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Study of the presidential addresses of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association

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A STUDY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"From this day the United States take their place among the powers of first rank..."\(^1\) So predicted the American minister to France, Robert Livingston, after concluding the treaty purchasing the Louisiana territory. Americans have long been interested in the valley of the Mississippi. Its very size was sufficiently vast and vague enough to stagger the imagination of most men. As the great tides of immigration spilled over the mountains into the valley, it became the "key to the Continent."\(^2\) Not only did the purchase of this territory double the original endowment of the American people, but it was the gateway to the West, without which it would have been impossible to have carried the American flag into Texas, California, Oregon, and the Pacific.\(^3\)

Mid-nineteenth century historians (with some notable exceptions—e.g., Francis Parkman) viewed American history largely as an appendage of Europe. But by the late nineteenth century, mainly through the influence of Frederick Jackson Turner, historians began to relegate European background to a secondary position in American development. It is indeed curious that the foremost historian of the Mississippi Valley, Frederick J. Turner, was never invited to the presidency of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association. Turner's essay, "The Significance of the Frontier


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 106.

\(^3\)Ibid.
in American History," had a tremendous impact on the historiography of this period, as these chapters will indicate. The frontier, and particularly the Mississippi Valley, loomed large as the most influential part of the American story. This self-consciousness led historians to form various state historical organizations in an effort to collect and preserve the records of past achievements. Because of their provincial scope there was little, if any, cooperation between these agencies. A general over-all organization, which could collect and publish all research findings, was greatly needed.

On July 29, 1907, an invitation was issued by the Secretary of the Nebraska State Historical Society, Clarence S. Paine, requesting the secretaries of six similar mid-western organizations to meet in Lincoln, Nebraska "for the purpose of considering plans for effecting a permanent organization for the advancement of historical material in these Western States." The seven representatives who convened the following October were: William S. Beel of Helena, Montana; Warren Upham of St. Paul, Minnesota; Benjamin F. Shambaugh of Iowa City, Iowa; George M. Martin of Topeka, Kansas; Francis M. Sampson of Columbia, Missouri; Edgar R. Harlan of Des Moines, Iowa; and the host, Paine.

Secretary Paine had anticipated the problems of the assemblage and at the first business meeting submitted a temporary constitution which outlined a tentative organization along the lines of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association. Temporary officers were

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elected--President, Francis A. Sampson of Missouri; Vice-President Warren Upham of Minnesota; and Secretary-Treasurer, Clarence S. Paine of Nebraska. Besides these officers, Reuben G. Thwaites of the Wisconsin Historical Society, and George M. Martin of the Kansas State Historical Society, were appointed to act with the elected officials as an interim executive committee until the next meeting of the association. This was to be held at Madison, Wisconsin, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Historical Association.

The early founding fathers of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association felt that their prospective organization could best function as a branch or section of the American Historical Association. Before the Madison meeting, the temporary constitution was submitted to the careful scrutiny of Charles Haskiens, secretary of the A.H.A. Haskiens raised an important question. Since the Pacific Coast Branch required membership in both organizations, the Mississippi Valley Historical Association might want to consider whether or not its constitution should contain a similar stipulation. Haskiens recommended that joint membership not be made a condition for belonging to the new Association.

Reuben G. Thwaites of the executive committee, and member of the Council of the A.H.A., openly favored calling the new organization a "section" of the A.H.A. On the other hand, he candidly admitted that the Council had been "reluctant" to establish the Pacific Coast Branch, and did so only because it realized that the West-coast members would seldom,
if ever, attend the annual meetings.\textsuperscript{5} Correspondence between the interim executive committee and officials of the A.H.A. revealed that the branch or section relationship would not fit the proposed purpose of the new organization. By the time of the December meeting at Madison, the possibility of a union of the A.H.A. and the Mississippi Valley organization had been abandoned.

In two business sessions on December 28 and 30, 1907, a permanent organization was effected and a constitution adopted. The Mississippi Valley Historical Association had become a reality. The constitution cited the real purpose of the Association: "The objective of the Association shall be to promote historical study and research and to secure cooperation between historical societies and the departments of history of the Mississippi Valley." Many years later President James L. Sellers reminded members of the M.V.H.A. that this clause "is worth frequent repetition among members of the Association."\textsuperscript{8}

The officers elected at this meeting were: President, Thomas M. Owen; Vice-President, Clarence W. Alvord; Secretary, Clarence S. Paine; in addition, Reuben G. Thwaites and George M. Martin were returned to the executive committee. Before adjourning, the first annual meeting was scheduled for June, 1908, at Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota.

\textsuperscript{5}James L. Sellers, "Before We Were Members--The Mississippi Valley Historical Association," \textit{The Mississippi Valley Historical Review}, (June, 1953), XXX, 7. Hereafter referred to as Sellers, "Members."

\textsuperscript{6}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 8.
The Mississippi Valley Historical Association is essentially the outgrowth of the vision and foresight of Clarence S. Paine. He believed that the history of the Mississippi Valley had a unique unity of development and only through cooperation and resolute purpose could its historical study and research be promoted.

Paine was involved in the establishment of business colleges throughout Iowa when he became acquainted with and influenced by Charles Aldrich of the University of Iowa History Department. Aldrich's painstaking efforts to gather and publish historical data especially appealed to him. In 1897, Paine moved to Nebraska, where he was associated with J. Sterling Morton in the collection and publication of a detailed history of Nebraska. Like Aldrich, Morton was a conscientious collector of historical material; and like Aldrich, Morton's enthusiasm was contagious. Paine became infected with the irrepressible desire to collect and write history. Paine and Morton made the Nebraska Historical Society their headquarters and are responsible for many of the valuable materials found there today. It was here that Paine undoubtedly first envisioned the necessity for such an organization as the Mississippi Valley Historical Association. Without knowing it, Morton's influence on Paine made him the "genuine spiritual godfather."7 of the present association. After Morton's death, Paine carried through to completion the Nebraska monograph;8 and in January, 1907, he was elected Secretary of the Nebraska Historical

7Ibid., p. 6.
8Julius Sterling Morton, Illustrated History of Nebraska, (1907).
Society. From this post he set himself the task of developing the new organization.

Paine was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the M.V.H.A. at its first formative meeting and retained this post until his death in June, 1916. His influence and importance to the Association are suggested in a letter he received from Frederick L. Paxson, written when the latter discovered that he was President-elect for the ensuing year (1917): "I learned through Solon Buck, that I have been the one to be placed under your tutelage this next year, and I hasten to write for instructions as to my duties as President."

The first six months were the most crucial the M.V.H.A. had ever known. There were the problems of securing membership for the new organization, plus a suitable program for the annual meeting. Most delicate and vexing was the problem of assuring a respectable attendance to make the meeting a success. The Association met at Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, as planned. Vice-President Alvord and Secretary Paine were faced with numerous complications, but they were determined that this would be no ordinary gathering. The first of five sessions was highlighted by the Presidential Address. Alvord's paper entitled "The Study and Writing of History in the Mississippi Valley," outlined two major tasks for members of the Association. First, he called upon historians of the Mississippi valley to provide monographs which would supply the necessary knowledge to "eradicate" inadequate and misleading

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10 President Thomas M. Owen was absent from the meeting, so Vice-President Clarence W. Alvord delivered the Address. Proceedings, (1908) I, 34.
information presented about western history in current texts. The second
task he set for historians of the valley was the "collection and publica-
tion" of local historical materials which would be the basis for the
eventual production of "true histories." These two tasks were to be
accomplished by the local and state historical societies, and the Associa-
tion would act as the "clearinghouse for this new material."\textsuperscript{12}

Finances always seem to dominate the agenda of any newly formed
organization, and the M.V.H.A. was no exception. The following year
witnessed a substantial growth in membership. It was still some time,
however, before the Association became financially sound. In fact, one
historian, Benjamin A. Shambaugh, furnished the members free of charge
with a printed record of the first meeting. Promptly referred to as the
Proceedings,\textsuperscript{12} it was put on sale and raised much of the money to support
the Association.

By the third annual conference, once financial problems became of
less importance, the Association busied itself with the problem of imple-
menting its stated objectives. The executive committee approved the
appointment of sub-committees to deal with six major issues confronting
the Association: (1) the relation of historical societies and departments
of history, (2) the teaching of history in public schools, (3) state
history in the University and public schools, (4) organization and work of
historical societies, (5) a program of publication for historical societies,
and (8) the marking of historical sites.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11}Clarence W. Alvord, "The Study and Writing of History in the

\textsuperscript{12}Sellers, "Members," p. 11.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
Problem five was given some immediate executive attention when President Orin G. Libby appointed a publication committee, consisting of Clarence W. Alvord, Benjamin A. Shambaugh, Isaac J. Cox, Frank H. Hodder, and Secretary Paine. The committee agreed that there was a definite need for a journal which would specialize in publishing the results of studies involving the Mississippi Valley. This was, after all, in accordance with the stated objective of the Association. The following year (1911) at a joint meeting of the A.H.A. and the M.V.H.A., Alvord succeeded in securing the appointment of a three man committee to work exclusively upon the possibility of establishing a Review. No executive committee action was taken until May, 1912, when Alvord, Shambaugh, and James A. James were given the official green light to draft a proposal to create a quarterly journal.14

There were, of course, numerous problems to be overcome before a review would be possible. First, a sufficient sum of money had to be raised in order to guarantee its support. Secondly, there had to be an adequate supply of historical papers to guarantee its success. And, thirdly, there was the perplexing problem of subscriptions. The committee reported (1913) that these problems had been solved and there seemed to be enough popular support to authorize executive action in the establishment of the Review. In accordance with this report, a Board of Editors was appointed and the first issue was scheduled to appear the following June, 1914. The report of the Secretary-Treasurer for that year expresses the enthusiasm with which the Review was greeted:

The most important work of this Association during the year has been the successful launching of the Mississippi Valley Historical Review. While the magazine has not yet appeared, we can regard it as an accomplished fact, since the preliminaries have been arranged and the first number is now upon the press.\(^1\)

With this report the Association has taken a paramount step in accomplishing one of its primary objectives. It had made available to historians and historical societies a medium by which they could report their work. And this work—bearing mainly on the significance of the Mississippi Valley—would be readily available to all historians everywhere. Now a true presentation of Western history could be accomplished.

The major field of the Review was to be essentially the Mississippi Valley. However, the histories of Canada and Mexico were so closely identified with it, that the Board of Editors felt their exclusion could not be justified. This was true also in the field of book reviews. Since the history of the valley was a vital part of the over-all pattern of American history, they found it necessary to advise the review of all general histories of the United States.\(^2\)

Viewing the history of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association in retrospect, one sees the rise of an organization from the outgrowth of one man’s dream, to a vibrant, fullgrown, sophisticated assemblage, which has carried on for fifty-four years at this writing. It has produced forty-eight scholarly volumes of the Review. And membership has increased to such an extent that specialized groups now prepare their own programs in conjunction with the annual convention of the Association. These annual

\(^1\) Ibid., "Report of the Secretary-Treasurer," p. 35.

