

THE STATE HISTORICAL CONVENTION AT ST. CLOUD AND WILLMAR

Five years ago the Minnesota Historical Society inaugurated a series of annual state historical conventions preceded by "historic tours," and in successive years meetings have been held in Duluth, Redwood Falls, Detroit Lakes, Winona, and Mankato. The results amply justify the prediction made after the first convention that these excursions into the state and into its past not only would prove an important factor in the dissemination of information about Minnesota history, but also would encourage local history organization. They have helped to impress upon the people of the state the many-sided interest and the present-day meaning of its past. They have led to the organization of several county historical societies. They have secured the participation of large numbers of people. They have produced historical papers and addresses of permanent value, many of which have been published.

The sixth of these conventions was held on June 16 and 17, 1927, with sessions on the first day at St. Cloud, Stearns County, and on the second at Willmar, Kandiyohi County. The tour began on the morning of June 16 with an automobile trip from St. Paul to St. Cloud, and was continued on the following morning to Willmar. Five years ago some fifteen persons started off on the first of these Minnesota "historic tours." This year a road leviathan — a huge automobile bus — followed by twelve automobiles left the Twin Cities, and the party as a whole numbered more than sixty.¹

The route followed was by way of Anoka. Here the Rum River, which Father Hennepin descended nearly two hundred and fifty years ago, empties into the Mississippi. Past this point ran one of the old Red River trails, along which, three-

¹ Banners for all the cars were courteously supplied by the St. Paul Association of Public and Business Affairs.

quarters of a century ago, lumbered the creaking carts from the Red River settlements. The tourists were met at Anoka by a few interested citizens and conducted to a place some miles west of the town, where a brief stop was made. From the highway this appeared to be merely a picturesque meadow, but upon closer examination it proved to be the site of a series of earthworks, including trenches and rifle pits, dug probably by the Winnebago in 1848, in anticipation of hostilities with the Chippewa. Passing on into Sherburne County, the tourists went through the village of Elk River, a name reminiscent of the wilderness days when Pike and other travelers found herds of elk in this vicinity. The modern metamorphosis of the region was strikingly illustrated here and all along the route — perhaps nowhere more so than at the St. Cloud Country Club, with its imposing building and attractive golf course. Here tourists were entertained at luncheon by the St. Cloud Reading Room Society, and here, as an after-dinner program, the first session of the convention, a local history conference with about one hundred and fifty persons present, was held.

The toastmaster, Mr. William B. Mitchell of St. Cloud, was introduced by Mrs. Fred Schilplin, the chairman of the efficient committee on local arrangements. Mr. Mitchell first called upon Mayor J. Arthur Bensen, who cordially welcomed the visitors to St. Cloud, called attention to the progressive development of St. Cloud and Stearns County, and expressed his warm interest in the work of the state society in gathering and permanently preserving Minnesota's records. Responding to this address Mr. Frederick G. Ingersoll, president of the Minnesota Historical Society, said that one of the purposes of the convention was to bring before the people of the state knowledge of the purposes and resources of the Minnesota Historical Society, to stimulate their interest, and secure their help. He declared that it is the business of history to call attention not merely to the positive achievements of the past but also to its mistakes. At the same time he pointed out that Minnesota had a large quota of very able men among the

builders of the commonwealth — men like Sibley, Ramsey, Rice, and Hill. For such a community as St. Cloud there were leaders whose services locally were comparable with those of the state builders, he said, and he paid tribute to a number of prominent leaders in the history of the city. St. Cloud, he said, “ was not built by chance but by intelligence, coöperation, hard work, courage, and sound judgment.” He closed by proposing a toast to Mr. Mitchell.

