

HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

Book Notes

Grass Roots History. By Theodore C. Blegen. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1947. 256 pp. Index. \$3.00.) "The pivot of history is not the uncommon, but the usual, and the true makers of history are 'the people, yes.' This is the essence of grass roots history." With these words, Professor Blegen introduces his new book, a collection of essays and articles on regional — grass roots — history. Reading the story of the past as written by the "people" in letters, diaries, and newspapers, can be much more rewarding than reading that story as written by the professional historian whose English is too often "not a style, but an occupational disease." For instance, the letters of Gro Svensen, written to her family in Norway from near Estherville, Iowa, in the sixties and seventies give a better picture of the Iowa pioneer than does many a second or third-hand account written by the historian or even by the novelist. In the chapter, "Everyday Life as Advertised," Dr. Blegen shows how a newspaper of any period, through its advertisements, illustrates the social and economic life of a community. The reading of this book is a rewarding experience for all interested in "grass roots" history.

Album of American History. Vol. IV: *End of an Era.* Edited by James Truslow Adams. (New York, Scribner's Sons, 1948. 385 pp. \$7.50.) This is the fourth and final volume of James Truslow Adams' pictorial history of the United States, a series which planned to tell "by means of pictures, the story of the United States from 1492 to 1917." Volume IV covers the period from the "gay nineties" to the outbreak of the first World War. The pictures, with explanatory captions, illustrate not only the larger national scene, but also such homely things as the dress, sports, and amusements, and the living and working conditions of the average American.

Midwest Heritage. By John Drury. (New York, A. A. Wyn, Inc., 1948. 169 pp. Index, engravings, and acknowledgments. \$5.00.) Here is another picture history of the Mississippi valley. The feature of the book besides its cost is the fact that the illustrations are entirely contemporary

prints — the chief means of keeping a pictorial record before the days of photography. Written by a professional newspaper man (also the author of *Historic Midwest Houses*), this book is a portrait of the American frontier while that frontier was still in the Midwest. It is not, however, a history.

America's Sheep Trails. By Edward N. Wentworth. (Ames, Iowa State College Press, 1948. xxii + 590 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, and index. \$7.00.) This monumental volume on American sheep raising does for this industry what Walter P. Webb's work did for the cattle industry. Col. Wentworth, director of Armour's Livestock Bureau, has undertaken to tell the story of sheep raising from the dawn of history to the present. Several chapters are devoted to this background material. Beginning with Chapter 10, the rest of the book treats the commercialization and organization of the industry. Iowa in relation "to its soil resources," has "never developed a proportionate ovine population," he declares. However, the work of Iowa State College in its research on feeding is given due credit for placing this part of the industry on a commercial basis. According to Col. Wentworth, there were a million and a quarter lambs in Iowa feedlots in 1943.

Meet Henry Wallace. By James Waterman Wise. (New York, Boni and Gaer, 1948. 91 pp. Illustrations and Table of Events. \$1.00.) This campaign biography of the former Secretary of Agriculture, Vice President, and Secretary of Commerce traces Mr. Wallace's career up to the time when Wallace revealed himself as candidate for President from the Progressive Party. Not an unprejudiced account, the biography attempts to show this former Iowan as America's chief hope for world peace.

Frontier Doctor. By Samuel J. Crumbine, M.D. (Philadelphia, Dorrance & Company, Inc., 1948. ix + 284 pp. \$3.00.) Dr. Crumbine, one of the busiest doctors on the Kansas frontier, has finally had time to write his autobiography. It is a life record worth having. In it are incidents from the early days of Dodge City, and, even more important, the record of the Doctor's campaign for public health. As Secretary of the Kansas State Board of Health, Dr. Crumbine was the first to start the war against the common fly. "Swat the fly," his slogan, will long be remembered as the beginning of a public health program which was to extend far beyond the borders of the state of Kansas.

A Centennial History of Mount Vernon, Iowa, 1847-1947, was published by the Centennial Committee of Mt. Vernon in 1948, in celebration of Mt. Vernon's 100th year. From "Pioneer Days" to "Recent Years" the chapters cover the growth of Mt. Vernon and of Cornell College. A section of pictures of historic homes in the town is of interest, and an appendix lists the Mt. Vernon men who took part in the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and both World Wars. The names of graduates of the high school from 1879 to 1947 are also listed. Of special interest is Chapter 4, containing a series of letters written by Mrs. Benjamin Ford to her parents in New York during the years 1854-1863. The book contains a wealth of factual information on the development of this Iowa town.

