



*The Pageant*  
*of*  
*The House of Romance*

Being a Revival of Important Events  
in the Fisher-Richardson Families  
to Celebrate the Restoration  
and the Opening of

FISHER - RICHARDSON  
HOMESTEAD

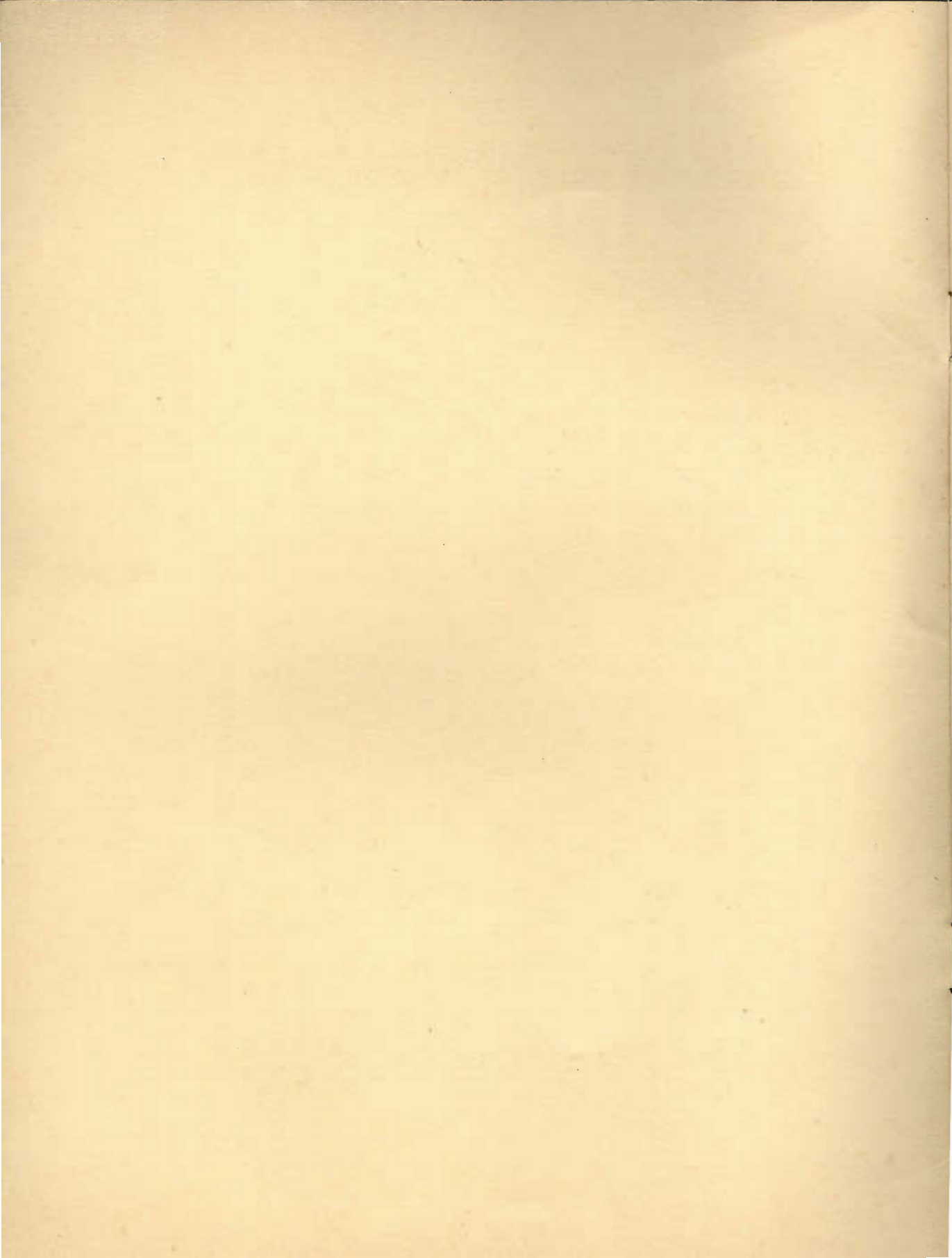
*Built about 1700*

Deeded to the Town of Mansfield  
April, 1930, by Emma Frost

Restoration Ordered by Vote of  
Town Meeting, February, 1930



*Formal Opening, September 6, 1930*





The History of the Restoration  
*of the*  
Fisher - Richardson Homestead

*Commemorating the*

MASSACHUSETTS BAY TERCENTENARY

**A** YEAR ago the semblance of an old house on Willow street sagged on its foundation. Only sentiment and stout wooden pins held it together. Father Time, abetted by the elements, had been relentless until the house had reached a place where police and firemen condemned it. It was a dubious inheritance, indeed, that fell into the hands of Miss Emma Frost. By far the easiest and cheapest way would have been for her to have ordered the remains pulled down. She, however, felt that if it had any value to this community it was her duty to keep the building here. She consulted Mr. William Sumner Appleton of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and, with Mr. Eugene Dow, he came here and looked the house over very thoroughly. The verdict was that it was an interesting type of house and should be preserved, and furthermore stated that if she would preserve and care for it for some years they would raise an endowment for it and take it over later. Miss Frost felt that she could not finance it alone though she offered \$3000, half of the sum that the men estimated that it would cost. Meanwhile news of the old house got round and offers came in. Two people offered to take it down and set it up on their own estates in another part of Massachusetts while a third offered cash for the material in the house. The fate of the house hung in the balance throughout the fall.

