Notes on the Writing of General Histories of Kansas

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PART FIVE: THE "VANITY" HISTORIES

INTRODUCTION

The financing of history is always a problem, but the costs of local history, because of the limited audience of readers, makes its publication through conventional channels very nearly prohibitive. Some types of books using more or less of historical material may sell on the commercial market in a volume sufficient to pay for themselves. Highly popularized history, thrillers, or sensational fictionalized stories of several varieties, seldom are good history, and more often are not history at all. Of course, history may be subsidized, but that presents problems also. When interested parties provide the costs, they usually control the results.

The experience of Holloway and Wilder, related in earlier essays in this series, is the fate that overtook most projects of serious local history launched independently regardless of quality. In spite of the artificial enthusiasm about history during the centennial celebration agitation of 1875 and 1876, and all of the friendly publicity provided gratuitously by Wilder's fellow journalists, few of his friends and admirers proved their interest in Kansas history to the extent of the five dollar purchase price of the Annals of Kansas.

One method devised for financing local history was found in what is sometimes called "Vanity" histories, sometimes called subscription histories. The latter term is not exact, because Holloway had announced that his history was sold only on subscription. By that he meant only that it was marketed by agents or canvassers who sold it by personal house-to-house calls. His agents offered for sale, on its merits, a printed book. The procedure of the vanity histories was different. Whether a single volume or several volumes, such a project included two categories of material; history and biography. The feature of special interest here is the biographies. The persons included were not selected upon the basis of their importance to the area whose history was being presented, but on the test of whether or not they placed an order for the

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history. With a few possible exceptions, the only biographical sketches included were those of contracting purchasers. The principal attraction offered to convince a prospect that he should place his order for the forthcoming history was that the purchaser would see his own biographical sketch in print. As a further inducement to appeal to his vanity, at an additional price, his portrait might appear also. On account of this feature, the derisive name "Mug Books" was often applied. So far as the history proper was concerned the purchaser was contracting only for a promised history, of unknown quality, to be delivered at some future date and to be paid for in full on or before delivery. Details about conditions and payments varied with the several projects. Whether the history would be of any value as history depended upon the reliability of the company promoting the enterprise. In any case, the outcome must be judged upon individual merits, but as highly speculative commercial ventures, the companies that produced them must of necessity place the profit motive first.

I. TUTTLE'S History of Kansas

In Kansas the first venture in the vanity type of history was that of Charles Richard Tuttle, A New Centennial History of the State of Kansas, Being a Full and Complete Civil, Political and Military History of the State. According to the title page, it was published at Madison, Wis., and Lawrence, Kan., in 1876, by the Inter-State Book Company. However, it was stereotyped, printed, and bound at Madison. The exact date when the first copies were delivered to subscribers is uncertain, as are many other of the basic facts about the production and marketing of the book.

THE AUTHOR

Among other things, Tuttle represented himself as a professor and as a minister, apparently of the Methodist denomination, born in 1848. The Library of Congress card catalogue includes 24 book titles under his name, in a few cases in admitted joint authorship. Another title, not found in this catalogue, is a History of Indiana, which must be added, or 25 in all. These books included eight histories of states, of regions, or of the United States, 1873-1876. Among the state histories were Michigan, 1873; Wisconsin, 1875; Indiana, 1875; Iowa, 1876; and Kansas, 1876. Besides the Iowa and Kansas books, two other histories were issued under the date 1876. Another group of historical and descriptive works were four dealing with Canada, 1877-1897, and one with Alaska, 1914. Five
inspirational and reform books appeared between 1878 and 1896. During the early years of the 20th century Tuttle became interested in the Oriental cult “Yang,” or “new idea” philosophy, and produced four books in seven editions, 1904-1908. “Yang” represents the male principle or good, while “Yin” stands for the female or evil principle in Chinese philosophy from which the cult was derived. In 1916, Tuttle produced a book on World War I, and then in 1917 and 1918 two books on co-operatives.

Additional information about Tuttle’s background and intentions was alleged by the Madison (Wis.) State Journal, October 6, 1875, upon the eve of the distribution of his History of Wisconsin: “He left the position of managing editor of the Boston Daily News, five years ago, to undertake the project of bringing out a history of the United States, in state volumes, and the end of the present year will carry him to the end of the fifth volume, making one volume a year . . . ,” besides other works.¹

As Colorado was admitted in 1876 as the centennial state, 38th state in the Union, Tuttle had 33 volumes, still ahead of him in order to complete the projected series of state histories credited to him by the State Journal story. This summary of publications and announced intentions is somewhat indicative of the type of man whose name appeared on the Tuttle, History of Kansas. Further details will emerge in due course.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORY PROJECT

The earliest mention found thus far of a Kansas history eminating from Madison, is an entry in D. W. Wilder’s diary July 17, 1875: “[Governor] Osborn received a letter from one Davis, in Madison, Wis., who proposes to publish an illustrated history of Kan. & biographical dictionary of Kansas men. Such books will sell better than mine.”² Scattered references to Tuttle and his History of Kansas leave much to be desired as to the chronology of the project. In his Annals of Kansas (1886) Wilder recorded under a date line of January 19, 1876, that the “Rev. Charles R. Tuttle comes to Kansas from Wisconsin to write a Kansas history.” This entry was not accurate, as other records show, and besides the body of the history must have been written already. The reasons for this last conclusion will develop later.

The first explicit evidence found of Tuttle’s activities in Kansas is

¹. Reprinted in the Leavenworth Daily Times, January 11, 1876.
². D. W. Wilder, “Diary,” manuscript division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka. A search of Governor Osborn’s official correspondence, in the K. S. H. S. archives division, has not turned up such a letter.
a letter to Gov. Thomas Osborn dated September 18, 1875. It was written on the printed letterhead of B. B. Russell & Company, publishers, which listed many histories by Prof. Charles R. Tuttle. Without any of the usual formalities of salutation, the letter ran as follows:

Dr Sir: I desire to secure the services of a man in your state in connection with my History, to travel from town to town, not to canvass, but to talk business to leading men. He must be a man of influence, generally known in the state, and exceedingly energetic—

I write this letter to you, hoping you can place it in the hands of such a person. To the right kind of a man I will pay $200 per month. An ex-congressman did the work for me in Mich. It is a chance for some man of influence who can spare the time to travel through the state for a few months to make a $1000—or more, in a work that is in every way pleasant and suited to the tastes and scruples of the most particular.

You may have a friend or an acquaintance that you can aid by putting him in correspondence with me.

Please excuse the liberty,

Yours etc.,
C. R. Tuttle.

There must have been an enclosure or another communication not mentioned, because the governor's private secretary, Ward Burlingame, replied October 6 on two points. First, the governor had no suitable person in mind. Secondly, a memorandum of material for a biographical sketch and the photograph requested were enclosed. Furthermore, the rather indiscreet permission was granted to put the data in such a form as Tuttle might think proper.\(^3\)

What happened next is not clear, but on January 11, 1876, the Leavenworth Times carried a story about a new “History of Kansas,” saying:

We were shown yesterday a prospectus copy of the new “Illustrated History of Kansas,” by Prof. C. R. Tuttle, author of several state histories. The work is being published by R. S. Peale & Co., who, for the purpose of extending the work of canvassing the State, have opened an office in Leavenworth, at 236 Delaware street. Prof. Tuttle is now in the city, making his headquarters at the above office. He is collecting materials for the completion of the Kansas history, which will be ready for delivery to subscribers in about sixty days.

In the same “news” story the Times quoted the State Journal (Madison, Wis.) account of the History of Wisconsin, by Tuttle, assisted by D. S. Durrie, of the Wisconsin Historical Society and published by B. B. Russell & Company. The Kansas volume was to be similar to the Wisconsin book, but there was no explanation about the difference in the name of the publisher, or of the fact

\(^3\) Tuttle to Osborn, September 18, 1875.—Governor Osborn's incoming correspondence; reply, Governor Osborn's letterpress books, v. 5, p. 491, K. S. H. S. archives division.
that Tuttle was using B. B. Russell & Company stationery which represented his History of Kansas as one of its books.

As already explained Tuttle had failed in his effort to maneuver Governor Osborn into a position of appearing to sponsor his history. Why Tuttle established his headquarters in Leavenworth instead of in Topeka during the legislative session is not clear. It could have been because Leavenworth was the metropolis of Kansas at the time, but other factors may have operated. Apparently he had arrived during the first week of January, because, on Sunday, January 9, he occupied the pulpit of the First Methodist church, of which the Rev. Dr. T. H. Phillips was pastor. He assisted Phillips in the services of January 16, preached the evening sermons on January 23 and 30, and after an absence from the city, again on February 20. On Sunday, January 30, the Times printed a sermon on "Preachers and Preaching," which apparently he had delivered earlier.4

In the "Personal" news column of the Times for February 1, 1876, two paragraphs appeared separately, one reporting that: "Rev. Charles R. Tuttle, who is at present engaged in writing a history of Kansas, went to Topeka yesterday." The second stated that the Rev. T. H. Phillips, pastor of the Methodist church had gone to Topeka yesterday (Monday) for about a week. He was in his pulpit, however, Sunday, February 6. The Times, February 15, reported that: "Prof. C. R. Tuttle, the Kansas historian, has gone to Madison, Wis., to move his family to this place to complete his history. He will be here about Saturday next." He was in the pulpit of the Methodist church Sunday evening, February 20, but no information is available about his family. This was his last appearance in Kansas for some time.

During the first week of February, while he was in Topeka, Tuttle apparently made the most of his opportunities, probably with the aid of the Rev. Dr. Phillips who was in a position to introduce him. Just what did occur must be drawn inferentially from a few authentic documents. His return to Madison, which the Times had reported, afforded the background for a letter to Governor Osborn, dated Madison, February 9, 1876, relative to the reprinting of material from the Fourth Annual Report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture:

4. The church news appeared each week in the Times in the Sunday and the Tuesday issues, if reported to the paper in time. Often the Tuesday reports summarized some of the sermons. If a report for any church did not appear, it was assumed that the data was not furnished by the interested parties.
Gov. Thos A. Osborn

Sir:

Please send me an order from the proper authorities worded about the same as the enclosed

We shall bring out the first edition of Kansas in about 6 weeks and I would like the order as soon as possible as I wish to return to KS before the legislature adjourns, and desire to attend to the printing of whatever matter we take from the Report before I leave. I think now of embodying all the Co. sketches and all the engravings in my work. I would not trouble you in the matter but feel confident that notwithstanding the state should issue even 100000 copies of the report, further benefit will arise from its partial republication in my work. I will give the proper credit both to the Board of Agri, and to the contributors to the work in every particular. Please confer with Mr Gray and get me the order as soon as you can

Truly yours

C. R. TUTTLE.

P.S. Called on Rand McNally & Co in Chi. They have no objection.

The draft of the order asked was as follows:

Mrs Rand McNally & Co.

Gentlemen

Please give C. R. Tuttle permission to have electrotype plates made from any or all pages of the Kansas Fourth Agricultural Report, including engravings or letter press, and also permit him to make such changes in said plates in electrotyping them as will show that they have been incorporated in his work, and will give the proper credit to the Board of Agriculture: or print for him in any quantity he may desire from any or all plates, with such changes as he may indicate. Provided in all cases, however that no expense or cost shall be made against the state of Kansas or the Board of Agriculture, etc.

The endorsement entered on the back of the letter was dated February 12, 1876—"referred to Hon. Alfred Gray," but the heading of the entry indulged in a bit of facetiousness—"Prof (?) Tuttle."

Under the same date as his letter to Osborn, Tuttle wrote one to Alfred Gray, secretary of the State Board of Agriculture:

I have written Gov. Osborn in relation to an order for the use of those plates. Please confer with him on the subject, and send me an order as soon as you can oblige.

