

THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA 1953-1955

By *William J. Petersen**

The State Historical Society of Iowa continued to make solid progress during the biennium 1953-1955. It has shown a net membership increase of 448 for the biennium. Its publication program has continued on the traditionally high plane that has become a target at which other societies aim. From a small experimental beginning seven years ago, its historical tours have grown in popularity and continue to attract national attention. Moreover, these tours have been expanded to include two boat trips on the Missouri with the United States Army Engineers to commemorate the Lewis and Clark expedition; joint sponsorship with the Iowa Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society in the Tama-Alden excursion; and the chartering of the steamboat *Addie Mae* for three excursions in the historic Keokuk-Nauvoo area.

This broad, constructive program has won for the Society the warm support of the General Assembly, which demonstrated its faith in our past work and confidence in our future performance by generously appropriating \$200,000 toward the construction of a new State Historical Society of Iowa Centennial Building. In addition, the General Assembly granted the Society a modest increase in its regular appropriation. No biennium in its past history has been marked by action of such far-reaching promise. As we enter the last two years of our century of service to the state of Iowa, our future seems bright indeed.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

In my last report I indicated that the membership of the Society had increased from 60, at the time the IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS was established in 1903, to 978 when *The Palimpsest* was founded in 1920. By 1940 the membership had risen to 1,560. During the next seven years the membership declined to 1,121; of these, 683 were active members and 438 were life members. At that time the historical societies of the five states

*William J. Petersen is superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa.

of the Upper Mississippi Valley ranked as follows in active and life membership: Missouri — 4,312; Wisconsin — 2,343; Illinois — 1,682; Minnesota — 1,674; Iowa — 1,121.

In 1947 one-third of our Iowa counties had two or less members — and six counties actually had no members. Your Superintendent and Board of Curators determined at that time that the Society should endeavor to build up a more evenly distributed membership. The compilation on page 195 reveals the growth our Society has enjoyed over the past four bienniums.

Our membership of 4,900 in 1955 still places us second in the United States in total membership. It also represents the greatest membership increase of any Society in the United States over the past eight years. Only Missouri, with 6,800 members, eclipses the Hawkeye State.

During the past eight years our Society registered gains in active as well as life membership. The following figures should be gratifying to all who are interested in a broader dissemination of Iowa history.

Iowa's Increase in Active and Life Members

	1947	1949	1951	1953	1955
Active Members	683	1,749	3,095	3,776	4,197
Life Members	438	545	614	676	703
	—	—	—	—	—
Total Members	1,121	2,294	3,709	4,452	4,900
Net Gain	1,173	1,415	743	448
Total Membership, 30 lowest counties	80	146	306	288	328
Average Membership, 30 lowest counties	2.6	4.9	10.2	9.6	10.7

Two years ago we set our 1955 goal at 4,700 members; we have actually exceeded this goal by 200, our membership now standing at 4,900. If our members will only continue their warm support of our program, we should continue to register substantial gains.

Past Membership

	<i>Active</i>	<i>Life</i>	<i>Total</i>
1947	683	438	1,121
1949	1,749	545	2,294
1951	3,095	614	3,709
1953	3,776	676	4,452
1955	4,197	703	4,900

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Membership Growth by County, 1947-1955

