

THE STATE HISTORICAL CONVENTION OF 1932

Since this year marks the centennial anniversary of the discovery by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft of the source of America's mightiest water road, it was highly appropriate that this anniversary should have been observed by members of the Minnesota Historical Society at Lake Itasca as the climax of the society's eleventh annual summer tour and convention, which was held from July 14 to 16. In yet another respect the tour had special interest, for the three-day orbit of its itinerary encompassed not only the source of the Father of Waters but also important points along the most frequented routes between that river and the upper Red River. For many this recalled the venture of the romantic Italian explorer, Giacomo C. Beltrami, who, nearly a decade before the discovery of Lake Itasca, thought that he had found in a little lake in northern Minnesota the source of both the Mississippi and Red rivers.

The annual trek of itinerant seekers of history got under way at 8:15 A.M. on Thursday, July 14, when a chartered bus and a half dozen private cars set out from the Historical Building in St. Paul for Anoka, the general starting point. About an hour later the bus, which had called for Minneapolis passengers, met some twenty cars at that rendezvous. Over the modern concrete adaptation of the trail to the Red River that was frequented by the oxcart traffic three-quarters of a century ago, the motorcade, which numbered about a hundred persons, headed toward St. Cloud and then turned west to Alexandria for the first session of the state historical convention.

The formal portion of the Alexandria session centered at Blake's Hotel on Lakes Carlos and L'Homme Dieu, a short distance from that city. At 2:15 P.M., following a

refreshing luncheon, Dr. Theodore C. Blegen, superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, opened the first session of the convention by calling attention to the growing recognition of the intimate relationships between state and community history. As illustrations of the close ties of the historical society with Alexandria and Douglas County, he mentioned the society's possession of a complete file of the *Alexandria Post* from 1868 to date and of the papers of the late Senator Knute Nelson. He then introduced as the first speaker Mr. Constant Larson of Alexandria, who presented a vigorous address on "The Historical Backgrounds of Douglas County." The "authentic history" of the county, according to Mr. Larson, dates from 1362, the date given by the Kensington rune stone for the visit of a party of Norsemen. After briefly calling attention to salient landmarks in the county's historical backgrounds, he referred to the cosmopolitan character of the settlers who came to that region, and then he turned to the question of the authenticity of the Kensington rune stone. Declaring that it was "impossible to have been faked," Mr. Larson referred to a number of what he termed "frivolous" arguments that have been advanced against it and then declared that every possible objection is met by Mr. Hjalmar R. Holand's recent volume on that subject.

Mr. William Goetzinger of Elbow Lake, who spoke next, gave an interesting paper entitled "Travelers on a Red River Trail." Late in the seventeenth century, he declared, the fur-trader reached the Minnesota country, and, for a hundred and fifty years before Pierre Chouteau and Company of St. Louis established a post at Pembina, that intrepid nomad pursued his multiple vocation of explorer, hunter, and trapper. The early route from Pembina to Mendota, later St. Paul, was up the Red River to Lake Traverse, then by portage to Big Stone Lake and the Minnesota River. Norman W. Kittson was responsible, the speaker explained, for furnishing the impetus in 1844

to the development of the celebrated Red River oxcart traffic. The rapid extension of that traffic brought into use three main routes between the Red River and the Mississippi—the “west plains,” the “east plains,” and the “woods” trails. After commenting on the heterogeneous character of the travelers who soon appeared on those trails, Mr. Goetzinger described the trains of creaking ox-carts that for nearly two decades were common sights between Pembina and St. Paul. In conclusion he said that “the oxcart and its dark-skinned driver were important factors in the development of our state,” although the progress of civilization left that crude vehicle far behind.

