Kansas History as Published in the Press

Among historical articles in recent issues of Your Government—Bulletin of the Governmental Research Center, University of Kansas, Lawrence, were Dr. George Anderson’s “The Territory of Kansas, 1854-1861,” September, 1953, and “Beginnings of Federal Land Machinery in Territorial Kansas,” January, 1954. In October, 1953, “Soldiering in the Kansas Territory,” by Dr. W. Stitt Robinson, Jr., was featured.

In the September, 1953, issue of Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science, Lawrence, a series of editorials on “Early Science in Kansas,” was begun with a review of the work of Frederic Hawn by Dr. Robert Taft. Hawn contributed extensively to the early knowledge of Kansas geology. The life of Prof. Benjamin Franklin Mudge was reviewed by Dr. W. H. Schoewe in the December number. Mudge settled in Kansas in 1861 and became the first state geologist. In the same issue was an article, “Kansas Weather—1952,” by Richard A. Garrett.

“Thomas Jefferson Sutherland, Nebraska Boomer, 1851-1852,” by Dr. James C. Malin, University of Kansas, was published in Nebraska History, Lincoln, September, 1953. Early in the 1850’s Sutherland was one of the principal agitators for the opening of Nebraska for settlement.

An article about the discovery of oil and the development of the oil industry in the Russell area, by Merlin Morphy, was printed in the Wichita Beacon, September 10, 1953. A historical marker at the discovery well, Carrie Oswald No. 1, was dedicated September 12. A history of the Wichita Historical Museum appeared in the Beacon, November 8. The museum was organized in January, 1939, and was dedicated by Gov. Payne Ratner on June 6, 1939. It is located in the Wichita Forum.

A letter from C. E. Hollingsworth, Denver, giving the location and description of the buildings of old Fort Solomon, was published in the Minneapolis Messenger, September 10, 1953. The fort was near Lindsey, now a “dead” town in Ottawa county, on land once owned by Mr. Hollingsworth’s father.

Labette county Star school, District No. 50, was featured in a brief article in the Coffeyville Daily Journal, September 17, 1953. Portraits and biographical sketches of the men who were killed in Cof-
feyville by the Daltons in 1892 were published in the Journal, October 4. The story of the Cherokee strip run, September 16, 1893, as recalled by Andy Patchett, one of the participants, appeared in the Journal, October 25.


The Argonia Argosy in recent months has printed articles compiled by Frank Beals. Among them were: “Memories of Pioneer Life,” September 24, 1953; “Living Quarters of Settlers,” October 15; “Customs Began in Early Schools,” November 19; “Eager Pupils


Some of the early history of Sheridan county by J. F. Morgan, whose father settled in the county in 1868, was printed in the Hoxie Sentinel, September 24, 1953.

Pierceville, described as the oldest white settlement in southwest Kansas, was the subject of two articles in the Garden City Telegram, September 26, 1953. Thayne Smith told of its establishment in 1872-1873 and something of its history. Ruby Basye described the Indian raid July 3, 1874, which destroyed the town. It was a “ghost town” until rebuilt in 1878.

Featured in the October, 1953, number of the Bulletin of the Shawnee County Historical Society, Topeka, was a memorial to the late Paul Adams, more than anyone else the founder of the Shawnee County Historical Society. Two of his articles were included in the issue: “The Topeka Turn Verein” and “Some Early [Shawnee County] Bridge History.” Other articles were: “Topeka’s Fall Festivals Were Exciting” and “Some Topeka Firsts,” by Euphemia Page; “The Dyche Museum [University of Kansas],” by John Cobb Landon; and another installment of George Root’s “Chronology of Shawnee County.” The entire December Bulletin of 96 pages was devoted to a history of Potwin by Charlotte McLeLlan. In 1869 Charles W. Potwin bought 70 acres of land northwest of Topeka. It wasn’t platted until 1882, and home building began in 1885. The area was incorporated as the City of Potwin Place in 1887, and on April 17, 1899, became a part of Topeka.

Newspapers in Kansas was the subject of Elizabeth Barnes’ column, “Historic Johnson County,” in the Johnson County Herald, Overland Park, October 1, 1953.
A history of Belle Plaine, compiled by Pearl Wight, appeared in the Belle Plaine News, October 1, 1953. A town company was organized early in 1871, and the townsite was platted in November, 1873.