Dr. Solon J. Buck, superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, then opened a general discussion of “ The Possibilities of Local History Work in Minnesota.” He pointed out that history serves the community in the same way that memory does the individual; that the characteristics of the community are determined wholly by its past; and that only through a knowledge of that past is it possible to understand the present and plan wisely for the future. He likened life to a motion picture and suggested the plight of a person who enters the theater after the picture has started. He sees only a small segment of it and needs some sort of synopsis of what has gone before in order to understand it properly. History does more than furnish such a synopsis, however, and the speaker stressed the added richness of life that comes to the individual from a knowledge of the history of his environment and the added charm of the community that is interested in and preserves the record of its past. He also called attention to the direct commercial value of the cultivation of local history, in attracting tourists, for example, and said that this value is successfully capitalized in Europe and in the East. A survey made about ten years ago disclosed the fact that, though there were a number of pioneer and old settlers’ associations in the state, there did not appear to be a single local historical society actively functioning as such. The situation has been much improved since then. All told there are at present nine county historical societies in the state: Becker, Blue Earth, Cook, Lake, Olmsted, Ramsey, Rice, Roseau, and St. Louis. Three others, Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Otter Tail, have organizations

planned; in five or six more local historical work of value is being done through museums connected with high schools or libraries; and occasionally, as in Kandiyohi, old settlers' associations are functioning to some extent as historical societies. The speaker pointed out that this local history movement is of comparatively recent origin and has been fostered by the state historical society. In 1921 annual conferences on local history work were started in connection with the meetings of the state society, and in 1922 the society issued a model constitution for a county historical society. In the same year the practice of holding summer historical conventions in various parts of the state was begun. The oldest and most active of the new crop of local societies is that of St. Louis County, which was organized at the time of the summer convention in Duluth in 1922. "Under the leadership of Mr. William E. Culkin it has become a factor of importance in the community, with a large and interested membership, frequent meetings, offices in the court house, a growing collection of manuscripts, and financial support from the county."

Dr. Buck suggested three requisites for successful local history work: (1) some one person willing to shoulder the responsibility of keeping the work going; (2) a continuous program of constructive work for the county society, with preservation of records, publication of historical material, and marking of historic sites and trails included; and (3) coöperation with the state society.

In the discussion that followed this talk the Reverend Charles Grunenwald of St. Cloud spoke of the spirit of the pioneers. They were all beginners, he said. They had to help each other; they knew each other well; and they were not intolerant. Material prosperity, he suggested, tends to make people selfish and to create diverse interests and as a result there develops a lack of tolerance and coöperation. It is therefore the more important to know what our forbears did to build the community, for such knowledge will cause us to give credit to the agencies that have made the community great and good.

It will stimulate mutual respect and coöperation. Because the study of the past can thus be made to serve the present, the speaker favored very strongly the local organization of historical work.

The next talk, by Dr. J. A. DuBois of Sauk Center, was devoted to a presentation of "the other side of Main Street." The Main streets of the country are the natural soil "necessary to produce even a start on civilization," he said.

Mr. William Sartell of Sartell then read an interesting paper telling of the pioneer experiences of his father and mother, who took a homestead in 1854 near Watab, "a stopping place for stages and the busiest place north of St. Anthony, except possibly Sauk Rapids." Mr. Sartell's father once "carried a sack of flour eight miles on his back to keep hunger from the door." On one occasion he wheeled an injured son twelve miles on a wheelbarrow to St. Cloud. These and many other incidents were related by Mr. Sartell to illustrate the difficulties that pioneers met with on the early Minnesota frontier. This colorful paper brought the luncheon program to an end.

The visitors then joined the Stearns County people in motoring to the athletic field of the State Teachers College at St. Cloud to view the unveiling of a marker on the site of a stockade built in 1862 during the Sioux War in anticipation of an Indian attack. This marker consisted of a large boulder with an attached bronze tablet bearing the inscription "1862-1927. Site of Stockade Established during the Sioux Indian Uprising. Erected by the Saint Cloud Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution." The ceremonies were conducted by Mrs. Darius Stewart, regent of the chapter, and a brief talk was made by Mr. Mitchell, whose father, General H. C. Mitchell, had charge of the building of the stockade.

Following this ceremony the party proceeded to St. John's University at Collegeville, where it was greeted by the Right Reverend Alcuin Deutsch, abbot of St. John's Abbey, who conducted the visitors on a tour through the buildings and gave a brief informal account of the university and the abbey. On

the return trip brief stops were made at St. Benedict's College and the United States Veterans' Hospital. After this excursion, which was made in cars provided by the hospitable people of St. Cloud, an informal dinner was served at Grandmother's Tea Garden in St. Cloud.

