Kansas History off the Press

The September-October, 1976, issue of the 35th Divisionnaire, Horton, printed the first installment of Maj. Samuel Clarke’s memoirs of World War I. Major Clarke, who was born near Lawrence in 1882, enlisted in the First Kansas infantry at the age of 17, and served on the Mexican border in 1916. In World War I he served in France with the 35th division, and during the battle of the Argonne commanded the 13th infantry. Clarke was appointed superintendent of the Boys Industrial School at Topeka in 1925, and was elected a representative to the state legislature in 1928.

“Arkalalah,” the annual fall festival in Arkansas City, was marked by a 60-page special edition of the Arkansas City Traveler, October 26, 1976, devoted to the theme “Heritage in Harmony.” The Mexican-American, Black-American, Indian-American, and European-American heritages of the community were highlighted in different sections of the edition.

Designated a National Historic Site in 1973, the Lebold-Vahsholtz mansion in Abilene, has now been completely renovated and furnished with antiques and is open for tours by appointment. An article by Karen Douglas on the mansion’s renovation appeared in the November 4, 1976, issue of the Lindsborg News-Record. The present owners are Mr. and Mrs. Fred Vahsholtz. The home was built in 1881 by C. H. Lebold.

Mrs. Minnie Munson of Elsmore is the author of a series on “The Marmaton River People and Places” which began appearing in the Marmaton Valley Sun, Moran, November 10, 1976. Pictures of the old arched bridge, the river’s source area, and the first sign were featured in that issue. Fishing, swimming, buggy washing, baptismal services, and several drownings were included in the river’s early history.

A history of St. John’s Catholic School at Hanover which celebrated its 100th anniversary November 23, 1976, appeared in the Hanover News, November 19, 1976. The school is supported by the St. John the Baptist church, Hanover. Rev. John H. Pichler directed the building of the first school which opened with an enrollment of 18 pupils in November, 1876.

An article in the Bonner Springs-Edwardsville Chieftain, November 25, 1976, reviewed the history of the Methodist church.
in Bonner Springs. A church building was completed in 1899 and used until 1967. In recent years it has served the Victory Assembly of God, but on November 17, 1976, it was destroyed by fire.

The Natoma Union Pacific depot, one of the oldest landmarks in Natoma, has been purchased by Codell Grain, Inc. and moved to Codell. A history of the depot which was built in 1891 and the branch line of the Union Pacific which served the community, is included in an article in the Natoma-Luray Independent, November 25, 1976.

An article in the Onaga Herald, November 25, 1976, compiled by Mrs. Cliff Labbee, highlighted the city's history in the 1880's. The Herald, January 27, 1977, proposed that the city celebrate its centennial this year, since "there was an Onaga in 1877, established or founded by the Kansas Central Railroad 'cause they needed a place for a depot." Portions of Mrs. Mildred McCrum's history of Onaga which appeared in serial form in the Herald in 1929 was quoted. Another 100th anniversary also should be observed in 1983, the editorial suggested, as the city incorporated in 1883.

Progress 200, a pictorial history of Pawnee county, was published in December, 1976, as a supplement to the Tiller and Toiler, Larned. The 144-page soft-cover book ranges pictorially from an early photograph of Fort Larned to current color pictures of some areas and buildings of the county. It includes an early history of Kansas as well as a chronicle of progress in Pawnee county and the city of Larned. The book is dedicated to Bobbie Victor Wallace, publisher of the Tiller and Toiler from 1940 until her retirement in 1969. Much of the material used in the book "was originally saved and preserved by her."

Included in the December, 1976, issue of Heritage, a supplement to the Lansing Leader, December 16, 1976, were the following articles: "Railroad Town [Piper in Wyandotte County] Experienced Excitement," by Mary Flanagan; "Kickapoo [Town in Leavenworth County] History Dates to 1832," by Kathy Gipka; also a historic recipe, "Jeff Davis Pie," and an article on antiques, "Grooming Aids Before Bathrooms," both by Vera Haworth Eldridge.

Whenever a town was founded in Kansas usually a newspaper soon made its appearance, E. Neil Carson, secretary of the Clifton Community Historical Society, says in a brief history of Clay county

Three churches which observed 100-year anniversaries recently were the Cherokee United Methodist church, the Bethany United Church of Christ in Hiawatha, and the Cuba Presbyterian church. Articles noting their centennial observances and including accounts of their histories, appeared respectively in the Pittsburg Morning Sun, December 4, 1976; Hiawatha Daily World, November 22, 1976; and Belleville Telescope, December 9, 1976.

