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Article Summary: Kivett's summary highlights preparations for state centennnial celebrations in 1967, reconstruction of the Thomas P Kennard home and development of the Chimney Rock Historical Information Center.

Scroll down for complete article.

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Photographs / Images: Mrs Hazel Abbuhl at the card catalog; Duane Reed and Douglas Bakken examining a collection; an exhibit prepared by the museum staff; visitors viewing Society exhibits at the State Fair in 1966; excavation of the Fort Robinson Crazy Horse Guard House of 1874; excavation of a prehistoric Indian earth lodge (1200-1300 A.D.) near South Bend in Cass County; annual meeting of the Society held in Lincoln, October 1, 1966; Dr. Donald Jackson addressing the annual meeting

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1966

Marvin F. Kivett, Director

FIFTY years ago, in 1916 the report of Secretary Clarence Paine was concerned largely with the proper observance of Nebraska's Semi-Centennial to be held in 1917. Omaha and Lincoln commercial clubs had appointed committees to provide for the proper events and Society President, John L. Webster of Omaha, was chairman of the state committee. The year 1917 was to be the occasion for organizing a local historical society and old settler's association in each county for the purpose of preserving our history.

Many of the problems and goals of 1916 are familiar to us today. As we prepare for our Centennial in 1967 an increasing number of organizations, both state and local, are seeking out their history. This is a welcome development to your State Historical Society despite the heavy load it has created for our relatively small staff. Requests for our services have ranged from acting as historical consultants for the Centennial Commission to providing technical guidance for local historical museum projects.

We welcome this increased recognition of the services that your Society may provide. It is our desire to assist in any way possible to provide authentic history and interpretive museum areas where the material objects used by earlier people may be preserved and serve as educational

devices. Each director, during our many years, has concluded in his report that the Society has experienced a busy year, I find myself reaching that same conclusion for the past year. It is difficult to provide specific measurements of the work load.

Some comparison, however, may have value. A year ago our membership stood at a new all-time high of 3,753 as compared to 3,242 the year before. Our membership for July 1966 stood at 3,933. Our most significant gains have been in the area of special memberships. We now have 216 Contributing Members as compared to seventy-nine last year. A year ago we listed seven Supporting Members while this year we have ten. Last year we gained twenty-four Life Members while this year we have twenty-one new members in this category. The added support provided by special memberships can be very important to your Society. We ask your help and assistance to provide a membership of not less than 5,000.

This year the Society has expanded its regular programs and has taken on new responsibilities. A total of 88,591 persons visited the Society building in Lincoln. More than 16,000 of these visitors were students who attended special museum programs and, or, took part in tours. Volunteer aid by the Lincoln Junior League provided 3,531 children with Wednesday tours and puppet shows—a 28% increase over the year before. I might add, that by popular demand, the puppet programs will be expanded to two days per week during the next year.

Educational leaflets were distributed upon request to school teachers and students throughout the state. Hundreds of letters were answered from students both in the library and museum requesting information on a special subject.

As in all divisions of the Society the museum staff, under the direction of Mr. Kehoe, has devoted much time and effort toward working with local historical organiza-

tions in their program. Such effort ranged from advice on cataloging systems to total display design.

The cooperative project with the Bryan Hospital Board and the Lincoln Junior League for the operation of the William Jennings Bryan Home in Lincoln has continued to be most successful. This restoration has attracted not only thousands of Nebraskans but tourists from all over the nation.

The Society has now operated a branch at Fort Robinson for ten years. The Museum was opened there in 1956 by legislative direction. Except for the initial opening, budget limitations have not permitted us to move ahead with our program of preservation and interpretation. This last year our appropriated funds have permitted us to repair certain buildings under our control and make a modest start toward reconstruction. The first step in this reconstruction has been completed with the archeological excavation of the 1874 Crazy Horse Guard House. Detailed research is now being carried out for completion of this reconstruction in 1967. Funds will be needed to continue the interpretative program at Fort Robinson.

Another special project that has received the attention of the museum staff is the reconstruction of the 1869 Thomas P. Kennard home in Lincoln as the Statehood Memorial Project. Architectural plans have now been completed for the exterior work to be completed in the next few months with interior reconstruction to be carried on during the winter. The building will be opened in the summer of 1967. The Museum Staff has also developed plans in cooperation with the Centennial Commission for three trailer exhibits to tour the state in 1967.