County	1947	1949	1951	1953	1955	County	1947	1949	1951	1953	1955
Polk	127	186	315	420	426	Jackson	4	5	22	28	25
Johnson	123	202	285	328	323	Appanoose	8	12	39	25	25
Linn	81	101	204	271	288	Dickinson	6	32	28	22	24
Scott	90	152	197	226	272	Clay	2	16	21	23	24
Black Hawk	48	93	138	160	189	Grundy	8	21	30	27	24
Muscatine	8	22	71	75	93	Marion	9	9	14	15	23
Washington	18	30	64	75	88	Sac	3	7	11	11	23
Clinton	17	36	71	72	79	Sioux	2	9	15	19	21
Dubuque	25	46	71	75	78	Allamakee	8	10	16	18	20
Iowa	15	38	68	66	74	Palo Alto	4	9	17	19	19
Lee	20	43	58	65	72	Cherokee	4	12	16	19	19
Jasper	5	14	30	62	72	Wright	5	9	16	16	18
Cerro Gordo	15	20	57	76	72	Hancock	4	7	12	12	18
Wapello	14	44	60	67	69	O'Brien	5	18	18	18	18
Cedar	10	26	42	55	66	Buena Vista	0	6	16	14	17
Benton	13	23	52	65	62	Calhoun	4	7	12	16	17
Des Moines	19	36	56	61	62	Harrison	2	2	7	18	17
Marshall	14	18	33	35	59	Van Buren	2	9	14	18	17
Story	12	20	45	55	59	Pocahontas	8	9	25	19	17
Webster	5	31	39	43	55	Shelby	4	5	12	11	16
Hamilton	7	12	30	38	47	Winnebago	0	4	7	13	16
Butler	4	6	18	18	43	Winneshiek	5	7	14	14	16
Woodbury	14	21	30	36	42	Hardin	4	8	15	20	16
Buchanan	7	13	27	31	42	Franklin	4	7	10	9	15
Jefferson	12	23	30	30	42	Monona	5	5	9	13	15
Pottawattamie	16	23	46	49	41	Monroe	2	5	10	9	14
Keokuk	12	17	35	40	41	Crawford	4	6	12	12	14
Fayette	6	9	25	28	40	Worth	2	2	8	13	14
Kossuth	4	24	29	37	40	Union	2	6	14	14	14
Clayton	5	10	29	48	40	Fremont	2	12	11	8	13
Jones	8	17	23	28	39	Madison	0	5	13	9	13
Henry	9	11	23	26	39	Guthrie	5	7	9	9	12
Louisa	8	24	25	46	38	Howard	1	1	8	8	11
Delaware	1	15	19	29	37	Emmet	1	11	11	10	11
Montgomery	8	18	28	25	37	Taylor	3	6	15	13	11
Poweshiek	6	11	25	39	36	Lyon	1	11	14	14	11
Page	6	13	31	33	35	Adair	0	4	10	11	10
Bremer	7	10	21	22	35	Osceola	1	9	16	17	10
Tama	3	15	40	44	33	Mitchell	4	6	4	5	8
Boone	3	18	25	28	29	Decatur	0	9	9	6	8
Mills	5	9	18	21	29	Lucas	3	4	9	9	8
Warren	3	4	11	13	29	Plymouth	4	10	8	10	8
Chickasaw	2	4	6	7	29	Ringgold	2	5	9	11	8
Humboldt	2	9	19	27	28	Audubon	0	9	10	8	7
Carroll	5	15	23	25	28	Clarke	1	10	9	9	7
Dallas	9	16	19	22	28	Davis	2	2	6	5	6
Greene	4	11	22	20	28	Ida	5	5	7	7	6
Floyd	1	7	11	22	26	Adams	3	5	6	8	6
Cass	8	30	34	33	26	Wayne	4	6	4	5	3
Mahaska	8	14	45	30	25						

Future Goals

1957.....	4,500	725	5,225
1959.....	5,000	750	5,750
1961.....	5,250	800	6,050

There is plenty of opportunity for membership growth, particularly in the weaker counties in the state. Actually 66 of our 99 counties gained in membership, while five others remained the same. The following counties made the best gains during the biennium:

Scott	46	Jefferson	12	Marion	8
Black Hawk	29	Montgomery	12	Mills	8
Butler	25	Sac	12	Clinton	7
Marshall	24	Webster	12	Lee	7
Chickasaw	22	Buchanan	11	Dallas	6
Muscatine	18	Cedar	11	Franklin	6
Linn	17	Jones	11	Hancock	6
Warren	16	Jasper	10	Woodbury	6
Bremer	13	Hamilton	9	Fremont	5
Henry	13	Delaware	8	Monroe	5
Washington	13	Greene	8	Shelby	5
Fayette	12	Iowa	8		

The gains registered by the 35 counties listed above total 443, or 5 less than the total net gain registered by the Society during the past biennium. They deserve a special salute from the membership at large.

Despite the over-all net gain, one must regret the fact that 28 counties declined in membership, even though 18 of the 28 sustained losses of three or less. Since it is important for our members to watch these trends and endeavor to correct them, the counties are listed herewith, with the number lost at the head of each group.

<i>1 loss</i>	<i>2 losses</i>	<i>3 losses</i>	<i>4 losses</i>
Adair	Adams	Benton	Cerro Gordo
Audubon	Clarke	Grundy	Hardin
Harrison	Plymouth	Jackson	
Ida	Pocahontas	Lyon	
Lucas	Taylor	Poweshiek	
Van Buren	Wayne	Ringgold	
<i>5 losses</i>	<i>7 losses</i>	<i>8 losses</i>	<i>11 losses</i>
Johnson	Cass	Clayton	Tama
Mahaska	Osceola	Louisa	
		Pottawattamie	

It would be a real challenge to our members if every one of these 28 counties could report a gain in membership at the time of our Centennial in 1957, with each county actually attaining the highest membership in its history at that time. The total loss registered in these 28 counties is only 103, a figure that is offset by the 100 gained by Scott, Black Hawk, and Butler counties alone.

Truly, this is no insuperable task. The exciting gains registered by Butler and Chickasaw can be repeated in any county. The morning following my commencement talk at Parkersburg (Butler County) I secured a list of prospective members, contacted eight of them, and was rewarded with eight new members. A couple of hours' work on the part of any of our members would yield a similar harvest.

A Chickasaw County gain was registered when several human dynamos agreed to secure ten new members for the Society if your Superintendent would come up and speak to them on the occasion of the Centennial celebration sponsored by the newly-formed Chickasaw County Historical Society. These enthusiastic members actually secured 22 new members. Your Superintendent stands ready to make a speech before any historical group on the same terms, and he hopes the results will be equally fruitful.

