Notes on the Writing of General Histories of Kansas

JAMES C. MALIN


INTRODUCTION

Did you ever drop a pebble into a deep well and not be able to see or hear it hit the bottom? Holloway's history, reviewed in the preceding paper, fits such a metaphor. From the ranks of the leading participants, no one cheered and no one damned. The adverse criticisms that were offered did not touch essentials in any material way. Neither did the faint praise. With little exception, the comments were written by relative new-comers or by men who had little or nothing to do with the Kansas troubles of the early years. Positive or violent reactions to historical writing came only with the passing of years and the organization of "Old Settlers" to commemorate the past. Along with this came "refreshment" of memories already faded. The "refreshment" process often resulted in engrafting legends and hindsight upon the atrophied memories.

As all Free-State men were united in their verdict on the Proslavery cause, with few exceptions, their differences in interpretation were over credits and honors applied to men and measures. The lost cause did not write history. That conclusion is emphasized by the examples of Judge Samuel D. Lecompte and James Christian, neither of whom wrote in vindication of the Proslavery cause as such, but rather in defense of individuals against unjust charges.

Three attempts, 1855, 1859, and 1867, were made to organize an effective state historical society before success was attained in the fourth trial, beginning in 1875. Why did these attempts fail, while a substantial number of other institutions succeeded: schools, churches, the agricultural society, etc.? It was partly a case of first things first; partly it was a reflection of the cultural background. The making of history took precedence over the collection of materials and the writing of history. This statement, however, over simplifies the situation. A substantial minority of those engaged in the activities of the 1850's and 1860's were convinced that they were

Dr. James C. Malin, associate editor of The Kansas Historical Quarterly, is professor of history at the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

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participating in a momentous cause that would characterize a historical era. Although all generations probably feel that way, more or less, many of this early Kansas generation were more than ordinarily captive to such self-deception. To them, the preservation of the records of their side of the controversy was thought essential to the enlightenment of future generations. A state historical society was the chosen instrument for this end.

A number of obstacles stood in the way of the realization of this dream. Some were more or less common to pioneer communities, while others were unique to Kansas and to the geographic area from which it was carved. Pioneer life was always conspicuously unstable and insecure. Movement was its outstanding characteristic. Of the people present in a given community, according to the census of 1855, for example, very few would probably be there five years later, still fewer in 1865, and 1875. A similar principle would apply to the newcomers of 1860 or of 1865, only possibly in less drastic proportions. This principle applied both to the total population from which a membership of a historical society could be drawn, and to the initial groups which instituted the successive societies. Also, in proportion to population, Kansas had a surplus of "professional" men—lawyers, doctors, ministers, or at least men who answered to such labels—and "speculators." A very sizeable proportion of these "doubled" in "professional competence" as politicians. Any legitimate movement undertaken by the people was likely to be taken over by these professional people and used or dropped as it served their peculiar purposes. As early as January 18, 1855, G. W. Brown complained in his *Herald of Freedom* that Lawrence had already nearly a dozen each of lawyers, doctors, and clergy, but what was needed were farmers, mechanics, "or any class of persons relying upon labor for support...." And he explained further that "The truth is the learned professions are over-supplied everywhere, and new countries seem a sort of safety valve to which they invariably resort, with the hopes of growing up with the country. Many do so...; but the great masses sink into obscurity and are forgotten."

By coincidence the early years of Kansas settlement were a period of weather as well as political extremes, especially 1854 and 1860, although only one year of the first eight, 1859, was generally favorable to most crops. Kansas was visited by excesses of drought and

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moisture, heat and cold. Many of the failures and much suffering chargeable to these factors were blamed on the Kansas troubles, making Proslavery men, or Missourians, or South Carolinians the scapegoats.

Upon entering Kansas in 1854 the population was meeting an environment strange to them. Eastern people were forest dwellers. Wood was utilized for most of their needs, whether housing, fencing, tools, and equipment of all kinds, with a minimum of metal, or fuel. Only Western people from parts of Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee east of the Mississippi river, and from the states of Iowa, and Missouri west of that stream, had made acquaintances in any substantial manner with the prairie. Kansas was not only prairie, but rainfall followed a decidedly seasonable pattern, and westward the amount diminished rapidly to a point critical to the successful production of the accustomed crops of the East—corn, oats, etc., and many of the fruits and vegetables. Relatively, the prevailing culture emphasized to a high degree a subsistence economy. This accustomed way of life was challenged by the years of extremes in eastern Kansas, and by “normal” years farther west. New crops, tillage methods, and machinery were necessary, as well as more economical utilization of scarce and expensive wood for buildings, fencing and fuel, and a resort to rock and brick for construction, and to coal for fuel. In addition to the traditional concern for fertile soil as a natural resource, attention was directed sharply to other resources of the earth—to coal, salt, and gypsum, and later to oil. The geology of the area took on a new significance. Of course, the wider utilization of coal and iron was taking place in the older parts of the country, and in Europe, but the relative importance had a sharper impact upon the people of the prairie than of the forest. How were these supplies to be purchased from the outside and paid for? The answer was money crops sent to markets at population centers. This requirement emphasized further the necessity of shifting from subsistence to commercial agriculture, and imposed upon the people of Kansas an understanding of the necessity to find cheap transportation. In a grass country, where water was scanty, the answer was steam railroads.

At the time the Nebraska agitation was under way, 1844-1854, for the organization of the grassland which was to become Nebraska and Kansas territories, the age of steam, coal, and iron was already changing American culture in the East. One large factor in this transformation was the exhaustion of forests within economical
transport distances. In Kansas, that condition faced the settlers from the beginning. The search for mineral substitutes had been begun in a systematic way by state geological surveys east of the Mississippi river. In 1849 Sen. Stephen A. Douglas proposed a grant of land in the public land states to aid them in financing surveys. Missouri took a particular interest in his bill of 1849, along with proposals for a Pacific railroad, and the organization of Nebraska. Missouri’s geological survey had been organized in 1853 with George C. Swallow in charge. One of his first objectives was to determine whether coal-bearing geological formations existed in western Missouri. He concluded that the northwestern part of Missouri and the adjoining parts of Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas were of the Upper Carboniferous age—the coal measures.

Through Frederick Hawn, one of his subordinates in the geological survey of Missouri, who was employed in the Kansas linear land surveys, Swallow became involved in Kansas geology. Hawn collected fossils in Kansas, which he could not identify adequately and sent part of them to Frederick Meek and part of them to Swallow. Both men, in early 1858, announced their conclusions that these fossils were Permian in geological age, the first identification of that geological horizon in the United States. Just as coal was associated in the public mind with the Upper Carboniferous rocks, so salt and gypsum were associated with the Permian rocks. Thus coal, salt, and gypsum, as well as other minerals, and limestone, sandstone, and clay for building purposes, were resources already recognized in territorial Kansas.2

The critical role of transportation may be illustrated by two cut-out examples. In January, 1862, just as the first year of the Civil War was drawing to an end, and on the eve of the legislative session at which the Kansas State Agricultural Society was chartered, an editorial raised the question: “Does it pay to raise corn?” The answer was “No,” but the reasons are the important point for present purposes.

The editorial admitted that: “The staple production of Kansas up to the present, is corn. . . .” The following unpleasant facts were pointed out however: “Corn in the raw, when the Eastern markets are best, will scarcely pay its transportation. Take out 75 to 80 cents per bushel as such charge and nothing remains to the

2. James C. Salm, Grassland Historical Studies: Natural Resources Utilization in a Background of Science and Technology, v. 1, Geology and Geography (Lawrence, the author, 1950), pp. 81, 82.
producer.” The disadvantage was only partially remedied by selling it as cattle and hogs, or as beef and pork.

This fact was not a new discovery, but its proximity to the chartering of the State Agricultural Society has some significance. Charles Robinson had discussed the whole subject in 1859 in a more elaborate and pertinent form, as well as for the particular purpose of explaining his Kansas career. At the time his letter was written, the Free-State party was breaking up and the Republican and Democratic parties were being organized, as in the states. Robinson’s reaction to this new situation was to announce a decision not to participate in any political convention, not even the Wyandotte constitutional convention:

In the first place I am not a politician, never was, and, so long as I have my reason, never mean to be. It is true I voted for Harrison for President [1840], because I thought the Whigs honest and the Democrats corrupt. Since that time I could see but little difference between them, and have voted for no Presidential candidate, but have occasionally joined in popular movements.

With the defeat of the English bill in 1858, he insisted that the slavery question was settled, and it was time for the politicians to enter the field, and for all others to retire, and

From that time I have avoided all political gatherings and turned my attention more particularly to the development of the material interests of the territory. Kansas . . . has, probably, less commercial advantages than any State in the Union. Her lands, so rich and beautiful, must lie unimproved and comparatively valueless without the means of getting their products to market.

Robinson pointed out that in ordinary seasons corn sold at Missouri river towns at 25 cents per bushel, but at Lawrence it was worth nothing because the freight from Lawrence to the river was 30 cents per bushel; “Should things remain as they are, and no railroads be built, the land in the Missouri river counties will increase in value, while the lands of the interior cannot rise above the price of grazing lands, or from one to five dollars an acre. So with the towns. . . . the interior towns will lose even their present trade.”

Realizing this situation, Robinson related that he had attended the last three sessions of congress, 1856-1857, 1857-1858, and 1858-1859, in order to use the influence which his prominence in early Kansas affairs had bestowed upon him, to promote land grants for a system of railroads for Kansas. He insisted further that at the last session “a grant would probably have been made had not the political demagogues interfered. That system would have given five, if not

six roads to Lawrence, and would have increased the value of every lot in town ten fold, every farm in the county four fold, and every acre of land east of Fort Riley, on an average, two fold.”

Robinson placed the blame for defeat of railroads upon M. F. Conway, elected to congress under the Leavenworth constitution, who resorted to “libel, slander, and lying,” unequalled in the annals of Tammany Hall politics.

Should the land sales come off as advertised, there will be but little, if any, land in Eastern Kansas for road purposes, and we can, in [the] future, lie supinely on our backs, hugging the delusion that certain men are great benefactors of Kansas, and especially Lawrence.

In the perspective of the traditional histories of the period, the most remarkable aspect of Robinson’s blame for the defeat of the railroad system was that he placed it, not upon the Proslavery men, the Democrats, or the Buchanan administration, but upon the Kansas antislavery radicals—the same men who were trying to seize control of the Republican party which was to be launched at Osawatomie a few days later. Repeatedly during the spring of 1859 Robinson warned that the political party of the future that he would work with depended upon circumstances, and positions on issues.

But these differences over a particular group of measures must not divert attention from the fundamental principles which underlay Robinson’s argument about the significance of railroads. Those principles were the important historical fact, regardless of how the railroads were built or who received the credit. The analysis of the geographical setting of Kansas history in relation to the communications, as presented in this letter, was fundamental. When Robinson himself had arrived at this understanding of the relationship of railroads and land-mass in the grassland environment of the continental interior is not clear. Certainly not when the site of Lawrence was selected in 1854. Possibly the important thing is that he had arrived at all. So many, both then and since, never did grasp this basic concept.

About the same time, Lucian J. Eastin, editor since 1854 of the Weekly Kansas Herald of Leavenworth was expounding his views of what was of “immediate and urgent importance” in Kansas. He was a Democrat and had been rated a Proslavery man. Although the writers of Kansas history have either ignored or denounced Eastin for opinion’s sake, he was among the ablest journalists on the Kansas scene. His editorial entitled “Conservatism” was published February 26, 1859. He decried the radicalism that was dis-
turbining the country, and then proceeded to differentiate the conservative from the radical:

No man can be a conservative, unless he has the spirit of submission to authority fully developed in his nature. He must premise that his judgment is not infallible, and that his reasoning faculties are as apt to be warped by his feelings as those of other men. He must know how to make the proper distinction between firmness and obstinacy, and when superior authority has stamped the ideas of his opponents with the impress and sanction of the law, he must subject his private opinion to public statutes. This may be done without abating his original convictions, and if it is not done, cheerfully and promptly, the refractory individual becomes, in our estimation a radical.

Again he must form his opinion from deliberate and dispassionate investigation, and not permit the thought to be offspring of the wish. . . . Toleration is also absolutely requisite in the composition of a conservative.