In all places proper credit (?) to you and to the Board

Please send me in a letter to this office, your photo, and data for a sketch and autograph. I will send you proofs of portrait and sketch before they are finally printed. There will be no cost to you whatever for the portrait or sketch. Please let me have them soon. I obtained all the other state officers photos before I left, but did not get to see you again.

If I did not believe that it was for the interests of the state of Kansas, to have those plates in my book I would not ask for them. I have concluded to make Kansas my home and want to make the book the best one as it will probably be.

truly Yours,

CHARLES R. TUTTLE.
Gray did not respond to Tuttle’s letter, who wrote again:

March 2, A.D. 1876

Mr. Gray

As I have had no response from you, I write again to ask you now, if you will send me an order on Rand McNally & Co. to permit me to have them make electotype plates for me from the engravings of the cities, and towns only [?] Please send me this order at once.

Truly yours

C. R. Tuttle.

PS. Am not I to have your portrait and sketch.

What conferences were held between Osborn and Gray are not a matter of record, but all of the correspondence was filed with the governor, and no record has been found of replies.

The correspondence has been presented in full that the reader may gauge for himself what the Rev. Prof. Tuttle recorded by his own hand. The kindest thing that can be said about these letters is that they revealed him as inept and tactless. In view of the man’s experience in the world, however, it is difficult to be so charitable.

Further light on Tuttle’s mission to Kansas is derived from Topeka sources. The Daily Commonwealth, February 1, 1876, reported that Tuttle was spending the week in Topeka “in the interest of his new history of the state of Kansas... upon which he has been engaged for some time...” According to this story the publisher was to have been the Chicago house of H. S. Peale, and the book was to have been issued in March. This was in accord with the story printed in the Leavenworth Times, January 11. Again Wilder’s diary supplies important clues. On February 1, 1876, the diary recorded that he “Refused picture to Tuttle.” Apparently he reconsidered the following day: “Photo to Tuttle.” On February 9 the entry read: “Photo taken.” Later, May 3, an entry read: “Sent $20 to Phillips & Tuttle, Kan History.” The Phillips referred to in this entry was the Methodist minister at Leavenworth.5

Three points emerge from the foregoing evidence about Tuttle’s activities in Kansas during these early months of 1876. The office opened in Leavenworth was the base from which the subscription campaign was being conducted for a book not yet completed. The correspondence addressed to Osborn and Gray demonstrates that the county sketches were to be derived from the Fourth Annual Report of the State Board of Agriculture. As the necessary permission was not forthcoming, those had to be written. Lastly, the

solicitation of Gray and Wilder shows that material for the biographical sketches and the photographs were still being collected.

As printed, the History of Kansas contained 708 pages, 581 of which were text of the history. The county sketches covered 78 pages, and the biographical sketches 49 pages. The photographs were inserted and were not assigned page numbers. It is possible that the prospectus copy shown the Times in January contained the 581 pages of text and a dummy layout for the remainder as planned for a proposed 800 page volume. At any rate, the main text must have been in type and printed soon thereafter. Otherwise the six weeks specified within which the books were to be delivered would not allow time to prepare the county biographical sketches and photographs and print such additional pages. In any case, the timetable was not met.

In his diary entry for May 30, 1876, Wilder wrote: “Saw Tuttle’s History of Kansas, now nearly completed; it is Holloway over again & to [too?] a very poor affair—but will sell.” This comment would imply that Wilder either saw the manuscript of the book, or a dummy prospectus copy. In 1886 the Annals of Kansas, under the same date line, May 30, 1876, recorded: “Rev. Chas. R. Tuttle’s History of Kansas, comes out . . . .” There can be little question but that this entry was an error, and that the diary entry was correct. On June 3, and following, the Daily Commonwealth carried an advertisement for the Inter-State Book Company, Lawrence, soliciting agents to sell histories of South America, of America, and of Kansas. On June 4, the Daily Commonwealth reported that the agent of Tuttle’s History of Kansas was soliciting orders: “It is a book that will be much sought after and often referred to.” Again, note should be made of the wording which read only that the agent was soliciting orders for the book. Tuttle’s preface was dated Madison, April, 1876, which would suggest also that the book was not yet ready for delivery in Kansas in either May or June of 1876. Thus far the present writer has not established a date for the “publication” of the books; that is, the actual delivery to subscribers of the completed volume.

On May 4, 1877, the Tuttle History of Kansas exploded into a scandal, reported by the Leavenworth Daily Times:

That’s a bad story that comes to us from Wisconsin about our good Brother Tuttle—the clerical, literary, historical genius who flashed like a pious meteor across the moral horizon of Leavenworth about a year ago. You remember him, don’t you? Brother Phillips, who was Pastor of the Methodist church at that time, will remember him if you don’t—he will remember him, probably,
about five hundred dollars' worth. If we might be permitted to speak of Bro. Tuttle in the same terms usually applied to the unregenerated, under the same circumstances, we should say he is a fraud, of the first water.

Apparently the exposure of Tuttle's financial dealings had been precipitated by the arrival in Leavenworth of a man from Wisconsin to sell the book for which Tuttle had been securing data the year before, who found that the latter "had drawn against the work pretty largely in advance" at $35 each for biographies and portraits. Some bills had been left with Phillips as security for a loan of $500, part of which Phillips had collected. Only three or four biographies, according to the Times story, had been reported to the publisher and had appeared in the book. Under the circumstances Phillips was called upon to reimburse the victims.

Furthermore, Tuttle's dishonesty extended also to authorship, the charge being made that the History of Kansas had been written by Charles E. Jones, of Chicago. Also, Tuttle was charged with appropriating Jones' lectures which he delivered as sermons at the church where he was assistant pastor. The charges against Tuttle had been heard by his church. Tuttle's alleged defense in the matter of the history was that as he had gathered most of the data and had superintended publishing it, he thought he was entitled to put his name on it as author. As for the sermons, Tuttle declared before his congregation that he had never plagiarized Jones' lectures, and Jones had withdrawn the charges. But the Times story asserted that the sermon Tuttle had delivered in Leavenworth the year before and which the Times had published—"Preaching and Preachers"—had been "borrowed" from Jones' desk and "read in the pulpit from Jones' own manuscript!" In addition, the Times story declared that Jones was not a Christian, but a Huxley Materialist, and thus the sermon palmed off on the Leavenworth congregation by Tuttle was the work of an infidel.

The effect, if any, of the exposure of the Tuttle scandal is a puzzle. Even in Leavenworth, where the Times told the tale, there is no evidence of the effect upon the principals in the case, nor upon the sale of the history. The newspapers of other Kansas towns appear to have ignored the whole matter. Although supposedly the book had been published in Madison and Lawrence, the papers of the latter city seem to have been blind to the whole episode.

No explanation is available about the several company names involved as publisher of the Tuttle history. He had used the printed letterheads of B. B. Russell & Company, which advertised his several histories, including the History of Kansas. The new stationery
upon which the letters of February and March, 1876, were written, contained also a photograph of Tuttle himself. At the same time, Tuttle's publicity given out to the Leavenworth Times and to the Topeka Commonwealth had credited the publication responsibility to R. S. Peale & Company. The book was actually issued under the imprint of the Inter-State Book Company of Madison and Lawrence, with the copyright held in Tuttle's own name. In view of Tuttle's financial involvements, this last named firm may have been set up for the occasion.

**Contents of the Tuttle History**

In Wilder's Annals of Kansas (1886) the entry of May 30, 1876, which announced the supposed publication of the Tuttle History of Kansas continued by alleging that on page 29 Tuttle said: "The forest must be cleared to make room for the cornfield. For the accomplishment of this the pioneer prepares his axe, and day after day he toils on. Tree after tree bows its lofty top." Apparently, Wilder intended this supposed extract to stand as a self-evident condemnation of the competence of Tuttle as author and of the reliability of the history of Kansas, a grassland state. If the quotation had been accurate it would have accomplished that purpose, but the facts appear otherwise. No such statement appeared on page 29, has not been found in the book, and is out of harmony with the text of the history, which recognized fully the prairie setting of Kansas history. The problem becomes not one of condemnation of Tuttle, but one of explaining how Wilder made such a blunder.

Regardless of who authored the text of the history, probably Tuttle wrote the preface or introductory statement. In this he asserted in language similar to 20th century relativism: "The writer has striven to avoid prejudice in preparing these sheets for the press, but every man is a partisan in some degree, and with his utmost efforts cannot prevent his constitutional leanings finding utterance in his written and spoken words, when his feelings as well as his judgment become interested." Tuttle explained further, and in a contrasting philosophical spirit, his attitude toward his task: "History should be for society and man . . . a faithful presentation of every fact and feature. . . ." But he confessed that: "Such a design could not be fulfilled for Kansas, except in a rudimentary and incomplete way at the present era. . . [p. 3]."

6. Confusion exists in the bibliographical data available about Tuttle's other publications. The American Catalogue, 1876, of books in print lists the Peale firm of Des Moines, Iowa, and Dan S. Durrie is given as publisher of the Wisconsin history.
In recognizing the importance of the physical setting of history, Tuttle asserted that:

It is . . . of some importance that our readers should know that Kansas contains none of the precious metals, and that its geological formation forbids the expectation of any such discoveries. It is of greater significance for the industrial future of the state that coal and lime and building stone abound, that salt springs are numerous, that layers of pure salt can be found embedded among the strata, and that the soil is rich in just such principals as will continue for a long time to keep this region in the front rank among the most fertile agricultural countries of the world. Gypsum, alum and native sulphur, brown hematite and petroleum, porcelain clay and fire clay, indicate wide fields of enterprise which will not fail to build up a great community. . . .

Besides a brief description of the drainage system of the state, located in the center of the United States, Tuttle asserted that "nearly 95 per cent of its area is prairie. . . ." He commended as a whole the climate, admitting that a limited knowledge was available of the laws of atmosphere, but repudiated the great American desert myth. The first two chapters of the history, or 70 pages, were devoted to these matters of the setting of history. Although in the spirit of the day, prolix and ornate in language, the most of the material of these two chapters was intelligently chosen and presented. To be sure, the boomer spirit was conspicuous, and there was a commitment to the erroneous idea of favorable climatic change in response to settlement, the planting of trees, and the stoppage of prairie fires. On the last point, the role of fire, something more should be said. Possibly the author's relatively high batting average on this subject was pure accident, but however that may be, mid-20th century ecologists will go a long way with the Tuttle history in the evaluation of prairie fires.

The red man had allowed fires to sweep over the country year after year unchecked, if not caused by his operations, denuding the prairies of every tree and bush and blade of grass . . . Examine a patch of grass under your feet and you will find not only grass, but shrubs of a thousand kinds, in miniature, trying to find room for expansion . . . The white man assists nature, because he has a home to protect . . . He hends all his energies to avoid conflagrations . . . Then from the willing soil the earth once again gives out its teeming forests. . . . [pp. 38, 39.]

Of course, the extent to which this role of fire was correct was limited to the eastern or tall grass area. The book scored other hits also. While most agricultural evaluations of Kansas were emphasizing that "Corn is King" in Kansas, the Tuttle book said: "The special fitness of Kansas for the growth of winter wheat is one of the established facts [p. 30]." Furthermore, on the spine of the
cover, a bundle of wheat was shown. Too much must not be made of these more favorable aspects of the book, because the general lack of discrimination in the work as a whole created a distinctly unfavorable impression of the author's adequacy of information and soundness of judgment.

Chapters 3-22 recounted the political and military history of territorial Kansas and of the American Civil War in much the conventional extreme antislavery-abolition spirit. Chapter 23 was devoted to education; chapter 24 was a catchall, and chapter 25 told the story of "The Plague of Locusts." Chapter 26 was "County Sketches" and chapter 27 was "Biographical Sketches," and in all. The photographs were not indexed and were scattered indiscriminately throughout the text as unnumbered inserts. Six of the biographies were without portraits; S. S. Benedict, H. C. St. Clair, C. G. Bridges, George W. Fox, Byron Judd, and Brev. Maj. Gen. Carr. Nine photographs appeared without biographies of their subjects: S. C. Blanchard, R. W. P. Muse, M. C. Willis, W. P. Barnes, George H. Weaver, Sam R. Peters, N. D. Ingraham, H. D. McCarty, and Josiah Kellogg. All these are virtually unknowns so far as Kansas history is concerned, and illustrate in that sense the "vanity" aspect of the Tuttle enterprise. The book was provided with a few illustrations, but as a reviewer remarked in the case of the Holloway illustrations, they were of "such a character as to make us thankful there were not more."

