

THE 1930 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The eighty-first annual meeting of the Minnesota Historical Society, held in St. Paul on January 13, was opened in the assembly room of the Lowry Hotel at 10:00 A.M. with a session devoted to the tenth annual conference on local history work in Minnesota. Judge Julius E. Haycraft of Fairmont, president of the Martin County Historical Society, presided, and some forty people, representing at least twelve counties, were present. In view of the astonishing progress that local history organization has made in the state since the first of these conferences was held, in 1921, it seemed appropriate, at the tenth conference, to view the advances made and to measure the results. This was done in a paper on "The Progress and Prospects of Local History Work in Minnesota" by Theodore C. Blegen, assistant superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society. The second paper was concerned with a matter of vital and immediate importance — "The Problem of Historic Markers and Monuments in Minnesota." It was presented by Willoughby M. Babcock, curator of the museum for the Minnesota Historical Society. As both of these papers are published in the present number of MINNESOTA HISTORY, attention may be devoted here exclusively to the discussion that they occasioned.

This was opened by Miss Carolyn Punderson, state regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution, who spoke of the important work being done by that organization in the marking of historic sites and promised hearty coöperation with the state society in the program outlined by Mr. Babcock. Mr. William E. Culkin, president of the St. Louis County Historical Society, declared that people generally are interested in historical work, but that they have a tendency to "let

George do it." The important thing, he said, is for George — that is, the active workers — to "carry on." History reaches out to include the most varied activities of the people; it can not be put in a strait-jacket; it grows and expands with changing times and points of view. Local history workers need not be discouraged if their numbers are few in a given community. The speaker cited a Canadian society with only twelve members, which has done notable work. He closed by urging those engaged in organizing the historical interests of a given locality to study the work of other societies, both within and outside the state.

Dr. C. A. Duniway of Northfield, president of the Rice County Historical Society, who spoke next, sounded a note of encouragement to those struggling with small beginnings. Interest and energy, he pointed out, will inevitably be rewarded and needs met. The Rice County society, for example, can now look forward to occupying quarters in the Buckham Memorial Library of Faribault, which is under construction, and one dream of its promotors will soon be realized. Dr. Duniway mentioned, as a special factor in stimulating interest, the historical displays exhibited in store windows in connection with meetings of the society.

Dr. Buck then raised the question of the attitude of the people of the state toward the survey of Minnesota's historical resources as proposed in Mr. Babcock's paper. The chairman, Judge Haycraft, voiced his hearty approval of the project, and Mr. Culkin moved that the projected survey be indorsed by the conference. This motion was seconded and carried.

Mr. W. H. Pay, president of the Blue Earth County Historical Society, characterized the recent publication of Mr. Thomas Hughes's *Old Traverse des Sioux* as a notable result of local historical interest. Touching upon the problem of the relations between county historical societies and old settlers' associations, he mentioned the interesting fact that the two organizations in Blue Earth County have the same officers,

a remark that prompted Dr. Duniway to call attention to the practise followed in Rice County, where the members of the old settlers' association have been elected honorary members of the historical society. Miss Laura S. Laumann, secretary-treasurer of the Nicollet County Historical Society, drew attention to the fact that that society aided in the publication of *Old Traverse des Sioux*.

Before the close of the conference, Judge Haycraft called upon Dr. Benjamin F. Shambaugh, superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa and president of the American Political Science Association, who was present. Dr. Shambaugh suggested that the two papers read at the conference should be published and thus made available not only to local history workers in Minnesota but also to people in Iowa and other states. A motion was made, seconded, and carried that the Minnesota Historical Society be urged to publish the papers, whereupon the session was adjourned.

Mr. Frederick G. Ingersoll, president of the Minnesota Historical Society, presided at the annual luncheon, held at the Lowry Hotel and attended by about ninety members and friends. The first speaker was Mr. Edward C. Gale of Minneapolis, a member of the society's executive council. He told interestingly of "A Visit to Ath, the Birthplace of Father Hennepin," a subject particularly appropriate in view of the fact that 1930 marks the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the famous explorer's journey into the Minnesota region. Mr. Gale's address is among the papers published in the present number of MINNESOTA HISTORY.

