

## **Author's Introduction**

by Nelda Ikenberry, 1999

While researching the life of legendary plant collector Mary Strong Clemens, I found a clue to the whereabouts of nearly 30 years of journals of her husband Joe Clemens -- early Central Pennsylvania Conference Methodist Episcopal minister who later became an Army Chaplain, Philippine Evangelist, and Mary's partner in botanic expeditions. Because the Clemens' gave all their worldly goods to missions and because World War II devastated their books and his manuscripts stored in Manila, it was with a great deal of surprise that Mary Clemens opened two boxes in September of 1952. The boxes were shipped from Manila to her in Brisbane, Australia, where she was an elderly widow and 'refugee' of the war. They contained journals kept by her husband between 1892 and 1921, unscathed by the bombing.

Eighty year old Mary, still collecting botanical specimens and ministering in Australia, wrote that she opened one at random and the first line she read said: "It was a joy to bring a soul to Christ today." She debated about what to do with them because "Joe's kin were too old to decipher them, also the postage might better be given to missions," as she wrote September 19, 1952. She pondered for several months and then in a letter of April 17, 1953 to Chaplain Edel, [President William W. Edel, Dickinson College, Carlisle PA], she acknowledged his gracious letter accepting the journals and noted his check for postage was far more than needed. "As it would hardly be honest for me to keep your generous check," she wrote, "so it is enclosed, but if the spirit moves you, send half of it to Dr. E. E. Tuck, Foreign Missions, NY, and ask him to send it to my husband's friend Dr. Frank Laubach, now in the Philippines. Mrs. Laubach is a Dickinson Seminary alumnus where my husband found me."

Although the recovered Journals encompass a period from 1892 to 1921, there were obviously diaries kept prior to 1892. The ones from 1921 to his death in 1936 are not accounted for at this time and presumed devastated in Manila.

### *Acknowledgments*

Through the kindness of archivist Dr. George Hing and assistant curator Marie Ferre at Dickinson College, the journals were loaned to the author for the purpose of transcription and development of a history of this important and interesting couple. Through the encouragement of Central PA Conference archivist Milton Loyer, this transcription and history is submitted for the enjoyment of readers and to honor the memory of a most worthy individual, our great-uncle Joe.

### *Additional acknowledgments*

The author has been greatly helped by permission to copy archived letters of Mary and Joseph Clemens at  
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*Joseph Clemens, 1894  
upon his graduation from Dickinson College and entry into the ministry*

**Rev. Joseph Clemens**  
**1862 - 1936**

*I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,  
And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;  
My days of praise shall ne'er be past  
While life, and thought, and being last,  
Or immortality endures.*

-- Isaac Watts

"Does that not sound like an appropriate funeral hymn? Yes, yes, for my Joseph! So I sang it all, with all my powers Jan. 22 at his place of internment..." And thus begins the poignant letter from the widow Mary Clemens high in the rain-forested mountains of New Guinea, as she strove to inform relatives of the sudden death of her "soul companion, the Elijah-spirited" Rev. Joseph Clemens, Jan. 21, 1936.

They knew it well for not only had Joseph and Mary sung this hymn for 40 years around the globe to thousands and thousands of people, but the lusty voices of Elisha Barnet and blacksmith Tom Best led the Cornish immigrant Methodists as they lifted this hymn of praise at Joe's baptism, likely in the Yellow River near Tatesville, Pennsylvania in 1876 when he was 14 years of age. An exhaustive research of the life of Chaplain Clemens, including nearly 30 years of daily journal entries, indicates he never ceased to live by his baptismal vows to praise God, cheer and lift up the fallen.

Joseph was born December 9, 1862, the 2nd son to Charles and Jane James Clemens, in depressed Cornwall, England. His maternal grandfather, prior to his marriage to Mary Arthur, had been a 'runner' of goods for the Pirates of Penzance. His father was a miner in the depleted coastal tin mines struggling to eke out a living in mine shafts extending dangerously far out under the ocean. Still standing are the ruins of the last mine he worked, the Botallack, near St. Just, Land's End, where during heavy ocean storms he could hear the boulders crashing overhead. Although the Clemens name in the 15th century was associated with bloody feuding, they were among those to fall under the spell of John Wesley whose preaching in Cornwall dominated the form religious life was to take for many years.

Immigrating to Tatesville's iron mining region of Bedford County PA, in late 1867, the Clemens' and other Cornish people brought with them their love of robust singing. Records in that community suggest that the 1884 Methodist Chapel was built in Eichelbergertown alongside the Yellow River for the "Singing Cornishmen!"

From the age of 14, Joe's 4 brothers went underground with their father. Perhaps Joe did as well, but he had other aspirations. Within 2 or 3 years, richer iron deposits in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan lured many of the Cornishmen to places like Ironwood, where the forests were being sacrificed to fuel the mining industry,

and in 1886 the family moved away. But 24 year old Joe, according to family members, after being "spurned by a Gribble girl, took his marrying money" and went to Williamsport Dickinson Seminary [now Lycoming College].

In his 2nd of 4 years Joe met the red-haired petite Mary Strong -- then 16 years old, majoring in sciences, and as ardent a believer as he. Unfortunately, illness kept her bedfast and hospitalized for several years, and it was not until her recovery in 1896 from hysterectomy surgery 4 years earlier, that they were able to marry.

Joe enrolled at Dickinson College at Carlisle in the fall of 1890, giving his address as Eichelbergertown, Bedford County, although it is unlikely any of his family remained there at that time. The last two of the four years at Dickinson are well documented in the entries of recovered journals. They generally show a man relishing his classical studies, particularly in literature and religion, heavily involved in extra-curricular activities, entrepreneurial, yearning to be a powerful Christian, and praying daily for the health of his beloved Mary.

### **1892 through 1894**

The first of the recovered Journals is for 1892 and begins January 1st as Joe is coming home from the Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) convention in Atlanta, to spend a few days at Mary's home in Muncy Valley before returning to classes. Though Mary is quite ill, the lovers indulge in ardent conversation, nature study in the woods, the singing and memorizing of hymns, reading classic literature, and family worship and prayers at bedtime.

Back on campus Joe divided his study and class time with two other major endeavors. The first was a book-selling enterprise through the Chautauqua Company. In this instance, Joe recruited more than 3 dozen salesmen from the male student body, trained them on Saturday mornings in the art of canvassing, and sent them off to canvass outlying communities to sell Bibles and related religious books. The accounts for such an enterprise were a large task, but Joe's profits were such that he not only supported himself but was able to make loans to students, family members -- and even to faculty members (e.g., \$250 to Prof. Morgan)! He ended his school years with a profit.

The 2nd project that required his time and organizational skills was that of writing and assembling the *History and Catalogue of the SAE Fraternity*, a 599 page book of which he was the chief editor. This required juggling the services of numerous men to do data research, hiring copiers, and hasty decision-making visits to Myers Publishing in Harrisburg. All the while he kept these accounts separate from his other finances.

He maintained a full schedule of heavy classes, never missed a church service or prayer meeting, and debated with the Literary Society. He often visited jails, the Poor House, hospitals, the Indian School. On Sunday's he read only religious material, sang hymns, attended at least 3 services, and often taught classes and preached. At this time in his life and on this campus, such zeal on the Lord's Day was not out of place, but there were many times ahead when this conservatism for

"keeping the Sabbath" became something of a nuisance -- especially to his military superiors.

