

THE STATE HISTORICAL CONVENTION AT WINONA

The smiling skies of a perfect Minnesota June day greeted the thirty people who on the day preceding the opening of the fourth state historical convention set off from St. Paul on the annual "historic tour" of the Minnesota Historical Society. The date was June 16, the time 9:00 A.M., and the objective Winona.

An hour's ride on the west side of the Mississippi brought the tourists to a little-used branch road which led to the home of Ignatius Donnelly and to Nininger, the city of his dreams. Though the glories of the great metropolis designed by Donnelly were never realized, the name of the place is familiar to all students of Minnesota history, for this was the home of the "Sage of Nininger," fighting politician, brilliant orator, third party leader, novelist, and student of the Shakespeare-Bacon problem. The outstanding feature of the Donnelly home is its magnificent library, rich especially in Shakespeariana.

At Red Wing the tourists were the guests of the Red Wing Historical Society and the Minnesota State Training School for Boys. Through the courtesy of Mr. J. T. Fulton, superintendent of the latter institution, a luncheon was served on the school grounds, at which about fifty Red Wing people, in addition to the visitors, were present. An excellent brass band made up of schoolboys contributed to the pleasure of the occasion. From the heights on which the school is situated a panoramic view of the Mississippi and its valley is afforded. Little wonder that the Mdewakanton Sioux under the succession of chiefs named Red Wing treasured this strategic and scenically beautiful spot!

After the luncheon a cavalcade of some twenty-five automobiles proceeded to Frontenac and thence to the Villa Maria

Academy, a Catholic girls' school built, according to some historians, on the site of old Fort Beauharnois. "Historic ground," say the local historians. Yes, in the sense that a somewhat spectacular event which occurred at that place was recorded in contemporary manuscripts and is today remembered. It is possible, however, that the development of agriculture in the modern period of Goodhue County or the settlement and the social life of the region are of greater historical importance than the events associated with the expedition of La Perrière, the building of Fort Beauharnois, and the establishment of the mission of St. Michael the Archangel. In any event, all Goodhue County and all Minnesota must be considered "historic" if the broad view of history be accepted. Still, there is a certain pleasure in studying special historical associations. In imagination the visitors to Villa Maria Academy saw the soldiers of La Perrière arriving at this wilderness spot in the early eighteenth century, witnessed them hewing logs for the fort, and participated in their celebration, on November 14, 1727, in honor of the French governor, Beauharnois — that celebration at which, according to Father Guignas, the astounded and frightened Indians "saw the fireworks in the air and the stars falling from heaven."

The eighteenth-century background of the place was impressed upon the tourists when they assembled in the quaint chapel of the villa to hear a program of brief talks. Judge Albert W. Johnson of Red Wing presided and first introduced Sister Stanislaus Kostka, a teacher in the academy, who spoke interestingly on the problem of the site of Fort Beauharnois. She was followed by Dr. W. M. Sweeney of Red Wing, who called attention to some of the points of special historical interest in Goodhue County, and Mr. Frank M. Wilson, also of Red Wing, who discussed certain details of the story of Fort Beauharnois. After the conclusion of this program many of the visitors climbed to the top of the high tower of the villa and were rewarded by a sweeping view of Lake Pepin and its farther shore, where loomed the great rock

from the summit of which, according to Indian legend, Winona threw herself to a tragic death. Refreshed and charmed by the hospitality of the faculty of Villa Maria Academy, the tourists set off, at about 3:00 P.M., for Winona, while the Red Wing people returned to their homes. At Wabasha a short stop was made to visit the old home of Alexis Bailly, the well-known fur-trader, through the courtesy of Mr. C. C. Hirschy, its present owner. At about 7:00 P.M. Winona was reached and the "historic tour" came to an end.

