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Article Summary: County and local historical organizations provided major assistance to the Society in 1971. Public demand for Society services and membership both increased.

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Photographs / Images: Chancellor James C Olson addressing the membership at the annual meeting; dedication of the Red Cloud historical marker as part of its centennial; Mr and Mrs Val Kuska accepting an award of merit on behalf of Ed Kopac; bulldozer transforming the Rogers Mansion in Lincoln into a parking lot; Great Platte River Road historical marker; mobile museum; award of merit certificate recognizing the Society publication program; Fort Robinson improvements: restored 1887 adobe and reconstructed Adjutant's Office and Guard House; Lincoln Garden Club members inspecting shrubbery to be planted on Kennard House grounds; Herbert Thomas constructing Society exhibits; Pat Sorok, student guide from Scottsbluff, giving a museum tour; annual workshop session; mobile exhibit; Dr. Everett Dick and other scholars using library resources; archeological work in Cheyenne County; Bonnie Fletcher and Betty Loudon, who provide information from the newspaper index for patrons; Archivists James Potter, David Johnson, and David Smith; Potter and Tim Turner consulting original architectural drawings for the State Capitol



*Chancellor James C. Olson addresses the membership at the Annual Meeting.*

## THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN 1971

By MARVIN F. KIVETT, *Director*

Presented at the Annual Meeting in Lincoln, October 23, 1971

YOUR SOCIETY, now in its 93rd year of operation, has strived during the past year to carry out two broad goals of responsibility. These goals are to *preserve* and to *interpret* Nebraska history. One function has limited value without the other. The artifacts, records, photographs, and manuscripts must be collected and preserved before the displays and publications can be produced to interpret and inform the public. Much of our effort must be devoted to the preservation function which involves a variety of steps from collecting the raw material to final selection for permanent preservation. We believe that progress has been made during the past year toward meeting these goals.

One of the most encouraging aspects from the State Society point of view is the major assistance being provided by the some ninety county and local historical organizations. Never before have so many dedicated people banded together to meet the common goals of preserving the history of Nebraska. These local organizations are fully dedicated to the full range of historical functions from the development of museums and preservation of structures to the publication of county or local history. We believe that the most lasting gains can be made by the State Society working closely with the local Societies and being available to aid in their projects. I should point out that the benefits are mutual, with the State Society also receiving dedicated assistance.



## 1871 RED CLOUD 1971

Red Cloud, named for the Oglala Sioux chief, was founded early in 1871 on homestead land filed upon by Silas Garber and company July 17, 1870, at Beatrice, the nearest land office. It is one of the oldest communities in the Republican Valley. When Webster County was organized, Red Cloud was voted the county seat at the first county election, April 19, 1875. The election was held in the dugout of Silas Garber, Nebraska's governor, 1875-1879.

The Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, completed in 1879, accelerated growth and brought national heritage to the area. It is a division of cultural development and is being preserved.

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*Red Cloud and many other communities dedicated historic markers as a part of their Centennials.*



*Mr. and Mrs. Val Kuska accept an Award of Merit on behalf of Ed Kopac from Foundation President M. S. Hevelone.*

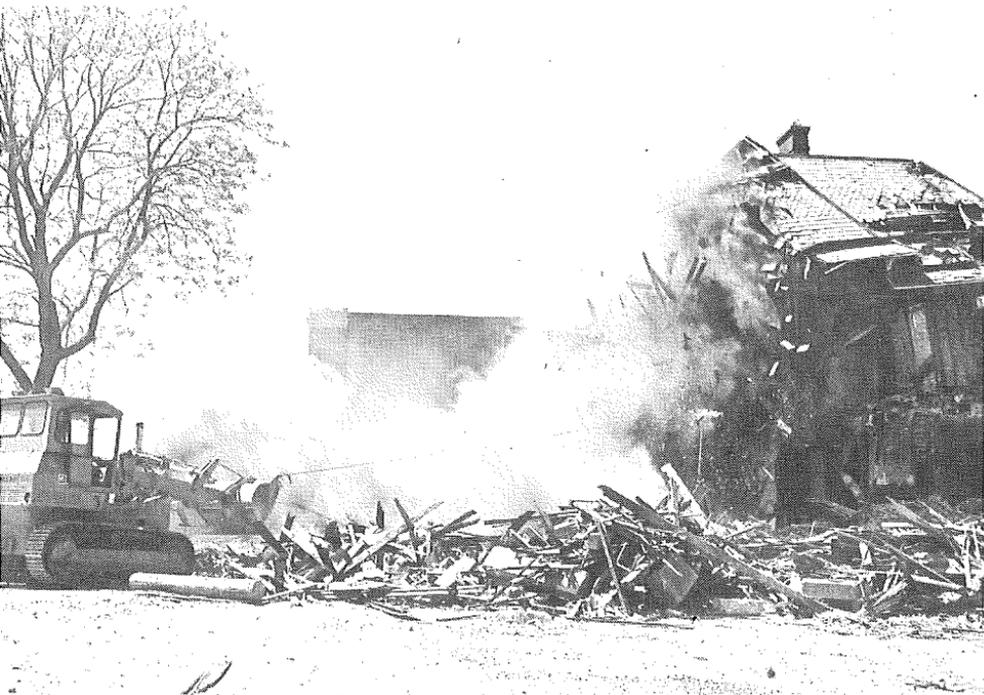
This cooperation has been particularly evident in our efforts to carry out a comprehensive survey and listing of sites of historical, archeological, and architectural merit in Nebraska. Such a survey was directed by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Responsibility for carrying out such a survey was assigned to the State Society, in Section 82-118, by the 1967 Legislature. I am pleased to report that, with the assistance of local historical organizations and individuals, major steps have been taken on this program. Presently forty-two sites or structures have been approved for entry on the National Register. A major report listing some eight hundred sites entitled "Historic Preservation in Nebraska—Preliminary Plan" has been approved by the National Park Service and is in process of publication. Although much survey work remains, we believe that this publication can provide for the first time ample evidence of our historical resources.