Joe played his first game of tennis in May of 1892, and that summer he started a tennis court in Mary's little village of Muncy Valley. He became strongly interested in the Prohibition Party, lectured on the party's platform around the county, and found that it well reflected his anti-alcohol stance. He found time to exercise and go on daily walks, but he struggled with illness -- frequently battling nervousness, and getting medicine from Dr. Divine. These illnesses incapacitated him for several months at a time, every spring and summer, and continued to occur throughout his ministry and chaplaincy years. He referred to them in the July diary as a "break-down" for which doctors prescribed such things as Dr. Hill's Bowel Medicine, balsam to cure la grippe, Serdon and salt baths, quinine, castor oil, lard, turpentine, Dover's Powders, and more. The quinine caused a temporary loss of hearing and vomiting, and affected his eyes so badly he could barely read. The turpentine was put on his chest to aid with the coughing, but at times his stomach was too weak to tolerate even that. Although a dose of corn starch and mustard plasters were added to the prescription, the months of ill health drug on into the summer.

There was finally some restoration when he and Mary, among others of her family, went to the Methodist summer camp meetings at Ocean Grove NJ. There the young lovers filled their days with prayer, reading, lectures, occasional bathing, and drives in horse and buggy. If courting was a part of the agenda, it was not mentioned at all. Back at Mary's home they entertained the family with new songs learned at camp meeting and synopses of sermons.

Illness continued to plague Joe into 1893. In addition to the cures previously mentioned there were headache powders and the tying of a kerchief about his head for his severe headaches. Classes in wintertime were frequently canceled due to severe cold. Tricks such as smelly cheese placed on radiators and filling offices with snow were perpetrated, and Joe's room was sacked on occasion. He was the class poet this year, and wrote some lengthy ones for publication. "Pass Under The Rod", the original of which was sent to his brother John whose 2 infant sons Willie and Joe died a week apart in April, reveal his belief in the chastening of God's people to purify lives. This very tenet supported him through his darkest hours life long.

The work on the SAE Catalog, of which Joe was Chief Editor, continued in full swing and Joe enjoyed a tour of Myers Printing House. He thought it "quite a thing" as he saw how they set type by machinery. In addition to his staff of men involved in Catalog operations based on the Dickinson campus, he had a cadre of men selling books out of a house at Camp Hill -- a great deal of stress for a man so sick.

Just before the fall 1893 semester, Joe took the train to Chicago to see the great COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION. He was amazed at conveyances in Transportation Hall and went several times to Electricity. The electric lights at nights on those wonderful architectural structures had a wonderful appearance and the view from the 285 foot high Ferris Wheel was memorable. Advanced technology so impressed him that immediately after returning from the Exposition, Joe bought his first typewriter.

The Journal for 1894 is missing, but we know that March 16 he was received on trial in the Central PA Conference at the Fifth Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Harrisburg. The AB degree was granted him from Dickinson College at graduation, and Joe began his first pastorate ministering to several small congregations and communities near the Maryland/Pennsylvania border outside Waynesboro, his residence being at Rouzerville. His mother, now divorced, lived with him, keeping house for him.

### **1895 through March 1899**

The existing diaries for these years of service in the Central PA Conference are reproduced in this volume in their entirety.

### **April 1899 through 1900**

No journals exist for Joe's remaining years of ministry within the Central PA Conference at Audenried 1899-1900 and Nescopek 1900-01. From related sources we know that ill health and depression continued to be of concern. At the very end of 1899, the two took a 2 month vacation to Cuba. Why they went is uncertain but Mary later hinted the trip was for recuperation. We know she made a large collection of plants there for a private collector. Joe indicated they came for rest and to observe the fauna, thus he may have already been collecting bird and animal skins. With a letter of introduction from Elihu Root, Secretary of War, they camped at Neuvitas, Puerta Principe, among American soldiers who were without the services of a chaplain. At the request of Captain Kendall and other officers, Joe began holding the 1st services in English ever held there and was received with enthusiasm such he had not known in his pastorates. Joe was inspired to write directly to President William McKinley, requesting appointment as chaplain and suggesting he would even stay in Cuba as such if the appointment came quickly! His original hand-written letter and supporting letters are in the National Archives, Washington DC.

### **1901 through August 1902**

Joe's application for the chaplaincy was accepted February 2, 1901 -- although his confirmation was held up in the Senate until January 21, 1902, causing him much concern. He listed Nescopek PA as home address on all correspondence. July 26 he was assigned to the 15th Infantry Regiment and was posted at Madison Barracks at Camp Drum near Watertown NY with the rank of Captain. Joe noted the "paths to saloons were well beaten and broad... I felt like weeping, my heart is so sore... God, how shall I help these men?"

A blizzard of intense proportions hit New York just before the train was to leave with the troops in early February 1902. After being dug from numerous drifts, the train traversed the USA, and the men reached their transport in the San Francisco bay. Joe experienced great anxiety at his role and how men and officers perceived him. "Everyone looks at me as if they would determine what I am -- a rogue, fool, or true man." As always, Joe was first a minister, albeit in Army uniform, actively

ready to convert and save -- but soon to find himself among career army officers with other priorities.

In the Philippines most of 1902 year, Joe was stationed in Calbayog, on the island of Samar, where they were both ill intermittently with Dengue fever. Joe was in charge of the bakery and had his first encounter with officers of ill will. "You must never expect a man to be your friend in the army, chaplain," he was told. Cholera was epidemic and kept the troops quarantined until after the insurrection was actually over. On the bright side of the months in the Philippines, Joe collected native artifacts which were later sold to the Smithsonian. He also shot and mounted hundreds of reptile and bird specimens for museums -- present locations unknown. Mary, whose interest was strongly in ornithology, was also moving into botany, a passion which influenced the direction of their future lives.

In every spare moment Joe studied the native peoples and took copious notes of his observations and interviews with them. Missionaries had suggested, he said, that the native people could "learn up to a point," but Joe felt they had vastly more potential. He found their happiness and impoverishment incongruous and was eager to bring about their Christian enlightenment.

### **September 1902 through November 1905**

Returning to Monterey, California in September of 1902, Joe was stationed at the Presidio. Ill health and depression were of concern early on. He enrolled in a body building course with Miss Murcutt, a system which was "for nervous people." This, along with daily afternoon naps and Mary's buoyant support, sustained him in his interactions with fellow officers. In true Christian spirit, Joe severely reproached himself for lack of tact and being overly sensitive to the words of abuse, saying he cared "too much for self."

He reflected the view of most white people at the turn of the century regarding the separation of blacks and whites in the churches and in the military service and regularly identified African Americans as "colored".

January 1, 1903, he notes, "It is certainly easier to meet these people [officers] than last year because we are not afraid of them. They are not stronger or better than ourselves, some very weak... some sensible, some ridiculous... God help me this year to be useful." He mentions fewer incidents of friction. They had a busy social life --



*Chaplain and Mrs. Clemens, 1901  
ready to leave for the Philippines*

not only with fellow Christians but among army officers and enlisted men.

Mrs. E. B. Davenport, whose archived material is at the Gray Herbarium at Harvard University, met this unique couple for the first time in the summer of 1903 in Pacific Grove. She described the Chaplain as a "gentleman" and said, "Mr. Clemens was an unusual chaplain; he was in the regular Army and really lived with his regiment. When they changed camp, the first thing he did was to start a club room and get ready for the publication of their weekly newspaper. All were invited to furnish copy, and he always had an article. If any of the men went wrong and were put into the guard house, there were words of cheer and encouragement for doing better next time." She writes of the "character" of Joe and Mary as being impressive. "So deeply immersed in science, and yet never faltering in an almost consecration to all the faith in their earliest Christian living, they keep the Sabbath not because they think they ought to, but to do anything else would not occur to them. They never work on that day."