The literary padding of the narrative ranged all over the area of Biblical history, classical ancient history, modern history, Shakespeare, Robert Burns, and other literary figures. Anything was called upon except a systematic statement of the facts of Kansas history. Had this padding been eliminated, the history instead of 708 pages would have been a very slender volume indeed, and its inadequacy as history would have been more apparent. The claim of authorship as between Tuttle and Jones was no compliment to either man.

Some specific points of fact and interpretation should be recorded. The Tuttle book denounced the Democratic party as the tool of the slavocracy, and the Whig party as "afraid to express an opinion of any kind on a question so debatable. . . . The men who formed the free soil party were alone consistent, but they were as yet only a handful. . . . [p. 84.]" This commentary was applied to the period of the Kansas-Nebraska act. David R. Atchison was the one man singled out for particular vituperation in connection
with the history of the organizing legislation. In early territorial Kansas, Secretary Daniel Woodson was the principal target (p. 246). The Branson rescue was credited to S. F. Tappan rather than to S. N. Wood, or James B. Abbott, the usual rivals for that honor (pp. 255-259). The secret society of Free-State men, the Kansas Legion, was represented as not "inimical to good government. . . . [p. 248.]" The whole Wyandotte constitution movement was covered in one page (pp. 436, 437), and no account was given of the admission of Kansas into the Union, or of the organization of the state government. James H. Lane and Charles Robinson were given scant attention, and of Robinson as governor the book said: "Gov. Robinson's term in office was very brief, and the war record [of Kansas] mainly arose during the rule of his successor, Gov. Thomas Carney. . . . [p. 449.]

The hero of Tuttle's History of Kansas was John Brown. Three chapters (14-16 inclusive) were devoted to "John Brown's War," which dealt with a part of the years 1856-1857. Of the Pottawatomie massacre of May 24, 1856, it was written (pp. 340-342) that:

The belief was common that the whole settlement, and the Browns more particularly, would be destroyed by an act of simultaneous assassination. [A war council of Free-State men decided, supposedly, upon a plan whose execution awaited more specific evidence of provocation.] On the 24th of May, 1857 [1856], during the absence of the leader [John Brown] of the little band, five men . . . [who] had committed outrages . . . were . . . killed. The event was one of the shocking incidents of a warlike time, and it is not easy to determine where the blame primarily belonged. . . . Apart from the criminality of this cold-blooded line of conduct, it was a blunder, because it cooled the ardor of their own best friends, . . . and infused greater rage into the hearts of the dominant faction. . . . It is however only fair to the participants in those executions to say that old Capt. Brown, who was absent at the time, fully indorsed the action of his command when he returned. . . .

The foregoing account is an example of the legend about John Brown that had been constructed, dependent particularly, without specific credit, upon James Redpath's biography of John Brown published in 1860. Tuttle had in his possession a far more reliable account of these events from James Hanway, but did not modify the text account in that direction. The biographical sketch of Hanway (pp. 677-681) contained a version of his account already in print since 1868. The Tuttle version read (p. 679), that Hanway "gives it as his opinion, contrary to the received versions, that John Brown was the commander on the expedition out of which the
massacre grew . . . that he was present at the time, and gave
the orders necessary for the execution of those men."

Why did the Tuttle history attract so little attention? It was
neither praised nor condemned as history, and except for the
Leavenworth Times exposé, the questionable business practices of
the publishers were ignored. A major conclusion would seem to be
unavoidable, that few people in Kansas were actively interested in
the history of the state. That verdict is based, not only upon the
apathy shown toward the Tuttle project, but was evident in relation
to Wilder's Annals of Kansas, to the centennial history agitation,
and to the organization of the Kansas State Historical Society, all
of which paralleled each other in time 1875-1877.

II. United States Biographical Dictionary:
Kansas Volume

The second book of the vanity type in Kansas history was The
United States Biographical Dictionary: Kansas Volume, Containing
Accurately Compiled Biographical Sketches, Into Which Is Woven
the History of the State and Its Leading Interests (Chicago and
Kansas City: S. Lewis & Company, Publishers, 1879). It was illus-
trated by steel-plate portraits. Although no editor was indicated,
contemporaries always credited the task to John Speer of Lawrence.
A further fact should be noted, that although the main title specified
biography, and the contents bore out that description, the explana-
tory sub-title made a bid for reader interest by alleging that the
history of the state was actually told through the medium of biog-
raphy. This point of view was elaborated further in the publisher's
preface which quoted seven prominent writers on the subject of
biography as history. The argument was extended in the following
context:

A new era, a new civilization has sprung up, which furnishes a different
material for history. There has been enough written of kings, feudal barons,
and the turbulence of unbridled power. It is the social condition of the people
that makes the history of the United States. . . .

The interests of the United States demand that her history should be modeled
after her institutions, and viewed from that stand-point, honor should be given
to those who have made the country great. A man is a constituent of a com-
unity. So is the history of an individual a constituent of the history of a
country; and that history which best represents the lives of prominent indi-
viduals, will best represent the social condition of a country.

A contrasting literature written for another type of civilization was

7. For James Hanway's long campaign for revision of the Pottawatomie massacre story,
particularly in the writer’s mind, dealing with monarchy, aristocracy, and privilege, such “a European literature is not an unalloyed blessing.” The United States required something different, and the publishers insisted that:

The Biographical Dictionary will furnish this material. It is purely an American idea, and is in the direction of assimilating American literature with American civilization. A sound public opinion is essential to the permanency of a stable government. ... A national literature must represent the national sentiment; should be in accordance with the principles and a support to the institutions of the country.

The publishers then proceeded to explain their interpretation of the basis used in the selection of biographees “who would be representatives of the various interests of the State.” If they had failed, they alleged that the fault lay with those who for various reasons had not co-operated, “thereby accepting the humiliating position of being supernumeraries in society, who have no share in the common intellect. ...” Furthermore, the allegation was made “that not one cent has been asked or received from the parties, whose biographies have been given to this work; nor has it been intended to pander to the vanity of the weak. ... We have aimed to seek out merit. ...”

The business side of the Biographical Dictionary was handled from Kansas City and from Topeka. To this end blank contracts on pink and green paper were printed, the pink for purchase of a copy of the book at $25, and the green for the steel-plate engraving from a photograph at $175. The wording of the contracts is important, and should not deceive anyone. The form of the purchase agreement made one party “The Publishers of the U. S. Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery, Kansas Volume, Kansas City and Topeka.” No firm name or officer was specified. The Eastern office was designated as New York. The book of about 600 pages was described and the publishers were directed to “deliver to my address ____ copies of the above named work, and I will pay to you or your order the sum of twenty-five dollars per copy.” The paper was to be signed and dated by the purchaser.

The portrait contract was more subtle:

Gentlemen:

Please execute for me, a steel plate engraving, from Photograph furnished, and upon receipt of fifty impressions from the plate as good as the average samples shown, I agree to pay to you or your order One hundred and Seventy-five Dollars; and I hereby authorize you to print, copyright and insert the required number of impressions in the U. S. Biographical Dictionary and Por-
trait Gallery published in "Parts," and complete in one volume, after which send the plate to my address.

On its face the subscriber was merely buying 50 prints of the steel engravings made from his own photograph. But the essential part of the arrangement was the "permission" to "print, copyright and insert the required number of impressions in the U. S. Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery." The condition was not specified in the contract, but obviously the privilege of inserting the portrait was contingent upon the purchase of a copy of the book at $25, and the inclusion in it of the biographical sketch to accompany the portrait.

The occasion for these printed contracts being preserved is that the Kansas State Historical Society was a prospective client, and in fact did subscribe, August 6, 1877, for a copy of the Dictionary. Just prior to this the publisher’s representative had prepared a special contract covering a prospective order for three group engravings, a copy of the Dictionary, and 100 copies of the "Part" containing the engravings and their accompanying biographical sketches bound as pamphlets. The three engravings were to be composed of groups of men: six governors of the territory, four acting-governors, and six governors of the state. A biographical sketch of each of the governors, 1,000 to 3,000 words in length, was to be prepared and printed. The cost to the society was set at $564 for each engraving if all three were ordered, or $575 each for two. This offer was made to the board of directors of the Kansas State Historical Society in behalf of the publishers on August 2, 1877, under the authority of J. W. Hodge, managing editor, and was signed by William F. Gordon, for the company. The proposition was declined by the society, and only the order for one copy of the dictionary was authorized. The form of the special contract made explicit what was omitted from the printed pink and green contracts and left to inference. The order for the book, the biographical sketches, and the portraits were linked together as a "package" deal. The individual biographee might have his sketch included at the purchase price of $25, and his portrait for an additional $175.

In all, about 750 names were included in the Dictionary, mostly singly, but the Kennedys appeared as a family group. A number of Missourians were included. No women found a place in their own right. The question must remain unanswered whether this represented prejudice on the part of men against women, or whether it meant that women were less vain than men. Fifty-six of the men
were represented by the full-page steel engravings, two, James H. Lane, and John Brown, being among the dead who were thus honored. There is no way to determine whether or not any living person was included in the Biographical Dictionary who did not subscribe. The omissions of important persons then living were conspicuous, and included two Kansas governors, Carney, and Osborn. A number of men who were dead were included, but upon what terms they were chosen has not been established. The inclusion of James H. Lane and John Brown would appear obvious. Josiah Miller was present, but his living partner in the Kansas Free State newspaper enterprise of 1855, R. G. Elliott, was omitted.

John Speer, Editor

In view of the fact that John Speer was credited by contemporaries with the editorial responsibility for the Biographical Dictionary, he must be given particular attention. No manuscript evidence has been found relating to his agreement with the publishers of the book, S. Lewis & Company, and to the extent of responsibility entrusted to him. Under such conditions, all conclusions about his editorial role are circumstantial.

John Speer (1817-1906) was of Scotch-Irish descent, born in Pennsylvania, educated in a printing office, and for a large part of his career followed journalism. With his brother Joseph he came to Kansas and established a Free-State newspaper, the Kansas Tribune at Lawrence during the winter of 1854-1855. After many vicissitudes he was again editor of a paper of the same name at Lawrence from October, 1875, to March, 1877, when he resigned to engage in "literary pursuits," according to the account in his own biographical sketch in the Dictionary. This was about the time that the Lewis company launched the Biographical Dictionary, and the implication of the sequence of events is that Speer’s editorship began at that point.

During the agitation of 1876 about local history, John Speer had undertaken what appears to have been his first extended writing of Kansas history. This is all the more important as a key date, because he had not been represented in the several prior history and historical society enterprises. Yet, Speer had been among the prominent men of Kansas from the time of his first arrival, and his career in Kansas politics had been stormy. In the series of historical articles which he published in the Daily and Weekly Tribune during June and July, 1876, his major commitments on Kansas history were clearly in evidence, although not yet in their extreme form; his
admiration for James H. Lane, and his own personal tragedy suffered in the Quantrill raid on Lawrence. Both of these subjects became virtual obsessions that warped and embittered his whole outlook and eventually made him vindictive. Besides these, other personal bereavements of 1876 added to his gloom. His son-in-law was killed in a railroad accident in April, and his wife died, October 9, of cancer after a long period of suffering.

