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Article Title: Henry M Eaton

Full Citation: N C Abbott, "Henry M Eaton," *Nebraska History* 25 (1944): 148

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1944HMEaton.pdf>

Date: 9/12/2017

Article Summary: Eaton served as vice-president of NSHS and superintendent of Douglas County schools.

Scroll Down for complete article.

Henry M. Eaton *

The State of Nebraska and our Historical Society lost a fine citizen and officer in the death of Henry M. Eaton, Vice-President of the Society and Superintendent of Douglas County schools, June 16, 1944.

Mr. Eaton had been superintendent of the Douglas County schools for twenty-two years and had recently secured a new election at the hands of the voters.

It was at the election in 1942 that he was apparently defeated by J. G. Masters, who held the office for a scant fifteen days and then lost to Eaton in a recount.

Mr. Eaton came naturally by his interest in things historical and political. His father had the rare experience of being present at the Ford Theater when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. In fact, the elder Eaton was only a few feet away when Booth fired the fatal shot. This veteran of the Civil War told many times to his awed children (there was a large group of them, too) that striking event in American history.

Henry, before becoming the head of the Douglas County schools, had been active in educational affairs for many years, starting as a country school teacher in Thayer County when he was sixteen.

Besides teaching in rural and town schools, he had been superintendent of schools at Emerson and Dakota City, and a teacher at Fremont College, from which he was graduated. He was a past president of the Nebraska State Teachers' Association and of the Nebraska County Superintendents' Association.

On October 19, 1940, Mr. Eaton was elected as Second Vice-President of the Nebraska State Historical Society, which office he held continuously until the time of his death. Mr. Eaton was a faithful and interested member of the Board of Directors, attending meetings regularly. The loss of his loyal support and friendship will be keenly felt by the Society.

The *State Journal* of Lincoln in its issue of June 19 speaks particularly of that part of Mr. Eaton's life when he was an officer in the State Capitol. To quote:

"He came to the capitol some forty-five years ago to become deputy commissioner of public lands and buildings, and from 1905 to 1909 served elective terms as commissioner, a position since abolished. At the time of his service it was an important position because of the large number of school purchases and leases in effect. He introduced new and more effective methods of handling contracts."

* Prepared by N. C. Abbott, Superintendent Nebraska School for the Blind, Nebraska City.