Presidio of Monterey,  
Calif.  
Aug. 29, 1905  
I Walter McQueen  
promise the Chaplain by  
the help of Almighty God  
not to taste alcoholic drink  
of any kind for a period  
three months  
Signed  
Walter McQueen

*This 1905 pledge of Walter McQueen to "by the help of Almighty God not to taste alcoholic drink of any kind for a period of three months" typifies Clemens' work among the troops.*



In Monterey Joe spent hours playing chess with Dr. Titus (a sad agnostic), Henry (a soldier who needed to turn his life around), James (a deserter in whom only Joe had faith), and dozens of others. He was the confidante of the imprisoned and sick, the dying, the faltering. He instituted a pledge process whereby a soldier would promise, in writing, to abstain from drink for a certain period of time. Tucked between pages of many journals are several of these yellowed documents. He grieved to conduct funerals for the men who "suicided" because of drink.

In addition to advocating for imprisoned soldiers and running the camp school, Joe found time to increase his skills in collecting bird specimens for the museum. He went on numerous hunting excursions in the mountains, and participated with ornithologists in some research studies. He took as many as 120 prepared bird skins to the Pacific Grove Museum of Science, at least one of which was a Mexican species far from its normal range. He and Mary often attended lectures at the Museum. Their friends included city officials, English people at Del Monte, and people well-known in fields of science world wide. August 13, 1903, they had electric lights for the first night.

Helping family members continued. He led his brother Frank (a pump man in the gold mine at Sutter Creek CA) into preaching and teaching, encouraged a nephew to sell books, opened their home to his sick missionary cousin from China and her two children. Monthly expenditures included checks to PA churches, their extended family, and larger amounts to assist in special needs of his mother. He continued to loan a great deal of money, as well.

Joe had only intermittent health problems in coastal California, largely seasonal bouts with bronchitis and pneumonia -- for which he swallowed Vaseline and took hot Cabinet baths to "roast the cold out of his bones." He took short breaks from his duties to go hunting and fishing and collecting with Mary in the mountains behind Monterey. On these expeditions they slept beneath trees and hay stacks, or in abandoned cabins or barns, and had troubles with horses becoming unshackled, or carriages breaking as runaway frightened horses careened down the mountains. For food they ate the dozens of trout Joe successfully caught, also many squirrels, and drank buttermilk from the farmers. Although Joe had a hearty appetite, "Mary could go all day on a glass of buttermilk," her brother Roy often said. Joe loved taking friends to find bee trees in remote canyons, robbing the honey often after dark, and then sharing it with many friends including the camp kitchen. Once he mentioned feeling a bit guilty about 'stealing' from the bees; perhaps that's why he was not very upset when on one occasion, before it was put in jars, the bees robbed it all back.

### **December 1905 through December 1907**

In his 2nd tour of duty in the Philippines, Joe worked at Lake Lanao on the wild southern island of Mindanao. He started a weekly literary society which featured lectures (often by Joe), debates, and visiting lecturers such as William Jennings Bryan. On the day Bryan arrived, Joe had planned one of his frequent expeditions for plants and birds and invited Bryan to go hunting with him. Bryan

responded, "I don't believe I have lost anything."

It is hard to find a typical entry among the marches of grasshoppers through the camp, the Muchacho (house) boys burning up the stove, the stealing and drunkenness. A record of one day's work followed: "Read and looked after school. Go to Quarter Master's, go to library. Bid Chaplain Griffes good bye. To commissary, paid bills, skin 2 birds and read. Looked after school. Went for walk to the big fig tree, found several new flowers, home 12:00. Boys restless. P.M. read *Army and Navy Journal* and rest awhile. This much damp gives me pains. Major Dr. calls. Read Sunday School lesson, make out monthly report. Evening prayer service, present: 35. Read to prisoners, finished *Ten Nights in a Bar Room*. Most men well pleased. I hope God will bless my efforts. Home and read *Sierra Bulletin* to wife. Wrote journal, bed. Thank God I am so well." April 22, 1907, he wrote: "To reading room and eject the drinkers and break their bottles of whiskey and beer" -- no repercussion was ever mentioned.

Mary had returned to the Philippines with an introduction from the eminent botanist Alice Eastwood, curator at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, to Dr. Elmer Merrill at the Bureau of Science in Manila. This man, more than any other in botany, encouraged their future expeditions into the remote areas of the world to collect plants hitherto unknown to science and thus changed the focus of their lives. Highlights of this period include the magnitude of plants and birds, insects and reptiles they collected for the Bureau of Science in Manila and other world museums. This area had not been at all botanized previously due to the fearsome Moras, but Mary was impassioned to collect all they could. She discovered her first new genus here, and many species are named for her. Joe collected both plants and insects, and had some named for him by enthusiastic scientists who received their bundles of preserved flora and fauna. Mary kept detailed notes on each day's observations, and even to this day scientists are amazed as they continue researching those discoveries.

In addition, Joe became interested in the Mora's, the "Mohammedan" people, long a part of Mindanao's history. Joe cultivated their friendship, bought their canes and brass ware, collected their stories, read their Koran, and invited them to his home. He lost no opportunity to broaden his knowledge of foreign religions and wrote a paper comparing their beliefs to his own. Some of his Mora collection is at the Smithsonian today. He felt sorry that the Moras were under the domination of the Filipinos. Later he not only gave illustrated lectures on the Moras but hoped to publish the book he was writing about them and other aspects of the Philippine experience. Unfortunately, research has failed to find his manuscript or that it was ever accepted by a publisher.

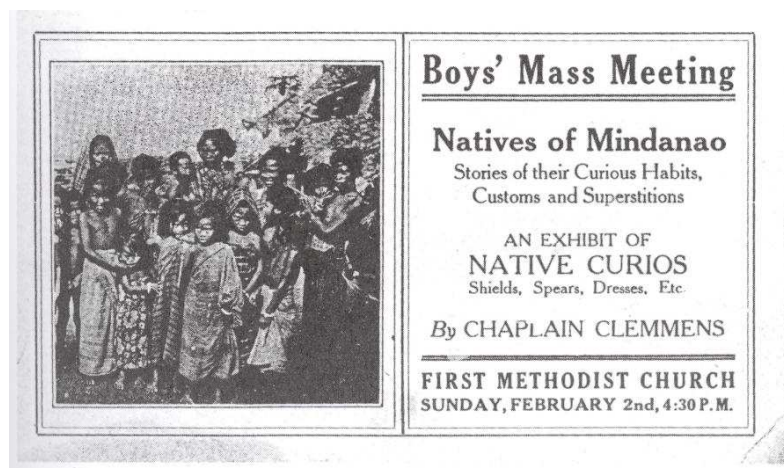
Joe began to experience what he called 'nerve problems' in mid-1906 similar to those in the pre-1900 years. He took "physics" and Mary rubbed and ironed him with hot irons. Finally he was sent to the hospital in Manila for treatment that included cold and hot packs, medicine in milk, and sleep medication. Joe still had severe headaches, awakened exhausted, was annoyed by heat and rain, and had many

pains, but he was deemed healthy enough to return to duty after 6 weeks of treatment and tests. Gradually he worked back to full coverage of his duties, (many of which Mary had taken over), a return to the collecting expeditions, a participation in tennis, and even went on maneuvers with his men.

Just prior to leaving the Philippines for the States, Joe and Mary took into their care the house boy Sixto Cordillo. Joe had been teaching him how to read and felt he was quite bright. A trip out to a distant island led to his mother signing a little handwritten note giving permission for Sixto to accompany the Chaplain to the USA and be sent to school. Decades later, Sixto's son was entering the Priesthood and wrote the widow Mary to tell what that gesture meant to his family.