There continues to be increased public demands for the Society services. A portion of this demand results from the national emphasis on our history, but much results from

interest within the State. There is a great increase in requests for aid and advice in the many projects being carried out by local organizations. Perhaps the greatest number comes from those with museum or proposed museum projects. There is a change in their research tools. Local organizations are increasingly utilizing microfilm for searching their local newspapers and other documents relating to their local history. This has resulted in many high quality local histories produced in the last several years. A step toward providing increased service was started last year with the workshop arranged for county and local historical societies which was held the day before the annual meeting. This has been continued, and we expect it to be an annual event.

*Nebraska History* now in Volume 52 has continued to publish a variety of articles dealing with various phases of our state or regional history. Volume XXV of the *Publications* series titled "The Great Platte River Road" by Merrill J. Mattes has continued to receive national attention. We are pleased to report that Volume XXVI in the *Publications* series is now at the printer and will be available early in 1972. Titled "From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake," it will deal with the important freighting business from Nebraska west in the Territorial period. The author, Professor William E. Lass of Mankato State College, Minnesota, carried out the study under a Woods Charitable Fund, Inc. grant administered by the Society.

Increased activities by the Society have also resulted in increased membership. Our present membership stands at 4,707 as compared to 4,522 reported last year. Twenty-nine new Life Memberships were taken out last year. We are not satisfied with this modest gain, but it should be noted that our membership stood at 3,753 five years ago in 1966; thus, we have gained approximately two hundred new members each year since that time. The Contributing Membership category, which was established in 1964 to provide additional support, presently numbers 447, an increase of twenty-four for the year. We invite all individuals and organizations to work with us for increased membership in both local and state organizations. We believe that the Historical News Letter



*The bulldozers continue to remove many Nebraska landmarks, as the Rogers Mansion in Lincoln becomes a parking lot.*

has increasingly become a bond between all such organizations in Nebraska.

The annual Spring Meeting held at Red Cloud on June 12 was sponsored by the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Educational Foundation and the Webster County Historical Society. The attendance was excellent with Professor Donald Danker speaking at the luncheon. Tours during the morning were to historic Red Cloud locations and during the afternoon to historic sites of the area.

The historic markers program has progressed well with the total number of the new style markers now 130. A total of twenty-nine such legends were researched and written by the Society staff during the year. It is not my purpose to provide total statistics for this report. However, it may be of interest to you to know that some 13,000 pieces of mail came to the administrative office to be distributed. In addition there were 6,383 phone calls.

During the year the Society was represented by one or



## THE GREAT PLATTE RIVER ROAD

This is the Platte River Valley, America's great road west. It provided a natural pathway for westward expansion across the continent during the nineteenth century. Here passed the Oregon Trail, following the South Platte River along much the same route as the highway over which you now travel. Beginning in 1841, nearly 250,000 travelers crossed nine plains to Oregon and California over this important overland route. At O'Fallon's Bluffs, the wagon trains faced one of the most difficult and dangerous spots on the trail. The Platte River cut directly against the bluff, making it necessary to travel the narrow roadway over O'Fallon's Bluffs. Deep sand caught the wagon wheels, and Indian attacks were always a danger. A few feet southeast of this point, ruts made by thousands of wagon wheels still remain. Although first traveled primarily by immigrants, the trail was later used by the Pony Express and became an important freight and military route. With the completion of the trans-continental railroad across Nebraska in 1867, travel on the trail declined. Although the danger and hardships faced by early travelers no longer exist, the Great Platte Valley route remains an important modern thoroughfare across Nebraska and across the nation.

Department of Roads

Historical Landmark County

*Excellent cooperation between the Department of Roads and the Society provides for historic markers on highways.*

more staff members at 160 meetings on various historical matters. The majority of such meetings were in the state, with others at regional and national locations. The Director continued to serve on a number of boards or commissions with historically related interest. Among these are the Nebraska Hall of Fame, Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, Arbor Day Centennial Commission, and the Bi-Centennial of the Revolutionary War Commission.