Life and Voyages of Louis Jolliet (1645-1700). By Jean Delanglez. (Chicago, Institute of Jesuit History, 1948. vii + 251 pp. Maps, appendixes, bibliography, and index.) Iowans should find interest in this new book on Louis Jolliet. The author is professor of history at Loyola University in Chicago, editor of *Mid-America*, a quarterly historical journal, and has written many studies on the early French period in America. His book takes up, in great detail, the records of Jolliet's early life, the various manuscript and secondary sources on the famous voyage of discovery of the Mississippi, and includes a chapter on the cartographical evidence. Other chapters deal with Jolliet's life after the voyage of 1763.

Two recent books on railroad history will be of interest to Iowans. *The Milwaukee Road, Its First Hundred Years*, by August Derleth (New York, Creative Age Press, 1948. 264 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, and index. \$4.00), tells the story of this railroad from its beginning as the Milwaukee and Mississippi to the present day. *Pioneer Railroad: The Story of the Chicago and North Western System*, by Robert J. Casey and W. A. S. Douglas (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1948. 287 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, appendixes, and index. \$4.00), is timely, since 1948 is the centennial year of the North Western.

Articles

Roy F. Nichols has some suggestions for "Postwar Reorientation of Historical Thinking" in *The American Historical Review* for October, 1948. After drawing a contrast with the period following World War I,

Mr. Nichols points out some evidence of revolt now against the doctrine of uncertainty which prevailed then. Two trends he finds in present historical thinking are the abandonment of what he calls "the pattern of inversion" and the insistence on a higher level of performance.

Richard H. Bauer concludes a series on "The Study of History," in *The Social Studies* for November, 1948. His is the fourth in a series of articles on the same subject and is primarily concerned with research in history with particular emphasis on the problems of external and internal criticism of documents and manuscripts. After defining these terms he concludes with some miscellaneous suggestions for the practicing historian.

Two documents of middle western history appear in *The Kansas Historical Quarterly* for November, 1948. One is the conclusion or Part Four of "William Clark's Diary (1830-1831)," edited by Louise Barry; the other is an account of a journey "Over the Santa Fe Trail Through Kansas in 1858," by H. B. Mollhausen. This German traveler describes contemporary conditions, including the trails, the traffic with the Indians, the scenery, buffalo hunting, and early military posts such as Fort Leavenworth.

"Three Artists of the Frontier," by Mary M. Powell in the *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*, October, 1948, describes some sketches of places and events drawn by Frederick Piercy, Paulus Roetter, and Julius Kummer about whom very little is known. These contemporary records of pioneer days are valuable both to the historian and to the development of American art. Included among the illustrations of their work is a view of St. Louis in 1853.

David Donald and Frederick A. Palmer, in a joint article, "Toward a Western Literature, 1820-1860" (*Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, December, 1948), trace the early attempts toward regional literature by the literary pioneers who paved the way for such men as Hamlin Garland, Joseph Kirkland, or James Whitcomb Riley. That it took more than a quarter century for these first seeds to bear fruit is attributed to practical difficulties such as poorly equipped printers, publishers, and editors.

The *Wisconsin Magazine of History* for September, 1948, contains three articles of interest to historians of the Middle West. For economic historians, there is an article on banking, "Samuel Marshall, Pioneer Banker," by Richard H. Marshall; for historians of agricultural education, "The

Agricultural College Crisis of 1885," by W. H. Glover; for historians of cultural groups, "Venturing into Politics — the Norwegian-American Press of the 1850's," by Arlow William Andersen.

"4-H Boys and Girls Grow More Food," by Frederick Simpich in the *National Geographic Magazine* for November, 1948, outlines the movement which touches 1,759,911 members, particularly in agricultural areas like Iowa. Likened to another children's crusade, this youth-training program is under the United States Department of Agriculture, land grant colleges' extension services, and some 6,534 county agents. Under this guidance the young people learn the latest, most scientific methods of raising both stock and food stuffs.

The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society for September, 1948, contains two articles on agriculture. "Old Hutch — The Wheat King," by William Ferris is an account of Benjamin Peters Hutchinson, an impressive figure in the grain pits back in the 1880's. "Illinois Agriculture in Transition, 1820-1870," by Richard Bardolph, traces the transformation of farming from the days of frontier communities to the days of commercial farming. This development in Illinois is of course only a manifestation of a contemporaneous development in the surrounding area.

"Illinois Records of 1000 A. D.," by Thorne Deuel in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (September, 1948), tells the story of Hopewell Indian culture in this area. Evidence of an even older inhabitant of the Midwest is reported in the *Middle Border Bulletin*, Winter, 1948. The article describes some archaeological evidence of the "Folsom Man" found recently in the Black Hills, which if authenticated would prove that men lived in the area as much as 10,000 years ago. More recent Indian artifacts of the Byron W. Knoblock collection and the Edward Buel collection are described and illustrated in the *Journal of the Illinois State Archaeological Society* for October, 1948.