Dr. Shambaugh then spoke informally on "The Functions of a State Historical Society." The problem of problems, he said, is that of clearly defining a society's purpose and of definitely outlining its functions. The grand purpose he put in these words: "to reveal to the present generation the history of the commonwealth and to transmit that history to future generations"; and the functions he outlined as four, all cen-

tering about state and local history materials. These are discovery, collection, research, and publication. In this four-fold work there is "no excuse for barriers, no place for jealousies." Though a state historical society normally is the outstanding agency in the performance of the stated functions, much active and valuable work is done by other organizations, such as local and regional historical societies, public libraries, and patriotic societies, and by individuals operating single-handed; and all such work should be warmly encouraged. Dr. Shambaugh closed by sounding a note of warning against the danger of being "too academic, too high-brow." Scholarship, scientific precision, and monographic research are indeed necessary, but a state historical society "as the people's institution for revealing local history should aim to reach the wider circle of the intelligent public through popular organs of publication."

The afternoon session convened in the auditorium of the Historical Building at 3:00 P.M., with Mr. Ingersoll in the chair and about fifty people present. Mr. E. H. Bailey presented his report as treasurer and the superintendent then read his annual report, a survey of the society's activities in 1929, which is printed in this number of the magazine. The following thirty life members of the society were then elected to serve as members of the executive council for the triennium 1930-33: James D. Armstrong, Everett H. Bailey, Ralph Budd, the Reverend William Busch, Homer P. Clark, William W. Cutler, Mrs. Charles E. Furness, Harold Harris, Frederick G. Ingersoll, William H. Lightner, James M. McConnell, Ira C. Oehler, Victor Robertson, Edward P. Sanborn, Lester B. Shippee, Charles Stees, and Warren Upham of St. Paul; Solon J. Buck, Guy Stanton Ford, Edward C. Gale, Jefferson Jones, George R. Martin, and Mrs. James T. Morris of Minneapolis; William A. McGonagle and Jed L. Washburn of Duluth; Burt W. Eaton of Rochester; Julius E. Haycraft of Fairmont; Thomas Hughes of Mankato; Victor E. Lawson of Willmar; and John R. Swann of Madison. The new ex-

ecutive council later met in the superintendent's office and elected the following officers of the society for the next three years: Guy Stanton Ford, president; Mrs. Charles E. Furness, first vice-president; William W. Cutler, second vice-president; Solon J. Buck, secretary; and Everett H. Bailey, treasurer.

After the election of the executive council the following statement, prepared by a special committee consisting of Messrs. Gale, Harris, and Buck, was read by Mr. Gale, and was unanimously adopted by a rising vote as expressive of the sentiments of the society:

WILLIAM WATTS FOLWELL

In the wake of the pioneer settlers on each successive American frontier came pioneers of culture whose function it was to promote the transit of civilization across the continent. William Watts Folwell was preëminently Minnesota's pioneer of culture. Coming to the state about a decade after it was organized, as the first president of its university, he devoted himself to planning and building its educational system and engaged in such diverse activities as the founding of the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, the establishment of a state geological survey, the development of a park system for Minneapolis, and the promotion of public health in the state. As a teacher he gave not only knowledge but inspiration to hundreds of the leaders of today, and as an administrator he sought out and brought to the state other torchbearers of civilization.

Dr. Folwell was never content, however, with the mere transmission of accumulated knowledge. He recognized that it is only a foundation on which to build the greater knowledge of the future, and he was eager to promote research in every field. With his retirement from teaching in 1907, he was free to devote himself to research and during the remaining years of his long life the history of his adopted state was his major interest. Unlike most men who turn to history after their active careers in other fields are over, Dr. Folwell wrote, not amiable reminiscences, but critical, objective history based on extensive research in the original sources. He was never satisfied until he had examined the last shred of available evidence, and he set forth his conclusions fearlessly but judiciously. Rejecting a liberal offer from a commercial publisher, Dr. Folwell gave the results of his work to the people through the Minnesota Historical Society. The first

volume appeared in 1921 and as successive volumes came from the press the work was generally recognized as one of the outstanding histories of American states. The author continued his work of revising, annotating, and supplementing the copy for the fourth and last volume until a few months before his death and consequently did not see the completed work in print. It will stand, however, for all time as a monument to his scholarship.

The writing of his *History of Minnesota* and its gift to the society was only a part of Dr. Folwell's service to the cause of history in Minnesota. From 1905 on he was an active and interested member of the society, and he served on its executive council from 1917 until his death. From 1924 to 1927 he held the office of president and, despite his advanced age, gave freely of his time and energy to the work of the society. On more than one occasion his influence helped the society to obtain more adequate financial support, and many are the collections of important manuscripts acquired as a result of his suggestions. Finally, he began some years before his death to turn over to the society his own papers, including besides personal material a vast accumulation of notes, records of interviews, and correspondence relating to Minnesota history. Supplemented with additional material received from his family, this collection will be of inestimable value to future students and constitutes a second monument to the scholar who accumulated and preserved it.