With the observation that the historical trek was an excursion into Minnesota's past as well as into the state in a geographic sense, the chairman then accepted for the visitors an invitation extended by Miss Lorayne Larson, on behalf of Mr. P. H. Noonan, to visit the Noonan Rock Garden in Alexandria. In anticipation of the next stage of the tour, Mr. E. T. Barnard of Fergus Falls, chairman of the committee on local arrangements in that city, presented to the convention printed leaflets prepared under his direction entitled “Routes and Points of Interest between Alexandria and Fergus Falls.” The first session then adjourned, and, led by the bus, the caravan proceeded to the Chamber of Commerce Building in Alexandria, where the guests inspected the much discussed Kensington rune stone and a collection of historical objects pertaining to it. At the Noonan Rock Garden, which was the next gathering point, refreshments were served through the courtesy of the committee on local arrangements headed by Mr. Larson. So picturesque and restful was the garden spot which Mr. Noonan has painstakingly developed that the visitors wished for more time to tarry among its varied attractions.

Shortly after 4:00 P.M. the journey to Fergus Falls began. A number of cars proceeded by way of Elbow Lake, but the main body followed the route charted by the Fergus

Falls committee and passed through Parker's Prairie, Old Clitherall, Battle Lake, and Underwood. A brief stop was made at Old Clitherall to inspect the site of the first permanent settlement in the county by the Latter Day Saints, made in 1865. There the Otter Tail County Historical Society has erected a marker that points out the first log cabin. About 6:00 P.M. the caravan reached Fergus Falls for dinner and an evening session. Following a dinner at the River Inn, during which the relentless heat of a summer evening forced the gentlemen to choose between the gallantry of their coats and the possible comfort to be gained from their removal, about a hundred and fifty people gathered in the district court room of the attractive Otter Tail County Courthouse for the second session of the convention, which convened at 8:00 P.M., with Mr. Barnard presiding.

The first speaker on the program of the evening session was Mr. Verne E. Chatelain, chief historian of the National Park Service, Washington, D. C., with a paper entitled "Homestead Operations in Minnesota in the Sixties," which he introduced by pointing out that the infant commonwealth of Minnesota not only played an important part in the political revolution of the late fifties, which brought about the split in the Democratic party and made possible the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, but also, through its support of the Republican party, "launched the most insistent demands for sweeping changes" in the federal land policies and for the adoption of a homestead law. For the Northwest, he asserted, "these were the principal issues of the day, not even excepting slavery." The presidential veto of the first homestead bill in 1860, which had been strongly supported by the Minnesota delegation, only fired its zeal, and a more liberal bill was shortly introduced, which became law and went into effect on January 1, 1863. That Minnesota had a special interest in homestead legislation was evident, Mr. Chatelain pointed out, from the fact

that in spite of the Civil War, the Sioux Outbreak, and limited rail facilities it led every other state in the number of homestead entries that were made during the first decade of the law.

The program was continued by Miss Alta Kimber of Battle Lake, who gave a talk on "The Latter Day Saints in Otter Tail County." The use of the term "Mormons" in connection with the settlement at Old Clitherall is erroneous, Miss Kimber said, for that group was "disfellowshipped" by Brigham Young, who led to Utah in 1847 a large faction of the church, which was originally organized by Joseph Smith. The speaker then sketched the history of the little group that set out in covered wagons from Manti, Iowa, in September, 1864. The simplicity and quiet dignity of her presentation caught the attention of the audience at the outset and held it throughout the talk. The little group of pioneers wintered at Red Wing and set out again the following April encountering successively a blizzard and a forest fire. On May 6 they arrived at Clitherall Lake, where the first permanent settlement of Latter Day Saints in Otter Tail County was made.

It is a notable fact, Miss Kimber observed, that immediately upon arriving the settlers made a treaty of friendship with the Indians, signed by seventeen chiefs, which was never broken. An outstanding characteristic of the settlement was its almost complete economic independence. With the exception of the first year, when flour was imported, iron was the only commodity brought in. The settlers worked, it was emphasized, "not each for himself, but each for all." Separate groups operated a sugar camp, hunted, and wove cloth for the benefit of the whole settlement. Needles, clothes pins, tools, glue, shoes, musical instruments, and farm implements were a few of the articles made within the community. In addition, one of the pioneers operated a portable photograph gallery. Miss Kimber summed up the chief characteristics of the founders of

the settlement as "their faith in God; their temperance and sobriety; loyalty to their belief, coupled with a large tolerance for the belief of others; their industry, charity, hospitality, and friendliness; their adaptability to changing conditions; and their great diversity of talents and abilities."

