Kansas Historical Notes

The annual dinner meeting of the Shawnee County Historical Society was held in Topeka, December 15, 1948. The program, the theme of which was Col. Cyrus K. Holliday, included a review of incidents in Holliday's early life by Cecil Howes; a report by E. P. Murphy, president of the Topeka Junior Chamber of Commerce, that his organization was glad to participate in a movement to memorialize Holliday; a talk by Gov. Frank Carlson on the duty of present-day residents of Kansas to pay tribute to their forefathers with suitable memorials, and a playlet, "In the Beginning," by Paul Lovewell, staged by the Topeka Civic Theater. An amendment to the society's constitution was adopted which increased the board of directors from nine to 30 members. New directors are: George A. Root, Arthur J. Carruth, Jr., Mrs. Erwin Keller, J. Glenn Logan, T. M. Lillard, Hampton Shirer, Maude M. Bishop, Helen McFarland, Harry Colmery, Mrs. H. S. Blake, Dwight Ream, Marco Morrow, Holmes Meade, Mildred Quail, Frank Durein, Earl Ives, Robert Billard, Otis Allen, Margaret Whittemore, W. A. Biby, Frank Gibbs, Frank Ripley, J. C. Mohler and Mrs. Alf. M. Landon. A meeting of the board of directors was held January 6, 1949, when Homer B. Fink was elected president and Earl Ives vice-president. Other officers were re-elected as follows: George A. Root, secretary; Paul Adams, assistant secretary, and Paul Sweet, treasurer. Robert Stone was the retiring president.

Officers of the Ness County Historical Society for 1949 include: Lea Maranville, president; Mrs. Reina Mellis, vice-president; Ada L. Young, treasurer, and Audra M. Hays, secretary.

The thirty-first annual meeting of the Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas was held in Topeka on January 28, 1949. Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower, president of Kansas State College at Manhattan, the principal speaker, referred to Kansas as "the Atlas of the free world," in his address, "The Strength of Kansas." Miss Carol Bass, student of Kansas Wesleyan College, Salina, winner of the afternoon oratorical contest, repeated the winning oration at the dinner meeting. She was presented with the annual Capper award by Sen. Arthur Capper. Wayne David of Burden was the sweepstakes winner of the 1949 essay contest for high school students. Mrs. Kenneth W. McFarland, retiring president of the Native Daughters,
presided at the meeting. She was assisted by Sen. William T. Beck, president of the Native Sons. New officers of the associated organizations are: Native Sons—William Ljungdahl, Menlo and Topeka, president; Guy Josserand, Dodge City, vice-president; Edwin R. Jones, Topeka, secretary, and C. W. Porterfield, Holton, treasurer; Native Daughters—Mrs. Ella Ruehmann, Wamego, president; Mrs. P. A. Petitt, Paola, vice-president; Mrs. Thomas H. Norton, Topeka, secretary, and Mrs. Ray Pierson, Burlington, treasurer. Mrs. Frank W. Boyd, Mankato, continues as contest chairman.

One hundred and thirty residents of Finney county gathered at Garden City on February 8, 1949, for the first annual meeting of the Finney County Historical Society. Mayor A. M. Fleming was the principal speaker. Re-elected to the board of directors were: Gus Norton, Frederick Finnup, Mrs. Ella Condra, Mrs. R. E. Stotts, William Fant, Albert Drussel, J. E. Greathouse, William Easton Hutchison, Jean Norris Kampschroeder, Kate Hatcher Smith and Mabel Rowe Brown. Elected to fill unexpired terms were John Henselman and Clay Weldon. Gus Norton is president of the society. The organization’s chief project is to write a complete history of Finney county.

Robert Stone, retiring president of the Shawnee County Historical Society, discussed the early history of Topeka at a meeting of the Riley County Historical Association in the Manhattan Congregational church, February 11, 1949. Another feature of the program was a group of Kansas folk songs, including the Kansas state song, presented by Prof. and Mrs. William E. Koch. Sam C. Charlson, president of the association, presided.

The Southwest section of the French “Merci” train arrived in Kansas City, Mo., February 12, 1949, where it was given a formal reception. The next day the train traveled on to Wichita via the Santa Fe lines for further ceremonies, stopping at Lawrence, Topeka, Emporia and Newton for brief programs. Columnist Drew Pearson, secretary of the U. S. reception committee; Madame Denise Davey, representing the French donors; Gov. Frank Carlson, representing Kansas and who formally accepted the Kansas car, and Richard M. Long of the Wichita Eagle, representing the Southwest, were among those participating in the ceremonies. The “Merci” train was made up of forty-nine “40 and 8” French boxcars full of gifts from the people of France to the people of each of the United States and the District of Columbia in gratitude for
the “Friendship” train which carried grain and other food to France in 1947.

Members of the Crawford County Historical Society were given a verbal picture of “Pittsburg Then and Now” at a meeting of the society, February 25, 1949. Mrs. J. T. Moore gave a report on the early history of Pittsburg, mentioning a number of “firsts.” Modern Pittsburg, with its “new look,” was described in a paper prepared by Dottie Lou Thomas and read by Mrs. Robert Crain. A quiz on Crawford county history was won by C. M. Cooper. Mrs. George Elliott was elected treasurer of the society. Other officers were elected in December, 1948, and were reported in this Quarterly in the February, 1949, issue.