In the Quantrill raid of August 21, 1863, two of Speer’s sons, John M., aged 19, and Robert, aged 17, were killed. The extent to which this tragedy weighed upon him is indicated somewhat in the fact that he mentioned the boys four times in the course of his own biographical sketch in the Dictionary. In later years, when he came to look upon himself as a guardian of Kansas history, he made bitter attacks upon Prof. F. H. Hodder for the historical introduction to his little book, The Government of the People of Kansas (1895), and upon Frank W. Blackmar for his biographical work on Charles Robinson. It was in connection with the latter incident, in particular, that he wrote to F. G. Adams, September 2, 1898: “I cannot let a history go to the world undisputed which dooms my children to everlasting condemnation as justly put to death.” Of course, such a conclusion drawn from the work of either Hodder or Blackmar was quite unwarranted, but it is an index to the depth of the emotion that dominated John Speer and others like him as they came to relive in their memories the days of the Kansas troubles.

Chronologically, the editorial work on the Biographical Dictionary lay between the time of Speer’s writing of the articles of 1876 and his embittered tirades of 1898. The articles of 1876 revealed clearly that during two decades of political and journalistic activities his memory of early events had become impaired, and he had not kept records necessary for its refreshment. Consequently both factual statements and interpretations were faulty, and so seriously so as to do himself an injustice. Also, between 1876 and 1879, the John Brown controversy was entering a new phase. The quarter centennial celebration of the organization of the territory of Kansas had been held at Bismarck Grove, Lawrence, September 15, 16, 1879. The tension between the Emigrant Aid Company group and
the combined Lane-Brown admirers was becoming more and more strained. Speer’s devotion to Lane, even if no other considerations had been involved, put him in the John Brown camp also. These were the years when the editorial work on the Biographical Dictionary was being done, the book being issued in September, 1879. Between September and December, 1879, when the so-called Townsley confession was published, the Brown controversy exploded. Among other things, the Speer-Robinson feud was aired in the public prints, and both men demonstrated the frailty of human memory. These men hated with a virulence that was appalling. Of course, prior to this last unfortunate turn of events the Biographical Dictionary was already in print.

Contents

The opening biography in the Biographical Dictionary, or position of honor, was assigned to Charles Robinson, the first state governor of Kansas, as well as governor-elect under the Topeka constitution during territorial days. The authorship of the sketch is unknown, but it did more than justice to its subject. The second position was assigned to the current governor of Kansas, John P. St. John. The remainder of the personal sketches followed no determinable plan.

The biography of James H. Lane was brief, but also in the hero spirit. In view of Speer’s unrestrained worship of Lane, a question arises about the moderation and generality of the sketch. The Tribune article of July 4, 1876, had made Lane the hero of the Sandbank convention of July 17, 1855, but without specifying the date. Only a vague reference, and not by name of the event or date appeared in the Dictionary. Neither the Lane nor the Robinson biographies attracted particular attention from the public. In view of the circumstances already explained, it was the references in the Biographical Dictionary to John Brown that virtually monopolized attention.

The sketch of John Brown was one of the longest in the book and was written in the heroic tradition, but made unusual admissions. The “Pottawatomie tragedy” was utterly repudiated by Free-State men, and was generally believed to have been perpetrated by John Brown; but his immediate Free-State neighbors justified it as a necessity “for the preservation of their own lives.” An eyewitness, a Mr. T [Townsley] was quoted as repeating John Brown’s justification, and then the writer asked the rhetorical question: “Who

can say that the freedom of a race . . . did not hang upon that very act?” Thus, in this sketch the admission of John Brown’s responsibility was strongly suggested, but without making the matter explicit.

James Hanway’s biographical sketch was probably written by himself, with little if any editorial revision because the language is what he had used. He made an issue of John Brown’s responsibility, but justified the deed as necessary—a matter of striking first. The fullest treatment of the Pottawatomie massacre was attached, however, to the biographical sketch of Johnson Clark, who insisted that “John Brown planned and executed the killing, and was present and a participant.” In support of this view Clark submitted a detailed statement based upon the story of a Mr. T who was a member of the John Brown party and in whose wagon all but one of them rode on that eventful night. These three challenges of the legend of John Brown’s innocence in the matter of the Pottawatomie massacre contributed to forcing the issue which resulted in James Townsley admitting publicly that his wagon carried the John Brown party and that the “Old Hero” was present, was in command, and participated in the murders.

In view of John Speer’s position in the Kansas controversies, there was a strange irony indeed in the fact that a book, supposedly under his editorship, should have played the unpremeditated role in publicly establishing John Brown’s guilt. If Speer actually exercised full editorial authority, he imposed upon himself a most unusual restraint in publishing these accounts of Brown and the laudatory sketch of Robinson. Furthermore, there was no attempt to reconcile direct contradictions in the conflict of claims for credits and honors. For instance, the James B. Abbott biography claimed the credit for Abbott in the Branson rescue which S. N. Wood claimed in his biographical sketch.

III. Andreas-Cutler

History of the State of Kansas

INTRODUCTION

In 1891 N. L. Prentis chose to give the Andreas-Cutler History of the State of Kansas a facetious though complimentary notice in his Kansas City Star column. His story revealed that a substantial legend about the book had accumulated during the eight years since it was first published. After summarizing the main facts
which emphasized the great size and cost of the work, Prentis continued humorously:

But when the book was ready and the publisher should have gathered in his sheaves, Kansas took a freak and suddenly landed on the great book with both feet. The frisky commonwealth turned on "Andreas's History of Kansas," just as she has turned on several "favorite sons," and on one occasion on a favorite political party. The agreed price of the book—which it was well worth—was $12. A country justice of the peace decided that it was worth $3, and the decision was heralded all over the state. But this was not last nor worst; somebody attached to the great work the name of "The Kansas Herd Book" and the joke "took." When anything is made ridiculous in Kansas its day is done. In Kansas men have been "pilloried," and "ventilated" and "nailed to the counter," and all that, but the man who is laughed at is lost. The state is a trifle wild on the question of fun. It is doubtful if in any other state a burlesque syllabus would have been preserved in the supreme court reports. At any rate it was moved and seconded that the biggest and most elaborate book ever published about Kansas be called the "Herd Book," and the motion carried.

In the loud guffaw that rolled over Kansas on the adoption of the motion the sale of the book by any publisher seems to have ceased . . . Justice travels with heavy shoes, but her arrival can be safely calculated upon. The merits and value of the book with the unlucky nickname are being recognized . . .

Prentis' reputation as a humorist and literary artist betrayed him in several ways. People came to expect him to be funny regardless of the occasion or subject, and he felt obliged not to disappoint his public. Also, his facility with words misled him into overemphasis upon literary form. Under the impulsion of these drives, Prentis lost sight of the primary importance of accuracy in facts and interpretation. For contemporaries, what Prentis wrote so entertainingly, was accepted as true. In cold print, separated by two thirds of a century from the charm of the Prentis personality, there is reason to ask some questions, and to test his allegations against verifiable facts.

The Preparation

The History of the State of Kansas, or "Herd Book," was published by the Western Historical Company, of which Alfred Theodore Andreas (1839-1900) was proprietor. Andreas had embarked upon a formidable program of preparation and publication of state and other local history. This was in the early 1880's after some experience in a related field. His Western Historical Company was the outgrowth of the Andreas Atlas Company, which among other things had published in 1874 An Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota, and in 1875 a similar one of Iowa. Also, he
published several county histories of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan. The first enterprise of the state history series was a *History of the State of Nebraska* . . . issued in 1882, a quarto book of 1,506 double-column pages in minion type, with notes and documents in nonpareil, a still smaller font.10 The *History of the State of Kansas* . . . in 1883 came next, and then a *History of Chicago* in three volumes in 1884-1886, a total of 2,304 pages using the same page format.

The editor in charge in the field and the principal author of the Nebraska enterprise was William G. Cutler. Upon completion of that work he was assigned to Kansas, arriving in Topeka during the first days of February, 1882, to organize his work. After some negotiations, the board of directors of the Kansas State Historical Society, at a special meeting February 8, at which time Cutler presented his program, granted him permission to make use of the materials owned by the Society under such regulations as the secretary might direct.11

Cutler's staff of assistants mostly recruited in Kansas, but including his son, H. G. Cutler, was put to work under uniform instructions preparing county histories and interviewing subscribers for their biographical data. Cutler and his wife, Mary, with some additional help, worked intensively from February to December, 1882, studying, taking notes from manuscripts, newspapers, and public documents assembled there, and in public offices in the Statehouse, and writing the general history of the territory and state of Kansas. The quantity of work done and the degree of thoroughness with which it was performed in approximately 11 months in Kansas was all but incredible. The task the Cutlers had performed in Nebraska had provided some background for their Kansas work, but so far as Kansas itself was concerned, in February, 1882, they had virtually started from scratch. Necessarily, working under such pressure over so short a time, they had little choice but to follow essentially the beaten paths. Time did not permit original thinking and the investigations essential to its verification even where the source materials calling for such revision were met at every turn.

In the general state history section a few biographies appeared. One group was the state governors since admission of Kansas as a state. Another group, 14 in number, were listed under the head-

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10. These are the type sizes specified by the *Daily Kansas State Journal*, Topeka, July 27, 1883, in its review of the Kansas history, which was in the same format. In current 20th century terms these would be approximately, if not the exact equivalents of, six point and eight point. Both were set solid without leading.

ing: "In Memoriam," most of whom were entitled to inclusion in any moderately extensive list of distinguished Kansans. The question that was disturbing was why some of these were chosen to the exclusion of others obviously more important. One word more is in order: Kansas was so young as were most of its leaders, that the majority were still present, and many were actively and acrimoniously disputing honors and credits. To make a selection for distinction among them was hazardous.

The theory of history under which the Andreas enterprises were operating and rationalizing their activities requires some attention. The word history as defined by "the acknowledged authorities, quite imperfectly defines the scope of an American history of to-day," is the dictum found in the preface to the Nebraska history. Among the reasons listed for the change in meaning were "the widespread dissemination of intelligence; the marvelous increase in printed records . . . ; the quick . . . growth of States," and the fact that under American conditions the whole history of a state might lie within the lifespan and memory of living persons, "to be subject to the hot and merciless criticism of the still living survivors, whose lives make the page."

More was involved in this definition than might be apparent, because it provided the transition to a justification of the role of biography, invoking the authority of Carlyle and Macaulay in support of the dictum that: "True history is biography."

In consequence, the Andreas creed was represented in the boast that:

We have undertaken, for the first time in the annals of literature, to cover the entire domain of history, and to publish a history of a Commonwealth, embracing its full scope as to time and detail . . . even down to the present time. . . . Never before has a work of like magnitude been undertaken and performed. It combined the labor of more than a single life, and has required the investment of more capital than was ever before risked in a single literary enterprise of its kind in this country.

In conclusion emphasis was placed upon the fact that the county sketches were written by different authors under uniform instructions. This gave to them a status supplementary to the general state history although in bulk overshadowing it.

The Kansas history was similar in plan to the Nebraska history, but proved even more elaborate, 1,616 pages. Again the claim could be made that: "It is the most complete and exhaustive history of a single State ever published . . . ," as well as the most expensive, in the United States. But Kansas was represented as
being a special case: "Kansas is richer in historic lore than any other region of the Great West. Its traditions go back to the time of the Montezumas and the Spanish conquest of Mexico." Included were the French, the Indian, and the America relations. Also, in the spirit of the day, the American Civil War was reviewed as a conflict between two types of American civilization: "In Kansas the war was begun; and there the first victories, presaging the full triumph of Liberty, were won." In telling this story, especially of the territorial period, "the editors were not embarrassed from lack of material so much as overwhelmed by a superabundance of conflicting and often untruthful accounts. . . ." Andreas differentiated three principal categories. First, each tale, as now read through the perspective of retreating time, shows most plainly the tinge of that subtle yet mischievous form of falsehood which comes from an unconscious perversion of facts on the part of the earnest writers. In addition to this, unscrupulous newspaper correspondents, instructed to write only for the northern or southern political markets, sent broadcast over the country, contradictory or false reports of every new phase of the exciting contest as it developed. [Third.] Many books on Kansas affairs were published during the territorial troubles, some of great merit and of rare historic value, as furnishing corroborative testimony; but of the whole, it is not believed that a single volume is now acknowledged as authoritative, or even approximately accurate, in a historic sense.