The last speaker on the program was Dr. Blegen, who gave an illustrated talk on "Collecting Western Minnesota Historical Records." Recalling a scene in the Minnesota legislature when that body paused to honor the late Dr. William W. Folwell, he quoted the Minnesota historian's assertion that the people of the state "are not a hoard of nomads," but a "unified social body." Interpreting Minnesota as land and people "bound together by a common heritage," the speaker declared that the collection and preservation of the materials that contain the story of that heritage open the way to "a more discerning citizenship" and to the acquisition of that "double eyesight that enables one not only to see the surrounding scene but also to people it with figures of the past." Among the more important types of material for collection and preservation by local societies, the speaker mentioned letters, diaries, account books, reminscences, newspapers, pamphlets, constitutions and minutes of local organizations, church records, business records, pictures, and museum objects. The speaker praised the work of the Otter Tail County Historical Society, which was organized five years ago, and predicted that in time every county in the state would have its own historical organization. Of special interest in this connection was an editorial in the *Fergus Falls Tribune* for July 21, which declared that "next to the state society come the county societies, equally valuable, each in its own boundaries."

At this point in the program, with the assistance of Mr. Willoughby M. Babcock, curator of the museum of the Minnesota Historical Society, about fifty slides were pre-

sented, giving glimpses of the historical backgrounds of western Minnesota. Thus came to a close the Fergus Falls session of the historical convention. Many of the visitors paused during the course of the evening to view the exhibits of the Otter Tail County Historical Society that were effectively displayed just inside the entrance to the courthouse.

The second day of the tour got under way at 8:30 A.M. Friday. Stimulated by the variety and interest of the previous day's excursions into local backgrounds, the band of inquiring history lovers set out for Moorhead and arrived at the state teachers' college at 10:30 A.M. for a late morning session, which was attended by about two hundred persons. Dr. Blegen had preceded the arrival of the main group in order to give a convocation address before the students of the summer session of the college on the work of the Minnesota Historical Society. With Mr. Babcock as chairman, the program of the morning session was opened with "A Retrospect of Pioneer Society" by Mr. William A. Marin of Minneapolis, who vividly related his boyhood observations and experiences while living near Crookston subsequent to 1879. Recalling the optimism of the frontier and the absence of social distinctions, he described the whole-hearted pleasure that the pioneers derived from the annual firemen's ball and amateur theatricals, and then sketched various aspects of frontier life within his own experience. The saloon, he asserted, "was the real social center of pioneer life although its attractions were devoted exclusively to the male population." In a real sense it was "the farmers' club." Life on the frontier, Mr. Marin concluded, had a flavor for which the complicated form of present-day living has no equivalent.

The chairman then introduced as the other speaker on the morning program Miss Agnes Larson, assistant professor of history in St. Olaf College, whose paper was entitled "On the Trail of the Woodsmen in Minnesota."

Terming the woodsman "an unsung pioneer, the hero of a passing epic drama in Minnesota," Miss Larson presented an intriguing account of his life and of the industry that he established. She stated that the first woodsmen, who reached Minnesota in 1836-37, came from New England, and emphasized the fact that they were genuine pioneers "who ventured into the new country for the purpose of cutting timber for a livelihood, and not for speculation." Chief among these New Englanders were the "Maineites," outstanding among whom were the Boveys, De Laittres, Eastmans, Stanchfields, Morrissions, and Washburns. Later, New Yorkers, French-Canadians, Irish, and a scattering of Germans, Norwegians, and Swedes entered the picture of Minnesota lumbering. The industry began on the St. Croix River, the speaker explained, but soon appeared on the Rum River and then rapidly spread up the Mississippi.

The pioneer lumberman, Miss Larson pointed out, lived and worked under primitive conditions. The cramped one-room shanty, with its venerable "bean hole," was only one aspect of the "hand tool period," which pitted man's strength against the giant pines with the aid of only such implements as the ax, the go-devil, and the ox. Food was imported during the early period of the industry and this fact was a stimulus to farming. The growth of the industry brought improved methods and equipment. The French-Canadian introduced the cant hook and the peavy, which soon brought the sled and the log road. In the seventies, the speaker said, the industry entered the "big business" phase. The one-room shanty was replaced by separate buildings for eating and sleeping; the go-devil gave way to the steam engine; and the ax, to the saw. The lumberjack, Miss Larson concluded, is part of the group that "solidly laid the basis for our state."