Still other qualifications specified that: “He must be an independent thinker. . . . He must demand proof. . . . He must be frank and candid. . . . And above all other essentials, he must be kind-hearted and amiable.” As related to the political scene: “He must be a national man. . . . To be truly conservative a man must be just, sincere and patriotic. . . .”

Of course, as a newspaper editor, writing for his subscribers in Leavenworth and the territory of Kansas in 1859, Eastin was not indulging himself in abstract social philosophy in a vacuum. He applied his principles of conservatism to American politics—to Kansas and to the general government. He was preparing his reader with criteria by which to deal with first things first:

Time has arrived when the great sectional issue is settled upon a firm basis, and we must direct our attention to topics of more immediate and urgent importance.

What were these topics, as of February, 1859, that should come first?—

Kansas must be developed: her rich alluvial [soil] . . . : her mines . . . : her cities . . . , and the whole body politic welded with the iron ribs of public improvement. . . . And when the undertaking is vigorously commenced, and citizens of all shades of politics work side by side for the common good, the paltry abstractions which separate man from man will sink into insignificance by comparison with the importance of the great work in which they are now engaged. Passion will cool down—reason regain her sway, and men will laugh over the olden time when neighbors essayed to cut each other’s throats upon matters in which they themselves were so little interested.

Even those Kansans who might agree with Eastin up to this point, might balk at his conclusion that “the great mission . . . of the Democratic party [was]—to harmonize—to pacify and conservatize.” But again difference over political party preferences as to the
instruments to be used must not divert attention from the evalua-
tion of what things come first.

A change in editorship of the Leavenworth Herald, late in the
same year, did not modify the view held in Leavenworth about “Our
own Interest.” This title appeared over four separate editorials in
the issue of December 17, 1859, while the excitement about John
Brown at Harpers Ferry was at its height. The front page editorial
insisted that: “The true course is plain. We want a direct Railroad
communication with the East, and we must have it soon. . . .”
The three articles on the editorial page proper developed the same
theme as applied to the country to the west, even to the Pacific
coast.

Although each city was looking at the problem from the stand-
point of rivalry with competitors, the principles involved were basic
to the new age of steam railroads. River traffic in the interior had
been oriented upon New Orleans, but rail traffic was being oriented
eastward by way of the Great Lakes and the Ohio river to the At-
tlantic coast cities. The full impact of that revolution was receiving
a belated recognition. The railroad was the key to the future, not
only of cities but of the agricultural development of the interior.
The railroad and the telegraph became the channels by which the
interior was bound to the East in all aspects of communication, in-
tellectual, artistic, or material.

The Kansas troubles of the 1850’s and the Civil War, in their re-
lation to slavery and to the Negro, were not the single issue in Kan-
sas, in spite of the fact that the Free-State party and the Proslavery
party were organized supposedly upon that single issue of freedom
or slavery. Even these phenomena, had they been as dominant as
tradition has represented them, had to be subordinated to the mak-
ing of a living. Kansas could not indefinitely be supported by “aid”
and “relief” and new capital brought in by immigrants and the
general government. Sooner or later Kansas must assume respon-
sibility for paying its own way. How long did Kansas operate on
a deficit economy? Certainly until the later 1870’s! And how much
longer? The answer is important to the writing of Kansas history.

On the basis of first things first, it would seem to be laboring the
obvious if the foregoing discussion had no more bearing on the sub-
ject of this paper than to conclude that a historical society was not
among the first things. The goal in the writing of history is to re-
construct so far as possible historical reality, and the function of a
historical society is to serve as a repository for the materials from
which history may be written. The obstacles to be mastered by the
pioneers in the settlement of Kansas were but an index to the range
of the historical reality, to the variety of materials that should be col-
lected for the use of the historian and to the scope of that history
when it is to be written adequately.

In view of the fact that such a comprehensive view of the inter-
ests of Kansas was so clearly recognized at the time, why was the
history of Kansas written upon the narrow basis so evident in all the
printed histories? Why this wide split between historical reality
and written history?

THE HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF KANSAS

The bare narrative of the origins of the Historical and Philosophi-
cal Society of Kansas, initiated in 1855, attributed the leadership to
William Walker, of the Wyandotte Nation. He was a one-eighth
Wyandotte Indian, and principal man in the Nation, resident in
what is now Wyandotte county. He had received some education
at Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio. On August 1, 1855, in the council
of the “Bogus” legislature, Lucian J. Eastin, editor of the Leaven-
worth Kansas Weekly Herald, “asked leave to present a memorial
from William Walker and others, praying for an act to incorporate
a Historical and Philosophical Society in Kansas Territory, in which
memorial were mentioned some of the beneficial results to be ex-
pected from such a Society, and the expediency of incorporating it
at the earliest possible period.” A bill accompanied the memorial,
which Eastin presented. He then moved a suspension of the rules
to permit an immediate second reading and reference to the com-
mittee on education. The council Journal recorded no further action,
but the bill, as passed by that body, was messaged to the house the
same evening. Action in the house was not taken upon it until
August 22 and 24, when it was passed. 5

In the statute the organization was named the Historical and
Philosophical Society of Kansas Territory, located at the seat of
government of the territory. The nine incorporators were William
Walker, D. A. N. Grover, David Lykins, John Donaldson, James
Kuykendall, Thomas Johnson, William A. M. Vaughan, Lucian J.
Eastin, A. J. Isaacs, and their associates. The conception held by
these incorporators of the function of such a society was stated thus:

... the object of said society shall be the collection and preservation of

5. Journal of the Council of the Territory of Kansas . . . ., 1855, p. 95; Journal of
the House of Representatives of the Territory of Kansas . . . ., 1855, pp. 140, 251,
308, 309.
a library, mineralogical and geological specimens, historical matter relating to
the history of this territory, Indian curiosities and antiquities, and other matters
connected with and calculated to illustrate and perpetuate the history and set-
tlement of our territory.6

Two other items dealing with history came before the council.
On July 5, D. A. N. Grover, of Kickapoo City, gave notice of a bill
he proposed to introduce to incorporate at Kickapoo City the "Hist-
torical Society of Kansas Territory." Apparently, however, he
dropped the matter, and instead, on July 21, in anticipation of
Eastin’s bill, moved that the president of the council be authorized
to appoint a committee of three members to memorialize congress
for a donation of one section of land to the Historical and Philo-
osophical Society of Kansas Territory. The council agreed and the
committee was composed of Grover, David Lykins, and H. J.
Strickler.7

A word more is in order about the name of this society and the
meaning of that name in relation to the scope of the program pro-
posed. In the 18th century the words philosophy, philosopher, and
philosophical were still used generally in the comprehensive sense
which carried over from the medieval and early modern usage.
Philosophy was: "The love, study, or pursuit of wisdom, or of
knowledge of things and their causes, whether theoretical or prac-
tical." The "three philosophies" of the Medieval university were
natural, moral, and metaphysical. The modern academic degree,
Doctor of Philosophy, preserves this meaning. The "natural philoso-
phy" included within this context meant science, both theoretical
and applied.8 Benjamin Franklin was among those instrumental in
founding "The American Philosophical Society held at Philadelphia
for promoting useful knowledge," often designated as America’s
most distinguished scientific organization. This so-called Proslavery
legislature in the Kansas of 1855 was using the word "philosophical"
in this historic sense as including science, but the name of the soci-
ety was more comprehensive than if it had been written "The
Historical and Scientific Society of Kansas Territory."

The incorporators of this venture were men of representative
quality for any segment of American society of the 1850’s. Their
charter did not become effective, but the reasons for the default lay
not so much with the individuals involved as with the times. Fur-

6. The Statutes of the Territory of Kansas, Passed at the First Session of the Legislative
Assembly One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty-five . . . , ch 58, pp. 391, 392.
8. The Oxford English Dictionary . . . a Corrected Re-issue . . . on Historical
thermore, they had undertaken their enterprise before the structure of the history they proposed to commemorate had taken shape. Other abortive attempts must be recorded before success was attained.

**The Kansas Scientific and Historical Society**

In consequence of the election of October, 1857, political control of the territory of Kansas fell into the hands of the Free-State party, and that party not only governed, but wrote its history. After the defeat of the Lecompton constitution in August, 1858, T. Dwight Thacher expounded “The Need of a Historical Society in Kansas.” Educated for the ministry at Union College, Schenectady, Thacher in the spring of 1857, at the age of 25, became editor of the Lawrence Republican. Among Free-State men, he was a radical, young newcomer, and that fact was reflected clearly in his editorial on history and a historical society. In distinguishing the two, he assigned to history an aggressively functional role. Quoting Lord Bolingbroke, he asserted:

‘History is philosophy teaching by example.’ It takes of the various developments of the human race, its laws, languages, customs and religions,—and from them draws many a lesson of interest and profit to place before the student of after times. Races have their histories, and States have theirs.

It is not always necessary that a people should have existed for a long time in an organized society, to enable them to have a history. . . . Indeed, the great eras of history, those which stand as landmarks upon the boundless field of time, are generally the record of only a few years.

As were so many of his generation, Thacher was convinced that he was an actor in one of those great eras and that Kansas history was an important part of it. He feared that posterity would consider the facts of the struggle between freedom and slavery too incredible in their enormity to believe that they “ever did or could have occurred. . . . Even the careful historian, fifty years hence, will be apt to look back and strike the difference between the actual truth, on the one hand, and the suppressed, mutilated, prejudiced and perverted accounts, on the other, which it has been the interest of our enemies continually to send forth to the world.”

Thacher was insistent that the facts of Kansas history should be established:

All the important events . . . are now capable of verification by living eyewitnesses, actors, and participators, and by original documents. . . . If something is not done, many . . . will be irrecoverably lost. . . .

The basis of all right history is facts. It is the province of a Historical Society to discover, collect, and preserve these facts. . . .
Thus to Thacher, history and a historical society were social instruments to be used for molding society:

The history of Kansas is yet to be written. The oppression and tyranny exercised on our people is to be treasured up for the scorn of coming ages. The patience, forbearance under wrong, wisdom, and eternal fidelity of those who have won the great battle, shall be commemorated forever, for the encouragement and warning of those who shall live after us. The graves of our martyrs shall be kept green in the affections of our children, and the truthful pen of History shall erector an enduring monument to their fame.

Here was the doctrinaire young radical, consumed by the fire of his own intolerant conviction that no one could be right but himself and his partisans. How different, by contrast, from the views of Eastin and of Charles Robinson quoted earlier, which were written in February and May respectively of the year immediately following Thacher’s August 19, 1858, editorial.

Free-State men made their move for a historical society in January, 1859, applying to the territorial legislature in session at Lawrence. The charter bill was introduced into the house of representatives, January 22, by Charles H. Branscomb and reported back from committee and passed on January 28. In the council it was referred to the committee on education, January 28, and reported back the following day with a recommendation that it pass, but the committee was “not wholly satisfied that the incorporation of a society intended for the general benefit of the entire Territory should all be residents of the city of Lawrence. . . .” The incorporators did not take the broad hint, however, and the bill passed without amendment February 4, and became law February 7, 1859, by the approval of the governor.9

The bill was conceived in the same particularistic spirit as Grover’s proposed bill of 1855, which specified Kickapoo City as the seat of the society, regardless of the location of the capital or of the interest of the territory as a whole. Not only were the incorporators Lawrence men, but the seat of the society was Lawrence. In 1855 Grover had yielded his ambition for Kickapoo, but the Lawrence group of 1859 were stiff-necked, and the legislature yielded to the Lawrence monopoly. At the same time the New England element in Kansas secured the incorporation of “The New England Society of Kansas,” mostly also a Lawrence monopoly.10 The student who would understand Kansas history must give heed to these signs in-

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The act "to Incorporate the Scientific and Historical Society of Kansas," approved February 7, 1859, named 12 incorporators: Edward Clark (1854), Charles H. Branscomb (1854), R. G. Elliott (1854), William Hutchinson (1855), Charles Robinson (1854), W. I. R. Blackman (1855), Samuel C. Harrington (1854), B. W. Woodward (1855), Melanthon S. Beach (?), James Blood (1854), J. S. Emery (1854), E. S. Lowman (?), and associates.11

A call was issued promptly for a meeting, February 12, to organize under the charter.12 For the temporary organization, J. S. Emery occupied the chair, with William Hutchinson as secretary, only seven of the 12 incorporators being present. The other five present were Elliott, Harrington, Branscomb, Blackman, and Woodward. After accepting the charter, the seven incorporators present voted into the organization 11 associates, most of whom were not Lawrence residents. A committee of five was then appointed by the chair: Elliott, Branscomb, F. N. Blake, J. P. Root, and J. C. Douglas, the last three being out-of-town associates, to frame a constitution and bylaws. The meeting then adjourned to 7 P. M.

