Notes on the Writing of General Histories of Kansas

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PART FOUR: THE KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY; REPOSITORY OF THE MATERIAL OF HISTORY

The organizations antecedent to the creation of the Kansas State Historical Society in 1875-1879 have been reviewed in the previous essay. Those earlier approaches carried the story of the main currents of historical and scientific activity into the decade of the 1870's, where the present essay begins. The many differences between the two periods produced sharp contrasts, but certain underlying continuities persisted.

FACTORS IN THE BACKGROUND, 1875

The story of the organization of the Kansas State Historical Society is exceedingly complex and therefore it is appropriate at the outset to provide a sort of guide to the labyrinth. For this purpose factors in the problem are grouped under seven headings. First, the persistence of a devoted group of men with F. P. Baker and F. C. Adams at the head of the list. Possibly one woman should be included, even in this story of the founding years, as of 1876, a 17-year-old high school girl, Zu Adams.

The second of the factors was the interest of old settlers in their own history; the manifold experiences, not of heroes, but of common folk, who had carried the daily burdens of making their homes in a new state. These people functioned first in the setting of their own communities and their own contributions to them, but not consciously as having anything to do with history as usually defined. Their meetings were social gatherings, primarily of old settlers with a common community experience.

The third factor was the controversy over heroes, and the legends that had arisen about them. Some background for this hero philosophy is in order. In May, 1840, Thomas Carlyle, a major figure in the English literary world of the mid-19th century, had delivered a series of six lectures which were published under the title On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History. In the first of...
these Carlyle's theory of history was stated: "universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked here." After surveying the different kinds of heroes, Carlyle devoted his final lecture to "The Hero as King," and of the hero as political ruler; by whatever name he was called he was

The Commander over Men; he to whose will our wills are to be subordinated, and loyally surrender themselves, and find their welfare in doing so, may be reckoned the most important of Great Men. He is practically the summary for us of all the various figures of Heroism; Priest, Teacher, whatsoever of earthly or of spiritual dignity we can fancy to reside in a man, embodies itself here, to command over us, to furnish us with constant practical teaching, to tell us for the day and hour what we are to do. He is called Rex, Regulator, Roi: our own name is still better; King, Könning, which means Can-ning, Able-man.\(^1\)

Manifestly Carlyle was hostile to popular government. In 20th century language his hero as King, might be called Dictator, or Administrator.

American transcendentalism, centering upon New England, during the same period, in spite of its pretentious talk about the individual, was committed extensively to the "Hour and the Man" theory of history, with its repudiation of the capacity of popular government to operate effectively. When mediocre men, according to this view, had muddled hopelessly, only the intervention of a hero could set things to rights. From another point of view, that of outsiders, the extreme individualism of transcendentalism made a commitment to a practical condition approximating anarchism, in which the only means of resolving the stalemate of individual differences which prevented a majority decision, was the intervention of the hero—dictator. At any rate, after the Harpers Ferry episode, and the execution of John Brown, he became the particular hero of a large segment of that transcendental cult.

In Kansas William A. Phillips, who boasted of his radicalism, proclaimed at Lawrence, in a lecture January 20, 1860: "Mediocrity has no immortality. . . . I have shown that history of the ages was but the history of a few men. Each recorded age has its man. He is the lesson of its history. This age has its man . . . [John Brown].\(^2\)

Twenty-three years later, when the controversy over John Brown was nearing the climax of bitterness, F. B. Sanborn, in the Spring-

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field (Mass.) Republican, November 18, 1883, declared that for every emergency God provided a superman to set right what ordinary mortals failed to accomplish. In the Pottawatomie massacre of May 24-25, 1856, according to Sanborn, "The hour and the man had come," and Kansas was saved.\(^3\)

In Kansas John Brown was not the only hero. There was James H. Lane, whose dramatic passing by suicide during the summer of 1866 invited many attempts at evaluation of his controversial career. Charles Robinson and others of the New England Emigrant Aid Company group were still on the scene, and insisted upon their share of credits and honors as heroes.

But the factors listed here as number two and three became intermingled upon occasion, with the general result that where that occurred, the bitterness of controversy over heroes tended to involve everybody and to divert attention largely, if not altogether, from the legitimate history of Kansas as a whole. Old settler organization was sporadic and no pretense is made here of systematic compilation of the data necessary for its formal history. A few samples must suffice. In the Osawatomie and Pottawatomie creek area, an organization was formed in 1859 to remove the bodies of the "martyrs" of the battle of Osawatomie, August 30, 1856, to a single site on the "battlefield." During the 1870's the John Brown question became confused with the movement to erect a monument to the five martyrs reburied in 1859. In the meantime the old settlers of Franklin county, independently of either of these other phases of local history, organized on September 25, 1875, the specification for membership being residence in Kansas prior to 1860 and a resident of Franklin county at the time of application for membership.\(^4\)

This old settler organization, representative of the rank and file settler, did not survive, but the monument movement at Osawatomie was completed and the dedication occurred August 30, 1877. By this time the John Brown idea had taken over even the monument movement, his name appeared on the marble shaft, along with the five martyrs of the Battle of Osawatomie, and in fact the monument was usually referred to, not as a monument to these five men buried at its base, but as the John Brown monument. The dedication ceremony also became a landmark in the precipitation of the bitter controversy over Kansas hero worship. This episode epitomizes more sharply than anywhere else, the impossibility of keeping separate the general old-settler history idea and the narrower hero-idea.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 411. For the context of the controversy, see especially chs. 17 and 18.

\(^4\) Ottawa Triumph, October 1, 1875.
In Lawrence the old settlers organized in 1870, and held meetings annually until 1878. In 1877 a decision was reached to omit the annual meeting of 1878 and concentrate upon that of 1879 as a state-wide quarter-centennial celebration. This move had wider repercussions than anyone at the time could have foreseen, because Lawrence sponsorship tended to revive and to fasten upon Kansas historical tradition the idea that the history of Lawrence and of Kansas were virtually synonymous. In Leavenworth county the old settlers association was organized August 8, 1874. Topka and Shawnee county did not organize until December, 1875, the 21st anniversary of the founding of Topeka.

Ever present in these pioneer communities were the differences between old and new settlers. The Franklin county association had restricted membership by the requirement of residence prior to 1860. In 1878 at Lawrence “The Settlers of ’54” organized, and at the supper October 15, Charles Robinson voiced the point of view of the group by insisting that the settlers of the first year were entitled to some credit. A committee was appointed to plan for another meeting in 1875. Somewhat later at Lawrence “The Fifty-sixers” organized. At Manhattan, February 22, 1878, the “Old Settlers” met at one hotel, and the “New Settlers” celebrated separately the same day at another hotel.

In politics the same issue of old against new arose from time to time. In the previous essay, attention was called to the rivalry of M. F. Conway and Thomas Ewing, Jr., for the senatorship. D. W. Wilder raised the issue against Ewing although the difference in time of arrival between the two men was but two years, 1855 and 1857. To the Fifty-sixer or earlier settler, the newcomer of 1857 had not fought, bled, and suffered for freedom in Kansas. In Edwards county in 1857 a tenderfoot candidate protested “that unless a man ran wild with the buffalo . . ., he is not eligible to office,” but on that basis three fourths of the voters were also tenderfeet.

The Kansas Editors’ and Publishers’ Association is fourth on the
list of background factors. An early attempt at an editorial organization occurred October 2-8, 1863. D. H. Bailey had presided as president, and F. P. Baker as secretary. The officers chosen for the following year included John Speer as president, D. H. Bailey as secretary, and D. W. Wilder as treasurer. Apparently no further meetings were held. After the war, the leadership was assigned to Richard Baxter Taylor, of the Wyandotte Gazette, for promoting a meeting at Topeka January 17, 1866, to effect an organization, and at which he presided, with John A. Martin of the Atchison Champion as secretary. Thereafter, except for 1869, apparently, the association met annually. In 1868 Taylor was president, and in 1870 he delivered the annual address which was devoted to a history of the press in Kansas, but more of that later. As will be seen subsequently, this body endorsed or sponsored a succession of enterprises: a history of Kansas newspapers, the Kansas Magazine, and the Kansas State Historical Society. In other words, the association not only recorded Kansas history daily and weekly, but made Kansas history in its own right.

The first substantial literary aspirations of these early Kansans found tangible form in the Kansas Magazine for which preparations were completed during the last months of 1871. The historical and philosophical society movements and the library movements in their several forms placed the first emphasis upon the collection of materials for study, the facilities for reading, and eventually these would yield productive writing. The Kansas Magazine group was convinced that the state then possessed a literary talent sufficient to justify a medium of publication that, in turn, would stimulate further productivity. What was more natural than for the major organization of professional writers, if not the only one in the state, to provide the background for launching this venture?

At a meeting of the Editors’ and Publishers’ Association, convening that year at Lawrence, October 24, 1871, D. W. Wilder explained the plan, which received the endorsement of the association. On November 8 the Kansas Magazine company was incorporated by nine men. The list included S. S. Prouty, Henry King, D. W. Wilder, and John A. Martin. The first number of the magazine appeared January, 1872, and was issued from the Commonwealth office under the editorship of Henry King. In December, 1872, Capt. James W. Steele (Deane Monahan) became editor. The project terminated with the October number, 1873, two months short of a two-year life. The panic of 1873 had just occurred as a climax to Kansas drought.
The story would not be complete, either as pertaining to the Kansas Magazine, or to the larger theme of this study of historical societies, without an introduction to the Commonwealth, a daily and weekly newspaper, founded at Topeka, May 1, 1869, by S. S. Prouty and J. B. Davis, with Ward Burlingame as chief editor. Prouty was an old settler and a radical of early Free-State party days. He sold out to Henry King, August 17, 1873. Somewhere along the line, probably after the fire of October 20, 1873, which burned the Commonwealth plant, George W. Veale became proprietor, with King as editor. On March 7, 1875, the Commonwealth announced a new editor and proprietor, F. P. Baker, with N. L. Prentis as local and news editor. Baker had arrived in Kansas in 1860. Prentis came in 1869, associated with Henry King. During the years when Prouty, King, and Baker controlled the policy of the Commonwealth, it was active in supporting intellectual enterprise. It contributed free publicity in the form of favorable news coverage to the enterprises in which its editors were interested. The financial accounts of the company are not available, but there is a suspicion that they would have revealed price concessions equivalent to a subsidy for printing costs.