School Institutional Members

I am particularly happy over the tenfold increase in school institutional memberships. Some counties are represented with nearly 100 per cent school institutional members. Virtually every large school system in Iowa has taken out an institutional membership for its high schools and junior high schools. Des Moines, for example, has seventeen institutional memberships. This means that in the years ahead the libraries in the Des Moines school system will build up a valuable collection of Iowa history material for teachers and students alike. One of the best things our members can do is to see that their local schools are identified with the Society.

It is also gratifying to record the large number of state legislators among our most enthusiastic and loyal members. Forty-five of the 50 Senators in the 56th General Assembly are members and 80 of the 108 Representatives. All eight Congressmen are members, both United States Senators, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and numerous other state officials.

PUBLICATIONS

During the past two years *The Palimpsest* and the IOWA JOURNAL OF

HISTORY have appeared regularly. We print 6,000 copies of our monthly magazine regularly, but frequent heavy demands for extra copies of special issues make our total printing of *The Palimpsest* run well over 100,000 copies annually. Thus, almost 40,000 copies were printed of the Catholic, Episcopalian, and Lutheran issues, the latter being responsible for half of the total. Our monthly continues to be geared to popular demand, schools and study clubs finding it particularly valuable. Letters from Iowa teachers constantly attest the value of *The Palimpsest* to them in their work. Mrs. Mildred Ellefson, an Iowa teacher who resides in Thompson, recently wrote me: "I find many uses in my teaching for the material I receive from the Society by being a member."

The wide variety of subjects treated is indicated by the following:

The Palimpsest

1953	Title	Author
July	Iowa in 1952	Robert Rutland
Aug.	The Roman Catholic Church in Iowa	M. M. Hoffman
Sept.	College Football in Iowa	Robert Rutland
Oct.	The Episcopal Church in Iowa	M. F. Carpenter
Nov.	Naval Namesakes of Iowa Cities	William J. Petersen
Dec.	Times Have Changed	Harriet Connor Brown
1954	Title	Author
Jan.	The 55th General Assembly of Iowa	Frank T. Nye
Feb.	Town and City in Iowa Fiction	John T. Frederick
March	Boys' Basketball in Iowa	Harry G. Burrell and William J. Petersen
April	Tulip Festivals in Iowa	George Ver Steeg, James Treneman, and William J. Petersen
May	Interurbans in Iowa	Frank P. Donovan, Jr.
June	Some Iowa Lutheran Centennials	Albert A. Jagnow, Gerhard Ottersberg, and Mary Qualley
July	The Iowa State Fair	Earle D. Ross and William J. Petersen
Aug.	Iowa in 1953	Robert Rutland
Sept.	The Lewis and Clark Expedition	William J. Petersen
Oct.	Iowa Rhodes Scholars	Virgil M. Hancher, Jacob Van der Zee, and Rhodes Dunlap

Nov.	Iowa State Education Association	William J. Petersen and Irving H. Hart
Dec.	An Early Grave Snatching Incident Sioux City and the Frontier	Vernon Carstensen C. A. Reed
1955	<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>
Jan.	The Good Roads Movement in Iowa	George S. May
Feb.	The Burlington <i>Hawk-Eye Gazette</i> , 1837-1955	Robert Rutland
March	From Germany to Iowa in 1853	William J. Petersen and Charlotte von Hein
April	Major League Baseball Players from Iowa	George S. May
May	The Zebulon M. Pike Expedition	William J. Petersen
June	<i>The Palimpsest: 1920-1955</i>	Benjamin F. Shambaugh, John C. Parish, John E. Briggs, and William J. Petersen

Iowa Journal of History

During the same period our quarterly magazine has stood at the forefront among the documented publications issued by state historical societies. It has published a wide variety of scholarly, yet readable articles that have attracted widespread interest among our membership as well as among professional historians. The following monographs and documents have appeared during the biennium:

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Article</i>	<i>Author</i>
July, 1953	"The State Historical Society of Iowa, 1951-1953"	William J. Petersen
	"The Mississippi & Missouri Rail- road, 1856-1860"	Dwight L. Agnew
October 1953	"Iowans and the Fourteenth Amend- ment"	Robert Rutland
January, 1954	"The Copperheads of Iowa: A Re-examination"	Robert Rutland
	"C. C. Carpenter in the 1858 Iowa Legislature"	Mildred Throne
April, 1954	"William B. Allison and Iowa Sena- torial Politics, 1865-1870"	Leland L. Sage
	"The Powers of the Governor of Iowa"	Russell M. Ross

July, 1954	"The Domestic Finances of Secretary of War W. W. Belknap"	Philip D. Jordan
	"The Rock Island Railroad in Iowa"	Dwight L. Agnew
October, 1954	"The Anti-Monopoly Party in Iowa, 1873-1874"	Mildred Throne
	"Pioneer Experiences in Keokuk County, 1858-1874"	Edith H. Hurlbutt
January, 1955	"The Decline of the Democratic Party in Iowa, 1850-1860"	David S. Sparks
	"The Iowa General Assembly: Composition and Powers"	Russell M. Ross
April, 1955	"Steamboating on the Missouri River"	William J. Petersen
	"The Liberal Republican Party in Iowa, 1872"	Mildred Throne
	"Stephen A. Douglas Speaks in Iowa City, 1860"	Charles A. Thodt

