Kansas History as Published in the Press


Late in 1899 the novelist, William Dean Howells, made a lecture tour which included several engagements in Kansas. An account of the tour entitled “The Dean in Person: Howells’ Lecture Tour,” by Harrison T. Meserole, appeared in the Autumn, 1956, number of Western Humanities Review, Salt Lake City.

American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, included in its issue of October, 1956, a 71-page article entitled “Trail Blazers of the Trans-Mississippi West.” The two-page section devoted to Kansas mentioned several of the state’s early Jewish settlers.

Identification of the principal printed items that chronicle the origin and growth of Protestantism in Kansas is the objective of Dr. Emory Lindquist’s The Protestant Church in Kansas: an Annotated Bibliography which comprised the October, 1956, number of The University of Wichita Bulletin.

“Who Were the Pioneers? What Became of Them?” was the title of a series by Charles A. Scott, beginning October 4, 1956, in the Westmoreland Recorder. Included were biographical sketches of Pottawatomie county pioneers.

Argonia’s early history is the subject of a series of articles by Mrs. Grace Handy which began appearing in the Argonia Argosy, October 11, 1956. This Sumner county town was incorporated on Kansas Day, 1885.

A sketch of the Marion Hill Lutheran church, near Dwight, was printed in the Junction City Union, October 12, 1956. The church was organized June 1, 1876, with 61 charter members. Histories of the church also appeared in the Council Grove Republican, October 17, and the Alta Vista Journal, October 18.
Recent articles in the Chanute Tribune included: a biographical sketch of Octave Chanute, the man for whom the town of Chanute was named, October 16, 1956; and Woodson county pioneer life as recalled by O. C. Rose and G. C. Jackson, whose parents were early settlers in the county, December 1.

T. C. Briggs, a Kiowa county rancher, was the subject of a biographical sketch by Mrs. Fern Eller in the Kiowa County Signal, Greensburg, October 18, 1956. Briggs came to the county in 1885 when he was ten years old.

W. F. Elland organized the Christian church of Bucklin in 1906 according to a history of the church printed in the Bucklin Banner, October 18, 1956. The first church building was completed in 1909. The article appeared in the Clark County Clipper, Ashland, October 25.

Beginning October 18, 1956, the Turon Press has been publishing a historical series by Alfred B. Bradshaw entitled “When the Prairies Were New—A History of the Lerado Community.” Settlement of the Reno county community started in 1873.

Goodland’s city library was the subject of a historical sketch in the Sherman County Herald, Goodland, October 25, 1956. In November, 1908, a small library was opened as the result of efforts by Goodland church groups. A grant from Andrew Carnegie provided a library building which was completed in 1913.

Two anniversaries were celebrated by the Fort Scott First Methodist church, November 1, 1956: the 90th anniversary of its founding and the 50th of the cornerstone laying for the present church building. Historical notes on the church were published in the Fort Scott Tribune, November 1.

The Colby Free Press-Tribune, November 5, 1956, printed a history of Wesley chapel, near Colby, by Mrs. Ruth Pence. The chapel was dedicated October 29, 1916.

In 1903 a Methodist church organization was effected and a minister assigned at Talmo, Republic county. A building was erected in 1906. The Belleville Telescope and the Concordia Blade-Empire published a church history November 8, 1956.

Haviland was incorporated in 1906. The town company was formed and the townsite established in 1886. In observance of the town’s double anniversary, a special edition was published by the
Haviland *Journal*, November 8, 1956. An eight-page section reviewed the history of the community.

In 1920 Anna VanLew read a history of Axtell at an old settlers' reunion. The manuscript was recently rediscovered and the story printed in the Axtell *Standard*, November 8, 15, 1956. By 1871 Axtell was “on the map,” with a railroad and a post office.

Reece Ingle, Cherokee, Okla., narrated his personal experiences in making the Cherokee Strip “run,” September 16, 1893, staking, filing, and farming his claim, and living in a dugout for six years, in the Cunningham *Clipper*, November 8, 15, 29, December 6, 13, 1956. Ingle still lives on his claim.

In June, 1857, D. R. Anthony, I, left Rochester, N. Y., to settle in Kansas. From his new home Anthony wrote frequent letters to his father, brother, and sister in Rochester. Excerpts from the letters were published in the Leavenworth *Times*, beginning November 18, 1956.