Your Society operates with four major divisions, each of which receives a specific appropriation and is directly supervised by a department head. These include Administration, Museum, Library, and State Archives. Professional staff members in each area have as their goal the preservation and interpretation of some aspect of our history. Today I will provide some highlights for each program.

## MUSEUM

The museum program, directed by Wendell Frantz and Carl Jones, Assistant Director, reports a busy year. In the more apparent areas of public service, attendance is the most obvious. Attendance at the Society building during the year was 75,287, at the Kennard House 7,157, at the Norris House in McCook 2,364. Fort Robinson museum attendance was 32,794 in the museum building itself and 10,679 on fort tours. The Mobile Museums were also well attended during their open seasons. Unit 1 at the Grand Island west-bound rest area on Interstate 80 drew 17,290. Unit 2 at the Maxwell east-bound rest area on Interstate 80 saw 16,416 visitors, and Unit 3 at Chimney Rock Park south of Bayard had 15,206 visitors. These figures for the Mobile Museums are for July, August, and September of 1970 and May and June of 1971. The attendance figures indicate a slight increase in attendance at the Lincoln museum. Attendance at the Mobile Museums increased by 5,000. It is interesting to note that the mobile unit at Chimney Rock has regularly reported a seasonal increase in attendance of about 2,000 visitors per year. It is evident that this important landmark owned by the Society is deserving of a permanent interpretive center.

In the area of educational services 17,235 visitors in 499 groups toured the museum. Guided tours were given to 6,986 people in 241 groups; 8,305 saw films or puppet shows. A new service was added this past year for local schools. Lincoln Junior League volunteers, who have had past experience as guides, visit local schools with a kit of artifacts to illustrate talks on Nebraska Indians and pioneers. The Curator of Education received 3,072 pieces of mail, distributed 1,112 items of free literature upon request, and handled 1,031 paid orders for educational material. Nine hundred and ten teachers' packets were sent to Nebraska teachers and to libraries both in and out of Nebraska.

The staff photographer made 3,297 prints, 910 copy negatives, 38 color transparencies, 142 black and white slides, and 77 color slides. He also developed 88 rolls and packs of film taken by other staff members. The photographer's work in the area of prints increased over 30 per cent. The art staff constructed 54 displays during the year. During the year 133 donors gave 2,725 items to the museum and a total of 3,015 items were catalogued. Thirty-four loans of 368 items were made. In the display areas automatic audio tape equipment was installed to play recorded messages at the trading post and cowboy exhibits. The earthlodge display also has a taped message connected to special lighting effects in the display. Other improvements at the Statehood Memorial include: the addition of a strip of land twenty feet wide to the east side of the lawn; and the landscaping and planting of trees, shrubs, and flowers by the Lincoln Garden Club. The plantings are appropriate to the period of the restoration and do much to improve the setting. The Lincoln Garden Club is to be commended for its interest in Nebraska history and for the completion of this project. This is one of several Garden Club projects which brought the club to the finals of the Sears Foundation Community Improvements competition.

Improvements at Fort Robinson included the installation of small markers with legend material and photographs at building sites around the post. These help interpret the history of the Fort to visitors. The research center at Fort Robinson was improved by the addition of 160 rolls of



*The three Mobile Museums continue to attract an increasing number of visitors.*



*The Society publication program is recognized by an Award of Merit.*

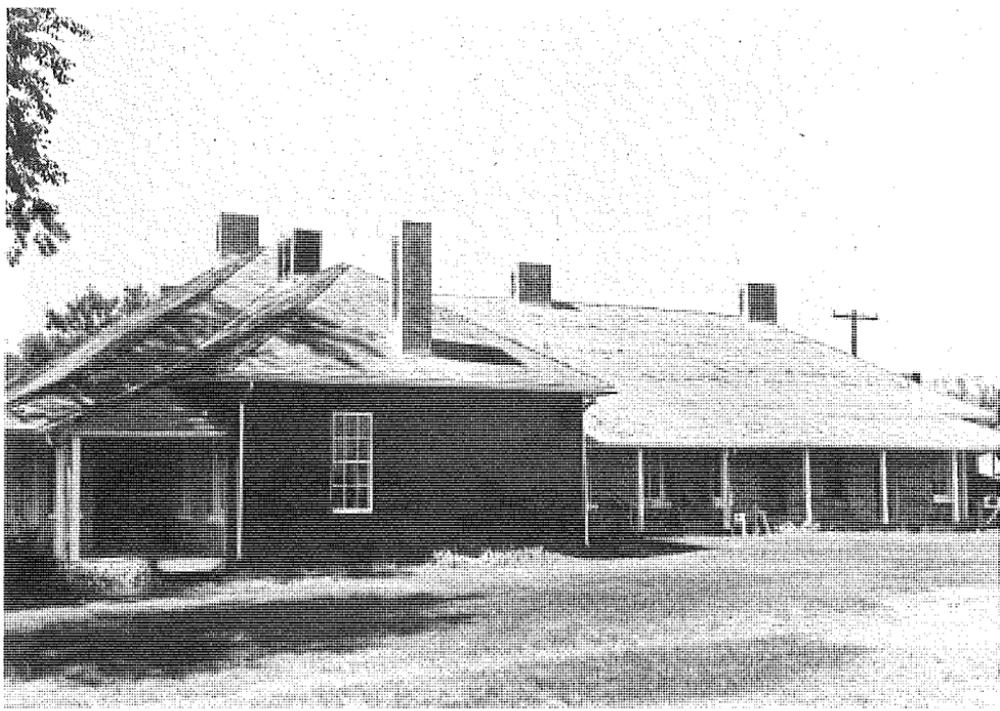
microfilm to the library. A display including photographic murals and a recorded message was set up at the bandmaster's quarters.