### **December 1907 through December 1911.**

Just before Christmas 1907, Joe, Sixto, and his regiment arrived at Fort Douglas UT where he plunged into a continuation of his Chaplain's duties. In his spare time he cleaned and equipped the house for Mary's arrival at Christmas time, and here the Philippine artifacts were unpacked, aired, and exhibited. Being so close to Salt Lake City, he immediately began to learn what he could about the Mormons and his bibliography indicates he read several books of which he was rather critical. The regular Monday morning meeting of city ministers must not have included clergy from "The Saints," for at least one program dealt with 'How to relate to Mormons'. Other topics Joe chose to research and write about included psychotherapy ("a clear mind can heal itself," he wrote), and the Emmanuel Movement. As a layman with a scientific curiosity he joined theologians of his time in defending and/or reinter-



*announcement for Utah Joseph Clemens missionary presentation, 1909*

preting the Scriptures to fit increasing knowledge.

When Mary arrived, they contacted botanists at the university and high school to form an Academy of Science which held weekly lectures. When Mary lectured to a college class on the botany of the Philippines, bragging being sinful, he noted that "she did all right." They took Sunday School children on weekly wagon excursions into the Canyons and mountains to study nature. Much time was spent with the remaining bundles of plants and artifacts from Mindanao. He received checks for plants (from the Field Museum in Chicago, the National Museum in DC, Munich, and India) and "beasts" (from the Academy of Science in Philadelphia).

Joe ordinarily presided at 3 services on Sundays, one being the Sunday School lesson and the other two involving a prepared sermon. Realizing that the stereopticon which enhanced lectures at the University might effectively enhance his sermons, he spent hours in the making of slides and the formation of these programs. He acquired equipment from Sears & Roebuck, the Army found electricity for his "tent," and programs featuring pictures taken from the likes of illustrated versions of *Pilgrim's Progress* came into dim view on the screen. From that time on, illustrated sermons were the hallmark of his preaching career.

The department of children in Sunday School was a problem to him. On December 20, he "chased 2 boys home for behavior," and at the Christmas Eve program he said that "it requires nerves to control 20 to 30 children."

Collecting trips continued as they could be worked into the Army routine, but often Mary collected independently -- sometimes coming home well after dark. In 1909 they left on a Midwestern tour to visit brothers and sisters and collect plants in the mosquito infested woods of northern Michigan and at every train station along the way. Depots were the site of many activities, and he wrote from Omaha, where he had spread out plant dryers (blotters) in the sun, "Have time warding off police and rail road officials while drying pads for flowers." Always the pastor, while waiting to change trains in Nebraska at 1:00 A.M. in the morning his diary reads: "Walk up the street and meet a man and give him a temperance lecture."

Joe's diaries note his routine ministering to his men, vast bibliography of reading, growth in scientific endeavors, and continuing work on improving his earlier Philippine material. On January 23, 1910, he saw a total eclipse of the moon and the long tail of a "wonderful comet." He wrote articles for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, such as one on the *certhocophlayn jefferi* -- a monkey-eating eagle. Healthwise, he said he could even climb a flag pole to the last joint!

#### **January 1912 through April 1914**

Joe fulfilled a long-held desire when he was accepted to serve with the China Expedition, involved in putting down the unrest around Tientsin, Chihli Province, and the Boxer Rebellion. As usual, he never ceased caring for and converting his men. Daily entries include statements like: "Man comes and I talk and pray with him -- he repents" and "Call and pray for seaman's baby." He sought out the monthly trip down line to the smaller Army outposts along the rail road some distance from

Tientsin. Here he brought slides and lectures to the lonely men, without a hint in the diary of the discomfort and stress involved. One day's entry notes: "Up at 6:20, just catch train to Wali. Rest on way, speak to men of news, Easter, Lincoln stories and prayer. To Kaiping and give same program, men seemed pleased. To Kuyeh, men meet me at station, I ride upon hand car, give *Ten Nights in Bar Room* slide lecture to a crowd. God is mindful. Miss train, take freight, sleep on a bench."

Joe's interest in photography and writing led him to produce photo albums which he subscribed and sold to military men. The photos were taken of the various encampments, daily activities of the men, and something of the Chinese way of life. With the money he earned from the production and sales of the album, he bought a movie projector which he carried from outpost to outpost to entertain the men. The ownership of the moving picture machine became an issue later when the Army declared it belonged to them -- as the money was derived from the enlisted men and officers. Joe had thought it was his to use wherever he was stationed -- since he had done the massive amount of work to photograph, print, sell and distribute the albums. In the end, he acquiesced.

A more serious situation came up later when Joe quoted in a report an unnamed 1st Sergeant who had told him in confidence that the Army didn't care about the morals of its men -- only in their becoming fighting machines. When asked to divulge the name, Joe refused -- he was placed under arrest, stripped of his duties, confined to quarters, and threatened with court martial. The subsequent inquiries and trials connected with this refusal brought up a whole laundry list of actions that certain superiors had against Joe, and so the issue of the ownership of the projector was brought up again. Also of concern to the Army was an impression that Joe had made money by exchanging gold for Chinese money -- something for which he had actually chided himself as being "over-interested" in the rise and fall of the market. That it would obsess his thoughts even on the Sabbath was so distressing to Joe that he had gotten out of the business. Some felt Joe was excessively interested in photography and botany and used his visits to stations down the rail road line principally for these purposes. Others suggested his wife was traveling at Army expense and that he neglected his duties in order to botanize with her. The list went on and on.

All the officers of the 15th Infantry on duty with Chaplain Clemens for the last year were asked to testify as to whether or not he was zealous in his work, respected by the enlisted men, and dignified the position he held in Tientsin. The weight of the opinion was that he was zealous in his work as he understood it, but not greatly respected by the men and did not dignify the position of Chaplain in Tientsin.

Also noted was that he and his wife had little "social relations" with other officers and their families -- and this may truly have been the root of all the friction. While Joe played tennis and chess with other officers, for example, he and Mary left receptions when the drinking and dancing began. He also refused to put aside his own principles and cater to his superiors in the evaluations (known as Efficiency Reports) Chaplains were required to submit. A communication Joe sent to General

Bell about the situation was introduced as further negative evidence in spite of the latter's notation that "This letter from Chaplain Clemens contains a great deal of common sense. I am convinced that he is deserving of consideration."

Joe had nothing to add to the trial except to repeat that he could not divulge the 1st Sergeant's name because of the chaplain-confidentiality issue and to say he held nothing against his accusers or Colonel Tillson -- under whom Joe said he would rather serve than any commanding officer he had ever had.

Major Frier's conclusion is of interest. "Chaplain Clemens is a conscientious man, little adapted to the military service and, apparently, not broad minded enough to grow into it. The greater part of his troubles have (sic) been due to his failure to associate with and better know the officers of his regiment. I believe him to be honest. That he persistently declined to comply with the direct orders of his commanding officer to furnish the name of the first sergeant whom he quoted in his letter of March 17, 1914, is a matter of record, but I do not believe that it was a knowing and intentional disregard of this order, but a conscientious belief that his duty as a minister of the Gospel forbade his divulging the name."

The final recommendation was that he not be subject to court martial, but that he be sent back to the Philippines. The full report was submitted by Major J. H. Frier, Inspector General and is archived at the National Archives in Washington DC.

Joe's diary during the ordeal reflects an attitude of frustration with the Army but confidence in God. On Easter Sunday, April 12, the conclusion of the affair is recorded as follows: "At Head Quarters General Bell admonishes me in the most respectful and kindly manner the circumstances allowed, and told me I would be ordered to the Islands. I requested 8th Infantry. Look after Sunday School, teach the Easter story. Attend Union Church. P.M., released from arrest..."