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Editor</i>
July, 1953	"The Civil War Letters of Samuel Mahon, Seventh Iowa Infantry"	John K. Mahon
October, 1953	"School Days in Coin, Iowa, 1880-1885 — Catherine Wiggins Porter"	Kenneth W. Porter
July, 1954	"Letters from Shiloh"	Mildred Throne
January, 1955	"A Commissary in the Union Army: Letters of C. C. Carpenter"	Mildred Throne
April, 1955	"An Iowan in the Mexican War"	George S. May

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Source Material</i>
July, 1953	"The Steamboat <i>Charles Rogers</i> "
January, 1954	"An Iowa Woman in Washington, D. C., 1861-1865"
April, 1954	"An Iowa Political Reporter, 1864"
October, 1954	"Reminiscences of Early Iowa"
April, 1955	"Iowa Political Sketches by David Brant"

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Miscellaneous Articles</i>	<i>Compiler</i>
July, 1953	"Iowans in Congress, 1847-1953"	Mildred Throne
April, 1954	"National Party Convention Sites, 1832-1952"	Robert Rutland
July, 1954	"They Saw the Early Midwest: A Bibliography of Travel Narratives, 1727-1850"	Robert R. Hubach

Two Books Issued During Biennium

During the biennium two outstanding books were published by the Society. Melvin Scholl's *Arnewood: The Story of an Iowa Dairyman* is an unusually readable book that has won praise from members of the Society and received fine reviews in newspapers, magazines, and professional journals. The warm human story that pervades *Arnewood* is buttressed by a keen professional knowledge which Scholl gained with his own Arnewood herd and as herdsman for the famous Maytag dairy herds. Listen to some of the comments. *The Cowculator*, a monthly published in the interest of American Dairy Herd Improvement, declared: "Better than most, Mr. Scholl paints a picture of the cares, fears, anxieties and lack of sleep as well as the happiness and satisfaction of milking great cows to great records." In *The Rotarian* John T. Frederick wrote: "Unpretentious, warmly human, accurate in detail, and constructive in spirit, this is a book of distinct value."

A second volume, Edward Younger's *John A. Kasson*, appeared as the biennium drew to a close. This intensely interesting biography of a man who was identified with Iowa and national politics from 1857 until his death in 1910 is destined to take its place as one of the best in the long series of biographies issued by the Society over the past half century. Much of the story centers around Des Moines and Iowa politics, but Kasson also played an important role in representing the United States at various foreign chancelleries. This volume will be followed by other important books, the next of which will be Leland Sage's *William Boyd Allison*.

In addition to the above, the Society has issued regularly its *News for Members* which aims to alert members to the activities of the Society. *News for Members* has been responsible for bringing many valuable manuscripts and books into our possession. It is equally significant in chronicling the development of the Society. Our history will be easier to record since *News for Members* first appeared in 1947.

Another publication, *Iowa History News Flashes*, goes out to 550 newspaper editors, providing them with feature articles and fillers for their papers. It helps bring Iowa history down to the very grass roots.

THE LIBRARY

During the biennium our library acquired 1,255 books in addition to numerous maps, pamphlets, pictures, and manuscripts. Most of these latter have come to us as gifts of the donors.

We still need more city directories, county histories, county plat books and atlases, college and high school annuals. Every effort should be made by members to see that material of this kind is not destroyed but is turned over to the Society's library. Two years ago we listed in our Biennial Report all the counties not represented in our county plat book and atlas collection, as well as those represented, with the date of issue of each volume. As a result we have increased our holdings and filled in gaps so that every county is now represented by at least one such book. Of course, to get a well-balanced collection, we will want plat books covering every generation, or approximately four for each county during the space of a century. This means there are a lot of copies to collect and we must rely on members for help.

Postcards

Since we have pictorialized *The Palimpsest* the need for good pictures becomes a pressing problem. One good source would be postcards, both current ones and those you will find stowed away in your bookcases, desks, cupboards, attics, etc. Photos of Main Street, courthouses, libraries, churches, schools, fraternal buildings, manufacturing plants, garages, livery stables, railroad stations, post offices, parks, and golf courses should be sent to us for future use as we prepare articles on various subjects. The black and white pictures are the best for reproduction, but the colored ones will do, if nothing else is available.

In addition to commercial photos the Society would benefit if members sent in more personal photos, both current and old time pictures. For old time pictures the following are suggested.