Work at the Neligh Mills in Antelope County has continued toward final restoration. The first phase of work was largely concerned with the removal of more recent additions to the 1873 Mill and the completion of roof work. A major second phase now in process should provide for the mill to be open to the public by July 1972.

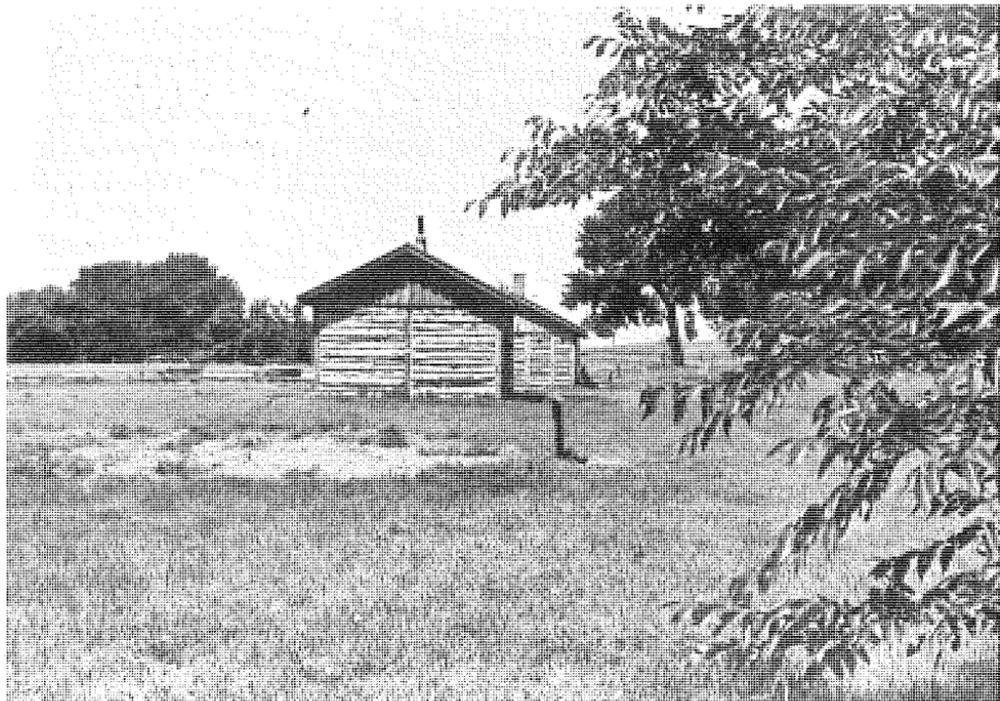
Archeological work was continued in the Nehawka Flint Quarries area, where two additional Indian earthlodges of the Nebraska Culture period were excavated. Seven additional Cass County sites were also recorded, and a salvage team spent a week on King Hill. The area around Leshara in Saunders County was surveyed, and three sites were recorded. Two major salvage operations were conducted in Nance County at Lower Loup and Historic Pawnee sites. One site in Otoe County was visited. During the late spring twenty-three sites, including several rock shelters, were surveyed and tested in Cheyenne County. Nine tipi ring sites were mapped and two rings were excavated. A site with fourteen tipi rings was also mapped in Kimball County. Work also continued this season at Fort Atkinson under an agreement between the State Game and Parks Commission and the Society. In addition to the above, the Highway Salvage Archeologist visited twenty-nine counties during 6,325 miles of travel. He recorded forty-six new sites and visited fourteen previously recorded sites.

### STATE OF NEBRASKA ARCHIVES

During the 1970-1971 fiscal year, service to state and local government and the public has been given major emphasis by the State Archives under the immediate direction of State Archivist James Potter. Increased public awareness of the resources of the Archives is reflected by the record number of 4,060 individuals using the facilities. Contacts with state and county offices have progressed in conjunction with the operation of the Records Management Act and through the



*Progress is made toward restoring selected buildings at Fort Robinson, such as this 1887 adobe.*



*At Fort Robinson the Society has also reconstructed the Adjutant's Office and Guard House.*

joint efforts of the State Archives and the Records Management Division of the office of Secretary of State. Considerable attention has also been devoted to internal affairs as reorganization and reprocessing of various archival and manuscript collections continues.