At the evening session, Emery was absent, five more associates were elected, the constitution was drafted, and a temporary treasurer appointed to receive the fee. Seventy-two associates were then elected. Incorporated and clergymen were excused from payment of fees. An election of officers was held. For president, Lawrence D. Bailey of Emporia, was chosen on the second ballot. The five vice-presidents were J. C. Douglas of Leavenworth, J. B. Wheeler of Palermo, F. N. Blake of Junction City, J. P. Root of Wyandotte, and E. Nute of Lawrence. The remaining officers, the working staff, were all Lawrence incorporators: B. W. Woodward, treasurer; William Hutchinson, corresponding secretary; Edward Clark, recording secretary; and S. C. Harrington, librarian. The executive committee of five included W. R. Griffith, Fort Scott; O. C. Brown, Osawatomie; J. L. McDowell, Leavenworth; and two Lawrence men, Josiah Miller and W. I. R. Blackman. The housing problem was solved as follows, on motion of Hutchinson:

Resolved, That the Literary and Scientific Club of Lawrence shall be allowed the right of free access to the library, cabinet, and collection of antiquities in the William Hutchinson "Papers," Kansas State Historical Society. The dates in the parenthesis indicate when each of these men came to Kansas.

11. Ibid., ch. 41. A manuscript draft of the bill in William Hutchinson's handwriting is in the William Hutchinson "Papers," Kansas State Historical Society. The dates in the parenthesis indicate when each of these men came to Kansas.

12. Lawrence Republican, February 10, 24, 1859. The Leavenworth Weekly Times, February 19, 1859, gave an abbreviated report of the meeting, based upon the Republican report.
uities, &c., of this Society; and as a consideration for the same, the said Club shall provide a room for the safe keeping of said library and other property, without charge to the Society.

The final business transacted was the appointment of 12 standing committees of three members each: geology, botany, zoology, meteorology, mineralogy, fine arts, local history, aboriginal history, ecclesiastical history, biographical history, history of events, and finance.

By actual count, there were 12 incorporators and 88 elected associates, and one man appears on the committee list, the Rev. John G. Pratt, of the Baptist Mission. Quindaro, who was not on the list of associates elected, making a grand total nominal membership of 101 men—no women. Of these, 24 were known to be clergymen, 17 physicians, and an unknown number of "lawyers." The amount of the initiation fee was not publicized, but during the first year only $42 was collected. Bearing in mind that 12 incorporators and 24 clergymen did not pay fees, the financial burden of the society would fall upon the very small paid-up membership—if one dollar per year—42; if three dollars—14 members. There is no evidence that more than a few of the associates elected were present. Probably the election was really in the nature of an invitation which would not be effective unless responded to by the fee. If the roll of completed memberships were known, a number of aspects of this organization would be easier to interpret.

Of the nine newspapers available for 1859, only two really reported the organization meeting, and one other noticed the fact that it was held. The Leavenworth Times gave pointed attention to the operating staff of officers: "All of whom will keep their offices in Lawrence."

Again, one of the significant aspects of this organization was indicated by the name Scientific and Historical Society, and the standing committee structure carried out that broad coverage, on paper at least. Although the organization of 1855 had used the word Philosophical, and this one of 1859 the word Scientific, probably there was in this usage as little real difference in meaning between Proslavery and Free-State men as in most other aspects of their cultural outlook. Both looked upon science and history as fully compatible and complementary in rounding out their orientation of knowledge about the Kansas geographical environment.

The annual meeting of the Scientific and Historical Society was held in Lawrence, January 19, 20, 1860. Again, virtually the only source of information about the meeting is the Lawrence Republican
which published in full the proceedings of the meeting and the report of the executive committee.  

The annual meeting opened on the morning of January 19, 1860, at its rooms, with President Bailey, of Emporia, in the chair. After the reading and approval of the minutes of the organization meeting, the first motion was one presented by William Hutchinson, corresponding secretary, that a committee of three be appointed on amendments to the constitution. This was carried, and the chair appointed Hutchinson, Woodward, and Lyman Allen, all of Lawrence. This question of amendment appeared to have been the bone of contention throughout the two-day session, but the minutes did not reveal the issues at stake. After the treasurer reported on finances, $42 receipts from fees, and $49.10 expenditures, an adjournment was had to 2 P.M.

At the afternoon session the librarian, Dr. S. C. Harrington, reported on the receipt of 244 books, listing the donors; pamphlets; maps and lithographs, nine; and one photograph of John Brown, who had been executed in Virginia some six weeks earlier. Probably the most important part of the library report was that relating to newspapers, the society having solicited editors to contribute their papers regularly for preservation and binding. Fourteen papers were listed:

*Southern Kansas Herald, Osawatomie
*Fort Scott Democrat, Fort Scott
*Elwood Free Press, Elwood
*Linn County Herald, Mound City
*Emporia News, Emporia
*Kansas State Record, Topeka
*Topeka Tribune, Topeka
*Olathe Herald, Olathe
*Lawrence Republican, Lawrence
*Kansas Statesman, Junction City
*Leavenworth Herald, Leavenworth
*Daily State Register, Leavenworth
*Atchison Union, Atchison
*Western Argus, Wyandotte.

The reports of the standing committees were the subject of facetious remarks by the secretary which have for their background

13. Lawrence Republican, January 12 (the call by the executive committee), 26 (proceedings), February 3 (report of the executive committee); Freedom's Champion, Atchison, February 11, 1860 (the proceedings); Weekly Leavenworth Herald, February 4, 1860 (summary only of the proceedings).

14. The Kansas State Historical Society now owns files for 1859-1860, some incomplete, of nine of the papers on this list, marked with the asterisk, as well as several not represented here. Of, "Kansas Territorial Newspapers Available at the Kansas State Historical Society," in A List of Kansas Newspapers and Periodicals Received by the Kansas State Historical Society, July, 1942.
the intense political excitement of the winter of 1859-1860, highlighted for Kansans by the Harpers Ferry raid, and the trial and execution of John Brown, along with the forebodings about the presidential campaign of 1860 already taking shape:

Reports of standing committees were called for, but as there was no committee on the state of the Union, and as the chairmen of all the committees supposed themselves better acquainted with political science than with any of the obscure sciences, no reports were forthcoming.

The committee on amendments to the constitution reported, and its suggestions were adopted. The amendments obviously did not go far enough to suit Lyman Allen, one of the committee members, because he then moved a committee of three on revision of the constitution to report at the next meeting, but his motion was lost.

Next came another item of controversial business upon which the minutes reported as follows:

B. W. Woodward, Esq., offered the following resolution: That all editors who shall contribute the files of their papers to this Society for two years shall be constituted members of this Society. Discussed and laid on the table.

New members were then elected, but again the secretary was uninforming as to either names or numbers. Adjournment followed, until 7 P. M., when the evening session would convene at the Methodist church for the formal addresses. L. D. Bailey delivered his address as retiring president, “upon the objects and success of the Society,” and Justice S. A. Kingman gave the annual address, “upon the physical causes and development of civilization.” The meeting then adjourned to convene the following morning, 9 A.M., at Miller’s Hall.

On Friday morning the controversial issues of Thursday’s sessions were fought again. Josiah Miller proposed a change in the method of electing members—he moved a bylaw that members propose new members by letter from the applicant. Mayor James Blood proposed a substitute that a committee of five be authorized to receive applications from new members. Carried. The Rev. Charles Reynolds’ motion to elect members by ballot was then carried.

Lyman Allen entered the lists again in the interest of reorganization of the society, proposing a committee of five on a new constitution and bylaws. Woodward, who had been a member of the committee of the previous day, moved to strike out the word “constitution” from the motion. Debate followed and Reynolds moved that the question be made a special order at 8 P.M., and that the society proceed to the election of officers. Carried.
The president elected for 1860 was Thomas Ewing, Jr., of Leavenworth. The five vice-presidents were S. A. Kingman of Hiawatha, F. N. Blake of Junction City, Augustus Wattles of Moneka, J. P. Root of Wyandotte, and Lyman Allen of Lawrence. The secretaries, treasurer, and librarian were re-elected. Two members of the executive committee were retained, McDowell and Miller. These, together with Bailey, the retiring president, James Blood of Lawrence, and D. W. Houston of Emporia, completed the panel.

At the evening session, the newly-elected president, Thomas Ewing, Jr., took the chair. The constitution question was reviewed, Woodward withdrew his amendment, and then Allen's motion was adopted. Hutchinson moved that the executive committee be instructed to prepare a code of bylaws for immediate use, to be ratified at the next quarterly meeting. Carried. This was the first mention of quarterly meetings. Possibly they had been provided for by the amendments that had been adopted. At any rate, before the session adjourned, the quarterly meetings were delegated authority to transact all business except election of officers. The structure of the organization was further changed by adding two new standing committees, making a total of 14: agriculture and horticulture, and commerce.

Another election of members was held, and then the fireworks began. Augustus Wattles took the floor, and this time, for a change, the secretary summarized the substance of the debate in some detail. The subject was the momentous woman question—the secretary referred to them as "ladies." Wattles, and in fact the whole Wattles tribe, who had settled at Moneka in Linn county in 1857, after two years in Douglas county, were radicals adhering to most of the fashionable "isms" of the day. They were not only advocates, but reportedly, practitioners of women's rights, including the wearing of bloomers. Wattles proposed the names of several "ladies" as members. But permit the secretary to tell the story in his own way:

Rev. C. Reynolds [minister of the Lawrence Protestant Episcopal church] hoped that a vote upon those names would not be passed; that the admission of ladies to such societies was a new thing, and feared it might prove injurious to the Society. Mr. A. Wattles considered this a matter of brains against prejudice. Mr. William Hutchinson said those ladies had applied for admission, and for one he would vote for them. Mr. E. Clark said that it was universally acknowledged that woman was more eminent in the social and domestic departments of life than man, and he had yet to find the man who would be unwilling to place a lovely woman at his fireside. It was the life dream of every man. Great men universally refer to a mother or a wife as
the foundation of their greatness. We were willing they should form the minds of our children—acknowledged their equality, physically, morally, socially and in every other respect. Why not admit them intellectually to full fellowship with us? Mr. Kingman said that in this litigation, this contest of brains against prejudice, he was in favor of brains, and that prejudice must eventually go down. Mr. Reynolds said that he nevertheless wished to consider this matter, and moved the names be referred to the Committee on Applications.

The president here decided that all elections that evening were out of order.

To clear the air G. W. Hutchinson moved, and it was carried, that all names proposed for membership be referred to the committee on elections. The president, Ewing of Leavenworth, appointed an all-Lawrence committee: James Blood, S. C. Smith, R. G. Elliott, Rev. C. Reynolds, and Rev. William Bishop. Thus whatever the committee decided on the woman question it was a Lawrence family quarrel.

One important, if not prophetic decision on membership, however, was recorded. During the first afternoon session, Woodward had proposed that a two-year contribution of papers by a newspaper publisher constitute him a member. That had been tabled. Now an unnamed member proposed the following, which was adopted:

Moved and carried, that all editors who shall contribute the files of their papers to this society shall be constituted members thereof, and that their initiation fees be remitted in consideration of such contribution.

The unpleasant question of membership and dues would not down, and the all but final action of the meeting was a resolution instructing the corresponding secretary to notify delinquent members of their status. After announcing the membership of the 14 standing committees, the meeting adjourned at 11 P. M.

