

ARCHIVES RECORD

RG32 NEBRASKA. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS

Records: 1866-1920
Cubic ft.: 3 cu. ft.
Approx. no. of items: 3600

HISTORICAL NOTE

The first state constitution was adopted on March 1, 1866. The citizens of Nebraska territory approved the constitution only with great reluctance for in addition to various political considerations, there was a fear that statehood would cost more than the meagre population could support. The first constitution was written with economy in mind and with little consideration given to other important aspects of state government. Indicative of the haste in which the document was drawn is the fact that the Legislature composed the draft rather than a constitutional convention. In addition the constitution was signed by the governor only five days after it was introduced. In the process, no amendments had been permitted, the lower house held no committee hearings and neither houses had printed copies to study.

A constitution written under such conditions soon received criticism from many quarters. As a result a constitutional convention met in 1871 but the voters rejected the submitted document; however, in 1875 a new constitution was drawn up by another convention and it received approval from the electorate.

By the turn of the century, a general revision was needed, according to many, and in 1903 the legislature placed a vote on a constitutional convention on the ballot. Although this effort was defeated, a similar measure was adopted by the people in 1917 and a convention met in December 1919. This body did not draft a new constitution but it did adopt 41 amendments which were approved by the voters and incorporated into the existing constitution.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of the Records of the various constitution conventions in Nebraska's history. The files are organized into the following series: (1) Correspondence, 1904-1919; (2) Initiative Petitions, 1916; (3) Printed Material, 1919; (4) Newspaper Clippings 1875-1919; and (5) Miscellany, 1875-1919, undated. (6) 1875 Convention (7) 1920 Convention

This collection primarily consists of records of correspondence and petitions from the various groups working for changes in the State Constitution during 1914-1919. The bulk of the material consists of correspondence

of such organizations as the Voters' Legislative League of Nebraska, Non-partisan League of Nebraska, the Nebraska Constitution Convention Committee and the Nebraska Popular Government League. Background material relating to the convention of 1919 can be obtained from the various histories in the collection and aspects of both the 1919-1920 and 1875 convention are covered by newspaper clippings.

SERIES ONE CORRESPONDENCE 1913-1919

Box 1	Folder 1	Correspondence, Voters' Legislative League of Nebraska	1913
	2	" " " Nebraska Popular Government League	1914
	3-6	" " " " " "	1915
	7	" " " " " "	1916
Box 2	Folder 8-12	" " " " " "	1916
	13-15	" " " " " "	1919
	16	" " " Non-partisan League of Nebraska June-July 1919	
Box 3	Folder 17-24	" " " Nebraska Constitution Convention Committee Sept.-Oct. 1919	
	25	" " " Relating to efforts to obtain information about the Constitutional Conventions of 1875, i.e. membership 1904-1906	

SERIES TWO INITIATIVE PETITIONS 1916

Box 4	Folder 1-7	Initiative Petitions for Constitutional Conventions amendment (Douglas Co.) Nov. 1916
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SERIES THREE PRINTED MATERIAL 1919-1920

Box 5	Folder 1	Senate File #217, Feb. 1919 "An act to provide for the calling of a Constitutional Convention"
	2	History of the 1919 Constitutional Convention-- Bills proposed for Constitutional Convention, 1901-1919
	3	Proposed Amendments to the Nebraska Constitutional Convention 1919-1920

SERIES FOUR NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS 1875-1919

Box 5	Folder 1	Accounts of the 1875 Constitutional Convention Omaha Bee 1875
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Folder 2	Accounts of the 1875 Constitutional Convention Omaha Bee	1875
3	Account of the Constitutional Conventions as recalled by reporter John A. Rea	1875
4	Scrapbook clippings of the Constitution Convention	1919
5	Miscellaneous clippings	1914-1919
6	THE OUTLOOK, published by the Constitutional Committee of one hundred	1919 Oct.28,v.1,no.2
7	THE LINCOLN PUBLIC, official paper of the Lincoln Central Labor Union	Oct.31,1919 v.1,no.32

SERIES FIVE MISCELLANY 1875-1919, undated

BOX 6

Folder 1	Misc. data relating to the 1866 Constitutional Convention	
2	Misc. data relating to the 1871 Constitutional Convention	
3	Constitutional Convention (Revenue & Finance) May 1875	
4	Differences between the 1866, 1871 & 1875 Constitutional Convention proposals, membership, etc.	
5	Material relating to the candidates to the Constitutional Conventions	1919
6	Membership lists of the Farmers Union (Lancaster County)	1919

SERIES SIX ¹⁸⁷¹⁺ 1875 CONVENTION

Box 7

Folder 1	Draft copy of 1875 journal
Volume 1	Journal
Folder 2	Proclamation re: Vote on 1871 Constitution

SERIES SEVEN 1920 CONVENTION

Box 8-13 Proceedings (draft copy) 1st-75th day.