Against these adverse factors, however, Andreas enumerated "advantages" which he insisted "were not inconsiderable." First, Wilder's *Annals of Kansas* provided a chronology of events 1854-1875. Second, the Kansas State Historical Society's materials on Kansas and the West was "more varied and complete . . . than can be found in the repository of any like society in the Great West." The co-operation of Secretary F. C. Adams was acknowledged. Next mentioned, were the Kansas State Library, the *Biennial Reports* of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture, and other state agencies, and for military history, the archives of the state adjutant general. Defects in the history, the readers were assured, derived from other considerations, and it "is only so far complete as to point the way to future historians."

The relation of the county histories and the biographies to the general history received more specific attention than in the preface to the Nebraska volume:

The County histories are supplementary. They have been written by historians who have visited each county, and are made up more directly from the remembrance of old residents, and less from documentary sources than is the general State history. They have been written by different authors,
each having his peculiar style, but all working under one general supervision. No attempt has been made to force a correspondence or agreement between the statements concerning the same general occurrences as detailed in the general history and the sketches of the counties. . . . Where differences appear they should be attributed to the different sources from which the information has been obtained, and treated as two honest versions of the same story, rather than reviewed as a proof of the unreliability of the whole work. In all cases the proof-sheets or manuscripts of the County histories have been submitted for revision and correction to old and reliable citizens of the County before going to press.

The subject of the biographies, was given special attention and theoretical justification, but without any admission that primarily they were limited to subscribers to the history. "The data from which they were written," Andreas insisted, had been "gathered from personal interviews with the subjects of the sketches, or from their immediate relatives." To insure accuracy, "the biographies of Kansans still living" were "submitted for revision . . . to those most interested. . . ." He argued that they showed "what manner of men make up the population, from whence they came, and what experiences or circumstances drove, drifted or lured them thither. . . . It matters little that many of them are poor, or that a few of them are rich." A history of Kansas, "containing no record of their lives, would be incomplete indeed." Of course, this fit into the Andreas theory of history, and of the manner in which American history differed from European—a history of the people themselves in the whole of their range of interests. In a new state this meant that history dealt not only with the remote past, but was brought down in time to the present including the people whose stories were told by the biographies.

The arrangement of the biographical sketches of subscribers is important to an understanding of the adverse criticism at the time of publication. They followed in each case the historical sketch of the locality, city, town or township, with which the subscriber was identified. Thus the history of the locality and of the individual biographee were linked. That association was in accord with the Andreas theory of history and of the relation of biography to history.

It is clear that Andreas as publisher determined the policies and wrote the prefaces to both the Nebraska and the Kansas histories, explaining his point of view. Cutler's role was that of managing editor and chief author in charge of the execution of the writing program. In spite of these essential functions, Cutler's name did not appear on either book.
The Reception Given "The Big History"

At the end of 1882 Cutler and his wife returned to the home office of the Andreas establishment in Chicago where the manuscript was put into final form, the type set, the proof read, and the book printed, the typesetting and printing being divided among three printing companies listed on the reverse of the title page. The final revision of the county histories during the early months of 1883 was done in co-operation with local people, although the efficiency of the operation varied with the personal equation.  

The task of delivering the Andreas history began in July and appears to have been completed during October or November, 1883. In the northeastern counties, the most heavily populated area, the first releases occurred simultaneously on or about July 25, notices occurring in the daily papers of Atchison, Leavenworth, Lawrence, and Topeka, July 25, 26, and 27 or soon thereafter.  

The range of delivery expanded west, southwest, and south. In early September, deliveries were made in Bourbon, Riley, and McPherson counties; and by early October, in Crawford, Montgomery, and Sedgwick counties. By November 1, the job must have been practically complete.

In order to sample the reception given the Andreas history a spot-check has been made of 54 newspapers, representing nearly every county in the eastern one third of the state, but including also cities as far west as Salina, McPherson, and Wichita. After the range of delivery dates was established, the papers in question were surveyed for that period, July-October, inclusive. In the course of determining the range of delivery dates and of testing out special problems involved, several papers were studied for the whole of 1882, 1883, and part of 1884. Only 25 of the 54 papers noticed the publication of the history. Of these 25, four were neutral or noncommittal, eight were hostile, and 13 commended the enterprise as worth while although not every aspect of it. Regardless of the verdict on the history proper, the biographies of subscribers usually called forth some adverse remarks.

 Appropriately, the feature of the book most commented upon was its size, it was "immense," and the most frequent comparison was with Webster's unabridged dictionary. In his Hiawatha

12. Sol Miller in the Troy Kansas Chief, August 23, 1883, described his participation. The revision by H. Miles Moore of the Leavenworth county history was acknowledged p. 420, Footnote.

13. The Leavenworth Times, July 24, announced it was being delivered but did not review it. The Topeka Daily Capital, July 20, announced that A. T. Andreas had visited Topeka August 19, and that F. C. Adams, at the Kansas State Historical Society, had received notice that the history was ready.
World, August 9, Wilder named it “The Big History” and that name was the most widely adopted nickname among other reviewers, but also he referred to it as "an imperial volume" and this phrase had some following.

Of the four newspapers noticing the book that have been classified as noncommittal, or neutral, the Leavenworth Times merely announced that it was being delivered; the Coffeyville Journal disqualified itself to judge the historical part but pronounced the biographies "a lot of gush," and not representative of its community; the Cherokee Sentinel printed only a paragraph reference to an allegation that the history of Cherokee was a reprint of the one compiled by the Sentinel the first of the year; and the Fort Scott Daily Monitor made no comment of its own but reprinted, August 11, a most favorable review by the Hiawatha World, erroneously credited to the Hiawatha Herald, and September 9, an extreme denunciation by "A Victim."

The North Topeka Times was the only one of the Topeka papers to condemn the Andreas History of Kansas: "A Fool and his money are soon parted. . . .—A 'History of the Humbugged' would be a more appropriate title." The editor recognized that "much of it is authentic," but he insisted also that "a good deal of it is the product of somebody’s fertile imagination." The feature of the book that irked him most was the biographies of the subscribers. Sol Miller of the Troy Kansas Chief had a grievance because he did not receive his copy paid for by advertising: "Besides, we gave their men the use of our files, and spent some time giving them information in person, and afterwards read and corrected a large amount of proof relating to this County." To the Chase County Leader: "The new history, of which so much was promised by the publishers, is not very satisfactory."

In downright denunciation, the letter of "A Victim" in the Fort Scott Daily Monitor, September 9, outdid the North Topeka Times:

Mr. Editor,—It is not sweet to be called a fool, nor nice to be looked upon as an idiot, but when, way down in his inmost soul a man knows he is both—he feels, well, he feels just exactly as those feel who subscribed for the above named book. In an unlucky hour they signed their names and then the blessedness of forgetfulness kindly hid their liability until in an hour still more inauspicious was delivered the History of Kansas. This botched

14. Leavenworth Daily Times, July 24; Fort Scott Daily Monitor, August 11, September 9; Coffeyville Journal, October 13; Cherokee Sentinel, January 18, 1884.
15. North Topeka Times, August 3, 1883. The other newspapers that condemned the book were the Wyandotte Gazette, August 10; The Weekly Kansas Chief, Troy, August 23; the Cottonwood Falls Chase County Leader, August 30; the Manhattan Republic, September 14; the Marion Record, September 21; the Manhattan Industrialist, September 22; and The Smecker, Pittsburg, November 3, 1883.
up mess of compilations, statistics, hideous photographs and ridiculous biographical sketches, in little type and poorly bound. This is what some crank recently called an "imperial volume." It is a bulky, cumbersome nuisance and a most humiliating monument to the annihilation of the victims who thoughtlessly subscribed for what they supposed would be a valuable work. I feel rather free to express myself, for I am one of the unfortunate. Misery loves company and is not a bit lonely just now.

Indeed, it does seem that running through the American character is a vein of greenhornism that is ineradicable. Our New England fathers bought wooden nutmegs and basswood pumpkin seeds—and we buy the history of Kansas. The book agent is a standing joke—our eyeteeth were cut long ago—we warn the unsophisticated to beware of him, we write jokes and read pubs about him and look upon him as a fraud and a snare—and yet we buy the history of Kansas.

Sometimes, after reading the last stanza of Buron's "Address to the Deil," I feel as if I could forgive the devil for most anything except for creating and scattering abroad the itinerant book agent. But since I have thought it over, I believe I can freely forgive him for that, if he will agree to forgive me for signing for the history of Kansas.

A VICTIM.

The Manhattan Republic recognized "much valuable historical reading matter" but insisted that the book was "too big to be handy," and that it would have been better if "consolidated one-half." E. W. Hoch, in the Marion Record, reported that "a sicker lot of book-buyers you never saw."

The two most notorious episodes came late in the season. At Manhattan, the Industrialist was a weekly paper published by the Kansas State College of Agriculture and edited by the faculty, E. M. Shelton, managing editor. At the head of the editorial column of the issue of September 22, and without any heading, appeared the following paragraph:

"The herd-book" is what the irreverent call the big history. But for the fact that every man wrote his own autobiography, we should have suspected, in looking over the pedigrees, that some of the remarkable careers here blocked out, must have given a thrill of astonishment, as well as joy, to the subjects of these biographical sketches.

Note should be made of the fact that Shelton did not claim that either he or his associates had originated the name. The inventor has not been identified, but, so far as the present investigation has been able to determine, the Industrialist was the first to make the term a matter of record in print. Nevertheless, the agricultural college animal breeding interests afforded a suggestive atmosphere for such a label and possibly also "the irreverent."

In reprinting September 28, the Industrialist paragraph, the Marion Record commented: "That big history business is creating a
good deal of fun for the newspaper boys all along the line.” Of the newspapers included in this survey, however, only one other picked up the “Herd Book” tag, yet over the years it stuck. The second edition of Wilder’s *Annals of Kansas* (1886) reported (p. 1,031) that the Andreas *History of Kansas* “soon comes to be called the ‘Herd Book,’ and the ‘Stud Book.’” Probably the Wilder perpetuation of the “tag” rather than the original printing in the *Industrialist* was responsible for its survival. Neither Wilder nor Prentis identified the origin, and the first printing of the term by the *Industrialist* was discovered in the present investigation only after a long search that lent realism to the proverbial quip about hunting for a needle in a haystack.

The lawsuit over payment for the Andreas *History of Kansas* occurred in Crawford county, November 1, 1883. The first hint of any difficulties of such a drastic nature that has been found was a note in the *Chase County Leader*, September 20, about the publisher of a history of St. Louis bringing suit against a subscriber who objected to biographies instead of a history of the city. The *Leader* believed, erroneously, that the publisher was Andreas. Such a suit was, however, brought by a representative of Andreas in justice of the peace court (Justice J. P. Hamlin) in Pittsburg and heard November 1, the defendant being W. H. Larimore, a farmer and stockman. The Pittsburg *Smelter*, November 3, reported that a number of prominent men were in the city on that case: “The boys are having plenty of fun over this history business.” The verdict was not reported by that paper. The Girard *Press*, November 8 said: “The plaintiff got judgement, but the jury assessed the value of the book at $3.00, which is quite a reduction from $12.50.”

The time has come now for an appraisal of the Prentis story of 1891. The two leading incidents related by him, but without date or place, did occur, the application of the “Herd Book” tag and the lawsuit. But what about the conclusions or interpretation of those facts? The *Industrialist* paragraph using the term “Herd Book” was not published until September 22. By that time the deliveries of the book had been completed in all the more populous counties. The Fort Scott *Daily Monitor*, September 12, reported completion in Bourbon county. The lawsuit occurred November 1, when deliveries were completed in most of the more distant counties. Even

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16. *Chase County Leader*, Cottonwood Falls, October 25, 1883, January 3, 1884. The Topeka papers, the *Capital*, the *State Journal*, and the *Commonwealth* did not pick up the term.