The report of the executive committee of the Scientific and Historical Society was published separately. It emphasized that the subject of first importance in launching a new organization was a sound beginning, and argued that this task was more difficult than keeping it in motion afterward. In their first year, they boasted of unexpected success, but the next item of business did not exactly bear out that optimism. They regretted the large list of members who had not paid dues; but they went further in indicating the source of revenue that they considered essential to success—state aid:

No society of this character can secure full benefits provided for in this act of incorporation, while dependent solely upon private aid, or the receipts for 15. Lawrence Republican, February 2, 1890.
initiation. Other States have usually made appropriations of money in annual installments, for the benefit of similar societies, by which they are enabled to erect fire proof buildings. . . .

Also such funds would provide salaries. Only by such aid could the society’s “true development” be achieved.

This report of the executive committee admitted frankly that the library department was the most prosperous aspect of the society. Except for one newspaper inadvertently overlooked, every publisher in the territory had been solicited to contribute his paper regularly, but “only about half of them have complied with the request.” Other measures taken toward building the library were summarized. As Woodward was visiting Philadelphia, he was authorized to solicit learned societies for books, as well as to arrange for the seal of the society “showing the Goddess of Liberty standing on a mounted cannon, with a book in one hand and leaning upon an anchor with the other.” The Smithsonian Institution of Washington had contributed, and Parrott, the territorial delegate to congress, had secured over 100 public documents. The Wisconsin and Pennsylvania historical societies had sent volumes, and others had indicated willingness to co-operate. Library policy required something more, however, than what had been acquired thus far:

A mere miscellaneous library is not so essential to the success of a Kansas Historical Society as a judicious collection of all works and material facts relating to Kansas—her laws, legislation, aboriginal and modern history, geography, statistics of vegetable and mineral productions, growth, progress, internal improvements and literary institutions. In these departments, but little, comparatively, has been done. . . .

They looked forward to statehood as holding greater promise, probably the hope of state support. And then as so often with Kansas pioneers in contemplating the future of Kansas, they elaborated upon the significance of its geographical setting and the peculiar problems attending the establishment of habitations in this central plain of the continent:

Our central location upon the arena of a great continent, with a pleasing diversity of mountain, plain and river scenery, peopled with an Anglo Saxon race of the purest blood and highest culture, who appreciate the transcendent advantages that here surround the physical man, are all characteristics of which we may well be proud. . . . It is well remembered, in looking back over the school day period, when the books taught us that this central plain we now occupy, was a portion of the great American desert. . . . But we are now dotting all over that page, heretofore blank, with the daily marks of free labor and the monuments of industrial, intelligent toil, opening its mineral beds, and erecting towns and cities where natives have heretofore held supreme dominion.

The abundant supply of historic facts so readily furnished, especially in re-
gard to the rapid innovations of science and art, will contribute perpetual stimulus to our Society to glean from the passing events matter that would otherwise be lost to the future historian. It becomes especially gratifying, therefore, to know that steps have been taken at so early a period in our civil history, to preserve the incidents of the most interesting period in our country’s history since the Revolution.

This was indeed an excellent conception of history and philosophy of history, as of the mid-19th century, with which to inspire a library policy. Possibly, in retrospect, more can be seen in their vision than they were aware of. There was no incongruity, within this comprehensive view, in combining the scientific (or as the men of 1855 worded it, the philosophical) and history in one society. Whether or not they were clearly conscious of what they had done is not evident, but they had come to think of all this as the material of historical reality within the realm of history, and referred to their organization in their report simply as a Kansas historical society, and the library they hoped to build as one for the use of “the future historian.” How different, and how sharp the contrast of views represented in this report, when set down beside the editorial of T. Dwight Thacher as of 1858! No clue has been found as to who wrote the report, or was primarily responsible for its philosophy and substance, except that it appeared over the joint signatures of the five members of the executive committee that had functioned during 1859.

However remarkable the activities of this Scientific and Historical Society may appear in the perspective of nearly a century, the press of 1860 gave it slight publicity; in fact few newspapers mentioned it at all. The Freedom’s Champion, February 11, 1860, printed the proceedings, with a tribute to Kingman: “Kansas has no abler or more eloquent man . . . .,” and commended the suggestion that his address was to be published. Thacher’s Republican, printed the proceedings and the report of the executive committee and commented on “The Historical Society and the Women,” January 26, 1860. As a professional radical, Thacher, of course, took the side of the women:

We think it was most appropriately termed [by Wattles] a question of “brains vs. prejudice.” When we reflect that one of the best of the histories of Kansas is the work of a Kansas woman, Mrs. Gov. Robinson, and that the women of Kansas have sustained as noble a part as the men, in the deeds that go to make up that history, we must confess to our wonder that any man should wish to exclude them. . . .

16. No publication of the text of Kingman’s address has been located. The theme was “the progress of civilization and distribution of wealth as controlled by climate, soil, and scenery.”—Lawrence Republican, January 26, 1860.
The question of quarterly meetings of the society was of concern to the president, Thomas Ewing, Jr. As he had seen nothing in the paper about the first quarterly meeting, he wrote to Secretary Hutchinson, April 14, reporting that on account of court duties he might not be able to attend. He had the promise of a contribution from Frederick Hawn on the geology of Kansas, and promises from others. Also, he proposed two contributions of his own—"not essays." But he asked for information, and the historians still ask. Quarterly meetings there may have been, but no record of them has been found.

When the time came for the annual meeting in January, 1861, many things were competing for attention: secession of the Southern states, attempts to find a compromise that would restore harmony, the admission of Kansas as a state in the Union, the inauguration of Lincoln, the meeting of the last territorial legislature and the convening of the first Kansas state legislature, the organization of state government, the election of two United States senators, and drought relief following the disaster of 1860. Hutchinson prepared a notice dated January 9, 1861, published in the Republican the following day, announcing a postponement of the annual meeting until February 3. Again, January 24, the Republican carried a notice of another postponement to February 7. Further adjournments on account of the fact that admission cut short the territorial legislature and focused attention on the coming state legislature finally resulted in the date, Friday, March 22, preceding the meeting of the latter March 26, being fixed upon.\(^{17}\)

An elaborate program had been prepared for the annual meeting: addresses by Col. William Gilpin of Independence, Mo., S. O. Thacher of Lawrence, and the address of the retiring president, Thomas Ewing, Jr. The repeated postponements changed the plans. The meeting was convened at Millar Hall on the morning of March 22, to transact business. No report of the proceedings was published, nor any information about the new corps of officers elected. The evening program consisted only of the address by S. O. Thacher on "The Duty of Government." The press report on this effort was brief—that the duty of government was to preserve freedom and prepare citizens for broader liberty; the perfect government was that which ruled least and under which the citizens were least conscious of being ruled. The only commentary in the press about the meeting was that: "The attendance was not large,

\(^{17}\) Lawrence Republican, February 14, March 21, 1861; Kansas State Journal, Lawrence, March 21, 1861.
no doubt owing to the general absorption of the people in the political excitement of the times,” but the audience that heard Judge Thacher was of “much more than average quality,” and “needless to say that the address was eloquent. President Ewing’s absence was not explained, but a reading of the Leavenworth papers, The Daily Times, pro-Ewing, and the Daily Conservative, pro-Parrott, revealed a particularly bitter fight between those two Leavenworth men for the senatorship. Among the issues was old settler against newcomer. Parrott had arrived in 1855, and Ewing in 1857. D. W. Wilder was leading the Parrott forces while J. Kemp Bartlett was supporting Ewing. Referring to Bartlett, Wilder wrote in the Conservative, February 27, 1861: “... we don’t see how the poor silly animal that wears the collar inscribed ‘I’m Tom Ewing’s dog,’ is to get any relief, immediate or remote.” The week end on which the Scientific and Historical Society met must have seen Lawrence virtually deserted by politicians.

After the capital of Kansas had been removed from Lecompton, that town had been referred to derisively as “the Lonely Widow on the Kaw.” Lawrence had been virtually the capital beginning with Free-State control of the legislature in January, 1858. Now that Kansas was a state, the capital was the village of Topeka and for some time Lawrence joined Lecompton as the second “Lonely Widow on the Kaw.” Just how small Topeka was, actually and relatively, is emphasized by the census of 1860: Leavenworth, 7,429; Atchison, 2,616; Lawrence, 1,645; Topeka, 759. The Conservative, March 24, had been correct in referring to Topeka as “the political Mecca of Kansas,” toward which the politicians from every part of Kansas turned their faces. How long, if at all, the Scientific and Historical Society survived, rooted as exclusively as it was in Lawrence, cannot be determined. It just was not on the cards for such a Lawrence institution to receive state support. No subsequent reference to its activities has been found in the press or in private papers.

W. I. R. Blackman Papers

The account of the Scientific and Historical Society just presented is the first to bring together so much of the documented record. Formerly, the most detailed story of the organization was that of W. W. Admire, of 1889, based largely upon information furnished by Kingman and Hutchinson. According to Admire as derived

supposedly from Kingman, the society was founded February 1, 1860, Kingman being present quite by accident. He was going to Lecompton, but losing his way near nightfall, stopped at Lawrence for the night. Hutchinson, learning of Kingman's presence, asked him to address a meeting being held that evening to organize a historical society. Admire attributed to Kingman the statement: "I am quite certain that Mr. Hutchinson constituted all there was of the society. . . . I never heard of any other meeting."

A letter of December, 1888, from Hutchinson supposedly supplied other aspects of Admire's story. When Hutchinson moved from Lawrence to Washington in 1861 he deposited his historical papers relating to the society with its library, as well as books and papers. Admire used a copy of the report of 1860 by the executive committee, supplied to him by Hutchinson, which he mistook for a report of 1861. Admire reported also that the library (the books, newspapers, manuscripts, etc.) of the society were destroyed on August 21, 1863, by the Quantrill raid.

The printed record of the historical society is conclusive evidence that Admire's version was in error. The date of February 1, 1860, for the organization meeting is impossible because the legislature of 1859 passed a charter act, and the organization meeting under it was held pursuant to a published call. Kingman addressed the meeting of 1860, but that also was pursuant to an invitation and a published announcement. If there was a kernel of truth in the Admire version, the date must have been early January, 1859. That a meeting was held preliminary to the introduction of the charter bill in the legislature by Branscomb January 22 is possible. Such an explanation of the Admire version, however, would rob it of its picturesque quality.

The story of the burning of the library of the society in the Quantrill affair requires further discussion. W. I. R. Blackman wrote F. G. Adams, May 23, 1878, that his personal historical collection, begun in 1856, had been burned at the time of the Quantrill raid. James F. Legate had testified during the Lecompte-Anthony libel hearings of 1874-1875 that the records of the United States court were burned at the same time. In that he was proved mistaken.20 Possibly some error entered also into one or both of the other instances, if perchance they were not one and the same thing. The Kansas State Historical Society acquired two installments of the Blackman "Collections" containing material dated prior to the Quan-

trill raid: a newspaper collection in 1898, and a manuscript collection in 1929, a part of which had been the property of the Scientific and Historical Society.

The first correspondence between F. G. Adams, secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, and Blackman began in 1878. Besides the statement that his collection had been burned August 21, 1863, Blackman wrote Adams on May 28 that at Blackman’s request Edward Hoogland had sent him a list of the Free-State prisoners held at Lecompton November 12, 1856. This was shortly prior to Hoogland’s death in 1862. Thus they would have been in Blackman’s possession on August 21, 1863. After several earlier attempts, in 1898 Adams purchased the newspaper collections from the Blackman family. Among others, the files secured were the Lawrence Republican, 1857-1862, and the Lawrence Kansas State Journal, 1861-August 13, 1863. Both of these newspaper files represented the period prior to August 21, 1863, and were not destroyed in the Quantrill raid.

After several more attempts by Adams, and G. W. Martin, all of which came to nothing, in 1929, M. W. Blackman voluntarily deposited a collection of manuscripts with the Kansas State Historical Society in the name of his father, who, he remarked, was “a great man to hoard all sorts of things of this character.” All of these manuscripts originated prior to August 21, 1863, and were not destroyed in the Quantrill raid. How is the survival of these newspapers and manuscripts to be accounted for, regardless of whether in the possession of the historical society or Blackman personally on August 21, 1863? In the case of the newspapers, the probability is that they were Blackman’s personal file, not that of the historical society, because each issue had his name as though marked by the publisher for delivery to him as subscriber. The case of the manuscripts is different.

One group of the manuscripts included the proceedings of the Leavenworth Constitutional Convention of 1858, in the handwriting of M. F. Conway, a secretary to the convention. The documents had come to Blackman, supposedly through a family connection.  