The local arrangements of the convention at Winona were made by a committee headed by Bishop Patrick R. Heffron, with the following members: Fred S. Bell, Karl Finkelnburg, James M. George, Willard L. Hillyer, Samuel L. Prentiss, R. E. Seaton, J. Russell Smith, Orrin F. Smith, Clarence D. Tearse, and Paul Watkins. The convention was held in Winona as a result of an invitation from the association of commerce and members and friends of the society in that city, and most of the details of arrangement were handled by Mr. Seaton, the secretary of the commerce association. At the Winona Armory where most of the sessions were held, an excellent picture exhibit was put up by the Winona County Old Settlers' Association. Here too was the traveling exhibit of the Minnesota Historical Society, designed to illustrate the work of the society in all its branches.

The convention opened with a luncheon held jointly with the Winona Rotary Club at the Winona Hotel on June 17, at 12:30 P.M. Mr. Seaton acted as toastmaster and first introduced Bishop Heffron, who made a brief address of welcome on behalf of the people of Winona. He declared that the time was opportune for making a survey of the past with a view to garnering its records and reminded his audience that, as Cicero said, one who is ignorant of the things that happened before he was born remains always a child. No dead line of demarcation separates the present from the past. "The present is in fact rooted in the past," he said, "and these roots are not found solely in the immediate past but ex-

tend even to remote times, to distant lands, and to far off influences." He emphasized particularly the importance of understanding adequately the multiform contributions to American life made by the various population elements which have gone into its making. The figure of the melting pot he rejected, for it "smacks of fusing precious gifts into a base alloy." He considered it better "that these gifts be allowed the fullest scope with the least hindrance that they may be worked out with their variety and vastness, through a unity of purpose and a basic brotherhood of spirit." A broad conception of the possibilities of history both in the local and in the state field marked the bishop's address. "An enticing vista," he asserted, "breaks before the enthusiast of history in the period of the early discoverers, the pioneer settlers, the agricultural development, the educational progress, religious growth, and the hundred other avenues along which historical research is invited to enter. This is a worth while task and the Minnesota Historical Society merits a meed of thanks from the citizens of every part of the state."

Responding on behalf of the society, Mr. Harold Harris of St. Paul, a member of the executive council, thanked Bishop Heffron and the people of Winona for their gracious welcome and expressed the hope that the convention would prove an effective stimulus not only to the study of the backgrounds of Winona and southeastern Minnesota but also to the promotion of Minnesota historical interests generally. The object of the society's summer meetings, he said, was to carry the society and its work before the people of the state with the twofold purpose of forwarding a more general interest in Minnesota history and of acquainting the people with the ideals and achievements of the society.

A brief address was then given by Dr. Theodore C. Blegen, assistant superintendent of the society, on the subject of "Minnesota: An Historical Interpretation." He contended that although in many respects the development of the state is essentially like that of other states in the upper Mississippi

Valley and in some important features simply a reflection of the progress of the nation as a whole, yet there are certain marks which distinguish Minnesota from other states of the Union. In short, the state has an individuality, and one of the objects of the study of Minnesota history is to trace out the elements in that individuality. After calling attention to some of the things shared by Minnesota with the larger section of which it is a part and with the nation, the speaker selected as items either unique or shared to a less extent with the nation its geography, the character of its population, the agrarian factor in its development, — especially the organization and activity of its farmers, — and finally certain specific cultural contributions. In each case he pointed out how these factors have entered into Minnesota history. To understand Minnesota as it is today, he said, one must know about these special factors in its past and their numerous ramifications. The nation is a family of states, and if one seeks to understand and interpret America as a whole, one must study the separate members, noting how they are like and how unlike.

Three papers and an address constituted the program of the afternoon session, which began at 2:00 P.M., with Dr. Clyde A. Duniway, professor of history in Carleton College, Northfield, as the presiding officer. The first paper was on the subject, "Minnesota as Seen by Famous Travelers," and was presented by Miss Bertha L. Heilbron, research assistant on the staff of the Minnesota Historical Society.¹ She discussed four distinguished visitors to Minnesota — George Catlin, Captain Frederick Marryat, Fredrika Bremer, and Henry David Thoreau. Catlin visited Minnesota in 1835 and 1836 and on the second trip journeyed to the sacred red pipestone quarries in southwestern Minnesota. The primary object of his visits was to portray on canvas the Indian life of the region, but he had an eye for the beauties of the coun-