Significant accessions of the Manuscript Division have included the papers of former Nebraska Congressmen Glenn Cunningham, 1957-1970, and Robert Denny, 1967-1970. Major General Butler B. Miltonberger, Assistant Commander of the 35th Infantry Division during World War II, has initiated a collection of his papers within the Archives. The Manuscript Division's documentation of business activities has been supplemented by the accession of records of the Crete Mill, 1892-1926, and the Milldale Ranch of North Platte, 1900-1960. Several of the larger manuscript collections, which lacked adequate arrangement and description, were reprocessed during the year; they included the papers of C. A. Sorensen, John P. Senning, George H. Gilmore, and U.S. Senators Kenneth Wherry and Hugh Butler.

The survey of source materials and biographical data for local history begun in 1969 has continued, and Manuscript Curator Donald Snoddy visited fourteen county and historical groups in connection with this project.

The State Archives provided increased service to state and local government in 1970-1971. State Archivist James Potter and Assistant Archivist David Johnson personally appraised records in numerous state and county offices during the year and the archives staff processed many additional routine requests for records action, submitted for approval under the provisions of the State Records Management Act.

Beginning in 1970 the State Archives offered storage for "security microfilm" of records from all governmental subdivisions in Nebraska. As of June 30, 1971, some 940 rolls of master negative microfilm from various county offices and state agencies had been deposited in the Archives for permanent preservation. This service will be expanded in the future as more agencies turn to microfilm as a preservation tool.

Several hundred cubic feet of state and local records have also been accessioned during the year, serving to increase the space problems within the State Archives. Outside storage was acquired within the fiscal year, and a considerable quantity of record material has been deposited at this location. While these facilities are not ideal for records' storage, they must continue to be utilized pending the expansion of the Society building.

Among the major accessions of the State Archives have been the gubernatorial papers of Norbert T. Tiemann, 1966-1971; records of the Nebraska Constitutional Revision Commission, 1969-1970; correspondence and minutes of the Nebraska Capitol Commission, 1921-1934; records of Nance County, 1886-1938; Greeley County, 1872-1935; City of Seward, 1874-1943; Fillmore County, 1874-1950; and Valley County, 1873-1935.

Numerous researchers have utilized the archival and manuscript collections during the year. The Senator Hugh Butler papers, 1941-1954, received considerable attention as they were examined in relation to studies of Puerto Rican autonomy, 1945-1952. Researchers also used the Butler Papers to examine national resources policies in the Truman-Eisenhower Administrations; Federal Indian policy, 1940-1960; and the Presidential election campaign of 1952. Other major collections employed included the records of the Nebraska Capitol Commission in a study of the artistic aspects of the State Capitol Building; the John J. Pershing collection in a biography of his life; and the records of the State Council of Defense in a study of anti-German sentiment in Nebraska, 1917-1919.

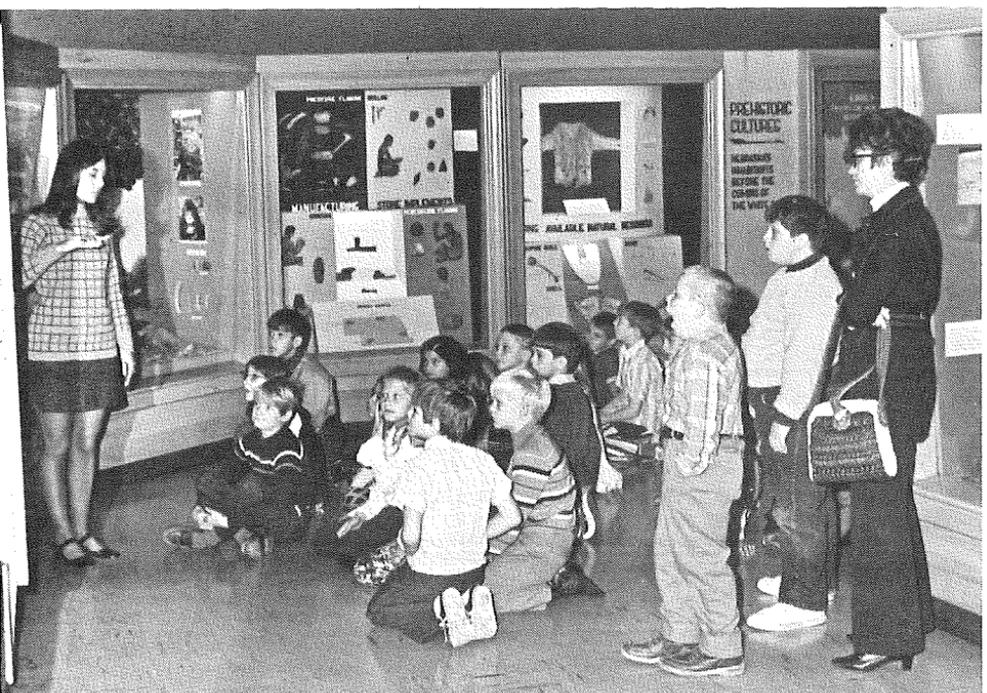
The microfilm division of the State Archives under the direction of Mrs. Joleen Smith, has experienced a 27 per cent increase in patron activity during the past year. However, due to frequent failures of the Recordak Model C microfilm camera which was purchased in 1952, fewer reels of microfilm were produced within the division than in previous years. Fortunately, the recent session of the Nebraska Legislature has appropriated funds so that a new microfilm camera can be placed in service during 1971-1972.



