

THE IOWA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

On Saturday, October 11, the Iowa Association of Local Historical Societies was officially organized at a second state-wide meeting held in Des Moines. Attended by representatives of local historical societies, their friends, and many interested individuals, the meeting was an outgrowth of the successful "Iowa Conference on Local History" held in Des Moines in May, 1941. The result of careful study and much planning by the Organizing Committee appointed by that Conference, the program of October 11 included an address at the morning session by Dr. Arthur J. Larsen, Superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, a noon luncheon at which the Association had as its guests Governor George A. Wilson, Chief Justice Frederic M. Miller, and Miss Jessie M. Parker, Superintendent of Public Instruction; in the afternoon business session the plan was adopted which took the step integrating the work of individual local historical societies, with the guidance and sponsorship of the two state historical agencies, the State Historical Society of Iowa at Iowa City, and the Iowa Department of History and Archives, in Des Moines, into a state-wide program.

The success of the fall session was due to the diligence of the Organizing Committee, composed of Henry K. Peterson of Council Bluffs, chairman, Remley J. Glass, Mason City, Walter H. Beal, West Union, W. S. Johnson, Newton, Mrs. Gertrude Henderson, Sioux City, secretary, and Miss Charlotte E. Crosley, Webster City. Dr. John E. Briggs of the State Historical Society of Iowa at Iowa City, and Kenneth E. Colton of the Iowa Department of History and Archives were ex-officio members, representing their respective institutions.

Holding several full committee meetings in executing their assigned task, the committee adopted recommended

drafts of articles of incorporation for a state association and a county historical society as well as issuing the call for the fall meeting.

The quick interest developed in the movement launched in May was evidenced by the increased attendance and the enlarged representation of Iowa counties at the October meeting. Whereas in May twenty-seven counties were represented, in October, forty-two were present. The attendance was fully 50% larger than at the spring meeting.

THE MORNING SESSION

The morning program, following the secretary's roll call which disclosed forty-two counties represented, was centered in the address of Dr. Arthur J. Larsen, Superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, who spoke on "Local Historical Society Organization, with Special Reference to Minnesota."

Reminding his listeners that Americans had for long been so busy conquering a raw wilderness that they seldom took note of the fact that they were making history, or of the need for its preservation, Dr. Larsen stated that this condition was supported by the fact that not until the middle of the eighteenth century did Americans begin to attain a consciousness of themselves as something different from Englishmen transplanted. This development, spurred by the Revolutionary struggle, led to the establishment of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the oldest such institution in the country, which commemorated in 1941 its 150th anniversary.

"In the states of our Northwest," Dr. Larsen continued, after settlement began, "the historical movement took root early. Wisconsin, admitted as a state in 1848, organized a historical society in 1849. Iowa, which had entered the union in 1846, established a historical society in 1857. In Illinois, the Chicago Historical Society was organized in 1856. Minnesota, with unusual precocity, established a historical society in 1849, the year of her organization as a territory."

Remarking that "basically, the work of all historical societies is the same," Dr. Larsen outlined the three basic duties of the Minnesota Historical Society as first the collection of records, "records in the form of published works, newspapers, letters, diaries, and manuscripts, and physical remains of artifacts, such as tools, implements, and objects that the men and women of Minnesota used or had in their homes." The second duty is the preservation of those records for the benefit of future generations. The third task is the dissemination of that information to the people of the state, "through public meetings, through publications, and through the use, by the people, of the museum, library, newspaper and manuscript collections of the society."

"Each of these duties is a continuing one. Today is tomorrow's yesterday, and unless that truism is accepted, the documents from which a people's history may be written are hopelessly lost."

But as Minnesota reached maturity, "it became evident that however well the Minnesota Historical Society fulfilled its functions, no matter how industriously it sought to perform its duties, there was a zone in the life of the people which it could not reach, a need which the society could not meet. It was to fill that need that the county historical society movement was started. Based upon the same principles as those that guided the Minnesota Historical Society, and pursuing the same general ends, the county, or local historical society was able to reach into a sphere which the larger unit failed to touch." Asserting that the value of the local society was in proportion to its contact with "all the people, whatever their interests, ages, race, or social status" in a given community, Dr. Larsen declared that "when it performs its tasks, the partnership between the local society and the state historical society becomes ideal, for the one institution supplements the other, and the work of neither is complete without the cordial co-operation of the other."