¹ Mr. Willoughby M. Babcock, curator of the society's museum, who was to have read a paper on "Minnesota Indian Treaties, 1805-1858," was unfortunately unable to attend the convention.

try, and in 1841 he published a volume of travels in which he recommended to tourists a trip up the Mississippi from Prairie du Chien to St. Peter's in order to view the "towering edifices of nature" along the river's banks. In speaking of Marryat, who found his way to Fort Snelling in 1838, Miss Heilbron told of the pompous Englishman's relations with the Sioux Indians from Lac qui Parle who presented him with a full Sioux costume.² The visit of the famous Swedish author, Fredrika Bremer, occurred twelve years after Marryat's visit, and she came to St. Paul, the capital of Minnesota Territory. Perhaps the most interesting feature of her visit, the speaker said, was the fact that she saw in Minnesota a possible "New Scandinavia" and decided that her countrymen could feel more at home there than in any other American state. The last Minnesota visitor mentioned by Miss Heilbron was the great naturalist, Thoreau, who came to Minnesota in 1861 in search of health. He was interested primarily in the flora and fauna of the state, and his journal and letters written during his visit are compact with observations about the plants and animals and physical features of the country. These earlier visitors left valuable records of the frontier conditions in Minnesota — conditions that soon disappeared after railroads made the state more accessible to the world.

Miss Mary C. Goff, who read the second paper on the program, dealt with "Beginnings in Winona County" on the basis of a careful study of government land records, the agricultural data in the 1860 federal census records, and papers in the office of the register of deeds for Winona County. The land records were consulted by Miss Goff at the Duluth land office, and the manuscript census returns for 1860 were used in the manuscript room of the Minnesota Historical Society. Miss Goff confined her study to the period from 1849, when the total population of Winona County consisted of six individuals, to 1860. Special attention was given to the influence of Captain Orrin Smith, who selected the site and had

² Marryat's own account of the episode is printed *ante*, p. 179-184.

the honor of being the founder of Winona, and to the activities of the Western Farm and Village Association, a New York organization which in 1852 sent two agents to Minnesota where they selected the town site of Minnesota City. To this place in the same year came a considerable party of eastern emigrants. Miss Goff did not attempt primarily to tell in detail the story of Winona County beginnings but rather to indicate how the manuscript records make possible a scientific analysis of the subject. She called attention to the general method which is being employed by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in the Wisconsin "Domesday Survey."³ Merely as an illustration of local history possibilities in the census records she traced the development of St. Charles Township from 1853 to 1860. In this connection Miss Goff analyzed the population of the township for 1860: 183 settlers hailed from New York, 42 from Vermont, 53 from Pennsylvania, 31 from Massachusetts, 39 from Connecticut, 20 from Illinois, 21 from Ohio, 20 from Canada, 39 from Ireland, 2 from Germany, 2 from Sweden, 15 from Scotland, and 97 from England. It is to be hoped that eventually careful studies will be made of many Minnesota townships and counties on the basis of such records as those used by Miss Goff.⁴

Mr. Arthur T. Adams of Minneapolis then gave an interesting address in explanation of "A New Interpretation of the Voyages of Pierre d'Esprit Radisson." Since a paper on this subject by Mr. Adams is to be published in a later number of MINNESOTA HISTORY, it is sufficient to indicate here that he has subjected Radisson's journals to painstaking analysis and has come to the conclusion that a series of transpositions, all of which he believes are logically justified, will clear up the ambiguities and apparent inconsistencies which confront stu-

³ In an article entitled "The Microscopic Method Applied to History," published in this magazine, *ante*, 4: 3-20, Dr. Joseph Schafer gives an explanation of the Wisconsin plan for intensive local history study.

⁴ Miss Goff's paper is printed in the *Winona Republican-Herald* for June 18.

dents of the Radisson and Groseilliers journeys. His general conclusion is "that the four voyages narrated in Radisson's journals took place in the exact order and during the exact periods of time that the voyageur himself asserts." He believes that the journals are a "truthful, reliable, and valuable source."