\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 25-27.
meetings have met without interruption, save for the year 1945, when the government requested that all conventions of over fifty persons be suspended.\textsuperscript{17}

As is true of any great assemblage, the M.V.H.A. has had internal problems and quarrels over the character and organization of the Association. In fact, there were two major problems which bedeviled the Association throughout much of its history.\textsuperscript{18} The first was the question of the scope and range of the Association. Although this issue had been determined by the course of events, and the character of the Association well fixed, President James L. Sellers deemed it worthy of review in 1953. Briefly citing the objectives of the Association, Sellers reasoned that aside from the phrase stating a geographical limitation, the objectives were general:

As historians we have learned how time compounds fiction and fact, and we must adjust ourselves to the changing meaning of terms. Our geographical limitation gave us a sense of unity and excuse for organizing, but our programs and functions have fitted a whole nation's need...\textsuperscript{19}

He called upon the members not to stumble back into this pitfall of localism by restricting the Association's "usefulness" with "concepts of petty geography."\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17}The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (January, 1945) XXXII, 232.


\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 20.
The second decisive issue dealt with the conflict between scholarship and the popularization of history, and unlike the previous problem, it was (and is) still present. Sellers put the question bluntly: had the Association allowed research to become the key to its existence and if so, was this not overshadowing the other objectives of the Association? Agreeing that pure scholarship might be desirable, for the general interest of all historians lies in the field of research, he wondered if it was not possible that the very success of the Association's promotion of historical research had handicapped a "more popular kind of history?" Carrying this further, Sellers called upon historians to remember that information considered by them as elementary, was just as novel and important to the beginning student as it was to scholars the first time it appeared in print:

Historical knowledge in our citizens, like individual wealth in the economic order, adds up to the collective experience of the nation. A people with little history is a people with little collective experience and the collective experience of a people is its greatest national asset.21

* * * * *

It is the purpose of this paper to analyze the Presidential Addresses delivered at the annual meetings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association. As the Addresses are representative of the ideas of the historians, the historians in turn are representative of their profession. These men as leaders in their field have presented the philosophies, the concepts of history that were common in their particular day. Their presidential addresses reflect, not only scholarly distillations of a life's work in the historical arbor, but trends in emphasis and approach of the entire profession.

21Ibid., p. 22.
These addresses will not be studied chronologically. It is possible to take a strict chronological approach to these speeches and derive meaningful conclusions. For example, through the years the addresses have become less provincial and more sophisticated; less local and midwestern, and more global; less concerned with the minutiae of history, and more with the philosophy of history. In 1917, Frederick L. Paxson delivered a speech entitled the "Rise of Sport," in which he discussed the importance of sports in the West. A few years later the famous Michigan historian Milo M. Quaife, in "Jonathan Carver and the Carver Grant," devoted his address to an account of the many facets of that particular land grant.

Forty years ago William E. Connelley delivered his Presidential Address on the "Religious Conceptions of the Modern Hurons." During the 1940's, however, the temper of the Association has changed. New England was the setting and dancing subject of President Arthur C. Cole's Address, "The Puritan and Fair Terpsichore." The speech of Ralph F. Bieber, "California Gold Mania," dealt with a subject of a particular locale, nevertheless, he was interested in its effects upon the whole nation. In 1957, Thomas C. Clark spoke on "The Great Visitation to American Democracy," in which he discussed how "America profited" from foreign travelers and

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22 Frederick L. Paxson, "The Rise of Sport," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1917) IV.

23 Milo M. Quaife, "Jonathan Carver and the Carver Grant," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1920), VII.

24 William E. Connelley, "Religious Conceptions of the Modern Hurons." The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (September, 1922) IX.


26 Ralph F. Bieber, "California Gold Mania," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1948) XXXV.
their comments, and how "they gained some perspective" of American life that would not have been possible under other conditions.27 And finally, in 1961, President Fletcher M. Green presented his "Cycles of American Democracy."28 These few titles alone, and their respective dates, illustrate the gradual development of the M.V.H.A. toward greater sophistication and national interest. This reflects, essentially, the story of American historians in general.

The possibility of a strict chronological approach to the addresses is convincing and inviting. However, since the addresses tend to fall within certain categories, dealing with particular problems-- and since I believe a more valid analysis may be reached by following this organization-- the treatment is topical rather than chronological.

This thesis will deal with the Addresses in two separate categories: first, the Mississippi Valley in American History; and second, American Politics. Within this topical approach the thesis will incorporate, as much as possible, the valid findings of a chronological analysis.

27 Thomas C. Clark, "The Great Visitation to American Democracy," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1957) XXXIV.

28 Fletcher M. Green, "Cycles of American Democracy," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1961) XXXVIII.
CHAPTER I

THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY IN AMERICAN HISTORY

In the early years of the Association presidential addresses dealt primarily with the Mississippi Valley. The various presidents chose to reflect upon the historical importance of this area per se, rather than to speak on broader subjects of more national interest. The pattern for this approach was established by Orin G. Libby at the second annual meeting (1909): "History like charity, for us at least, should begin at home." Although this emphasis represented a provincial perspective, it was an obvious and conscious decision on the part of these famous historians. Furthermore, they foresaw that this study of regional history would eventually result in a more profound appreciation of American national history.

Libby cautioned the members of the M.V.H.A., that if they truly desired to find their proper place in the publishing of a history of the Mississippi Valley, they must first take a generous view of their task. "The characteristics of our life, the peculiar phase of industrial growth in this section, the political, social, and educational problems in the

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1 President Clarence W. Alvord was absent from the meeting, so Vice-President Orin G. Libby delivered his own Address. Proceedings, (1909), II, 95. Alvord, strangely enough, had delivered the address the previous year in the absence of President Thomas M. Owen.

2 Orin G. Libby, "The Response to the Address of Welcome," Proceedings, (1909), II.
great cities that stretch across the Valley, all these and many others present, in part or in whole, a most fascinating field for the historian."

He further admonished the members that they must be tolerant enough to keep in their "field of vision" the general as well as the particular--"the planetesimal theory of the Universe, the vanishing language of a well-nigh extinct Indian tribe, or the facts as to the location of a trading post on the Missouri River."

Libby believed that the function of the membership of the M.V.H.A. was to establish with unmistakable emphasis the historical characteristics peculiar to this region. He concluded that the colonial period of Mississippi Valley history had not completely passed; the Indian problem was not solved; and in many States great masses of foreign population were still unassimilated. These were the problems that the M.V.H.A. was privileged to record, and for this reason he asked the Association, without pretense or apology, to remain local in their pursuit of historical fact.

Reuben Gold Thwaites carried out Libby's wish by confining himself to local history. In his Address, "At the Meeting of the Trails: The Romance of a Parish Register," he disclosed how a parish register had revealed much of the history surrounding Fort Mackinac. Thwaites traced the rise of the fur trade; how the white man had played upon the Indian's natural love to barter and convinced him of the desirability of trade.

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3 Reuben Gold Thwaites, "At the Meeting of the Trails: The Romance of a Parish Register," Proceedings, (1913) VI. Thwaites was a pains-taking collector of historical material. Perhaps his most famous and enduring collection is his 73 volume edition of Jesuit Relations. (Cleveland, 1896-1901).
Because of the unreliability of Indian-White relations, however, a fort was constructed which, in times of primitive warfare and commerce, easily commanded the navigation of Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior. He concluded his Address by calling on historians not to overlook the importance of such a small item as a parish register, a "great source of knowledge," of conditions in the early trading days of the Mississippi West.

The following year James Alton James continued the pattern of localism in his paper on "Some Phases of the History of the Northwest, 1783-1786."\(^4\) The theme of James's discourse was the Indian relations in the Northwest during the brief span of four years, with special emphasis on the relationship of George Rogers Clark to those events. With the discontinuance of general hostilities in the West, at the close of the American revolution, the maintenance of a regular military organization was considered unnecessary. Clark was retired from active service. His reward from a grateful Commonwealth consisted of six thousand acres of land in the wilderness of southern Indiana, an ornamental sword, and a letter of thanks from the governor of Virginia.

Early in 1754, Thomas Jefferson succeeded in securing Clark's appointment as one of five commissioners who were to negotiate treaties with the several Indian tribes of the Northwest. For two years, the commissioners labored to negotiate lasting treaties. Their orders were to hold conventions with the "Six Nations and all other Indians to the Northward

\(^4\)James Alton James, "Some Phases of the History of the Northwest, 1783-1786," *Proceedings*, (1914) VII. James was ill and unable to attend; however, his address was printed in the *Proceedings*, (1914) VII.
and Westward of them and as far south as the Cherokee within the limits of the United States." Besides bringing the Indians under the protection and control of the American government, boundary lines were to be established between their hunting grounds and villages, and the territory opened to settlement by Americans. James concluded that had some such line been instituted a year earlier, "much trouble and bloodshed might have been averted."

But the commissioners failed to obtain a workable treaty. Laboring under the ominous cloud of the British in the Northwest forts, the negotiators pursued a policy inaugurated by Congress, of treating with a few tribes or a single tribe. The Indians, however, held tenaciously to the idea of a confederation, inculcated among them by the British. By the summer of 1786 it was evident to the commissioners that the United States could not gain possession of the Northwest by this procedure.

Clark, who had continuously favored a more militant policy, watched with alarm as American traders under British patronage pursued measures which alienated the Indians from the United States. American settlers began to move north of the Ohio River in increasing numbers and once again fell victim to savage depredations. In a letter to the President of Congress, Clark declared that no permanent peace was possible unless a sufficient force was sent to reduce the confederated tribes and drive the British from the Northwest forts. James concluded that Congress was eventually to pursue Clark's policy, but at a much later date.

As the presidential addresses followed Libby's advice to emphasize local and specific historical events of the Mississippi Valley, the blurred knowledge of that history was focused by this concentration of historical
attention. Yet Libby (like Turner) had also advised his fellow historians not to isolate these events, but rather to seek their relations—if only by analogy to the entirety of western civilization. Thus, Isaac Joslin Cox in his 1915 Address, "The New Invasion of the Goths and Vandals," broke slightly with the established precedent for historical research, by going beyond the bounds of the Mississippi Valley for a comparison. Cox compared the migration of the Americans into the Floridas and the Mississippi Valley against the Spaniard, to the invasion of the Goths and Vandals against the Romans. The Mississippi River became the American Danube and all Spanish designs were aimed at keeping Americans west of that river.

Cox asserted that it was not so much the uncertain strength of the United States the Spaniards feared, as the uncontrollable western frontiersman "with the treaty of 1783 in one hand and a carbine in the other." The American government was still in the trial stage and its military and diplomatic strength was barely felt west of the mountains. The frontiersman, however, was erratic and bellicose, where the national government might be satisfied with the navigation of the Mississippi and the benefits acquired from such rights, the westerner hungrily eyed the great land mass that lay to the west.