An interesting feature of the St. Cloud convention was a series of historical exhibits collected by the St. Cloud chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and displayed in store windows, most of the articles on view being illustrations of pioneer household economy. Mention should also be made of a series of historical articles by Sister Grace McDonald of St. Benedict's College that appeared in the *St. Cloud Daily Times* before the convention. Thus on June 10, 11, and 13 there were accounts of famous visitors to the St. Cloud region in early days, including E. S. Seymour in 1849, Father Demetrius Marogna in 1856, C. C. Andrews in 1858, Carl Schurz in 1859, Bishop Grace of St. Paul in 1861, and others.

An audience of about 225 assembled for the evening session, held in the auditorium of the State Teachers College at 8:00 P.M., with Mr. Ingersoll presiding. An important paper — which is brought before a wider audience in the present number of the magazine — was read by Professor A. C. Krey of the University of Minnesota on "Monte Cassino, Metten, and Minnesota." He also exhibited a number of slides as a supplement to his paper. A motion picture entitled "The Chronicle of Time: The Story of Stearns County, Its History and Industry" was then presented through the courtesy of the *St. Cloud Daily Times*. Red River carts and covered wagons brought one phase of the history of the region vividly before the audience, and pictures of early St. Cloud newspapers another. The emphasis in the film, however, was chiefly upon the present-day industries of the county.

Before adjournment a special committee consisting of Mr. Harold Harris, Mrs. Theodore C. Blegen, and Dr. Grace Lee Nute, presented the following resolutions, which were adopted by unanimous vote:

It has been the good fortune of the visiting members and friends of the Minnesota Historical Society to be the guests of the city of St. Cloud on the first day of the sixth annual State Historical Convention and to be entertained with a hospitality that has made the day one that will long be remembered by all who have shared in these pleasures and privileges.

Be it therefore resolved that their deep gratitude and sincere appreciation be hereby extended:

To Mrs. Fred Schilplin and the committee on local arrangements, who have so thoughtfully planned the day's program.

To the St. Cloud Reading Room Society for the exquisite luncheon at the St. Cloud Country Club.

To St. John's University and to St. Benedict's College for the many courtesies extended to us.

To the St. Cloud Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for the splendid exhibit of historical articles displayed in the store windows of the city.

To those who have furnished cars and have so generously given of their time to make our stay in St. Cloud a memorable one, and

To the city newspapers for the very generous publicity given to the activities of the Society.

The plans for the second day of the tour and convention had been worked out in detail by a Kandiyohi County committee headed by Senator Victor E. Lawson of Willmar, and evidences of its effective work became apparent soon after the "historic tour" was resumed on Friday morning, June 17. The first stop made after leaving St. Cloud was at Paynesville at 10:00 A.M. The streets of this village were lined with waiting cars from Willmar, New London, Spicer, and other places in Kandiyohi County. At Paynesville, as at St. Cloud, the Indian uprising of 1862 resulted in the building of a stockade or fort. Mr. Frank P. Van Vorst, a local resident, directed the visitors to the site of this fort and then related briefly the circumstances of its origin. This place was closer to the scene of action than St. Cloud, for here a small group of pioneer farmers were attacked and besieged by a party of hostile Sioux, whereas the St. Cloud stockade was never brought into active use.

As soon as Mr. Van Vorst had concluded his account of this episode, a bugler of the American Legion drum and bugle corps

of Willmar "sounded off" the departure, the cars — now numbering about eighty — were formed in line, and the cavalcade started on its way to Sibley State Park. At Paynesville representatives of the local committee distributed copies of a special "program and itinerary" for the day's events, with brief historical notes about the points of interest along the route to Willmar. On the roadside were twenty-five special markers locating these places. For example, the boundary of Kandiyohi County occasioned such a marker, and in the program was a note explaining that the name means "where to go fishing," that formerly this region was part of Monongalia County, and that a colony of Virginians came to Green Lake in 1856 and 1857 from Monongalia County, Virginia. Similar markers and notes also called attention to the meanings of township names, first happenings of various sorts, schoolhouses, the sites of old mills, the early history of villages, the scenes of tragic happenings during the Sioux Outbreak, and the farm of Paul Willmar, a soldier of fortune who fought under Maximilian in Mexico and for whom the city of Willmar is named.