Dr. G. G. Anderson was elected president of the Wichita Historical Museum Association at the annual dinner meeting, March 17, 1949. R. W. Sutton was named first vice-president; Bertha Gardner, second vice-president; Dr. H. C. Holmes, treasurer, and Carl Bitting, secretary. Re-elected to the board of trustees were: Dr. Jesse Clyde Fisher, Mrs. Wallace E. Haines, Brace A. Helfrich and Robert A. Israel, Sr. New trustees are: H. G. Overend, Emery H. Cox, Lee H. Cornell, W. B. Salome, Jr., and M. C. Naftager. Dr. Mearle P. Culver, president of Southwestern College, of Winfield, was the principal speaker of the evening. Dr. Jesse Clyde Fisher, the retiring president, presided at the meeting. The museum, which is located in rooms in the Wichita Forum, is open from 1:30 to 4:30 p. m., each week day except Monday.

Fred G. Gurley, president of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Co., paid tribute to the founder of the railroad, Cyrus K. Holliday, on the 123rd anniversary of Holliday’s birth, in an address formally dedicating the new Santa Fe station in Topeka, April 3, 1949. Also appearing on the program were: Gov. Frank Carlson; Mayor Frank Warren, Topeka; E. P. Murphy, president of the Topeka Junior Chamber of Commerce, and W. Laird Dean, Topeka, master of ceremonies. One of the high points of the program was the unveiling of a Holliday memorial plaque by Kate Holliday and Elizabeth Holliday Burpee, great-granddaughters. The plaque, by Electra Waggoner, sculptress, showed a life-sized bust of Holliday, with railroad tracks running through a wheat field and an outline of the state capitol in the background. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, copies of a 35-page booklet containing Mr. Gurley’s ad-
dress, and a biography of Holliday entitled "The Man With the White Hat," were distributed.

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's own story of World War II has been told in his new book, Crusade in Europe, 559 pages, recently issued from the press of Doubleday & Company, Garden City, N. Y. It is an extraordinary review of those momentous years which changed a lieutenant colonel from Kansas into the supreme commander of the allied forces in Europe. Eisenhower's discussion of the conduct and problems of global war and his estimate of the world leaders with whom he dealt make absorbing reading. The general was the subject of another 302-page book, Eisenhower Was My Boss (New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), by Kay Summersby, WAC captain, who was a secretary and part-time driver.

Two outstanding historians who have done extended research in the Kansas State Historical Society's collections preliminary to publication of their current historical works are: Roy Franklin Nichols, of the University of Pennsylvania, who wrote of the breakup of the Democratic party, 1856-1861, in a book The Disruption of American Democracy (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1948), and Allan Nevins, of Columbia University, who is covering the nation's history from 1847 to 1861 in a series of books entitled Ordeal of the Union (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons). Mr. Nevins' first two volumes, "Fruits of Manifest Destiny," 1847-1852, and "A House Dividing," 1852-1857, were published in 1947. The third volume is under way.

About 500 species of Kansas wild flowers were pictured and described in detail by William Chase Stevens in a 463-page book, Kansas Wild Flowers, recently published by the University of Kansas Press of Lawrence. Professor Stevens is professor emeritus of botany at the University and for years has been photographing and assembling information for this splendid work. Of the 774 illustrations, 761 were his own photographs.

The Bureau of Government Research at the University of Kansas has recently issued a 76-page pamphlet, Kansas State Board of Agriculture, by Edwin O. Steane. This is the bureau's fifth in a series on Kansas administrative history. The pamphlet is divided into five chapters as follows: "Evolution of the Board," "The Development of Functions," "Organization," "Management and Finance," and
“External Relations.” J. C. (Jake) Mohler has been secretary of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture since 1914.

A 101-page booklet, Old Oregon Trail—Roadway of American Home Builders, by Walter E. Meacham, has recently been published under the sponsorship of the American Pioneer Trails Association, 1775 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y., with the cooperation of the Union Pacific railroad. After dealing briefly with the earlier passages over the Oregon trail, Mr. Meacham discussed the “Great Migration of 1843” in detail. Beginning at Independence, Mo., the story followed the Oregon-bound pioneers, relating their adventures and the histories of forts, towns and landmarks along the trail which ended in the Willamette valley, Oregon territory. An attractive 18” x 25” pictographic map in colors accompanied the booklet and both were commemorative of the admission of Oregon as a territory in 1848.

Wichita history and many of the early experiences of Rea Woodman are recorded in Miss Woodman’s new book, Wichitana 1877-1897, published late in 1948. The sketches, which made up the book, were first printed in The Democrat, Wichita, December 22, 1928, to May 2, 1931, under the title, “Yesteryears.”

The history of the founding of Stillwater, Okla., establishment of which was first, but unsuccessfully, attempted in 1884-1885 by William L. Couch, is reviewed by Dr. Berlin Basil Chapman in his new, 245-page book, The Founding of Stillwater, published in Oklahoma City by the Times Journal Publishing Co. Couch’s attempt was stopped by U. S. troops, and it was not until 1889 that a town government was organized.

A 96-page book, featuring the life and work of Dr. Charles M. Sheldon, was recently published by the Sunshine Press, Litchfield, Ill. Compiled and edited by Henry F. Henrichs, the book is in three parts: “In His Steps Today,” by Dr. Sheldon, a modern example of the principle expressed in his famous book, In His Steps; “St. Charles of Topeka,” a brief sketch of the life and character of Dr. Sheldon, by Dr. Charles W. Helsley, present pastor of the Central Congregational Church of Topeka, and “Obsequies,” by Dr. Helsley. Dr. Sheldon was pastor of the Central Congregational Church of Topeka for 31 years. Probably he is best known as the author of In His Steps, the all-time best seller in fiction.