The last paper of the session was given by Miss Hellen Asher of St. Paul on the topic, "Life in a Pioneer Minnesota College, Hamline University." She confined her attention to the period from 1854 to 1869, when the school was located at Red Wing, and she characterized the institution as "typical, in many respects, of the frontier colleges established in the upper Mississippi Valley by religious organizations in the fifties and sixties." Miss Asher told how the college was established by pioneer Methodists in 1854 and how Red Wing citizens offered a block of ground in the heart of their city in order to bring the institution to it. The name adopted was that of a distinguished Methodist bishop, Leonidas L. Hamline, who substantially aided the school in getting a start. Classes were opened in November, 1854. In describing the early financial trials of the college, Miss Asher stated that the students frequently paid tuition in farm products and that the instructors were obliged in part to accept this type of remuneration for their services. Two presidents served the school during the Red Wing period, Jabez Brooks and Benjamin Crary, both of them prominent figures in the educational history of the state. The curriculum of the college was surprisingly broad in scope, for in addition to the usual classical studies of the day, it included sciences, business subjects, and law. The atmosphere of the school was distinctly religious; students guilty of profanity, improper or disorderly conduct, or disrespect for the sabbath were expelled, and students were expected to attend chapel each day and church services on Sunday. The speaker pointed out that the Civil War almost broke up the school for "practically the entire

body of men students enlisted." Classes continued to meet, however, until 1869, when Hamline closed its doors. An important factor in leading the trustees to close the college was the desire to move it to another location, according to Miss Asher. The great function of the school in the pioneer period, she said, was to furnish for the region of the upper Mississippi Valley a coeducational college within reach of students with limited financial resources.

After the conclusion of the afternoon session, Mr. Paul Watkins, a member of the Minnesota Historical Society, took the convention visitors to see his valuable collection of paintings and other objects in the art gallery of the Winona National Bank. Following this there was an automobile trip, through the courtesy of the association of commerce, to places of scenic and historic interest in the vicinity of Winona.

The presiding officer at the evening session, which began at 8:00 P.M., in the armory, was Mrs. James T. Morris of Minneapolis, a member of the executive council of the Minnesota Historical Society and the editor of a well-known volume of state history stories. After the singing of a group of songs by Mr. Calvin Barlow of Winona, she introduced as the first speaker Dr. Louise Phelps Kellogg, senior research associate of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, who gave an address on "The French on the Upper Mississippi." In her brilliant and penetrating survey of this subject Dr. Kellogg disclosed her mastery of the widely scattered sources on the period and gave a clearly etched picture not only of the progress of French exploration but also of the general background of that exploration. The importance of studying the French explorations of Minnesota in their proper general setting was excellently illustrated by Dr. Kellogg's treatment of Du Luth. Knowledge of the Great Lakes, she said, first reached the world through the agency of French explorers and geographers. No such phenomena as large bodies of fresh water were known to Europeans and there was much

speculation whether these lakes might not furnish a route through the continent. The discovery of 1673 that the Mississippi ran athwart the continent compelled the Europeans to revise their geographical ideas and plans were made to occupy the valley of the river rather than to seek a route through it. Among the first to perceive the importance of the discovery of the great river were two young Frenchmen of good family, both of whom were connected with members of the court of Louis XVI. These were La Salle and Du Luth. The former came to the New World before the latter, as his brother had preceded him as a missionary. In 1678 he obtained a commission from the king to explore and settle the Mississippi Valley. Meanwhile Du Luth had come to New France and made his home at Montreal, where an uncle was a rich merchant. The same year that La Salle obtained his concession, Du Luth went west without the royal sanction to explore and find a route to the western sea. La Salle planned to make his headquarters on the fertile prairies of Illinois. Du Luth chose to explore Lake Superior and thence to push westward to the Pacific Ocean. For the accomplishment of his purpose he made friends with the great Sioux tribe, then dwelling around the headwaters of the Mississippi. In the summer of 1679 he visited the Sioux village on Mille Lacs and made a firm alliance with the tribesmen at that place.