*Members of the Lincoln Garden Club inspect shrubbery to be planted on the Kennard House grounds near the Capitol.*



*The art staff, headed by Herbert Thomas construct exhibits for all Society exhibit areas.*



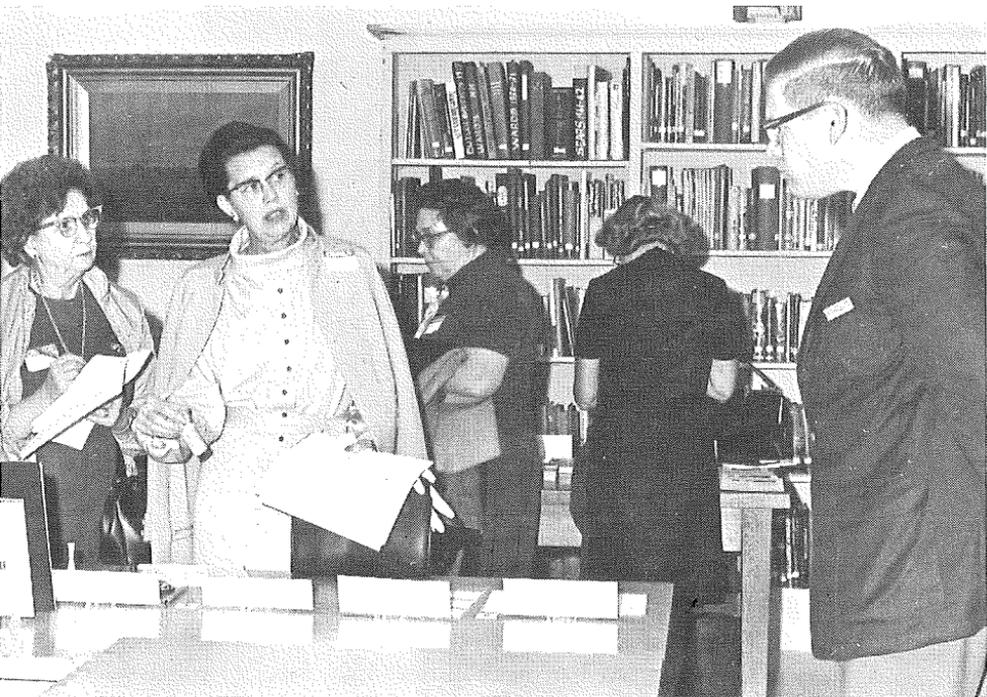
*Pat Sorok, student guide from Scottsbluff, provides a museum tour for the younger generation.*

Among the major newspaper titles placed on film during the year were the *Alliance Times-Herald*, 1925-1970; the *Niobrara Tribune*, 1885-1969; the *Garden County News*, 1909-1970; and the *Omaha Star*, 1938-1970. Special filming projects included the Lancaster County School Census, 1875-1918, and records from churches in Gering, Sutton, McCook, Avoca, Harbine, and Grant. Selected diaries and manuscripts were also preserved on microfilm. Under the terms of a contract with Micro-Film Photo Division of Bell and Howell all film titles owned by the Society can now be sold directly to patrons by the Micro-Photo Division. The Society receives a royalty payment on each roll sold, and this royalty fund is used to reduce the present backlog of more than 4,000 master negatives still on our shelves. During 1970-1971, 896 rolls of Society microfilm were sold to scholars, institutions, and the public, and royalty funds were expended for the reduction of the negative backlog by conversion to positive microfilm.