The morning session then adjourned, and the visitors gathered in Comstock Hall for a luncheon that was attended by about a hundred people. A brief session was

held following the luncheon, with Mr. Ray B. MacLean, president of the college and chairman of the committee on local arrangements, presiding. In opening the post-luncheon discussion, the chairman stated that the meeting had in view the organization of an historical society for Clay County. Interest in the movement, he continued, had developed from a number of sources and the college in particular was anticipating the contacts that such a movement offered. Mr. Solomon G. Comstock, a "Maineite" and one of Moorhead's pioneer citizens, was then introduced. He was born in 1842 and came to Minnesota in 1869. He served for several terms as a state legislator and was once a Congressman. With an enthusiasm and power that belied his fourscore and ten years, he effectively stimulated the interest of the audience in the historical backgrounds of western Minnesota.

Mr. Comstock explained the failure of Moorhead in the early days to keep pace with the growth of other cities of the state on the ground that it lacked "big men." Still, he whimsically added, it did have unsurpassed soil and could grow potatoes. Cities are built by the enterprise of a few "broad-gauge men," he declared, but, he added, "we have them not!" Citing James J. Hill as one of the outstanding examples of a "big man," he challenged his audience to show that Hill's contributions to the development of Moorhead and the state ever received proper recognition.

After the conclusion of Mr. Comstock's remarks Professor Herman Nordlie of Concordia College was introduced. Emphasizing the need of preserving the current records of community life as well as those that reveal its backgrounds, he suggested that "great movements and great men" probably are being moulded in the hurried days of the present. While the perspective of time is needed for an accurate appraisal of current happenings, Professor Nordlie stated that there is an obligation resting upon a community to conserve the records of its life. With this

background he made a plea for the organization of a county historical society as the most practical instrument for meeting this obligation. Dr. Blegen, who was next introduced, presented a form constitution for a local historical organization, which, with modifications to meet special situations, has been the basis of organization for most of the existing county historical societies in the state. It was then moved by Senator G. D. McCubrey of Moorhead that a committee be appointed to discuss plans for a county historical organization. This committee, as later constituted, consisted of Senator McCubrey, chairman, Professor Nordlie, Professor S. G. Bridges of the Moorhead State Teachers College, Mrs. S. E. Rice of Barnesville, and Mr. Levi Thortvedt, a pioneer Moorhead settler.

Shortly after 2:00 P.M. the itinerant seekers of history began the journey from the upper Red River country to the headwaters of the Mississippi. The bus made a brief stop at Park Rapids, where Mr. Edward Krueger, president of the Community Club of Park Rapids, extended to the visitors the greetings of the local citizens and furnished them with helpful maps of the region. At about 6:00 P.M. the travelers reached Douglas Lodge in Itasca State Park, which became the headquarters for the Itasca sessions of the convention. The first of the Itasca sessions convened at 8:00 P.M. on the veranda of the lodge, with about a hundred and fifty persons in attendance. Mr. William E. Culkin of Duluth, the president of the St. Louis County Historical Society, opened the session by sketching the background of the commonly accepted Latin derivation of "Itasca." Whether or not the light of history finally will confirm this explanation of the word, he declared that the Latin words for truth and head, from which it was formed, at least present a logical interpretation. The chairman then introduced Mr. Earl Lang, superintendent of Itasca State Park, who sketched for the visitors, with the aid of a large map, the chief attractions of the park.

Asserting that Itasca Park ranks with the Palisade State Park of New York as one of the most beautiful in the United States, the speaker stated that it contains three hundred and sixty-five lakes, a hundred and twenty million feet of white pine, and one of the largest game preserves in the Northwest. As evidence of the patronage that the park receives he said that about a hundred and twenty-five thousand persons visit it annually.