During the bicentennial year, a series of articles, “Flashbacks Into Local History,” was written for the Baldwin, Eudora, Overbrook, and Wellsville newspapers by Loren Litteer. They featured the people, events, and landmarks in the south Douglas county area. One of these, entitled “The Young William Clarke Quantrill,” reviewed the guerrilla leader’s formative years, beginning in the Eudora Enterprise, December 8, 1976. The first railroad to be built in Kansas south of the Kansas river, the Leavenworth, Lawrence, and Ft. Gibson, was the subject of a two-part article in the “Flashbacks” series, beginning in the Overbrook Citizen, October 28, 1976.

The Sedan Times-Star reprinted on December 8, 1976, an article on Emmett Kelly, for whom the city’s museum is named. Kelly, one of America’s best-loved clowns, was born in Sedan, December 9, 1898. The story covers the clown’s early years in the community and recounts his career through the height of his popularity when he played the part of Willie in Cecil B. Demilles’s The Greatest Show on Earth.

In observance of the bicentennial year, the Kansas Farm Bureau conducted a “Century Farm” contest. An article in the December 9, 1976, Paola Miami Republican reported on eight Miami county farms that are still occupied by descendants of persons who settled on them over 100 years ago. A description of the century farm owned by Donald and Alice Anderson in Neosho county was published in the Chanute Tribune, December 1. Mrs. Pearl Kennedy of Butler county was another recipient of the Farm Bureau’s century farm award. The history of her farm was printed in the Leon News, September 23. An article on the McRae family farm which was homesteaded in Linn county 104 years ago appeared in the Marmaton Valley Sun, Moran, December 8. At the land office in Jewell City Lucian Edgar Ransom filed a claim in 1869 on 160 acres which has remained in the Ransom family. The story
of this centennial farm was carried in the *Jewell County Record*, Mankato, December 2.

The Kansas setting for Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House on the Prairie*, the popular children’s book and television series, is about 15 miles southwest of Independence. According to an article about the site in the McPherson *Sentinel*, December 16, 1976, Mr. and Mrs. William Kurtis, present owners of the property, plan to construct a cabin like the one built by “Pa” Ingalls.

On the occasion of her 101st birthday, the *Jewell County Record*, Mankato, December 16, 1976, published a biographical sketch of Mrs. George Huntington of Mankato. Mrs. Huntington was born in Iowa and came to Kansas with her parents in 1885.

A history of Hillside Cottage, Wichita, by Bob Curtright, appeared in the Wichita *Beacon*, December 19, 1976. Recently added to the National Register of Historic Places, the house was erected in 1888 and is now the home of the Craig Miner family.

“Museum Footnotes” written by Roland Mueller for the Winfield *Daily Courier*, include a history of the city’s first nursing program in the December 24, 1976, issue; and an account of one of the state’s worst blizzards, in January of 1886, in the issue of January 18, 1977. The story of the blizzard, taken from *Courier* files, concluded “Kansas has since had cold weather but this storm in 1886 undoubtedly took the heaviest toll of livestock and human life in the history of the state.” Another article recalling the blizzard of 1886, a storm which lasted from December 31, 1885, to the latter part of January, appeared in the *Solomon Valley Post*, Beloit, January 26, 1977.

Carry A. Nation “for whom liquor was the devil to be exorcised from every establishment where its aroma could tempt the Christian soul” wrecked the bar of a Wichita hotel December 27, 1900, before she was arrested by authorities and placed in the Sedgwick county jail. An account of the incident by Fred Mann was printed in the Wichita *Eagle*, December 28, 1976. “The Grasshopper’s Gift” by H. C. Miner appeared in the Wichita *Eagle and Beacon*, January 30, 1977, and described how the image of the destructive insect was turned by Wichitans from an agricultural threat to an urban symbol.
Brownstone Hall in Concordia, built by Napoleon Bonaparte Brown in 1883, is furnished by its present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Gocke, much as it was in its early years. An article about the 23-room mansion appeared in the Salina Journal, December 30, 1976. Brown also built Concordia's Brown Grand Opera house which is being renovated by the city as a bicentennial project.

Mrs. Claude Kelley of the Lyle community, Decatur county, reviewed Lyle's history at the January 30, 1977, meeting of the Norton County Historical Society. Her talk was reported in the Norton Daily Telegram, February 8, 1977. The town once had more than 20 businesses but was bypassed by the railroad and today has a population of three.

The recent razing of the old Pacific Hotel in Dorrance prompted the publication of the history of the building in the Russell Daily News, February 9, 1977. The hotel was built in the late 1890's and was later known as the Dorrance Hotel and Cafe.