At length local people became interested. Consequently in January of this year a group of local people composed of William P. McDermott, chairman of the Selectmen, Harold H. Everett, Town Manager, Senator James G. Moran, Daniel C. Richardson, George C. Shields, Howard N. Fowler, Harold R. Bliven, Ira C. Gray, Mrs. Edward G. Jay, Regent of the Mansfield Chapter of the D. A. R., Mrs. Donald Tucker, Mrs. H. Russell Swift, Mrs. Alice G. Cobb, Mrs. Frank Brooks, and Miss Jennie F. Copeland met with Mr. W. S. Appleton of Boston and Miss Frost's brother, Mr. Lloyd A. Frost of Cambridge. At a later time Mrs. Warren L. Hopkins, President of the New Century Club joined the group. Several meetings were held and it was determined that if Miss Frost would deed the house to the town it would be more satisfactory to the citizens for the town to hold the title and assume the entire cost of



restoration, which it was thought by employing local men and leaving out all heating and plumbing, could be done for \$3000. When the matter was referred to Miss Frost, generously, she agreed to the proposition. Consequently the matter went to the annual town meeting. Much to the satisfaction and not a little to the surprise of those most interested, the motion was carried without a dissenting vote.

As quickly as she could, Miss Frost deeded the house and a suitable plot of land to the town. Immediately work under the direction of Town Manager Harold H. Everett and Harold R. Bliven, an expert on antiques and old houses, was begun.

The condition of the house was far worse than anyone had realized. The sills were entirely gone and all the woodwork that came in contact with the ground had rotted away; there were no windows or window frames left; the floors in the southeast and northwest corners had settled from a foot to a foot and one half into the cellar; the roof on the southeast corner had sagged three feet. Undaunted, Edward C. Garriepy, the carpenter in charge, began jacking up the building and making it stand true. At the same time the Town Manager was scurrying around to find old but strong material to replace timber that was decayed beyond use. His first bit of luck was to find the material that came out of the old Holmes house in Whiteville. For the sake of the cause Mr. Albert J. T. Thebault, the owner, was willing to sell it to the town at an exceedingly low figure, though he had been offered more by out-of-town men. How old the Holmes place was is not known, but it dates back fully one hundred and fifty years.