"Four Decades in Clearwater," the reminiscences of T. J. "Wad" McLaughlin, oldest living settler of Clearwater, as written by his niece, Mrs. Byrl Carter, was published in the Clearwater News, October 1, 1953, in conjunction with the annual home-coming day, October 2, sponsored by the Clearwater Lions Club. McLaughlin's father, Levi McLaughlin, brought his family to Sedgwick county in 1874.

Recent historical articles in the Atchison Daily Globe included Art Howe's story on Charles Metz, Border Ruffian leader just prior to the Civil War, October 8, 1953, and a history of the Lancaster Presbyterian church, November 20. The church was organized in November, 1878.


A history and description of the Chase county courthouse appeared in the Chase County Leader-News, Cottonwood Falls and Strong City, October 14, 1953. The building of native stone was completed in 1873 and an all-day housewarming was held October 17. Another celebration, October 17, 1953, marked its 80th anniversary.

A page-length article by C. M. Cooper, entitled "Old Spring River Academy Monument to Early Day Settlers," was published in the Pittsburg Headlight, October 17, 1953. The Quaker Valley area of Cherokee county along the Spring river was settled by Quakers around 1866. In 1880 the Spring River Academy was opened and served the community until 1912. A history of Bird school, Cherokee county, by Mrs. Jennie Broughton, was published in the Headlight, January 11, 1954. The first building, a log cabin, was erected about 1868. The present school was built in 1878 and later modernized.
“Old Castle,” first building of Baker University, Baldwin, was the subject of short historical sketches by T. A. Evans and Homer K. Ebright, in the Baldwin Ledger, October 22, 29, and November 5, 12, 1953. School began in the building November 22, 1858. It has not been used for classes for many years and a project is under way to restore the building and convert it to a museum.

Reports about the Hope community, made to the Dickinson County Historical Society at its meeting in Hope, October 22, 1953, have been published in the Hope Dispatch. On October 29 the Dispatch printed an account of the meeting, including summaries of the reports. They appeared in more complete form in later issues, as follows: a history of Hope, by W. L. Boyd, November 5; pioneers of Hope and Hope township, by Elizabeth Lorson, November 12, 19 and 26; a history of schools of the Hope community, by John K. Lay, Jr., December 8, 17 and 31; and industries of Hope, by Elsie Koch, January 7, 1954.

William D. McVey spoke before the “Westerners” in Chicago, October 26, 1953, supporting the affirmative view of the controversial question on whether Wyatt Earp arrested Ben Thompson in Ellsworth in 1873. The address was printed in The Westerners Brand Book, Chicago, November, 1953. Comments by others at the meeting also were printed.

In observance of the 75th anniversary of the organization of St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran church in Ellsworth county, the Ellsworth Messenger, November 5, 1953, and the Ellsworth Reporter, November 12, printed histories of the church. The church history began in 1878 when the congregation was organized as the David’s Star Lutheran church. However, Lutheran families had settled in the community as early as 1871, and services were held in the homes before 1878.

Salem Methodist church, near Bushton, celebrated its 75th anniversary November 1 and 2, 1953. On November 8 a history of the church appeared in the Hutchinson News-Herald. The church was organized in 1878 and the first building was begun in 1882.

A historical sketch of the Lyona Methodist church, near Herington, was printed in the Herington Advertiser-Times, November 12, 1953. The Rev. Charles Stueckmann began holding services in the community in 1858 and the church was established in 1859.
The Hill City Times, November 12, 1953, printed a biographical sketch of Mrs. Chas. Sperry, by her nephew, Elbert Severance. Mrs. Sperry has completed 75 years of continuous residence in Graham county. She came in November, 1878, with her father, Job DeHaven Shane, and his family from Illinois.

Brief historical sketches of towns and townships in Miami county began appearing in the Western Spirit, Paola, November 13, 1953. The sketches were originally deposited in the cornerstone of the Miami county courthouse, laid July 27, 1898.

The reminiscences of Mrs. Anna Hornecker began appearing in the Abilene Reflector-Chronicle, November 20, 1953. She was two years of age when her father, Watson A. Cleveland, brought his family to Abilene in 1871.

