

The Voice

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"Dedicated to the promotion of the cultural, social and spiritual life of a great people."

Rev. Melvin L. Shakespeare

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EDITORIALS

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by **JAMES C. OLSON**, Superintendent STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Throughout the years, no day has been quite so exciting in the lives of young Nebraskans as the last day of school. In pioneer times it was a day of examination and demonstration of what had been learned during the term as well as of celebration.

In many instances there were no formal examinations in the school room. Instead, public examinations were held on the last day of school, with the county superintendent or some other person of influence and authority in the local educational world conducting the examination and awarding the prizes.

These examinations were not held to determine whether or not the pupil should be advanced a grade—the teacher determined that by more informal methods. Rather, the examinations were conducted for the purpose of determining who was the prize scholar. Awards were frequently given to those pupils who made the best showing in the various subjects, particularly arithmetic, geography, and reading.

Excellence in spelling was determined by what was known as the "head-mark" scheme. The pupils stood in line, and those who spelled words correctly were permitted to advance toward the head of the line ahead of those who missed. The pupil standing at the head of the line when the lesson was over would be given a "head-mark." Prizes frequently were awarded on the last day of school to those pupils who had accumulated the greatest number of "head-marks."

These last day exhibitions and examinations provided an excellent opportunity for the teachers to show off their work to advantage before admiring parents and friends. An account of the last-day exercises at Beatrice in 1872, published in *The Beatrice Express*, March 30th of that year, well illustrates this feature of the occasion:

"The closing exercises of the winter term of the Beatrice school were held last Friday afternoon, and are spoken of by those who attended as being unusually interesting. They consisted of declamations, readings, essays, singing, a paper, etc., and were listened to by a large number of the 'outsiders.'"

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TO SPEAK FOR LAYMEN.



BISHOP WALKER.

The Rt. Rev. D. Ormond Walker has been selected to speak in Kansas City, Kas., Sunday afternoon June 4 at First A.M.E. church, for the A.M.E. Laymen. The meeting will mark the close of a three day session of the 5th district laymen who met for the purpose of a permanent organization and to make plans for governing lay organizations throughout the district.

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of the school, and the very excellent manner in which several pieces were rendered on this occasion sufficiently attests the success of his efforts..."

Ransom Addresses Laymen Delegates At District Meet

Dr. J. Louis Ransom, publicity and program chairman, of the Fifth District Laymen's Movement of the African Methodist Episcopal church was principle speaker at a meeting held on Sunday at Horton, Kas. Representatives from Topeka, Hiawatha, Fairview and Sabetha Circuit were among those present when plans were made preparatory to the annual meeting to be held in Kansas City, June 2, 3 and 4 at Trinity AME church.

Cornelius Morgan, vice president of the Laymen organization of the Nebraska Conference and District president of the A. C. E. League was present and spoke to the League at the evening session. Mr. Morgan of Omaha was accompanied by Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Maggie Smith. The Rev. Stephen David was pastor-host for the affair.

Mrs. William Sadler was hostess during the evening at which time she served refreshments to the out-of-town guests.

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