In the absence of the Honorable Julius A. Schmahl, state treasurer, who unfortunately was unable to be present, the paper that he had prepared on "Schoolcraft's Discovery of Lake Itasca" was read by Mr. Babcock. Recalling his "assignment," as a newspaper reporter in St. Paul from 1885 to 1892, to the events that arose out of the claims of one Willard Glazier to the discovery of the true source of the Mississippi, Mr. Schmahl related the activities of the Minnesota Historical Society in commissioning Jacob V. Brower, an expert topographical engineer, to determine the merits of those claims. On the basis of Brower's detailed investigations, the claims of Glazier were rejected and Schoolcraft was declared to be the discoverer of the river's source. With this introduction Mr. Schmahl sketched the attempts of a number of explorers to learn the secret of the source of the Father of Waters before Schoolcraft made his discovery in 1832—such men, for example, as Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike, Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory, and Giacomo C. Beltrami. Schoolcraft, he explained, who had been a member of the Cass expedition in 1820, was not satisfied with the decision of the leader that what is now Cass Lake was the source of the Mississippi and welcomed the opportunity that came to him twelve years later to push on through Lake Bemidji, up the east fork of the river, and across a difficult portage to Lake Itasca. The audience was reminded, however, that the mission of discovery for which Schoolcraft is honored was not mentioned by the government in the instruc-

tions authorizing the expedition, although Mr. Schmahl said that the quest of the river's source was generally understood to be one of the objects of the expedition.

The last speaker on the Friday evening program was Dr. Grace Lee Nute, curator of manuscripts of the Minnesota Historical Society, who spoke on "Schoolcraft's Companions in 1832." The fact that Schoolcraft, as leader of the expedition, has been honored for the discovery of the source of the Mississippi has often obscured, the speaker explained, the equally important fact that the expedition was a joint enterprise, and that, in the gathering of much of the information that the government wished to get, several of Schoolcraft's companions made notable contributions. Miss Nute called particular attention to the contribution of Dr. Douglass Houghton, the surgeon and botanist of the expedition, who vaccinated over two thousand Indians, which was one of the primary objects of the expedition. The diary of this intrepid young physician, which has only recently come to light, reflects, in addition to careful medical notes, his interest in the plants, birds, and geography of the region that the expedition traversed.

The most intimate glimpses of the daily happenings on the expedition of 1832, Miss Nute explained, are preserved in the illuminating diary of the Reverend William T. Boutwell, a young missionary who had been sent out by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to locate a suitable site for a Chippewa mission. The services of George Johnston, the half-breed interpreter, and of Lieutenant James Allen, in charge of the military escort to the expedition, though such services were routine features of many of the expeditions to the upper Northwest, were none the less essential and deserving of recognition, Miss Nute pointed out. The first session at Lake Itasca adjourned about 10:30 P.M. While a few of the visitors lingered to converse in the coolness of the evening, most of them retired in anticipation of the full day ahead.

Saturday morning was left open for the enjoyment of the park's recreational advantages. The spirit of historical exploring was in the air, for before breakfast one group hiked to Elk Lake, which is generally regarded as having been an arm of Lake Itasca in 1832. Through arrangements made by Mr. Lang, Mr. Leslie W. Orr of the forestry school of the University of Minnesota and Mr. Clarence Prout, public relations officer for the division of forestry of the state department of conservation, courteously volunteered their services as guides for a series of walks that had been planned. With a view to seeing as much of the park as possible in the limited time, the hiking plans rapidly became motorized, and most of the visitors, led by Mr. Orr, set out in a serpentine procession of about thirty cars on a fifteen-mile trek through the park. A small residue of intrepid pedestrians enjoyed a ramble about the east arm of Lake Itasca under the guidance of Mr. Prout.