The Kansas Magazine admitted to its pages literary productions of all types. Quite naturally the writers reflected in a substantial manner their identification with the West. Many of the articles on public questions of the day discussed those which were of special concern to their Kansas present: land, money, Indians, and the plains. A few, but surprisingly few, recounted aspects of the slavery controversies of territorial Kansas. To conclude that historical papers were not submitted, would be unwarranted. At least one, of which there is record, was offered and not printed. Charles Robinson’s “Ad Astra per Aspera,” appeared in May, 1873. It had been read on February 4, 1868, before the Kansas Historical Society. In printing it, an editorial made an issue of Robinson’s paper, asking whether or not the historical society still lived, and if so, it should give more frequent proofs of its existence. The Wisconsin Historical Society was referred to as an example of what might be done. The editorial closed with an appeal for a Kansas State Historical Society, adequately financed by legislative appropriations.

The decade of the 1870’s marked the centennial anniversary of


the opening of the American Revolution, with the Declaration of Independence of 1776 as the focal date. Preparations were begun definitely in 1871, when congress enacted the first legislation. In 1874 the Kansas legislature responded with appropriate action. The agency created—a board of centennial managers—was new, so its story will emerge in due course, the centennial operations constituting the fifth of the background factors.

The sixth factor on the list was one that had already accumulated some history in its own right. The Kansas State Board of Agriculture was designated as the local agency through which Kansas administered participation in the centennial exposition in Philadelphia. Several considerations entered into this decision. Necessarily a centennial celebration meant that at least a nominal historical character must be given to the exposition. Kansas had little history; she was making it, and the most insistent aspect of that process was the encouragement of immigration to the state. An immigration agency had been set up at the close of the Civil War and when the State Board of Agriculture was created, in 1872, out of the State Agricultural Society, the major emphasis in the Annual Reports of that board was the promotion of immigration. These reports were primarily immigration documents. No other state agency was in being in 1874 as a going concern that could better assume the responsibility that Kansas participation in the centennial exposition demanded. Thus Alfred Gray, secretary of the State Board of Agriculture, found himself cast in a role that turned out to be important to the writing of Kansas history.

Last upon the list of background factors, but certainly not least among them, was D. W. Wilder and his Annals of Kansas. Born in 1832 in Massachusetts, graduated from Harvard College in 1856, Wilder had come to Kansas first in 1857, but he did not remain long in any one place. On three occasions 1860, 1865-1866, 1876-1882, he had left Kansas, only to return. After about a year as editor of the Fort Scott Monitor, in 1872 he was elected state auditor. This led to a political storm, his first annual report revealing gross irregularities in the management of the state's finances. State Treasurer J. E. Hayes gave way to Samuel Lappin, and after a second round of irregularities in 1875, John Francos was installed to clean up. The year 1873 had also been the climax of senatorial scandal which drove both Kansas senators, Pomeroy and Caldwell, out of the state.

The Annals was conceived, written, and issued during this period of political upheaval. Wilder was quite realistic about the condition
of Kansas political life, but he was not driven to extremes as were many other Kansans during the drought, grasshopper, and depression years of 1873 and 1874. Wilder had first thought of a Kansas history of some sort as early as 1869.\textsuperscript{14} Not, however, until December, 1872, did he do anything positive about it. About that time he became aggressive in accumulating a library of Kansas books.\textsuperscript{15} During the process of collection, he became acquainted with the holdings of other Kansans who had done, or were then, collecting: W. H. Smallwood, H. D. McCarty, John Martin, S. A. Kingman, George W. Smith, James Christian, R. B. Taylor, John B. Dunbar, Frank A. Root, Joel K. Goodin, David Dickson, R. G. Elliott.\textsuperscript{16} Kansans have come to take the \textit{Annals of Kansas} for granted. A book like that doesn't just happen by some magic of spontaneous generation. In a diary entry of March 29, 1874, Wilder wrote: "I began to think in 1869 of writing a History of Kansas. In Dec. '72 made some citations & quotations for it. Now believe that I should go to work upon it and call it Outlines of a History of Kansas." After the start made in December, 1872, he had an idea for another book, probably not a substitute for the history but additional or supplemental to it—a documentary history. The diary entry June 6, 1873, recorded it and made an indirect acknowledgment of the source of the inspiration for this particular kind of book: "Found yesterday, in [Secretary of State W. H.] Smallwood's office, the Executive Minutes of the Territory, letters, appointments, proclamations &c of Govs. & Secys.—Looked over one of the two books to-day. Should like to use it in getting up a documentary history of K. T. King says he will make an estimate of the cost of 1000 copies of a 600 page book." No further mention was made of the project, the inference being that the cost decided the issue in the negative. Obviously, Wilder was correct that one of the most valuable projects that could have been undertaken was to publish the manuscript records and thus make them generally available for historical purposes. That is exactly what was done later in the early volumes of the \textit{Collections} of the Kansas State Historical Society.

The original plan for a history was continued in a desultory fashion through 1874. On August 12, Wilder wrote in his diary: "Have 20 years of 'Annals' ready." The use of the word "Annals" in this entry may be prophetic, but to jump at conclusions that he had adopted a new name for the book would be an error. On March 19,
1875, Prentis commented in the *Commonwealth* on Wilder's project referring to it as "a political history, or rather hand-book. . . ." In his diary entry for the same day Wilder quoted this description with apparent approval, but overnight came an inspiration, and the diary entry for March 20 read: "In bed last night thought of Annals as the name and way of writing my book." In that inspiration of the night came a decision that was momentous. Thus far Wilder had been floundering. Two good reasons can be assigned. The time was not ripe for a formal history of Kansas because the materials had not been assembled and evaluated, and for Wilder to undertake such a task single handed and as an extra private enterprise outside a full-time job as state auditor just was not practicable. Furthermore, whatever talents Wilder possessed, they did not include those of historian in the formal sense. No one realized that fact more clearly than Wilder himself, and he pronounced his verdict upon himself in a diary entry for June 12, 1875. He had been reading the files of the Leavenworth *Daily Conservative* which he had edited 1861-1864, and it was in this context that he wrote: "In the Conservative for '62 & on I did just the historical itemizing that I am doing now.—Whether good or bad, the notion was born in me." Wilder had the good sense to recognize where his talent lay and to capitalize upon it rather than to persist in something for which he was quite unsuited. Once Wilder had found himself the progress of his work on his book was amazingly rapid. In spite of all the preliminary work and thought that he had already expended on the project prior to the fateful March 20, or rather the night of March 19-20, he later came to date his book from that day. May 21, 1875, he wrote in his diary: "Have worked on book seven weeks . . . .," but in the *Annals* entry for March 20, 1875, he was more explicit: "First page of the 'Annals of Kansas' written."

All these factors ran concurrently and interacted upon each other. Each has been singled out from the others for purposes of individual identification. The next task is to trace as simply as possible, through the years of 1875-1879 inclusive, the story as a whole of the founding of the Kansas State Historical Society, where necessarily, all these factors were intermingled.

**The Centennial and Kansas History**

Not in isolation, but within this background, publicity was focused conspicuously during 1875 on the activities of the centennial managers. Publicity was their business, but it should not be permitted to distort history at the expense of the other themes that did not
possess an advertising machine. Kansas history became a minor aspect of the program of centennial activities, and it came about in this fashion. The act of congress of 1871 authorized conditionally the centennial exposition at Philadelphia for 1876 and a commission which should include a representation from each state and territory. Further legislation in 1872 completed the organization, with additional state representation.¹⁷

Under the first of these statutes, the governor of Kansas nominated John A. Martin, of Atchison, national commissioner for Kansas, and George A. Crawford, of Fort Scott, as alternate. These men were then appointed by the President. The governor’s recommendation of 1872 brought no response from the legislature, but in 1874 action was taken. To add to the troubles of 1873, a drought year, a worldwide financial panic broke late in the year, so when the legislature undertook in 1874 to authorize Kansas participation in the centennial exposition, the economic outlook was gloomy indeed. Five state centennial managers were authorized to be appointed by the governor, and they were to use space in the room in the capitol assigned to the State Board of Agriculture.¹⁸ The two commissioners together with the five centennial managers were commissioned March 30, 1874, and constituted the first state board of centennial managers. On April 24, 1875, Alfred Gray, secretary of the State Board of Agriculture, was commissioned to fill a vacancy, and was promptly designated secretary also of the centennial managers. In 1876 a reorganization took place, most of the managers being replaced, but Gray continued in his double secretarial capacity.

The year 1874 was another drought year in Kansas, accompanied by the locust plague of August. A special session of the legislature met to provide limited relief, and in addition private aid for Kansas was collected in the East to relieve drought and grasshopper victims. Under the shadow of cumulative disasters the legislature of 1875 was called upon to make its decisions.

Necessarily, under any circumstances, a pioneer state must operate under a deficit economy until local productivity can meet requirements of a relatively self-sustaining existence. The only question at issue during the deficit era was the sources from which the deficit would be met—new capital introduced by settlers, federal government financing of services, and private and public credits.