The Minnesota Historical Society assembled in its eighty-first annual meeting takes this occasion to express its deep sense of loss at the death of this distinguished historian and its gratitude for his services and achievements in the cause of history.

The program feature of the afternoon session was an address by Dr. John M. Armstrong of St. Paul. Because of the importance of its subject matter and the fact that it contained an appeal for coöperation that deserves the attention of the entire state, it is published herewith in full:

A PROJECT FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN MINNESOTA

Some two years ago an historical committee was appointed by the president of the Minnesota State Medical Association. Its function is to gather material for a history of medicine in Minnesota, which is to be published eventually by the association as part of its *Transactions*.

The committee has divided the work into several divisions, and subcommittees have been appointed in the constituent county societies to look after the gathering of local material. In this way a large amount of still undigested data, which will have to be gone over carefully and edited, has been accumulated. The material gathered in the larger centers of population has up to the present writing been rather carefully worked over and written, but of course revisions are often necessary as new data are unearthed or discovered in uninvestigated sources.

There are many aspects to be considered in such a study. If the volume consisted only of the story of the formation of medical societies in the state, with the names of the members and transcripts of the minutes of the meetings, it would be dry reading indeed and of no particular lasting interest even to members of the medical profession itself. If, however, the subject be treated in a broad way with a sociological perspective, the possibilities are enlarged, as all aspects of social, economic, and even political events are bound up with it.

What influence did climate, living conditions, and epidemic and endemic disease play in the affairs of the pioneer settlers of this state and how were such factors met by them? What did they do for themselves to combat and alleviate these handicaps? What part did the medical profession take other than individual care of the sick? What was the mental attitude of both the people and the profession toward these hardships? How were emergencies met? What part did transportation, monetary panics, and war play with reference to the state of well being of the people? What laws were passed, hospitals established, and other measures taken to improve the public health; and what were the factors which, directly or indirectly, occasioned such measures and by whom were these things brought about?

Such are a few of the thoughts and problems with which the members of this committee have to contend. We are conversant with the present state of the practice of our profession and the strides made in the prevention, cause, and treatment of disease and to some extent with the mental attitude and thoughts of the medical man in past times and with the facilities, or rather the lack of them, which of necessity created self-reliance or failure in the medical man and confidence or distrust on the part of the public. We are interested also in knowing what kind of men these pioneer physicians were, who they were, why they came here, and what became of them.

We are busy men attempting to write history and untrained in that vocation; we cannot find the necessary time, without sacrifice,

to investigate every source of information, published or unpublished, that may be at our disposal. We are doing this work with no compensation other than our interest in the subject, and thus far that has carried us along.

We desire aid and are confident that many sources of information regarding medicine and medical men in the broad sense as outlined are available in diaries, records of deceased medical men, manuscripts, biographies, county, church, and other records that would be of great value to us. It is hoped that our committee will be able to produce a creditable history of medicine in Minnesota covering all these aspects of the subject and not a jumble of uninteresting information about ourselves alone.

We ask your aid in pointing out to us data relative to these various aspects of the task we have undertaken, and request you to put us in touch with sources both general and local pertinent to our study. The book, which may be made a source book in character, should be readable and so written as to appeal to one interested in history in general.

The committee appeals to the members of the Minnesota Historical Society and others interested for information, data, and ideas as to the structure and scope of the work we hope at some time to complete. The task is of necessity a slow one and revision has been constant, but the acquisition of new material only adds interest to our labors and increases our appetite for more. Information may be sent to Dr. J. M. Armstrong, Lowry Building, St. Paul, and will be gratefully acknowledged.