<i>Outdoor Scenes</i>	<i>Indoor Scenes</i>	<i>Holidays</i>
Picnics (church & school)	Church suppers	New Year's
Baseball	PTA meetings	Easter
Football	General stores	Arbor Day
Chautauqua	Blacksmith shops	Memorial Day
Fire departments	Drug stores	Flag Day
Circus	School programs	Fourth of July
Carnivals	Ice cream parlors	Labor Day
County fairs	Barber shops	Armistice
Boat regattas	Photo salons	Thanksgiving
Plowing matches	Groceries	Christmas
Husking contests	Meat markets	

HISTORICAL TOURS

Steamboat Excursions Continue to be Popular

The steamboat excursions inaugurated with Commodore O. D. Collis aboard the *Rob Roy III* continued to attract large numbers of members during the biennium, over seven hundred participating each year. The trips won national recognition — the *New York Times* devoting two glowing columns in its travel page to the trip and its All-Iowa Menu. The *Ford Times* for July, 1955, also featured the trip illustrated with eight colored paintings. A new feature was inaugurated by Mrs. William J. Petersen in 1954 when she added an "Iowa Cheese and Ice Cream Bar" to the afternoon snack. This was extremely popular with members and guests.

At the end of 1954 Commodore Collis had made his boat available to Society members for over forty trips during which time the *Rob Roy III* carried well over four thousand passengers. This generous gesture on "O. D.'s" part was an important factor in broadening the scope and in re-kindling interest in the Society's work throughout the state. The heavy drain on his vitality and time after seven years made it impossible for Commodore Collis (now seventy-eight years old) to continue to make the *Rob Roy III* available for future trips, but his generosity will never be forgotten by a long list of Society members who enjoyed his kind hospitality.

With the Army Engineers on the Missouri

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition, as well as to give the people on the Missouri slope an opportunity to enjoy a steamboat trip closer to their homes, your Superintendent contacted Brigadier General William E. Potter, Division Engineer, at Omaha, Nebraska, and arranged with him for Society members to board a barge towed by the *John Ordway* for a 57-mile inspection tour on June 4, 1954. Over one hundred members and guests from 41 different Iowa towns in 30 Iowa counties came to learn first hand about the Missouri, its history, its legends, and the problems the Big Muddy presented to the Army Engineers from the standpoint of flood control, irrigation, and navigation. Finally, they came to observe the 150th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition and its relation to Iowa history. The inspection cruise, during which the *John Ordway* performed its routine work of hauling crushed stone, was covered by newspapers, television, and radio.

The Missouri cruise was an educational experience which delighted all who participated in it. Writing in the *Des Moines Register*, George Mills declared: "At the end of the day, everybody was gorged with history and fried chicken. . . . The travelers enjoyed the biggest recreation bargain of their lives." W. D. Archie wrote in the *Shenandoah Sentinel*: "The army engineers are doing a fine job, and backed by the soil control methods now being used on the tributaries, I think they will eventually tame the untamable Missouri. . . . It was a notable excursion and one to be remembered by all who partook of the many courtesies of the day." In the *Ogden Reporter* editor Carl Sexauer declared: "We enjoyed adding this wonderful trip to our list of memorable vacation outings." A Life Member of the Society from Shenandoah, Judge Frederick Fischer, wrote as follows: "No amount of traveling except traveling on the river itself, can provide information such as was afforded by this trip. Your talks to the group together with the talks by Army personnel about the river were very informative and made a lasting impression. Everyone on this trip is very much indebted to you and Mrs. Petersen for a most pleasant experience of the day and the fine food."

Fortunately for the Society a similar Missouri trip was arranged for June 24, 1955, just three days before the Biennial Meeting of the Society. This time the *Patrick Gass* towed our barge upstream from Nebraska City to Plattsmouth with Colonel T. J. Hayes and civilian engineer Elmer Toman providing information on the work by the Army Engineers. The historical background was discussed by your Superintendent, who called attention of members to the April, 1955, issue of the IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY containing his article on "Steamboating on the Missouri River." The trip received excellent newspaper, radio, and television coverage. All who participated (and members came from distant Keokuk, Rock Island, Renwick, and Spirit Lake) agreed the Missouri was a waterway well worth studying.

With the Addie Mae in the Half-Breed Tract

A special 1955 steamboat bonus was offered members in the form of a 4-hour round-trip cruise between Keokuk and Nauvoo aboard the *Addie Mae* on June 17, 18, and 19. Already requests for additional cruises have been so great that other excursions will be arranged by the Society aboard Captain H. Andressen's sternwheeler. This trip had special significance to Iowans for it marked the 150th anniversary of Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike's expedition to the Upper Mississippi in 1805. The May,

1955, issue of *The Palimpsest* was devoted to the Pike expedition, and some members came armed with their copies. The *Addie Mae* contained an excellent loud speaker that made it possible for all to hear the story of the Half-Breed Tract, Tesson's Spanish Land Grant, Indian villages, early military posts such as Fort Madison, Fort Edwards, and Fort Des Moines, the first white settlements in Iowa, the first school, the Mormon Trail of 1846, the building of the Des Moines Rapids Canal, and later the great Keokuk lock and dam. The relation of Zachary Taylor, Robert E. Lee, Francis Scott Key, Isaac Galland, and a host of other famous Iowans and Americans associated with the regions through which the *Addie Mae* passed was described during the course of the trip. Since both Pike and Lewis and Clark returned to St. Louis in 1806 it is hoped the Society can arrange appropriate commemorative trips on both the Mississippi and the Missouri in 1956.