The recent activity in Minnesota and elsewhere in respect to local historical interest was not the first such activity in that state. The difficulty with the "brief flurry of unor-

ganized effort to establish local historical societies and old settlers' associations during the last half of the nineteenth century" was that they were too purely local, and often too purely social in nature, served no broad general purpose, and co-operated with no other agencies in a definite program. "Only in the last score of years, under the sponsorship of the Minnesota Historical Society has the local history movement developed in Minnesota." Today, Dr. Larsen noted, "the county which possesses no historical society of its own is looked upon with a question—a wonder why these people are not curious about their own intimate past as they are about other aspects of their daily lives." At present sixty-three of the eighty-eight counties have local societies.

Reminding the conference that the work of the local society was fundamentally the same as that of the larger state society, Collection, Preservation, and Education, Dr. Larsen asserted that there would be no lack of loyal willing workers if an interest was aroused in a community. Noting the rich almost neglected sources of documents in attics and barns, of half-forgotten trunks full of the records of a former day, letters, diaries, newspapers, an expense book, a family album, pamphlets, posters, placards, of sheds and barns housing old breaking plows, ox-chains, butter molds, slates, etc, the speaker declared that collecting historical material can be and is fun.

When found these materials must be housed in a suitable shelter, and "the society must then carry on its work of telling the story of the past—a story that must be told through public meetings, through newspapers, magazines, and books, through visits of the people to the collections that have been established. The task of the local historical society is not completed until every man, woman, and child in the community has become aware that he or she is a part of the great past. The goal of the local historical society cannot be reached until the people of the neighborhood have come to understand the great essential truth that history begins at home.

"In Minnesota the local history movement was sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society. When local groups are discovered to have an interest in the history of their communities the society fosters that interest. When it has grown to the point where organization of a local historical society is possible, our staff is available for advice and assistance. Twenty years ago, we devised a sample form of constitution for local historical societies which satisfies not only the requirements for the successful prosecution of the aims of such a society, but those for legal incorporation as well. When organization is undertaken, the society sends out a speaker to assist and guide the local group. Once organization is completed, our task has just begun, for then we are called upon to supervise the work of the local society, and help it adjust its program to its resources.

"Periodically, the Minnesota Historical Society conducts local history conferences. At the time of our annual meeting, it has become customary to devote the opening session to a discussion of local history problems. In the past year and a half, sentiment has been expressed in favor of converting this informal conference into a permanent organization under the sponsorship of the executive council of the state society. It is probable that final action on this suggestion will be taken at our next annual meeting in January, 1942.

"This appears to be a logical step. In 1929, the Minnesota legislature enacted legislation making it possible for the counties of Minnesota to appropriate money for the support of the local historical society. In almost every county where there is a local society, some such form of aid is now being given. There were two safeguards in the law to prevent groups from exploiting the situation. Both of them involves the Minnesota Historical Society. The first is that before financial aid can be given a local historical society, it must be approved by the Minnesota Historical Society. The second condition was that the local historical society must be affiliated, through annual institutional membership, with the Minnesota Historical Society. These conditions imply some form of permanent state organiza-

tion of the local history groups under the leadership of the Minnesota Historical Society.

"Such is the present situation in Minnesota. Our treatment of the need differs in detail from that followed in other states, but basically, the problems are the same. There is no conflict of interests between the local historical society and the larger state-wide groups if, at the beginning, we realize that the history of the state is, after all, but the summation of the history of its communities. If this truth is understood the story of the community, as unfolded by the local historical society, will be broadened by the knowledge that the community has influenced the course of state history. The work of those whose interest is not restricted by community or county lines will be enriched by the great flood of information that the local historical societies can release. With proper balance and honest co-operation, all interests will be well served by the study of community history, the basis for all history."

Following the discussion period which arose after Dr. Larsen's address, the conference recessed for a luncheon program at which Governor George A. Wilson, Chief Justice Frederic M. Miller, and Jessie M. Parker, Superintendent of Public Instruction briefly addressed the group and tendered the conference their congratulations upon taking the important step of integrating local history into the state-wide program of historical activities.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The afternoon meeting continued with a discussion of the numerous points raised by Dr. Larsen's presentation in the morning session. Following this discussion Remely J. Glass, chairman of the sub-committee appointed to draft the articles of incorporation for the Iowa Association of Local Historical Societies, submitted the report on behalf of the committee. With the adoption of a minor amendment providing for the inclusion in the Association of district organizations as well as town, city, and county societies, the conference unanimously approved the report and adopted the articles of incorporation as amended.