In his “Sun Shine” column in the Pittsburg Morning Sun, February 11, 1977, John Hay featured the old ice house built in 1896 at Girard. During the winter ice was stored (insulated with sawdust) in the house to be used in the summer for preserving food in the days before refrigeration.

“Frederic Remington in Kansas,” by David A. Dary, was published in Vol. 6, No. 1, of Persimmon Hill, Oklahoma City. Remington, who later became famous as a Western artist, operated a sheep ranch in Butler county for about a year in 1883-1884.

Reminiscences of 11 former Emporia Gazette writers, interspersed with stories on various aspects of Emporia history, are included in a 48-page Album of Memories published recently by the Gazette. Several of the 11—for example, Oscar Stauffer and Rolla Clymer—currently publish their own newspapers.

Settlers began arriving at the site of Dorrance in Russell county when the railroad reached that point in 1867. A 56-page, illustrated history of the town by Esther Reilly, entitled The Story of Dorrance, Kansas, Past and Present, was published in 1976.

Bender Hill's centennial-bicentennial observance included publication of a 31-page pamphlet entitled Centennial History of Bender Hill Settlement and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. The first church building was erected in 1877.
The History of Stull, 1857-1976, an eight-page pamphlet, was issued in 1976 as a part of the community’s bicentennial observance. By 1857 six families were living near Deer Creek in Douglas county. This settlement originally was called Deer Creek, but in 1899 the name was changed to Stull.

As We Were, published in 1976 by the Saline County Historical Society, is Vol. 1 of a projected series, Pictorial History of Saline County. Mary Crowther and Mary Maley are the editors of the 64-page, paperbound booklet.

A 24-page pamphlet entitled The History of Milberger, Kansas, was published in 1976 by the historical committee for the Milberger bicentennial. The Russell county community was largely settled by Germans from the Volga river region of Russia who began arriving in 1876.

History of Wetmore, 1866-1976 is a 20-page pamphlet published in 1976 by the Wetmore bicentennial committee. Wetmore was established by the Atchison and Pike’s Peak railroad in 1866 as a shipping point. Mike Callahan, who worked for the railroad, was the first resident.

Clearfield History, 1858-1976 is the title of a 14-page pamphlet on the Clearfield community in Douglas county—its church, school, and grange—compiled by the history committee for the Clearfield bicentennial celebration. The Clearfield United Methodist Church, started in 1858, was originally made up of German settlers of Evangelical background. The city of Clearfield was organized in 1885, the grange in 1907.

Fourteen pages of text by James C. Lee and 32 pages of pictures comprise the recently issued pamphlet The Overland Park Story. In 1905 William B. Strang, Jr., organized the Strang Land Company and the Missouri and Kansas interurban railway, known as the Strang line. The activities of these two firms resulted in the development of the Overland Park area.

A 56-page history of Erie by Crystal Fleming, entitled Erie Remembrances was published by the author in 1976. The town was started in 1865 when J. L. Denison and A. H. Roe established a trading post two miles northwest of the present townsite.

In 1874 Mennonite families began settling in Marion county. Peter Eckert joined this group in 1876 and under his leadership the Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren church, Hillsboro, was established.
The church recently issued a 39-page historical pamphlet entitled *The Ebenfeld Church in Action, 1876-1976*.

Margaret Squires Gay compiled and edited a recently published 37-page pamphlet entitled *The History of “Four Corners” Mount Pleasant, Johnson County, Kansas*. Mount Pleasant was located a few miles from Gardner, in McCamish township.

_Honoring Our Heritage—A History of Sylvan Grove, Kansas_ is a 92-page, paperbound booklet, written by Marge Lawson for the Sylvan Grove centennial-bicentennial committee and published by the Ellsworth Reporter in 1976. Settlers began arriving in the area in the late 1860’s and Sylvan Grove was established in the mid-1870’s.

_Our Yesterdays—A Story of Mulberry, Kan._ is a recently published 73-page history of Mulberry by C. Irvin McCullough. In 1866 a post office called Mulberry Grove was established and in 1869 the town was laid out.

H. Craig Miner is the author of *A History of the Wichita Country Club, 1900-1975*, a 92-page book published by the club in 1975. Dr. J. D. Ritchey and Bennett Cushman were the prime movers in getting the club started in 1900.

_Die Liebenthaler und Ihre Kirche_ is the title of a 97-page, English text publication on the history of St. Joseph’s Catholic Parish, Liebenthal. The author, Emerald Dechant, starts the narrative with the migration of Germans to the Volga region of Russia beginning in the 1760’s. The exodus from Russia to the United States began in 1875.