This researcher's first knowledge of the China period in Joe and Mary's lives was to learn that at the New York Botanic Gardens there is a series of some 30 photographs taken by Joe on some of their forays to the Great Wall, Manchuria, and remote areas of China. Joe may have been accused of not having close friends among the Army officers, however he was closely involved with Methodist missionaries. They had a room in a missionary home in Tientsin, next to the WFMS Mission School for girls. They began life-long support of Chinese pastor Rev. Verity and others out in the field with regular large donations, and their botanical collecting trips were based in those outlying mission stations. Like the scientific observer he was, Joe made copious notes of each day's activities, the situation of the people, and their interactions with them. He left money at a number of universities during their travels in China so that collections of folk stories written by students could be sent him, and these he intended to publish. Over the next decade he pursued such writing and publication with a consummate passion.

However, the China Expedition ended abruptly for Mary and Joseph as they left immediately (April 22) to return to Manila. Leaving Tientsin, Mary nearly missed the train for collecting plants -- an altogether typical occurrence.

### **May 1915 through October 1915**

Back in Manila, Mary pursued botany at the University and at the Bureau of Science. Joe used free moments from his busy chaplain's schedule to write, correct and rewrite manuscripts which he sent to major publishing entities -- only to receive rejection. On January 9, 1915, he notes: "Get States' mail, discouraged because MS not accepted... How failures of our little selfish schemes affect us little creatures... How wonderful is our God in all His dealing with us."

Except for short expeditions into mountainous parts of the country for Mary's botanical specimens, Joe appears to have limited his collecting birds, insects and reptiles in favor of his writing. Working closely with his colleague Chaplain Moose, he filled his days with operating schools for soldiers and for children, talks, prayers, songs, services, sermons, and much counseling of men. On Feb. 5, 1915, Adj. Gen. E. F. Ladd commended Joe's zeal and his methods of work and Joe confesses to being "a little puffed up about it."

In the undercurrent of their lives, however, were the plans for a 3 month expedition to the highest mountain this side of the Himalayas -- the famous Mt. Kinabalu on the island of Borneo. By October of 1915, the packing for a full-fledged onslaught of that mountain for its unknown botanical specimens was in readiness and Joe decided to specialize in orchids. Thus was the influence of Dr. Merrill beginning to direct their lives.

A 3-page letter from Joe to his nieces describes the trip and includes the following:

"How I should like to have had all my nieces with us in the wonderful life we have led in the last four years, mingling with the strange peoples of China, Philippines, Borneo, and en route in Japan and Honolulu...Wife is becoming so famous in her botany studies that I am jealous lest the people soon begin to refer to me as the husband of the discoverer of such and such wonderful plants...But I know I made some very fine discoveries in orchids on the great mountain [Mt. Kinabalu], for there were only 60 reported there before, and I brought out over two hundred, and some of them were very wonderful. You know orchids are so full of sap and life stored in their thick roots and leaves so as to help them over a dry spell or to make up for the fact that they nearly all hang to the limb of some tree, that they are hard to dry for specimens. But we had a folding stove with us, and some sheets of asbestos, and I placed all but the blooms between the asbestos and roasted the life out of them, and the wife said they would not be good specimens but the great botanist [Dr. Merrill] said they were very superior. But that girl tried to bring home the whole forest..."

"The Dusan people, with whom we spent about six weeks, were until recently a head hunting race...Most of the 30 who came to tote our heavy bundles up the steep mountains were women dressed in nothing but a skirt reaching to the knees...The men were dressed in what we know as a gee-string which is in reality a band of cloth about the waist with one end brought through between the legs and tucked under the part about the waist...The little village we lived in on the side of the mountain has houses in which the people live in the patriarchal manner...Houses and other property is held by families and not by individuals..."

"Thirty five of them accompanied us up to the last night's lodging place on the great granite mountain. They took two priests, although I tried to make them think that was unnecessary as I am a priest...They took with them four chickens, seven eggs, and other

things to offer as sacrifices to the spirits of the mountain...One of our two Chinese dropped by the trail from heart failure at an elevation of 10,000 feet...and we buried him by the trail. It was so wet and cold that day that the chickens brought by the priests died also. Wife and I reached the damp cave two hours before any of our things, and for two hours danced up and down to keep up the circulation...I removed all my clothes except a long woolen shirt and danced that one dry...

"When we reached the ridge of the granite top, the fog was so thick and rain so cold we had to give the little, almost naked, people all the clothes we could spare. But we reached the top and from there down made large collections of plants. I took only orchids...which are being sent to the great specialist in orchids for identification. [They are archived at Harvard University's Oakes Ames Herbarium]...

"We were sorry to have so little time with these simple living people who need no money except to pay their taxes to the English Governor to prevent them from cutting off one another's heads -- which they considered a pleasant pass-time [sic] in former days. We saw some large baskets of heads they took in their last war."

Now 53, Joe concludes by cautioning his nieces that he is not old as it may seem to them -- but that he is enjoying life.

Another description of this trip is given by Oscar Cook in his book *Borneo: Stealer of Hearts*. He says he had heard that the American Army Chaplain Clemens and his wife were coming back to the sea coast and were likely to stop with him later in the week. This is how he chronicled their visit:

"I did not envy them their journey for the weather was wet and I knew from experience the route they must follow would (as the river was in flood) come through a belt of land that was practically one large kerbau wallow...Never shall I forget their arrival or their stay in my house! I was having tea on my verandah about half-past four, the rain was coming down in torrents, the padifields were one large sheet of water; the river which I could see from the verandah was a turgid, racing torrent. Suddenly there were sounds of footsteps on my stairs...I looked up and for a second gasped. On the topmost step stood two drowned rats, dripping water and oozing mud from every article of clothing they wore...They entered and squelched all over the verandah. It wasn't their fault but my misfortune."

There follow Mr. Cook's efforts to get them to bathe and change -- which they refused in favor of spreading their precious cases of plants, now arriving in curious square-shaped wicker cases on the backs of the coolies, out on the porches, verandahs and passageways. Over these the two lavished much care, as of course they were the reason for the trip. The Chaplain was so horrified at Mr. Cook's offer of a gin and bitters and Mary looked so pained that the host had to drink alone while the botanists continued pressing plants until quite late. Finally he felt he must serve dinner, so he drug his guests away from their orchids. The host

"...sat down and was about to gulp my third spoonful of soup when I realized that matters were not as usual. Of course I had put my foot in it. As the saying goes, 'I was up to the fetlocks in the consomme.' There was a pained silence, a sort of 'Oh, how could you!' atmosphere. I looked up quickly and the soup spilt itself out of that third spoon. Mrs. Padre was sitting with folded hands on her breast, her eyes upraised to the ceiling. The Padre was standing. His hands too were folded on his chest; his eyes too sought the ceiling. 'Sorry, Padre,' I mumbled, and my hands became clasped over my soup plate, and my eyes looked steadily down on the soup growing colder and colder. For what seemed an age there was



silence, then the Chaplain found his voice and said grace."

Before bedtime Joe insisted on making payment rather than wait to pay later saying, "I'd rather pay now, tomorrow is Sunday and I never pay money on Sunday if I can help it." Just before midnight, the host was awakened by voices singing "There is a green hill far away." The next morning he was awakened by the same voices joined in "New every morning is the love." So it would seem that not everyone sleeping just beyond a bamboo or curtain wall appreciated the songs of worship. But this less than flattering account points up the way these two pilgrims consistently lived their daily lives. One wonders how these religious rites were perceived by the coolies and former head-hunters on whose sacred mountain they were trespassing and around whose campfires they shared food and sleep.