Proceeding to the electing of officers, the report of the nominating committee, submitted by its chairman, Miss Ethyl E. Martin, was unanimously adopted, there being no other nominations from the floor. The following individuals were declared elected:

President, Henry K. Peterson, Council Bluffs
 Vice President, Walter H. Beall, West Union
 Secretary, Mrs. Getrude Henderson, Sioux City
 Treasurer, Remley J. Glass, Mason City
 Directors at Large:

Homer Calkin, Clearfield
 Richard C. Leggett, Fairfield
 Prof. Francis I. Moats, Indianola

Representatives from the State Historical Society of Iowa
 Miss Ethyl E. Martin
 Dr. John E. Briggs

Representatives from the Iowa State Department of History and Archives
 Ora Williams
 Kenneth E. Colton

According to the provisions of the articles of incorporation, the session resolved itself into congressional district caucuses to select district directors for the Association. The elected directors are as follows:

First, John H. Bailey, Davenport
 Second, Prof. S. S. Reque, Decorah
 Third, Leon S. Barnes, Northwood
 Fourth, Dr. P. A. Johnson, Grinnell
 Fifth, A. C. Graybeal, Des Moines
 Sixth, Miss Bessie Lyon, Webster City
 Seventh, O. J. Pruitt, Council Bluffs
 Eighth, Mrs. C. M. Mohler, Sac City

With the association fully organized, President Peterson then assigned to each unorganized county assistance either from neighboring counties, or designated a known interested individual in that county, to forward the work of organizing a local historical society there.

Votes of special thanks were offered by the conference to Dr. Arthur J. Larsen for his address, and to the Organiz-

ing Committee for its splendid work, with that the conference adjourned.

The forty-two counties represented at the October 11 meeting were

Appanoose	Hamilton	Polk
Benton	Humboldt	Pottawattamie
Black Hawk	Jasper	Poweshiek
Boone	Jefferson	Ringgold
Calhoun	Johnson	Sac
Cerro Gordo	Linn	Scott
Chickasaw	Madison	Shelby
Clayton	Mahaska	Story
Dallas	Marshall	Tama
Fayette	Monroe	Union
Floyd	Montgomery	Warren
Franklin	Muscatine	Webster
Fremont	O'Brien	Winneshiek
Guthrie	Osceola	Woodbury

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

OF THE

IOWA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

ARTICLE I.

We whose names are hereto subscribed, being all citizens of the State of Iowa and of full age, do hereby associate ourselves together as a corporation not for pecuniary profit, under provision of Chapter 394 of the Code of Iowa and Acts amendatory thereto.

ARTICLE II. Name and Location

The name of this corporation shall be the "Iowa Association of Local Historical Societies" and its principal place of business shall be in the City of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

ARTICLE III. Objects and Purposes.

The purposes of this corporation shall be:

1. To kindle and keep alive an active interest in state and local history.
2. To cooperate as fully as possible with the work of the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Iowa State Department of History and Archives, and with such other agencies in the county, state, district, or nation as may be created from time to time, for the commemora-

tion of historical events, the preservation of historical records, and the marking of historical sites.

3. To assist in the organization and maintenance of district, county, city, and community historical societies and to integrate and implement their activities.

4. At no time shall there be any duplication by this Association of any of the functions of the State Historical Society of Iowa, or the Iowa State Department of History and Archives.

ARTICLE IV. Membership.

The membership of this Association shall consist of:

1. Such district, county, city, or community historical societies in the state of Iowa as shall make application for membership, and pay the annual dues of \$2.00.

2. Such individual citizens of Iowa as may be elected to membership by the Board of Directors and pay the annual dues of \$1.00.

3. And sustaining members who shall be elected by the Board of Directors and pay annual dues of \$5.00 per year.

Any individual or sustaining member who shall have paid \$25.00 in dues shall be relieved from further payments and shall be entitled to life membership.

Annual fees shall be payable on the 1st day of January of each year, and failure to pay the same within six months after notice of delinquency shall result in termination of membership.