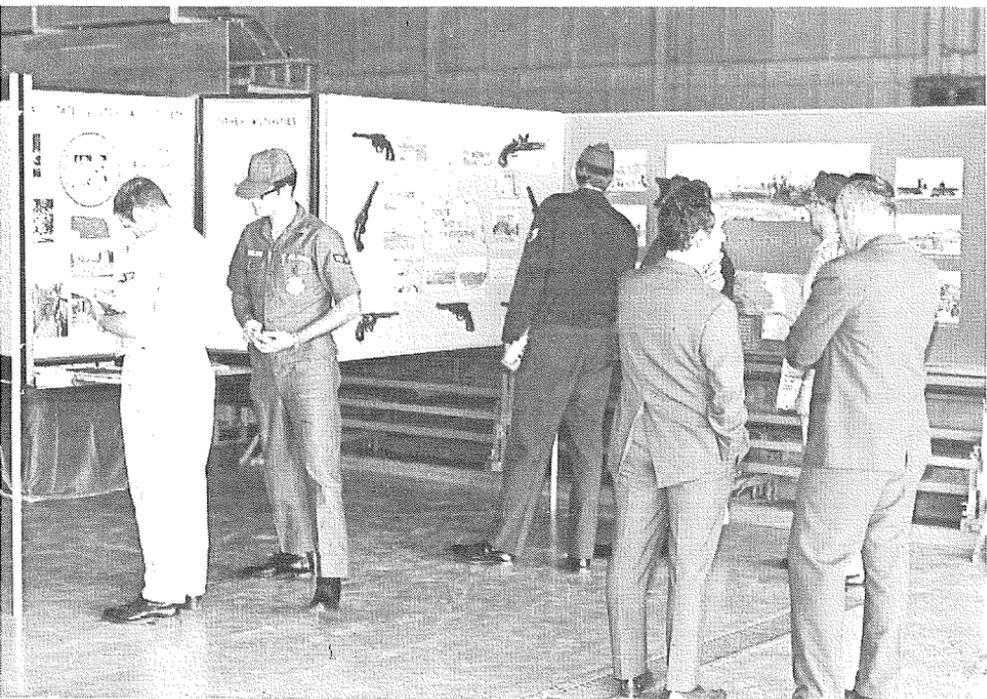
The research facilities at Fort Robinson were enhanced during the year by the deposit of microfilm copies of official records, manuscripts, and newspaper files at the Society Branch Museum. This project was made possible through the cooperation of the Records Management Division of the Office of Secretary of State who provided surplus diazo microfilm for this purpose. Hopefully, this project will aid researchers interested in the history of Fort Robinson and the northwest Nebraska region.

The Archives report contained rather convincing statistics to demonstrate their increased activity. This report refers only to a few. As an example, in 1968 there were 2,531 persons who used the Archives as compared to 4,060 the past year. Rolls of positive microfilm have increased from 6,835 in 1968 to 10,255 at this time. One important contribution made for the schools and other interested individuals was a packet, "Documents from Nebraska's Past," distributed in cooperation with the State Department of Education.

A major problem during the past several years has been the existence of a backlog of over 4,000 master negative rolls of microfilm within the Microfilm Division, which have not been



*The Society's annual workshop sessions provide an opportunity for questions.*



*Mobile exhibits provide orientation on historic Nebraska.*

converted to positive copies due to lack of funds. The last session of the Legislature again failed to provide a sufficient appropriation to eliminate this backlog through production of silver positive work-copies. Inability to produce positive copies and transfer the negatives to storage will result in the continued deterioration of the master negatives and a potential loss of this significant source of Nebraska history. During the next fiscal year it is hoped that existing funds will prove sufficient to produce diazo work-copies of the bulk of the negative backlog through the cooperation of the Records Management Division of the Office of Secretary of State. The master negatives can then be stored in security vaults.

Funds have also been requested in 1972-1973 for the purchase of the micro-filmed files of Omaha and Lincoln newspapers. These are among the most important newspapers in the State and a major historical source. The continued use of the original papers has accelerated the deterioration which has already rendered many of the early volumes unuseable. Purchases of these titles on film will eliminate the necessity of duplicate filming of these files by the Microfilm Division.

