Rides on so pure as air

Richard K. Pate

Sister - hath seen the songster gay
Play round the hunter's square,
Nor think of dangers in its way,
Till its death shriek rend the air?
And hast thou felt the tear spring forth
Unbidden to thine eye
To see such innocence and mirth
Thus treacherously die?

Its ease is thine - no more secure
Thy present happy state;
No more thy power to endure
The glittering, treacherous bait.
To often Friendship's holy name,
Assists to spread the snare,
While hatred, malice, envy reigns
(in demons glory there)

How oft does pleasure's winning smiles
Direct to ruins tend,
And often fancied joy beguiles
Its notaries to their ends.
A thousand solemn days nice divide
To entrap the virtuous heart,
And oft the truly good and wise
Fall victim to its art

But though such perils set thy path
Let virtue be thy guide -
Smile at the wiley tempter's wraths,
And scorn the world beside.
Live with an eye to honor here,
To happiness and love;
And earnest seek that peace so dear,
A glorious rest above!

A tribute of esteem
from your brother
John Brough

The Remembrance Album of Harriet Pruden effectively fuses an authentic 19th century pioneer-settler poetry collection with 21st century narrative, revealing an endearing story spanning eight decades; a true American love story from the Old West.

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