One of the surprises which the work of restoration revealed was that what appeared to be a plastered house was really a pine sheathed home. The little southwest room had good clean sheathing just as it was put on originally, but for some reason, either for style or warmth, the other rooms had been plastered. A still greater surprise was to find under the plaster in the northwest room wall paper of a delightful dark blue tracery on a light ground. In removing the laths and plaster most of the delicate paper was torn off, but Mr. Henry E. Lane performed a miracle and patched together pieces, many of them no larger than a man's hand, until we have one entire panel restored.

Some new sheathing had to be made for splicing the rotted boards and for replacing others that for some reason had at some time been removed. New clapboards had to be made, for the narrow clapboards of today would have been entirely out of place. New window sashes and frames were needed. Few towns could produce a carpenter who could turn out by hand all patterns desired, but Mr. Lewis S. Packard,





who for many years has been picking up old carpenter tools at auctions, readily consented to undertake the exact reproduction of the needed woodwork. His seventy-six years have not decreased his efficiency, but rather added to his knowledge and experience.

Mr. Bliven made a study of the house and discovered where the original chimney and fireplace stood before the house was enlarged in 1800. Consequently it seemed the proper thing to restore a chimney and fireplace in the east end. It was also best to retain the other chimney and fireplaces. Therefore, we see two chimneys from the outside,—a necessary innovation. The building of that new fireplace involved a few other changes, such as the place of the attic and cellar stairs and opening up of two new doors into the kitchen, one from the front room and one from the small bedroom. There are good indications that there was such a door from the small bedroom. While work was being done on the kitchen floor the original trap door to the cellar was found, so it was easy to place the cellar stairs. A good substitute arrangement was also made for the attic stairs out of the kitchen.

Mr. Bliven also found evidence that there had been a bricked in boiler beside the fireplace in the kitchen. He used as a model the boiler in the house that Daniel Fisher, Jr., had built not far away. The set kettle also came from that farm and had been outdoors, exposed to the elements for the last forty-five or fifty years.

Of course many bricks were needed. Again Mr. Everett went scouting. Practically all that were needed came from Foxboro, from the old Union Straw Shop and from the old Foxboro Cash store on Wall street where the Foxboro Coal Company is doing business today.

Day after day Mr. Garriepy has worked patiently at his task, sometimes alone and sometimes with the assistance of Harry Rennie, the town carpenter, Harold Lunn, and Luigi Bacchiocchi.

The well-sweep was built under the direction of Mr. Packard, who as a boy drew water with a well-sweep.

Mansfield now has a substantial, appropriate, and permanent memorial—a typical home of the early American settler—to commemorate the Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary celebration.





## Pageant of the House of Romance

*Written by* JENNIE F. COPELAND

### PROLOGUE

*Spoken by the Spirit of the Old House*

I, the Spirit of the Old House, bid you welcome,  
You who come to help our celebration.  
This spot holds memories of the Long Ago,  
Signs of which are wiped away.  
Here the Indian roamed the woodland.  
While just yonder came Miles Standish  
To survey.  
There he marked a boundary,  
Stopped to mend his shoe,  
So we call it Cobbler's Corner.  
To the westward a few rods  
Stood the grist mill.  
'Twas the first mill.  
For full two hundred years this house has stood  
A very little one at first.  
But hold—  
What see we here?  
Ah, 'tis the bride, sweet Mary White,  
Daughter of the parson.

EPISODE I. Lemuel Fisher brings his bride on an ox cart. 1763.

### INTERLUDE



Quickly the years go by.  
Children come and grow.  
Ere long young Daniel,  
Son of Lemuel and Mary,  
Does a-wooing go.  
Anon he brings a bride.  
Ah, here he comes,  
With Hephzibah a-pillion.



EPISODE II. Daniel Fisher brings his wife home on horse back. 1800.  
Neighbors assembled dance the minuet.

INTERLUDE

Too small the house is now by far.  
It grows until it is as you behold it.  
Five children, two to live,  
Are born within and two stay  
Until they man and woman are.  
Daniel, the son, departs to make his home.  
From Attleboro town there comes a swain  
To wed fair Evelina.