¹⁷ 16 U. S. Statutes at Large, 470, 471; 17 U. S. Statutes at Large, 203-211.
¹⁸ As most of these official documents dealing with the centennial were reprinted in the “Report of the Centennial Managers,” which was incorporated into the Fifteenth Annual Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, 1876, they may be consulted there, unless otherwise designated.
During territorial status, federal funds met much of governmental expense. A major penalty of early statehood was the cutting off of that source of financing. All state and local governmental costs for improvements and current expenses were met either by local taxes or by borrowing; mostly the latter, and at all but prohibitive costs. The centennial managers put the alternative bluntly; high taxes paid by a scanty population, or a lower rate spread over a large population induced by immigration. The centennial exposition at Philadelphia was welcomed as an opportunity that should be capitalized upon as far as possible to induce immigration to Kansas and thus to spread the tax burden among a larger number. The economic disasters of 1873 and 1874 only emphasized the need of heroic measures. The legislature was at least partially convinced.

While the necessary measures were pending a recommendation was received from A. T. Goshorn, director-general at Philadelphia, dated January 30, 1875, which went beyond the matter of physical exhibits, introducing the subject of history:

Another department that should be inaugurated and prepared under the auspices of the State governments is that which may be termed the “historical and statistical.” Unless done by official authority, there will not be a complete presentation of such matters as the history of the early settlement of the State, its physical features, climate, geographical position, government, law and punishments of crime, system of State and municipal taxation, revenue and expenditure, benevolent institutions and charities, education, scientific, industrial, commercial, learned and religious societies, agricultural and manufacturing interests, the extent and effects of railroads and other means of transportation, the history and growth in population and wealth of the State. All these subjects, among others, ought to be represented, so as to afford a summary view of the history, progress and present condition of every State. Unless this is accomplished, the Exhibition will seriously fail in that part of its purpose which contemplates a representation of the nation’s growth during the first century of its existence.

The importance of official action in the premises was further stressed as the only means that could secure results:

A collective representation of this character will not only be interesting as illustrating the prosperity of the country, but will also be of inestimable value for preservation in the archives of the nation, as a correct history of the birth and progress of the several communities that have contributed during the century to the growth and strength of the Union of States.

Among other things this recommendation reflected a remarkably naive conception of the methods requisite for the writing of history, but when history was recognized as having a place in a historical celebration, that fact in itself calls for commendation. The Kansas
 legislature accepted the suggestion about history, which appeared in the following form as section 2 of the act of March 6, 1875:

Said managers shall also prepare and have printed for distribution at the exposition, a complete, condensed history of the state, showing its physical features; its early settlement; its birds, fishes and animals; climate, geographical position; educational, religious and charitable institutions; agricultural and manufacturing industries; streams and water powers; railroads and other means of transportation; growth in population and health; character and habits of the people, and any other matters which will aid in making up a summary view of the birth, progress and present condition of the state.

While reflecting the national recommendation as to content, the legislative instruction about history was substantially in the Kansas tradition which began with the Bogus legislature of 1855 in authorizing the Historical and Philosophical Society. This fact is a reminder that during the 1870's the separation of science into a special compartment of knowledge had not yet been completed. Personal responsibility for authorship of particular documents and for the content of policy cannot be traced satisfactorily, and probably it is not important. The centennial managers were explicit in trying to avoid the jealousies that would result from specific personal credits, and announced in their report that all matters of policy were decided after full discussion and represented in fact as well as form their joint action.

Specific Steps Toward a Historical Society

March and April, 1875, were momentous for the launching again by specific steps a movement for a state historical society. The cast of principals in this act were the Commonwealth, the Editors' and Publishers' Association, D. W. Wilder, this time associated in the public mind with a project for a history of Kansas in progress, F. G. Adams, back in Topeka again as clerk in the office of state treasurer, and the legislative requirement for a condensed history of Kansas for the centennial at Philadelphia.

On March 7, 1875, as mentioned previously, the Commonwealth passed into the hands of Floyd P. Baker as proprietor and editor, with N. L. Prentis as local and news editor. Baker was born in Washington county, New York, and was educated in the common schools. By 1860 he had arrived on a farm in Nemaha county, Kansas, after many changes which had taken him to Wisconsin, New Orleans, California, the Hawaiian Islands, and return by way of the Isthmus route, and Missouri. He entered Kansas politics as

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10. This matter of the theory of history and its content has been discussed at some length in the previous essay in this series.
a member of the legislature in 1861, and in early 1863 bought an interest from F. G. Adams in the Topeka Kansas State Record which he retained as part or sole owner until 1871. After a period in Denison, Tex., he was back in Kansas journalism again in March, 1875.

Noble Lovely Prentis (1839-1900), although born in Illinois, from his tenth to his 18th year was reared by an uncle in Vermont. After learning the printer’s trade in Connecticut, he worked in Illinois, and in Missouri, besides serving during the Civil War in an Illinois regiment. Henry King induced him to come to Kansas to work on the Kansas State Record. He arrived in Topeka, November 10, 1869. Later he was with the Commonwealth, the Lawrence Journal, the Junction City Union, which he edited for G. W. Martin, and now in March, 1875, was with Baker on the Commonwealth.

Both Baker and Prentis were men of more than ordinary talents, and both made significant contributions to Kansas history. The Commonwealth, during the next few years, was the most active promoter and publicity medium for the movement to inaugurate a state historical society and to make it a success after it was organized. Just who was responsible for Commonwealth editorials is not always clear. Of course Baker was actively sympathetic from the beginning of his ownership. Within this general framework of policy Prentis probably wrote the early editorials, and Wilder was a close confident. Until June 9, according to Wilder’s diary, Baker was not altogether free from his Texas connections. S. S. Prouty was on the paper until about the middle of June. Wilder made it clear that until this time, Prentis had carried the real burden of editorship. For the later period, December, 1875, and later, Wilder, in his presidential address before the Society January 17, 1888, credited the Commonwealth editorials in support of the Kansas State Historical Society to Baker.20 By December, 1875, F. G. Adams was definitely one of the society group.

The editorials of March 19, and June 20, and November 29, 1875, on the theory and nature of history, were probably the work of Prentis, and they contained truly distinctive thinking about history. The one of March 19, “A History of Kansas,” used as a text the second section of the statute enacted by the legislature relative to a “condensed history” of Kansas to be distributed at the centennial exposition at Philadelphia. As the time was short none was to be lost, an editor or board of editors should be chosen and the work

commenced, but the editorial did not stop with generalities. The history should include, according to the *Commonwealth*, all that was known of the country prior to the coming of the white man; accounts of churches, each denomination being responsible for its own history, military history, county and city histories, Indian history, treated by the missionaries associated with the tribes, summaries from the military post archives, accounts of explorations and surveys, recollections of army officers, R. B. Taylor’s history of the press which had not been printed, descriptions of the physical features of the state by scientists, and the reports of the state board of agriculture condensed and made available. In closing, a challenge was thrown out that such a presentation at Philadelphia “can lay before the world a history of what civilized man had done in Kansas in twenty years.” It was a pretentious program, but also, it represented a broad and comprehensive conception of history.

The Kansas Editors’ and Publishers’ Association held its annual meeting at Manhattan April 7-8, 1875, after which many members went on an excursion to Galveston, Tex. At Manhattan, April 8, two important resolutions were adopted; one dealing with newspaper history and the other with a state historical society. By the terms of the first of these resolutions a committee was appointed, consisting of R. B. Taylor, T. D. Thacher, and D. W. Wilder, to prepare a history of the Kansas press. The designation of Taylor as chairman was in recognition of the history he had compiled in 1869 as the basis of his annual address of January, 1870.

The second of the resolutions was presented by D. W. Wilder:

*Whereas,* All efforts to establish an active and efficient State Historical Society have been failures; and

*Whereas,* Such an organization is imperatively demanded for the purpose of saving the present and past records of twenty-one years of eventful history: therefore,

*Resolved.* That this Association respectfully requests that F. P. Baker, D. R. Anthony, John A. Martin, Sol. Miller and G. A. Crawford act as a committee to organize such a Society, and ask of the Legislature an appropriation of not less than $1,000 annually, to pay for subscriptions and for the binding of every newspaper published in the State, and for such other historical records as can be secured.

About this time the key figure in the cast of characters was added to the scene. F. G. Adams had been in Topeka at an earlier time as has been noted. During the winter of 1874-1875, when F. P. Baker was negotiating for the *Commonwealth*, one of his plans of mid-January, 1875, had included F. G. Adams as editor.21 When the deal

was completed in March, however, Prentis, not Adams, was brought in as local and news editor. Later in March, Adams was appointed as a clerk in the office of the state treasurer, and had moved to Topeka by April 1.22 It was in this capacity as clerk in the treasurer’s office that Adams was to function, and make his living until 1879 when the legislature belatedly appropriated money sufficient for a real salary as secretary of the state historical society.

During the decade of absence from the Topeka scene, Adams had founded and edited the Atchison Free Press, served as Indian agent to the Kickapoo Indians, published the Waterville Telegraph, a book: the Homestead Guide (1873), and engaged in farming. During 1875 the state grange made him chairman of its educational committee. But almost immediately after his arrival in Topeka in April, 1875, Adams published in the Commonwealth, April 13, 14, a two-part paper on “Old County Names.” Although printed anonymously, the Commonwealth identified the author, April 16, in printing a second letter in correction of the Adams’ articles. In this connection the editor observed: “Not the least valuable thing connected with sketches like those by Judge Adams, is the bringing out of information on Kansas history from all quarters.”