Each county, city, or community historical society which is a member of this corporation shall be entitled to three votes at any and all elections or balloting, and each individual or sustaining member shall be entitled to one vote.

ARTICLE V. Corporate Powers.

This corporation assumes to itself as such corporation, all the rights, powers, privileges, and immunities conferred upon similar organizations under provision of Chapter 394 of the 1939 Code of Iowa and Acts amendatory thereto, and takes to itself the power to sell, hold, encumber, convey, and dispose of property both real and personal, in any manner not prohibited by law, and consistent with the objects and purposes of the corporation and necessary and convenient for the proper conduct of the affairs of the corporation.

The provisions of this article are specifically subject to the provision against duplication of activities as contained in Article III.

ARTICLE VI. Corporate Term.

This corporation shall continue for a period of fifty years from the date of the filing hereof unless sooner dissolved by majority vote of all the members of this society, by Act of the General Assembly, or by law.

ARTICLE VII. Officers

1. The officers of this corporation shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board of directors, who shall be elected from the membership at the annual meeting of the corporation and shall hold office for one year and until their successors are elected and have qualified.

2. The Board of Directors shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Association by virtue of their office, and three members elected by the general membership of the Association from that district; one member from each congressional District of the State elected by the members of the Association from that district; two members from the State Historical Society of Iowa, elected by the Board of Directors of that organization; and two members from the Iowa State Department of History and Archives elected by the Board of Directors of that organization.

ARTICLE VIII. Board of Directors - Duties.

The Board of Directors shall have control over and manage the real and personal property of the organization and shall have charge of its financial and business affairs. They shall perform those duties usually performed by such a Board.

ARTICLE IX. Vacancies.

Vacancies in the officers or Board of Directors of this corporation shall be filled by the Board of Directors or the remaining members thereof and such appointees shall hold office until the election and qualification of their successors at the next annual meeting of this corporation.

ARTICLE X. Finances.

Contracts, deeds, conveyances, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness, and mortgages securing the same, shall be signed and executed in the name of the corporation by its President or Vice President and Secretary.

ARTICLE XI. Meetings.

1. The first regular annual business meeting of the Association shall be held at two o'clock in the afternoon on the 11th day of October, 1941, at Des Moines, Iowa, or such other place as may be determined by the Board of Directors.

2. Subsequent regular annual business meetings of the Association shall be held on the second Saturday of October of each year at such hour and place as may be designated by the Board of Directors.

3. Special meetings of the corporation may be held upon the call of the majority of the Board of Directors or upon the written request of ten members of said corporation.

4. Notice of the regular annual meeting or special meeting of the corporation shall be given by mailing a copy of said notice to members in good standing at least ten days prior to the time of said meeting. Notices of special meetings shall set out the purposes and business to be considered and no other business shall be considered.

ARTICLE XII. Meetings of Board of Directors

1. The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held immediately following the annual meeting of the membership.
2. The Board of Directors may make such provision for regular meetings as it may determine.
3. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at such times and places as may be designated by the President upon three days' written notice thereof.

ARTICLE XIII. Executive Committee.

The Board of Directors shall elect an executive committee to be composed of the President, Secretary, and three members of the Board who shall have general charge of the business of the Association in the periods between directors' meetings. Meetings of the executive committee may be called at any time by the President upon three days' written notice.

ARTICLE XIV. Quorum.

Twenty-five members of the corporation shall constitute a quorum to transact business for any regular or special meeting of the corporation.

ARTICLE XV. By-Laws.

By-Laws shall be adopted by the corporation and may be amended at any regular annual business meeting of the corporation or at any special meeting called for that purpose.

ARTICLE XVI. Exemptions.

The private property of any and all of the members of this corporation shall be exempt from any and all liability for the acts of the corporation or for any of its indebtedness.

ARTICLE XVII. Amendments

These articles may be amended at any regular annual business meeting or at any special meeting of the corporation called for such purpose by the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members at the meeting.