23. “Correspondence” of Kansas State Historical Society, Blackman to the secretary of the K. S. H. S., June 18, July 8, 1929.
His mother, Thomas Anna Amoss, was the stepdaughter of M. F. Conway’s brother, Jefferson B. Conway. 24

Another group of papers related to judicial proceedings before Edward Hoogland, United States commissioner for Kansas territory, arising out of the John Brown massacre excitement on Pottawatomie creek in 1856. Hoogland had deposited these with the historical society at Lawrence, his letter of presentation reading as follows:

Tecumseh, Kansas, January 28th 1861.

To the President and Members of the Kansas Scientific and Historical Society, Gentlemen: As a member of the Committee on “Events” it would afford me pleasure to furnish for your Archives a labored composition on some topic if I supposed, under present circumstances, the reading of the same would be edifying to you or ultimately of interest to the Historian. But as I suppose the evening will be occupied advantageously by others, I ask permission to discharge the duties of my appointment by contributing some original papers relating to the Public and General History of the Territory, which may sometime be considered interesting if not valuable.

This paragraph was followed by an inventory of the papers in five groups, and at the end appeared Hoogland’s signature.

An endorsement was added, apparently in the hand of W. I. R. Blackman: “Papers of interest read before the Scientific and Historical Society of Lawrence, Kansas, and afterward presented to W. I. R. Blackman by Edward Hoogland.” The wording makes unmistakable that Blackman’s was not a contemporary endorsement, but an afterthought.

The element of contradiction in these two inscriptions suggests that there was a question about title of ownership. There was no release of ownership by officers of the society in which Hoogland’s letter had explicitly vested title. Had the society broken up in part, or wholly, and the property been dispersed to individuals who had an interest in parts of it? Or had the library been placed in trust to Blackman pending a possible future revival, or a successor society? This latter alternative had been the device used by the Kansas State Agricultural Society of 1857: “The library was placed by the Secretary in the hands of Hon. E. D. Ladd, of Lawrence, and subsequently was placed in the Kansas State Library by Hon. Lawrence D. Bailey.” 25 If such had been the case with the library of the historical society, Blackman did not record the arrangement in the


above endorsement, nor in his letter to F. G. Adams in 1878 when referring to these papers. If he was one of the officers of the society elected in the final unreported meeting of March 22, 1861, and thus responsible in an official capacity for the property of the society he did not record that either. As of 1861, when Hoogland was on the committee on history of events, and presented the papers to the society, Blackman was a member of two committees, botany and meteorology.

W. I. R. Blackman was born in Ohio in 1824, and educated in the Troy, Ohio, schools. He enlisted for the Mexican War and upon his return entered the furniture business with his father. In 1855 he settled in Lawrence and opened his own furniture business which he operated until the Quantrill raid, when most of his stock was burned. In 1862 he bought railroad land four and one half miles north of Lawrence. In August, 1863, he was visiting in Ohio, thus escaping the Quantrill raid. In 1864, at the age of 40, he married. At some time after 1863, apparently, he established his home on the farm, where he died March 2, 1883.26 According to his letter of May 23, 1878, to F. G. Adams, he began his personal collection of historical documents in 1856.27 The biographical sketch reported that most, not all, of his furniture stock was burned. Possibly his historical collections were partly saved, and part of the historical society’s library which came into his personal possession. Whatever the explanation of their survivals, the newspaper files and manuscripts as described in the two acquisitions from the Blackman family are now in the possession of the Kansas State Historical Society, in spite of Quantrill and without any physical evidence of fire damage.

**THE LEAVENWORTH MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, 1859-1873**

While Lawrence was undertaking to carry on the Scientific and Historical Society, nominally on a territory-wide basis, but in reality on little more than a city basis, in conjunction with its “Literary and Scientific Club,” Leavenworth established its Mercantile Library Association.

Of course, Leavenworth did not pretend to be establishing a historical library, but the differences between the Historical and Philosophical Society idea and the Mercantile Library Association idea

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26. Biographical sketch (1899), op. cit. The date is given erroneously 1882. The Lawrence *Daily Kansas Herald*, March 12, 1888; *Daily Journal*, March 4, 1888. The *Western Home Journal* and the *Cassette* did not record it. Except for the *Herald*, no obituary was printed by the Lawrence newspapers.

27. Kansas State Historical Society, “Incoming Correspondence,” v. 3, p. 188.
were not as real as the names and recent traditional assumptions about such things might suggest. Without any deliberate intention of doing so, the Leavenworth institution might serve the cause of Kansas history better than a weak historical society. It is the effectiveness of an institution, not the name it bears that is important. To deal adequately with the history of historical writing about Kansas, with the history of the facilities that could serve the historian, and with the history of the Kansas State Historical Society would mean virtually to write a history of intellectual activity in Kansas. This series of essays makes no pretense of such completeness, but nevertheless it does constitute a substantial introduction to such an enterprise. In a territory and state where even so-called history was at most only current events not yet more than a decade old, that fact should be apparent in any case. The reasons include other things as well, because these men were close enough to all aspects of the problem of living in Kansas for many of them to think of history as dealing with the past as a whole. And furthermore, specialization of skills, and its counterpart, fragmentation of culture, had not yet become an issue.

In territorial Kansas, even before statehood, as soon as intellect as distinguished from emotionalism had an opportunity to operate, Leavenworth, the largest concentration of population, with the greatest volume of business of all kinds, and the greatest newspaper circulation, took the leadership and held it well through the first quarter century. Kansas City, in Missouri, was its only rival. With the population record before the reader, it should be easier to understand the basis for such a conclusion.

**Cities of Kansas**

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<td>17,873</td>
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<td>1,310</td>
<td>5,790</td>
<td>7,272</td>
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In territorial Kansas, each legislature, Proslavery and Free-State, incorporated its quota of institutions of learning, and, except for the first Free-State legislature, that of 1858, its quota of societies designed to promote other intellectual, literary, professional, and social interests. The legislature of 1858 chartered nothing in the latter category. The Leavenworth Lyceum of 1857 was a joint-stock

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28. The record of the several legislatures for institutions of learning (universities, colleges, seminaries, etc.) was 1855, four; 1857, nine; 1858, eleven; 1859, eight; 1860, nine. Most of these were paper institutions associated with townsite speculations. Three became realities: Baker University at Baldwin, still in operation under one continuous management,
enterprise, designed to raise funds for a city library. Among the incorporators was Tiffin Sinks, M. D., who was active in later Leavenworth literary and scientific interests. The lyceum venture failed for want of support, but October 14, 1858, the agitation was taken up by Champion Vaughan, editor of the *Times*. He argued that with the approach of winter the time had come to provide a library as a place where young men could spend their evenings—something besides “haunting saloons.” Vaughan wanted a mercantile library association:

The young men’s mercantile library association has become a National Institution. There is scarcely a town of any magnitude in the country that has not its branch organization. . . .

We do not want any country Lyceums or school-boy debating clubs which go off like squibs and end in smoke, but we do want a regular mercantile library association, patterned after those in the East. . . .

Vaughan invited letters to the editor. He got at least one response: “It is one of the great and urgent necessities . . . of Leavenworth,”—young men, away from home and religious ties, needed facilities that would rescue them from temptation.29

Before proceeding further with the Leavenworth Mercantile Library Association agitation, the general background of the M. L. A. movement should be explained briefly in order that the several Kansas library charters bearing that name may be placed in perspective. For convenience, libraries serving the public may be classed in four general groups, recognizing that individual examples may not fit exactly into any category and may embody some of the characteristics of two or more kinds. The subscription library followed in the main the precedents found in Benjamin Franklin’s plan in Philadelphia in 1731, and served only subscribers. This type of library was on the decline by 1820, when two other types came upon the scene, the mechanics’ or workmen’s and the mercantile libraries.

The mechanics’-apprentices’ libraries reflected a humanitarian outlook in which employers sought to benefit their workers by providing libraries, reading rooms and lectures. Not only would the workers improve themselves in an educational sense, but the libraries

would offer competition to the saloons and other places that bid for their leisure hours. The movement grew out of the workingmen’s lecture idea of Glasgow, Scotland, in 1760. The first important American examples of libraries on this principle were established in 1820 and later, in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and elsewhere.

The mercantile library association movement reflected the interests of young clerks and merchants on-the-make, to provide facilities for self-improvement in their commercial careers. In the United States this type of library paralleled closely in time the mechanics’ apprentices’ type, but in its pure form was self-financed and controlled, not depending upon the patronage of philanthropy. Both movements lasted well past the middle of the 19th century when the public library, supported from public funds and open to the public, began to emerge.\(^{30}\)

The Leavenworth M. L. A. reflected a little of the last three types of library movements, but mostly it was of the mercantile character, and in any event it was an adventure in adult education.

Vaughan did not get a mercantile library the winter of 1858-1859, but Leavenworth men did secure a charter for the Leavenworth Literary Association.\(^{31}\) Its objects were to diffuse “useful knowledge among its members,” and to “found a library and reading room, collect a cabinet of minerals and natural curiosities and specimens in the various departments of sciences, institute a system of literary and scientific lectures, and such other appliances of education, not inconsistent with the general design of said association.” The point should be noted carefully that this statement of objects specified in the charter, except for the omission of the word history, was very similar to that of the Scientific and Historical society, with offices at Lawrence, chartered by the same legislature. Among the incorporators of the Leavenworth Literary Association were Henry J. Adams, brother of F. G. Adams, and J. L. McDowell.

With the approach of another winter, Champion Vaughan returned to the lists battling for a library at Leavenworth. His Weekly Times editorial, October 29, 1859, urged again that the citizens, “the young men especially,” act. He tried to shame the native born Americans in Leavenworth into action:

Our German friends, true to those instincts for which their nationality ever has been distinguished, have taken the initiative in the right direction. Besides

\(^{30}\) This account is based particularly upon S. H. Ditson, “Mechanics and Mercantile Libraries,” Library Quarterly, Chicago, v. 10 (April, 1940), pp. 192-219. For the history of several individual libraries, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, etc., consult the index, Library Literature.

\(^{31}\) Priests Laws of the Territory of Kansas . . . 1859, ch. 40. Approved February 7, 1859.
the Turnerverien and Sangerbund, [which included literary activities and lectures]. . . , they have also organized an exclusively Literary Association, under the name of "The Harmonic Library Association."

Vaughan reminded his readers that the earlier library plan had come to nothing: "Will not our young men move in the matter?" Lectures could be provided from local talent as had been suggested a year earlier: "The public library, the debating club and the lyceum desk are, today, among the most potent educational forces of the nation."

Possibly Vaughan’s editorial and the action of friends were responsible for stimulating the old venture into life. At any rate the incorporators of the Leavenworth Literary Association met on Christmas Eve to organize under their charter. This was the last that was heard, however, of this organization. The sequences are confused, but soon the library movement emerged under a new name.

Out of a series of preliminary meetings, on January 6, 1860, a Young Men’s Mercantile Library Association was born by the adoption of a constitution and bylaws and the election of officers: Samuel A. Drake, president; George W. Gardiner, and John A. Halderman, vice-presidents; Champion Vaughan, corresponding secretary; Lewis L. Weld, recording secretary; D. R. Anthony, treasurer; William C. McDowell, Thomas Ewing, Jr., Samuel A. Stinson, A. Carter Wilder, Edward C. Jacobs, directors. A committee on preliminary business was appointed (Vaughan, Sinks, and Weld) to report plans to the directors. The initiation fee was one dollar, and annual dues three dollars. The lectures arranged, with an admission of 25 cents, were not well attended, and the series was abandoned. Before this outcome was painfully evident, however, the legislature had granted a charter to this ambitious group of young men under the title: Leavenworth Mercantile Library Association. The incorporators were A. Carter Wilder, John A. Halderman, Champion Vaughan, William C. McDowell, Lewis L. Weld, E. C. Jacobs, Samuel A. Drake, Thomas Ewing, Jr., Samuel A. Stinson, David H. Bailey, and George W. Gardiner. The objects stated were "the improvement of its members, establishing a permanent library, and such other matters and things as may be for the benefit of said corporation," and the property of the association being “for the purpose of mental culture, shall be free from all taxation whatever.”