THE CONDENSED HISTORY

During the year 1875 the board of centennial managers was active in organizing, planning, and collecting materials for the Kansas exhibit at Philadelphia: collections were assembled representing Kansas geology, native and domestic animals and plants, crops, etc. A special issue was made of a number of things. A systematic photographic program was planned—“landscape views of scenes of natural beauty or historic interest.” As was explained: “These views are desired as pictorial illustrations of the present appearance of the State, and are designed for permanent preservation in the interest of historical accuracy.” 23 Also the board declared that as “Corn is the staple of Kansas,” special premiums were offered for the best specimens, the preparation of which when selected was to be managed by the board itself. And state pride was involved also in another way: “It is intended that all work done in preparing for the Centennial shall be by Kansas men.” 24

In August, 1875, the board of centennial managers concluded the “blocking out of the plan of the history of the State called for by

22. Ibid., March 21, April 1, 1875.
24. Ibid., August 9, 1875.
They decided upon six short papers: D. W. Wilder on political history; John A. Anderson on agriculture; T. Dwight Thacher on railroads; B. F. Mudge on geology; F. H. Snow on natural history; John Fraser on education. Although scarcely measuring up to the ideal of a history of Kansas, it served the purpose for which it was intended, and the six papers were printed in the *Fourth Annual Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture*. . . 1875. For the purpose of centennial distribution, the legislature of 1876 authorized a second or abridged edition of the *Fourth Annual Report*, called the centennial edition, in which were printed only three of the so-called historical papers: those of Wilder, Anderson, and Thacher, along with the section called "Industries by counties," together with county maps. In the *First Biennial Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture*. . . 1877-8, these county sketches, with the co-operation of the state historical society, were given a substantial historical character. This *First Biennial Report* went through three editions and stands as probably the most important immigration document published by the state of Kansas. The pronounced historical character of the volume is explained by the foregoing background. Several years were to pass before the state historical society was in a position to begin a publication program of its own. The circulation of the *Fourth Annual Report* and the *First Biennial Report* was enormous because they were given away.

**Wilder's Annals of Kansas**

It is time now to return to 1875 and Wilder, to provide some glimpses into the process by which the *Annals of Kansas* took shape, and to notice some of the by-products. Although Wilder had been actively assembling a library of Kansas materials since December, 1872, his collection was still deficient and gaps became evident that he had not suspected. Having settled on the *Annals* form, he went through the books in his collection for material that could be dated and arranged chronologically. On April 21 he had 120 pages of copy. He began April 27 on the manuscript materials in the archives of the secretary of state, Smallwood. In May he turned actively to newspapers. He found that G. W. Smith, and James Christian, of Lawrence, had partial files of the *Herald of Freedom*. He took the matter up with S. A. Kingman who was president of the Kansas Historical Society, inactive since 1868, and with whom he had discussed the historical society question as early as April 19,

1873. Kingman responded to his new appeal and Wilder acted as intermediary in the purchase, for $25, of Smith's file for Kingman and the historical society. Similarly, he acted for David Dickinson, librarian of the state library, in purchasing, for $30, the James Christian file, but as Dickinson had only $25, Wilder made up the difference out of his own pocket.26

Wilder had a file of the Elwood Free Press, 1859, and part of the St. Joseph (Mo.) Free Democrat, 1860, which he had edited. Those he proposed giving to Kingman for the historical society.27 He borrowed the Quindaro Chindowan from Frank Root, the Leavenworth daily papers, the Conservative, and the Times, from D. R. Anthony. In Topeka he borrowed the files of the Freeman, the Kansas State Record, the Leader, the Commonwealth, the Tribune, and the Lawrence Republican. In nine weeks, May 6 to July 14, he had closed out most of his work on newspapers. Next came legislative journals, statutes, and state documents.28 Also by this time he had located books dealing with Kansas not formerly known to him.

After finishing his work on the newspapers, Wilder felt that he was through the worst but: "There is still much to do. I hesitate to begin final revision and exam." That was on July 16. On July 19 he assorted the copy, and on July 22 he "wrote & finished the first four pages of copy. . . . Must entirely finish a little copy every day now, besides reading & filling in more recent events. . . ." By July 26 all copy was ready to 1854, and July 29 the year 1854 was arranged: "I have still a month's work before me." On August 2 he finished 1857, and had 205 pages of manuscript. Printing responsibilities were assumed by George W. Martin, who was also state printer. E. P. Harris was the foreman with whom Wilder worked, and on August 4, 32 pages of copy carrying the story to 1853 were turned over to him.

On August 10 Frank B. Swift, the typesetter, insisted that Wilder must insert data on the Indian tribes and Wilder agreed. Two days later the Indian material, prior to 1853, was added, and the next day, August 13, the remainder to 1859. Fortunately for Wilder's methods, his annals style permitted the scissors and paste method of revising copy and that procedure accounted for the rapidity with which he revised, rearranged, and added to his manuscript as he accumulated new material. Wilder's task from this point on was to keep ahead of the typesetter. Proofreading with Harris, and index-

26. Wilder, "Diary," April 19, 1873; May 5, 7, 9, 10, 24, 27, 28, 1875.
27. Ibid., May 12, 1875.
28. Ibid. Nearly every daily entry between these dates had something on the subject of his work on newspapers.
ing were soon added duties, that were kept up to date besides the further reading, writing, and preparation of copy. This hand-to-mouth procedure, operating under high pressure, continued until November 2, when Wilder decided to cut the book at the end of 1874. The next day Gray turned over the data from the 1875 census, which closed the book. On November 9 the last proof was returned and the following day the press work was completed. A copy was taken to George W. Crane to bind, and at 1:30 P.M., November 11, Wilder had this advance bound copy in his hands. At this point, he took out $2,000 worth of insurance on the books. On November 26 Wilder’s diary entry contained the succinct comment: “Threw away the manuscript.”

When Wilder began on the Annals of Kansas, it is evident that he had no idea of the magnitude of the task he had undertaken. Probably it was best that way, or he would not have committed himself. The realization of how formidable the project really was unfolded gradually. On May 20 he thought he should be finished on July 1. On June 13 he admitted he should have another year which would include a trip east to do the book justice. Five days later he recorded the news of R. G. Elliott’s holdings of Kansas materials but admitted: “I am too much worn out to go after them. This book will be big enough. If another edition is called for, will get everything.” Already Wilder was complaining of backache and headaches. The headaches became worse. By September 17 he weighed 121 pounds and on September 21 he limited himself to one cigar a day, and had not chewed tobacco for four days. September 22 he “Sat still ten hours indexing—176 pp.” Besides that he read proof both before and after the indexing. By November 2 he confided that “I feel as if my work, and annoyance on the book and elsewhere might end in a fever—a crazy one...” The factor in his regime that kept him going was his routine established gradually soon after his return to Topeka in 1873 of taking evening walks. During the long ordeal over the book he walked nearly every evening, combining exercise with conversation with a walking companion, Prentis more frequently than any other. His reference to annoyances elsewhere referred especially to his conviction that there were irregularities in the treasurer’s office which his own, the auditor’s office, was not able to verify.

In the course of his selection and arrangement of the Annals Wilder made a number of revaluations of aspects of Kansas history.

29. Ibid., November 10, 1875.
His reading of the files of the Herald of Freedom convinced him, by May 6, that "[G. W.] Brown was a man of good political judgment. I have always thought otherwise." His criticism of his own editorial work on the Leavenworth Conservative during the Civil War election of 1864 was severe: "Am ashamed of the record made then, though glad I opposed Lane." This capacity to revise opinions as of 1875 was noteworthy. Under these circumstances it was unfortunate indeed that Wilder decided not to get the R. G. Elliott material, especially the files of the Kansas Free State published at Lawrence during 1855 and early 1856 by Josiah Miller and Elliott. Already their role in the Free-State party and the Topeka statehood movement had been lost out of such Kansas history as had been written. Wilder might have restored the perspective, and had he done so in 1875, prior to the outbreak of the bitter controversies of later years, the whole course of Kansas history writing would have been different. By 1886, when the second edition of the Annals appeared, it was too late for Wilder to change his mind.

Early in the course of the writing of the Annals one element of pessimism crept into the work. Although only 43 years of age, the shock of the attempted assassination of D. R. Anthony, May 11, prompted the comment about the Annals: "It is already a history of those who are dead or who have left Kansas, and my work today has been more melancholy than ever." Although difficult to evaluate, that elusive sense of the uncertainty of life and the hazards of time hovered over the Annals of Kansas. Still another reaction to his project is important to an understanding of the members of the generation who were founding a historical society in 1875. Upon finishing with the Civil War period, Wilder wrote, August 27: "Copy now has lost interest, war being over." Although applying literally only to himself, the psychological state reflected in this comment was pervasive.

The size and cost of the Annals of Kansas grew with Wilder's response to the magnitude of his task. When discussed with Martin on the Galveston excursion of April 9, a two-dollar book was in contemplation. On May 24, Martin estimated that a 1,200 copy edition of a 400-page book, allowing 150 gratis copies, could be produced at one dollar each, possibly 80 cents, and would be sold at two dollars. Wilder suggested that it be printed in Brevier type, to which Martin agreed. On June 19 Martin suggested a two-column format. On July 20 Harris estimated that the manuscript would make a 400-page book, Wilder's figure was 500. The evening
walk for August 7 was taken with Martin who thought that if the book reached 500 pages the price would have to be three dollars in order to pay out, without any expectation of profit. Martin's estimate of cost as of November 8, was $2.03, and the price was set at five dollars—"600 copies will pay him—that would leave 700 copies for me."

On behalf of the board of centennial managers, George T. Anthony and John A. Martin had approached Wilder, June 3, to write the historical sketch for the centennial volume. Wilder declined at first, but took it under advisement. He could not do any work on it for months. On October 1, he tried to secure a release from his promise, "but Gray said nobody else had the facts and 20 pages would do; made a beginning." A little more work was done October 6 and 7. On October 21 John A. Anderson called on Gray relative to what he was to write. On November 10 Wilder was ready to resume his centennial sketch, and again November 19 he confessed that it would be chiefly "a puff for Kansas." The finished product went to Gray, November 24, but pictures were desired and a revision was resubmitted December 1. The printing and binding of the volume was done in Chicago, not in Kansas, where the board of centennial managers had insisted earlier that all work on the centennial should be done.