_Wellsville, Kansas, Bicentennial, 1776-1976_ is a 128-page, well-illustrated history of the community, issued in 1976 by the Wellsville bicentennial heritage committee, Donna Bosworth Romstedt, editor. Wellsville was incorporated in 1884.

A. N. Ruley’s *History of Brown County*, originally published in 1930, was reprinted in 1976 as a bicentennial project of the Morrill Public Library. Ruley, who died in 1920, was a Brown county newspaperman for 47 years.

Barbara Oringeroff is the author and Leah Johnson illustrator of a new 168-page work entitled _True Sod—Sod Houses of Kansas_, printed by the Mennonite Press, North Newton. The book includes over 200 photographs and other illustrations of Kansas sod houses, many of them showing details of construction.
A 151-page pictorial history entitled *Lawrence Fire Department, Lawrence, Kansas, 1859-1976*, was published in 1976. Phil Leonard, a member of the fire department, is the author. Among the historic fires fought by the department were those set by William C. Quantrill and his men in 1863.

*Argonia* is an 117-page, paperbound booklet by Grace L. Handy published in 1976. The volume includes a reprint of *Argonia, 1882-1932*, and updates the history to 1976.

In 1976 the Grantville Community Historical Society issued a 158-page, paperbound volume entitled *History of Grantville Kansas, 1854-1976*. In addition to a history of the community and its schools, churches, and businesses, the book includes histories of many Grantville families.

Msgr. John A. Duskie, former pastor of the Sacred Heart Parish, Salina, is the compiler of *A Centenary History of the Salina Catholic Community 1876-1976*. The new 181-page, illustrated centennial history begins with the story of the first Kansas missionary, Fr. Juan de Padilla, who was with Coronado on his visit to Kansas in 1541. Since the first resident pastor of the Salina Catholic parish, Fr. Adolph Wibbert, came in 1876, the Catholic community has grown into three parishes with three parochial schools, St. John's hospital, and Marymount College.

Ninety years of history are covered in *Land of the Windmills—Thomas County, Kansas*, a 180-page pictorial work published during the bicentennial year by the Thomas County Historical Society. Many of the photographs were taken by R. I. Bruner, editor. Helen Schnellbacher Frahm wrote the history and commentary. In 1879 settlers began arriving in Thomas county which was organized in 1885. In addition to county history, each town is represented in the text, and there are two picture sections—one for the county and the other including historical views of the towns.

The writing of a history of Shawnee county was sponsored in 1976 by the Shawnee County Historical Society and the Heritage Committee of the Shawnee County American Revolution Bicentennial Commission. The 376-page, well-illustrated work, *Witness of the Times—A History of Shawnee County*, was written by Roy D. Bird and Douglass W. Wallace; general editors were Robert W. Richmond and Joseph W. Snell. The authors took a topical
rather than a chronological approach, dealing separately with each phase or topic of the county’s history.

In 1790, 19 of every 20 Americans were farmers; in 1970, 19 of every 20 were not. Technology that has swept family farms into corporate systems has had tremendous social as well as economic impact. John L. Shover analyzes the implications of the changes that some have called a crisis in American agriculture, in his 338-page work, *First Majority-Last Minority, the Transforming of Rural Life in America*. The book, one of a series, *Minorities in American History*, edited by Moses Rischin, was published in 1976 by Northern Illinois University Press, DeKalb, Ill.

Daniel Fitzgerald is the author and publisher of *Ghost Towns of Kansas*, a new 218-page paperbound volume. Among the towns featured are many that are completely dead and of which there is no trace, and others that still live but have declined from what they once were. The author may be reached at 2912 Eveningside Drive, Topeka, Kan. 66614.

Material representing 82 Kansas counties is included in a 405-page volume entitled *Kansas Pioneers*, published in 1976 by the Topeka Genealogical Society as a bicentennial project. The society’s mailing address is P. O. Box 4048, Topeka, Kan. 66604.

The section “Kansas Historical Notes,” which “has had the last word” in the Quarterly since 1932, will no longer appear. In an effort to eliminate duplication, reports on local historical societies and museums will be printed only in the “From Here and There” column of the *Historical Society Mirror*. It is requested that officials of the local organizations inform us of the activities of their groups so that these reports may be as complete as possible. Mention of recently published pamphlets and books of interest to Kansans will now appear as a part of “Kansas History off the Press” in the Quarterly. Also, a list of new historical publications and, when available, prices and names of persons or firms from whom they may be purchased, will appear under “Book Ends” in the *Mirror*.—THE EDITORS.