Railroad Excursion

An entirely different tour co-sponsored by your Society in conjunction with the Iowa Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society was the railroad excursion on the North Western from Tama to Alden on June 19, 1955. Basil W. Koob of Fort Dodge was in charge. Probably one-third of the 478 who participated were members of the State Historical Society. A feature of the trip was the stop at Conrad to visit Paul Franzenburg's Wolf Creek Smokehouse. A steam engine was employed to pull the train over little-used tracks. It is an instance where the Society can cooperate with other groups in adding to our knowledge of Iowa.

We believe these tours have real value and should be encouraged wherever feasible. Especially should members participate in commemorative tours, such as those relating to the centennials of Amana, the Little Brown Church, the coming of the railroad to Burlington, and those relating to their own communities.

Legislative Ladies Tour Amana Colonies

For the second time in two years a tour of the Amana colonies was conducted by Superintendent and Mrs. William J. Petersen for some sixty members of the Iowa Legislative Ladies League, which is composed of the wives of present and former legislators and elected state officials. Upon their arrival at Amana in the morning, members of the League were entertained at a Kaffee Klatch at the Homestead Club House. Next they at-

tended the Homestead Church, where they were addressed by Dr. Henry Moershel, president of the Amana Colonies. The League women were the first guests to go through the new Amana House at Homestead, owned by William Leichsenring, proprietor of the Ox Yoke Inn, and opened in 1955 in observance of the centennial of the founding of the Amana Colonies.

Bus tours to points of interest in the colonies followed, including the meat market, cabinet shop, woolen mills, and Amana Freezer plant. The ladies were the luncheon guests of George Foerstner and Amana Refrigeration, Inc., at the Ox Yoke Inn. The group drove by the Amana cemetery, Amana Lake, the new Amana school, and on to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hahn in Middle Amana where they saw the only open hearth bread oven in the colonies. The splendid coverage of the tour by the Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, the Des Moines *Register*, and Stations WHO and WHO-TV attests the tremendous interest of press, radio, and television in the Amana tour.

Important Centennials Lie Ahead of Us

It is important for Iowans to pause and take stock whenever a centennial rolls around. One hundred years is a long period of time. Many things can happen to people and to a community during the course of a century. If we miss a centennial observance it will be a long time before the second century rolls around. It is highly gratifying to an historian to note the number of communities, churches, schools, newspapers, industries, etc., observing their centennials during 1954 and 1955. Since your own Society will be observing its one hundredth anniversary in 1957, let us consider a few other centennials immediately before us.

The founding of the first Amana village by Christian Metz occurred in 1855. We dare not let 1955 slip by without doing something to commemorate this event. We have already conducted a tour for the Iowa Legislative Ladies League and we now hope that a tour can be arranged this fall similar to the one conducted by us in 1951 when 230 members took part.

The organization of the Little Brown Church in the Vale at Bradford (Nashua) occurred in 1855. That rich Iowa historical gem will be observing the first of many centennials in its history in the years ahead. On the occasion of our Biennial Meeting, a delegation from Chickasaw County was present, composed of the following members of our Society: Tom D. Conklin, Mrs. Earle Edson. The following invitation was presented to the Superintendent by Mrs. Edson:

The Chickasaw County Historical Society cordially invites the members of the State Historical Society of Iowa to participate with it in a joint historical observance of the Centennial of the Little Brown Church in the Vale at Nashua in the fall of 1955. Dr. William J. Petersen, Superintendent of the Society, was invited to be the principal speaker on the occasion of this centennial observance.

SOCIETY SEEKS PERMANENT FIREPROOF QUARTERS

During the past six years the Board of Curators has been confronted with two serious problems — first, the inaccessibility of our quarters due to the eighty-six steps that lead from the street to the third floor of Schaeffer Hall and, second, the lack of space for books, newspapers, and our own reserve stock of publications. Two elevator shafts had originally been built in Schaeffer Hall in 1898, but no cars have been installed during the succeeding half century. As a result, many elderly Iowans — students of local history, newspapermen, legislators, and other prominent folks, paid one visit to our library and that invariably was the last one. Meanwhile, desks occupied by graduate students and faculty had to be removed and their place taken by newspapers that had to be carried upstairs and piled to the ceiling. The problem of space seemed to have no solution, for University classes were bulging and faculty men needed offices.

During the summer of 1954 the Board of Curators of the State Historical Society made an important decision. Since its establishment at Iowa City in 1857 the Society has had six homes. At first it occupied rooms in the Old Stone Capitol. In 1862 its library and collections were removed to the Mechanics Academy building. Three years later the Society was authorized to use "the Library Room and Cabinet of the University for their purposes as a Society, with leave to hold the annual meetings of the Society in the University Chapel." In June, 1868, the Board of Curators leased the Old Stone Church on Burlington Street, which served as headquarters until 1882, when better quarters were secured in a building on Washington Street. Finally, in September, 1901, in accordance with the wishes of the General Assembly, the Society was assigned rooms on the third floor of the Hall of Liberal Arts, now Schaeffer Hall. During the first forty-four years of its existence the Society was located in the University for eleven years, in its own quarters for the remaining thirty-three years.