### **November 1915 through July 1917**

After the Borneo expedition, Joe was briefly assigned to Ft. Sill, OK. But almost immediately his Regiment joined others along the Mexican border near El Paso at Fort Bliss, TX. This period brought the disapproval of his Army superiors down on him in forceful ways. First he was ordered to take over the Amusement Funds, which he most strenuously wished to avoid because of conflict with his conscience in regard to questionable movies and drinking. The comments he made to his fellow chaplains were duly noted as insubordination and entered in his Efficiency Report. A paper he had written on a chaplain's duties in which he tried to give moral guidelines was returned with a recommendation for Joe's court martial. He was ordered not to preach in certain situations on base. He was criticized for having prayer at the beginning of certain entertainments, and accused of turning every gathering in to a prayer meeting. His standing offer to new recruits to come and see him for help at any time was also viewed as insubordination. He was heavily criticized for all his off-base religious and botanical activities -- and even that the inexpensive off-base house where he arranged for Mary to live was beneath that of an officer! While they moved, he did not cease his cooperation with city churches. He and Mary were a team. He rode to her off-base house each morning for prayers, and she partnered with him in all of his day-time and evening hospital services, songs and prayers in the guard house, and more. In the late afternoons they were typically free to ride their horses to nearby mountains, canyons, springs and mesas for 2 or more hours to collect. "Wife is pleased with her plants," he wrote often. While he spent months working on his manuscripts of recent travels and stories, Mary worked with him in their correcting and editing. And he assisted her in packaging her dried plant specimens for sale to various institutions. On a regular basis, their gifts of money flowed to worthy schools and individuals. This included all of Mary's plant funds and much additional from Joe.

### **July 1917 through March 1918**

Reports of the increase in war activity in Europe saddened Joe and caused him to write letters to Congressmen, but in April President Wilson led the United States to unite in a war against Germany and Joe's regiment was hastily sent forth.

The United States was ill prepared for such an undertaking and there was a flurry of advancements in ranks to provide enough officers. Joe asked to be allowed to work exclusively in hospitals, where he felt so needed and useful, but his request was denied. Joe used the train journey to reach the troop transport ship in Hoboken NJ to study French, write letters, and worry about the swearing of soldiers! "How to reach them!", he grieved.

On the 31st of July the great ship sailed from the dock as its big guns fired. It reached Belle Isle, France, on August 30th and was greeted by French women in "widow's weeds." Army records indicate he served at St. Nazaire, Le Vallahon, and Luneville -- and that the 5th Field Artillery saw battles in the Sommerviller and Ansauville sectors.

His two jobs in France were the typical chaplain's services to the men and officers, plus the complete responsibility for censoring the mail for his regiment. He billeted in rooms rented from village residents. After his horses Jack and Dan arrived from Texas, he explored often to photograph the French countryside and to make notes on the plant life for Mary back in the US -- where she was studying at the Missouri Botanic Gardens. He met General Pershing, gave aid for some weeks to an elderly woman kicked by a soldier, and reported on the German war machines. Although he suffered as did others with the cold and constant wet feet, he gave some of his bed covers to needy soldiers. At Christmas he organized parties in the community and went by train to Paris to buy gifts which he delivered riding around in a cold wagon.

Charges against Joe continued to move through military channels -- even though he was now in France. On January 6, he was ordered to a special physical examination. On January 21, he was called before the Retiring Board even as his column was moving into battle. Ordered to return for a physical examination scheduled for February 6, he rode 17 miles horseback to the Colonel's Head Quarters in a cold fog. The physical examination turned up nothing more than a little "heart sclerosis and leg veins." But the next day Joe indicates that "the Doctors say not fit for active service. I make fight for it." Although Army records appear to have burned for this period, we learn he was given the option to be court martialled or to take retirement. Neither was acceptable to Joe, but his defense was useless. Under Special Orders N. 64 from the War Department in Washington, Joe, having been "found incapacitated for active service on account of disability incident thereto, is retired from active service and is to proceed to his home." The real issue, of course,



*Chaplain Clemens (seated)  
and orderly in France. 1917*

was his unwillingness to use the chaplain's tent for liquor and immoral movies.

### **March 1918 through September 1918**

Joe arrived in New York March 21 on the transport *Covington* and immediately took his Filipino manuscript for publication. During the long trip across the ocean, he came to terms with his fate and began forming in his mind a plan to go on a lecture tour in the hopes of earning sufficient funds to endow a scholarship at Williamsport Dickinson Seminary, now Lycoming College.. In fact, he had several lectures already written by the time the transport docked. Joe and Mary were soon reunited at her sister's home in Williamsport PA to launch a 6 month Lecture tour. While this period includes reference to a variety of people and places across the entire Conference, space does not permit even a partial rendering and/or indexing of the material.

Near the end of the tour, September 13, Joe and Mary visited his boyhood village of Tatesville PA and "go to the church where I was converted." The lecture tour ended by not only collecting sufficient money to establish an annuity for students at WDS, but also by elevating Joe's stature among PA Methodist Episcopalians as a lecturer and "martyr" to the cause.

### **October 1918 through November 1922**

An item in the *Pacific Grove Daily Review* for November 9, 1918, states, "Chaplain Clemens Here. Chaplain Joseph Clemens, retired, is now in the Grove and has about decided to locate here permanently. At present he is living in his own cottage at 412 Park Street. He expects his wife to arrive today or on Monday. Chaplain Clemens was with the 5th Artillery on the Mexican border for a year and has just returned from seven months' service in France." Joe delighted in the intellectual stimulation of the Pacific Grove community -- the Methodists, the Chautauquas, the abundance of Marine Biological life to learn about and to dine upon.

To make a living, Joe purchased and remodeled about six quaint cottages for rentals -- some of which are still preserved as historic sea-side cottages. The diary entries with all the details of his handicraft and expeditious manner of recycling lumber, including tent-houses and piano packing crate material, are presently of interest to the Pacific Grove Heritage Society. But the landlord business did not fulfill Joe's need to be of service, and he offered himself to the California Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Although Joe was looking for something in China, the September 1919 Conference, assigned him to a mission circuit pastorate in Greenville, Plumas County CA. Although the primitive mining communities and tiny churches offered little encouragement, he and Mary plunged in -- making hundreds of calls on horse-back, giving entertainments, and talking in the schools. In his spare time he tried to water-proof the wretched parsonage, split the wood, find pasture for the horses, and pull the weeds that choked the place. Stomach trouble and discouragement soon started. He wrote to the Secretary of War to ask for reassignment to active duty, saying he didn't

feel right taking his retirement check without giving service to the country.

By August of 1920 he was looking into other assignments, and was spending much time gardening, fishing, and cooking. Mary delighted in collecting rusts and plants. Leaving this pastorate, the two of them shipped their goods back to Pacific Grove and rode their horses, camping out along the way, all the way down the Sierra Mountains to Lake Tahoe. From there they headed west until they could sell the horses and take the train back to the civilization of Pacific Grove.

Quite a contrast was the subsequent interim assignment April to September 1921 at Morgan Hill CA. He earned \$72 a month and enjoyed the class of people in the congregation. Just after Mary deeded her Nebraska land over to the WFMS, Joe and his congregation came under the spell of Aimee Semple McPherson at revival meetings in



*Joe and Mary checking plant rust, 1920*

nearby San Jose. Joe attended regularly and even assisted with altar calls. So impressed was he with her success that he wrote a paper showing what Methodists could learn from this God-fearing woman. Had he known of her trysts with her handsome musician, how disappointed he would have been!

Joe strongly admired his cousin Ed James, who was heavily involved in Chinese missions. Ed's advice to better prepare themselves in botany and religion was likely the reason they both enrolled in graduate studies at USC in 1921. Joe took classes in religion and writing, tempered with a little botany -- the field in which Mary concentrated her studies. They were expecting the Lord to find them a team-work that would combine their beloved vocations.

