

# Legislature of 1863 Provided For Three State Colleges, A Good Job For Third Session

KC Kansan Feb. 28, 1937

The 1863 legislature of the new state of Kansas might well be called the "educational legislature."

For it was in that year that the legislators passed laws providing for the University of Kansas, the Kansas State Agricultural college, Manhattan, and the Kansas State Teachers' college, Emporia.

Quite a record for the third session of the legislature of a new state!

The legislation which instituted these three schools is set out in a copy of the 1863 statutes, a book which is a prized volume in the library of the George Stine family, 836 Barnett avenue.

The act for the University of Kansas was approved February 20, 1863.

It provided that the governor, then Thomas Carney, should appoint three commissioners, whose duty was to locate permanently the state university.

That committee was S. M. Thorp, I. T. Goodnow and Josiah Miller.

The committee, it was ordered, "shall immediately proceed to locate permanently the state university at some eligible point in or adjacent to the city of Lawrence. Said location shall be made upon a tract of not less than forty acres of land."

## Title of Land.

The title of the land was to be procured to the state without cost, and there was required an endowment of the university by or thru the citizens of Lawrence, of \$15,000 in money.

The commissioners were ordered to make a full report of their proceedings to the governor on or before May 1, of that year.

It was provided that at the expiration of six months after such location, by the commissioners, the governor was to issue his proclamation declaring the university permanently located and to do all things necessary to completion of the school.

Should the citizens of Lawrence fail to provide the \$15,000 endowment, the university was to be located in Emporia, provided eighty acres of land would be donated.

But the committee obtained the site in Lawrence. The city obtained it for the state by giving Mr. and Mrs. Charles Robinson, in exchange for it, half a block of land south of the North College building, ten acres of land half a mile west of the new building site and a large cash bonus raised by individual subscriptions.

## First Effort for College.

The first effort toward founding a college on Mt. Oread had been made in 1856, when Amos A. Lawrence, of Boston, one of the founders of the Emigrant Aid society, donated a sum of money for the purpose, and work was started on a building.

The enterprise was abandoned shortly because a clear title to the land could not be obtained. Early the next year, Mr. Lawrence made the gift which later became the original endowment of Kansas university. It was in the form of two notes of \$5,000 each, against the Lawrence University of Wisconsin. The donation was placed in the hands of trustees to be used for educational purposes. The Presbyterian church then undertook to found a "Free State College" and raised some money for the purpose.

In 1859, the legislature gave official sanction to the "University of Lawrence," and a conditional deed was obtained from the town to the present site of North college, where the work already had been begun.

## New Charter Secured.

The church advanced the building as far as the means would permit, but was unable to complete it on account of the drouth of 1860. In 1861, the Episcopal church took over the enterprise, secured a new charter under the name of the Lawrence University of Kansas, and continued the work on the building.

Then the war interfered.

In 1863, the town of Lawrence took possession.

The Amos Lawrence notes were used to realize \$10,000 toward the \$15,000 endowment required by the legislature, and the balance of \$5,000 was raised by notes signed by Lawrence people.

About this time, the town was devastated by Quantrill, and because of the poverty which followed, the legislature of 1864 refunded the money to the signers of the notes.

The university was divided by the legislature into "male and female branches." The branch for women was to be separate from the college proper and taught exclusively by women.

## Triumph for Women.

However, the admittance of women to college on any terms was, in those days, a triumph of liberality, and was obtained in Kansas by a small majority.

But the facilities were so limited that no attempt was made to divide the college into "male and female branches," so the University of Kansas became one of the first institutions in the country where men and women attended the same classes.

Fifty-one students enrolled this first year.

The act to "locate and establish a college for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts" was approved March 3, 1863.

Under act of congress, July 2, 1862, the state of Kansas was granted 90,000 acres of public lands for the endowment, support and maintenance of a college "where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agri-

culture and the mechanic arts, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life."

## Agricultural College.

The state located the college "at and upon a certain tract of land, situated and being in the county of Riley." There follows a legal description of the site.

Next is the provision as to the Blumont Central College association ceding to Kansas that real estate. That college had been established under auspices of the Methodist Episcopal church. It was chartered February 9, 1858, to "establish, in addition to the literary departments of arts and sciences, an agricultural department, with separate professors, to test soils, experiment in the raising of crops, the cultivation of trees, etc., upon a farm set apart for the purpose." The corner-stone of the college was laid May 10, 1859, and instruction began about a year later.

When the national endowment became available, Blumont, with its land, library, apparatus and other property was offered to the state on condition that it should be made the state agricultural college. This offer was accepted in the location of the college at Manhattan and the state thus obtained a valuable nucleus for future growth.

## Four Departments.

The Kansas State Agricultural college was given four departments: agriculture, mechanic arts, military science and tactics and literature and science.

The law, in declaring the college open to all persons, under such regulations as may be prescribed by the board of regents, provided that "no student shall be refused admittance to this college simply because he has been expelled from some other college."

The board of regents, created to control the college affairs, was to be called for a first meeting by the superintendent of public instruction as soon as possible after Blumont became the state college.

Recognizing the importance of a library and museum, the law itself directs the board of regents to obtain a collection of "specimens in mineralogy, geology, zoology, botany and other specimens pertaining to natural history, and whenever a geological survey of the state may be made, a complete set of specimens collected shall be deposited in the cabinet of the college."

## State Normal School.

Establishment of a state normal school also was approved on March 3 of 1863.

The act provided that such a school should be located at Emporia, the exclusive purpose of that institution being "instruction of persons, both male and female, in the art of teaching, and in all the various branches that pertain to a good common school education, and in the mechanic arts, and in the arts of husbandry and agricultural chemistry, and in the fundamental laws of the United States and in what regards the rights and duties of citizens."

That was to be done on the provision that not less than twenty acres be donated as a site.

The normal school idea was a new one and thus this state had one of the first of such schools in this section of the country.

## School Suffers.

But no cash appropriation had been made and there was no income. In 1864, \$1,000 was voted to pay a teacher, but no provision made for a building. Lyon county had a new schoolhouse in process of construction and offered use of the second story to the state school. The offer was accepted and school opened February 15, 1865, with eighteen students.

The school suffered much hardship, meeting reverses in income, loss of property thru litigation, fire and tornado. Then interest was reawakened and development of the present Kansas State Teachers' college of Emporia was begun.

Thus did the 1863 legislature of Kansas act to further the educational advantages of the new state!