In the fifty-three years that followed the Society's removal into the Liberal Arts building in 1901 the holdings of the Society have expanded 1,000

per cent, increasing from a few thousand books and pamphlets to 105,000 in 1954. Our newspaper files have increased on the same scale, numbering 7,000 volumes in 1955, plus a tremendous amount of microfilmed volumes. Meanwhile, the amount of space allotted to the Society has failed to keep up with its steadily expanding holdings — business and editorial offices, library, newspapers, storage and shipping being housed in 9,500 square feet. The situation has become desperate since World War II; some newspapers, once filed in the basement, must now be housed on the third floor, creating a hazardous weight problem. The University, meanwhile, has its own space problems. Enrollment reached 8,500 in 1954 with prospects of a steady increase in the years ahead. The University is now using 65,000 square feet of temporary housing, much of which is steadily deteriorating.

In the spring of 1954 the University approached the Board of Curators with a proposal that the Society consider vacating its quarters in Schaeffer Hall and moving its offices temporarily into the newly acquired Dey home on Clinton Street north of Currier Hall. The University itself would ask \$200,000 from the General Assembly for a temporary fireproof air-conditioned storage building behind the Dey home to house the Society's books and newspapers.

The Board of Curators deliberated over this proposal for several months. Although far removed from the campus, the Dey home was on one of the most beautiful sites on the campus. It was generally agreed, however, that the small rooms of the Dey home would not handle either the personnel or the heavy office equipment of the Society. Furthermore, since the Society was approaching its Centennial it would scarcely be a wise move to return to temporary quarters such as it occupied during the first forty-four years of its life. Since the \$200,000 request for capital improvements from the General Assembly would be included with ten other major University capital improvement projects, the sum desired for the Society would be lost in the scramble. The Curators felt, however, that since the Society would be required to seek its own appropriation from the legislature it should shoulder the responsibility of securing funds for its own capital improvements. It was felt that the Society had gained a host of friends in the General Assembly, most of whom were members of the Society, who would see the plight of the Society and rally to its assistance. President Hancher accordingly withdrew the University's \$200,000 request for storage space from his askings and agreed to be helpful in every way in the Society's quest.

An incident soon occurred which played an important part in the Society's future plans. Early in August, 1954, State Representative Wilmot Hendrix clambered up the eighty-six steps to the State Historical Society quarters on the third floor of Schaeffer Hall in Iowa City. Mrs. Hendrix was with him, accompanied by two elderly friends. While the ladies busied themselves getting valuable historical information, Representative Hendrix soberly remarked to your Superintendent that not one of the four in his party would be able to visit our Society quarters again because of those steps. Since this had happened hundreds of times, I said: "Wilmot, do you suppose if we could raise \$100,000 from members that the General Assembly would give us \$200,000 to erect an adequate fireproof building easily accessible to all Iowans?" Mr. Hendrix said he believed they would, or at least that our chances would be improved 100 per cent. He also declared that he would help us in the legislature and believed enough in the work of the Society that he would contribute personally to the proposed building.

A week later, while your Superintendent was attending a dinner honoring Herbert Hoover at the Howard Hall home in Cedar Rapids, he had an opportunity to discuss the Society's problem with Craig R. Sheaffer, president of the Sheaffer Pen Company at Fort Madison. Mr. Sheaffer, a Life Member of the Society, was the first to receive a typed copy of "Some Facts About Your State Historical Society" which was printed simultaneously in the November, 1954, issue of *News for Members*.

Some Facts About Your State Historical Society

1. It was established by law in 1857.
2. It is one of the oldest departments in the State of Iowa.
3. It has the second largest membership in the United States, almost five thousand Active and Life Members.
4. It has one of the finest publication programs, issuing a monthly magazine, a quarterly, and at least one book each year.
5. It is desperately crowded for space in its University quarters. It occupies 9,500 square feet of space and urgently needs 15,000 square feet.
6. The University is unable to grant more space because of its own crowded conditions. By building its own building, the Society will release valuable space to the University.
7. The Society should be properly housed in its own building as it enters its second century of growth in 1957.

8. It has never before called upon its members for a contribution.
9. It now proposes to raise \$100,000 from members and friends toward a Centennial Building for its offices, library, and newspaper collection.
10. It proposes to ask the next General Assembly for \$200,000 to complete this 110' x 70' two-story building.
11. Such a building would provide space for years to come and would be a fitting monument to the Iowa pioneers who established the Society.
12. Contributions to this educational institution can be deducted in computing your Federal and State Income Taxes.
13. Our expanding library and increasing demand by the public for services necessitates a new fireproof building, accessible to all.

The day after my return from California, where I had the privilege of addressing 50,000 Iowans at their annual picnic at Long Beach, I received a letter from Mr. Sheaffer stating that the W. A. Sheaffer Memorial Foundation was pledging \$5,000 for our proposed building, contingent on the General Assembly appropriating \$200,000 toward it. Mr. Sheaffer concluded his fine letter by saying: "Walter and John along with me think this is a worthy project, and we are glad to be able to participate with full hopes of your usual success."

