

THE MINNESOTA DIAMOND JUBILEE

Three-quarters of a century ago Minnesota took its place in the federal Union as the nineteenth state to be admitted after the original thirteen. Behind it were nine years of experience as a territory, used in solving the problems of settlement and development in the wilderness of the upper Mississippi. Less than a year in the background was the devastating panic of 1857. Pressing economic and financial problems, the grim inheritance of that panic, were live issues on Minnesota's birthday. Buoyant confidence in the future of the young state, however, was the keynote of sentiment on the frontier in 1858.

Today, seventy-five years later, the birthday setting is strangely paralleled. Although the backwash of another economic cataclysm besets the commonwealth, despair is again giving away to optimism. This similarity of conditions forms the basis for a better appreciation of the kinship between the complex life of the modern commonwealth and the pioneer state of 1858. Recognition of that kinship is the keynote in Governor Olson's proclamation of April 7, officially designating 1933 as Minnesota's "Diamond Jubilee Year" (see *ante*, p. 211).

In accordance with the Governor's proclamation a series of anniversary celebrations were planned for the spring and summer under the auspices of a number of state agencies. The department of conservation utilized Arbor Day, May 5, to center attention upon the wealth of Minnesota's forest and water resources; the department of education sponsored a state-wide observance of the Diamond Jubilee among the schools during the week of May 11; and during the summer the state tourist bureau emphasized the opportunities for recreation among Minnesota's myriad lakes and streams. For the observance of the historical significance of Minnesota's admission to the Union on May 11, 1858, the Minnesota Historical Society was primarily responsible.

It arranged at the Historical Building in St. Paul on Statehood Day at 3:00 P.M. a program which was attended by about two hundred people. The Minnesota Territorial Pioneers Association, which was in session at the Capitol, adjourned to attend this program. Mr. William W. Cutler, president of the Minnesota Historical Society, presided and opened the meeting with a sketch of the history of Minnesota's attainment of statehood. This was followed by a

paper on "How Minnesota Received the News of Admission to Statehood," presented by Dr. Theodore C. Blegen, superintendent of the society, who described the variety of reactions that were voiced in the editorial columns of Minnesota newspapers after May 11, 1858.

Dean Guy Stanton Ford of the graduate school of the University of Minnesota, formerly president of the society, who was next introduced, presented an address in which he viewed the development of the North Star State in the setting of world history. Dean Ford was followed on the program by Senator Frank B. Kellogg, whose career as senator, ambassador to Great Britain, secretary of state, recipient of the Nobel peace prize, and judge of the World Court have made him, as Mr. Cutler said in his introduction, the most distinguished citizen of Minnesota. Senator Kellogg spoke of the migration of pioneers from East to West and touched upon the coming of his own parents from New York to Minnesota in the year that saw the close of the Civil War, when he himself was a nine-year-old boy. He suggested some contrasts between frontier conditions and those of today and closed with an expression of his firm belief that America is moving upward, conquering the depression, and facing a brighter future. At the conclusion of his remarks the chairman introduced Mr. Willoughby M. Babcock, curator of the society's museum, who gave an illustrated talk on Minnesota at the time of its admission to statehood.

The program came to a close with the reading by Mr. Cutler of telegrams of congratulation to Minnesota upon her seventy-fifth birthday, which were received by the society from Dr. Joseph Schafer, superintendent of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, and from the Wisconsin state senate. After the meeting adjourned, those who attended viewed the special statehood exhibits that were arranged in the museum, the manuscript division, and the library.

In addition to conducting an anniversary meeting on Statehood Day, the society, with the coöperation of five broadcasting stations, arranged a series of radio programs for the week of May 11. They were inaugurated on Monday, May 7, at 7:00 P. M., with a talk from station WLB by Dr. George M. Stephenson, professor of history in the University of Minnesota, on "The Immigrant Churches in Minnesota." This was presented as part of the series of weekly talks on Minnesota history given over WLB under the auspices of

the society (see *ante*, p. 328). It was followed at 7:30 P. M. by a half-hour concert from station KSTP, featuring the University of Minnesota Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Abe Pepinsky.