Cox discussed the unreliable method pursued by the Spaniards of admitting a select number of the American immigrants on the assumption that with proper control, their descendants would prove an effective barrier.

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5 Isaac Joslin Cox, "The New Invasion of the Goths and Vandals," Proceedings, (1915) VIII.
against further encroachment by the United States. This process Cox likened to an attempt to "erect a barrier of ice against the spring floods." He compared this policy to the Roman barbarian captives and mercenaries long before allowing more extensive immigration. The analogy holds to the very end: this policy caused the downfall of Spain in the Mississippi Valley.

Continuing the comparison of the Roman Empire with Spain in the Mississippi, Cox described the fall of Rome as in reality caused by a struggle between two groups of barbarians for supremacy. One group had actually adopted, to some measure, the culture it appeared to supplant. This placed the conquerors in the position of protecting and preserving the Roman culture for future generations. Cox raised the question of whether the westerner (who represented barbarism) had attempted to "protect and preserve what was best in the life, culture, and tradition" of Spain in the Mississippi? He concluded that both peoples were equally remiss in their failure to appreciate the virtues of each other's culture.

Migrations, economic growth, and cultural exchanges within the Mississippi Valley were the theme of Dunbar Rowland's Address the following year (1916). Unlike Cox, who used the technique of historical analogy, Rowland stressed the basic traits of human beings, and their application to the story of the Mississippi Valley. According to Rowland, one of the less virtuous characteristics of western man has been greed; and this trait has been accompanied by the search for adventure, the desire

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to fulfill a curiosity about the unknown reaches of the west. To these two impulses, Rowland asserted, "one must attribute the beginning of civilization in the Mississippi Valley: curiosity as to what the land had to offer, and greed to acquire its riches."

Rowland made special note of the cosmopolitan character of immigration into the Valley, which afforded a broad basis for future development. Those early eighteenth century immigrants were farsighted and had behind them a history of self-government. It was evident to them that they must possess a stable government if they were to share in the destiny of the United States. To meet this demand they developed the Ordinance of 1787. Rowland concluded that "no better way has been found for governing dependent territory than that which was evolved by these men, whom we must credit with a foresight for the future of remarkable breadth."

The speaker continued by tracing the nineteenth century economic development of the Mississippi Valley. The post-Civil War period in particular witnessed a magnificent advance in manufacturing, in agriculture, as well as in social and cultural activities. Rowland predicted that with the completion of the Panama Canal there would be an unprecedented economic growth, which would develop the cities of the Mississippi Valley into artistic and intellectual centers of the United States.

Implicit in Rowland's address is the racist philosophy prevalent among many historians of that era. The Anglo-Saxon racial bias displayed by American historians is best explained in a recent historiographical work by Harvey Wish, *The American Historian* (New York, 1960), pp. 79, 99, 106, 110, 124-25, 132, 165, and 183. After all, other races have migrated, settled and conquered lands; other peoples have been motivated by greed
and curiosity. But only the Anglo-Saxons, according to these historians, developed a political and economic structure of such brilliance and endurance, and with such an unparalleled potential.

What was implicit in Rowland became explicit in Harlow Lindley's 1919 address, "Western Travel, 1800-1820." The title was somewhat misleading, for the subject-matter of Lindley's address--like that of Cox and Rowland--dealt primarily with American migration westward. Unlike his predecessors, however, Lindley did not limit himself to the boundaries of the Mississippi Valley, but discussed in broad general terms the total American movement.

He introduced with a grand and grandiose statement the growth of civilization: "Just as the mighty river which flows onward to the sea is composed of mingled waters born by tributaries coming from many sources, so the flood of civilization is but a mingling of many elements." (Not only is the theme reminiscent of nineteenth century writers, but also the style). To Lindley civilization was the result of many forces and currents, which have mingled and intermingled, first in confusion, then in harmony, until any one element or force is scarcely discernible in the finished product.

The most striking phenomenon in western civilization has been the spread of the Anglo-Saxon race. And one of the most dominant and significant phases of that movement was the expansion of the American people across the continent. In little more than a century this vast territory was secured, occupied, and developed with what Lindley characterized as a

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7Harlow Lindley, "Western Travel, 1800-1820," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (September, 1919) VI.
"restless energy and laudable spirit." In so doing, the migrants established and exemplified the most characteristic and permanent ideals of the American nation.

The theme of Turner and the advice of Libby are once again repeated in Lindley's speech. He described the westward movement as being actually as old as the history of the American colonies, for in them it had its beginnings. However, because the first colonies were not firmly established, and because of the forbidding aspects of the frontier, only a small number of hardy individuals went west in the first century. These men could hardly be called agents of civilization, for they not only took up the way of the Indians but often did not favor further migration, preferring to maintain the wilderness which afforded them a livelihood. The initial government census of 1790 revealed that roughly five per cent of the total population lived west of the mountain ranges which lie in the Atlantic States.

In that year the center of population was in western Maryland; in 1800 it was just west of Washington; by 1820 it had moved to western Virginia; and in 1880 it was as far west as Ohio. Lindley noted the comparative steadiness with which the population moved west, a rate he estimated at approximately five miles per year. He recalled that the movement, which even the most farsighted of the generation of the constitution had predicted would take centuries to complete, was finished by the sons and grandsons of those who fought in the Revolutionary War. The United States, Lindley noted, seemed to have instinctively turned its entire energies toward westward expansion.
Repeating largely what Turner had said earlier, Lindley discussed three aspects of the westward movement which were especially important in determining its result. First, the movement stimulated the spirit of American democracy. All social distinctions were left behind, for men had neither the time nor material to establish a well defined class system. This forced them to meet each other on equal terms. Secondly, because of the conditions of frontier life, only the hardy, energetic and self-reliant survived. It was the spirit of these men that developed the "progressive, and radical characteristics of the West." Finally the early movement consisted almost entirely of individuals with an Anglo-American background. Because of this, the institutions and traditions of English speaking people were firmly entrenched in the West by the time of the great European immigrations.

Lindley contended, as did Rowland, that the economic advantages offered by the new territory were the chief causes of the westward movement. The desire to improve material conditions rather than religious, political or social pressures, was the drive behind the pioneers. Copying Turner almost to the letter, Lindley referred to the type of individuals that moved into the west to prove his point. First came the trappers and traders whose occupations led them into the unsettled regions. They were followed by the squatters and as agricultural conditions improved, they in turn were followed by the more competent farmer. And in his wake, came all sorts of business entrepreneurs to cater to all the needs of commerce and transportation.

Lindley noted with special interest the importance of the direction of settlement. He described it as having been determined by the rivers of
the west, the Ohio, the Missouri, and most important the Mississippi. Tracing posts along these water routes made it possible for the emigrants to advance by easy stages. Indeed, it was not until the settlers reached the trans-Mississippi plains that real difficulties were encountered.

There is little use in repeating the summaries of other addresses delivered during this era— they are all cut from the same fabric. Largely influenced by Turner and Orin Libby for content and direction, and by nineteenth century currents of thought for style and philosophy, the addresses verge on the repetitive. If we skip a decade and study the speeches of the 1930's and thereafter, however, different emphases are immediately apparent. Foreign relations, wars, alliances, imperialism, as well as the issue of civil liberties, individual rights, economic problems, and changes in American culture and character, dominated American thought in this period, and historical writings most certainly reflected this domination.

Louise Phelps Kellogg in "France and the Mississippi Valley: A Résumé," broke with the established pattern of presidential addresses for the M.V.H.A. Her discourse presented a study of a foreign power and its general policies concerning the whole Mississippi Valley, rather than reviewing a particular aspect of local history. For the first time, neither

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9 Louise Phelps Kellogg, "France and the Mississippi Valley, A Résumé," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1931) XVIII.
the United States nor the Mississippi Valley make up the central theme, but rather are relegated to a somewhat secondary position, with France being the principal subject.

The discovery of the great interior valley of the Mississippi inflamed the enthusiasm of France. Two years before the famous voyage of Louis Joliet, the French colonial authorities staged a pageant at the head of the Great Lakes which exemplified this fervent interest. With feudal pomp and ceremony, calculated to impress the watching Indians, all of the region of the Great Lakes, plus "all other countries, rivers, lakes..., those discovered and to be discovered, bounded on one side by the Northern and Western seas and on the other by the South Sea, this land and all its length and breath," were to be annexed to the Kingdom of France. With this declaration France gave notice to the world that the interior of North America was to become French. That claim was buttressed by Joliet's discovery of the upper Mississippi.

One of the first problems faced by any colonizing power is what to do with the native inhabitants? Kellogg observed that it has long been held that the French were much more successful with the Indians in North America than any other colonial power. She contended, however, that a review of French experience in the Mississippi Valley does not prove the truth of this assertion.

The coming of the white man changed the habits and customs of the Indians. French traders quickly cultivated them to become dependent upon the French for necessities of existence. The quick replacement of the bow and arrow with the white man's rifle is a case in point. Only by
obtaining sufficient pelts from fur-bearing animals could the Indian supply his needs and wants. Assiduous hunting drove the game farther and farther away, forcing the Indian hunter to travel great distances. Thus, Kellogg asserted, they became a more migratory and a less sedentary people. This situation worked directly against the official French policy of segregating the various tribes into particular areas, and hindered the success of the French in the Mississippi Valley.

In 1763, with the loss of Canada to England, France was forced to cede Louisiana to Spain. Kellogg speculated that in all probability, France was relieved to be rid of the burden of that territory: "France had given Louisiana to Spain in 1763 without reluctance and Spain had received it without enthusiasm." To be sure, the loss of the colony was disastrous to the pride of the French. Nevertheless, Kellogg asserted, the "cession of Louisiana was a necessity." Louisiana did suffer from its own problems; autocratic control by the home-government had weakened any self-help; and French policies had led to Indian uprisings that seriously curtailed further immigration.

President Kellogg considered France's attitude towards the Mississippi Valley during the four decades that followed the Treaty of 1763 as a moot question. She reminded the members that it was for a long time believed that France had assisted the American colonies during the Revolution in hope of recovering its own colonies. However, the author cited recent historical studies of the diplomatic relations of that time in order to point out that the alliance was stimulated by a desire of the French to humiliate England and to regain its lost prestige in Europe, not to recover Canada and the Mississippi West. Not until the time of
Napoleon did France attempt to regain its previous stature as a world colonial power.

The value of this lost colony was recalled to France by the numerous travelers who visited North America during the last years of the eighteenth century. Among these was Talleyrand, who, when called to the foreign office under the Consular regime of Napoleon, "awoke in that ambitious, restless ruler a desire to reestablish a French empire with Louisiana for a base." At the same time, French public sentiment was aroused by the publication of Chateaubriand's poem, "Atala," which recalled the wonders of the Mississippi Valley. Although a romantic and unreal description, Kellogg observed that it awakened a hope that this "idyllic region" might once more belong to France. With the fall of Napoleon, French ambitions in that direction waned.

