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Article Summary: The annual summary of NSHS activities highlights the construction of the Society headquarters building planned since 1943.

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Nebraska State Historical Society in 1947¹

James C. Olson

The year 1947 has been one of great progress for the Nebraska State Historical Society. In particular the society has moved forward toward a goal whose achievement has long seemed virtually impossible of realization—the construction of a building of its own in which to house the treasures which keep alive the past of Nebraska and the West.

The initial step was taken in 1943 when legislation, introduced by Senator Daniel Garber of Red Cloud, providing for a special levy to reimburse certain deficiencies in the permanent school fund, provided that all money collected in excess of that needed for these purposes would be used for the construction of an Historical Society building when specific appropriation was made therefor by the legislature. That appropriation was made this year by the 60th session of the Nebraska legislature. The action was recommended by Governor Dwight Griswold in his outgoing budget message and by Governor Val Peterson in his incoming budget message. Under the law \$273,000, already accumulated, has been invested in United States Treasury bonds by the State Treasurer at the direction of your Executive Board. The levy in question will continue through the tax year 1947. Also in anticipation of the construction of a building, the Executive Board has invested \$7,000 of the Society's miscellaneous cash fund in United States Treasury bonds.

In addition to making the appropriation noted above, the 60th session of the Legislature appropriated the amount requested by your Executive Board for the operation of the society during the biennium 1947-49. Including unexpended balances of \$12,876.31, reappropriated, the total amount appropriated for current expenses was \$67,226.31. In pre-

¹Read in part at the annual meeting of the Nebraska State Historical Society held in Lincoln, Saturday, 18 October 1947.

paring the budget, your Superintendent and Executive Board were moved by the realization of the importance of keeping public expenditures at the lowest possible level during this period of inflation and by the further realization that costs must of necessity increase during periods in which every article or service an institution buys has increased in price.

In addition to sound financial support from public sources it is essential that the society be supported by a large and ever increasing membership. To this end a membership campaign has been begun under the direction of your President's membership committee consisting of Senator Arthur Carmody of Trenton, Mr. D. S. Dalbey of Beatrice, and Mr. A. R. Outhouse of Loup City. Although the campaign is just getting under way, the results so far are heartening and it is believed that the coming year will witness an unprecedented increase in the Society's membership. The Superintendent wants to take this opportunity to remind the members of the Society that the most effective way for the Society to increase its membership is through an active interest on the part of all its members. From 1 October 1946 to 30 September 1947, the Society received 91 new annual members and one new life member, bringing the total membership to 1,216.

The program of bringing the history of Nebraska to the people of Nebraska has been steadily carried forward during the past year. The Superintendent's weekly column, "Out of Old Nebraska," distributed by the Nebraska Press Association, has been carried regularly by newspapers in all parts of the state. A partial check reveals that approximately 80 newspapers carry the feature somewhat regularly and that it has appeared in approximately 145 newspapers. As a further means of bringing the history of the state to the people of the state, the Superintendent has made some 21 historical addresses during the past year, including six in Omaha, six in Lincoln and one each in Beatrice, Columbus, Crawford, Hastings, Kearney, Nebraska City, Nehawka, Plattsmouth, and Wayne. In addition he has read papers at national historical gatherings in Columbus, Ohio and Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

The Superintendent is vitally concerned with the extension of the teaching of state and local history in our schools. Tentative discussions have been engaged in with representatives of the Nebraska History Teachers Association regarding the possibility of organizing junior historical societies among our school children. As a means of providing more adequate instructional materials the Historical Society is cooperating with the Visual Education Department of the University of Nebraska Extension Service in the preparation of film strips, motion pictures, and traveling museum exhibits dealing with the history of Nebraska.

The work of the library is one of the Society's primary responsibilities, and although hampered by a shortage of personnel and working space we have made progress during the year toward a more useful organization of the library's collections. As pointed out in the Superintendent's last report the Society over the years has collected great quantities of material not pertinent to the history of Nebraska or the West. In order to streamline the collection for more efficient utilization it is necessary that this irrelevant material be eliminated. The inventory toward that end mentioned in the report for 1946 has been completed. A ruling from the Attorney General to the effect that the Society needs specific legislative authorization for the disposal of any material has made it necessary to discontinue this phase of the work until the matter can be considered by the legislature. Despite this, however, considerable progress has been made toward reorganizing the library. The genealogy collection has been completely reorganized and has for the first time been provided with a working catalog. The cataloged section of the less used material now housed in the basement has been greatly enlarged. This has involved a great deal of shifting among shelves already crowded to capacity. Book plates have been placed in some 5,000 volumes of the cataloged collection. In the manuscript division work has been begun on the arranging, indexing, and cataloging of the Executive correspondence, one of the most important sources available for the history of Nebraska. Likewise, the indexing of the land office entry books has been begun. All

work in connection with the organization of the library has been pointed toward an eventual transfer of the collection to the new building.