Jean Delanglez in "The Cartography of the Mississippi" (*Mid-America* for October, 1948), analyzes the maps of the great river and compares them with the available documentation on which they were based to produce another link in the history of the exploration of the Mississippi River valley.

Monia Cook Morris' article "Teacher Training in Missouri Before 1871,"

in *Missouri Historical Review* for October, 1948, outlines the training program for teachers from 1818–1871. This covers the period during which the program developed from one private school in St. Charles, through the agitation for teacher education, up to the establishment of the first normal schools. The account of this development is one chapter in the history of middle western education.

Two documents in the *Missouri Historical Review* for October, 1948, are "A Missouri Forty-niner's Trip across the Plains," by James B. Evans and Part III of "The Missouri Reader: The Lewis and Clark Expedition," edited by Ada Paris Klein. Both give excellent first-hand accounts of conditions encountered by early travelers and explorers.

"The Pony Express Starts From St. Joseph," by Olaf T. Hagen in the *Missouri Historical Review* for October, 1948, gives the newspaper background for the Pony Express and thus records the contemporary excitement over the new venture, the "greatest enterprise of modern times," as it was called then. The first trip (240 hours to San Francisco) was followed closely in the local press, and upon the rider's return 9 days later, there was general celebration over the success of this new, fast transportation.

The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society for September, 1948, contains an account of "Sheldon Jackson, Planter of Churches," by Alvin K. Bailey. This missionary of the 1860's established congregations in many churchless areas of the Middle West — particularly in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado.

"Economic and Social Effects of the Depression of 1819 in the Old Northwest," by Thomas H. Greer in the *Indiana Magazine of History* (September, 1948), describes the loss of produce markets and the disappearance of currency which hit the Northwest in full force by 1820. Mr. Greer defines the resentment of the West, which focused on the Bank of the United States, and the growing urge of people in the West to extend their influence over the policies of the national government.

The October, 1948, issue of *The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* is devoted to the history of medicine in Ohio from 1890–1945.

Lyle E. Mantor's article, "Fort Kearny and the Westward Movement" (*Nebraska History*, September, 1948), traces the importance of this post

to the forty-niners during the gold rush and later during the fifties, when it served as one of the last outposts for mail and transportation.

Iowa

Of interest to Iowa historians is the article by Paul Wallace Gates, "Cattle Kings in the Prairies" (*Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, December, 1948), describing the large prairie farms where cattle are fattened between the time they are brought from the range and the time they are sent to the Chicago market.

History of the Scott County (Iowa) Chapter of the American National Red Cross, by John Charles Bready, a condensation of an M.A. thesis at the State University of Iowa, was published by the local chapter. The period covered is from 1889, when this chapter was organized, up to 1947. However, the years 1917-1923 are omitted because records for these years are no longer available. Various departments such as home service, disaster relief, unemployment service, and activities during World War II are described.

"Historical Data of the Iowa Bar," by W. R. C. Kendrick appears in *Annals of Iowa* for October, 1948. Mr. Kendrick, the librarian of the State Law Library, traces the history of the Iowa bar and outlines the background of the establishment of the State Law Library. He lists also some of the rare documents it contains.

The "Eminent Iowan Series" of the *Annals of Iowa* for October, 1948, is devoted to George E. Roberts, for many years editor and publisher of the *Fort Dodge Messenger*. As the result of his little book on currency, *Coin at School in Finance*, Roberts was named Director of the Mint. Though he was absent from Iowa for nearly half a century, his background as an Iowa newspaperman and the campaign he waged against Bryan, while he was still in the State, are enough to identify him with his birthplace. One of his speeches, "The Economies of a Boom," is printed in the same issue.

In the November, 1948, issue of *Coronet*, Barry O'Flaherty has re-told the story of one of Iowa's early heroines, Kate Shelley. Sixty-seven years ago, Kate, then a girl of 15, "saved the Chicago and North Western railway's midnight express from plunging over a washed-out bridge into a

rain-swollen stream." This story is told as part of the 100-year history of the Chicago and North Western, which celebrated its centennial in 1948.

Newspaper Stories

On August 31, 1948, former state senator Aaron Vale Blackford died at his home in Bonaparte at the age of 76. *Burlington Hawkeye Gazette*, September 1, 1948.