This summer your Society established a temporary Chimney Rock Historical Information Center near that important Oregon Trail landmark. The historical importance of this site has long been recognized and in 1939 some 80 acres of the site were deeded to your Society by Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Durnal. In 1956 the site was designated by the

U. S. National Park Service as a National Historic Site. A cooperative agreement between the City of Bayard, U. S. National Park Service and the Society has provided for a minimum of interpretation. Our limited efforts this summer with an informational trailer indicate that thousands of visitors would like to view Chimney Rock at closer range than the present facilities permit. It would be desirable if a hard-surfaced road could be provided with a small visitors center. Trails would provide a means for visitors to actually visit the site.

The Library, under the immediate supervision of Mrs. Hazel Abbuhl, has continued its service to the public in many ways. The reference section has provided service to 4,223 persons who came to the building and by 1,663 letters of inquiry.

This number of letters becomes significant when one realizes the detailed research that may be required to provide the proper information. Major additions to the Library collections came by donations from the late Dr. James L. Sellers library and by a collection of more than 1,000 genealogical publications from the State Law Library. For the first time, major state owned genealogical collections are now in one library and readily available to the public.

There are several significant gains that should be noted in the Archives program carried out under the immediate supervision of Mr. Douglas Bakken. It has been possible under the present appropriation to make some significant advances in this area of the Society. For the first time we have an Assistant Archivist, Mr. Duane Reed, who has been able to devote more time to the processing of the archival collections. Some comparative figures relating to the newspaper collections may be of interest. In 1962-63 a total of 1,694 persons used the collections while in the past year 3,751 visitors made use of these particular collections.

A major advancement has been made in our microfilm procedures. For the first time in sixteen years of microfilm work it has been possible for us to have a positive as

well as a negative film made of all work photographed during the year. In addition we have been able to secure positive copies of certain of the work carried on during the prior years. This provides greater assurance that this microfilm record will be preserved for future generations.

A special project in the Archives has been made possible by a grant of \$15,785 from the National Historical Publications Commission for the microfilm publication of certain significant collections including the papers of J. Sterling Morton, Robert W. Furnas, The Farmers Alliance, Samuel Maxwell and Samuel M. Chapman. The advance processing of these collections was carried out last year with a grant in the amount of \$6,800 from the Commission. The completion of this project will enable Nebraska items of historical significance to achieve wider state and national use.

Another service activity in the archives was the publication of the second volume, *A Guide to the Archives and Manuscripts*, which lists the Society's manuscript holdings. This was sent to various institutions and organizations throughout the state and nation.

A year ago I reported that one of our major problems was to recruit a competent staff and meet competition from other institutions. During the past year we have lost staff members on the professional level, two in the museum and the Archivist. At the present time all positions are filled with the exception of the position of Curator of History. Several of these positions have been filled by people without prior experience. It is my hope that we can retain our staff upon completion of their training.

Nebraska History now in its 48th year of publication, has continued to attract the attention of outstanding researchers not only in Nebraska but throughout the nation. Subjects ranging from Indian to political history have been presented.

The Historical *Newsletter* has continued as an exchange of historical information. With the more than 80

historical organizations now in the State there has been no lack of news. The "Out of Old Nebraska" columns edited by Dr. Danker, Society Historian, continue to be issued at the rate of one each week for publication in the press.

The Historical Land Mark Council, a Society related activity, dedicated nine markers during the year. Specialized markers commemorating the route of the Pony Express were erected at various points on or near the trail including such locations as Big Springs, Hastings and Cozad.

Dr. Danker as well as other members of the staff spoke to many groups throughout the state. It was my pleasure to appear on 28 programs during the year throughout the state. I also served on a number of commissions or boards including the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, Nebraska Centennial Commission, Historical Land Mark Council, Lewis and Clark Trails Commission, Nebraska Hall of Fame and the National Pony Express Centennial Commission.

We are departing somewhat from tradition today in presenting some details on another important activity of the Society. This is the Foundation. Some of you may not be fully aware of this activity.

The Foundation was incorporated on September 25, 1942 under the immediate supervision of James E. Lawrence, Addison E. Sheldon and Nathan Gold, as a non-profit, educational corporation. Under the laws of Nebraska, the corporation has full authority to accept gifts of all forms including real estate and to administer the same for the use and benefit of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

The Foundation can be an effective method of supplementing the work of the Society. It is only within the last ten years that the Foundation fund has grown. For instance, in 1956 our Foundation balance stood at \$1,291.00. The Foundation balance on June 30, 1966 as noted in the financial report stood at \$74,915.38. Major additions to

this fund have come from the Olivia Pound, Sylvester Emley and Jessie T. Langworthy estates. The most recent addition came from the James L. Sellers Memorial Fund.

