

HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

State Historical Society of Iowa

Curator William D. Houlette, who is professor of history at Drake University, is active in furthering interest in Iowa history. In addition to speaking at the Guthrie County Historical Society meeting on July 12, 1953, Dr. Houlette has organized field trips for his classes in Iowa history for the purpose of visiting historic sites in the state. On July 16, 1953, as part of a radio program, "Let's Visit Drake," he discussed these Iowa history field trips.

Superintendent William J. Petersen has been appointed to the Board of Editors of the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*. Dr. Petersen is also a member of the Editorial Board of the *American Archivist*.

The Robert Smyth Papers are now available for research students and will be particularly valuable to those seeking information about Linn and Marion counties. There are more than 100 personal and private letters in the collection, dating from 1854 to 1868. They are mostly family letters written to Robert Smyth, a paymaster with the Iowa troops stationed in Missouri and Iowa during the Civil War. Smyth was an astute lawyer and land owner with interests in many eastern Iowa counties. Many of the letters reflect the problems at home during wartime. In addition to the family letters, the collection also includes Smyth's official reports as paymaster.

SUPERINTENDENT'S CALENDAR

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| August 4 | Addressed Davenport High Twelve Club. |
| August 15 | Attended christening of towboat <i>Sioux City</i> at Omaha. |
| September 17-20 | Attended meeting of American Association for State and Local History at Detroit. |
| September 21-22 | Attended meeting of the Society of American Archivists at Detroit. |

The following members were elected to membership in the State Historical Society during the months of July and August, 1953:

Ainsworth

Mr. R. L. Colthurst

Alta

Mrs. Effie Allen

Ames

Mr. John S. Quist

Mr. George C. Winterowd

Anamosa

Mr. Harold Hartman

Ankeny

Mr. Wm. A. Vaughn

Attica

Miss Winona M. Davis

Baldwin

Baldwin Public Schools

Belle Plaine

Mr. L. M. Winslow

Belmond

Mr. Roy A. Henderson

Mr. Bert C. Hewlett

Bettendorf

Mrs. John C. Crissey

Bloomfield

Miss Clara Barton

Mr. Robert D. Bond

Mrs. Frata Brown

Bryant

Mrs. John Camp

Burlington

Mr. Ralph F. Ziegler

Cedar Falls

Cedar Falls Jr. High School

Cedar Rapids

Mrs. Margaret S. Bernstorff

Mr. W. V. Fiebig

Mr. Eldon D. Johnson

Mr. Harold J. Rowe

Mr. G. K. Thompson

Miss Lena A. Vogt

Mr. Harry E. Winn

Corning

Mrs. Wayne L. Whitmore

Crawfordsville

Mr. Robert W. Miller

Creston

Miss Mary E. Ward

Davenport

Mr. R. V. Boom

Mr. Frank S. Maag

Sister Miriam Rita

Mrs. Raymond O. Schmidt

Mr. L. E. Milota

Mr. Peter C. Petersen

Mr. Carl E. Rylander

Mr. Walter E. Von Korff

Rev. Walter S. Wendt

Mr. G. Richard Wissing

Des Moines

Mr. John Bemis

Mr. H. E. Hazen

Miss Vashti Lott

Mr. Harry E. Russell

Mr. R. E. Thorpe

Dexter

Mr. John C. Nevins

De Witt

Mrs. A. H. Keen

Dubuque

Sister Mary Ursula

Durant

Mrs. Esther Meinert

Fairfield

Mrs. O. E. Kirby

Fort Dodge

Miss Sarah Heggen

Hopkinton

Mr. Marshall Neil

Hubbard

Mrs. Fannie B. Strother

Indianola

Mr. Lewis S. Kimer

Mr. Eldon L. Ogan

Iowa City

Mr. Reynold Larson

Mr. William Dyre Lampard

Mr. John T. McGruder

Mr. Edward F. Mason

Mr. H. G. Petershagen

Mr. W. W. Summerwill

Mr. Frank Vogel

Irwin

Mr. Donald G. McConnell

Kalona

Mr. Herman Ropp

Keokuk

Miss Helen Coombs

Mr. Harry C. Robertson

Knoxville

Dr. Robert B. May

Lockridge

Mr. E. H. Bogner

Mrs. Vincent E. Crane

Manchester

Mrs. Claude Ryan

Maquoketa

Miss Beatrice Sharp

Marshalltown

Mrs. Raymond Lorensen

Mr. James D. Scott

Mason City

Mrs. James B. Conroy

Miss Merry Lou Foster

Mr. M. E. Laird

Mrs. George W. Paschen

Mount Pleasant

Mrs. O. H. Martin

Mr. Melvin Talbott

Muscatine

Mrs. K. M. Hathaway

Mrs. R. W. Heerd

Mrs. Charles W. Opel

Mr. P. G. Richard

Mr. Berry Bryson Tracy

Newton

Mr. Fred J. Pulver

Norway

Mr. Royal L. Tuttle

Oelwein

Mr. V. Allan Vaughn

Osceola

Mrs. Mildred Gibson

Oskaloosa

Mr. Van Buren Reisman

Ottumwa

Mrs. Dewey E. Latimer

Pella

Mr. M. S. Kuyk

Prairie City

Mr. John R. Buckley

Royal

Mr. George W. Brighton

Sergeant Bluff

Mr. Fred C. Colby

Sigourney

Mr. C. L. Heald

Spirit Lake

Mr. Earl Treloar Rose

Sumner

Mr. L. P. Winks

Tracy

Mrs. L. B. Rankin

Waterloo

Mr. Clarence Clark

Mr. Victor B. Foster

Dr. Isaac E. Hayes

Mrs. Robert M. Knox

Mr. George F. Sherrill

Washington

Mr. John Gamon

Waukon

Mrs. Merton R. Palmer

West Des Moines

Mr. John R. Buckley, Jr.

West Liberty

Mrs. Charles Jacobsen

California

Mr. L. A. Edwards, Porterville

Colorado

Miss Virginia Moore, Denver

Idaho

Mr. W. Howard Davison, Boise

Illinois

Mr. James B. Vincent, Galena

Mr. Robert H. Milner, LaGrange

Indiana

Mr. William C. Power,

Indianapolis

Oregon

Mrs. Edith Birney, Portland

West Virginia

Mr. Thomas R. Ross, Elkins

The following persons were elected as life members:

Adel

Mrs. Milton M. Frakes

Beaman

Mr. T. L. Evans

Cedar Rapids

Mr. Geo. B. Sherman

Mr. Thomas C. Tibbitts

Fort Dodge

Mr. A. M. Kenyon

Kalona

Mrs. Emil Hesselschwerdt

Mason City

Dr. George M. Crabb

Mount Pleasant

Mr. Charles S. Rogers

Onawa

Mrs. A. W. Burgess

Postville

Mr. Joseph B. Steele

West Des Moines

Mr. Earl H. Williams

Missouri

Mr. Jay E. Keck, Independence

Ohio

Mr. Victor W. Flickinger,

Columbus

Iowa Historical Activities

The grave of the Indian chief, War Eagle, at Sioux City, has been restored. Located on a hilltop at the junction of the Sioux and Missouri

rivers, the gravesite had been made a state park, but had deteriorated in recent years. C. B. Chesterman of Sioux City provided the funds for the restoration of the site and for the improving of the road leading to the park. Mrs. Alfred C. Zweck had charge of the project.

At a meeting of the Four County Historical Society at Belle Plaine, H. Roy Mosnat read a paper on the famous Jumbo artesian well in that city. His paper was published in the August 19, 1953, *Belle Plaine Union*.

The 29th annual meeting of the Wyoming (Iowa) Historical Society was held on August 27, 1953. James E. Remley, attorney of Anamosa, addressed the meeting on "Past History of Wyoming."

Several county and town centennials have been the occasion of publication of booklets on local history. Montgomery County has published a centennial book which may be procured from the office of the *Villisca Review* for fifty cents. At Sanborn a "Historical Booklet" was published in September, at a cost of \$1.50. The Sanborn *Pioneer* can supply copies. Selections from this book have been published from time to time in the *Pioneer*.

The Strawberry Point centennial was held August 2-3, 1953. Part of the celebration included the publication of a booklet containing a brief history of the town. Sanborn celebrated its 75th anniversary, September 10-11. The Clarksville centennial occurred in June; that of Smithland in August; Troy Mills on September 1; and Toledo on October 16-17.

Walter T. Berrett has been appointed superintendent of the Effigy Mounds National Monument, to succeed W. J. Kennedy, who has been transferred to Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah. Mr. Berrett, who has been with the National Parks Service for seventeen years, took up his new duties on September 15.

The Oelwein *Register* is sponsoring a movement in northeastern Iowa for the collection and preservation of rare books and manuscripts dealing with that area of the state. The sponsors have had the advice of Clyde Walton, Jr., curator of rare books at the University of Iowa Library, on what books should be collected. As the drive progresses, the *Register* plans to publish articles on the historical information uncovered.