32. Daily Times, December 24, 1859.
33. Ibid., January 4, 9, 19, 1860. Association activity in perfecting plans was reported further, January 11, 19, 26; February 6, 8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 1860.
In 1861 a new recruit for the M. L. A. movement arrived on the Leavenworth scene. A publishing house under the title of D. W. Wilder and Company, composed of six stockholders among whom were D. R. Anthony and D. W. Wilder established *The Daily Conservative*, edited by Wilder. The first number appeared January 28, 1861, and the issue of February 5, relayed the question asked by a young man who had paid his three dollars membership dues to the Mercantile Library Association—where is it? In view of the fact that Anthony was the treasurer of the library association as well as a business associate of Editor Wilder, the question would seem to have been purely rhetorical. On December 10, however, the question was repeated, and this time followed up with vigor. He called out a group of leading men by name:

If such men as Gen. Delahay, Thos. Carney, Capt. Drake, Robert J. Brown, Henry Deckelman, Judge McDowell, James McCahon, and S. A. Stinson, will interest themselves in such a movement, it can speedily become a source of profit and pride to our city.

Also, Wilder had another gimmick that he thought would stimulate interest: “We are the more urgent about the matter because our friend Artemus Ward wants to come to Leavenworth and because we have ourselves prepared one of the most racy, juicy and gay lekters ever listened to by American freemen. It can’t be delivered before nobody. There must be an Association.” Wilder used his friend Charles F. Brown, alias Artemus Ward, one of the most noted of American humorists, for all he was worth: “Unless our people are absurdly foolish they will form a Mercantile Library Association and have Artemus Ward here to lecture.”

According to previous announcement, the Leavenworth Mercantile Library Association was organized December 12, 1861. C. A. Logan, M. D., was temporary chairman of the meeting, and D. W. Wilder stated the object of the gathering. The officers elected were Thomas Carney, president; Samuel A. Drake, vice-president; Lucian Scott, treasurer and librarian; David J. Brewer, secretary; and among the board of directors was Dr. C. A. Logan. This was indeed a distinguished panel of men. Carney operated a large wholesale house, and was soon to be elected the second governor of Kansas. Drake was one of the leading members of the association until its demise in 1873. Lucian Scott was the head of the Leavenworth Coal Company. Brewer was later to become justice of the United

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35. *Leavenworth Daily Conservative*, December 12, 1861. Three separate paragraphs appeared in behalf of the organization meeting held that evening.
36. Ibid, December 19, 1861.
States Supreme Court. Dr. Logan, and his teammate Dr. Tiffin Sinks, were to be the mainsprings in the Kansas Medical Association.

This action was in the nature of a reorganization under the original charter of February, 1860, but as the constitution and bylaws of that date had been burned new ones were adopted December 14, 1861. Membership was open to "any person" upon approval of the board of directors and receipt of the fee of four dollars per year, payable quarterly. Life memberships were available for $850. General management of the association lay with the board of directors: "No card playing, drinking, smoking, profane swearing, boisterous conduct, or loud talking, shall be allowed in the rooms of the Association." Rooms were to be obtained, newspapers and periodicals ordered, books bought, and a librarian employed. The first life memberships were subscribed by Carney and Scott, and within the first week there were 10 others. In this manner sufficient money was raised, together with what Anthony turned over from the treasury of the previous organization to order and pay for the following dailies: New York Herald, Tribune, Times, and World; Washington Star and National Intelligencer; Philadelphia Press, Chicago Tribune, Cincinnati Commercial, Milwaukee Sentinel, Boston Post, St. Louis Democrat and Republican; Weeklies: Harper's, London Times, Vanity Fair, Home Journal, Scientific American, Albany Evening Journal, London Illustrated News; Reviews: Atlantic, Knickerbocker, London Quarterly, Westminster, North British Blackwoods, Harper's, and the Dublin University Magazine. The rooms of the library were furnished and opened for use January 4, 1862. Books were solicited from members. Carney contributed a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica (21 volumes). Leavenworth claimed a larger list of newspapers and periodicals than the Rochester, N. Y., library.

The next step was to plan a series of lectures. The first year of the American Civil War was closing and the Lane Southern expedition was highly advertised for 1862. Lane was expected in Leavenworth. If any man could draw a crowd willing to pay admission fees, it was Lane and he did his best on January 27. Wilder was enthusiastic. His heroes at this time were Lane, Anthony, Jenkinson, and Montgomery. The next on Wilder's list of lecture candi-

37. Ibid., December 17, 22, 24, 25, 1861.
40. Ibid., January 4, 5, 11, 17, 1862.
41. Ibid., January 22, 28, 29, 1862.
dates was Artemus Ward, and for five months he tantalized the Leavenworth public with the imminence of his visit, announcing May 4 that Ward was expected that day. 42 Apparently Ward never came.

During the spring of 1862, regardless of the war and of the absence of Artemus Ward, the M. L. A. seemed to thrive. On February 9, the Conservative announced that hereafter the library would be open from 2 to 5 every Sunday afternoon, as well as week days.

On March 8 a summary of the holdings of the library was published, which was said to have 800 volumes, as well as the reference works and the newspapers, and periodicals already indicated. A membership of about 150 was claimed and a reading room capacity of 100. The library hours were 8:30-12 A.M., 2-5:30 P.M., and 6:30-10 evenings, and the Sunday hours previously announced. At this time an innovation was recorded casually which was anything but casual. Memberships for women were listed at $2.00, payable annually or semi-annually. No record is available specifying how this change in the by-laws came about. It should be remembered that at Lawrence the Scientific and Historical Society had limited membership to men, and then, under the new president, Thomas Ewing, Jr., of Leavenworth, the issue had been evaded by reference to a committee. The Leavenworth M. L. A. had been launched as a young men's movement, among other things, to provide a substitute for the saloon. Publicly, at that time, no one seemed concerned about the young women. Apparently the admission of women paid off, because the history of the organization indicated that they were active in various entertainments offered to the public in connection with fund raising drives. In 1869 a list of the 69 life members included five women, only one of them married. 43

In late 1867 the M. L. A. was out of debt, claimed over 4,300 volumes, and over 100 newspaper and periodical subscriptions. 44 Information has not been turned up to indicate how many of the newspapers and periodicals received were bound for preservation. This was the largest library in the state and one of the few accessible to J. N. Holloway when he was writing his History of Kansas during that year. The Leavenworth M. L. A. did, therefore, make some direct contribution to the writing of Kansas history. His acknowledgment was to "J. A. Halderman of Leavenworth, through whose

42. Ibid., January 5, April 25, 1862.
43. Callahan, op. cit., "Sketch of the Mercantile Library."
44. Ibid.; Daily Conservative, February 8, 1867.
influence I obtained access to the Mercantile Library of that city, and the use of its excellent files of old papers. . . ." Unfortunately the list of such old files has not been found, but two files on his list, the Leavenworth Herald, and the Kickapoo Kansas Pioneer, must have been available there as they were not credited elsewhere.45

It is important to emphasize the status of the M. L. A. as of 1867, because on the morning of January 31, 1868, fire destroyed everything. If there is any moral to the story of these Lawrence and Leavenworth library enterprises, it would seem to be that the more historical material that is gathered in one place, the bigger the fire. In other words, if truly fireproof storage cannot be provided, it may not be wise to collect unique material in one, or even a few, central repositories.

In reporting the fire, the Conservative, February 1, 1868, stated that before noon, of the day of the fire, the president of the association, F. C. Eames, had rented a room, and had started assembling a new library. By February 7 the Conservative reported the donation of over 500 volumes. A year later, in writing the sketch of the M. L. A. for his Catalogue of the new library, Callahan said:

By nine o'clock the same morning, while the flames were still raging and the engines playing upon them, President Eames had already rented the present rooms, and was canvassing the streets with a subscription paper appealing to the citizens for another Library. . . . in less than a week the Library was in full blast, with one thousand volumes on its shelves.46

In both versions the credit went to President Eames. The librarian of the early period was Henry White, who resigned in February, 1867. Mrs. Marion O. Wright was White's successor and remained through 1871, the data being lacking on the last years. Full information would be desirable on this process of reconstituting the library, because the Callahan Catalogue of 1869 revealed a most remarkable success in the selection of books. So sound an acquisition policy could not have resulted from the mere chance of the voluntary contributions assembled the week after the fire. The new library had arisen indeed like a Phoenix from the ashes of the old, but even a Phoenix requires some intelligent direction, and at this juncture the M. L. A. had it. With justice, Leavenworth again could claim the best library and "the largest one for general use in the State." Also in 1871, the city government appropriated $1,000 for the library, and for the first time the reading room was opened to

45. J. N. Holloway, History of Kansas (Lafayette, Ind., 1868), preface and appendix.
others than the regular members. 47 Apparently, this contribution from the city was not continued.

As the years passed, control changed hands, and in 1873 the M. L. A. ran into difficulties by employing a so-called “Gift Concert” scheme as a means of raising money—in plain United States language, a lottery promising a pool of $332,555, the highest gift to be $50,000, tickets $2.00 each, or 60 for $100. The management proved dishonest, the president of the M. L. A. resigned in protest against the scheme, and finally it was abandoned, the directors undertaking to refund the money on tickets sold. That appears to have been the last of the M. L. A. 48 It may be that the breakup of the M. L. A. in the midst of the panic of 1873, the drought years of the 1870’s, and the consolidation of railroads, is a significant index of a redistribution of power among the towns of eastern Kansas and western Missouri, but that story lies outside the scope of present considerations.

The Kansas Agricultural Society

While unsuccessful efforts were being expended for historical and philosophical ends, the people of Kansas, who were mostly farmers or directly dependent upon agriculture, made a solid beginning of an agricultural society. An interesting, and an important aspect of this venture was that a number of the same men were involved in both the agricultural and the historical societies, and the interests of some of them overlapped still other enterprises. Thus in a very real sense all of these men and organizations became an integral part of the story of historical society enterprise. This interrelation of interests and events is critical to an understanding of the Kansas State Historical Society and to the writing of the general history of Kansas.

Again, the first attempt to inaugurate an agricultural society in Kansas occurred in the “Bogus” legislature of 1855, when a territorial agricultural society was incorporated. 49 Another abortive undertaking was inaugurated at Topeka, July 16, 1857. On March 5,

47. Collins, Lynch & Edge's Leavenworth City Directory and Business Mirror for the Years of 1871-72 (Leavenworth, 1871), pp. 6, 7.
48. Leavenworth Daily Times, January 7, March 30, May 11, 13, 17, 22, July 2, 4, 1873. The M. L. A. lottery advertisement ran in the Times until July 4, the day the directors announced the refunding operations. Lottery advertisements were a common thing during these years, the Times carrying its full share of them. Congress finally closed the mails to them in 1860, and interstate commerce in 1885.
49. A new charter for the M. L. A. was taken out in 1873, executed January 11, and filed May 20, 1873, legalizing lottery operations—“Corporation Charters (official copiesbooks from office of secretary of state, now in Archives division, Kansas State Historical Society).” V. 2, pp. 326, 227.
48. The Leavenworth Public Library Association was chartered September 3, 1896. —Ibid., v. 55, p. 84.
1862, success was achieved. F. P. Baker, then of Nemaha county, was in the chair as temporary presiding officer, and F. G. Adams was on the committee appointed to draft the constitution and bylaws. Adams also drafted the charter bill introduced into the legislature. Among the permanent officers for the first year, 1862, was F. G. Adams, as secretary, and F. P. Baker, as a member of the executive committee. In 1863 L. D. Bailey became president, Adams was continued as secretary, and F. P. Baker was elected treasurer. The Kansas Farmer, was authorized to be edited by Adams, the first issue being dated May 1, 1863. In 1864 Bailey and Adams were re-elected and R. G. Elliott became treasurer. Bailey served four terms and then declined another re-election. Elliott became a member of the executive committee in 1865, and Adams dropped out as secretary.

Two new names, worth noting for present purposes, appeared on the executive committee of 1866: H. J. Strickler and Alfred Gray, and before the year was out Strickler became secretary and was continued in 1867, with Elliott as president. In 1868 the officers were re-elected, and Josiah Miller appeared on the executive committee. In 1869 the officers were again re-elected, and Alfred Gray reappeared on the executive committee. In the election of officers in October, 1870, Gray became secretary, a position he held until his death in 1880. In 1872 the legislature created the State Board of Agriculture out of the agricultural society, thus making of it a self-governing quasi-public corporation.

