

The Aurora Daily News
Thursday Evening, October 8, 1907

MAUD POWELL WILL APPEAR THIS EVENING

Famous Woman Violinist Chats of Early Life Here

AURORA IS HER HOME

**While Other Cities Claim Her, She Claims Aurora and Will Spend Declining Years Here
— First Public Appearance in Aurora in Several Years.**

Maude [sic] Powell, and she will always be known by that name to Aurora people, chatted pleasantly with a representative of the Daily News this afternoon at the home of Mr. and Mrs. T. N. Holden, where she is a guest during her stay in Aurora. Mrs. H. Godfrey Turner (Maude [sic] Powell) is the same charming woman she was when she made Aurora her home and during the visit she said that Aurora would always be known as her home, although Chicago and Washington, D.C., claimed her, the latter place because she was accustomed to visit her father, the late Prof. W. B. Powell, every season. Mr. Powell, after resigning the principalship of the East Aurora schools, went to Washington, where he assumed charge of the schools there.

“Chicago,” said Mrs. Turner today, “claims me perhaps because I am an Illinoisian. I was born in Peru, Ill., but came to Aurora when I was a little girl and for a long time lived with my parents on West street. By the way, I walked past the old home this morning and it has not changed one bit.

Aurora Seems Natural

“It seemed quite natural to come through the park on my way from the train last evening, everything seems the same, only I think that the city is more beautiful than ever. The foliage is prettier and everything looks so nice and fresh. I want to spend my old age here.” This latter was said with a rippling laugh.

“Tonight I will wear on my wrist a snake bracelet of Roman gold, having ruby eyes, presented me by Willie Hawkins in behalf of the people of Aurora upon the occasion when I made my farewell appearance in this city before going abroad to take up my musical studies. It has always been a precious keepsake of mine and the sentiment with which it is associated makes it doubly so. I received the gift on the stage in Aurora when I was a little girl and have guarded it diligently ever since. Many people in Aurora, all old friends of mine, will remember the night the bracelet was given me.

“Mr. Turner will be here this evening and he will enjoy this reunion as much as myself. I met Mr. Turner in England. He had charge of the company and has lived in the Bohemian world and world of art for a great many years.

“It is now eight years since I appeared in Aurora in public. Tonight after the concert I will enjoy meeting many old acquaintances. I learn with a great deal of pleasure that the attendance will be large and I am only sorry that the Peoples’ church is not larger.

Father Sang in Church

“There is a coincidence in the engagement here tonight. My father at one time sang tenor in this church, and I played the violin obligato. It is a source of pleasure to realize that I will be able to remain in Aurora over night and not hurry away on the train after the concert.

“I am more at ease since we heard that our accompanist and piano soloist, Maurice Eisner, will be here tonight, for a while I was somewhat disturbed, thinking that perhaps he would not be able to fill the date. He came from Minneapolis and is a charming young man to meet and an artist of ability as well. He is an Illinoisian, having been born in Champaign.”

In speaking about the surroundings in Aurora and that particular locality near the school buildings, Miss Powell said:

“Things look about the same when I was living here, the Center school occupied the center of the lot, and the boys played on the south side and the girls on the north side, now I notice that the boys and the girls play together on the north side of the grounds and the high school building stands on the former vacant lot.”

Mrs. Turner is a charming woman to meet. She has a fascinating English accent and is a pleasant conversationalist.

There is a every reason to believe that the Woman’s club of Aurora will realize handsomely tonight from the concert given by Maude Powell, who belongs to Aurora alone, and who is known as the celebrated woman violinist in the world. The proceeds will be turned over to the school for the deaf.

Considerable interest is being manifested in the concert. Aurora people will attend this event for a two-fold reason.

In the first place Miss Powell is generally regarded as an Aurora product having spent her girlhood in this city where she obtained her first instruction in the violin from William Fickensher and [in piano from] his daughter [Emma].

Then she is playing this evening partly for the benefit of the school for the deaf, an adjunct of the East Side high schools and a most worthy object. Many tickets have been sold and the indications are that this wonderful artiste will be greeted by a very large audience.

Sketch of Her Life

Miss Powell was born in Peru, Ill. Her father, the late Prof. William Powell at one time superintendent of the East Aurora schools, was of English-Welsh extraction, and her mother was of German-Hungarian stock. At the age of nine Miss Powell was playing the pianoforte and the violin in public.

Her earliest lessons were from William Fickensher and his daughter in Aurora. For four years she studied the violin with William Lewis of Chicago and the piano with Miss Agnes Ingersoll. Went to Europe for further study at the age of thirteen. She spent a year with Schradieck in Leipsig, at the end . . . [1882] was awarded a diploma at the examination held in the Gewandhaus; a year at the Paris Conservatory with Dancla; then at the advice of Leonard, went to England in 1883.

Taught by Joachim

She played in London and the English provinces. In London she met Joachim, who became so interested in her that he put her at once into his class in the Royal Academic High School of Music. She made her debut in Germany at the Philharmonic concert in Berlin in 1885.

At the end of a year she returned to the United States and made her first appearance at a concert of the Philharmonic society of New York, Theodore Thomas conductor, November 14, 1885, when she played Bruch's First Concerto. Since that time she has lived the life of a virtoso. She has played in the chief cities of the world, with orchestra and in recital. She has toured in Germany, France, Denmark, Austria, Holland, Poland, Russia, Belgium and South Africa.

From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education