Publicity about Wilder's forthcoming book had been practically continuous from the time Prentis had first referred to it in his editorial of March 19. Because the two men were so close personally, Prentis' frequent references were the most authentic and were widely copied. According to Prentis in the Commonwealth, June 20, 1875, "the real historian was the newspaper man. This verdict came from Wilder after he had been at work about five weeks on the newspapers: "... in Kansas newspapers has after all been preserved the fullest and fairest history of Kansas." The content of the papers thus described was intended to include editorials, locals, and advertisements, everything—"no man ever yet looked over a yearly file of a newspaper without learning much of the society of human beings among which that newspaper is published."

The moral of this editorial is that editors should remember that they are writing, not for to day or to morrow, but for all time; and that the more faithfully they portray the phases of daily life of the community in which they are published, neglecting far-off, remote and abstruse matter, the more faithfully they will be fulfilling their vocations as writers of history.

Apparently Martin turned out the first lot of complete books on November 25, Thanksgiving day. The first books distributed to the
public were review and gift copies sent out by express November 26, Friday. The Commonwealth and the Leavenworth Times had notices of it on Sunday, November 28. On Tuesday, November 30, a baby boy, Samuel, was born to the Wilders. Thus momentous were these last days of November, 1875.

On November 28 the Commonwealth returned to the theme of “newspapers as history,” with the assertion that the bulk of the Annals of Kansas “was gleaned from common newspapers files” without which “it would have been difficult, if not impossible” to have presented such “an accurate and connected account of the events that have transpired in the State. It is a matter worth thinking about that the Kansas newspapers, with all their waywardness and all their weaknesses, are yet the fount from which the historian of our stormy and checkered career draws” his material. Also, Wilder was complimented for his discretion in “having sedulously suppressed the volumes of foolish and spiteful and contemptible things we have written.”

The more important reactions to Wilder’s Annals of Kansas were the private comments and responses. He had difficulty in making his friends understand the kind of book he was writing. Thus on May 4 he explained that “my book would be a collection of facts, a book of reference, & not a stately history.” On September 11, Kingman called and read the first 48 printed pages: “it was not what he expected.” A week later his friend and frequent walking companion, William H. Rossington, commented: “Seems to me it is a Kansas Encyclopedia.” When Prentis, in the Commonwealth, November 16, called it “a Diary,” Wilder echoed “good.” On December 3 Wilder noted that “Almost every Kansas paper has a notice & there is not a single unfavorable word. It is wonderful. But I see the book can only be sold by personal solicitation.” “The sale of the book was slow” was the comment on December 7, and just how slow was revealed by the frank admission that an agent in Topeka did not sell any on his first afternoon. Wilder began to cast about for some arrangement by which Martin could get his money out of the venture. Further discouragement came with the breaking of the Lappin bond forgery scandal. Lappin resigned December 20, and John Francis was made state treasurer the following day to clean up the mess. Thus there was much point to Wilder’s bitter comment of December 4: “Martin & I gain immortality: nothing else.” At five dollars a copy Wilder’s Annals could not compete in circulation with free copies of the Fourth Annual

Full justice must be done G. W. Martin in the Annals enterprise because he underwrote the cost before he knew how big the book would be, and did the printing. Without his participation and the co-operation of his men, Harris and Swift, on the mechanical side, there would have been no book. If Wilder had found it necessary to produce a completed manuscript, and have a clean copy made, and then negotiate in the market for a publisher, there would have been no Annals of Kansas. Only devoted friends and loyal printers who were willing to work together unselfishly all hours of the day and night, without any idea of profit, could have produced this book and have done it so promptly. The book had defects, but the most important fact about it was that it was done.

Taylor's Newspaper History

During 1875 R. B. Taylor's committee on a “history of the Kansas press,” was not heard from, but the background for his project should be brought up to date as of January, 1876. On October 2, 1869, in order to accumulate the data for his annual address to the Editors' and Publishers' Association to be held in Topeka, January 17, 1870, Taylor explained his purpose in his Wyandotte Gazette. The theme was a history of the press of Kansas, but the editors would have to co-operate. Each one would have to provide the necessary information about himself and the paper he was editing. Under the date November 4, he sent out a printed circular specifying the data to be supplied by each. The response was rather better than might have been expected. One major defect of Taylor's procedure, however, was that he could reach effectively only those still operating in the state.

Even under these circumstances the volume of material accumulated during the next two months was too great to be summarized in one annual address, so his presentation upon that occasion represented only a sampling. But it was an impressive sample. That compilation represented the winter of 1869-1870 and the history of the press had neither been completed nor published, yet the Taylor collection was the most extensive body of information about Kansas journalism that had ever been gathered anywhere. The resolution of April 8, 1875, creating the new committee, with Taylor as chairman, was designed to stimulate action. Unlike the centennial volume of the State Board of Agriculture, and Wilder's
Annals of Kansas, Taylor's history was not ready at the close of 1875. Taylor died in 1877 without completing the work. All the materials he had assembled were deposited by his family with the historical society, and the abstracts as he had prepared them were published in the Collections of the society.  

Launching the Historical Society

In spite of all this historical activity of 1875, the committee appointed April 8 to organize a historical society had not found a spot in the news. In his "Diary," September 17, Wilder noted that F. P. Baker, chairman of the committee, insisted that action must be taken as a demonstration of good faith prior to the meeting of the legislature in January, 1876, when an appropriation was hoped for. Baker elaborated upon this strategy in an editorial in the Commonwealth, December 16: "It is believed that if the society can show the Legislature that it has made a beginning, that it will be ready to co-operate and build up an institution that will be a credit to Kansas." It was performance that Baker wanted, not just more talk.

Baker called a meeting of his committee, together with other men, in the Commonwealth office, December 14, 1875. Only three of the five committee members were present: Baker (Topeka), Martin (Junction City and Topeka), Crawford (Fort Scott). The additional personnel on hand, although the basis of their presence was not explained, were M. W. Reynolds (Parsons), Kingman (Topeka), Prentis (Topeka), Taylor (Wyandotte), and Prouty (Topeka). Kingman was chosen chairman, with Baker as secretary. The business transacted was simple: the adoption of a resolution to form a historical society; the naming of a committee (Kingman, Baker, and Crawford) to prepare a charter, procure signatures of the necessary incorporators, and file it with the secretary of state; and the naming of nine men to the board of directors: Kingman, Baker, Crawford, Martin, Miller (Troy), Wilder, Anthony (Leavenworth), Prouty, and Taylor. The meeting then adjourned.

The charter committee acted with dispatch, the charter being filed the following day with six named incorporators: Martin, Crawford, Prouty, Kingman, Reynolds, and Taylor. The board of directors then met and perfected organization under the charter, electing Kingman president, Crawford vice-president, Martin treas-
urer, and Baker secretary. With this done the board adjourned
subject to call by the president.31

The persons missing from the lists just enumerated were im-
portant to such a project, and the reasons for their absence were
not apparent. Wilder was in southern Kansas about this time.32
F. G. Adams was soon to take over the key position in the Society.
No one was in attendance nor was named to the board of directors
from Lawrence, Manhattan, Emporia, or Osawatomie, the old rad-
cal strongholds of the days of the territorial wars of 1856 and
earlier. Only Prouty was a fifty-sixer. Immigrants of 1857 included
Anthony, Crawford, Kingman, Martin, Miller, and Wilder. Taylor
arrived in 1858, Baker in 1860, Reynolds in 1865, and Prentis in
1869. Relatively, they were newcomers. Although they were all
antislavery, and most of them had Civil War military records, but
few of them had been active participants in territorial radicalism.
In other words, the controversies that were to be waged so bitterly
during the next decades over credits and honors were not at issue
with these men as of 1875. And furthermore, so far as these men
did become partisans in the later controversies, they had to depend
altogether upon hearsay, except as to events of 1857 or later.

The importance of having something in hand that was tangible
Baker made the basis of an appeal in connection with his editorial
of December 16 announcing the organization of the Society:

31. The original records of these transactions are represented by two sheets of manu-
script minutes, apparently kept by Baker. These were copied at some later date into
"Record A," pp. 1, 2, a manuscript record book of proceedings of the board of directors of
the Kansas State Historical Society, Manuscript division, K. S. H. S. The record of action
as written on the two sheets did not distinguish the proceedings of the two different days,
and the material was copied in that form. At a later date corrections were inserted in the
book, between the lines and in the margin. A summary of action, with Baker’s explanatory
comment, was printed in the Commonwealth, December 16, 1875.

For some unexplained reason errors of dating found their way into the original notes
of proceeding. The figure 13 was written first, then (15), and later both were struck out
and 14 was inserted above the line. Most of the printed accounts of the historical society
use the date December 15 for the organization meeting. There is little question that the
correct date was December 14. The Commonwealth, December 16, 1875, indicated that
the meeting was on December 14, the charter signed on the 14, filed with the secretary of
state the 15, and the officers elected on the 15. Furthermore, a corroborating of the correct-
ness of the 14 as the date is found in the Commonwealth locals December 15, which
reported R. B. Taylor of Wyandotte had arrived the day before, and would go to Emporia
the 15. Taylor was present at the organization meeting. In "Record A," p. 1, the date
of the organization meeting was changed by erasure and insertion of 14.

Still another difficulty is found in the membership of the board of directors. The original
minutes of the organization meeting and as copied into "Record A," listed nine members.
The Commonwealth, December 16, 1875, listed only seven, omitting the last two; Prouty
and Taylor. The charter as filed with the secretary of state specified seven directors.
Possibly, if not probably, the list of nine were named prior to an agreement on seven by
the charter committee. Why the lesser number was specified in the charter and what
method of elimination of the two extras afterward as enumerated by the Commonwealth has
not been determined. The text of the charter was copied into "Record A," pp. 5-4. The
original is in K. S. H. S. manuscripts. But the Commonwealth, December 16, 1875, may
have been in error or may have taken liberties with the charters, or any which was
unmistakable. However, Adams' pamphlet of April 28, 1877—"A list of the collections
" did not help matters very by adding a tenth name, that of M. W. Reynolds, of
Parsons.