In July of this year the Foundation for the first time, acquired real estate in the form of the Victorian home of the late Constance M. Syford in Lincoln. With this bequest was \$30,000 to provide for the preservation of the home. Thus at this time the Foundation funds have exceeded the figure of \$100,000.

Such funds can be used in many ways to supplement tax funds in preserving our history. A brochure on this subject will be distributed to all members as well as other individuals late this year. Funds received for Contributing and Supporting memberships in excess of the annual rate are deposited in the Foundation. We urge your support of the Foundation.

The progress noted here would not have been possible without an able and conscientious staff. Each member of the staff has worked hard to carry out the goal of preserving our historical past. Your Executive Board, under the leadership of President Charles Osborne, has devoted many hours of their valuable time to the Society, and I might add at their own expense. As members I urge each of you to work for the betterment of the Society. We need the support of all Nebraska if we are to fulfill our responsibilities.

Details relating to each department are presented in the sections which follow. New annual members are listed each month in the Newsletter. With this report we are listing those members who have provided support "over and above" the regular annual membership rate. These include Contributing, Supporting and Life members.

MUSEUM

Much of the activity of the Museum during 1966 was devoted to the forthcoming Nebraska Centennial. Plans

were made for a 35 foot Historymobile trailer unit which will bring Nebraska History to local communities. Other activities focused on the Nebraska Statehood Memorial—the restoration of the Thomas P. Kennard home.

The program devoted to working with local historical organizations and museums has continued. Assistance in advice regarding building plans and exhibits was the most prominent task. Much of the museum staff time was devoted to twenty-seven exhibit installations both in the Lincoln headquarters building and outside. Attendance records show that 88,591 people visited the Society building while 33,609 visited the Fort Robinson Museum. An additional 68,907 visitors viewed the Museum's State Fair exhibits.

The museum staff was quite active in giving talks before civic groups and answering hundreds of inquiries by mail and telephone. The Society was represented at several professional meetings. The twelfth annual meeting of the Mountain-Plains Museum Conference and the seventh annual meeting of the Nebraska Museum Conference, for which the Society was co-host, were attended by all staff members.

Several publications and manuscripts are credited to the Museum staff. Wendell Frantz, Curator of Anthropology, completed a report on *An Archeological Survey of Scottsbluff National Monument* for the National Park Service. Thomas Kehoe had feature articles in *Museum News*, *Journal of the American Association of Museums*, and in *American Antiquity*.

One hundred and seventy-one persons donated 1,625 items to the Museum during the year. One of the most important donations was the B. Y. High Collection of Santee Indian beadwork and other artifacts.

Archeological work has continued with the Highway Archeological Salvage program carried out by Mr. Robert Gant in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Roads. The Museum conducted major excavation work in



Mrs. Hazel Abbuhl, Society Librarian, at the card catalog.



Duane Reed, assistant archivist, and Douglas Bakken, archivist, examining a collection.



HAIR CRAFT

Locks of hair have long been treasured as precious mementoes of relatives and loved ones. In the last century, the Victorians gave hair ornamentation and sentiment found use of its expressions in the creation of artistic and decorative objects from tresses of hair.

Hair was braided and woven into a variety of jewelry articles, fashioned into hair wreaths and pictures, and collected from all members of the family to form mementoes. Articles made from one's own hair were highly valued as the most appropriate and affectionate of personal gifts.

Though commercial firms produced hair articles, much of this delicate and painstaking creation was done at home by the ladies of the family. On the frontier the making of hair articles was a popular leisure activity and the hair wreath a common decoration of the homemaker's dwelling.

One of the many exhibits prepared by the museum staff during the year.



Visitors viewing the Society exhibits at the State Fair in 1966.



Excavation of the Fort Robinson Crazy Horse Guard House of 1874.



Excavation of a prehistoric Indian earth lodge near South Bend in Cass County which may date from 1200-1300 A. D.



The Annual Meeting of the Society held at Lincoln, October 1, 1966.



Dr. Donald Jackson, speaker at the evening session of the Annual Meeting.

the summer of 1965 at the Leary-Kelly Site, south of Rulo; in May of 1966 at a Nebraska Culture earthlodge near South Bend; and during the summer of 1966, the 1874 guard house at Fort Robinson was excavated for reconstruction purposes. This work was under the direct supervision of Wendell Frantz, Curator of Anthropology. Since September 1965, a total of 11,860 artifacts from archeological survey and excavation work has been cataloged.