At Sibley State Park a visit was made to Mount Tom, a high point commanding a panoramic view of sixteen surrounding lakes. Here Mr. E. F. Fink of New London gave a sketch of the history of the park and called attention to the attractions of the region. At New London, where the next stop was made, Mr. Harold Swenson, a pioneer merchant, told of the beginnings of the community. The founder was Louis Larson, a trapper, who in the early sixties developed a project for utilizing the available water power for a sawmill. The place might appropriately have been called New New London, for it was named not for the English metropolis but for New London, Wisconsin, a village in Larson's home county. After leaving New London the tour passed a churchyard where stands a state monument erected in memory of the thirteen whites massacred by the Sioux at West Lake in 1862. The cars then proceeded to the shores of Green Lake, and a brief stop was made at

Interlachen Lodge. Here Mrs. Mathilda Larson, whose father was a boat builder for the Hudson's Bay Company, gave a brief account of her early experiences. She was introduced by Senator Lawson as the first graduate of the St. Cloud Normal School and an early school teacher. Mrs. Larson displayed several cases of arrow points and stone implements, most of which were picked up on the shores of Green Lake.

The line of cars, then wound around the west shore of this incomparable lake, passed through the village of Spicer, and halted at the Green Lake Country Club, where the visitors were entertained at luncheon by the Willmar Commercial Club. About 275 people attended this luncheon and heard the program that followed it. With Mr. A. J. Anderson, president of the business men's club of Spicer, presiding, talks were given by Mr. Peter Henderson and Mrs. T. M. Findley, and response was made on behalf of the society by Mr. William E. Culkin of Duluth. Thereupon nearly a hundred cars were formed in line and started on the final portion of the tour to Willmar. As the procession entered the city it was met by the gaily uniformed American Legion drum and bugle corps, which maneuvered, drummed, and bugled the tour through Willmar to the Kandiyohi County Fair Grounds.

Drawing up near the new Pioneer Memorial Cabin erected by the Kandiyohi County Old Settlers' Association, the drummers and buglers gave a formal salute; two Winnebago Indian girls then unfurled and raised the flag above the cabin; and the audience sang "America." After these preliminaries, those who were present — numbering at least fifteen hundred — went to the fair grounds auditorium to attend a joint session of the society and the old settlers' association. Senator Lawson presided at this meeting and first introduced Mr. D. T. Carlson, president of the Willmar Commercial Club, who extended a welcome to the two organizations on behalf of the citizens of Willmar. He paid a tribute to the work that the state society is doing in arousing interest in state and local history and preserving the records of the past. Mr. Harold

Harris of St. Paul, a member of the society's executive council, expressed the pleasure of the visitors in the interesting tour and cordial reception they had had in Kandiyohi County; and Judge A. O. Forsberg spoke for the old settlers, calling special attention to the fact that membership in their association is open to all who have lived in the county for thirty years.

The principal address of the session was delivered by Mr. Ray P. Chase, the state auditor, on "State Parks and Memorials and State History." After enumerating the chief resources of Minnesota, he asserted that the tourist industry was destined to rank third in importance in the state. He stressed the influence of climate, scenery, good roads, and parks in attracting tourists; and he urged that the system of state parks should be put in charge of an expert "park man." Such an official, he said, should be given the necessary funds with which to develop the parks properly; and the people of the state should compel the legislature to appropriate money for this purpose.

The next speaker was Mr. Samuel Miller, a full-blood Stockbridge Indian, who eloquently pleaded for recognition of his race, particularly in the matter of full American citizenship. Other numbers on the program were songs by the Willmar Quartet and by the two Winnebago girls.

After this session the audience went to the handsome Memorial Cabin, in front of which formal dedicatory exercises were held. The dedication address was given by Mr. Gabriel Stene, the president of the Kandiyohi County Old Settlers' Association. He sketched the history of the effort that resulted in the erection of this appropriate memorial, and announced its dedication to the memory of the pioneers, their brave and patient wives, their children, the victims of the struggles between whites and natives, the early school teachers, and the unselfish pioneer ministers.²

² This dedicatory address is published in full in the *Willmar Tribune* for June 29, 1927.

