

SCIENCE

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THE FOUNDING OF THE WISCONSIN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ARTS AND LETTERS

THE event we are met to commemorate was a quiet one in itself. It took place without noise or pageantry. But none the less, in the intellectual history of the people of this commonwealth, it was a signal event. The founding of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, though quite without the paraphernalia of a great event, was yet a most distinctive step in the passage from the first stage in the intellectual evolution of our people into this, the second stage.

The first stage, it is needless to say, was that of pioneer development. It began with the coming of our forefathers into this goodly land between the Great Lake and the Great River. The territory was then in its virgin state, tenanted by the wild life that had taken possession of it on the retreat of the Great Ice Invasion. This first stage was a period of pioneer struggle and this struggle almost necessarily delayed certain forms of scientific and cultural development. This pioneer stage continued not only until the virgin prairies, the wild meadows, the park-like groves, and the trackless forests of Wisconsin had been replaced by cultivated fields, comfortable dwellings and prosperous towns, but until all these had been bound together by a network of roadways and railways that united the whole into an intercommunicating co-operative community ready to enter upon a common organized career in pursuit of its higher interests.

The second stage could really begin only