Kellogg concluded with a brief discussion of France's attempts at building an empire in Africa. Having failed at becoming a colonial power in North America, France turned its attention to Africa, and there set about building an empire second only in extent to that of its formal rival, Great Britain. There, the author noted, France seems to have succeeded by following the very policies that proved disastrous in the Mississippi Valley.

The address of Dwight L. Dumond in 1949 clearly reflected the spirit of the time in which it was composed. A crisis of free inquiry versus regimentation faced America in the mid-twentieth century, and Dumond
turned to "The Mississippi: Valley of Decision" for advice and guidance. Frightened by what he saw as a loss of freedom of speech and thought, Dumond struck out against the apathy of Americans towards this loss. He raised the question: "Where among our young men is there that deep sense of moral responsibility to speak out against the sins and injustices of a perishing world; to raise their voices and never be silent until every person enjoys the unalienable rights of man, free from the persecution of arbitrary governments and the violence and exploitation of his fellow man?" The sad and bitter truth, Dumond contended, was that nine-tenths of young men and women in American schools were completely ignorant of the great questions that confronted the world. He asserted that free inquiry and discussion were so restricted by Teachers Oath Laws, and regulations of school boards, regents, and administrators, that the interest of students in public questions and their ability to make sound judgments has been paralyzed.

10 Dwight L. Dumond, "The Mississippi: Valley of Decision," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1949) XXXVI. Dwight Dumond is most famous for rewriting the history of American abolitionism. Essentially Dumond destroyed the over-emphasis placed by historians on the figure of William Lloyd Garrison, and proved that the most important abolitionists came from the old northwest region, and that they are intimately connected with Protestantism. Dumond's most important works in this area are: Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857, (New York, London, 1938), Antislavery Origins of the Civil War in the U.S., (Ann Arbor, 1939), A Bibliography of Antislavery in America, (Ann Arbor, 1961). His most recent work, Antislavery: the Crusade for Freedom in America, (Ann Arbor, 1961) has been criticized most severely by Professor C. Vann Woodward, in The American Scholar (Spring, 1962).
Dumond considered this a matter of gravest concern. He maintained that America lived in a period of world revolution, when people were striking out blindly in search of something to which to cling:

Nothing but the combined intelligence and deep devotion of all men who love freedom will preserve for us those things which we believe to be true, and just, and right. Nothing but the free expression of our thoughts and opinions in speaking, writing, and printing will save us. Nothing but the free exercise of our reason, by full and frank discussion of all questions, under all circumstances and on all occasions will reveal the truth; and nothing but the power of truth will set men free and keep them secure.

Dumond went back to the pre-Civil War period of the Mississippi Valley to show how earlier Americans had overcome similar restrictions of their freedoms. The public questions were different, but the basic issues were the same. The great question of the time was slavery, but one of the most crucial issues was whether or not an individual had the right to speak against this institution.

The people of the Mississippi Valley had a tradition of free thought, inherited from the earliest settlers, both intellectually and politically. In fact, Dumond asserted, "the revolution in human institutions, from which emerged our democratic way of life, began with the religious nonconformity of the Reformation and reached its climax in America in 1776."
The spirit of religious nonconformity spread rapidly to intellectual and political convictions, and man was gradually released from his restrictive bonds. The ideas and logic of men who prized liberty and truth constituted a formidable body of liberal thought with which every early American was familiar.

Among such men was Thomas Jefferson. Endowed with a brilliant intellect, inspired by an unyielding faith in man, he laid in a few short
sentences a solid foundation for the first permanent revolutionary govern-
ment in the history of the world: "We hold these truths to be self-
evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their
Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty,
and the pursuit of Happiness." Eleven years later the principle of a
fundamental law which the government must obey was enshrined in the
Constitution. With the addition of the First Amendment, the government was
specifically restrained from interfering with the free development of man.

These democratic traditions were put to the test when "young men
and women, unable to find a place for themselves in the stagnant economy
of the seaboard, crossed the mountains into the Mississippi Valley."
Aided by a system that allowed for an orderly progression of territorial
governments to statehood, these individuals in a short space of time trans-
formed a virgin wilderness into thriving communities.

Accompanying the flood of immigrants was a great revival in religion.
By rejecting the doctrine of Calvinistic predestination, and substituting
freedom of the will as a factor in salvation, "man was now not only the
architect of his physical and political environment— he was the master of
his own soul." Dumond asserted that the new religious doctrines harmonized
perfectly with the political and economic philosophy of the Mississippi
West. Man, to the westerner, was completely free.

Everyone was aware of the potential power of the Mississippi Valley.
Politicians, financiers, industrialists, and religious leaders, all knew
and realized that here the battle between slavery and freedom would be
fought to conclusion. Dumond quoted with approval the comments of James G.
Birney, a leading western abolitionist: "The antagonistic principles of
liberty and slavery have been roused into action and one or the other must be victorious. There will be no cessation of strife until slavery shall be exterminated, or liberty destroyed."

The foundation was being laid for a thirty year struggle against the institution of slavery in the United States. In New England, Anti-Slavery Societies were established in 1831, and within two years a nationwide American Anti-Slavery Society was organized. A system for the distribution of abolitionist newspapers and magazines was established, and its effect was felt in the West. Through that media, the Anti-Slavery Societies stated a fundamental indictment of slavery: "The slave is a man, created in the image of God, possessing an immortal spirit, which oppression is polluting and degrading."

The first major condemnation of slavery by a western organization was instituted by students at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1833. Their discussions, widely attended by both faculty and students, ended with unanimous endorsement of immediate emancipation. This action aroused the fears of the meek and conservative public relations minded administration. A system of faculty censorship of all student discussions was established, and any member of the student body who violated that policy was dismissed without a hearing or statement of cause. Fifty-one students withdrew from the institution, publicly stating their reasons for so doing, and went to Oberlin College. Dumond's judgment was that the conduct of "the students against the encroachment of popular and powerful combinations marks an era in the history of freedom in America." Several leading educators in the West who heard of the students' plight approved of the exodus and joined the faculty. This action established that
backwoods school as a paramount leader in the field of theology, while Lane Seminary was reduced to mediocrity.

Dumond declared that the case for academic freedom, as stated by the Lane Seminary students, rested upon the inalienable right of free inquiry and discussion. Students do not forfeit that right when they enroll in an institution of learning. Since it is their right before they enter, then the institution can "neither grant it nor take it away."

This right can neither be harmed nor reduced by allowing investigation and discussion, for "discussion is the standard test for the detection of fallacies and the revelation of truth... It is the court of errors where decisions of individual tribunals are reversed or confirmed."

Dumond continued by relating a dreary record of riot after riot over the right of anti-slave groups to speak against that institution. These leaders refused to be intimidated by threats of mob violence or governmental interference, and rose in defense of the constitutional right of free speech. Dumond raised the question of what authority the abolitionists used to defend the right of free inquiry?

The abolitionists claimed, and justly so Dumond concluded, that the First Amendment to the Constitution, as a statement of national policy, places a solemn obligation upon all branches of the government to protect free inquiry and discussion. The abolitionists went even further, and once again the author concurred, by assuming that the Declaration of Independence was a part of the fundamental law of the land; it had stated principles upon which the United States was established, and therefore the Constitution must be interpreted in the light of these principles.
Interesting as was this argument, it did not meet the issue that social interests were paramount to individual rights. Specifically, the charge was made that anti-slavery societies, through the distribution of highly incendiary publications, had attempted to incite a slave insurrection and overthrow an ancient institution. After all, as Southerners claimed, slavery was endorsed by the Scriptures, was recognized by the Constitution, and was an essential part of southern society. Dumond emphasized the fallacy of that argument by referring to the ease with which it was destroyed. The abolitionists had always addressed their arguments to the slaveowners, not the slaves; and at no time, the author asserted, was evidence ever presented to the contrary. Further, Dumond maintained (as did the abolitionists), that slavery, through Fugitive Slave Laws, was an institution which concerned everyone, not just southern society. Finally, Dumond summarized this aspect of the abolitionist argument— that if men engaged in illegal violence, for what they regarded as a correct purpose (encroachments upon free speech to stop discussions on the issue of slavery), then the example of despotism was established for all men to follow. "If we call liberty licentiousness, say that man's rights are continent upon his using them wisely and prudently, and invoke public sentiment as the test of indiscretion," stated Dumond, "the way is open to tyranny."

Yet the real problem lay even deeper. Here was a situation, where self-constituted tribunals (anti-abolitionists) had been able to set themselves above the laws of the land. These committees had, with deliberate calculating measures, wrecked their vengeance upon those who had incurred their displeasure. Composed of prominent men, they had been able to win
over a so-called free press and gain support of a Congress who refused to entertain petitions from abolitionist societies. There was example after example, where the mayor and police stood by, while mobs destroyed anti-slave newspapers, and committed violence against abolitionist lecturers and free negroes. A minority, through the use of force and intimidation, was able to quiet the might of the press and win over the support of the government. Had it not been for the brave few, who prized liberty above bread and truth before life," democracy would have slipped into despotic tyranny.

On this note, Dumond returned to the present problem facing the Mississippi Valley. He questioned the future of an area which has the power to determine the destiny of the world, yet permits its college faculties and students to be denied the right to speak freely on the great questions that face the nation; when faculty members are released because they have supported a particular political candidate; when students cannot form associations or organizations without permission. What must be proclaimed with positive force, as a basic commandment, is this: that until every Teachers Oath Law is repealed, until students are allowed their inalienable rights, on and off the campus, and until universities not only permit but encourage free inquiry, then the "future eminence of this Valley as a moral force in man's eternal fight for freedom is dangerously compromised."

The problem of civil liberties, on which Dwight Dumond spoke so earnestly and directly, is but one facet of mid-twentieth century interest. Economic growth and economic development, as well as their social and cultural results, captured the attention of other historians of the
Mississippi Valley. Oil and agriculture in particular, have had catalytic influences on American development. Carl Coke Rister, for example, devoted his 1950 Address, "The Oilman's Frontier," to a discussion of the effects of oil upon the region of the Mississippi Valley and the nation as a whole. For almost three hundred and fifty years, Rister contended, regionism had grown parallel with nationalism, so that the American way of life became partly homogeneous and partly heterogeneous. He compared American life to a mosaic whose general features are harmonious and unified yet in whose particulars each specific area was dissimilar. Customs, language, and public institutions are general integrants, but regional innovations have changes the original culture and added variety to the American character.

Rister used the frontier as his example. Each succeeding border area was in some respects unlike the preceding one, and the last bore little resemblance to the first. The Mississippi Valley in the late nineteenth century was quite different from that of a hundred years earlier, for the more recent inhabitants could use the accumulated experiences of past frontiers, as well as the improved inventions of the day to solve their problems. Thus, the author concluded, "that southwestern border culture of the late nineteenth century had no more in common with eighteenth century Piedmont life than nineteenth century Denver had with New York a hundred and fifty years ago." In fact, both border and urban life, in each succeeding era, experienced evolutionary change.