IOWA LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES (ORGANIZED)

ADAIR COUNTY

Adair County Historical Society

R. H. Gregory, Fontanelle, President

CERRO GORDO COUNTY

Cerro Gordo County Historical Society

Remley J. Glass, Mason City, President

Hugh H. Shepard, Mason City, Vice-President

Kenneth I. Waughtal, Mason City, Secretary and
Treasurer

DES MOINES COUNTY

Old Des Moines Association

Mrs. E. R. Hertzler, 1000 Eighth Street, Burlington

FAYETTE COUNTY

Fayette County Centennial Association

D. R. Roberts, West Union, President

Walter H. Beall, West Union, Treasurer

GUTHRIE COUNTY

Guthrie County Historical Society

Miss Elizabeth Hudson, Panora, President

W. Benedict, Casey, Secretary

HAMILTON COUNTY

Hamilton County Historical Society

Miss Bessie Lyon, Webster City, President

J. W. Lee, Webster City, Vice-President

Fred C. Runkle, Stanhope, Secretary

Mrs. John Sheldon, Webster City, Treasurer

HOWARD COUNTY

Howard County Historical Society

W. H. Tillson, Cresco, President

JASPER COUNTY

Jasper County Historical Society

Fred E. Meredith, Newton, President

Mrs. Mark J. Shaw, Newton, Vice-President

W. S. Johnson, Newton, Secretary

W. J. Price, Treasurer

LINN COUNTY

Linn County Historical Society

B. L. Wick, Cedar Rapids, President

MADISON COUNTY

Madison County Historical Society

H. A. Mueller, St. Charles, President

Charles Tucker, Winterset, Vice-President
 Mrs. Fred Hartsook, Winterset, Secretary
 Mrs. Fred Lewis, Winterset, Treasurer

MAHASKA COUNTY

Mahaska County Historical Society
 J. C. Bradbury, Oskaloosa, President

MARION COUNTY

Pella Historical Society
 S. S. Sybenga, Pella, Curator

MARSHALL COUNTY

Marshall County Historical Society
 Ida M. Evans, Marshalltown, Treasurer

O'BRIEN COUNTY

O. H. Montzheimer, Primghar, President
 Charles F. McCormack, Sutherland, Vice-President
 John A. Campbell, Sheldon, Secretary and Treasurer

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Osceola County Historical Society
 Mrs. L. H. (Bertha G.) Heetland, Sibley, President

PLYMOUTH COUNTY

Plymouth County Historical Society
 Mrs. B. C. Wolley, LeMars, President
 R. I. Koehler, LeMars, Secretary

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

Pocahontas County Historical Society
 Miss M. Alice Cole, Pocahontas

POLK COUNTY

Polk County Historical Society
 Ray C. Stiles, Des Moines, President
 J. E. Howard, Des Moines, Vice-President
 J. A. Wilbois, Des Moines, Secretary
 H. C. Plummer, Des Moines, Treasurer

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

Pottawattamie County Historical Society
 Henry K. Peterson, Council Bluffs, President

RINGGOLD COUNTY

Ringgold County Historical Society
 Homer L. Calkin, Clearfield, President
 Arthur S. Palmer, Mt. Ayr, Vice-President

Vera F. Dickens, Mt. Ayr, Secretary

C. D. Allyn, Mt. Ayr, Treasurer

SCOTT COUNTY

Davenport Public Museum

John H. Bailey, Davenport, Director

UNION COUNTY

Union County Historical Society

B. L. Tyler, Afton, President

Ray Wilson, Creston, Vice-President

Mrs. Henry Carolus, Afton, Secretary and Treasurer

WARREN COUNTY

Warren County Historical Society

C. C. Briggs, Indianola, President

WEBSTER COUNTY

Webster County Historical Society

Mrs. Maude Lauderdale, Fort Dodge, Secretary

WINNESHIEK COUNTY

Greater Winneshiek County League

Prof. S. S. Reque, Luther College, Decorah, President

Dr. J. P. Malloy, Castalla, Vice-President

Jerome R. Oslund, Decorah, Secretary

WOODBURY COUNTY

Sioux City Public Museum

Mrs. Gertrude Henderson, Sioux City, Curator

Smithland Historical Society

The Rev. A. Pruit, President

Mrs. Will H. McDonald, Vice President

Woodbury County Historical Society Including the
Academy of Science and Letters

D. S. Lewis, Sioux City, President

C. S. Van Eaton, Vice President

C. C. Fowler, Treasurer

Mrs. Gertrude Henderson, Secretary

WORTH COUNTY

Worth County Historical Society

O. K. Storre, Kensett, President

Leon Barnes, Northwood, Vice-President

Glenn O. Tenold, Northwood, Second Vice-President

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