At 2:30 P.M. members of the tour and convention joined a gathering of over twenty-five hundred people at the head waters of the Mississippi for a special performance of the Schoolcraft centennial pageant, which was arranged and sponsored by the Northwestern Minnesota Historical Association. The historical setting of the presentation could not have been surpassed for the dramatic atmosphere that it contained. From the vantage point of a natural amphitheater, the audience looked out upon a Chippewa village and caught intimate glimpses of Indian life before the advent of the white man. Off to the right was visible an imposing wall of a stockaded trading post, through the gate of which passed the traders and the soldiers of the garrison in their daily routine. Directly in the background was the infant Mississippi meandering on its way to the distant sea, while stretching away to the left was the north arm of Lake Itasca. From time to time graceful Indian canoes and a stately Mackinaw boat were seen skirting the shore of the lake or gliding along the slender stream that

was to become a mighty river and to hold a continental valley in its grip. As the episodes of the pageant unfolded, the running narrative by Hotan-Tonka, an adopted Chippewa, and director of the presentation, contributed materially to a vivid portrayal of the drama of white penetration of the Chippewa country that began early in the last century and came to an important climax with Schoolcraft's discovery of Lake Itasca on July 13, 1832. The scenes depicted in the pageant's two main episodes featured a Chippewa village, President Monroe's cabinet, the return of a war party, trappers and traders, Schoolcraft at St. Mary's, the Ojibway village on Star Island in Cass Lake, Schoolcraft's arrival at that lake, a wilderness romance, Schoolcraft's arrival at Lake Itasca, and the return of the expedition to Star Island.

The centennial anniversary was the occasion for the appearance of a number of outstanding articles, as well as a great many newspaper stories, dealing with the historical backgrounds of the quest for the headwaters of the Mississippi. Two articles were published by Dr. Blegen, one of which appeared in the quarterly publication of the Minneapolis Civic and Commerce Association for May, supplied by that association with the terse title "Goes to Pacify Indians, Finds Source of Mississippi River"; the other, an extended and revised account of the former, was entitled "Discovery of Lake Itasca by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft" and formed the principal portion of a souvenir Schoolcraft booklet published by the Northwestern Minnesota Historical Association. Mr. Schmah's address on the "One Hundredth Anniversary of the Discovery of the Source of the Mississippi River" was made available in printed form by the Modern Life Insurance Company of Minnesota, which also published, as a souvenir folder, a colored reproduction of the Eastman picture of Schoolcraft's landing at Lake Itasca. In addition, the quarterly publication of the St. Paul Association of Commerce contained an article in

the June number on "A Minnesota Centenary," by Miss Nute. An example of the interest that the centennial anniversary aroused outside the state was an illustrated article that appeared in the *Milwaukee Journal* for July 13 under the suggestive title of "Minnesota Still Insists Schoolcraft Found True Source of Mississippi."

A delightful preliminary to the evening session of the convention on Saturday was a boat trip on Lake Itasca. With nearly a hundred people the little launch "Itasca" left the dock at Douglas Lodge for an hour's cruise on the lake. A number of the visitors were unable to make the trip because of the limited capacity of the boat, which recalled Schoolcraft's own problem a century before, when he found it necessary to leave a portion of the expedition at Star Island in Cass Lake before proceeding to Itasca. For those who were able to take the boat trip, the impressions from the pageant of the afternoon and the stillness of the early evening as the launch skirted Schoolcraft Island contributed to an atmosphere that seemed charged with historical significance.

The last session of the tour and convention, with nearly three hundred people in attendance, convened at Douglas Lodge at 8:00 P.M., with Mr. William W. Cutler of St. Paul, second vice president of the Minnesota Historical Society, presiding. He first explained that Dr. Louise Phelps Kellogg, senior research associate of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, who was to have presented an address on "The Lure of the Mississippi," had found it impossible to be present because of the untimely death of Professor Carl Russell Fish of the University of Wisconsin, one of America's outstanding historians. Mr. Cutler then introduced as the first speaker Mr. Edward C. Gale of Minneapolis, who spoke on "That Name Itasca—a Review of the Evidence," which was based on a group of "Itasca Studies" that appeared in this magazine for September, 1931, and on a group of documents published in

the issue for June, 1932. There are, Mr. Gale pointed out, four theories of the derivation of "Itasca"; one, that it was derived from the name of the Indian maiden in the legend of the lake given by Mrs. Mary H. Eastman; another, that it was derived from some Dakota term; and finally the commonly accepted Latin explanation of the term as related by Boutwell and the Ojibway explanation given by Schoolcraft himself in volume five of his *Information Respecting the History, Conditions and Prospects of the Indian Tribes*.