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11 Carl Coke Rister, "The Oilman's Frontier," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1950) XXXVII.
The oil industry, which Rister characterized as having been "basically important and vitalizing" to gulf regions of the Mississippi West and the nation, created a new economy and brought radical changes to American culture. The southwestern part of the United States was the locale of the earliest account of a white man's notice of a petroleum product. Survivors of the DeSoto expeditions, on the Texas Gulf coast, recorded that they saw "a scum which the sea cast up, called 'copee',... like pitch." There were several oil discoveries in the United States during the early nineteenth century. In 1829, while boring for salt water, a Kentucky farmer struck a vein of pure oil. According to published account, oil from this well entered and flowed down the Cumberland River to a point some five hundred miles away. At this time oil had no great commercial value; consequently, the well was regarded only as a physical phenomenon.

Immediately preceding the Civil War, oil well discoveries were reported in the Gulf southwest. And after the war's conclusion, interest was increased in oil exploration. However, Rister asserted, it was the famous Spindletop gusher near Beaumont, Texas, that launched the Mississippi West and the Nation into the modern "oil age." The gusher, sponsored by Anthony Lucas, had an astonishing effect upon oil production; in 1900, Texas produced 836,000 barrels, but by 1905 its production had risen to 28,136,000 barrels a year.

Beaumont became the pattern for future oil boom towns. In the words of the author, the "roar of its Lucas gushers had been heard around the World." Adventurers, oilmen, and investors from every quarter swarmed into
Texas. Real estate boomed. It was reported that land one hundred and fifty miles from Beaumont sold for as much as one thousand dollars an acre; and within the immediate Spindletop area for one million dollars an acre. Spindletop itself was assessed by Jefferson County at $100,000,000.

This was by no means the end; more and more fields were discovered in North Texas, Kansas, and Louisiana. Although the industry was faced with the threat of a dangerously fluctuating market, the introduction of the automobile kept it from crashing. Several improvements occurred in the oil industry by the mid-1930's. Rister observed that this process was hastened by several factors--federal and state conservation; sound principles of secondary recovery and oil field maintenance; promotion of educational programs; and federal legislative action.

During the Second World War the oil industry attained its maturity. Armies were highly mechanized and dependent upon petroleum products. Oil from the Gulf southwest provided such an advantage to the Allies over the central powers as to seal their fate. In the words of the author, "it may well be said that Napoleon's legions fought on their stomachs; the American troops of World War II, on their carburetors."

The oil industry's impact upon the Mississippi Valley was transforming. Rister cited the following examples: in four hundred and sixty-nine counties and parishes of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas, from 1920 to 1930, there was a population increase of 1,934,606, 47.3 per cent of which occurred in the eighty-five oil producing counties. In Texas alone, in one year (1947), the industry's expenditures amounted to over two billion dollars. In other gulf states expenditures were proportionally as great.
The American West, the author concluded, has had its unique characters and industries—the prospector, lumberjack, mountain man, bull-whacker, and cowboy. Each character has had its biographer and each industry its historian. Yet the oil industry, Rister proclaimed, with its equally interesting characters and numerous interrelated industries, is for the most part still an untouched area for historical research. Rister ended his Address with an invitation:

For years ambitious historians, who may believe that there are no more research worlds to conquer, and for seasoned historians who are casting about for new research and writing opportunities, here is a new area of study, among others of social and industrial significance, that promises rich returns for him who is willing to dig.

Fred A. Shannon, in "Culture and Agriculture in America," reviewed the argument of Charles Austin Beard, that no farmer struggling to "wrest a living from an unwilling soil ever made a significant contribution to culture." Shannon, who agreed in the main with the self-evident economic truths of Beard's compositions, designed his paper to question the cultural consequences of this theory. Shannon was particularly incensed by the assumption of urban classes who consider any culture different from their own as obviously inferior.

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12 Fred A. Shannon, "Culture and Agriculture in American," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1954) XXXXI. Professor Fred A. Shannon began his career as an historian of the Civil War, but soon abandoned this area of specialization to take up American economic history with an emphasis on agriculture. Besides a famous text, Shannon's most important work is The Farmer's Last Frontier (New York, 1945). Shannon gained a measure of publicity in 1940 with his devastating critique of Walter Prescott Webb's The Great Plains (Boston, 1959), to be found in "An Appraisal of Walter Prescott Webb's The Great Plains," Social Science Research Council (1940) Bulletin 46.
Shannon held that in discussing so delicate a subject as culture, one must be careful to define it properly. Any definition that encompasses an idea or state of mind, that can be called practical, materialistic, or economic, must be eliminated. To do otherwise, the author contended, "would give the country lout an initial advantage that scholarly rectitude long since decided should be denied." All improvement in agriculture, while it may have increased immeasurably the well-being of urban peoples, is of a practical nature and therefore not germaine in the discussion.

Shannon turned to Webster's Dictionary for a definition of culture: "Conversance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science; distinguished from vocational, technical, or professional skill or knowledge." Only one thing, the author asserted, was lacking in that summation: it said nothing about the creation of fine arts, humanities and pure science. Taken literally, it would admit only those who merely appreciate, or give the impression of appreciation, to the select circle of culture. Shannon concluded satirically, that one should not expect too much from a dictionary definition, for the dictionary was an object of practical use, therefore outside the realm of culture.

Shannon then reviewed the so-called cultural elements of the United States. He recalled a statement of Beard's, wherein the latter discussed the standards of the "urban nabobs of 'The Gilded Age.'" Beard, in several "devastating paragraphs," noted how the princes of industry had simulated an outer shell of culture by surrounding themselves with antiques and art treasures. They rated the merit of each object by its price tag alone. At least, Shannon observed, the 'boorish farmer' had the saving grace not to make false pretenses.
If there has been little culture among American farmers, and little more among the nation's wealthy, Shannon asked, is it not safe to question whether any country ever boasted a broad diffusion of culture throughout its population? Many chapters have been written on the great cultures of the world, both ancient and modern. However, no historian has ever demonstrated whether a culture was shared by more than one person in a thousand, either in the city or country.

Returning to the question of culture in the United States, Shannon discussed the farmer's city counterpart, the industrial worker. The author contended that the cultured of the city were not the factory laborers, who like the farmer, toiled long hours to survive. Shannon questioned the proportion of city-dwellers who take advantage of the art museums and opera houses, and who borrow from the local libraries any books other than worthless fiction?

Whether in the city, town or country, whether in the past or present, at no time, however dormant culture may have seemed to be, was it or is it entirely dead. In the last fifty years, Shannon suggested, with the development of highway transportation, rural electrification, and improved conditions in agriculture, the old city-country barrier has just about disappeared.

Shannon concluded with:

Humorists will ask about the multifarious and sometimes ingenious uses of the Sears, Roebuck Catalog and the changes it wrought in rural culture. Charles Beard may be pictured rising from his grave to demand an answer to his assertion that American farmers 'evolved no culture... comparable to that created by the European peasantry.' These matters have not been ignored for lack of any awareness of their existence. But the self-imposed limitations of this paper were
designed to answer the assumptions of the urban elite who, smugly inquire: 'Rural culture, did you say? Don't you mean agriculture?"

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In the early years local and specific history of the Mississippi Valley dominated the attention of the presidents in their annual addresses. Cut essentially from the same fabric, the speeches were largely influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner and Orin Libby for content and approach. During the decade starting with 1930's, a different emphasis was apparent. Foreign problems, alliances, and cultural changes in the United States dominated American thought, and the presidential addresses reflected this new interest. By the 1950's, economic growth and development, as well as its social and cultural effects, had captured their interest.

The early presidential addresses had followed the advice of Libby and brought forth specific historical events from the dim part of the valley. However, as Libby had further advised, they attempted to relate these events to an over-all pattern of western civilization. Specifics were not forgotten, but rather broadened, to encompass general aspects of American history.
CHAPTER II

AMERICAN POLITICS

"History is past politics," declared the nineteenth century historian Walter Bagehot. Despite the influence upon history of psychology and psychiatry, sociology and economics—indeed, a wide variety of other disciplines—history to a large extent is still past politics.

The presidents of the M.V.H.A. have been representative of this fascination, and throughout the years, their addresses have provided a generous sampling of political questions. At first it was American politics somehow connected with the Mississippi Valley and the West that dominated their attention. But with the broadening interests of the Association, the speeches began to take on a national rather than a sectional approach to the political issues.

Orin G. Libby had keynoted the purpose of the M.V.H.A. by advising the Association members to emphasis the local and specific historical events of the Mississippi Valley. This advice was heeded for about two decades. A sampling of the addresses dealing with American politics, until about 1930, reveals a sustained and consistent interest in the role of the Mississippi Valley in American politics.

Armed with Libby's counsel, for example, St. George L. Sioussatt in his 1918 address, "Andrew Johnson and the Early Phases of the Homestead

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1 Orin G. Libby, "The Response to the Address of Welcome," Proceedings, (1909) II.
Bill," traced the rise of such a movement and the particular efforts of Johnson to see it through.

The Homestead Bill had its origin in a combination of political forces. Each faction--essentially divided along sectional lines--was represented by a particular land policy. There was first the scheme of Henry Clay to sell western lands and to distributed the greater part of the net proceeds among all the states of the Union. This plan was dear to the Whig party and to eastern manufacturing states. Secondly, there was a plan supported by John C. Calhoun, who wished to reduce the power of the federal government by surrendering to the states the parts of the national domain which lay within the bounds of organized states. Although the plan was never adopted, Sioussatt observed that it made ghostly appearances long after its advocate had passed from the scene. The third scheme was that of Thomas Hart Benton. It assumed that the land would be sold, but called for preemption laws to protect "squatters." Benton held that the amount of time that land remained unsold constituted a criterion of the quality of the land. He therefore presented a plan for gradually reducing the price of such land. Benton's scheme found great support in the West.

Andrew Johnson (although not the founder of the Homestead Bill nor the first to introduce the proposed legislation in Congress), was nevertheless the first practical politician to persistently force it upon the attention of Congress. He greatly resented the treatment accorded the

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2St. George L. Sioussatt, "Andrew Johnson and the Early Phases of the Homestead Bill," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (December, 1918) V.
poor artisan by the well-to-do farmers, and supported free land as early as 1843. In the first session of the twenty-ninth Congress (1846) Johnson introduced his own homestead bill which was essentially the Benton plan. Though it received considerable support, the act failed to pass.

Four years later in a letter to his son-in-law, Johnson commented: "I have strong hopes of getting the homestead bill through this winter. If I do I shall die happy." In defense of his bill he cited Moses, Wattel, and Andrew Jackson—a curious combination of authorities. He argued that the domain of the United States belonged to the people as a whole. The bill again failed—in fact, this time it did not even come to a vote. Johnson re-introduced it once again in the lower house of the thirty-second Congress (1852), which finally passed the Homestead Bill. It received particular support from the Northwest and surprising support from the East. The Senate, however, turned a deaf-ear to outside appeals and refused to pass the bill. Their standard objections were that the bill would involve a great loss of revenue and this would necessitate higher tariffs and direct taxes; that the public lands were pledged by Congress for the payment of the public debt; that there was no discrimination contained in the bill as to the lands opened to selection, so that mineral land would be included; and finally, that the nation would be deprived of this vast resource in the case of future wars. It was not until 1962 that Johnson—with vigorous and resolute effort—was able to fuse both the eastern and western points of view, and the Homestead Bill finally was passed.