In June 1922 Mary received a government appointment to work on white pine blister rust control at Corvallis OR. A July 6, 1922, letter of Joe archived at the University of Michigan states that "Mary goes to her office, is so popular that botanists use her instead of books and the herbarium to identify rusts and plants." Joe applied to the Missionary Society to go to the Philippines (or anywhere else), but was refused because he was "too old." His donations continue -- with \$500 to USC for its Theological School, and hundreds to other missionary movements.

### **December 1922 through January 1930**

He may have been too old to be a full fledged missionary, but when Mary's appointment was over he gave himself to evangelistic work in the Philippine Islands - bearing his own expense until he was appointed Conference Evangelist in 1927.

Thus it was the two intrepid homeless Christians again left the United States December 5, 1922 for the Philippines. Working with the Methodists in Manila, Joe began a decade and a half of evangelistic work. He carried his stereopticon out to the hinterlands, where he brought many thousands into the folds. If there was no electricity, he made do with a carbide lamp -- most spectacular to the local people!

In May 1924 Mary noted that Joe felt the lost sheep he was saving lacked leaders for the flock, and his focus centered on raising up shepherds. In addition to saving souls, Joe provided Lt. Roberts, of the Geodetic Survey of Ilageean information on topography and distances involved in at least one of their trips up Mt. Moises. Mary teamed with Joe on many of these evangelistic trips, playing the portable organ. And he, of course, worked closely with her abundant plant collections. Trips took them to the northern and southern limits of the Islands -- including Zambales, Longopo, Tondo, Corregidor, and Mindanao. They conquered the highest mountains, including Mt. Arayat -- and Mt. Apo, where leeches were as abundant as the plants.

In 1927 Joe was employed by the Philippine Annual Conference. Conference missions' treasurer E. S. Lyons reported that "No difficulties stopped the Chaplain: rains, typhoons, difficult transportation did not delay him as he went forth to preach the gospel to the people. It is reported that he baptized more than 20,000 people while at work in the Philippine area."

Between May and September of 1927 Mary and Joseph went collecting on grassy trails in the Touran region of Indo-China (Viet Nam) -- including mountains areas as well as along the rail road. While much of these plants are archived in France, no letters or articles have yet been found to document this expedition and its focus.

Then in May 1929 the pair launched a strictly botanic expedition into the Sarawak area of Borneo. They came via Singapore, stopping first with Methodist Missionaries (the Hoovers) on the island of Sibu in the Rejang River. By boats and canoes, and with countless Dyak men laden with food and hundreds of plant presses on their backs, the entourage plunged into the hidden upper reaches of the Rejang. Joe was stricken with Dengue Fever early in the expedition. While hospitalized back in Kuching, he got the idea that the good Rajah Brook ought to be interested in supporting an expedition to discover his country's mysterious plant life. A brilliant idea! The Rajah was pleased to support the expedition for the remainder of the year and saw that they were supplied with men, petrol launches, equipment, and his valuable endorsement.

On rain-forested Mt. Poi (Peuh), they had for 5 weeks a system of upper and lower cave-camps. They took 4-day rotations: one living, collecting and pressing in the upper cave and on the mountain top -- then sending materials down by helpers to the one in the lower cave for further drying, writing/attaching labels, packaging, and sending down to the Chief's home to await the end of the trip. Of their mountain cave Joe wrote, "not a comfortable home, in fact it was beneath a huge rock, with a dome-like roof, which let streams come through when it rained, and it rained nearly every day. We placed all available pails to catch the water so it would not form a

lake under our cots, and we tried to keep the charcoal fire under the plants piled about our Standard Oil can stove..."

On the final return down the river the heavy bundles of precious plants took the boat precariously deep into the water. The drenching from spray at the rapids and the heavy rains made the redrying of plants a continuous process until final shipment to Manila and New York. Other dangers included fires which would flame up and burn stacks of dryers, storms that splintered huge trees, animals that shared their damp cave homes, and the loss of money from untrustworthy Chinese helpers.

In the great Bidi Cave, nearer the end of the expedition, 200 feet of ladders were built so they could climb to the cave and camp at its entry. No one had ever reached this area before because of the perpendicular sides of the mountain. No only were they able to botanize there, but Mary saw light a quarter mile within the cave and suspected there was an exit to the mountain top. Joe took lanterns and helpers and found a hole through which they could ascend and explore the strange world above. Singular plants were discovered, some never known anywhere else. A fuller account of this exciting trip is to be found in the *Journal of the New York Botanical Garden*, Vol. XXXI, August, 1930, No. 368.

### **February 1930 through May 1931**

Joe and Mary returned to the US via Singapore and Manila. In February 1930 a military examination pronounced Joe as having the body of a 25 year old -- he exulted. By June they had worked their way east as far as Ironwood MI, where at his brother John's home Joe baptized 6 month old Gilford John Ikenberry, Jr. -- the author's husband. It is likely that the trip included a stop at Chicago's Field Museum, where Mary had inquiries regarding an unknown species she had sent them. Then they finally caught up with their 3000 newly collected specimens at the New York Botanic Gardens. For three months they worked without remuneration, helping Dr. Merrill identify, label and catalog into sets the bounty of the latest Borneo material.

Their next stop appears to be Kew Gardens and Cambridge, England, where they attended the International Convention of Botanists. Following this heady experience, Joe was at last able to fulfill a dream -- to visit his birthplace at Land's End, Cornwall. In typical Mary and Joseph fashion, they walked ("no lifts") 300 miles from London to Land's End -- collecting, taking notes, stopping to sleep at farm houses. From that exhilarating adventure came another manuscript: *Browsing and Nibbling from London to Land's End*. A letter suggests that he lacked funds to have it published.

By September 20 they were back in London working at Kew, followed by 3 months at the Edinburgh Herbarium over the holidays. They traveled to the University Herbarium at Leiden, Holland, and to the Berlin/Dahlem Herbarium in Germany before returning to the US in May 1931.

### **June 1931 through December 1933**

On October 9, 1930, Joe had written to the Rajah of Sarawak, back in

Kuching, Borneo. He announced that they had decided to return to Kuching to make their home there. "There are two heads in our family," he wrote, " with only the one purpose -- to live and labor where we can do mankind the most good...Our coming to Kuching would have two objects -- hers would be to promote botany, mine philanthropy and religion." He then said they were looking for a place to invest \$20,000 in gold in a school for girls, modeled after a Methodist missionary school in another part of the country. He also offered to assist in the establishment of an herbarium for the Rajah's country, properly developing it and offering to direct it until indigenous people could be trained. Neither offer was accepted, but about this time the British Museum offered to fund Joe and Mary's next expedition into Borneo. This one was to be three years in length and to encompass Mt. Kinabalu from all sides, at all elevations -- something thought impossible even to local persons.

With this commission to collect in hand, they assembled the coolies, gear, plant presses, papers and labels. That expedition made the most famous collection ever brought from the area. Today's botanists, studying the mountain and plotting their camps and climbs on maps, say they "can't believe Mary and Joseph made it to these inhospitable places." Fortunately, photographs and the plants specimens themselves document their veracity. Not only did they climb again to the summit, but also to the previously unclimbed Victoria Peak -- a feat documented by a photo. After sleeping on the summit of Mt. Kinabalu, the next day Joe climbed to the top of St. John's Peak. All the collecting seems to have been done in areas not before studied by any person. In three years, however, they thought they could barely make a start on its abundance.

In 1932 Mary, running a fever, saw the Easter sunrise alone (except for the wood rats) on the summit of Mt. Kinabalu. Joe had taken the 4th consignment of specimens to the coast to ship to the British Museum, a trip they made at two-month intervals.