Five conclusions are to be made in connection with the names selected for emphasis in the preceding account. L. D. Bailey was the principal driving force during the first years of the Agricultural Society, unless F. G. Adams deserved that distinction. This is the same Bailey who had been president of the Scientific and Historical Society, and his name will appear again in connection with the Kansas Historical Society of 1867. Secondly, in the launching of the State Agricultural Society, F. P. Baker, and F. G. Adams worked together as a team for the first time, and in 1875 and 1876 this team staged virtually a repeat performance in organizing the Kansas State Historical Society. Thirdly, the emergence of Alfred Gray as secretary of the Agricultural Society prepared another man for a niche in later historical work. Fourthly, attention should be called to the recognition given R. G. Elliott and Josiah Miller. They had played a key role in the critical year of 1855, but historically became “forgotten men,” victims in part at least of the New England myth and the feud that raged so fiercely over the merits of Robinson, Lane,
and John Brown. Lastly, but not least, is the case of H. J. Strickler, a Proslavery Democrat, who had been a high officer in the territorial militia before Lawrence in the Wakarusa War. As a representative of the lost cause, he had no place in the historical societies. Yet, he was a man of distinguished ability whose only fault was a difference of opinion with the winning side in the slavery controversy. He was one of a substantial number of former Proslavery men whose talents were largely neglected. Fortunately for Kansas, the Agricultural Society afforded an opportunity for Strickler to serve his state when most other activities were closed to him on account of prejudice.50

THE KANSAS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY QUESTION

The interest of Kansas pioneers in geology, and something of the reasons for it, has already been discussed. Looking backward, the proposal of Stephen A. Douglas, in 1849, to provide federal aid for the establishment of geological surveys in the Western states affords background. The territorial historical and philosophical societies of 1855 and 1859 had contemplated geological activities as within their scope of operations. After admission as a state, if there were a serious desire for a geological survey, the responsibility lay with the state legislature. The campaign started almost before the ink was dry on the bill admitting Kansas to the Union. The establishment of a geological survey meant a more specialized geological organization than was involved in the earliest organizational efforts, and the separating out of that specialized interest from the general interest and from the general societies, both historical and agricultural.

Richard Mendenhall, the Quaker missionary to the Indians, who had come to Kansas in 1846, wrote the Lawrence Republican, March 11, 1861, in the interest of the geology of Kansas. He wanted to stimulate private activity but his letter called out another, dated April 10, from a reader who signed himself “M,” and insisted upon a geological survey conducted by the state government. The writer was interested not only in soil as an agricultural resource, and coal and other minerals, but especially in oil deposits such as had been discovered in western Pennsylvania and in eastern Ohio in 1859 and later.51


51. Mendenhall’s letter was published first in the Lawrence Republican, March 21, repeated in the Kansas State Record, Topeka, April 6, 1861. The letter from “M” was printed in the Republican, April 11, 1861.
For a state just setting up for itself under the handicaps of 1861, with an empty treasury and no means of filling it except by borrowing without collateral, and no certain prospect of being able to pay, a geological survey must have appeared to most men as an unnecessary luxury. Yet the legislatures of 1864 and 1865 were induced to appropriate money for a state geologist, and two years of survey activities. B. F. Mudge and G. C. Swallow respectively headed these two exploratory surveys. Associated with the Swallow regime were two men who have already been introduced and reappear here as old friends: C. A. Logan, M. D., who reported on sanitary relations of Kansas, and Tiffin Sinks, M. D., who did likewise for the climatology of Kansas.

**THE KANSAS MEDICAL SOCIETY, 1859**

The Kansas Medical Society was chartered by the legislature of 1859. The incorporators, 29 in number, were widely distributed over the territory. In this respect it contrasted sharply with the Scientific and Historical Society chartered at the same time. The first meeting, to organize under the charter, was set to convene at Lawrence. Apparently, this completion of organization did not occur until February 23, 1860, when a constitution and bylaws, and the National Code of Ethics were adopted. Another session, pro forma in character, took place in February, 1861, but not until after the Civil War did the society become effective. At the time of this reorganization, April, 1866, Dr. C. A. Logan became president. His presidential address of April 3, 1867, pointed to the principal function of this professional organization during its early years—to eliminate quacks of which Kansas had an oversupply, and to regularize professional ethics. Logan and Tiffin Sinks founded the Leavenworth Medical Herald, June, 1867. With the April, 1871, issue, Logan withdrew, leaving Sinks as editor until 1875 when the journal was terminated.52

**THE KANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE**

After the Civil War the tendency toward specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge became conspicuous. Instead of reviving the Scientific and Historical Society, the naturalists discussed among themselves the possibilities of an organization of

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52. An incomplete file of the Medical Herald is in possession of the Kansas State Historical Society. For a short period, from May, 1871, to June, 1872, inclusive, the scope was enlarged and the magazine was titled the Leavenworth Medical Herald and Journal of Pharmacy.

Logan entered the diplomatic service, representing the United States successively in Chile, Guatemala, and again in Chile, 1873-1883.
their own. As a result a letter was published in The Kansas Educational Journal, Emporia, April, 1868, to test out opinion. The responses were sufficiently favorable to encourage the publication of a call in July for an organization meeting at Lincoln College (Washburn) on September 1 to organize the Kansas Natural History Society. Among the names associated with this society were Peter McVicar, president of Lincoln College, and J. R. Swallow, both of whom will be met again in another connection.

In 1871 the society was reorganized to include the physical as well as the biological science: "every line of scientific exploration and observation," and a new name was adopted: The Kansas Academy of Science. By an act of the legislature approved March 6, 1873, the Kansas Academy of Science was declared "a co-ordinate department of the State Board of Agriculture," to become effective upon compliance by the academy. Thus the organization, while remaining essentially self-governing on the model of the State Board of Agriculture, became a quasi-public corporation subsidized from the state treasury.

Although the purpose of the academy was to specialize in science, it is important for the present purpose to review the program of this body in order to clarify the scope of its activities as practiced under that label, as well as the personnel who participated. In 1869 one lecture was devoted to the mound builders; in 1872 papers were presented on the Cherokee language, on the sources of the English language, and on the artist in society. Again in 1874 there was a paper on the English language. In 1876 a commission on ethnology was established. In 1876 F. G. Adams, secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, presented a paper on "How to Popularize Science," in 1877 one on "Kansas Mounds," and in 1878 he was appointed to the commission on anthropology. During the three years 1877-1879 there was great interest in anthropology, but the interest in language, during the same period declined. In any case, these were fields that overlapped other specializations that tended in turn to set up for themselves.

The Kansas Historical Society, 1867-1868

Prior to the action of the naturalists in setting up for themselves, men interested in history had launched a Kansas Historical Society. The society was organized at Topeka, March 2, and the charter filed March 4, 1867. The incorporators included George A. Crawford, Dr. D. W. Stornont, who had been one of the incorporators of the
Kansas Medical Society, L. D. Bailey, who had been one of the leading men in the Kansas Agricultural Society, and Samuel A. Kingman, who had participated in the Scientific and Historical Society. The objects of the society were specified as "the collection, preservation, arrangement and publication of facts pertaining to the history of Kansas, together with such powers and privileges as usually belong to similar Societies." In the second of the bylaws adopted March 2, was a repetition of a provision from the earlier society: "Editors and Publishers of newspapers in the State shall be exempt from the payment of a fee of membership." 53

The officers of the society were S. A. Kingman, president; C. K. Holliday, vice-president; Dr. D. W. Stormont, treasurer; Andrew Stark, librarian; Prof. S. D. Bowker, corresponding secretary; and George A. Crawford, recording secretary. 54

Supposedly, the society was to meet May 30, the anniversary of the signing of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, but no record of such a session has been found. The annual meeting was called for February 4, 1868, at Topeka. The program consisted of the address of the retiring president, the annual address by Charles Robinson, a paper by George A. Crawford on the candle-box fraud, and one by Hoyt, of John Brown notoriety. The new officers elected were Kingman, president; J. R. Swallow, vice-president; George H. Hoyt, recording secretary; George A. Crawford, corresponding secretary; Dr. Stormont, treasurer, and Prof. Peter McVicar, librarian. 55 A canvass of these lists of names indicates two conclusions: the overlapping in personnel of this and other organizations reviewed, historical and scientific; and the fact that this Kansas Historical Society was virtually a Topeka monopoly. The movement did not strike fire. For reasons difficult to account for adequately, the time was not yet ripe for Kansas history. Holloway was gathering the material for his history during 1867, and was selling the book during 1868. The chronology of the society and of the book were parallel, but each appeared to be completely isolated from the other. The state was apathetic to both.

One aspect of the Kansas Historical Society is important enough, possibly, to justify the effort, and that is the presidential address of Kingman on the objects of the society, the full text of which was

53. The constitution and bylaws of March 3, 1867, were printed as a circular, a copy of which is on file in the library of the Kansas State Historical Society.

54. From a printed form of notice of election to membership, dated March 4, 1867, in the library of the Kansas State Historical Society; Topeka Tribune, March 8, 1867.

55. Kansas State Record, Topeka, January 20, February 5, 1868; Topeka Weekly Leader, February 6, 1868; Leavenworth Daily Constitution, February 6, 1868; Junction City Weekly Union, March 7, 1868.
print in the Weekly Leader, February 6, 1868. Kingman (1818-1904), was Massachusetts born, and was educated in common schools and academy until his formal schooling ended at 17. In 1838, at the age of 20, he moved to Kentucky for 18 years where he became a lawyer and held county office and sat in the legislature. In 1856 he went to Iowa for one year, and thence to Brown county, Kansas, in 1857, practicing law in Hiawatha. Elected associate justice of the supreme court in 1859, he served 1861-1864, and was elected chief justice in 1866, re-elected in 1872, resigning on account of ill health in 1877. Whig, Free-State, and then Republican in politics, he was a man of moderation and tolerance on slavery and other issues. Kingman not only held a judicial office, he possessed a judicial mind. This fact is conspicuous in his address:

The leading primary object of the society is to collect from all quarters every attainable fact connected with the early settlement of Kansas. Not only those facts that will throw light upon our history, but such as will show those who come after us the labors and struggles necessarily attendant upon the settlement of a new country, and the organization of society in the wilderness. We wish to gather every fact that will illustrate the manner of life, the style of living, the habits of thought, the motives of action—of every kind and class of people who sought homes on the great American desert. We desire to obtain the details of every enterprise, whether educational or commercial, moral or religious, that has served in any way to develop, shape or modify the institutions of our State or affect its character. We propose to secure a minute history of every settlement within our bounds, telling the story of its progress, the causes that have aided therein, and the impediments that have retarded. . . .

How did Kingman come by this concept of history? Would that the materials were available upon which to reconstruct the biography of his mind. With the minimum of formal schooling, Kingman had developed that mind through his own initiative and experience. Comparisons are invidious. Kingman did indicate one example to illustrate the direction of his thought, but important as it was, it explained only in part his theory of history:

Those who have read the brilliant pages of Macaulay's history 56 will probably recall with vivid interest the memorable 3d chapter in which that most skillful writer has sketched a picture of the material situation, the conditions of society and the manners and habits of the people of England at the time of the accession of James the Second. How he sought in every old letter, in every scrap of gossipping journalism, in every broadside, in every account of a public meeting, in the local records and public archives, for every fact and incident,


This commentary of Kingman's was focused upon chapter three and the question of materials and method. There is no indication whether or not he realized how partisan Macaulay's history was—much more so than Kingman's own idea of Kansas history.
for every expression of thought, or declaration of purpose that would in any way enable him to exhibit the manners, habits, and condition of that age.

So when this new infant community shall have grown into the great central State of the continent, we wish to preserve for the use of some future Macauley, the materials out of which his beautiful fabric may be woven.

Kingman was keenly aware of how presentism tends to distort the perspective of history and in discussing the problem, cited a poet to illustrate his ideas about history:

It is never easy—it may never be possible for any contemporary to delineate truthfully the movements of society in his own age.