As the career of Andrew Johnson illustrated the opportunity which democracy in this country has offered, so the evolution of our land system, Sioussatt held, has been an evidence of working self-government. In the
typical phraseology of Frederick Jackson Turner, yet remembering the admonishments of Libby, the author concluded with a prediction that the lessons learned from the frontier land problems -- which was a potent factor in distinguishing American conditions from those of the Old World -- will aid in solving the problems confronting the world of 1919.

Frank Heywood Hodder continued the pattern of localism in his speech on "The Railroad Background of the Kansas-Nebraska Act." The theme of Hodder's discourse was the relation of the building of railroads in the United States to the settlement of the West. Historians, the author observed, had learned that they have written the history of slavery too large and the history of the westward movement too small. But they had yet to learn that they must develop the history of the railroads as the controlling factor in that movement. Hodder urged something like a railroad interpretation of western American history. The most striking example of the validity of such an emphasis was the extent to which the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by the Kansas-Nebraska Act was controlled by railroad consideration.

The organization of Kansas-Nebraska in 1854, Hodder contended, was the outcome of a project that Stephen A. Douglas had formulated some nine years before and for six years had been actively promoting. Douglas--who held no real misgivings about slavery and believed that it was not likely to invade the middle-west -- had been willing to repeal the Missouri Compromise to accomplish the building of a transcontinental railroad

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4 James Albert Woodburn, "Western Radicalism in American Politics," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (September, 1926) XIII.
with Chicago as the connecting link between east and west.

In answer to the charge that Douglas repealed the Compromise to win southern support for the presidency, Hodder turned to the fact that he (Douglas) had not originally intended to repeal it permanently, but merely to limit it during the territorial period. If the bill had been a bid for southern support, Douglas would have proposed repeal at the outset.

In his concluding remarks the author suggested that ever since the appearance of Frederick Jackson Turner's epoch-making essay on "The Significance of the Frontier on American History," students have devoted themselves to the study of the settlement of the West. However, they had neglected the most important factor controlling the westward movement. "It is common to think of the population as drawing the railroads," Hodder observed, "but it is quite as true that the railroads in their turn drew the population."

"Western Radicalism in American Politics," was the title and theme of James Albert Woodburn's Address the following year (1926). Unlike Hodder, who stressed the importance of an eastern invention on the western movement, Woodburn emphasized the effect of radical western political thinking on the nation. According to Woodburn the radicalism of one age usually becomes the conservatism of the next -- "An epithet of contumely today becomes a badge of distinction tomorrow." Every generation in America, since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, had witnessed an advance in democracy. This advance has been the result of radical opinion, action, and leadership. To a large extent, this radicalism had its source and impetus in the West. For verification, Woodburn cited the outstanding "epochs and movements" of America's political history: first, the triumph
of Jefferson as the founder of American democracy; second, the era of
Jackson, the product of the frontier; third, the struggle of Lincoln
against the spread of slavery and the slave oligarchy; finally, the
period merging into the present (i.e., 1926) of Bryan, Roosevelt, Wilson
and La Follette, popular leaders who never objected to the label of
radical.

Woodburn underscored the importance of the western radicals. They
had overcome and defeated the class that looked with a cold and apathetic
mind on the vast mass of remediable misery that surrounded them. They
had saved the nation from becoming politically stagnant. They were the
panacea to America's sicknesses. He concluded that the nation must
encourage its bold thinkers and make room for their creation: "In sailing
the Ship of State, at times we shall have to add to our sails, at other
times to our ballast. But let us not forget that it is the sail, and not
the ballast that makes the ship go."

Just as the cycle of addresses noted in the previous chapter were
affected in the early years in content and direction, so were the speeches
on politics. The influence of Turner loomed large in their conclusions
and the narrowness of scope gave mute testimony of Orin Libby's impact.
In the period starting with the 1930's, the addresses--although certainly
not neglecting the West--took on a more national emphasis. Political
parties, the Civil War, the Federal Government, and American democracy in
general dominate the historical thought of M.V.H.A., and the presidential
speeches reflect this new concern.
Homer C. Hockett, in his "Little Essays on the Police Power," was the first to break with the tradition of reviewing specific political issues. Concerned with the challenge which alleges that many constitutional topics cannot be dealt with by usual historical methods, Hockett attempted to review the history of "police power." He divided the topic into several categories, and then discussed each phase in the development of police power in the American political scene.

To the modern legalist, appropriately enough, the police power of a state is identified with the power to protect and promote the general welfare of the people residing within the confines of that particular state. This definition, Hockett contended, was actually a product of post-Civil War conditions. Historical investigation finds the origins of the term in a much more remote period with a more extended scope. During the colonial era, the right of each legislature to exercise autonomous control over the internal policies of its colony became a cardinal principle of the American political creed. This belief failed to invoke a responsive sentiment in the attitude of the British statesmen who administered the Empire. It may be said that it was this refusal to recognize these demands that cost the British their choicest colonial possession.

5 Homer C. Hockett, "Little Essays on the Police Power," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1930) XVII. Professor Homer C. Hockett wrote one of the most widely used textbooks in constitutional history, A Constitutional History of the U. S., (New York, 1939), a text which was regarded as definitive and was of immense influence for several decades. But like other texts, it is now outmoded and has been supplanted by others containing newer interpretations of American constitutional history.
The same concern over internal police power which led to the Revolutionary War and eventual independence was expressed by the founding fathers whenever colonial union was suggested. Every proposed plan protected that right: the Albany Plan of 1754, Galloway's Plan of 1774, and the Franklin and Dickinson drafts to the provision of the Articles of Confederation all declared essentially that: "Each State retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence, and every power, jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled." Hockett suggested that it was quite evident that the framers had not the slightest intention, in proposing a "more perfect union," to abandon the principle of state control over internal police powers.

One of the major problems facing the framers of the Constitution was the confusion between state police power and state sovereignty. It was obvious that in a union of this unique sort the powers reserved to the states could not be identical to those pertaining to the members of a league or confederation. The autonomous control of the state over its internal police power was not easily distinguished from sovereignty. Indeed, the common use of the phrase "divided sovereignty" when referring to federal and state powers obscured the very real differences between the two. In later years even Chief Justice John Marshall, for all his nationalism, used the language of divided sovereignty. When referring to the reserved powers, Marshall described them as embracing "everything within the territory of a state, not surrendered to a general government." This meant simply that the internal police powers of a state were exactly those powers which were reserved to them by the Tenth Amendment.
As history has so often shown, agreement upon principles by no means rules out disagreement of their application. Hockett observed that the colonists defended their right of internal police power against England by arguments based upon an interpretation of the British Constitution. When these arguments proved fruitless, they fell back upon the right of the natural law of men to alter or abolish government. They used this to justify the Revolution. Later as a Nation, the reserved rights of states were defended on the grounds of strict interpretation of the Constitution. When this failed, the theory of state sovereignty was championed, which implied the right of interposition, nullification, and as a last resort, secession.

Before the Civil War, John C. Calhoun formulated the theory that "sovereignty resided in the people of the several states." Calhoun rejected as illogical the principle that sovereignty is divided between state and federal governments, and he reduced the status of the latter to a mere agent of the several states united only by a constitutional compact. Calhoun felt, the federal government must be held to a strict accountability of its actions. Since slavery was a domestic institution Calhoun reasoned, it was within the realm of internal police power and therefore strictly a problem of the individual states. The states therefore had the right to protect slavery against all attacks or criticisms from outside the confines of each state concerned. "As a result of the appeal to arms." Hockett added, "the police power shared in the disaster which overtook slavery."

Since the Civil War the doctrine of state sovereignty in the Calhounian sense can no longer exist. Academically, Hockett maintained.
it was the true theory in the ante-bellum days, but it was not practical once the South lost the War. Hockett ended his discussion with one suggestion— that the history of the police power in the United States be well studied by those who labor in the area of international organization. In international relations the counterpart of the police power is nationality. Although it would undoubtedly be much harder to reconcile nationalism with internationalism than it was to bring police power into harmony with the federal authority, the author felt that the facts of American success warrant the hope that closer union in the field would meet with equal success.

To the superficial observer, remarked John D. Hicks in "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics," 6 American third party movements might appear to be only a long succession of jeremiads. It is true enough that their successes at the polls have been short lived and their hopes for endurance questionable. But, their continual reappearance is a factor in American political history that cannot and should not be over looked.

Hicks, (unlike Woodburn who used a pure Turner approach to politics), found that the majority of third parties had been formed along sectional lines and during generally prosperous times. Also, he established that these third parties had come about as natural biproducts of diverse American

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6 John D. Hicks, "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1933) XX. Professor Hicks's primary interest in American history has been the Populist movement. His presidential address on third parties is essentially an extract of his findings from The Populist Revolt, (Minneapolis, 1931).
sectional interests, and no one section had a predominance of parties. Major national political organizations were dependent upon the support of all sections of the country and had to somehow manage to collect the maximum number of votes. These major parties had therefore to be cautious in accepting new policies—"What is one man's meat is another man's poison." When a particular policy was meat to the industrial east, for example, but poison to the agricultural west, then such a policy had to be rejected or compromised. However, let a whole section begin to feel that its interests were being neglected by both major parties, and the time was ripe for a plain-spoken third party, organized along purely sectional lines.

Hicks observed that the success of a third party principle had almost always meant certain death to that particular party. The reason for this was self-evident. Let a third party once demonstrate that votes were to be gained by adopting a certain demand, then one or the other of the major organizations would most assuredly absorb the new principle.

Not all third party ideas were adopted, nor should they have been. However, they have presented a formidable list of acceptable principles. Abolition of slavery, the restoration of "home rule" to the south, the regulation of the railroads, the revision of banking and currency system, the attempts to curb the "trusts," the conservation of natural resources—were reforms that first made headway through the agitation of third parties. Perhaps a great many of the same policies, Hicks observed, would have been adopted without third party support. However, one cannot ignore the remarkable number of instances when these organizations had marked out in advance the course that the nation was later to follow.
By the end of the 1930's historians had ploughed and reploughed the few centuries of American history. A few prominent historians--Turner, Beard, and Parrington in particular--had left a profound impression on the entire discipline. Their theories were accepted, and then challenged, rebutted, modified, and extended. All of this unprecedented historical activity resulted in a demand for clarity. And clarity could be achieved in two ways -- first, by attempting to synthesize historical findings into one cohesive portrait, framed and labeled; and second, by the continued application of new knowledge to exorcise the old myths.