On Tuesday, May 8, at 8:00 P. M., a special Minnesota program was presented from station WLB, opening with a talk by Mr. Babcock on "Indian Music and Folklore" and followed by selections of Indian music. Miss Grace Lee Nute, curator of manuscripts for the society, sketched Minnesota's "Fur Trade Backgrounds," after which a number of voyageur songs were sung. Mr. Blegen then discussed "Sibley and His Times." The program was concluded with the playing of a number of melodies that were popular in 1858. At 9:30 P. M., from station WRHM, Mr. Arthur J. Larsen, head of the society's newspaper department, gave a talk on "Statehood for Minnesota," in which he described the maze of events that led to Minnesota's admission to the Union nearly seven months after the adoption of a constitution.

On the morning of May 11 Miss Agnes M. Larson of St. Olaf College, speaking from station WCAL at Northfield, reviewed the story of the attainment of statehood by Minnesota. At 4:00 P. M., Governor Olson gave over KSTP the address on "The Heritage of Minnesota" which appears in the June issue of *MINNESOTA HISTORY*. The Minneapolis Apollo Club, under the direction of William MacPhail, presented an hour's concert from WCCO, beginning at 9:00 P. M. The Governor was to have appeared on this program also, but was unable to be present because of illness. The anniversary programs sponsored by the society were concluded on Friday, May 12. "Highlights of Minnesota History" was the subject of a talk by Mr. Donald E. Van Koughnet, the society's research and general assistant, from WRHM at 6:30 P. M. A unique program was presented from KSTP at 9:30 P. M., portraying "The Charge of the First Minnesota" at the battle of Gettysburg. This was given by Mr. Thomas D. Rishworth with musical accompaniment by Dr. Francis Richter, both of the staff of KSTP.

At the same time that the society was carrying out its own plans for the observance of the Diamond Jubilee it encouraged observance of the anniversary throughout the state. With the assistance of a state-wide committee of about thirty persons, headed by Mr. Cutler and with Mr. Babcock as executive secretary, the society urged local communities to plan appropriate programs. A model program, suf-

ficiently general in character to be easily adapted to local conditions, was suggested. The society likewise coöperated with the department of education in drafting an anniversary program for the schools. Public interest in Minnesota's seventy-fifth birthday rapidly gathered momentum. County historical societies, schools, clubs, patriotic and fraternal organizations, business organizations, radio stations, and newspapers aided in doing honor to Minnesota's progress since 1858.

The rôle of the county historical societies in the general celebration was outstanding. The diamond anniversary was featured at the annual North Shore Historical Assembly, — a joint meeting of the historical societies of Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties, — which was held at Lutsen on August 21. Special anniversary programs were arranged by the Cottonwood, Crow Wing, Goodhue, Meeker, Rice, Rock, and Roseau county historical societies. The celebration of the Rice County society on May 11 has special interest, for it effectively linked the history of the county with the observance of the state anniversary. Mr. Larsen, as guest speaker, gave an address on the nationalities contributing to the settlement and upbuilding of the county; and Professor I. F. Grose of St. Olaf College read a paper on the beginnings of that institution. The local picture was placed in its proper perspective by Professor C. A. Mellby, also of St. Olaf College, who recalled the salient events in Minnesota's trying struggle for statehood.

Widespread attention was given to the Diamond Jubilee in the schools. Many of them joined with county historical societies in arranging special anniversary meetings and the program suggested by the state department of education stimulated the interest of teachers throughout the state. A number of programs of an unusual character were presented. At Stillwater the pupils of the Oak Park School prepared a group of papers that were read before the Oak Park Mothers' Club on May 12. Topics such as the first settlements in the St. Croix Valley, the first steamboat in Minnesota, and pioneer children were developed by fourth-grade pupils. At Arlington an historical pageant of early Minnesota life written by H. E. Anderson, superintendent of schools, was presented on May 11 under the auspices of the local Parent-Teachers Association.