Dr. Buck then spoke on the preservation of local history, with special attention to the situation in Kandiyohi County. Though for most counties of the state he has advocated the establishment of county historical societies, he said that he had not committed himself to any inflexible plan. He expressed the view that the vigor and activity of the Kandiyohi County Old Settlers' Association made a new organization in this county unnecessary. That association had already done two notable things — erected the cabin just dedicated and given the encouragement that made possible the publication twenty-three years ago of an excellent history of the county, perhaps the most effective memorial possible to the pioneers. Dr. Buck suggested the possibility of the association widening its membership still further so that young people would join in forwarding the work, and he also referred to numerous possibilities in the cultivation of the county's history that the association might exploit. After this talk some verses written in Swedish by Mr. N. S. Swenson were read by Mr. Stene, the audience sang "Auld Lang Syne," and the meeting adjourned. Some of the visitors then took advantage of the opportunity to view the special historical exhibits on display in the Willmar store windows, a feature planned by the local committee.

The convention was brought to a pleasant close with a banquet attended by about 250 persons at the Bethel Lutheran Church. During the meal the Willmar Orchestra furnished excellent music. The Reverend J. J. Daniels of Willmar offered the invocation. A program of papers and addresses followed the dinner, with Theodore C. Blegen, assistant superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, acting as toastmaster.

The first speaker was Senator Lawson, whose theme was "The Historical Backgrounds of Willmar and Vicinity." He said that it was not his intention to relate the history of the county, but to point out some of the things that give it individuality, differentiating it from other counties in the state. The population of the county, for example, is of Scandinavian

extraction, in contrast with that of its neighbor, Stearns County, which is mainly German. In fact, Mr. Lawson asserted, Kandiyohi County is a miniature of the Scandinavian countries. Thus the county has a Swedish Värmland settlement of large proportions, a Dalecarlia, a Scanian section, a Småland, a Hälsingland, and a Vestergötland; and the old home localities of the Norwegians are reflected in the names of their churches, such as Vinje, Vikör, Nordland, Trömsö, and Gausdal. Speaking of settlement in general, Mr. Lawson first sketched the story of the town-site promoters, who hoped to profit by the building of the proposed St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. The coming of genuine settlers is a tale in two parts, for the Sioux War caused a general exodus, and the permanent settlement of the region developed later under the Homestead Act. "The building of the railroad in the fall of 1869 put Willmar on the map," and another important epoch in the history of the town followed the coming of the St. Cloud and Willmar and the Willmar and Sioux Falls lines in 1886. An interesting historical feature of the county was the location within its borders of the ten sections of state land granted Minnesota for state building purposes, commonly known as the State Capitol Lands. Chosen by a commission appointed by Governor Sibley in 1858, these lands continued for many years to be a source of legislative agitation, the speaker said. In 1869 a bill to relocate the capital in Kandiyohi County passed both the House and the Senate by large majorities but was vetoed by Governor Marshall. Later attempts made less headway, but for many years no Kandiyohi County senator or representative felt that he could neglect to bring in some sort of bill for the utilization of these lands. Finally, after all hope of moving the capital had vanished, the lands were sold to farmers.

"Some Characteristics of the Scandinavian-Americans" was the subject chosen by the next speaker, Dr. George M. Stephenson, assistant professor of history in the University of Minnesota. He first touched on the rapid assimilation of the

Scandinavian-Americans, which he said is explained by many factors, especially the political training received in their homelands, their high degree of literacy, the similarity of their languages to English, and their love of liberty. The Scandinavian-Americans, he said, are intensely individualistic. This characteristic reveals itself in politics, for there is little nationalistic coherency in their political activity; and in religion it takes the form of independence toward the churches of the homelands. Sectarianism showed itself in the earliest Scandinavian settlements in this country; and the laymen showed a disposition to take an active part in the affairs of the church.