Meanwhile La Salle had been forwarding his plans. After building a fort on Lake Peoria he sent three of his men to the upper Mississippi to obtain furs to help him pay for his expedition. The leader of the party, Dr. Kellogg pointed out, was Michel Accault, and the chaplain was one Father Louis Hennepin. She told of the experiences of Accault and his companions as prisoners of the Sioux and described the indignation of Du Luth when he heard of the treatment accorded them. They were rescued by Du Luth, who severely reprimanded the chiefs for breaking their alliance with him.

For eighty years after these earliest recorded voyages of the French on the upper Mississippi there was "much passing

up and down the river," the speaker said, and several French posts were built in the region. She told of the annexation to France by Nicolas Perrot in 1689 of the upper Mississippi and adjacent countries. Traders were numerous in the Indian villages and their business was profitable. Le Sueur was discussed as one of these traders, and the speaker told of his famous mining venture on the Blue Earth River in Minnesota. The establishment of Fort Beauharnois on Lake Pepin in 1727 was next considered by Dr. Kellogg. She told of the coming of officers, traders, *voyageurs*, a blacksmith, and other artisans to this post. After the abandonment in 1756 of Fort Marin, which stood near the site of Fort Beauharnois, the upper country was left to the traders, who kept up relations with the Indians until the coming of the British.

Dr. Kellogg concluded her address by emphasizing the fact that for three-quarters of a century, during which the French traveled up and down the great river, learned its secrets, and exploited its natives, the region was part of the French kingdom, was ruled from Versailles, and contributed its riches for French development. She said that the French first made this region known to the world, that they "put it upon the map" in a literal as well as a figurative sense, and that some of the earliest and best descriptions of the region were made by these earliest of white men to come to the upper Mississippi.

The evening session closed with a paper entitled "A Typical Frontiersman: Joseph Renshaw Brown," by Dr. William W. Folwell, president emeritus of the university and president of the Minnesota Historical Society. In the absence of the author it was read by Dr. Solon J. Buck, superintendent of the society. After a brief review of the early career of Brown, a detailed account was given of his invention of a steam wagon and of his attempts in the sixties to perfect it and to bring it into use for purposes of overland transportation. Since most of the material in the paper will appear in the appendix to the third volume of the author's *History of Minnesota*, an abstract of it need not be given here.

The last formal session of the convention was held on Thursday, June 18, at 10:00 A.M., in the Winona Armory, with Professor Hugh Graham of St. Theresa College as the presiding officer. The first paper read at this meeting was an interesting presentation of "Goodhue County's Historical Background," by Mr. C. A. Rasmussen of Red Wing. He began with a review of the early French exploration of the Mississippi and gave special attention to Radisson and Groseilliers, Hennepin, Le Sueur, and La Perrière and the establishment of Fort Beauharnois. In each case he considered particularly the local connections. Carver, Pike, and Long were mentioned among the later explorers who passed up the river and recorded their observations of the region now comprised within Goodhue County. The speaker then told of the Swiss missionaries, Daniel Gavin and Samuel Denton, who in the late thirties of the last century established themselves at the present site of Red Wing, then occupied by an Indian village. In connection with the settlement of Goodhue County, Mr. Rasmussen called attention to the Swedish colony established at Vasa in 1853, the large Norwegian and German settlements begun in the fifties, and the activities of the Stratford Western Emigration Company, a Massachusetts concern which organized the settlement of Zumbrota. Among the many later developments in Goodhue County history to which he referred may be mentioned the establishment of Hamline University at Red Wing in 1854; the publication in the same city in 1857 of *Minnesota Posten*, the first Swedish newspaper issued in Minnesota; and the participation of Goodhue County people in the Civil War. In conclusion the speaker read a roll of some of the residents of the county who won fame in various lines of activity. Altogether Mr. Rasmussen made it clear that the county has a background of extremely interesting and important historical development.