17. *The Smelter*, Pittsburg, November 17, 1883, reprinted the *Press* paragraph, and so did the *Chase County Leader*, January 3, 1884. Larimore’s biography is found in the history, p. 1,129.
in Crawford county there were no reports of other "incidents." Prentis' allegation seems unwarranted, that as a result of these facts "the sale of the book by the publisher seems to have ceased. . . ." Furthermore, there is no evidence that Kansas failed to appreciate with a fair degree of accuracy both the merits and weakness of "The Big History." Wilder's verdict in the Annals (1886, p. 1,031) was an ever-present reminder: "The completeness of the work is amazing. Without a full index, the true value of the History will be known only to the few who really read it." But the strictly contemporary record of reviewers who took the more favorable side must be given full consideration.

Although not chronologically first, Wilder's review is entitled to first place. In introducing "The Big History" August 9 he asserted that:

Nobody will ever read it through, but whoever wants to know anything and everything about Kansas will find it here. . . . The book can be compared to nothing but itself. It is all of Kansas, 200 miles wide and 400 miles long, and all here. We are overcome with wonder and give up the attempt to write a notice of such an imperial volume.

The following week confirmed the first impression: "No one can examine this work without admitting that it is the most complete history that we have." In adverse criticism, Wilder called attention to a Massachusetts state history in which each writer of a section in a co-operative work was eminent in his department—a real historian. . . . The object of that work is to make the best history, by the best men living at the time. The purpose of the Big History is to make money for the publishers. The biographies are put in to float the volume. And yet the publisher has not sought to distort history, to misrepresent or conceal facts . . . its real history could be condensed into one-tenth of the space and one-twentieth of the type, with no loss; with a real gain. That is what the real historian will do within twenty years, taking this book, and all of its predecessors, with the newspapers of the day, as his ample repository of facts.

Wilder was concerned about the anonymity of authorship and rendered his own verdict on where he thought credits belonged:

No credit is given in the Big, for any writer of the Big, and this is hardly fair. But the army of writers were doubtless well paid. We judge, from internal evidence, that the State history proper was written by Judge F. G. Adams and Col. S. S. Prouty, and two more competent men could not have been selected. The history of the Indian tribes, most admirably done, we

18. Atchison Daily Champion, July 25; Topeka Daily Capital, July 26; Topeka Daily Commonwealth, July 26; Topeka Daily State Journal, July 27; Emporia Weekly News, August 2; Hiawatha World, August 9, 16; Junction City Union, August 25; Lawrence Daily Kansas Herald, August 1; Marion County Democrat, Marion, August 30; McPherson Republican, September 6; Girard Press, October 11; Girard Herald, October 11; Wichita Beacon, October 17, 1885.
credit to Adams. The Territorial Conflict is Prouty-Adams, the Erckmann-
Chatian, of the Big. The picture of Lane, and the great speech in Chicago,
is Prouty's, of course, and is the first worthy laurel placed upon the tombstone
of the Grim Chieftain by any Kansas writer. And yet Lane's Chicago triumph
was only one of a hundred similar Jim Lane victories and ovations. Looking
the matter all over we can understand very well why we were a "Lane" and
not a "Robinson man" up to 1884—when we ratted, and went over to the
Opposition.

Wilder's speculation about the authorship of the principal part of
"The Big History" brought a prompt denial, August 17, from F. G.
Adams, the letter being printed in full in the World, August 30:

You are not correct in your surmises. . . . I did not . . . prepare
any part of the book, and there is no writing of mine in it. [The authorship
of the general history was credited to William G. Cutler, of Milwaukee, Wis.]
By him or under his direction all investigations were made, and by him, ac-
cording to the best of my information, most of the writing was done, though
he was constantly assisted while here, by his wife, a lady of excellent literary
ability. They resided here in Topeka, for about ten months, from February to
December 1882. Mr. Cutler was assisted more or less by Colonel Prouty and
J. C. Hebbar, who I think, assisted somewhat on the general history, as they,
and many others did upon county and local work.

Credit for the planning and financing of the Kansas history project
was given, of course, to A. T. Andreas, the publisher, who told
Adams, upon his visit to Topeka July 19 that the cost was $90,000.
Adams then summarized the story of the relations of Cutler with the
Kansas State Historical Society and himself in connection with the
whole episode. When Cutler arrived in Topeka in February and
first approached Adams the latter disapproved, but Adams should
tell of this in his own way:

As it was to be a mere business enterprise, and the book necessarily to
contain in part matter which would be of interest only to subscribers, the
directors of the State Historical Society, when asked for the use of its library
and materials in its preparation, looked upon the undertaking with disfavor
and sought to discourage it. It was hoped that the materials collected by the
Historical Society would be first used by some competent citizen of our own
State in the preparation of a history of Kansas; of a book which would be free
from the taint of commercial jobbery; . . . he was told very frankly that
the Society did not wish the result of its labors to be used as he proposed,
and that he could not expect any encouragement from the Society. Such effort
as could be was immediately made to head him off by getting a Kansas man at
such a work. Colonel Prouty was consulted, and urged to undertake it, as he
of all other competent persons, seemed to have the leisure, and the requisite
knowledge of book-making, and book-publishing. He gave the matter careful
consideration and decided against it. A meeting of such of the directors of
the Society as were in Topeka was held, and Mr. Cutler was invited to come
before the meeting and explain his project, which he did. The following is the entry upon the records of the Society, concerning the meeting:

"After a consultation had in the Society's room, February 8, 1882, the following officers and members were present, namely: Gov. J. P. St. John, Hon. P. I. Bonebrake, Hon. James Smith, Hon. John Francis, Hon. F. P. Baker, Hon. T. D. Thatcher, Hon. C. K. Holliday, Col. S. S. Prouty and the Secretary."

Adams stated the object of the meeting and Cutler presented his plans. After deliberation the decision was made and entered in the minutes of the board of directors as of February 8, 1882. Adams related that: "It was informally decided that Mr. Cutler should be given access to the library of the Society in such a manner, and under such restrictions as the Secretary might determine." In accord with this permission the library was opened freely to Cutler who promised that the work would be well done, "and the promise, it seems to me, has been amply fulfilled." Adams testified that of course he took an interest in what was being done, but no compensation had ever been offered or received for his time taken by the project.

The Atchison Champion, John A. Martin, editor, wrote: "There can be no complaint on the score of quantity" because it was "certainly one of the largest volumes ever printed in the English language." He pointed out that the general state history occupied about 300 pages, the county histories and the biographies accounted for the remainder:

The feature of the book which will be most criticised—and read—is the biographical, containing sketches longer or shorter, of Kansas citizens, some well known; . . . and others unknown. But the sketches have, many of them, genuine historical value, and the others are of interest to individuals and families, and will have [value] in the future to the historian, the seeker in the field of genealogy, and others.

And in conclusion, applying to both the general history and the county histories and the biographies: "... this book . . . is of great value, and, in that respect it is a happy disappointment."

The verdict of the Topeka Capital was that:

The completeness and accuracy of the book will be a pleasant surprise to the subscribers. The editor, Mr. Andreas, has fulfilled every promise he made his subscribers, and given them the most comprehensive history of Kansas ever made of a State in one book. . . . The book is unlike most histories . . . gotten up to sell by subscription, in being really a meritorious work. . . . The matter it contains is of value to-day and will continue to be of increasing interest for its historical and biographical data for generations to come.

19. The official action is recorded in "Record A," "Proceedings" of the board of directors, K. S. H. S., pp. 56, 57.
The Topeka *Commonwealth* said: “Its contents, which will of course be criticized, are carefully compiled, great attention having been paid, apparently, to genuine history.” The Lawrence *Daily Kansas Herald*, said: “So far as the work goes it is grand. . . . Yet as an authentic history it is sadly lacking in many points.” Especially the *Herald* objected to the biographies. The Emporia *News* thought it “will undoubtedly be consulted almost as much as Wilder’s Annals.” The Hiawatha *World* insisted that: “The book can be compared to nothing but itself. It is all of Kansas, 200 miles wide and 400 miles long, and all here. We are overcome with wonder and give up the attempt to write a notice of such an imperial volume.” All of these evaluations were printed during the last days of July and the first days of August, 1883, and all were by major Kansas dailies and weeklies.

Political partisanship was not conspicuous in the reactions to “The Big History.” A letter to the editor of the Marion *Democrat*, signed “Patriot,” had possible political implications. He quoted Wilder’s *World* review on one point: “Many matters are fully and correctly brought out in the Big that have not been well understood before, and the chief of these are the Pottawatomie murders.” Instead of undertaking to justify John Brown as most admirers had done after the Townsley confession of December, 1879, “Patriot” spoke his Democratic mind: “At last men are beginning to admit that ‘Old John Brown’ instead of being a christian and a patriot, was a thief and a murderer. John Brown did this diabolical work. And yet men refer to him as a saint.” This was giving the Andreas history an approval not exactly in the orthodox vein, but nevertheless the minority of otherwise minded in Kansas found something of merit in the cracks shown in the monolithic structure of antislavery-abolition Kansas historiography.

Among the later reviews the McPherson *Republican* pointed out that: “Unlike most works of the kind, there is not a bit of padding or stuffing in it. No thick leads, wide margins, blank pages, and spongy paper to make a little matter fill a big book.” The immense labor involved in the county histories was emphasized: “the force engaged in gathering the facts seems to have ransacked the country pretty thoroughly.” In conclusion it was said that: “the work has been done well and faithfully. The value of this history to the Kansan who takes pride in his state, is beyond estimation.”

The *Republican* went beyond the scope of comment usual to these review notices. One point made was that:
The book has also another peculiar value. It preserves in permanent form the history of events which hitherto have never been recorded. Kansas is a peculiar state. She has had her share of announcements, proclamations and other performances common to what may be styled, statesmanship on paper. But here the people have gone further. With the early Kansan, thinking was followed by acting and often so quickly that it was not easy to tell which came first. A real or fancied grievance, an indignation meeting, a raid, a fight, that was the way in early times. But the participants in these affairs never troubled themselves with writing. . . . Kansas may be grateful that before these memories have perished from earth, they have been gathered and recorded.

The writer did not assume that history as found in such a book was final: “That all of this matter is not equally important is true, but this book will be a treasure house for future historians.” In one respect the Republican was more discriminative than most people of that day who would have agreed with Andreas about the relation of Kansas to the American Civil War: “In Kansas the war was begun. . . .” Instead, the Republican observed: “What influence Kansas has had on national affairs cannot be estimated at present. . . . To those who in the future years shall attempt the task, this book will be of inestimable value.”

After a first look at “The Big Book,” weight 14 pounds, the Girard Press admitted that it was too long to read in the time available, so the editor did not commit himself on its literary merits: “The state history, we notice, contains much that has not heretofore been collected, and is valuable, at least, in furnishing data that will be of value to the student.” He was troubled by the biographies. The Girard Herald admitted that when the agent called and outlined the scope of the history he thought it “too colossal, would take too much time, means and research, and altogether . . . too much like the many dreams that are discussed by impracticable people. . . .” But when the agent delivered the book:

Imagine our surprise [that it was] in no way inferior to the declaration of purposes. . . . That it is a perfect piece of work, such as could be gotten up by the same parties after ten years labor instead of eighteen months, only, we would not have inferred, but we do not hesitate to say that the work done in that time by the author, agents, printers, binders is well done.

The editor regretted the limited edition because he wished that it might be accessible to “every boy growing up in Kansas.” Apparently girls didn’t count in such a context!