EPISODE III. Ira Richardson arrives in a *one hoss shay* followed by a coach full of girls. The departure of the bride. 1833.

INTERLUDE

Duty to parents calls the daughter home.  
'Tis here the Richardsons henceforth abide.  
Here lived their children nine,  
Six daughters and three sons.

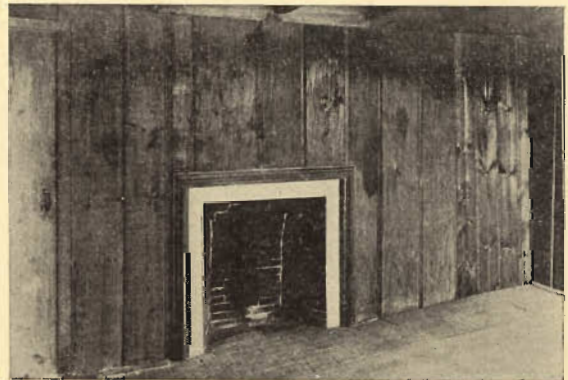
Dance of the buoyant spirits of the maidens, interrupted by Cupid.

EPISODE IV. Departure of five Richardson brides.

Mary with her husband, John Selee. 1860.  
Lodoyska with her husband, Elijah Morse. 1866.  
Clara with her husband, George Fiske. 1869.  
Caroline with her husband, Jared Dean. 1872.  
Emma with her husband, Albinus Frost. 1874.

INTERLUDE

Ever the years go by.  
Death's bugle calls  
'Till only one is left,  
Martha, the spinster,  
Loved of all.





EPISODE V. Martha Richardson with the children.

INTERLUDE

She, too, grows old and weak,  
And needs must leave the home.  
Empty the House with only Father Time  
To lay his hand upon it.

EPISODE VI. Father Time roams about the house with the Spirit of Destruction close behind him.

EPISODE VII. Miss Emma Frost, the new owner, and granddaughter of Ira Richardson, comes to take possession. Saddened and disconsolate she enters the house.

EPISODE VIII. Youth bearing tools comes around the house.

*Spirit of the Old House:* And who art thou?

*Youth:* The Spirit of Restoration.

*Spirit of the Old House:* And can you give us back the house?

*Youth:* I can.

Miss Frost is summoned and the Spirit of Restoration lays his tools at her feet.

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*Transition from the symbolic to the actual.*

EPISODE IX. Miss Frost presents the keys and deed of the House to Mr. McDermott, chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. McDermott invites into the House, Mayor Willis K. Hodgman, Jr., Mayor of Taunton, the original mother town.

Mr. Elmer E. Lane, chairman of the Board of Selectmen of Norton, which later became the mother town, is invited to cross the threshold.

The House is now thrown open by Mr. McDermott to Senator James G. Moran, representative of the Commonwealth by request of Governor Frank G. Allen.

EPISODE X. A fire is lighted on the hearth by Mrs. Harold Everett, wife of the Town Manager. As the smoke is seen curling from the chimney, Rev. Willard H. Roots asks the blessing of God.

EPISODE XI. A bucket of water is drawn from the well as the cast sing "The Old Oaken Bucket" with audience joining in the chorus.  
All who wish, drink to the health of the old house.





## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Spirit of the Old House . . . . .	Grace Forbes.
Lemuel Fisher . . . . .	Howard Fisher, <i>great great grandson of Lemuel.</i>
Mary White Fisher . . . . .	Jennie Fiske, <i>great great great granddaughter of Mary.</i>
Daniel Fisher . . . . .	Harry Phillips, <i>great great grandson of Daniel.</i>
Hephzibah Fillibrown Fisher . . . . .	Mrs. Maud Fisher Brooks, <i>great granddaughter of Hephzibah.</i>
Welcoming Neighbors . . . . .	Mr. and Mrs. Russell W. Wheeler, Mr. and Mrs. Harry R. Howe, Mr. and Mrs. Lesley B. Allen, Mr. and Mrs. William W. Shaw.
Ira Richardson . . . . .	George Flint, <i>great grandson of Ira.</i>
Evelina Fisher Richardson . . . . .	Clara Flint, <i>great granddaughter of Evelina.</i>
Nephew of Ira Richardson . . . . .	William Fiske, <i>great grandson of Ira.</i>
Guests for the wedding . . . . .	Kathleen Fox, Barbara French, Marian Shields, Elizabeth Cochran, Bayley Sherman, Elsmore Austin.
Stage driver . . . . .	James R. Cobb.
Buoyant spirits of the Richardson girls . . . . .	Gladys Hanson, Ruth Ward, Florence Calhoun, Muriel VanWormer, Eleanor Merrill, Margaret O'Donnell.
Cupid . . . . .	Winifred Ochsner.
John Selee . . . . .	William McRae, <i>descendant of neighbor of Richardson's.</i>
Mary Richardson . . . . .	Elizabeth White, <i>descendant of neighbor of Richardsons.</i>
Jared Dean . . . . .	Julian Corey, <i>descendant of one of old families.</i>
Caroline Richardson . . . . .	Helen Cates, <i>descendant of neighbor of Richardsons.</i>
Elijah Morse . . . . .	John D. Holmes, <i>descendant of one of old families.</i>
Lodoyaska Richardson . . . . .	Mary Walker, <i>descendant of neighbor of Richardsons.</i>
George Fiske . . . . .	Howard Richardson Fiske, <i>grandson of George.</i>
Clara Richardson . . . . .	Anna Flint, <i>granddaughter of Clara.</i>
Rev. Albinus Frost, Swedenborgian minister . . . . .	Malcolm Fisher, <i>great grandson of Emma's cousin.</i>
Martha Richardson . . . . .	Mrs. Clara A. Flint, <i>niece of Martha.</i>
Emma Frost, Martha's niece . . . . .	Martha Flint, <i>grand child of Emma's cousin.</i>
Marian Frost, Martha's niece . . . . .	Elizabeth Flint, <i>grand child of Marian's cousin.</i>
Neighbors' children . . . . .	George Brannigan, Thomas Brannigan, Elizabeth Brannigan, Ruth Patriquin.
Father Time . . . . .	Leon Fiske.



### CAST OF CHARACTERS Continued

Spirit of Destruction . . . . . Edward Ochsner.  
Spirit of Restoration . . . . . Herbert Stearns.  
Attendants at the well . . . . . Helen Smith, James Wheeler.

### COMMITTEES

*General Committee:* Daniel C. Richardson, James G. Moran, Ira C. Gray, George C. Shields, Howard N. Fowler.

*Committee on Costumes:* Mrs. Sadie Tucker, Mrs. Mary Swift, Mrs. Bertha Hopkins, Mrs. Maude Brooks.

*Committee on Antiques:* Harold R. Bliven, Howard N. Fowler, Jennie F. Copeland, William P. McDermott and Harold H. Everett ex-officio. Counsel and referendum.

*Hostesses for the Opening:* Mrs. Thomas J. Fox, Miss Emma Hall, Mrs. Leroy L. Woods, Mrs. Alice Bailey, Mrs. Lewis A. Richards, Mrs. Edward G. Jay, Mrs. Alice Cobb, Mrs. Lunette Hallett, Mrs. Ethel K. Brooks, and Mrs. Jennie Fisher.

*Photographer,* Clarence Pike.

*Pageant,* Jennie F. Copeland.