The next paper, entitled "The Fur Trade in Southern Minnesota during the British Régime," was by Miss Alice Smith, a teaching fellow in history at the University of Minnesota,

who is preparing a thesis on the subject. At the outset she raised the question as to why the British, who never owned Minnesota land west of the Mississippi, nevertheless controlled the fur trade of that region for half a century, from the close of the French and Indian War to the end of the War of 1812. The answer is to be found in a chain of circumstances. The trade of the country west of Lake Superior had been well organized by the French before it was taken over by the English. Soon eager traders from Canada, New York, and the Illinois country were pushing into the region of the tributaries of the upper Mississippi. The center of the fur trade of the region under consideration was Prairie du Chien, interesting descriptions of which are given by Jonathan Carver and Peter Pond for the years when they visited the place. Pond, who was there in 1774, says that boats "from Eavery Part of the Missippey" were gathered there and that fifteen hundred packs of a hundredweight each were carried from Prairie du Chien to Mackinac that season. A vivid picture of the life of a fur-trader in the region is given by Jean Baptiste Perreault, who spent several winters in the vicinity of the Chipewewa and Minnesota rivers in the period from 1786 to 1789.

The British trade in the region encountered not a few obstacles before the American Revolution, the speaker indicated. Down the river, where lay the most convenient route to markets, Spanish regulations barred the way; for a time the rebellious American colonists threatened to take Montreal, the great market for furs; and later the trade was endangered by attacks from the Illinois country. Though the treaty which terminated the revolution gave the land east of the Mississippi to the United States, the British clung to their trade. In 1785 the estimated value of the British export of furs from Canada was £185,000, and of that total furs worth not less than £100,000 came from American territory. Jay's treaty in 1794 stipulated that the western posts were to be turned over to the Americans, but it permitted alien trade and consequently little change ensued either in method

or personnel so far as the upper Mississippi posts were concerned. Among the British traders in the period before the War of 1812 mentioned by the speaker was Thomas G. Anderson, who spent many years on the Mississippi above Prairie du Chien. The British domination came to an end, Miss Smith said, by the passage of the United States law of 1816 forbidding foreigners to engage in the trade and as the result of the erection of government forts in the upper country after the War of 1812.

The third paper, which was given by Mr. Orrin F. Smith of Winona on the subject of "The First White Settlers of Winona," supplemented in interesting fashion Miss Goff's paper on Winona County beginnings, for it was based upon a knowledge of the history of the community gained through personal contact as well as through the study of documents. Mr. Smith in fact was the second white boy born at Wabasha's Prairie, now Winona — the son of A. B. Smith, a pioneer who settled there in the early fifties. In his paper he spoke first of the unsuccessful work of the Reverend Jedediah Stevens, who came to Wabasha's village in 1838 as farmer to the Sioux Indians there. For a few years, beginning in 1842, he said, a government employee, James Reed, was engaged in the same kind of work among these Indians. The real beginnings of the modern city, however, occurred in 1851, when Captain Orrin Smith selected the place as a suitable town site. The speaker gave an interesting description of the struggles between contending claimants for the site and told in detail of the accessions to the population of the place in 1852. In that year, he said, the site was surveyed and the town named Montezuma. At a meeting of the settlers this inappropriate Aztec name was dropped, however, and the name Winona selected. The speaker quoted from a number of contemporary diaries and letters which give vivid pictures of the crude frontier conditions in the settlement in 1851 and 1852.⁵

⁵ Mr. Smith's paper is printed in full in the issues of the *Winona Republican-Herald* for June 19 and 20.

The last paper of the session was read by Dr. Grace Lee Nute, curator of manuscripts for the Minnesota Historical Society, on the subject, "The Mississippi Valley from Prairie du Chien to Lake Pepin: a Survey of Unpublished Sources." A year ago Dr. Nute made a similar survey of unprinted materials available for the history of the Red River Valley.⁶ She now called attention to a surprisingly large amount of manuscript material, most of it unused hitherto by historians, which will contribute in no small measure to knowledge of the history of the upper Mississippi Valley. Her survey will be brought out in a later number of this magazine.