For example, William O. Lynch's 1939 Address, "The Mississippi Valley and Its History," is the first real attempt by an M.V.H.A. president to present an overview of the entire history of the Valley in more than

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7 Charles Beard wrote a prodigious amount, on a wide variety of subjects. His most provocative study, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution (New York, 1913) has elicited the most controversy. In the past few years several volumes of rebuttal have appeared, the most famous of which is by Forrest McDonald, We The People (Chicago, 1952). Vernon L. Parrington gained fame on one tour de force, Main Currents in American Thought (New York, 1930). While it has been variously defended (most notably by Henry Commager) and attacked, the most telling blows have been delivered by Lionel Trilling, The Liberal Imagination (New York, 1950). Besides these three historians, Carl Becker might be added as one whose writings had an impact on the professional study of history. An analytical study of this impact is contained in Cushing Strout's study, The Framatic Revolt in American History: Carl Becker and Charles Beard. (New Haven, 1958).

8 William O. Lynch, "The Mississippi Valley and Its History," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1939) XXVI. Compare this speech with the summary of Dunbar Rowland's 1916 address given in chapter one.
two decades. The westward movement into the Mississippi region, Lynch states, resulted in almost complete occupation in a single century. Unlike the Teutonic peoples that over-ran the western provinces of the Roman Empire, the American colonists found no well established culture that would eventually absorb them. Instead, there was a vast region, virtually uninhabited, just waiting for the creation of an entirely new civilization such as the world had never seen. Why then, Lynch questioned, was such a noble experiment not tried?

From the beginning, Americans were drawn to the West. Whether the West served as an economic "safety-valve" to the older communities (as Turner contended) or not, it did relieve the East of many of its surplus citizens. These people took with them their customs and traditions from an early way of life. People by nature, the author observed, are averse to experimentation when developing political, economic, or social institutions— even when free of restrictions. Only those born on the frontier or taken there while still children, were apt to welcome radical changes. The desire to imitate the advantages of the older states greatly influenced the frontiersmen.

Although the Westward movement was in general considered a wholesome movement, it was still pretty much of a haphazard affair. People emigrated on their own, without aid or support. Once there, the pioneers produced whatever the soil, climate, and market conditions would permit. No thought was given to the welfare of competitors in older areas. In short, the Mississippi Valley was occupied under a regime of everyone for himself.

The westerners were certain that the bounties of nature were inexhaustible. They were even more certain, Lynch observed, that human beings
can only develop strength under severe competition and the philosophy that "every man for himself and the Devil take the hindmost." Regardless of whatever form in which these attitudes may be expressed, or in whatever language they may be disguised, they were still widely held as sound in the Valley.

In the field of politics, the Mississippi Valley played a very real part. As if stepping from a Turner drama, the population of the valley has historically held a sincere belief in the competence of the common man to exercise self-government. With unwavering faith, the midwestern masses and their leaders had no idea that the soundness of democracy could ever be questioned. Peoples of other countries had only to adopt the enlightened principles of American government to attain political freedom for themselves. With an almost childish naiveté they concluded that the surest way to maintain democratic government was to elect all officials by popular vote. Any other method was dangerous — only the people could be trusted.

Believing in equality and uncontrolled competitive practices, coupled with their desire to reproduce the advantages of the East, the settlers of the Valley were faced with a very real dilemma. They learned that between the ideal of individualism, unrestrained by government, and the principles of democracy, was an innate conflict. The captains of industry, allowed to reign unchecked, had ruthlessly misused natural resources and trampled on the individual rights of the general populace. The American way of life contained two hostile conceptions. This, Lynch noted, is what underlies the present current of political thought in the Mississippi Valley.
Frederick Jackson Turner believed that the people of the Valley would be able to devise ways and means of their own to preserve democracy. This, however, was not the case. The political activity of the West had exhibited much the same characteristics as the East since World War I. Representatives of the people were confronted with enormous economic problems. Equality of opportunity had not been established. Unemployment and agricultural distress were widespread. The elected and the electorate fell into liberal/conservative political battles which ignored the real problems. Lynch concluded, any verdict passed upon the political record of the Mississippi Valley must be that the story is imperfect.

If President Lynch's 1930 Address was an attempt to draw meaningful conclusions about the Mississippi Valley by viewing the total range of its development--i.e., clarity through synthesis--the following year an address was delivered which attempted a new view of an old question, the causation of the Civil War. Professor James G. Randall, in "The Blundering Generation," examined some of the "irrational" ideas about the Civil War. It has been treated in glowing romantic language, neglecting the realistic terms of the conflict. If World War I produced more total deaths, the Civil War produced more American deaths. If weapons have become more deadly,

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at least medicine and sanitation have advanced. Randall noted that one seldom reads accounts of the Civil War in terms of the sick and wounded, or its blood and filth. This restraint may be necessary, he added, but it ought to be recognized that the true picture of the War is not presented when one writes of Congressional debates, flanking movements or retreats and advances. In a sense, the full realism of war cannot be discussed. The human mind will not stand for it. For the very word, "war," Randall suggested, the realist would have to substitute such terms as "organized murder" or "human slaughterhouse."

Even after reading the studies of historical revisionists, the author found it difficult to achieve a full realization of how Lincoln's generation stumbled into such a war, how it continually blundered during four years of slaughter, and how the triumph of the Union was spoiled by the reconstruction period. It was a "needless and repressible conflict," Randall charged, and to suppose that the Union could not have been continued or slavery ended without war, is hardly an enlightened assumption. If anyone would challenge or question the term "blundering generation," Randall continued, let him state how many measures he wished copied or repeated if the period were to be approached with a clean slate and to be lived apart. "The distortions and errors of the time," the author argued, "were a matter of mass thinking, of social solidification and of politics."

War causations, Randall noted, tend to be explained in terms of great forces. Something elemental is supposed to be at work, be it nationalism, race conflict or economic advantage. With these forces in motion, the move towards war is alleged to be understandable and therefore in some sense, reasonable. If an historian were to attempt to explain how a
particular group was drawn into the Civil War, he would find no one formula. Clear thinking would require a distinction between causing the war and being drawn into the war. Discussions which overlook this become foggy and distorted. If small minorities caused the War and then entire regions and sections were drawn in, Randall contended, no one seems to have thought of letting the minorities fight it out. Writers who ponder the causations of the War write broadly of vast sections, as if the fact of a section being dragged into the conflict was proof that its interests were part of the causations of the War. Herein lies the greatest fallacy of them all.

Taking all the factors leading up to the War--the Sumter maneuver, the election of Lincoln, abolitionism, slavery, cultural and economic differences, and so forth--it would be impossible for any of these problems or issues, individually or together, to have caused a war if the elements of emotion and overbold leadership were omitted. Randall concluded that if one word or phrase were selected to account for the war, "that word would not be slavery, or states-rights, or diverse civilization. It would have to be such a word as fanaticism, or misunderstanding, or perhaps politics."

On this note, Randall returned to the present problems facing the world and the United States. In the present troubled age, he suggested, it may be of more than academic interest to examine the period of that war generation with less thought of the "splendor of battle flags" and with more of the "sophisticated and unsentimental searchlight of reality."

Whether the current tendency of Mississippi Valley presidents is to deliver addresses of a broad and sweeping scope (e.g., Lynch), or to destroy
time-honored views (e.g., Randall), almost all the presidents seem to feel a compulsion to relate their addresses to contemporary American problems. Thus, Lynch concluded by warning his audience that the problems of the Mississippi Valley were far from solved, that past successes were no assurance of future triumphs; thus, Randall concluded that World War III, like the Civil War, was not inevitable if only wise statesmanship and moderation could conquer over blundering emotionalism. In the final address (1961) this pattern is once again repeated.

The problem of civil liberties as a political issue has constantly been an underlying concern of the presidents in this series of addresses. It is then fitting that the final address, Fletcher M. Green's "Cycles of American Democracy,"10 was dedicated to cover the development of such a problem. Before Green attempted to outline its growth, he settled upon a definition of democracy. He summarized it as follows: "A form of government in which the ultimate sovereign power is held by the people and exercised through a system of representation in which the representatives are chosen by a large electorate and are responsible to the electors."

Green found that in America, democratic government had been an evolving and expanding institution. It had grown with the country. The origins of this democracy could be traced back to the American colonial period. However, Green suggested, it was from the Revolutionary era--which was itself a struggle for political democracy--that one can date the beginning of a series of four discernable cycles in the growth of American democracy:

10Fletcher M. Green, "Cycles of American Democracy," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, (June, 1961) XXXVIII.
democracy. The first was the era of the Revolution when the people assumed authority to establish a government and a constitution by which they were to be governed. Critics of the Constitution forced the adoption of ten amendments which guaranteed particular freedoms to the people. The Federal government and Constitution, however, were less inclined toward democracy than were the individual states. In the second cycle (from 1790 to 1860), the states acting as agents of the people, were responsible for most of the democratic advance with the federal government relegated to a minor role. The liberals of the individual states realized that democracy could not stand still — "a static democracy like a static society was a dying one, and that to live democracy must constantly change and grow." The goal of reformers in the early half of the nineteenth century was political equality. This they attained through the abolition of religious and property tests for voting, the adoption of the written ballot, and the popular election of all state and local officials. The third cycle (1860 to 1900) began with the replacement of "federalism" by "nationalism." During this period the central government assumed the dominant role, which it has held ever since. Also during this cycle, while Congress exercised a controlling influence in shaping American democracy, the judiciary served as a check to slow down its progress. A broad civil rights program was started during the reconstruction era and was successful in gaining suffrage for male negroes. Attempts by Congress to pass "equal opportunity" laws were, however, generally thwarted by a conservative Supreme Court. Only during the latter part of this era did the states reassert any of their former dominance in liberal democratic reforms — and this was only temporary. The fourth cycle (1900 to present) started with what appeared to be the
replacement of Congress by the executive branch. However, since the 1930's the judiciary has been in ascendancy. In the present period, the Supreme Court has played the leading role in gaining "recognition, implementation, and attainment," of political and civil rights for minority groups.

Democracy, Green observed, has been tested in the United States longer than in any other country. While the United States has accomplished more than most, it still has many problems. Poll taxes, and discrimination against urban centers, are under attack and may be eliminated in the near future. (At this writing Green's predictions appear to be well founded). But other political evils are almost certain to appear. Ending with a quote of Patrick Henry's that "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," Green warned: "Since democracy is progressive in nature... it may never be completed. Like the mirage, the goal when approaching may recede into the future."

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The presidential addresses in the early years of the M.V.H.A. were focused upon the dim knowledge of the political history of the Mississippi Valley. They dealt with particular subjects. Yet the Presidents, influenced by Turner and admonished by Orin Libby, tried not to isolate these events, but rather, to fit them as one would parts of a jig-saw puzzle into an over all pattern of history.