A focal point in the anniversary celebration was the pageant presented at Itasca State Park beside the headwaters of the Mississippi.

This pageant, which was given six times between July 2 and September 4, was prepared under the auspices of the Northwestern Minnesota Historical Association in coöperation with the state department of conservation and was an outgrowth of the Schoolcraft centennial pageant of 1932, also sponsored by the association. With a cast of more than five hundred, including two hundred Indians from the Cass and Red Lake reservations and two hundred members of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the pageant portrayed Minnesota's "march to statehood" with dramatizations of the Indian period, the arrival of the early explorers and fur-traders, the War of 1812, the establishment of Fort Snelling, the discovery of Lake Itasca, Minnesota's organization as a territory and admission as a state, the Indian enlistments from the state for the Civil War, and the Sioux Outbreak.

Among other Diamond Jubilee celebrations was a birthday party given by Governor Olson at the Capitol on the morning of Statehood Day in honor of sixty-six residents of Twin City homes for the aged who were born in 1858. It was held in the Governor's reception room, which was specially decorated for the occasion; and a large cake with seventy-five lighted candles contributed to the birthday atmosphere. A number of anniversary celebrations were sponsored by business organizations of the state. Under the auspices of the St. Paul Association of Commerce the merchants of that city arranged special window displays on May 20, depicting episodes in Minnesota's progress during seventy-five years. At Olivia the local Booster Club held a celebration on June 6, which combined observance of the Diamond Jubilee of the state with the seventy-eighth anniversary of the organization of Renville County and the fifty-fifth anniversary of the incorporation of the village of Olivia.

An important factor in the success of the celebration was the cooperation of the press of the state. By the use of editorials, general news stories, and pictures of early Minnesota events, both the country weeklies and the metropolitan dailies brought to their readers the significance of three-quarters of a century of statehood. The *Northfield News* for May 19 includes the entire address given by Mr. Larsen at the Rice County Historical Society's celebration. A general news story of unusual interest appears in the *Winona Republican-Herald* for May 12 with this heading: "Winona First City in Minnesota

to Get Report of State's Admission to Union; '100-Gun Salute' Fired 75 Years Ago Today."

A particularly full account of the evolution of governmental organization in Minnesota, together with pictures of Ramsey and Sibley, first governors of the territory and the state, appears as a Sunday feature story in the *Minneapolis Tribune* for April 23. Another article in the *Tribune* for May 7, gives glimpses of pioneer life and customs in the late fifties and is illustrated with pictures of some early Minneapolis scenes. Accounts of Minnesota's "double-barrelled" constitutional convention and the growth of the state since 1858 appear with pictures of the three successive capital buildings since 1849 in the *Minneapolis Journal* for May 7 and the *Duluth News Tribune* for May 14.

A number of newspapers stimulated interest in the Diamond Jubilee through special activities. The *Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, in cooperation with the Crow Wing County Historical Society, conducted a contest to locate the pioneer men and women of the county, who were the guests of the society at a meeting held at Brainerd on May 11. The *Stillwater Daily Gazette*, in connection with anniversary stories that appear in the issues for May 11 and 17, lists the names of pioneers now residing in Stillwater and its vicinity who were living in Minnesota in 1858. The anniversary also was the occasion for a number of Minnesota stories in the papers of other states. For example, the first permanent school in St. Paul and the diverse nationalities of the early pioneers are featured in an article that appears in the *Christian Science Monitor* of Boston for May 8.

Observance of Minnesota's Diamond Jubilee will continue during the autumn in many parts of the state. Additional celebrations of special interest will be reviewed in future numbers of this magazine.

D.E.V.K.

GENERAL MINNESOTA ITEMS

Dr. Louise Phelps Kellogg contributes sketches of three French explorers—La Salle, La Vérendrye, and Le Sueur—to volume 11 of the *Dictionary of American Biography*, edited by Dumas Malone for the American Council of Learned Societies (New York, 1933). An American explorer of the upper Northwest, Stephen H. Long, is the subject of a biography by Harrison C. Dale. The career of



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