A history of the Herington Methodist church, by Mrs. F. E. Munsell, was published in the Herington *Advertiser-Times*, November 22, 1956. Organization of the church was effected in 1884 and the first building was dedicated in 1886.

School districts 22, 24, 50, and 56, Rawlins county, were organized in 1885, according to a historical sketch by Ray Moore in the *Citizen-Patriot*, Atwood, November 22, 1956. The sketch was given as an address at the recent dedication of the new school building in these districts—now consolidated into district 234.

Bernard H. Lermert's reminiscences of his experiences as a Western cattlemale, 1879-1889, are related in an article called “The Round Up of Eighty-Four.” Portions of this story appeared in the *Southwest Daily Times*, Liberal, November 23, to December 8, 1956.

“Know Your Town” is the title of a series on the history of Derby beginning in the Derby *Star*, November 29, 1956. First settlers in the area were featured in the first article.

A “Highland Park” edition of the *Bulletin of the Shawnee County Historical Society*, Topeka, was issued in December, 1956. Included are biographical sketches of many prominent Highland Park families.

“Living Conditions—1860 to 1956,” an article by Nellie Oder Whiteside, read at a recent meeting of the Butler County Historical

"Wellsford—Once a Thriving, Bustling City, Has a Colorful and Exciting History," by Ecile Hall, was published in the Kiowa County Signal, Greensburg, December 20, 1956, and in the Haviland Journal, January 3, 1957. Included in the history of this Kiowa county town is a biographical sketch of C. E. Anderson, for 59 years a Wellsford merchant.


"Missouri's Struggle for Kansas—the Story of a Lost Cause," an article by Bartlett Boder, was included in the Winter, 1957, issue of Museum Graphic, published by the St. Joseph, Mo., museum.


As a background for Butler county's centennial in 1957, Clarence King has written a review of early Butler county history which was published in the Augusta Gazette, January 9, 10, 1957. William Hildebrand was the county's first permanent resident, arriving in May, 1857, and settling near present El Dorado.


Articles prepared by the Lane County Historical Society from information received in answer to questionnaires sent to residents and former residents of Lane county, have appeared regularly in the Dighton Herald, beginning January 23, 1957. The stories are in the form of personal reminiscences and family histories.

"90 Years of Ellsworth and Ellsworth County History," by George Jelinek, began appearing by installments in the Ellsworth Messenger, January 24, 1957. The Ellsworth townsite was laid out in January, 1867.

Mrs. Fred Gerken's history of the Girard Public Library, presented at a library board dinner, was printed in the Girard Press, January 24, 1957. Work toward a library for Girard was started in 1895 by the Ladies' Reading Club. Other city clubs were invited to join in a federation which was successful in opening a library early in 1899.

In 1867 the Frankfort Town Company was formed, a townsite purchased and laid out, and the first houses were built, according to a history of Frankfort by J. M. Lane published in the Frankfort Index, January 31, 1957. Frankfort became a third class city July 24, 1875.

An article in the Smith County Pioneer, Smith Center, January 31, 1957, reviewed the history of Smith county. Gov. James M. Harvey organized the county February 1, 1872.

Among historical articles appearing the past few months in the Clay Center Dispatch were: “Rivers, Creeks Once Supplied Ice for Use in Summer Here,” by L. F. Valentine, February 2, 1957; “The Beginning of the Clay Center Schools,” by Mrs. A. R. Russell, February 22; a description of Clay Center 90 years ago, written 30 years ago by George A. Gray, March 6; and “Our Once-Forsted Country Now Has Tree Planting Day,” by L. F. Valentine, March 30.

The Valley Falls Vindicator, February 6, 1957, printed a short history of the Pony Express. Beginning April 3, 1860, the express operated for about 17 months on the route between St. Joseph and California.

On February 6, 1957, the Arkansas City Daily Traveler printed an article entitled “Last ‘Boomer’ Train Left Arkansas City 74 Years Ago This Month.” In February, 1883, over 500 “boomers” under Capt. David L. Payne set out from Arkansas City intending to settle near present Oklahoma City. But Payne and several others were arrested by federal troops and the plan failed.