As the years progressed, the addresses became less concerned with the specific political events and more concerned with general patterns of American political history. While more recent presidents were still
interested in the individual subjects of the early addresses -- Homestead Bill, Railroad legislation, Western Radicalism -- they were now, however, concerned with the political motivations behind these movements. Instead of reviewing an individual part, they investigated party agitation, civil rights, and cycles of political power.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

Two previous studies of the annual presidential addresses of prominent historians to historical associations have been completed. More than a decade ago Herman Ausubel's Columbia University Ph. D. thesis was published: **Historians and Their Craft: A Study of the Presidential Addresses of the American Historical Association, 1884-1945.**¹ And in 1961, Roy V. Barkley wrote an M. A. thesis in History at Montana State University which serves as supplementary study to Ausubel's volume: "The Addresses of the Presidents of the American Historical Association, 1946-1960."² A comparison between the approach and results of these two respective monographs dealing with the American Historical Association, and the present one on the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, is inevitable.

Ausubel presented a systematic analysis of the changes and contrasts of presidential thought through a sixty-one year period. Limiting himself to an evaluation of ideas found in the speeches, he made no attempt to explain the origin of theories or to account for their development -- a limitation followed by Mr. Barkley as well as in this thesis.³

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¹Herman Ausubel, **Historians and Their Craft: A Study of the Presidential Addresses of the American Historical Association, 1884-1945**, (New York, 1950). Hereafter cited as Ausubel, **Historians**.


³Ausubel, **Historians**, p. 12.

In dealing with the "Immediate Usefulness of History," Ausubel noted that the presidents were more interested in the present than in the past: "Although the past gave them their occupation, the present was their preoccupation." Obsessed with public issues, they held contempt for the ivory tower scholar who lost himself in antiquarium studies. The historian must justify his existence by studying those historical problems with an immediate social utility. Since so many presidents enthusiastically supported the practical side of history, one might conclude that literary style would also be emphasized. Ausubel found quite the opposite to be true. They considered good style to be either basic or only incidental. Those few presidents who dealt with "History as Literature" warned that any overemphasis on style might result in the loss of essential truths in a cloud of purple rhetoric.

In his chapter on "Facts in History," Ausubel repeated the same findings. The endless gathering of facts was considered to be pointless. Indeed, unless some practical use of such information was the end result, a concentration of facts used in the writing of history should be based upon immediate needs -- the present should play the decisive role.

Turning from historical fact to the philosophy and science of history, Ausubel discovered that few presidents bothered to reflect upon this

\[\text{Ausubel, Historians, p. 12.}\]
topic. It was true that some insisted that historians must not only
collect facts, but also interpret them. Others urged the study of
subjects like economics and sociology—subjects that might disclose
particular patterns or laws. A few actually discussed the philosophy
and science of history, but only as a means to condemn it. Most of
the presidents either totally ignored the subject or dealt with it
incidentally.

The subject of "Individuals in History," like "Philosophy and
Science of History," was not extensively discussed by the presidents.
Ausubel observed that while these historians were surrounded by such
impressive figures as Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D.
Roosevelt, Adolph Hitler, and Joseph Stalin, they did not yield to the
great man theory of history. To be sure, different presidents had
specific historical personalities to whom they attributed varying degrees
of influence. Yet the majority of the addresses touched only briefly or
passed over the individual and gave more attention to other subjects.

Finally the last category of Ausubel's topical breakdown is the
presidents' treatment of the "Content of History." Although they had
differed widely in their conceptions of the previous subjects, there was
no real disagreement in this area. They did not oppose a broad view of
the past nor deny the richness of the content of history. Many presidents,
long before James Harvey Robinson and his "New History," had declared
that history was more than politics and wars.

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4James Harvey Robinson was President of the American Historical
Association in 1929.
Ausubel concluded his study with a series of generalities: contemporaneous of antiquarium history, the presidents emphasized that they, like the economist and the sociologist, could find answers to contemporary problems. In so doing, they developed the tendency to search history in terms of the present -- history had to be readable, possess literary merit and above all be practical. The standards of selecting facts took on an attitude of present-mindedness. Finally, although historians tried to interpret facts and draw meaning from them, there was little support for serious reflection on the philosophy and science of history.

Roy V. Barkley's study continued to review the speeches of the A.H. A. presidents for the final fifteen years. Barkley decided that the short time span of his study made it inadvisable for him to follow the structure of Ausubel's work. He organized the addresses according to four main topics about which the presidents spoke most extensively. The headings were: "History and the Historian," "The Training of the Historian," "Areas Needing Investigation," and "What Good is History?"^5

In his analysis of "History and the Historian," Barkley found that the presidents directed their addresses to a discussion of the criteria of history and the values of the historian. Within this general problem a variety of topics were reviewed -- the possibility of objectivity, the breadth of history, research, specialization, present-mindedness, the danger of scholarship in writing for the public, and the need for a guiding philosophy.

There seemed to be general agreement that although the goal of true objectivity was unobtainable, the historian is duty bound to strive towards this end. The method the historian was to use while aiming for this illusive objectivity engendered much debate. No president, Barkley added, suggested that history could do without attempted objectivity, at least when establishing what is fact and what is false.

A second topic discussed by the presidents under the heading of "History and the Historian," was whether history should be written according to the needs of present day problems or as mirrored reflections of the past prepared for present day reading. A few held to the latter belief — the job of the historian is to find facts, interpret and record them. History should not be written to meet contemporary needs, but rather to record the past as it happened. Most of the presidents continued, as Ausubel found, to emphasize a present-mindedness. They believed that the historian had an obligation to write history with the present in mind. Society needed the direction that only the historian could afford.

Several presidents considered the problems of the enormous quantity of material now available and the tendency of the modern historian to specialize. Some felt that specialization was not only necessary but desirable. However, other presidents warned that this was dangerous, particularly if the historian succumbed to the temptation of not looking beyond his own field. In general the presidents agreed that this type of study leads the historian deeper and deeper into a confusion of minutiae. They doubted the real value of a monograph developed from such a narrow field.
Another source of concern for many presidents was the feeling that history had become too impersonal. Many felt that the influence of other disciplines, such as economics and psychology, had twisted history into an account of outside forces -- rather than an account of men. This development, they contended, explained the lack of interest the public held for recent studies. Historians themselves were to blame for this situation. They had presented to the public an analysis of forces and ideas, when the layman was interested in personalities and generalizations. Consequently the public turned to the popular writer, who took into account their needs. Some presidents, therefore, urged that historians become more aware of the public's interests and write at least some history accordingly. This did not seem a reduction in academic standards. They admonished their fellow historians to avoid the pitfalls of allowing generalities and inaccuracies to appear in their work, just to be readable.

In his second chapter, "The Training of the Historian," Barkley found that in general the presidents had agreed that too many historians were research minded and relegated the teaching of history to a secondary position. To counteract this trend they suggested that the prospective historian -- at the graduate level -- be impressed with the realization that teaching history was a major function of the scholar. They did not condemn research as such; they only asked for a better balance between the two.

In his third chapter, "Areas Needing Investigation," Barkley observed that most of the presidents stressed particular subjects which needed investigation. Each, he suspected, did so with the secret hope that the phenomenon that followed Frederick Jackson Turner's suggestion might repeat itself. They covered several topics and many fields -- causes that both
prevent and initiate wars, fairer treatment of liberals, intellectualism and anti-intellectualism in America, the use of psychology in history, and the effect of history written according to a conservative orientation.

Finally, Barkley discussed "What Good is History?" He noted that to the presidents, the value of history was not just the accumulation of knowledge itself, but rather the effect that this accumulation had upon the course of mankind. History had helped provide the answers to society's problems. It had helped nations to decide their proper direction and to determine their progress. From the study of history, man would create a better life for himself by crossing over the narrow limits of his personal experience.

Barkley found in this cycle of speeches (1946-1960), that the presidents followed in general the same patterns established in previous addresses (1884-1945). The presidents still feared the pitfalls of antiquarianism and emphasized a certain present-mindedness. They still refused to worry about the philosophy of history, yet called for more interdisciplinary studies. All in all, no great difference in style or attitude could be ascertained.

The presidents of the American Historical Association have had a tremendous effect in setting the tone for their fellow historians who study both American and European history in general. The list of presidents of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association is equally impressive. Indeed, several men have held both positions. For it contains the names of men who were leaders in their field -- who spoke not only for themselves, but represented the main currents of historical activity of their time.
Here, however, any similarity between the two scholarly organizations ends.

The presidents of the American Historical Association were from the start, concerned with broad subjects and broad problems. The totality of history, both subject and process, fell within their aim and interest. Although particular aspects of western civilization were studied, the addresses were never provincial. On the other hand, the Mississippi Valley Historical Association had from the start, local and more specific aims. In the first presidential address, Orin Libby outlined this philosophy when he cautioned the Association to remember that their whole academic concern should be the Mississippi Valley.

Ausbuel and Barkley both observed that the presidents of the A.H.A. tried to write history for the present. They were concerned with solving contemporary problems with lessons from the past. The prime concern of the presidents of the M.V.H.A. was with revealing the dim past of the Mississippi Valley, and the potential broader applications of their findings. Only in the last two decades did their addresses begin to review general American questions and grow present-minded. But even these were issues that still basically involved the great Valley.

Another factor of contrast between the two Associations is the problem of specialization. The presidents of the A.H.A. were greatly concerned by the pitfalls of specialization. They went so far as to question the value of monographs produced from specialized studies. The M.V. H.A. was different. The temper of the organization had been established

early and almost all of the presidents were renowned specialists in Mississippi Valley history.

History for the presidents of the A.H.A. had to possess some contemporary value. It was not enough, they contended, that the historian merely record facts, but he must also interpret them with the present in mind. Through most of its history practicality did not influence the historians of the M.V.H.A. Their job was to record and interpret all events of the Mississippi Valley, with the assured hope that at some later date this accumulation of knowledge would be developed into an overall history of the United States. To the extent that recent M.V.H.A. presidents have become more present-minded, and emphasized practicality, the distinctions between the two organizations tend to vanish.

This comparison holds true in a second sense. The A.H.A. has from the beginning been interested in the totality of western civilization. The presidents in their annual addresses discussed broad general topics which encompassed many ideas and experiences. The M.V.H.A. was from its formation, a provincial association, interested in local and specific subjects. Its very essence was developed around the central theme of the Mississippi Valley. But as the Association has developed over the past few decades, a noticeable change has taken place in the presidential addresses. Emphasis changed -- specifics were not forgotten, but rather broadened, to encompass general features of Mississippi Valley and American history. Culture, politics, and economics were just a few of the problems to dominate presidential thought. These events point to the fact, that the M.V.H.A. has gradually developed from local sectional interests towards greater sophistication and national concern. Again, the distinctions
between the two organizations tend to vanish.

M.V.H.A. historians are certainly conscious of this charge. The current program announcement for the 1962 M.V.H.A. Convention summarizes the purpose of the organization in the following sentence: "Founded in 1907 as an organization of the Secretaries of State Historical Societies in the Mississippi Valley, it very soon became an organization of all professional historians in the field of American history."
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