From the foregoing report it is obvious that the papers presented at the various sessions of the convention not only were genuinely interesting but also represented the scholarly point of view with reference to the state's background. The spirit of antiquarianism, so often associated with local history, was conspicuously lacking. The attendance at the regular sessions was unfortunately small — an average of less than fifty persons. At the joint luncheon on the first day, however, there were present about 125. Widespread attention was given the convention in the press of the state and thus in a sense the people of Minnesota were the audience.

The final event of the convention was a luncheon and local history conference held at the Hotel Winona at 12:30 P.M., on June 18, at which some forty persons were present. Judge Harry L. Buck, president of the Winona County Old Settlers' Association, served as toastmaster. He opened the conference by pointing out the need of an historical society in Winona County, and he expressed the hope that a definite organization would be the outcome of the convention. He then introduced Dr. Solon J. Buck, who first discussed the general problem of local history work and then explained some possibilities for its organization. The first and most important contribution of history, he said, is that it enables one to understand

⁶ See her paper entitled "New Light on Red River Valley History," *ante*, 5: 561-572.

the present, and he emphasized the necessity of understanding one's own local community, the affairs of which are constantly influencing the individual — perhaps more so than those of the state or nation. Dr. Buck next showed how a knowledge of history tended to develop "community consciousness," to give the community a personality; and finally he stressed the cultural value of history to the individual, pointing out that a knowledge of local and general history enriches life and greatly adds to its interest. He then turned to the problem of organizing local history work and explained that in the East, where the communities are more deeply rooted than in the West, practically every town has a local historical society. The situation in the West is rapidly improving, however. The speaker gave much credit to the old settlers' associations for helping people to visualize the past, but said that since their membership is ordinarily restricted to early pioneers or their descendants, they do not reach the entire community and especially the younger element. There is, therefore a distinct need for local historical societies, which of course should coöperate cordially with the pioneer societies. Organization and funds are imperative needs for the success of a county historical society, though the speaker indicated that no large amount of money is needed. He called attention to the proposed constitution for a county society prepared by the Minnesota Historical Society and read the comprehensive statement of aims and objects in its first article.⁷ Funds may be secured either through private contributions, a method much used in the East, or perhaps through county appropriations, as is at present the case in St. Louis County, which has the most active local historical society in the state.

The next speaker was Dr. Duniway of Carleton College, who pointed out certain favorable circumstances in Winona County which are not present in all counties. He particularly advocated the bringing of the colleges, teachers, and students of

⁷ This constitution is printed *ante*, 4: 252-256.

the community into close coöperation with the proposed local historical society, and he also suggested the advisability of coöperating with women's clubs, patriotic societies, and newspapers. The speaker then directed attention to the importance of searching out and preserving the precious manuscripts, too often neglected by their owners, which yield up information about the past.

Mr. Fred S. Bell of Winona, who spoke next, expressed the view that a Winona County historical society was both needed and possible of organization. He said that the danger in delaying such organization is that the pioneers are passing and the records disappearing. Thus the opportunities for preserving the earlier records grow smaller as time passes. Professor Graham indorsed Mr. Bell's views and said that the Winona teachers would undoubtedly coöperate in a move to preserve the historical records of the community. He called special attention to the emphasis which modern teachers are placing upon the use of first-hand sources of information. Mr. Orrin F. Smith made a few remarks advocating the formation of an historical society in Winona County, and Mrs. Marion J. Peake of Winona expressed her interest in the project. Mrs. Solon J. Buck spoke briefly of the pleasure of Minnesota history study and of its genuine cultural value. The following local committee was then named to study the problem and to consider the advisability of organizing a Winona County historical society: Judge Buck, Mr. Bell, Professor Graham, Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Peake. Dr. Buck, in closing, expressed the thanks of the Minnesota Historical Society and of all the convention visitors for the hospitality shown them by the people of Winona.

Mr. W. H. Pay of Mankato was present at the luncheon conference and presented on behalf of the people of Mankato, through the chamber of commerce, an invitation to the society to hold the fifth annual state historical convention in that city.

T. C. B.



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