Dr. Grace Lee Nute, curator of manuscripts for the Minnesota Historical Society, discussed the project outlined by Dr. Armstrong, and called attention to certain important manuscript sources of information about medicine and doctors in early Minnesota. Some of these pertain to the Indians, some to the fur-traders, and some to the early settlers. One of the most detailed in the first group is the report of Dr. Douglas Houghton, the surgeon of the Schoolcraft expedition of 1832, telling how he vaccinated 2,070 Chippewa. Five physicians are recorded for the period of the fur-traders in the Minnesota region: Dr. Munro, Dr. Bell, Dr. John McLoughlin, Dr. Charles W. Borup, and Dr. Thomas Williamson, all of whom practised medicine to some extent among the traders and Indians. Dr. Williamson has left an interesting account book

telling much about his patients. Among the best available data on health conditions among the early settlers are diaries. Dr. Nute mentioned, by way of illustration, the diary of Mitchell Y. Jackson at Lakeland in the middle fifties, which describes the course of a virulent fever in a young boy, an illness that left him with one leg much shorter than the other. The original federal census schedules are also useful for the study of health conditions, she said. The census of 1850, for example, gives a list of persons who died the preceding year and specifies the causes of the deaths reported.

The last session of the meeting was held at 8:00 P.M. in the auditorium of the Historical Building, with Mr. James M. McConnell, state commissioner of education and a member of the society's executive council, in the chair. The audience numbered about a hundred and forty. The annual address was delivered by Dr. Shambaugh on "The Statesman of Democracy." This statesman was Abraham Lincoln, who has come to be regarded as one of the intellectual and moral giants of history. His personality, the speaker declared, was so unique, human, gifted, mysterious, and fathomless that it is difficult to talk or write about him without using the language of the gods.

Dr. Shambaugh first put before his hearers a vivid word picture of Lincoln. After describing his bodily and facial appearance, he spoke of his dress: "Clothes simply hung on him as if on a pole to scare the birds away. His trousers invariably lacked from two to six inches of meeting the tops of his shoes. In later life he frequently wore a stove-pipe hat, in which he filed papers and memoranda; swallow tail coat of broad cloth, often rusty; trousers always too short; boots rarely if ever polished; and about his neck a high stock seldom renewed. On the circuit he carried a dilapidated carpet-bag and a big, green, faded umbrella."

In Lincoln's veins, the speaker continued, were ancestral inheritances from the New England Puritan, the middle-state

Quaker, the Virginia planter, and the Kentucky pioneer. "Forest-born and forest-reared, he was a wilderness boy. He grew rapidly, but matured slowly." Dr. Shambaugh told of Lincoln's liking for books, for stories, for foot racing and wrestling, and of his skill in rail-splitting. The river fascinated him. When he appeared on the Illinois scene he brought with him from the wildernesses of Kentucky and Indiana the gifts of the forest—courage, cautiousness, fidelity, silence, mysticism, secretiveness, tragic patience, and, more precious than all else, "the instinct to endure, to wait, and to abide the issue of circumstances."

The speaker then turned to Lincoln's life at New Salem, his entry into politics, his study of law, and his election to Congress in 1846. The story of Ann Rutledge, he said, "can be described only as a lyric—one of the sweetest, purest, saddest lyrics that love has ever played on the heart-strings of youth."

In the latter part of his address Dr. Shambaugh portrayed Lincoln's emergence on the broad stage of national affairs. Wheeled back from law into politics by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, he sprang to the defense of the white man's charter of freedom that "all men are created equal." The debates with Douglas "stripped principles of their accretions, drove a wedge into the Democratic party which was to split it in twain, and made Lincoln the most promising Republican candidate for the presidency." And so at the end "Lincoln of the log cabin was to enter the White House. Lincoln the boy of the wilderness had become Lincoln the man of destiny. Lincoln the dreamer had become Lincoln the man of action. Lincoln the politician had become Lincoln the statesman. Lincoln the humble had become Lincoln the mighty." By his life and ideals he has become the symbol of democracy, "the spiritual reality of America and to the world of the truth that all men are created equal."

Dr. Shambaugh's eloquent address was followed by an exhibition of "The Frontier Woman: A Chronicles of America Photoplay," presented through the courtesy of the extension division of the University of Minnesota. The picture tells the story of the settlement of Watauga, in the Tennessee mountains, in 1780. Its purpose is to depict the courage and strength of the pioneer women and their part in the making of America. The fighting men have ridden away from the settlement under John Sevier, but in the face of fearful tales of Indian depredations the women refuse to recall their men, who go on to fight the battle of King's Mountain. The picture is adapted from Constance Lindsay Skinner's *Pioneers of the Old Southwest*.

After the conclusion of the photoplay the audience adjourned to the museum rooms, where special exhibits were on display, and light refreshments were served by members of the society's staff. The special exhibits included items relating to Father Hennepin, pictures of the late Dr. William W. Folwell, copies of old maps of the upper Northwest from French archives, and pictures of various historic markers and monuments in Minnesota.



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