A biographical sketch of Maj. Andrew Drumm was published in the Kiowa News, February 7, 1957. Drumm came to Kansas in the early 1870’s, settling near Caldwell. Later he was one of the founders of New Kiowa.

The Jetmore Republican, in conjunction with Jetmore’s 75th anniversary, has in recent months published a group of historical articles by Margaret Raser. Included were: “Story of the County Seat,” February 7, 14, 1957; “The First Houses Built in Jetmore,” March 7; “Lives of Early Settlers,” March 14, 21; “Early Finances, From 1879-1882,” March 28; “The Big Blizzard of 1886,” April 4; and “It Happened 75 Years Ago,” May 2, 9.

Elizabeth Barnes’ column “Historic Johnson County,” has continued to appear regularly in the Johnson County Herald, Overland Park. A few recent subjects were: reminiscences of Fred W. Stolte, Jr., February 7, 1957; Hotel Olathe, February 28, March 7; and the Bishop Miege High School, March 14.

A new feature began in the Hutchinson News-Herald, February 8, 1957, titled “This Was Hutchinson.” It is a series of pictures of early scenes and old buildings in Hutchinson with brief explanations. An article by Ruby Basye, “Merry Men of England Wrote History on the Prairies of Western Kansas,” appeared in the News-Herald, February 10. On April 21 a 20-page special section was
printed by the newspaper, now called the News, which included items of its own history.

Seventy years ago pioneers of German origin began arriving in the area of present Bushton, according to an article on the history of Bushton in the Bushton News, February 14, 1957. Mentioned in the story are the city officers, businesses, schools, churches, and other institutions.


Stanton county’s 70th anniversary was the occasion for a special 38-page edition of the Johnson Pioneer, February 21, 1957. Included were articles on Stanton county people, institutions, and organizations.

“Early Creameries Helped Recovery of Central Kansas During 1890’s,” an 11-column article by Earl W. McDowell, appeared in the Hillsboro Star-Journal, February 21, 1957. The establishment of creameries began in 1889 in several towns, just as “hard times” appeared in Kansas. This new market did much to “save the day for the farmers.”

Cherokee county’s county-seat war between Columbus and Baxter Springs, was reviewed in the Columbus Advocate, February 28, 1957. Some historical information about Columbus was included in the Advocate, April 12. John Appleby, who settled at present Columbus in 1868, is credited with being the first settler in the area. The Modern Light, Columbus, has continued its column of historical information, “Do You Remember When,” which included notes on the Columbus-Baxter Springs fight, March 21.

Zebulon Pike’s expedition of 1806-1807 was reviewed in an article by Dick Blackburn, the first installment appearing in the February 28, 1957, issue of the Belleville Telescope. A large portion of the article is devoted to the location of the Pawnee Indian village visited by Pike in late September, 1806.

Histories of the Beloit Presbyterian church were published in the Beloit Gazette, March 7, 1957, and in the Beloit Call, March 15. The church was organized in 1872 under the leadership of the Rev. Charles Higgins.
Historical articles in the March 7, 1957, issue of the Marysville Advocate included a biographical sketch of Joe Carroll, by Mrs. Byron E. Guise, and an article on early Marysville schools. A story in the Advocate, May 9, by Gordon S. Hohn, recalled horse racing in Marysville around 1906.

"Indians, Hostile Whites Pioneer Perils," by U. S. Grier, was published in the magazine section of the Wichita Eagle, March 10, 1957. The article is comprised largely of pioneer experiences of Grier's father. In the same issue of the Eagle was an article on Sedan by Velma E. Lowry. The town was founded in 1868. "Everything Goes in Wichita," was the signboard greeting to visitors to that town in 1877, Lynne Holt said in an article on early Wichita in the Eagle magazine, May 12, 1957. The article points out that Wichita lived up to the promise.

Joseph Thoes and his brother, who arrived in 1855, are thought to be the first settlers at Alma. A series on the history of Alma began in the Alma Signal-Enterprise, March 14, 1957.


Glasco was founded in 1870 and incorporated in 1877, Mrs. L. W. Sheets reports in a brief history of the community printed in the Glasco Sun, March 14, 1957. The same issue of the Sun included reminiscences of Theodore D. Palmer, who came to Glasco in 1878, and Estell Arthur Owens, who recalls life there in 1912.