32. Wilder, "Diary," December 10, 18, 19, 20, 1875.
In order to get started, and show that business is meant, the secretary would suggest to newspaper publishers throughout the State to aid in inaugurating this society. He knows of but one way to do it; that is for them to donate for say three months, their papers to the Society. If they would do so, the Secretary agrees to see that they are preserved at any rate and hopes to secure a room and place them on file. But they shall all be preserved in a shape to file and be bound when the society gets into regular operation.

Besides newspapers, Baker solicited donations of books, pamphlets and documents relating to Kansas history.

In the Commonwealth, January 5, 1876, Baker announced that the Kansas State Historical Society was “now fully organized.” By this he meant that a change in personnel had taken place, that the organization had a temporary location, and that it had in fact become a repository of historical materials. F. G. Adams was introduced as the new secretary of the society with this explanation: “As Mr. Baker who was first elected Secretary, is too full of his own business to give it the attention it deserves, the board of directors has accepted his resignation, and appointed Hon. F. G. Adams in his place.” As for a home for the infant society the announcement was made that: “He [Adams] has procured a bookcase, and for the present it is in the Auditor’s [Wilder’s] office.” It was in this case that all books, documents, and newspapers contributed to the society were being kept. Baker hoped that all newspapers being received would be paid for soon—meaning that a legislative appropriation was expected for that purpose and to bind them: “We don’t believe that the State Historical Society will die this time. . . . We trust within the next thirty days a copy of every paper published in the State will be sent to the ‘Historical Society.’ Let them all commence with the first issue of 1876.”

There was much more in these summaries than met the eye. First was the status of Adams. He had come to Topeka in April as a clerk in the state treasurer’s office. The Lappin bond forgery scandal broke in mid-December. Wilder, the state auditor, learned the facts December 18, on his way back to Topeka from Fort Scott. Lappin resigned December 20. John Francis agreed, December 21, to take over the office.33 In the cleanup what would become of Adams? No doubt several men were interested, but Wilder’s diary entry for December 29 read: “Francis keeps Frank Adams for [Governor] Osborn & me.” That throws some light on the fact that on January 4, 1876, the diary entry recorded that the “Bookcase for Historical Soc. Library moved into office”—that is, into Wilder’s

33. Ibid., December 18, 20, 21, 1875.
department, the auditor's office space. The implication of this language is that the decisions had been reached prior to January 4, and other data tend to corroborate that conclusion. In the second edition of his *Annals of Kansas*, Wilder dated Adams' tenure as secretary as beginning January 1, 1876. It is even possible that Adams was in fact the acting secretary prior to that date. The conclusion would seem reasonable that Baker and friends had already decided upon Adams as his successor as secretary of the society, and that the Lappin scandal threatened to disrupt those plans. Having secured Francis' confirmation of security for Adams in the treasurer's office the transfer was then completed and announced January 5 in the *Commonwealth*.

Another difficulty in the historical record is of a different character. The *Commonwealth*, January 5, 1876, had announced as an accomplished fact the resignation of Baker, its acceptance by the board of directors, and the appointment of Adams. Yet the manuscript "Record A" of the Society, containing the "official" minutes of proceedings of the board record those events as occurring February 4, 1876. Obviously, the contemporary record of the *Commonwealth*, January 5, 1876, prepared and printed by Baker himself, and Wilder's diary must take precedence over the "official" minutes. If the date of that portion of the official minutes which deals with these points was changed from February 4 to January 4, all would be straight. Another possibility must not be overlooked, however, and that is, the board may not have actually met "officially" on January 4 or some earlier date to make the decisions. Among this small group of friends, working together in intimate harmony, the decision could have been made informally through separate consultations, and then the proceedings of February 4 would represent merely the perfecting of the official record with respect to actions already taken less formally. Whichever view is taken of the official record, the facts remain the same so far as they bear upon the momentous event in the history of the Society, the advent of F. G. Adams as secretary. The point should be kept in mind quite clearly that these men were friends, and they trusted each other, and were determined to make this historical society enterprise a success. The formalities were not important to them so long as the job was actually being done.

Another unresolved problem is that of the memorial to the legislature for an appropriation, and again the accuracy of the proceedings in the "official" minutes of the board entered as February 4
FRANKLIN GEORGE ADAMS
1824-1899

ZU ADAMS
1859-1911

RICHARD BAXTER TAYLOR
1822-1877

FLOYD PERRY BAKER
1820-1909
is at stake. The statement was made there that "the Secretary was directed to draw up a memorial to the legislature asking for an appropriation of fifteen hundred dollars for the use of the Society. . . ." In the Commonwealth report of the meeting of the board on February 4, the language read "a memorial was adopted. . . ." Strictly interpreted the first was prospective, a directive, while the second implied the adoption of the memorial after it had been drafted. Baker advanced his arguments in support of state aid by pointing out that:

More than twenty years have gone by since the Territory was organized, and not a dollar has been contributed for the preservation of our history. . . . We are behind every Western State. The Wisconsin Society is celebrated not only all over this country but throughout the civilized world. It has a library of more than twenty-five thousand volumes, and has received from the State more than one hundred thousand dollars. Kansas does not expect to equal Wisconsin. . . .

In the minutes of the board meeting of February 4, 1876, appeared for the first time a copy of the bylaws of the Society:

The object of the Society shall be to collect, embody, arrange and preserve a library of books, pamphlets, maps, charts, manuscripts, papers, paintings, statuary, pre-historic relics and other materials illustrative of the history and the antiquities of the state; to rescue from oblivion the memory of its early pioneers, and to obtain and preserve narratives of their exploits, perils, hardy adventures and patriotic achievements; to exhibit faithfully the past and present conditions and resources of Kansas; and to take proper steps to promote the study of history, by lectures and other means for the diffusion of information relative to the history and resources of the state.

The bylaws defined four kinds of members, corresponding and honorary, selected by the board of directors, and two paying classes, life and annual members, citizens of the state, assessed $20 and $2 respectively.

The statement of objects as given in the bylaws was an elaboration upon the simple formulation of the charter: "to secure past and future records of the state of Kansas, and to adopt such means as may be available to preserve the same in the future."

The campaign of solicitation for materials of Kansas history as carried on in January, 1876, and later by Baker in the Commonwealth and Adams by mail, yielded results in current newspapers and in books and documents. Judge Kingman, the president of this as well as of the defunct Kansas Historical Society of 1867-1868, made the first gift, one of books, January 7, 1876, according to Wilder's diary. The entry did not elaborate and the "Accession Record A" of the Society did not indicate whether these were from
his private library or from the earlier organization. Later, two files of newspapers, the *Herald of Freedom*, were contributed by David Dickinson, the state librarian. The description of these, one 1855-1859, and the other 1855, seems to justify the inference that these were the files Wilder had bought for Kingman in the name of the Kansas Historical Society, and for Dickinson for the state library, from G. W. Smith, and James Christian, respectively. Apparently after Wilder had used them during the summer of 1875 for the *Annals*, he had turned both files over to the state library. Frouty contributed the *Freeman's Champion*, 1857, and the Burlington *Patriot*, 1864-1867, and Wilder the Elwood *Free Press* and the St. Joseph *Free Democrat*. The "Accession Record" of the society listed meticulously all these gifts. On March 7, 1876, the first anniversary of his editorship of the *Commonwealth*, Baker summarized the year's accomplishments, an impressive showing for one year of historical activity in 1875 under the several stimuli that have just been reviewed.

Baker was not disposed to permit a letting down of activity. On March 12 he wrote that the society must not be permitted to die of neglect. He regretted what he called the unwise action of the legislature in not appropriating money, but proposed a membership drive. At the moment Adams was on a trip West, but when he returned Baker hoped

that the society will be called together and a circular issued appealing to citizens to become members. . . . Meanwhile we hope the newspapers of the State will unite in bringing it to the notice of their readers. Let them continue to send the papers and have the amount applied on membership. We believe enough money could be raised to keep it on its feet.

Another point might have been made but was not, that the legislature could hardly have been expected to appropriate money for an organization without members. If the record of the board meeting of February 4 was correct, the action of that day for the first time defined the conditions of membership.