"Dan De Quille (William Wright) the great Virginia City, Nevada, editor, whom Iowa has never claimed, lies buried in the Wright family plot at West Liberty. De Quille farmed near West Liberty, then set out for the California gold rush before the Civil War. He came back 40 years later, still poor, but famous." Dave Wiggins has written the story of Dan De Quille in the September 12, 1948, issue of the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*. Probably few Iowans, who have read the story of Dan De Quille and his colorful career as a newspaperman in California, Nevada, and elsewhere, know that he was an Iowan.

In 1904 buyers of \$1.50 season tickets for the Chautauqua program of that year could hear such men as William Jennings Bryan and Robert M. LaFollette. These were the headliners on a "Souvenir Programme" of 64 pages issued at Malvern in that year. The September 16, 1948, issue of the *Malvern Leader* recalls the popular Chautauqua performances, when "Culture was imported to Malvern in man-sized doses."

Bishop Edmond Heelan, head of the Sioux City diocese of the Catholic Church, died on September 20, 1948, at Sioux City, at the age of 80. *Des Moines Register*, September 21, 1948.

"When Des Moines fell to Armed Assault of Early Settlers" is the headline of a story in the September 22, 1948, issue of the *Winterset Madisonian*. In 1848, in a fight known as the Reeves War, farmers of Madison and Warren counties pursued members of the Reeves family, accused of cattle-stealing, into the small village of Des Moines. There, despite the efforts of Des Moines residents to protect them, the Reeves men were captured. "They were taken back to Linn Grove, where all members of both families were rounded up, all their belongings put in their wagons, and they were told to leave the state."

Newspapers have played an important part in Iowa history. The *Laurens*

Sun for September 30, 1948, carries an account of the history of that newspaper from its founding in 1885 to the present time. In the *Oskaloosa Daily Herald* for October 22, 1948, a story by Charles A. Kent gives proof that a monthly newspaper was published for a time during the nineteenth century at the town of Beacon in Mahaska County. A picture of the mast-head of the paper, the *Beacon Battle-Axe*, for August, 1874, accompanies the article.

Judge George C. Scott, 84, former United States judge of the northern Iowa district, died on October 6, 1948, at his home in Sioux City. The *Sioux City Tribune-Journal* for October 6, 1948, gives a sketch of Judge Scott's career as Representative and United States Judge.

In October, 1848, W. B. Hawkins, a veteran of the Mexican War and a resident of Indiana, bought 425 acres of Poweshiek County land. Today, 100 years later, the farm, now reduced to about 240 acres, is still farmed by members of the Hawkins family. The story of the farm and its owners is told in the October 7, 1948, issue of the *Montezuma Republican*.

The *Algona Advance* for October 14, 1948, contains a story on "How Greenwood Township Made Its Start in the Early Days," written by J. A. Frech. Mr. Frech, an early resident, recalls pioneer farming methods, schoolhouses, and residents of Greenwood Township, Kossuth County.

Francis J. L. Beckman, former archbishop of the Dubuque archdiocese, died in Chicago on October 17, 1948, at the age of 72. *Des Moines Register*, October 18, and *Dubuque Telegraph Herald*, October 19, 1948.

Two stories of Iowa theatrical companies appeared recently in Iowa newspapers. The *Waterloo Courier* of November 14, 1948, carried the story of Mrs. Birdie Williams, wardrobe mistress of the Princess Theater of Des Moines, where she knew and worked for Conrad Nagel and Fay Bainter, two of the famous alumni of that well-known stock company. The *Sabula Gazette* of September 16, 1948, tells the story of the traveling stock company of Jack and Maude Brooks, a thirty-seven-year-old theatrical troupe which has played in theaters and tents in Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin.

John M. Wormely, 84, former state representative and mayor of Kingsley, died at Sioux City, November 12, 1948. *Des Moines Register*, November 15, 1948.

The *Davenport Times* for November 30, 1948, tells of the Safley family who have occupied and worked the same farm in Cedar County, Iowa, for 112 years. Four generations of Safleys have lived on the old homestead which was a showplace in the 1860's. Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Harris, direct descendants of pioneer John Safley, are the present occupants of the farm which is reported to be the only one in Red Oak Township owned by the same family and farmed continuously by descendants of the pioneers.

In the December 16, 1948, issue of the *Des Moines Tribune*, Herb Owens tells the story of one of Iowa's "ghost towns," Reno, in Cass County. Mrs. Wilbur South, who lives near Cumberland, has made a hobby of collecting stories about the lost town of Reno. She has the original village record books. Reno was platted in 1876, was by-passed by the railroad, and began to decline in 1884. The town had a short but exciting history, its records being filled with violence and murder.