Dr. Stephenson asserted that the Scandinavian-Americans respond readily to leadership and are apt to be hero-worshippers. They tend to follow the lead of the Americans in politics. He confirmed a common impression when he pointed out that perhaps no immigrant stock yields so easily to the influence of environment as the Scandinavian-American. Sometimes this tendency assumes the form of self-depreciation and an over-emphasis upon names and customs that are foreign to them. In letters to friends and relatives abroad, immigrants frequently compare America and the Scandinavian countries, almost invariably to the detriment of the latter. As a matter of course the children of the Scandinavian immigrants quickly imbibe this spirit and want to be Americans in all respects. The Scandinavian immigrant combines a rather intense religious nature with a tendency toward independence, but he is seldom skeptical in the sense that German immigrants are. And though the Scandinavian immigrants frequently have left the church of their fathers, Lutheranism has placed a distinct stamp upon them. "The influence of Luther's catechism in inculcating respect for authority, deference to those in the service of the state, and honesty in dealing with one's fellow-men followed the Scandinavian to the end of his days." The pioneering instinct of the Scandinavian immigrants brought them into the West, where hardihood, industry, patience, and

thrift soon converted their farms into models. The spirit of these pioneers, the speaker said in conclusion, is typified in such men as Ole Paulson, a Norwegian minister in Minnesota, and Erik Norelius, the energetic and self-sacrificing Swedish minister.

Professor Hugh Graham of the College of St. Teresa at Winona, who spoke next, took as his subject "Minnesota's Pioneer Schools." He began by describing the situation at Fort Snelling in the twenties. A visitor to the fort in 1820, he reported, tells of the women of the post teaching their children and learning French from a soldier who had served as an officer under Napoleon. In 1823 John Marsh was employed as a tutor at an annual salary of seventy-five dollars, which he supplemented to the extent of forty dollars by carrying the mail between the fort and Prairie du Chien. The post school was apparently more definitely organized soon after the appointment in 1838 of a regular chaplain. In 1843 the chaplain taught daily from seven to twelve o'clock and had a dozen pupils. For more than two decades, beginning in the early thirties, various missionaries were at work among the Chipewewa and Sioux Indians. Of the Protestant missionaries, the Presbyterians and Congregationalists were the first on the ground; then came the Methodists, followed soon after by the Episcopalians. Three centers of Catholic activity were at Pembina, now part of North Dakota, but formerly in Minnesota Territory; in the northeastern part of the state; and at Traverse des Sioux and Chaska. The speaker ascribed to Frederick Ayer the credit for being the first teacher of a mission school within the limits of the state of Minnesota. Ayer's school was opened in 1832 at Sandy Lake in the house of William A. Aitkin, the fur-trader. William T. Boutwell taught a school at Leech Lake in 1833 and Edmund F. Ely opened one at Fond du Lac in 1834. Stephen R. Riggs, Dr. Thomas S. Williamson, and Samuel and Gideon Pond were well-known missionary teachers among the Sioux. Not so well known is

the Catholic missionary Father Pirec or Pierz, who established at Grand Portage in 1838 the first Catholic school in Minnesota.

The speaker told of the many-sided activity of these missionaries, who journeyed on foot or by canoe, who handled sickle and flail in teaching the Indians how to farm, who coped with the Indian language, and who taught the Indian children, in addition to performing their regular religious duties. Many difficulties were encountered, but the worst was the persistence with which the bootleggers of that period catered to the Indian's appetite for *minnewaka*. The federal census for 1850 makes reference to only one academy or boarding school in Minnesota. This school was in Benton County, had an enrollment of five boys and seven girls, and was taught by one teacher. Professor Graham identified this institution with a pioneer academy established by Ayer at Belle Prairie in Morrison County in 1849. It was intended for the more promising children of the Indian country, but in the course of time it became more white than Indian. The speaker called attention to the fact that Harriet Bishop was sent to Minnesota by the board of the National Popular Education Society, which was organized in New England in 1846 with the object of supplying the new settlements of the West with competent women teachers. "Miss Scofield, another St. Paul teacher, was sent by this Board, as was Miss Backus, who opened a school in St. Anthony in 1849. Mr. Hobart taught the first boys' school in St. Paul, using the Methodist Church as a schoolroom. The Sisters of St. Joseph arrived in St. Paul in 1851 and opened their first school in the vestry of the old log chapel from which the city obtained its name. Other settlements had also their pioneer schools, as for example Stillwater in 1848 and Point Douglas in 1850." Professor Graham referred to the territorial act of 1849 which established the public school system and he spoke in conclusion of the generous policy of the territorial legislature in granting charters to universities, academies, and seminaries. Though thirty-one such charters were

granted, he has been able to trace actual records of only four; the University Preparatory School (1851-53); Baldwin School, established in 1853; Hamline University, which opened its doors at Red Wing in 1854; and St. John's Seminary or College, established near St. Cloud in 1857. The Winona Normal School, which began its work in 1858, "has the distinction of being the first state normal school established west of the Mississippi."³