Museum staff changes include Robert Gant, added as Highway Salvage Archeologist, and Vance Nelson, added as Curator of Fort Robinson. The usual problem of inadequate space continues, to a greater degree than ever before, not only for the storage of important specimens and the display of these collections, but also in finding working space for the staff.

ARCHIVES

The past year has been another period of increased demands upon the archival staff. Work in the archives is divided into two main divisions—processing historical records and papers, and servicing these items. Processing in the broad sense includes the acquisition, arrangement, and description of archival material. The archives instituted a program several years ago to re-organize and describe its holdings in accordance with the policies of the National Archives and the Library of Congress. At the same time the staff is processing new collections, which are either from private or public sources. Included among acquisitions during the past year were various reports of the Burlington Railroad; records of Kimball County; assorted agricultural diaries; and correspondence of Dr. James L. Sellers, A. H. Kidd, and other prominent Nebraskans. Several important records, including a number of church reports were loaned to the Society and were microfilmed. One of the projects of the archives for the current year is to acquire additional historical material which is pertinent to the development of the state.

The second broad aspect of archival work involves assistance to citizens of Nebraska and other interested persons who utilize material located in the collections.

The special project of the Archives is the microfilm publication of the papers of J. Sterling Morton, Robert W. Furnas, The Farmers' Alliance, Samuel Maxwell and Samuel M. Chapman. The preparation and filming of the documents is being carried out under a grant from the National Historical Publications Commission. When this project is completed, it will enable Nebraska items of historical significance to achieve wider state and national use.

Another service activity was the publication of the second volume, *A Guide to the Archives and Manuscripts*, which lists the Society's manuscript holdings. This was mailed to various institutions and organizations throughout the state and nation.

The year 1966-67 will be a busy one for the archives. Many Nebraskans are seeking assistance for projects related to the centennial which begins March, 1967.

LIBRARY

The Library has continued its service to the public, not only through reference service to persons using the Library and answering telephone calls and letters, but also by cataloging and processing more materials, thus making a greater amount of resources available to patrons.

The Reference Section has given service to approximately 1200 people during the past year, answered approximately 250 telephone calls, and replied to 1663 letters. A total of 4223 persons did research in the reading room and stacks. The addition of xerox copying facilities during the year has increased the efficiency and convenience of our service to patrons.

The Cataloging and Processing section has cataloged 1780 new titles and processed 1157 added volumes. In ad-

dition, a total of 770 periodicals and newspapers are regularly processed as received. Two major acquisitions of the Library this year were a gift of the books from the library of the late Dr. Sellers; and a collection of 1000 genealogical books from the State Law Library. Besides organization of the materials currently received, over 1000 books and pamphlets from the backlog were cataloged.

The information index continued to grow with the addition of 3304 entries. Cooperation with the Union Catalog project of the Public Library Commission was carried on with the reporting of 2341 titles.

Other projects to improve service, carried on by the Library staff, were the revision of the map collection which was arranged in a new map case; compilation, by Mr. R. E. Dale, of an index to *The Official State Atlas of Nebraska*; and the establishing of a vertical file of Nebraska county and town material in the Reading Room. Mr. A. O. Andrews again volunteered his services in pasting our large obituary collection in scrapbooks.

Another improvement of library facilities has been the continuation of binding back issues of periodicals. This year the Bindery bound 251 volumes, repaired 73, and bound 78 volumes of newspapers.

The following chart indicates library growth:

Category	1965	Additions	1966 Total
Volumes	50,803	2,937	53,740
Maps	5,512	135	5,647
Microfilm reels	9,037	1,500	10,537
Photographs	82,354	2,450	84,804

The photographic section under the immediate supervision of Miss Berry has completed an active year.

Many photographs were furnished during the course of the year to periodical and book publishers over the nation. Among these might be mentioned: *American Heritage*, Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Denver Art

Museum, Educational Research Council of Greater Cleveland, Houghton-Mifflin, Minnesota Historical Society, Rand McNally, Western Publications, Austin, Texas and Weidenfeld & Nicholson, Publishers, London.

Every year sees an increased use of our picture files for television purposes, for special displays in schools and before various organizations and groups. As was to be expected, the coming Centennial has inspired much interest in pioneer Nebraska history, and in this connection we anticipate a continuing and heavy demand on our files.