It is estimated that approximately 2,030 persons have done research in the library during the past year. In addition, approximately 350 telephone inquiries were answered and approximately 500 inquiries have been answered by mail. Some of these have been answered in the course of a few minutes, others have required the labor of several hours on the part of a trained researcher. During the year the library has accessioned a total of 213 volumes, of which 46 were purchased, 60 received in exchange for our publications, and 107 received as gifts. A total of 860 books have been cataloged, and one part time worker in the bindery has bound or repaired 520 volumes. Several hundred miscellaneous pamphlets have been organized and placed in pamphlet boxes.

Two significant additions were made to the manuscript collection last year: 1) the correspondence files kept by Dwight Griswold during his three terms as Governor, and 2) the files of the Nebraska Advisory Defense Committee.

In the newspaper department a total of 378 Nebraska newspapers are now regularly being received. These may be described as follows:

Daily newspapers	24
Weekly newspapers	284
Tri-weekly or twice a week	5
Agricultural publications	7
College and High School	16
Religious	9
Trade and Professional	23
Miscellaneous	10

A total of 425 volumes of newspapers have been bound during the year. In the photograph department the Society has received as gifts a total of 64 prints and 15 negatives.

Donors of books and pamphlets include the following:

Don Carter, Lincoln

Cornelius J. Claassen, Omaha
H. M. Cox, Lincoln
Dr. Gladys Kindred Dolan, Jerseyville, Illinois
Mrs. Joseph Evans, Memphis, Tennessee
Mrs. Paul Ernst, Carl J. Ernst and Mrs. M. G.
Mills, Columbia, Missouri
Charles W. Haas, Lincoln
Hastings Public Library, Hastings
Rev. Harry E. Hess, Norfolk
A. T. Hill, Lincoln
Mamie Meredith, Lincoln
Sam Miller, Lincoln
Mrs. Frank Pilger, Lincoln
Althea Seamark, Lincoln
Irene Williams, Lincoln
Silas Wixson, Lincoln

Donors of photographs include:

Dr. Glen Auble, Ord
Mrs. E. S. Clements, El Cajon, California
F. M. Coil, Lincoln
Gold and Co., Lincoln
Arthur M. Hyde, Olivet, Michigan
Theodore Jorgensen, Lincoln
Merrill J. Mattes, Omaha
Clyde Porter, Kansas City, Missouri
Public Buildings Administration, Washington
D. C.
Mrs. B. A. Rose, Burwell
Clarence Schultz, Beatrice
Lamont L. Stephens, Loup City

After an interruption of five years resulting from the war the Society again was able to conduct an archeological field trip during the year. In August and September, Mr. A. T. Hill, Director of the Museum, supervised excavations conducted on Medicine Creek, north of Cambridge, in co-operation with the Missouri River Basin Archeological Survey of the Smithsonian Institution.

The museum continues to be the Society's principal attraction and the past year was one of the best years in our history in so far as the number of persons visiting the museum is concerned. It is estimated that during the year approximately 147,621 persons viewed the collection. By actual count over an extended period it has been found that less than one third of the visitors register. The total number registering was 49,207. Of these, 15,378 were from out of the state. In addition, a total of 474 registrants represented 40 foreign countries. Among the states outside Nebraska having the largest number of registrants were: Iowa, 2,438; Kansas, 1,907; Illinois, 1,539; Missouri, 1,242; California, 1,168; Colorado, 673; Michigan, 498; Minnesota, 475; Ohio, 445; South Dakota, 437; Wisconsin, 402; Indiana, 349. Among the territories and foreign countries having the heaviest registration were: Canada, 190; England, 20; China, 13; Alaska, 12; Panama, 11; Czechoslovakia, 11.