The convention program came to an end with an illustrated address entitled "The Pioneer Trek Across Minnesota" by Mr. Willoughby M. Babcock, curator of the museum for the Minnesota Historical Society. An interesting series of slides based upon pictures in the possession of the society brought before the audience in vivid fashion the changes in modes of transportation that accompanied the westward march of the pioneer. Mr. Babcock first discussed the importance of navigation in the early history of the upper Northwest and told of the expedition of Lieutenant Pike, in 1805. Eighteen years later a steamboat ascended the river to the newly established Fort Snelling, and a new era in the history of transportation in the Northwest was begun. The *voyageur's* canoe continued to be used on the smaller streams long after the newer forms of transportation developed, but steamboat pilots proved venturesome, and in the late fifties even the Red River Valley echoed to the puffing of the steamboat as the "Anson Northup," after having been hauled overland from Crow Wing, began operations. Meanwhile the picturesque Red River cart traffic grew to considerable dimensions before speedier traffic caused its decline. Mr. Babcock showed a number of slides illustrating the cart traffic, and then turned his attention to the rise of the stagecoach and the railroad. He spoke of the great railroad excursion of 1854, when the Chicago and Rock Island Railway celebrated the completion of its line from Chicago to the Mississippi River by sponsoring an excursion of some twelve hun-

³ Mr. Graham's address is published in part in the *Winona Republican-Herald* for June 17.

dred people on five river packets to St. Paul. The advance of railroad construction in Minnesota was signalized by the completion in 1862 of a line between St. Paul and St. Anthony, and after the Civil War it proceeded rapidly until in the seventies the settlers on the western edge of the state were at last connected by rail with the eastern markets.

After the conclusion of this address, the committee on resolutions presented the following report, which was unanimously adopted:

The Minnesota Historical Society has been the fortunate guest today of the Kandiyohi County Old Settlers' Association and the Willmar Commercial Club and has enjoyed a hospitality that will long remain a cherished memory.

Be it resolved, therefore, that the Minnesota Historical Society extend its heartfelt thanks to these organizations and others assisting them for the tour through the county so happily and carefully planned, for the receptions in the several towns along the way, for the speeches and songs, for the opportunity to visit Interlachen Lodge and to see that beautiful vista across Green Lake, for a delicious lunch at that lake, for the spirited greeting by a drum and bugle corps at the entrance to Willmar, for a carefully planned program, including the participation of three "native Americans," for a repast that left nothing to be desired and that was eaten to the strains of a splendid orchestra, to the people of Willmar who have opened their homes to entertain these guests, and to Mr. Victor Lawson and the committee on local arrangements to whom is due in no slight degree the success of the activities of the day.

It must be obvious to every reader of this report that this state historical convention was a marked success judged not only by the numbers of people participating in it but also by the quality of the papers and discussions and by the popular interest aroused. To the local committees the matter at issue was not merely a convention to be promoted for the sake of civic pride. It was an opportunity to bring before their communities and the whole state a part of the history of Minnesota. And this involved something more than the interest of a fascinating story. It meant an approach to an understanding of forces that lie back of and help to explain present-day conditions. In other words, the tour and convention have achieved,

to some extent at least, the purpose for which they are designed, that of bringing home to the people of the state both the interest and the significance of the history of Minnesota and of the communities that make up the commonwealth. As in other years widespread publicity carried the story of the convention to every part of the state. And already interest in the seventh convention, to be held in the summer of 1928, is being shown, for one city in southern Minnesota, another in the southwestern part of the state, and still another in the northeast have made preliminary inquiries looking toward the possibility of entertaining the convention.

T. C. B.



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