On December 18, 1848, Mrs. Henry Lott was murdered by Indians in Hamilton County, in revenge for the misdeeds of her husband, Henry Lott, "a reckless, ruthless Indian trader." In the December 18, 1948, issue of the *Webster City Freeman Journal*, in a story titled "An Important Event Took Place Just 100 Years Ago," Mrs. Christie Monson tells the story of Henry Lott and his wife. Lott's revenge murder of the Indian Sidominatoh and his family is often said to be part of the cause of the Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857.

David W. Hanks, a distant cousin of Abraham Lincoln, lives in Princeton. His story is told by Dr. Charles Snyder, Curator of the State Historical Society of Iowa, in the December 19, 1948, issue of the *Davenport Democrat*.

According to a story in the December 30, 1948, issue of the *Davenport Times*, the First Trust and Savings Bank of Davenport plans to exhibit a series of enlarged reproductions of the original historical documents displayed on the Freedom Train. Twenty-six reproductions will be on display, with historical background material, during the coming year. The exhibit will be changed every two weeks.

After hearing a radio broadcast about his old home town, A. J. Barr of Sedalia, Missouri, wrote a short reminiscence of the old days near Harlan, Iowa. It was printed in the December 10, 1948, issue of the *Harlan Trib-*

une. Mr. Barr recalls the exciting story of how local cattle rustlers were hanged and how one, Bill Cuppy, escaped and later became a respected citizen in the county.

Harry W. Hill, a Fort Madison prison employee of fifty years ago, says "life was rough and tough" in those days. Hill's letter to P. A. Lainson, now warden at the Iowa State prison, describes early prison conditions in Iowa. It was featured in the December 10, 1948, issue of the *Burlington Hawk-Eye Gazette*.

"In that early day the pioneers most likely to survive must have been happy, healthy — and illiterate!" writes Ernest Dewey in his description of *Dr. Chase's Recipes* in the *Burlington Hawk-Eye Gazette* for December 10, 1948. Mr. Dewey has a rare copy of this popular pioneer "doctor book," published in 1867 and said to have run through nine editions. One agrees that rusty nails and chimney soot would be too potent a remedy for modern patients. This early best-seller, containing 1,000 remedies for man and beast, listed complaints and treatments in an orderly manner: gargles, gangrene, and gingerbread; fevers, fistulas, and fresh fruits.

Many Iowa churches are celebrating 50 to 100 years of existence. The following newspaper articles will be of value to those interested in the history of religion in Iowa:

Marengo Pioneer-Republican, November 4, 1948 — Marengo Methodist Church, founded in 1846.

Richland Clarion, November 25, 1948 — Richland Christian Church, founded in 1848.

Davenport Democrat, November 14, 1948 — St. Irenaeus Church of Clinton, founded in 1848.

Newton News, October 27, 1948 — Newton First Methodist Church, founded in 1848.

Cedar Rapids Gazette, October 22, 1948 — Giard Methodist Church, founded in 1848.

Waverly Democrat, November 5, 1948 — Janesville Methodist Church, founded in 1850.

Waverly Democrat, November 12, 1948 — Waverly Baptist Church, founded in 1855.

Fairfield Ledger, September 28, 1948 — Fairfield First Christian Church, founded in 1858.

- Waverly Democrat*, December 31, 1948 — Horton Baptist Church, founded in 1858.
- Waverly Democrat*, October 15, 1948 — Waverly Evangelical United Brethren Church, founded in 1859.
- Eddyville Tribune*, October 7, 1948 — Pleasant Corner's Baptist Church, founded in 1861.
- Waverly Democrat*, October 29, 1948 — Artesian St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, founded in 1871.
- Sibley Gazette-Tribune*, October 28, 1948 — Sibley Congregational Church, founded in 1872.
- Grundy Register*, September 16, 1948 — Westfriesland Presbyterian Church of German Township, Grundy County, founded in 1873.
- Spirit Lake Beacon*, October 21, 1948 — Spirit Lake Baptist Church, founded in 1875.
- Waverly Democrat*, November 19, 1948 — Waverly St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, founded in 1878.
- Nevada Journal*, November 20, 1948 — McCallsburg Presbyterian Church, founded in 1889.
- Le Mars Sentinel*, November 19, 1948 — Oyens Gethsemane Lutheran Church, founded in 1898.
- Nashua Reporter*, September 15, 1948 — Nashua St. John's Lutheran Church, founded in 1898.
- Waverly Democrat*, October 22, 1948 — Waverly Peace Evangelical and Reformed Church, founded in 1902.
- Marengo Pioneer-Republican*, December 2, 1948 — Marengo Church of the Nazarene, founded in 1908.