Early history of 12 Mitchell county towns was published in the Beloit Call, November 21, 1953: Cawker City, Beloit, West Hampton (now Glen Elder), Springfield, Pittsburg (now Tipton), Scottsville, Victor, Simpson, Waconda, Waconda Springs, Asherville, and Hunter. The first town plat recorded in Mitchell county was that of Cawker City, filed April 26, 1871. According to the article the towns of Springfield, Waconda Springs, and Waconda have disappeared, and Victor remains in name only. A biographical sketch of Jane Collins, Mitchell county teacher and superintendent of public instruction, by Henrietta Boyd, appeared in the Call, January 22, 1954. Miss Collins began teaching in 1885.

On November 1, 1887, Cooper Memorial College, Sterling, now Sterling College, opened with a student body of 13, according to a historical article by Martha Reefer in the Sterling Bulletin, November 26, 1953.

Eagle Springs, “dead” Doniphan county town, was the subject of J. H. Lusk’s column, “Bits of History,” in the Highland Vidette, November 26, 1953. The town was once a summer resort, complete with mineral water. The history of Sparks, also in Doniphan county, by Lusk, appeared in the January 28, 1954, issue. It was located in 1870 and was first called Highland Station.

Emporia’s first church building [Christian], now being dismantled, was erected in 1859, according to an article in the Emporia Gazette, December 5, 1953. On January 28, 1954, the Gazette published a brief history of Americus, established in 1857.

Watson Stewart, who homesteaded near Humboldt in 1856, was the subject of a biographical sketch by his grandson, Donald Stewart, published in the Humboldt Union, December 31, 1953.

Among articles published in the 1954 issue of The Kansas Magazine, Manhattan, were: “Edgar Watson Howe, Born One Hundred Years Ago,” by Clyde C. Hammers; “Jim [Ferguson] and Charles [Handy]—With Associated Memories,” the story of two frontier stage drivers, by H. L. Chambers; “Samuel D. Bowker, Pioneer Educator,” by Russell K. Hickman; “Early Years in Lawrence,” by Clyde Hyder; and “Diary of a Pioneer Girl [Mary Peery],” by Mary Elsie Cunningham.

John S. Gilmore’s diary, the first installment of which was printed in the Wilson County Citizen, Fredonia, in January, 1953, has continued to appear regularly.

As a centennial feature, “This Day in Kansas History,” a column by Milt Tabor, is scheduled to appear in the Topeka Daily Capital every day of 1954. Each installment discusses an event which occurred on the date of the article’s publication.

Publication of historical information from “The Last One,” a booklet by Rosie Clem Maxton, began January 13, 1954, in the Columbus Daily Advocate. The booklet, property of Frank Maxton, Columbus, is the story of Mrs. Maxton’s pioneer life in the Crestline community of Cherokee county. In 1866, when she was five, Mrs. Maxton’s father, Henry Groves Clem, brought his family to Kansas.

The origin of the names of towns in southern Kansas was the subject of articles by Wayne A. O’Connell in the January 21 and 28, 1954, issues of the Chetopa Advance. Among the towns were Labette City, Bartlett, Chetopa, Montana City, Edna, and Oswego.

Historical articles in recent issues of the Kansas City (Mo.) Star included: “Tribute to Abraham Lincoln,” by Carl Sandburg, February 7, 1954, and “Highlights of History in First Century of Kansas,” by Albert Earl Robinson, February 7, 14, and 21. Among articles in the Kansas City (Mo.) Times were: “Amos Lawrence Deplored

The Winfield Daily Courier published its ninth annual Achievement edition February 22, 1954. The 144-page paper was a survey of progress in Winfield and Cowley county during the year.

A 172-page progress edition was published by the Wichita Sunday Beacon, February 28, 1954. Numerous articles on Wichita industries and institutions were included. The Beacon recently moved its plant and offices to a new building.

The Coffeyville Journal published a 142-page progress edition February 28, 1954, the largest in its history. Progress of the Coffeyville area in education, religion, agriculture, construction, and industry was traced.

A 56-page diamond jubilee edition of the Western Kansas World, WaKeeney, was published March 4, 1954. It contained articles on the history of Trego county, WaKeeney, and other towns in the county. The World was established in 1879 by Col. W. S. Tilton. The special edition was dedicated to Fred Shaw who started with the newspaper in 1908 as a printer's devil and retired in 1952 as publisher.