Shortly afterwards, as additional personal contacts were made by your Superintendent, the following heart-warming letters were received:

Governor William S. Beardsley, a Life Member of the Society, wrote: "Mrs. Beardsley and I are happy to pledge \$500 toward this meritorious program. The work of the Society is of such a nature and its records are so precious that it should have the finest and safest facilities. I wish you well in your campaign."

From Robert E. Vance, president of the Maytag Company Foundation, which is also giving \$5,000, the Superintendent received best wishes for the success of this undertaking.

Dorothy Musser of Iowa City, in giving a check for \$1,000, said: "Although I now live in Arizona, I am still for Iowa and its wonderful history. You need that building and I hope you get it."

Commodore O. D. Collis of Clinton wrote: "You can put O. D. Collis down for \$500. Let me know when you want the check and I will mail it to you." That check was immediately forthcoming and is drawing interest in the bank.

These are but a few of the many fine gifts and pledges that were made to the Society before Christmas. With \$20,000 already pledged by January, 1955, the prospects for success looked bright indeed.

Meanwhile, our hopes were buoyed up by the warm support given our proposed Centennial Building in the press. Editorializing in the Burlington *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, Clarence Moody declared the idea of a new home a "splendid one" that "deserves to enjoy fruition." J. M. Beck was equally enthusiastic in the Centerville *Iowegian*: "Iowa has one of the most enterprising as well as one of the largest State Historical Societies. William J. Petersen, superintendent, has energy and ideas which bring results. His present major project is to get a building to house the rapidly accumulating library of valuable historical matter and provide quarters for the Society at Iowa City. Iowa has a rich history. It needs to be collected and preserved." The Decorah *Public-Opinion* declared: "This is a worthy cause, and we hope it succeeds." The Des Moines *Register* concluded its editorial by stating "We hope [Petersen is] successful in getting the \$300,000." "There's no question of the need of new quarters," Bill Ferguson wrote in the Glidden *Graphic*. "I'm confident that the membership of the society will over-subscribe their share of the funds if the Legislature will provide the remaining \$200,000." Glen Ellis was just as pleased about the Centennial Building in his Marengo *Pioneer-Republican* editorial: "Dr. Petersen has built the Historical Society of Iowa into a virile and efficient agency for the preservation of Iowa history. Given the support and accommodations it needs, the organization can accomplish wonders. It is for that reason that this writer hopes fervently, that all concerned will take the future of the society's efforts very seriously."

Many editors had learned of the Society's inaccessibility through personal experience. Writing in the Iowa City *Press-Citizen*, Ed Greene declared: "Anyone who has ever climbed the 86 steps to the quarters of the State Historical Society . . . will join immediately in the society's efforts to get permanent and fireproof quarters by 1957. . . . The preservation of Iowa history is of great importance for the present as well as for future generations. . . . This is a project in which every Iowan should be interested."

The doctor may have told Ralph Shannon to slow down a bit, but he couldn't stop those crackling editorials from appearing in the Washington *Evening Journal*. "With nearly 5,000 active members supporting the work; with its interesting monthly magazine and publication program; with a

growing demand for the Society's services; and with a national reputation for its activities — all these facts point up to a need for prompt action. You just can't throw all those achievements out the window and then lock the door." The building plan, Shannon concluded in the *Journal*, "won't fail. The people of Iowa won't let it."

Our willingness to raise \$100,000, our cramped quarters in Schaeffer Hall, the need of the University for additional space in this building, the warm support of the press and members of the Society, all were important factors in gaining legislative support. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I am able to report that the 56th General Assembly of the state of Iowa appropriated \$200,000 for a State Historical Society Centennial Building contingent on the Society raising \$100,000 toward its erection. This was the goal which we announced in November, and the action of the legislature represents a long step toward the realization of our objectives. We already have passed the \$25,000 mark in our campaign, and I am confident that our loyal members and friends will see that we achieve our goal of \$100,000. Meanwhile, we should all be deeply grateful to the seventeen Senators who placed their names on Senate File 191, and to the twenty-six House members who personally endorsed House File 248. These men warmly encouraged and supported me throughout those busy 115 days, when larger appropriations and more controversial measures might readily have caused our small, albeit important, request to be lost in the shuffle.

Members of the State Historical Society of Iowa have a real challenge to face in raising \$100,000 to match the \$200,000 appropriated by the legislature. The Board of Curators has under consideration the problem of the best available site, a permanent fire resistant building to house the Society during the next one hundred years, and the employment of a qualified architect to draw up plans and supervise the construction of this building. The machinery will shortly be placed in motion to implement the collection of this sum.

In conclusion, my deepest thanks go out to an efficient and hard-working staff, a loyal and devoted Board of Curators, and to hundreds of enthusiastic members who have warmly supported our efforts to broaden the base of state and local history throughout Iowa and the nation. I am confident the response will be an overwhelming support of our program and the realization of our dreams — a permanent Centennial Building to house the State Historical Society of Iowa in 1957.