Possibly the failure of the appropriation was a blessing in disguise. At any rate a meeting of the board was held in the auditor's office March 30 that initiated an aggressive policy, although, according to Wilder's diary and the official minutes, only four men were present: Kingman, Baker, Adams, and himself. In effect, these four were the Historical Society. Wilder moved and it was adopted "that the secretary be directed to send to the editor of each

of the newspapers of the state a certificate of annual membership
with the request that it be accepted in lieu of the subscription price
of the paper, and that the paper be still furnished the society for
filing during the year.” Another resolution directed the secretary
“to prepare a circular of general information as to the objects and
present status of the Society, and to procure its publication as far
as practicable in the newspapers of the state.” The third item of
business was the presentation to the society by Adams of Indian
artifacts, and a proposal which was adopted that the collection of
such material of prehistoric vintage be included among the objects
of the Society. The fourth and final act was a directive to the presi-
dent and to the secretary to present certificates of membership “in
consideration of such donations as may be deemed worthy.” 35

In reporting this meeting, the Commonwealth, April 1, added
the comment that, “The society is producing among other good
results, the effect to stimulate the writers for Kansas press to the
contribution of much more than the usual amount of historical
matter.” Also, the report on newspapers being received by the
Society was brought up to date in giving the number at “about
fifty.” This column, as printed in the Commonwealth, was re-
printed on 12-inch slips of paper with a heading requesting other
newspapers to copy the Commonwealth story. In this manner, and
at a minimum cost, the secretary was enabled to fulfill his directive
to provide one circular. Another circular was printed on sheets five
inches by eight inches, dated March, 1876, in explanation to news-
paper men of the status of their relations with the society—annual
membership in exchange for files—and closed with an appeal to the
recipient to act as an agent of the Society in securing annual mem-
bers at two dollars each.36

The activity of Secretary Adams was reflected also in solicitation
for historical material from outside the state and for the establish-
ment of regular relations for exchange of publications with other
institutions—state historical societies, learned institutions, geologi-
cal survey, federal departments, and railroad companies.37

The Centennial, the Historical Society, and Local History

The subject of county histories had received some attention in
1868 when the Burlington Patriot and the Olathe Central had each
sponsored a history. John Speer had taken notice of these efforts

36. Copies of these documents are preserved in the Kansas State Historical Society
library.
37. Kansas State Historical Society, “Incoming Correspondence,” v. 1 passim.
in the Lawrence Daily Tribune April 26, 1868, and urged that “the plan [be] adopted by every county paper of the State. . . . Such histories would form a valuable basis for a history of the State, and would be more full and complete than anything of the kind out yet.” No survey has been undertaken to determine how many such histories of whole counties or of communities were printed that year or for other years, but many such accounts of varying merits were published by newspapers, especially of the newer counties. If for no other reason, these were compiled and printed as an aspect of booming for immigration into their area.

In its report to the governor in January, 1876, the board of centennial managers had admitted the indifferent success of its efforts to stimulate organization of the counties to assume responsibility for exhibits for Philadelphia. In connection with the statutory requirement for a “condensed history” of Kansas, it pointed to the papers in the Fourth Annual Report of the State Board of Agriculture. But for 1876 and the actual celebration it recommended the delivery on July 4, 1876, at each county seat in the state of “an address, which shall be a synopsis of the history of the county.” Town and township histories could also be preserved in that way. On April 25, Governor Osborn issued a centennial proclamation, incorporating the joint resolution of congress, calling upon citizens of counties, cities, and towns to assemble on the Fourth of July next to listen to a history of the city, town, or county, as the case may be. The Commonwealth offered suggestions for implementing the program in each locality, among them, to “combine the duties of the historian and the orator . . . .” and to season it “with as much spread eagle, red fire, and star spangled banner as can be conveniently worked in.”

In order to be assured of such benefits as might accrue from these Fourth of July local histories, the Historical Society sent out printed postal cards under the date line June 21 asking for copies, whether in pamphlet or in newspaper form for permanent preservation: “Thus the entire history of the State will be revised and brought up to the present time.” Adams reported that 75 newspapers had published histories, but several were behind schedule, “notably Leavenworth, Douglas and Doniphan.” The Commonwealth published two important editorials on the subject: one July 13, describing the celebrations in many different parts of the

38. Commonwealth, April 25, 1876.
39. Copies of the postal cards are in “Kansas State Historical Society Circulars, Blanks, etc.” in library, K. S. H. S. The Commonwealth, June 23, 1876, reprinted the request.
40. Ibid., July 25, 1876.
state, and one of July 25 interpreting the significance of the occasion to Kansas:

The good name of Kansas will be more dear to us hereafter, and those who cast a stain upon it will be more severely reproached. In our formative period we were 'flockers' and 'movers,' there was the inevitable laxity in the demands made upon public officers. That day has gone by. Whoever steals, bribes, robs or swindles Kansas now, has struck a blow at each of us. We are here to stay, and will not submit to insult, outrage, or wrong doing.

In the perspective of subsequent events this was somewhat optimistic, but after two senatorial scandals in 1873 and two treasury scandals of still more recent date, there was good reason for wishful thinking about the future.

The Historical Society may justly be said to have prospered during its first year of actual operation. On July 1, 1876, or later, Adams moved the Society's belongings from the auditor's office into new quarters assigned in the state house—a room occupied exclusively by the Society under the stairway to the senate gallery.41 Under the date line October 6, 1876, a new circular was printed: "For the information of those inquiring as to the objects and condition of the Kansas State Historical Society. . . ." It contained a brief statement of the origins, the organization meeting, the names of the officers, the objects of the organization as stated in the bylaws, and a note was made of the Society's location, with a description of the materials assembled. Noted particularly were 140 newspapers regularly received and preserved for binding, and more than 100 county and local histories, "more or less elaborately written," and published in the papers during the year "relating to nearly every portion of the State. Not a little of the public interest which has led to the compilation of so many newspaper histories has undoubtedly grown out of the work of this Society." The circular closed by calling attention to the annual meeting which would occur in January, 1877.42

CONSOLIDATING POLICIES

The first annual meeting of the Kansas State Historical Society was held in Union Hall, Topeka, January 25, 1877. In the absence of President Kingman, Vice-President George A. Crawford presided. The annual address for that occasion was to have been delivered by Crawford on the subject "Early History of Kansas."

41. Wilder's diary recorded the completion of the move July 14. The Annals of Kansas (1886) said July 1.
42. In the Kansas Historical Society library. This circular was printed on a single sheet of paper, five and one-half inches by eight inches.
On account of ill health he had not been able to prepare for the occasion. An address was given by Isaac Sharp, of Council Grove, on the “ethnological views of the native Indian tribes of the western plains.” Adams then recapitulated the activities of the Society in much the same language as the circular of October 6. Thirty-five bound volumes of Kansas newspapers and periodicals, 1855 to date, were held by the Society.

A board of directors was then elected: T. H. Cavanaugh, G. A. Crawford, Sol Miller, J. A. Martin, John Francis, F. P. Baker, T. Dwight Thacher. This brought into the roster of officials three names new to the society; Cavanaugh, of Salina, Secretary of State Francis, and Thacher. Cavanaugh was born in Indiana and came to Kansas in 1869. The inclusion of Thacher, incidentally, brought into the official group for the first time a Lawrence man and an immigrant of 1857. Francis was English born, migrating to the United States and Kansas in 1855. The board of directors met in the office of the secretary of state, where the new officers were elected: G. A. Crawford, president; John A. Martin, vice-president; John Francis, treasurer; and F. G. Adams, secretary. A decision was reached to arrange a series of historical lectures, and a committee composed of Cavanaugh, Francis, and Adams was given the responsibility. A vote of thanks was given to Hugh Cameron, of Lawrence, for an 1855 file of the Kansas Free State, which had been published in Lawrence by Josiah Miller and R. C. Elliott. Also: “The President and Secretary were directed to employ a canvasser to solicit membership to the Society and gather historical material.” 43 In reporting the meeting the Commonwealth, January 26, added a comment about the audience at the annual meeting—“the greater portion . . . were ladies”—which may or may not be a matter of significance. The Society of 1859 had denied them membership.

The historical lecture series for 1877 was arranged by the committee: N. L. Prentis, “Pike of Pike’s Peak,” February 19; Charles Robinson, “Kansas Political Events, 1854-1858,” February 26; N. F. Handy, “New Mexico and Her People,” March 26; Sidney Clarke, “Lane of Kansas,” April 9; S. S. Prouty, “The Kansas Emigrants of 1856,” April 23; and S. N. Wood, “Early Kansas,” May 14. 44 All the lectures were held at night in the Presbyterian church. So far as they dealt with Kansas topics they were generally in a eulogistic or moderate vein. Charles Robinson’s appearance as lecturer was

44. Ibid., proceedings of the board of directors, pp. 13-16.
the first time his name was connected with the Historical Society, and he treated his controversial subject with tact and moderation. Clarke went all out in glorification of Lane, “the Garibaldi of our politics.”\textsuperscript{45} In view of the stormy record of S. N. Wood and some remarks made in the correspondence arranging his lecture, Adams’ misgivings were aroused as to what Wood might say. His letter of admonition to Wood was a masterpiece, and revealed more effectively probably than anything else that can be cited the ideals and policy that actuated Adams throughout his long career as secretary of the Society, 1876-1899:

You say your lecture will be a kind of ‘autobiography.’ The Society will not dictate what shall be the character of lectures delivered by those who are invited to lecture before it. But it is obvious that the usefulness of the Society would be impaired by the introduction of such matters in these lectures as should arouse animosities among those who should cooperate for the sole object of recording and perpetuating the memories of history.\textsuperscript{46}

The legislature of 1877 appropriated $3,000 for the Historical Society, for the biennium, $1,000 of which was ear-marked for the purchase of the “Thomas H. Webb Collection” of manuscripts and scrapbooks. Incidental to the appropriation was an important enlargement of the objects of the Society. The money was authorized for the collection of material “illustrative of the history and progress of Kansas in particular and the west in general.” That principle that Kansas history could not be studied effectively in a vacuum, was to become fundamental to the policy of making the Society a repository of materials for the history of “Kansas in particular and the west in general.”\textsuperscript{47} A called meeting of the board of directors was held March 13 to decide matters “growing out of the appropriation made . . . by the state [legislature].”\textsuperscript{48} Six members were present.

 Appropriately, the first expenditure authorized out of the state money was a salary for Secretary Adams—$25 per month to be retroactive to January 1, 1877.\textsuperscript{49} Of course, Adams’ major income was still his salary as clerk in the treasurer’s office, and his services to the Society were performed on borrowed time—either from the state or from his private life. Also, the \textit{Commonwealth}, August 12, 1877, performed an act of justice in explaining to the public how

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Commonwealth}, April 10, 1877.
\textsuperscript{47} State of Kansas, \textit{The Session Laws of 1877} . . . , ch. 36, approved March 6, 1877.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Commonwealth}, March 14, 1877.
part of the work was done: "Mr. Adams, or rather his daughter [Zu Adams], working without pay, files all papers. . . ." Just when Zu Adams began this work for her father was not stated, but probably soon after her 17th birthday anniversary, which was January 13, 1876. She died in the service of the Society in 1911. At the second annual meeting, January 22, 1878, the financial statement accounted for only $237.50 paid for the services of the secretary during 1877. For 1878 he received his full $300, and his assistant, Zu Adams, $130.50 Still another subsidy to the Society came from certain railroads. The M. K. & T., the Santa Fe, the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Gulf, and the Leavenworth, Lawrence & Galveston companies granted Adams passes for official business. The Commonwealth, September 20, 1877, was disposed to advance this fact in evidence that "Corporations have souls—some of them at least."