One of the strangest aspects of the review notices of the Andreas history was the generally favorable judgments on the physical
aspects of the book, the department where experienced printers have been not only qualified to speak, but sensitive as a matter of professional pride. With few exceptions the paper and binding were commended. In perspective those were the two most serious physical defects of the book. A wood-pulp paper was used and the binding was totally inadequate for a 14-pound volume. As of the mid-20th century only a relatively few surviving copies can be rebound successfully because the paper is too brittle.

The prediction of John A. Martin may be taken as the means of introducing some consideration of the problem presented by the biographies in "The Big History": "The feature of the book which will be most criticized—and read—is the biographical. . . ."
The unanimity of the reviewers, both those hostile to the project and those appreciative of the general history, leaves no room for disagreement with Martin on that point. But merely to denounce the printing of the biographical sketches of the subscribers did not then and does not in perspective meet adequately the challenge involved. A number of contemporaries recognized the unpleasant facts and said as much.

Less objection would have been aroused apparently had subscription not been the sole criterion for inclusion of biographies in the county section. Apparently few would have objected to the inclusion of the subscribers as such providing others had been selected upon some reasonable standard of merit for the state as a whole or for the counties as a whole. The North Topeka Times asserted that:

It is well enough to write the biography of every early settler, and of prominent men of the state, and to embellish the book with their faces. They made the history of Kansas and we love to read of them, and look at their pictures. But we protest against making up such a book, of promiscuous biographies of anybody who would pay for it, leaving out of the work so many prominent and worthy names and calling it a "History of Kansas."

The omissions irked the Lawrence Herald which stated the matter thus: "unfortunately very many men whose lives formed a prominent part of the history of Kansas were not subscribers. . . ."

The objections of the Wyandotte Gazette and of the Chase County Leader were based also upon the wording of some of the biographical sketches which converted them into advertising. After analyzing the composition of the group in the Coffeyville section, the Journal of that place insisted that they were not representative of the community.

Two papers came nearer than the others to stating the issues
adequately. The Girard *Press*, as did several others, asserted that the biographies were written by the subjects themselves. Possibly some of them were, but the usual formula was that the subjects supplied the data which was written or revised by the editors and submitted for approval. Some were modest, said the *Press*, "but some have given the histories of their families (real or imaginary) from the time of the revolution, and boiled over in gushing eulogy of their own attainments. This is the disgusting part of the book—but as this was the publisher's source of profit, could not well be avoided in a work of this kind." The Atchison *Champion* was quoted as saying: "We really cannot understand what the critics expected. The biographies are as full and accurate as the parties contributing them would give."\(^{20}\)

None of the reviewers distinguished clearly the two-fold character of the problem of biography involved. First, some provision should have been made for selection of nonliving persons for biographical mention upon a basis of merit. Second, besides the subscribers, some categories of living persons could have been included. That no provision was made for persons no longer living was the omission that was hardest to understand or defend. Strictly speaking there was no possible justification. That omission violated the theory of history and biography formulated by Andreas himself, and laid him open to the cynical accusation so often leveled at all subscription or vanity histories of this sort, that they were purely commercial ventures operated solely for profit.

Pertaining to the limitations of the second group, the living persons, to subscribers there is an aspect that should be suggested for serious consideration. In any study of the structure and characteristics of a given society, criteria of selection must be set up. As every person in the state or county could not be described, a sampling technique must be adopted. Without rationalizing it as such, had not willingness to subscribe to a promised but unwritten history, on the assurance of a canvasser acting for an unknown publisher, achieved a fair sample of one sort of cross section of the total population of Kansas? Did not a similar principle operate also in explaining acceptance of political and social panaceas as well as patent medicines and book agents? If one were to be completely candid, just how far did this criterion deviate from the representative or average citizen of Kansas or any other state?

\(^{20}\). *Chase County Leader*, October 25, 1888.

42—1430
AUTHORSHIP AND THE ADAMS-CUTLER CORRESPONDENCE

On August 8, 1883, soon after receiving his personal copy of the History of Kansas, F. G. Adams wrote to Cutler reporting that he had tested it out for reference:

It contains a vast store of information. If it contains errors, I have yet to find them. I speak of the general history and may say the same of the local history, so far as I have examined . . . . those sections with whose history I am more familiar. In regard to the general work, I know of the methodical and laborious care with which you and your excellent lady pursued your investigations. The arrangement and putting in print of your work is not less admirable.21

Seeing a copy of Adams’ letter to Wilder about authorship, Cutler wrote Adams, September 13:

I merely want to thank you for the very truthful and frank letter which appeared in Wilder’s paper of the 20th ult. You did what you could to put me and yourself right. Now, if you think it valuable, in a historic sense, to have deposited in your archives the list of writers of the “Big History,” I will send you the whole thing. Of course, you can see that the reliability of the different parts of the “Big” must depend somewhat on its authorship, and, I consequently thought you, if nobody else, might desire to know exactly who wrote the book.

. . . I managed, in writing the history of Kansas, to get more than a passing interest in your work. It is plain that the history of the State is not yet written. The biographical portion—really the most important, has scarcely been touched. The great bulk of what appears in “The Big” as Wilder calls it, should be put into good school history form. Nobody could do that better than you and Wilder. Then, the Annals should be continued, and the second volume would, I think, sell largely and make the first invaluable. To you, I suggest that you use my history for the future rather than for the past. Note each error as you discover it, so that whoever looks at the book may see the latest—not only the history as compiled by me, but every revision and correction that you can make. In that way, it seems to me, you might make the over bulky volume valuable. . . .

In acknowledging Cutler’s letter, September 17, as would be expected, Adams replied: “I shall be very glad to receive from you for our archives a list of the writers of the Big History. It will be very valuable, and always of interest as a part of the literary history of the State.” Later in the same letter, Adams expressed his thanks for the suggestion about “noting corrections, if any need be, in the text of your history; also as to the school history. I shall heed both suggestions.”22

Following an exchange of letters in January, 1884, relative to the nondelivery of a copy of the history to a niece, Adams added a personal note to his letter of January 25: “The best critics speak well

22. Ibid., v. 8, p. 29.
of your book. In every instance of adverse criticism so far as I remember, it has come from those whose biographies were left out. This is human nature of course.”

A decade of silence was broken by Adams who wrote Cutler inquiring about authorship. Difficult to understand is the apparent lapse of memory on the part of Adams about the earlier correspondence on that subject and his failure to refresh his memory by consulting his letter files. Adams’ letter was dated May 5, 1894, and Cutler, then in the wool business, replied May 8:

Your letter of May 5 has just reached me, and I am glad you appreciate the historical work we did. I can only testify to your full cooperation and help, after we knew each other. You remember that, quite early, you tried to head me off—but, the cordial way in which you and your daughter treated us afterwards, and the warm friendship which followed, leaves that, to me, only as a joke, to laugh at.

My wife died 3 yrs ago. I leave to day, for a Western trip, on wool business, so far personal.

In regard to your inquiries regarding the History of Kansas:

1. I was the Editor in Chief, with head-quarters at Topeka—

2. The entire body of the State History was written by myself and wife. Also all the biographies of historical characters like John Brown, Lane, Robinson and others.

My wife, Mary W. Cutler, wrote the early history, including that of the Indians; Coronado &c. She was a better, and, I think a more conscientious writer of history than I could ever be.

The county and town histories, which were subordinate, were written by, perhaps, a dozen different writers; all their manuscripts being revised, before sent to press, by myself and wife.

My son, H. G. Cutler, was at Leavenworth, Atchison, and Wyandotte.

S. S. Proudy wrote the County, perhaps more than one, south of Topeka, where he formerly lived, and gave us much valuable information of his early days in Kansas, which was digested by us, and went into the general history; nobody wrote any of the general history of Kansas, as a state or territory, except myself and wife.

Mr. J. C. Herrard assisted in several county histories, and, I think, wrote one or two entire, and sent me the copy, after I returned to Chicago. He was most excellent help to me, also, in gathering local statistics and historic facts about the county in which Topeka is (I have no map by me, and don’t remember the name of the county). There was another Kansas man, who knew something about the Indian fights out west: I forget his name, who I hired to write a county out where he seemed acquainted.

I think the A. T. Andrews pay-roll would give you the author of every county history. I have written all that comes to my mind, with no written data to which I can refer.—

I send my warmest regards to you & daughter. If you ever have a World’s Fair in Topeka, and I visit it, I shall see you, if you are alive. . . .

23. Ibid., v. 8, p. 308.
In a postscript Cutler reminded Adams: "Soon after the History was published I sent you [a] list of writers on it. It is probably put away in some pigeon-hole." On the authority of this notation the present writer had the co-operation of the staff of the Kansas State Historical Society in a futile search for the missing list of writers.

In his acknowledgment of July 8, Adams again revealed a striking deficiency in observation or in memory. He thanked Cutler for the information about:

the authorship of the different portions of your great history of Kansas, 1883. . . . I did not know, however, of the full part taken in your work by your wife. I did observe that she was a most patient and attentive helper, but I so little cultivated an acquaintance with her, and saw so little of your work in your rooms that I would not know of the important and valuable help which your wife rendered, and which you so gratefully seem to remember.

I look upon the period of your work here with pleasant remembrance. You did a good work. Your great book is a collection of the materials of Kansas history which will be consulted to the latest day.24

Little additional information about authorship of the county histories has been collected, but more will be found from time to time in the newspaper files of the several counties. In addition to Atchison, Leavenworth, and Wyandotte counties, the son, H. G. Cutler, assisted in McPherson county, accompanied by Robert P. Dey.25 The Marion Graphic, April 27, 1883, credited the writing of that county to Hubbard [Hebbard?]. Sol Miller's contribution on proof reading, etc., has been mentioned for Doniphan county, and similarly revision by H. Miles Moore for Leavenworth county. James Hanway contributed to the Franklin county history.

EVALUATION IN RETROSPECT

The contemporary reviews of "The Big History" were quite general in substance. Few Kansas editors of 1883 possessed the knowledge of the details of Kansas history sufficient to have undertaken specific criticism. Except for a few points, even Wilder did not undertake to evaluate particular facts and interpretations. At no time since then has anyone assumed the task of detailed examination. Such a project is scarcely appropriate now, but some rather general commentary is in order for two reasons. First, because the perspective of nearly three quarters of a century affords a basis for testing the soundness of Cutler's work. Second, in spite of 70-odd years, no single book or even limited number of books are available which displace it altogether. For the period really covered, the

24. Ibid., v. 38, p. 324.
Andreas-Cutler history, with all its shortcomings, is still the least objectionable longer book available.

Of the shorter books, L. W. Spring’s *Kansas, The Prelude to the War for the Union* (Boston, 1885) still holds a similar qualified position.26

By the end of 1882 when Cutler and his wife completed their sojourn in Topeka, the Kansas State Historical Society had made substantial progress in collecting historical materials of all kinds, but especially newspapers, manuscripts, and public documents, both state and national. From the first three *Biennial Reports* of the Society, covering the years 1877-1883, it is possible to reconstruct quite accurately just what was actually available to the Cutlers at that time. For example, the Society had received the following collections of manuscripts, either substantially complete or major installments of what are now found in those groups under the following names: Eli Thayer, Thaddeus Hyatt, George L. Stevens, Thomas H. Webb, W. B. Taylor, James Hanway, Isaac McCoy, Robert Simerwell, John G. Pratt, Joel K. Goodin, James B. Abbott, S. N. Wood, James Montgomery, John Brown, James M. McFarland, and William Clark.

The Cutlers were the first to make use of these resources for systematic historical purposes, and they used them intelligently. As has been said earlier, in general Cutler followed substantially the traditional framework, but at this point the additional observation is in order, that he filled it in from these new materials in an authentic fashion that gave to Kansas history a substance not formerly present.