We plant the acorn, we know that the growth must be an oak—... [but what will happen to it is not known]—We must wait for the centuries to unfold the result. ... We know but little of the present because it is but the beginning of what never ends.

Every age,
Through being beheld too close, is ill-discerned
By those who have not lived past it. We'll suppose
Mount Athos carved, as Alexander schemed,
To some colossal statue of a man.
The peasants, gathering brushwood in his ear,
Had guessed as little as the browsing goats
Of form or feature of humanity.
Up there,—in fact, had travelled five miles off
Or ere the giant image broke on them,
Full human profile, nose and chin distinct,
Mouth, muttering rhythms of silence up the sky
And fed at evening with the blood of suns;
Grund torso,—hand, that flung perpetually
The largesse of a silver river down
To all the country pastures. 'Tis even thus
With times we live in,—even more too great
To be apprehended near. 57

The concept of history and of the materials essential to the writing of the history of Kansas as Kingman was outlining them did not come necessarily from Macaulay and Mrs. Browning. His ideas went much beyond anything contained in these citations. In fact the use of them does not mean that he was influenced by them in a cause-and-effect sense. His ideas may have been formed independ-


Why did not Kingman continue and apply to the historian the following?
"But poets should
Exert a double vision; should have eyes
To see near things as comprehensively
As if afar they took their point of sight,
And distant things as intimately deep
As if they touched them. Let us strive for this."

The text of the extract given here is from the collected poems rather than the one Kingman read, which was imperfectly printed in the Leader. A first edition of Mrs. Browning’s poem is not conveniently available from which to make corrections of that version.
ently, in which case his selection of these particular illustrations would be in consequence of conclusions already formed and would serve only as convenient illustrations familiar to his hearers, and chosen for that reason to facilitate presentation to his audience. Whether or not the synthesis had been original with him, the program recognized Kansas as a special case—it had features similar to other transfers of cultures to a wilderness, but it was different. He specified two elements of geographical setting that in themselves rendered it unique: the location at the center of the continent, and the modifications of Eastern culture as they must necessarily be adapted to the so-called "great American desert." He was thinking of history as a reconstruction of the past as a whole, and came very near to calling for the collection of materials of the whole past.

There was no defeatism in Kingman's use of this poetic illustration: "But if we may not grasp the present in all its broad significance, we may still exercise the humbler power we do possess, in gathering up the facts that transpire around us. . . ." Nevertheless, Kingman did share with many of his contemporaries some positive presentist convictions and he was candidly aware of their subjective nature:

There are certain periods which always draw to themselves a strong and enduring interest. There are eras in history so marked and so peculiar—having such powerful significance and seeming to exercise upon the course of events that follow them—so strong an influence that we involuntarily pause and look back with earnest attention upon them. We gather up every fragment connected with [them], treasure them in our minds, reflect and ponder upon them, and as the passing years throw over them the softening tints of time, leaving something for the imagination to act upon, we array them in all their brightest colors, and, with becoming grandeur, and our hearts kindle at the contemplation; we exult at success; we mourn at misfortune, and live over again in spirit as if in very fact the deeds in which we feel so deep an interest. We feel that the events are connected with us, that they form part of our greatness by being so connected with our race and the fate of the world.

The settlement of the territory of Kansas, it is believed, is one of those epochs.

There are great mountain ridges in the history of the world which catch the eye early and far off and hold it long. We think we have just passed one of those great mountain ridges—. . . . Whatever may be the fortunes of the future, the past, with all its glorious memories; the stern lessons that it taught; the exalted devotion that it evoked, is safe.

The history of Kansas is intimately and indissolubly blended and connected with that great struggle [the American Civil War]. Whether we consider it [the history of Kansas] as a miniature of that great contest, or as the acorn that produced so large a tree, or but the great rumbling mutterings that precede the earthquake, it was so intertwined and connected with it that no history of the one can be written that does not hold within its grasp the other.
Therefore the history of Kansas is not simply the story of the settlement of a new state—the planting of the institutions and organizations of civilized society in the wilderness—with somewhat more than ordinary turmoil and conflict—of struggle and triumph. It is a necessary link with the great chain of mighty events.

Whatever Kingman's personal commitments might be upon Kansas and the Civil War, and even John Brown, he was first of all possessed of a judicial mind, and that quality of intellectual objectivity asserted itself:

This is no partisan society, its leading object is the truth, the Whole Truth. If those who were successful in the struggle committed errors, or were guilty of wrongs, let it so appear; they were human—and if the merits they showed will not bear the weight of such errors as they committed, let them bear the odium—nothing will be changed by falsehood. If Old John Brown were alive to-night, he would scorn the man who sought to enhance his good name by the concealment of one iota of truth, or the utterance of the slightest falsehood.

And here let me in the name of the society, invite contributions from those who belonged to the losing side in the contest for supremacy in our infant state. The most that has been written, has been in the interest of the winning side. You ought not to let judgment go by default. History records her verdicts on men and measures, and before her arbitration becomes final, you ought to be heard.

This society invites your contributions either in the way of facts or criticism. It will safely preserve what you may present, and in the future will deal justly with it as with all others. . . . Our purposes are different [from other organizations] . . .—we want the truth, and all the truth, not to subserve partisan ends or personal advancement. . . . This is a free country, and this is a free institution, where each may testify as to facts, and we hope to find in the multitude of witnesses the Truth.

We aim to procure and safely keep the history of every village, town, city and county, every church, school and college, every bank, manufactory and railroad, and bring them here to one common centre, when they can be arranged and preserved for future use. This work must be done now. . . . If we want to preserve the present to our minds we must photograph it as it passes. [The society's] mission will be finished only when all history is ended.

In taking leave of Kingman, it is necessary to come down out of the stratosphere of historical idealism into which he had ascended and return to the rugged realities of Kansas as of 1868. The Kansas Agricultural Society was to meet the following day under the presidency of B. G. Elliott, one of the forgotten Free-State men as Kansas history was then being written. And at the head of the page upon which Kingman's address was printed appeared an editorial welcoming T. Dwight Thacher back to the editorship of the Daily Republican: “Of course the Republican will be radical,” and quoting from Thacher's salutatory: “We have no new confession of faith
to make. The principles which we avowed more than ten years ago, when the first number of this paper was issued, are still cherished by us with an intensity of conviction to which time and experience have only added renewed and increasing strength.” Thacher’s views on history and on a historical society have already been reviewed—as instruments to be used in molding society: “The oppression and tyranny exercised on our people is to be treasured up for the scorn of coming ages.”

Conclusion

The serious student of Kansas history is entitled to some analysis of why the inadequacies in the written history of Kansas exist. Partly, the reasons lie in the larger setting of so-called Western culture, and what happened to it during the 19th and 20th centuries. Partly, peculiar local circumstances, material, and personal, made of the Kansas situation a special case. To some readers this study may appear to be overly complicated, to others oversimplified. If this description of the split between theory and practice, and between science and history is not adequate, the reason is that to make it so would involve a larger setting than these essays on Kansas historiography permit.

The historian and the scientist may utilize much of the same material. The scientist uses it by classification with respect to likeness and difference in order to derive a law of the behavior of matter or the basis for a functional application. The scientist does not always use his material to establish laws. When he operates as an ecologist, studying organisms living together, he finds that uniqueness is the peculiar characteristic of every ecological situation, both in space and time. So far as he may have occasion to undertake to establish ecological laws, they must apply only as approximations, even when dealing with plants and animals as material. They cannot apply to man as history.

The historian may use science and much of the same material as the scientist, but not to establish laws. Each historical situation in space and time is different. His use of these materials is to enable him to describe more adequately the unique setting of history, to aid him in broadening the base upon which to reconstruct unique historical reality. So far as man is involved, he does not follow laws in his behavior, because, within limits, he possesses the power of choice. If for no other reason, his action is unique, because he possesses this power of choice. If that property is denied man,
either in the aggregate, or in the individual human person, he loses his freedom, becoming merely a cog in a universal machine.

About the time of the settlement of Kansas and of the American Civil War, Western culture was entering upon an era of specialization. The subdivision of knowledge and the setting up of compartments was done to promote a specialization that seemed necessary to make human intelligence effective in dealing with its problems. The separation of history and science, and the splitting up of science into many sciences, mark one of the many differences between the late 19th century, and the world of Benjamin Franklin and the American Philosophical Society. The early history of Kansas lies in this transition period. But, without losing sight of the advantages and even the necessity of specialization, the admission must be made candidly, that it was done at a price—a loss of perspective and a loss of an adequate comprehension of interrelationships that were essential to a unity of Western culture—and possibly to its vitality short of some new synthesis of a new order of magnitude.

In the early days of Kansas, regardless of Free-State and Proslavery differences, the historical and philosophical society idea of 1855 and of 1859 represent essentially the same cultural tradition. Too much stress has been given to the single factor of slavery as a criterion of difference, because even in the slave states probably about 80 per cent of the white population had no direct participation in slavery. Both north and south of the dividing line between free states and slave holding as an institution there was a substantial unity among white people on the race question—white supremacy, even Anglo-Saxon domination. In the story of historical and philosophical societies just told, the executive committee report of 1860 to the Scientific and Historical Society at Lawrence made that idea explicit. The promoters of these organizations were looking at the body of knowledge more as a whole than later, when specialization and its counterpart, fragmentation of knowledge and of the cultural pattern, became increasingly conspicuous.

The best introduction to what was happening to Western culture, with emphasis upon the United States at the federal level, is that of Roy F. Nichols, in his book The Disruption of American Democracy (New York, 1948), pp. 20-40. In that connection he emphasized “cultural federalism” rather than a federation of states as being characteristic of American society of the 1850’s. People belonged to groups in society, often without any relation to any recognized political boundary lines. These cultural groups made commitments to different, even conflicting attitudes, and as people
joined two or more groups they found themselves united within particular groups but sometimes in conflict with relatives, friends, and neighbors connected with another group or groups. As the new communications system widened geographical horizons, both the unifying and the divisive ramifications of these permeating phenomena were reconstructing the nature of society. The artificial geographical boundaries established for political purposes—towns, counties, states—no longer served the purposes for which they were created. Public opinion was molded more and more through the instrumentalities of these cultural groups. Yet for political purposes, the old machinery was used and was expected to function effectively in a cultural situation for which it was not adapted.

As applied to the problem in hand, in the early days in Kansas the men named in this study could have been, and often were, members of one or at most, a few organizations that covered their range of interests. By the late 1860's, and more conspicuously later, if a man was to follow intellectual interests, he must be a member of several specialized organizations—so many and so exacting in specialization that most men dropped out. The demands made by so many specializations were too great for a single individual to follow all.

Still another aspect of the internal reconstruction of society may aid in understanding the changing role of the several towns of Kansas. Leavenworth's pre-eminence as a population center, and therefore its bid for leadership in early Kansas, not only in business, but in the intellectual field as well, was founded upon its river position and the fact that the communications system of that time was still dependent upon water navigation. The orientation was toward the mouth of the Mississippi river and New Orleans. The change from water navigation to steam railroad and electric telegraph communications reoriented the interior of the continent upon the Atlantic coast cities of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. They are enumerated in that order, because already, when Kansas was organized, New York's rail system was on the way to giving it the leadership over Philadelphia and Boston. In the publishing field, the historic Philadelphia book house of the Carey family dynasty was no longer pre-eminent. New York was also taking over the publishing business of Boston. These facts are more important to the intellectual history of Kansas than those associated with the slavery controversy per se.

The new communications system was not only redistributing power among Atlantic coast cities, it was contributing similarly to
redistribution of power among Kansas and neighboring towns. Leavenworth, Atchison, and St. Joseph on the upper Missouri river, and Lawrence in the interior, all bidders for leadership, were eliminated from any hope of first rank positions. The fact that Topeka won the prize of being the state capital worked to its advantage, but, except in a restricted sense of local politics, it did not possess the resources requisite to make it the Metropolis of Kansas or of the region between St. Louis and the Rocky Mountain continental divide. Greater Kansas City, mostly on the Missouri side of the state line, won that prize. All these factors have a bearing upon the intellectual history of Kansas, working against a decisive Metropolitan concentration of energy within the state that could find expression during a railroad age in either a state-wide or a regional unity, whether in a restricted intellectual sense, or in the more comprehensive cultural context.