Mr. Gale dismissed as untenable the first two explanations. Since the other two involved an apparent contradiction between Boutwell and Schoolcraft—both men of integrity—he submitted three theories for harmonizing this discrepancy: first, that the suggested Latin derivation may have been a casual one and not taken seriously at the time, which, the speaker explained, would account "for the strange silence on the part of Schoolcraft's companions and immediate contemporaries respecting the new name"; in the second place, that the word may have been invented after the discovery was made, and in the course of the homeward trip; and finally, that Schoolcraft, since he was fond of Indian names, may later have become dissatisfied with the Latin association of "Itasca" and have evolved a new derivation from the Chippewa words "ia," "totosh," and "ka," meaning the fountain source. The speaker particularly piqued the interest of the audience in the last suggestion by citing the term "Algic" as a specific instance in which Schoolcraft later altered his explanation of the derivation of one of his coined names.

After the conclusion of Mr. Gale's talk the chairman introduced Professor Clyde A. Duniway of Carleton College whose address on "Frontiers and the American Spirit" was the last formal event on the program of the tour and convention. In the setting of American national history, the speaker launched into a sparkling interpretation of frontier

society, taking as a starting point the suggestion contained in James Truslow Adams' recent volume on *The Epic of America* that perhaps the obeisance rendered to the courage of the pioneers who pushed westward really belongs to those individuals who remained on the seaboard to grapple with the problems that the former escaped. Implicit in that suggestion, Professor Duniway said, was one of two ideals for the pioneer—either the hero or the failure. The truth, he concluded, “is the mixture of these two, just as in the society in which we live.” The speaker then recalled the late Professor Frederick Jackson Turner's summary of the chief contributions of the frontier as the growth of individualistic, democratic, and nationalistic attitudes. Referring particularly to the growth of a nationalistic attitude he explained that while the frontier served as a national “safety valve” as long as there was an abundance of land easily available it also gave rise to a group in the West that was “aggressively acquisitive for itself and not for the public good.” Today, Professor Duniway concluded, the West must recognize its joint responsibility for the welfare of the national structure.

At that point Mrs. Charles Stees of St. Paul voiced the appreciation of the members of the tour and convention of the work of Mr. Willoughby M. Babcock, who, as secretary of the state-wide committee on arrangements, deserved a large measure of credit for the success of the “peripatetic seminar in history.” Mrs. Stees voiced the feeling of the group as a whole when she pronounced the tour the best in the series. Early Sunday morning witnessed the dispersion of the visitors from Itasca to their homes in widely separated parts of the state. The bus circled north to Bemidji and then returned to St. Paul by way of Cass Lake, Leech Lake, Pequot, Brainerd, Little Falls, and St. Cloud. On the invitation of Mr. F. T. Gustafson of Pequot a brief stop was made at that point to view his private collection of Indian pottery, which was assembled from local sources.

Mr. and Mrs. Gustafson added to the pleasure of the call by serving refreshments to the guests.

Mr. Henry I. Cohen of Brainerd met the bus at Pequot and invited the band of homeward-bound travelers to visit the museum of the Crow Wing County Historical Society, of which he is president; on the way through Brainerd. Shortly after 2:00 P.M. that city was reached and Mr. Cohen piloted the group to the rooms of the Crow Wing County Historical Society in the county's imposing new courthouse. In the limited time at their disposal the visitors inspected the society's museum, which is unquestionably one of the most valuable and well organized local history museums in the state. A special feature of the museum was an extensive exhibit of implements depicting the pioneer phase of the lumber industry in northern Minnesota.

Thus came to a satisfying conclusion the annual summer pilgrimage of the Minnesota Historical Society—the eleventh in a series which an editorial in the *St. Paul Dispatch* for July 13 described as “rapidly becoming an accepted feature of the cultural life of the state.” The group of history excursionists returned to their vocations and professions with a clearer realization of the composite character of the historical backgrounds of their state. They had developed a keener appreciation of the importance for the history of a community and a nation of the casual and routine features of daily life; and in the light of a new historical perspective they viewed the problems of the present, perhaps finding them more familiar and less formidable.

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MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ST. PAUL



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