At a meeting of the reorganized McGregor Historical Society on June 26,

1953, Professor Leland Cooper addressed the group on the restoration of Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien. Professor Cooper, of Hamline University in St. Paul, is doing research on the history of that area. The new society now has a membership of forty. One of their projects is the erecting of historical markers in the McGregor area.

O. J. Pruitt of Council Bluffs has retired as curator of the Pottawattamie County Historical Society, because of ill health. He was succeeded by Loran A. Clark, also of Council Bluffs. The Council Bluffs *Nonpareil*, on July 11, 1953, published an editorial praising the work of Mr. Pruitt, who founded the Society in 1927.

The annual meeting of the Adair County Historical Society was held July 21, 1953, at Fontanelle. The president of the Society is Mrs. O. W. C. Brown of Greenfield; the vice-president is Miss Faye Dory; the secretary, E. E. Johnson. P. P. Sullivan of Bridgewater gave a talk at the meeting on "Frontiers."

A special meeting of the Mahaska County Historical Society was held on July 14, 1953, to discuss the problems of the Society's museum, which is housed in the courthouse at Oskaloosa. President of the Society is Marion H. Pothoven.

Officers elected at the annual meeting of the Ringgold County Historical Society in August are Donald Dailey, president; Arthur Palmer, vice-president; Miss Myrta Abigail Shannon, secretary; and Miss Patty Beard, treasurer.

A new historical society, to be known as "The Thomas Mitchell Historical Society," has been organized at Mitchellville, with the following officers: Lois Craig, president; James Grinstead, vice-president; Helen Stiffler, secretary-treasurer; Alta Glenn, Asa Lee, Forest Swift, Gladys Woods, and Charles Walter, members of the board of directors. Membership is \$1.00 per year. Mitchellville will celebrate its centennial in 1956.

The Guthrie County Historical Society held its annual picnic in Guthrie Center on July 12, 1953. Dr. W. D. Houlette, professor of history at Drake University and curator of the State Historical Society, addressed the Society on "Pioneer Life in Western Iowa After the Civil War," which was based on a book he is writing on pioneer life in Iowa. Another meeting of

the Society was held on August 9 at Bayard, where the various projects planned by the members were discussed. The Society is planning to mark additional historic sites in Guthrie County, to procure a museum for relics, and to start a 1961 supplement to the county history.

Other Historical Activities

Dr. Boyd C. Shafer of the University of Arkansas has been appointed Executive Secretary of the American Historical Association and editor of the *American Historical Review*, to succeed Dr. Guy Stanton Ford who is retiring. Dr. Shafer received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in history from the State University of Iowa.

The North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies at Fargo has published "Call Back Yesterday: How to Preserve and Write the Record of Our Regional Heritage," by Leonard Sackett, a booklet which should be of great value to those interested in preserving and writing the histories of their localities.

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin has made a color sound film on the activities and programs of the Society. The movie was completed in October. The Society is also preparing a monthly radio series, which started on September 15, consisting of lectures and discussions of Wisconsin history.

The American History Research Center of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin has made its first four grants-in-aid for research in localized American history. Professor C. Brewster Coulter of the College of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington, received a grant for research on the history of irrigation in Washington's Yakima Valley, 1880-1926; Francis Garvin Davenport of Monmouth College, Monmouth, Illinois, for a history of the development of scientific interests in Illinois in the latter half of the nineteenth century; Russell R. Elliott of the University of Nevada, for a history of Nevada's mining booms in the twentieth century; and Don E. Fehrenbacher of Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for a history of "Long John" Wentworth, famous civic leader of Chicago during the mid-nineteenth century. The grants from the Research Center are made possible by private gifts and bequests.

The Nebraska State Historical Society celebrated its 75th anniversary on

September 26-27, 1953. Part of the program included the dedication of the new building which will house the Society. Speakers at the two-day meeting included Walter Prescott Webb, professor of history at the University of Texas and vice-president of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association; and Albert B. Corey, New York state historian and president of the American Association for State and Local History.

A Mid-America centennial show at Omaha in 1954 is being planned. It will be a year-long Historical-Industrial Festival — the first in this region since the Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898 — and will celebrate the Midwest's 100th birthday as "The Great Breadbasket of the U. S. A." The officials are urging the farmers of Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, South Dakota, and Nebraska to take part by supplying old farm implements for display. L. M. Peterson is chairman of the spectacle sub-committee of the Centennial Agricultural Committee and he wants this old equipment for use in the Historical Spectacle planned for the week of August 23, 1954, and for a Pioneer Parade at the same time. Owners of equipment they think might be of use can write to Mr. Peterson at Centennial Headquarters, City Hall, Omaha, Nebraska.