The preliminary material in the Andreas-Cutler history dealing with the setting of Kansas history, based upon the inadequate knowledge available in 1882, has been superceded almost altogether. Recent geological knowledge is available in the publications of the State Geological Survey of Kansas, but of particular relevance here is John C. Frye and A. Byron Leonard, *Pleistocene Geology of Kansas* (1952). The geographical picture in modern form is found in Walter H. Schoewe, “The Geography of Kansas.” 27 The anthropological and archeological background of the prairie and plains between the Mississippi river and the Rocky mountains


27. In three parts (four installments), *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science*, Lawrence, v. 51, pp. 256-296; v. 52, pp. 291-333; v. 54, pp. 263-329; v. 56, pp. 191-190.
may be most effectively introduced for Kansas readers by the work of Waldo R. Wedel. 28

The Coronado story has undergone several transformations since Cutler wrote, using the J. H. Simpson version as his guide. The most recent reevaluation is that of H. E. Bolton, *Coronado, Knight of Pueblos and Plains* (New York, 1949).

The ecological setting of the grassland and the manner in which the Eastern American forest men met this environment, which was strange to them, receives attention in several works by the present writer. 29

The writing of the history of the United States has changed substantially since Cutler wrote his section on the national background of Kansas. That revision as it related to Kansas history owes much to the work of Frank Heywood Hodder (1860-1935), a professor at the University of Kansas, 1891-1935. 30 Focusing his reinterpretation of American history upon the career of Stephen A. Douglas, Hodder showed that his controlling interest was the organization of Western territory “as an indispensable necessity to the development of the country.” Douglas sensed the revolutionary importance of steam railroads to the interior communications of a large continental landmass such as the United States, and urged the construction of a railroad to the Pacific ocean by a central route. The accomplishment of that objective required the organization and settlement of the Indian country along the route. Douglas campaigned for those objectives from 1844 to 1854. Also, Douglas advocated local self-government and co-operation of states in regional affairs as an offset to the growing tendency toward national centralization of power. He insisted that popular government was grounded in the locality. These principles provided the background for the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, with its “Popular Sovereignty” clause, and for Douglas these principles, not slavery, were the real issues of the day. 31 The newer point of view ap-


31. For a further development of these principles, see James C. Malin, *The Nebraska Question, 1852-1854* (Lawrence: The author, 1954).
plied to the administrations of Pierce and Buchanan, 1853-1861, is treated best in Roy F. Nichols, *Franklin Pierce* (Philadelphia and London, 1931), and *The Disruption of American Democracy* (New York, 1948).

Kansas history proper, as differentiated from background, began in the Cutler book at page 81. The story was told in a factual manner, with the liberal reprinting of original documents or extracts from them, and with the minimum of personal interpretation. In accordance with the prevailing point of view the territorial story was told almost exclusively from the Free-State side. Leavenworth, for instance, was sacrificed to Lawrence even for the Free-State story. The convention era of 1855 during which the Free-State party and the Topeka statehood movement were launched ignored important factors. This story needs revision to recognize the role of J. Butler Chapman, J. H. Stringfellow, Josiah Miller, and R. H. Elliott. Also the Topeka Constitution needs re-evaluation.32

The Lecompton Constitution movement and the English bill have been reinterpreted by F. H. Hodder, showing that the bribery story is untenable.33 The admission of Kansas into the Union and the organization of the state government under Charles Robinson as governor, is told in modern form in G. R. Gaeddert, *The Birth of Kansas* (Topeka, 1940). The John Brown story is told in Malin, *John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-six*, based upon altogether new manuscript material as the point of departure from the traditional factual structure of the activities of Brown. In this new context the Pottawatomie massacre was political assassination.

IV. BLACKMAR, *Kansas, a Cyclopedia of State History*

The set of books called *Kansas, a Cyclopedia of State History* . . . was published in 1912 in three volumes, but volume 3 was in two parts each as large as either of the first two volumes (Chicago: Standard Publishing Company). The first two volumes were called history, but arranged topically in alphabetical order as is customary in an encyclopedia. Thus, it was designed as a reference work, not as one to be read consecutively. It was a vanity history, but by this time custom in such matters had pretty well standardized the procedure of printing the subscribers’ biographies and pictures


in volumes separate from the history, but the whole work was sold of course as sets. The two-part volume 3 contained the subscribers' biographies. The promoters of the enterprise tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade F. H. Hodder to permit the use of his name on the title page as editor, offering him compensation in the four-figure range. The exact conditions under which Frank W. Blackmar, professor of sociology and dean of the graduate school of the University of Kansas, accepted the role assigned to him on the title page as editor are not known. Although he wrote some articles, the work as a whole was written by a staff of writers, partly regular company personnel, and partly local people resident in Topeka. The details of this writing enterprise have been summarized in a written statement by Martin J. Flannery, October 11, 1933, supplemented by George Root, a long-time member of the staff of the Kansas State Historical Society. According to these informants, Thomas J. Hudson, Indianapolis, the managing editor, wrote most of the territorial and state history; Charles and William Jackson, Valparaiso, Ind., were in charge of outside activities. Martin J. Flannery wrote most of the biographical articles, and George Root most of the articles on rivers, springs, express routes, and landmarks. Elizabeth N. Barr (Mrs. C. B. Arthur, later publisher of the Overland Park Herald), contributed to the county histories. A number of others made lesser contributions. Most of the work was compiled and written in the rooms of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1910-1912.

V. THE CONNELLEY HISTORIES

Two sets of vanity histories were issued under the name of W. E. Connelley, secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, as author and compiler; each in five volumes, in each case two being history and three being biographies principally, if not altogether, of subscribers. The first set was entitled A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, and was issued by the Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago and New York, 1918. The second was entitled History of Kansas, State and People. . . . In the latter case the title page indicated that the biographies were by a special staff of writers. The publisher was The American Historical Society, Inc., Chicago and New York, 1928. This organization should not be confused with the American Historical Association, the professional organization of historians in the United States.

34. Professor Hodder told the present writer the story of these negotiations.
35. K.S.H.S., manuscript division.
Except for the three volumes of biographies in each set, the two histories were substantially one and the same thing. Neither the copyright notice of 1928 nor the preface of the same date gave any hint that the material had been published before. In the 1928 edition of the history, a new chapter one had been added and the following chapters renumbered accordingly and retitled. New chapters were added to cover the period between 1918 and 1928, the administrations of Governors Allen, Davis, and Paulen. Among the special articles three were new. A page by page collation of the texts of the two histories show that they are identical except an occasional sentence, paragraph, or section.36

The most of the history in these volumes was actually written by Connelley. The other chapters were published under the names of each of the contributing authors, but most of them were superficial. The major interest centers in Connelley’s interpretation of Kansas and national history. He had no formal training in such matters and had followed his own bent in cultivating only those aspects of history that were of interest to him personally. Also, he was a man of strong likes and dislikes. In his earlier days he had been in the thick of the feuding over John Brown, Jim Lane, and Charles Robinson, and had written biographies of Lane (1899), and Brown (1900), as well as a bitter attack on Robinson under the title Appeal to the Record. By the time he wrote Kansas and Kansans his views had moderated somewhat, but they colored his treatment of Kansas history which was unduly favorable to Lane and Brown. To Connelley, history was peculiarly personal. His interest in Indians resulted in an undue amount of space being devoted to that subject, particularly the Wyandotte Nation. His insistence upon the Wyandotte background for the Kansas-Nebraska bill, and the major roles of Abelard Guthrie and William Walker distorted that whole subject. His contention ignored what was going on in the United States as a whole, and in effect, made the tail to wag the dog. That type of exaggeration is one of the pitfalls of local historians when zeal for their own area loses touch with background. Another special interest with Connelley was the military history of the American Civil War, which resulted in six chapters on the Kansas aspects of military operations. Kansas history after the Civil War was written by several hands. The work as a whole lacked organization and coherence; a collection of historical articles arranged roughly in a chronological order rather than a history.

36. In reviewing the 1928 edition in the American Historical Review, New York (v. 34, pp. 663, 664), F. H. Huddler pointed out the main facts about the two histories.
CONCLUSION

Conclusions appropriate to close this series of essays fall under three heads, which emphasize the wide split between theory and practice. First, the conception of history conspicuous throughout the course of agitation for a state historical society had emphasized that history included the whole range of human activity. Kingman’s presidential address before the Kansas Historical Society in 1868 had held up a worthy ideal. Kansans of that era were not only familiar with Macaulay’s history, but also J. R. Green’s histories—the Larger History of the English People, sold in 1882 for 85 cents.37 The emphasis in Green’s work was on “the history of the people, rather than that of the kings only. . . .” The Andreas-Cutler book made a bid for some such conception of history, but fell short.

Explanations for the continued emphasis upon political and military history were grounded upon fundamental considerations even where the practice was deficient. In modern times responsible government was held up as the ideal. Such a concept of government could not be successful, nor could it be defended, unless the people of such a society were politically minded—which is only another way of saying government conscious. Under such a system, history must give attention to facts, activities, and ideas that were involved in political action. And so long as the final arbiter among nations was war, military history must necessarily occupy a role comparable to the historical reality which it is the function of historical study to reconstruct.38 Some discrimination must be exercised, however, in deciding the relative emphasis upon the several aspects of society. It is one thing to give due emphasis to political and military history, it is quite another to write political and military history to the exclusion of all else, or social history without politics and war. Also, care must be exercised with the concept of what is political. In a society operating under the principles of popular responsibility the term political may be as comprehensive as the scope of society. Decisions about the boundaries of government action, broad or limited, are political judgments. Thus, it is clear that in the third quarter of the 19th century, whether in the England of Green, or the New York of Dana, or the Chicago of Andreas, or the Kansas which is the subject of these essays on history, similar issues were at

37. Troy Kansas Chief, May 18, July 6, 1882, a series of advertisements. Green’s Shorter History of the English People had been published in England in 1874, and had been immensely popular there. It was reprinted in the United States by Macmillan at $3.50, and by Harpers at $1.75. The author of the biographical sketches in the Dictionary of National Biography, v. 23 (1890), pp. 46-49, remarked: “What Macaulay had done for a period of English history, Green did for it as a whole.” The Larger History of the English People was issued in England in four volumes, 1877-1880.

38. These issues were discussed bluntly in an editorial by William B. Dana, Merchant’s Magazine, New York, v. 63 (1870), pp. 241-246.
stake in the theory and practice of history. Pioneer Kansas was not operating in a vacuum of isolation.

The second conclusion has to do with the declining role of locality, the state, county, and towns and other subdivisions. The point has been made that Douglas was a proponent of local self-government and co-operation among states on a regional basis as an antidote for the trend toward national centralization. The American Civil War was a war of national unification by “blood and iron” comparable to the wars of unification of Germany and Italy during the same decade. Or, put in the converse, it was a war against the states and locality. The several series of state histories planned during the 1870's and 1880's were in one of their aspects a continuation of prewar devotion to locality, or reactions against the emphasis on nationalism. Tuttle and Andreas prepared series of state histories, but for different reasons neither plan was carried far. The conservative publishing house of Houghton, Mifflin and Company in Boston did execute their program for a Commonwealth Series, edited by Horace B. Scudder. The authors were drawn, so far as possible, from the academic world, and the books were very small. Spring's Kansas (1885), was a number in that series. The Andreas-Cutler history went further than most state histories in providing not only county histories, but divided the counties into their component parts and sketched the history of each. In contrast, the Connelley histories did not even recognize counties. Locality had evaporated from state history as completely as the state had been eliminated from the history of the union of states called the United States of America.

Lastly, what had become of the individual and his biography as history? In the Andreas-Cutler book the biographies, arranged alphabetically, were associated with the history of their respective localities. In the Blackmar and Connelley sets the biography volumes had no relevance whatever to the history volumes, except as a commercial transaction they must be purchased together. The biographies of the subscribers were not even arranged alphabetically for purposes of reference. The pretense that biography was history lost all semblance of any relation to the subject matter of the history.

In spite of the trends revealed here, state and local history are essential even to the writing of a sound history of the United States. Thus far national history has been written too much from the top down. And furthermore, local history is significant in its own right, when adequately framed in a larger setting of region or of nation or of other background for the achievement of perspective.