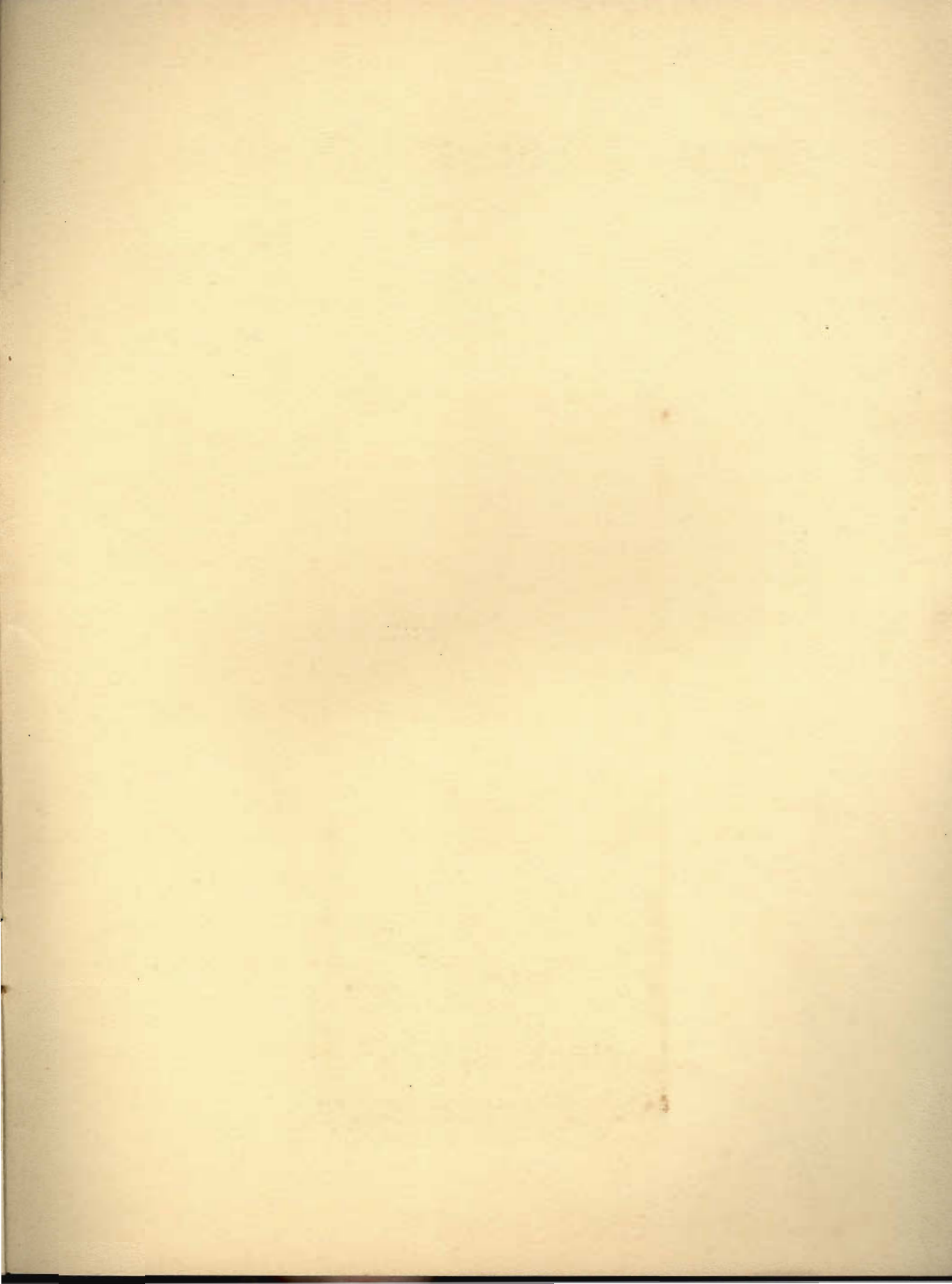
*Dances for pageant,* Eleanor C. Lovely

*For general assistance and service,* Boy Scouts.

*Publicity and printing,* Howard N. Fowler.

Thanks are due to Mr. N. E. Freeman of Norton for the oxen and the ox cart, to the family of Mr. Leonard Hodges for the chaise and to Mr. Frank Foster for the stage coach.





*The Mansfield Press*