In August a visiting nephew of Joe's built them a "house," hacked and thatched out of the deepest jungle at high cloud-forest elevation. The commodious 26 x 15 feet of work space somewhat protected people and plants from the torrents of rain that fell daily. With a decent oven for drying of plants, it was an opportunity to retire the old Standard Oil can stove Joe had used for years to immortalize plants in 3 days! Hundreds of plants were brought in every day with the help of native workers. Here, between the confluence of two rivers Joe waxed nostalgic and wrote of the symphonic sounds of the waterfalls, Penokok and Double Funnel Falls, juxtapositioned with calls of birds and insects, in a piece he called *The Never Ending Oratorio*.

They seldom slept in the "Jungle Lodge," for they were hacking steep trails through the forest all around the mountain. Sleeping, Joe reported in his frequent mailings called the *Collectors' Notice*, was done beneath "lobangs" -- rocks the size of mansions. "A Garden of God's Handiwork" and "a Switzerland of beauty" he wrote.

Known as the largest flower in the world, the Rafflesia was collected and

photographed at Marai Parai by Joe Clemens. One might ask a present day botanist how such a thick, yard-wide flower can be pressed between blotters for preservation. We are told that first one photographs it, and then slices it up like an enormous Pizza. This is exactly what Joe and Mary did, unfortunately the picture has not been found.

In August 1933 from Kota Kinabalu Joe wrote: "Nothing unusual in the jungle life except I have had a bit of fever and am just getting rid of the inner ten inch gluttons that have been eating part of my good jungle fare." He was apparently sharing his meals with round worms. The same letter directs money from specimens to be sent directly to President Waugh at Dickinson College as they continued to put every penny of botanical funds into scholarships --they were supporting some 20 persons at that time.

### **January 1934 through July 1935**

By January 1934 the two returned to Manila, where Joe gave illustrated lectures and took preaching tours out into the province and Mary worked at the Bureau of Science. At the end of one such tour in early April 1935, Joe had an attack of skin eruptions on his hands and feet known as Pompholyx. While hospitalized briefly for treatment, his blood pressure was noted as a healthy 130 over 72 -- this at age 72. Joe spoke at a Bible Institute and Preacher's Lyceum in April and May, but it is obvious that plans were moving forward to botanize and attend a Missionary Conference in New Guinea. In addition, their reading about the dire consequences wrought by immoral gold seekers there led them to want to extend the Christian message where it was so needed.

Joe and Mary had few household goods but they had numerous books, manuscripts, and artifacts. These they put in storage, apparently at the Methodist Publishing House in Manila (in which Joe had some unexplained financial interest) preparatory to the next expedition.

### **July 1935 through January 21, 1936**

On August 12, 1935, they were on "the high seas bound for Salamua" (New Guinea), where they intended to go 60 miles inland to some missionaries. "It is raining, but God is here and is very careful of us -- praise his name," writes sea sick Mary from the *S. S. Neptuna* pounding in the high harbor surf at Salamua. As strong natives unloaded the cargo in the rain, aristocratic English shipmates were stunned that Mary and Joseph were leaving the ship and coming to the land of "black savages." They might as well enter a lion's den as be eaten by these head hunters, they opined. The supposed immorality of the woolly headed natives was fervently repeated -- but Joe and Mary felt the sins belonged not to the blacks, but to the recent wave of whites, seekers of Gold, who imported immorality, crime and disease.

Joe was still incapacitated by blisters on his hands and feet and unable to help with the collecting and pressing, said Mary in a humorous letter, "but by the time he had the pleasure of telling every one about them, the Lord had mercy on us and removed them." The German Lutheran Mission had been working there exactly 50



years and owned at least 10,000 acres, coconut plantations, a shipping business and airplanes. It was with these people that Joe and Mary found primitive lodging, a bit of a network between mountain villages, and help in the shipping of plants back to the "real world." At Finschaffien, the business center of the mission, Joe found immediate acceptance with the over-worked missionaries and preached through an interpreter. One church, with a congregation of 500, had an "orchestra" of boys playing upon conch shells, with sounds like those of a mighty pipe organ. Joe and Mary thought it worth the trip just to hear that beautiful sound.

Soon Mary and Joseph begin to move even further up into the steep mountains to a base camp at Sattleberg, and then on up a 12,000 foot mountain from one converted village to another. Concern was given at times that villages untouched by missionaries would not be sufficiently civilized to make some of the desired encampments safe. But the collecting moved forward -- in spite of rains of 10 inches in 24 hours and ravenous leeches. The Huon Peninsula of New Guinea was discovered to be botanically more aligned to Australia than to Malaysia -- zoologically, too, as Joe soon had prepared 3 tree kangaroo skins to send back to the US.

Plans to climb a 13,500 mountain were underway at Christmas time, when a series of events cut short Joseph's life. They had celebrated Christmas in the little village of Wareo, by singing carols -- both the black man's and white man's. Joe had offered fervent prayers that needed no interpreter, only God, Mary said. From here Joe would go to a church conference, over dangerous mountain trails, back to Finschaffien, where a new church which Joe had financially supported was to be dedicated. Before leaving for the conference, Joe hastily ate some wild boar, not at all an unusual meal, but this time it appears to have been contaminated. His last Journal entry, January 16, 1936, concludes with: "Read and eat wild pig brought by Mittahatta. Eve, Dear Love reads to me, to sleep rather early. O, the great grace He extends, I would be worthy."

The next morning, January 17, 1936, he bade Mary good bye beneath a nutmeg tree at Wareo to go ahead to the Annual Conference. Mary was to follow in a few days, but first she must deal with packing and plans to start climbing into the interior on Wednesday. Via a little native boy Joe sent back a note relative to packing things and then almost as an afterthought he said "I seem to have 'mal de mer' both ways." More notes followed in the next days, Joe thinking it was just indigestion -- but suggesting she bring the beef tea cubes, although he thought he was better. When Mary finally reached him the evening of the 21st of January via steep, dangerous and slippery trails, and bearing a striking orchid to surprise him, he was sleeping soundly and made no response. He died within hours, "awakening to be with his God", she said. "He had gone peacefully" said the missionary, and Mary said "God's will be done." In a poignant letter she wrote, "They prepared his body and left me with my dead."

In the morning one could hear the village carpenters making the rude casket, and Mary sent little naked Alick for bright red flowers from the hibiscus clumps, which they laid on Joseph's snowy blouse. The two of them knelt and "thanked God

for the good 'master' who had gone to live with Jesus and not be sick any more." The service was held at the cemetery, on the hill between the native village and the new church which Joe had helped dedicate the Sunday previously. The sun burst out from the rain clouds at last as the natives sang and the German Rev. Winkler read the last of Romans 8 in his best English. The natives had given Mary a huge bouquet of roses and she in turn gave most of them to the mothers holding heavy babes. The choicest of flowers from the mission gardens bedecked his casket. And it was here that Mary, all alone, fervently sang the hymn, "I'll Praise My Maker while I've breath, and when my voice is lost in death, praise shall employ my nobler powers." Mary said of the hymn: "Not only mountain caves have resounded to this praise-song, but it has renewed the faith and courage of folk in various lands as they saw Joseph's face radiate from the glow within his heart. His motto was to 'Cheer Up and Lift up.' His presence alone did that."

In the Botanic Garden Herbarium in Berlin/Dahlem in Germany, there is a label attached to a specimen of a nutmeg tree. On it Mary Clemens wrote, "*Myristica lancifolia* var. *clemensii*, Flora of New Guinea, Clemens Expedition, #1668. Morobe Province, Wareo cart road, high forest... Special Notes: It was under this tree that my soul companion for over 40 years of wedded life, bade me farewell, for the higher life."



*Jungle Lodge, Mt. Kinabalu, 1932  
Joe's white head may be seen in the window.*