In view of the success of the lectures at Topeka during the early months of 1877 the Society initiated a much more elaborate program for the winter of 1877-1878. A four-page leaflet was printed in October explaining the plan to take the historical lectures to the state. The early history of Kansas, the argument ran, rested on memories of living persons: "These persons are vanishing with each succeeding year, and the facts within their knowledge will be lost forever, unless committed to paper and preserved." The Society made an issue of the point that "it is not merely in respect to political affairs that important matters in Kansas history remain unwritten. . . . The wonderful activity and strife in political affairs in early times obscured the history of many events less exciting and yet of great importance as concerned the material, social and moral founding of the State." A list of suggested topics was printed which illustrated effectively the possibilities of historical writing other than political. The manuscripts of all lectures were to become the property of the Society. The arrangements in each town were to be in the hands of local committees. Either the circular itself or summaries of it were published throughout the state.51

While the emphasis was upon lectures, the program included historical papers to be filed with the Society. The Commonwealth, December 30, reported a list of 50 men and their subjects already committed for delivery either as lectures or deposited as papers. Later this list was expanded to 70 promised, and the Common-

51. Atchison Daily Champion, October 21; Topeka Commonwealth, October 24, 1877, are examples. An original copy of the leaflet is in the library, K. S. H. S.
wealth, January 22, 1878, on the eve of the second annual meeting reported 79. Of course not all of these commitments were fulfilled, probably only a small proportion, but a definite impetus was given to the writing out of historical stories.

The second annual meeting of the Society was held January 22, 1878. The board of directors elected included George A. Crawford, F. P. Baker, John A. Martin, F. G. Adams, John Francis, C. K. Holliday, and Charles Robinson. The last two named were the members new to the official roster of the Society. Both were of the settler vintage of 1854. The new board elected officers for the ensuing year: John A. Martin, president; F. P. Baker, vice-president; John Francis, treasurer; and F. G. Adams, secretary.

Before the third annual meeting, the board of directors decided upon a constitution for the Society, a luxury it had thus far forgone, and revised the bylaws. A board meeting December 26, 1878, approved a draft constitution prepared by the secretary “modeled after that of the Wisconsin Historical Society.” It was adopted at the third annual meeting, January 21, 1879. The board of directors was enlarged from seven to thirty-six, each serving two-year terms, half renewed each year. Editors and publishers contributing their paper became active members during the continuance of such contribution. The annual meeting ordered another series of historical lectures. The new board of directors elected as officers: Charles Robinson, president; Holliday and Anthony, vice-presidents; Francis, treasurer; and Adams, secretary. At a meeting of the board, January 31, 1879, Adams was allotted a salary of $1,500 annually, and an executive committee of five was authorized, to be selected from the board.52

The legislature of 1879 appropriated $1,000 for the remainder of the fiscal year, and $2,500 each for the next two years. Also an act was passed designating the Society as trustee for the state, and redefining its duties. Particularly;

It shall be the duty of the society to collect books, maps, and other papers and materials illustrative of the history of Kansas in particular, and of the west generally; to procure from the early pioneers narratives of events relative to the early settlement of Kansas, and to the early explorations, Indian occupancy and overland travel in the territory and the west; to procure facts and statements relative to the history and conduct of our Indian tribes, and to gather all information calculated to exhibit faithfully the antiquities and the past and present conditions, resources and progress of the state. . . ." 53

CONCLUSION

By these events it may be fairly said that the Kansas State Historical Society was founded as a going concern, but a few points should be reviewed by way of recapitulation. The accompanying chart may aid in visualizing perspective about the original organizing group in the Historical Society, the 12 organizers plus F. G. Adams, to whom they entrusted their Society. Conspicuously, these were not old men who had outlived their usefulness, with nothing to do but relive in memory past strife. Only three Massachusetts educated men were in the group, and only three were college men. Nine of the 13 had no formal education except what they received in the common school, in some cases supplemented by some academy experience. The two who were the product of Massachusetts common schools, Kingman and Taylor, were anything but what are usually thought of as New England Yankees. Four were the product of New York common schools, and two of Pennsylvania schools, and to each of these states one from the college men, must be credited for his common schooling. Conspicuously, the controversial characters who had played the leading roles in early territorial days were not among the founders. They were practical men of affairs centering in Topeka, at that time the intellectual as well as the political capital of Kansas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KSHS Organizing Group</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Age, 1875</th>
<th>State of Birth</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D. R. Anthony</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Common schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. P. Baker</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Common schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George A. Crawford</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Pa.</td>
<td>Jefferson University, 1847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. A. Kingman</td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>Common schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. W. Martin</td>
<td>1841</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Pa.</td>
<td>Common schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John A. Martin</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Pa.</td>
<td>Common schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sol Miller</td>
<td>1831</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Common schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. L. Prentiss</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Ill.</td>
<td>Ill. VT common schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. S. Prouty</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Common schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. W. Reynolds</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. W. Wilder</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Harvard college</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The newspaper membership idea dated from 1860 when it was adopted by the Kansas Scientific and Historical Society.\textsuperscript{54} It was incorporated into the Kansas Historical Society of 1867. Wilder’s proposal of April 8, 1875, that newspaper subscriptions be paid for out of legislative appropriations was the deviation from the tradition. The denial of the first request for an appropriation threw the

new Society back upon the earlier principle, and one which bound
the Kansas press and the Historical Society together in mutual sup-
port and service.

A third theme that needs pointing up is that of the scope and ob-
jects of a Historical Society. The philosophical society idea has
been traced through the antecedent organizations. Also, the tend-
cy to divide the body of knowledge into compartments. The
Kansas Academy of Science had set up for itself claiming jurisdic-
tion over the science area, but it had extended its activities into
social areas such as linguistics and anthropology. The Kansas State
Historical Society, 1876, persisted in many aspects of the phil-
osophical society tradition. The Goss Collection of birds is a con-
spicuous example. Also, the Historical Society included in its ob-
jectives the collection of material on antiquities (anthropology).
Adams was a member and an active contributor to that subject in
the Kansas Academy of Science. He made a gift of his collection
of artifacts to the Kansas State Historical Society on February 4,
1876, and his proposal to include that subject within the scope of
the Society's activities was adopted. One thing that had stimulated
so much interest in the prehistoric inhabitants was a study made of
materials excavated near Parkville, Mo.55

The type of historical material collected by the Society may be
 traced briefly. In amplification of the definitions incorporated in
the charter, the bylaws of 1876, and the statutes of 1877 and 1879,
the Society issued a series of circulars. One of the earlier of these,
undated, divided material desired by the Historical Society into
seven classes: (1) every book, on any subject . . . relating to
Kansas; (2) "pamphlets of all kinds" enumerating publication of
educational, religious, and social institutions; (3) newspapers and
magazines; (4) manuscripts; (5) maps, drawings, engravings,
photographs, paintings, and portraits connected with Kansas his-
tory; (6) curiosities of all kinds: coins, medals, paintings, statues,
and war relics; (7) Indians, contemporary and prehistoric. In
the next of the series of circulars, section 1 was broken down into
three, by making separate sections of matters relating to cities, and
to laws, and manuscripts were combined with the first section.
Educational and other institutions were given a separate section.
A still later version of the circular, in ten sections, separated manu-
scripts from the first section making it the second section. These
lists are ample testimony to the purpose of the organizing group

55. Although earlier excavations near Parkville had been made in 1853, they had been
forgotten. At that time G. C. Swallow had estimated the age of the ruins at about 1,000
years.—St. Joseph (Mo.) Gazette, November 9, 1853.
and especially to the secretary, Franklin G. Adams, who so largely guided policy making. He wished to avoid controversies; for him the Society was not a battleground for either individuals or causes. As he told S. N. Wood, so candidly, "the sole object" was "recording and perpetuating the memories of history." And as he emphasized in the circular of October, 1877, political affairs were not the whole story of Kansas; "strife in political affairs in early times obscured the history of many events less exciting and yet of great importance as concerned the material, social and moral founding of the State."

If the present writer has been at all successful in reconstructing the point of view of the founders of the Kansas State Historical Society, and their evaluation of what was central to its functions, a rereading of the successive Biennial Reports prepared by the secretary should take on a fresh meaning. Adams tried persistently to put first things first. The Third Biennial Report restated with emphasis (p. 16): "the chief and essential feature of a historical society is its library work," and by that he meant to place first the newspaper collections, and after them reports of societies, and institutions, pamphlets, maps, manuscripts, pictures, antiquities, etc., all of which he had evaluated in some detail in the First Biennial Report. The first major group of manuscripts acquired had been the Thomas H. Webb and the Thaddeus Hyatt collections.

True, the historical atmosphere was changing rapidly. Already the Lecompte-Anthony libel suit had been heard at Leavenworth.56 The Osawatomie monument was dedicated in 1877, and the Townsley confession was published late in 1879, thus reopening on a new basis the whole John Brown controversy. In spite of Franklin G. Adams, the Historical Society was soon to be turned more and more into a battleground,57 but through all that unpleasantness he persisted in his central objective that the function of a Historical Society was to serve as the repository of historical materials, preserved in trust for use in the future.