Histories of Emporia's colleges have recently been featured in Emporia newspapers. Leon Reynolds' history of the College of Emporia appeared in the Emporia Times, March 21, 1957, and in the Emporia Gazette, April 1. A history of Kansas State Teachers College, by Ralph Daggett, was published in the Gazette, April 2, and the Times, April 25 and May 2. The College of Emporia was founded in 1882 and Emporia State in 1865.

The historical committee of the Lebanon Community Development Association has prepared a brief history of Lebanon which appeared in the Lebanon Times, March 28, 1957. The original town was established about two and a half miles west of the present site in 1873. The move to the new location was made in 1887.

On April 7, 1882, a meeting was called in the Chautauqua county courthouse to organize the Sedan Baptist church, it is pointed out in histories of the church by H. E. Floyd in the Independence
Reporter, March 31, 1957, and Howard Moore in the Coffeyville Daily Journal, April 4. The first pastor was the Rev. F. M. Walker, and the first building was completed in 1889.

History Today, a London magazine, published “The John Brown Legend,” by Arnold Whitridge, in its issue for April, 1957. Whitridge says the legend that surrounds the name of John Brown was put together “out of most unpromising materials.”


“Last Major Indian Battle in Kansas Fought Near Scott County State Park,” is the title of a full-page article in the News Chronicle, Scott City, April 4, 1957. The article reviews the Battle of Punished Woman Creek in 1878 and events leading up to it. The troop commander, Col. William H. Lewis, was killed in this action.

Caldwell is designated the “Border Queen” cowtown by George Viele in an article published in the Caldwell Messenger, April 11, 15, 18, 25, 1957. The town was laid out in 1871, incorporated in 1879, and became a cowtown in 1880.

The Kansas Chief, Troy, celebrated its 100th anniversary with a special 16-page edition April 11, 1957. The first issue of the Chief was published June 4, 1857, in White Cloud by Sol. Miller, its founder. Featured in the special edition is a biographical sketch of Miller which includes an autobiography first published in 1893. Among other articles is a sketch of Henry J. Cahalan, Sr., publisher of the Chief, 1904-1919. His son, Charles C. Cahalan, is the present publisher.

A biographical sketch of Prudence Crandall, by Lily B. Rozar, was published in the Independence Reporter, April 14, 1957. Miss Crandall is credited with establishing at Canterbury, Conn., in the early 1830's, the country’s first integrated school. In the 1870's she came to Elk Falls, Kan., where she died and is buried.
Stories on the opening of Indian territory for settlement and articles on the history of Oklahoma and the West, by Dr. B. B. Chapman and others, were included in the Guthrie (Okla.) Daily Leader’s annual ’89er edition published April 16, 1957.

Wayne A. O’Connell is the author of a history of Chetopa which appeared in the Chetopa Advance, April 18, 25, May 2, 1957; the Oswego Independent, April 19, 26, May 3; Oswego Democrat, April 19, 26, May 3, 10, 24. Chetopa’s history began in 1857 when Dr. George Lisle and several companions arrived and the first cabins were built. Chetopa was named after an Osage Indian chief.

A story by Myra Lockwood Brown on Butler county’s first courthouse was printed in the Butler County News, El Dorado, April 18, 1957. The building, a log cabin, is believed to have been erected about 1867.

Winding Vale school, district No. 20, Jackson county, was organized April 26, 1862. A history of the now-abandoned school, prepared by M. C. Barrows, appeared in the Holton Recorder, May 2, 1957.


An article by M. F. Amrine entitled “The Good Old Days,” was published in the Council Grove Republican in three installments, May 6, 8, 13, 1957. The author compares life in Kansas in the 1870’s and 1880’s to life at present, and leaves the impression that the “good old days” weren’t so good.

Oxford school history was featured in the May 9, 1957, number of the Oxford Register. The Oxford high school started in 1896, the grade school a few years earlier.

With the issue of May 15, 1957, the Hiawatha Daily World published the first section of the Centennial World. Section two was printed June 11, section three July 18, others appeared later. The special editions were described by the publishers: “The Centennial World is dedicated to a review of the historical events of the past century and a recital of stories that relate to the activities of the people who have brought this wonderful, modern community into being from the raw prairies.”