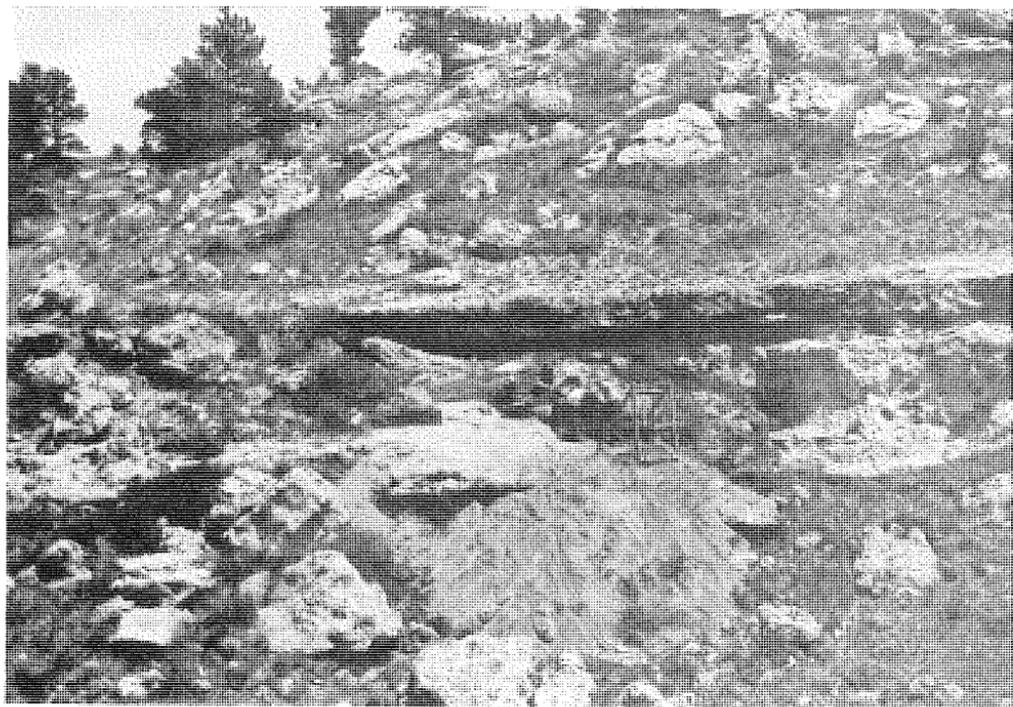
Now that the implementation of an active program of records management in Nebraska is a reality, it is imperative that the State Archives receive funding to provide maximum service to state and local government. In the past accessions of archival and manuscript material have been limited to rescue operations. In the future the State Archives must take an active role in the inventory, appraisal, and accession of historical materials if it is to fulfill its obligations. This can only be achieved through an active program of visitation and consultation with officials of state and local government in Nebraska.

## LIBRARY

During this report year the Society Library under the direction of Mrs. Louise Small has continued the steady increase in service to patrons, which has been an outstanding development of the previous years. The number of patrons who used the Library, including the Photograph Room, was 6,253, an increase of 16 per cent over the previous year. By



*Dr. Everett Dick of Union College and other scholars utilize the Library resources.*



*Archeological work in Cheyenne County and throughout the state provides new information on the early inhabitants of the state.*

telephone, letters, and through personal inquiry, the Library answered 3,541 reference questions, an increase of 20 per cent over the previous year. This year showed another spectacular increase in genealogical queries, both by mail and in person. The greatest increase in genealogical queries, was by those patrons who came personally to the Society Library. During the previous report year, 248 patrons had come to the Library to work on family lines, but during this report year 562 patrons used our genealogical collection.

Under the immediate supervision of Mrs. Opal Jacobsen, the Society's fine collection of photographs attracts steadily increasing national and international attention. Publishing houses and television studios, world wide, continue their increased interest in our collections of frontier and pioneer photographs. Many letters were received from persons outside the United States asking about photographs. Representatives of the British Broadcasting Corporation came personally to select pictures to be used in a documentary film they are planning. Reproductions have also been supplied to publishers in England, Sweden, and Australia. Local and national use of the collection is constant and vigorous. As an example, representatives of a national publisher spent several days at the Society and in Nebraska in reference to the republication of *Old Jules*.

A highlight of the Library year was the gift to the Society by Ed Kopac of the library of his late brother, Emil Kopac. This fine collection contains many volumes dealing with the history and development of the American West. Our material on the Indians of North America, particularly those of the High Plains, will be greatly increased by this gift. The full impact of this gift has not yet been felt in the public use of the Society Library because sorting, classifying, and cataloging will take some time. Through this generous gesture we will also be able to enlarge the branch library at Fort Robinson and make it truly useful to the researchers of western Nebraska.

Groups of patrons, both young and adult, continue to visit the Society Library. High school and college students all found material in our resources they could use, understand,

# NEBRASKA NEWSPAPER INDEX



*Mrs. Bonnie Fletcher (left) and Mrs. Betty Loudon provide for patrons information from the newspaper index.*

and enjoy. Genealogical classes from the Adult Education Courses of the Lincoln Public Schools came in groups to learn what we had in the collection and then came back individually to use it.

In March we were pleased to have staff members from the Omaha Public Library spend a day at the Society, learning what resources we could offer in helping them set up a History Room. We also supplied information on our manuscript collections from the papers of Bess Streeter Aldrich, Willa Cather, and Mari Sandoz for incorporation of a new edition of *American Literary Manuscripts*. Nebraskans and Nebraska history continue to be our primary interest, but we are pleased when we achieve national and international recognition.

From the statistics provided in the full report we find that patrons in the library increased from 3,557 in 1968 to 6,253

for the last year. A similar increase is noted in reference questions which rose from 1,678 in 1968 to 3,541 for the past year. You may be interested to know that there are 58,683 volumes in the library.

### NEEDS OF THE SOCIETY

Times change but basic needs have a way somehow of staying more or less constant. You will be interested in hearing words from the past which speak to problems that plague us yet. The following quotation is an excerpt from a report to Nebraska State Historical Society members just sixty years ago:

“The needs of the Society are really too numerous to be even recorded within the space devoted to a single report, but the more urgent may be briefly noted for the information of those interested:

“First, a suitable building for the protection of the library and museum.

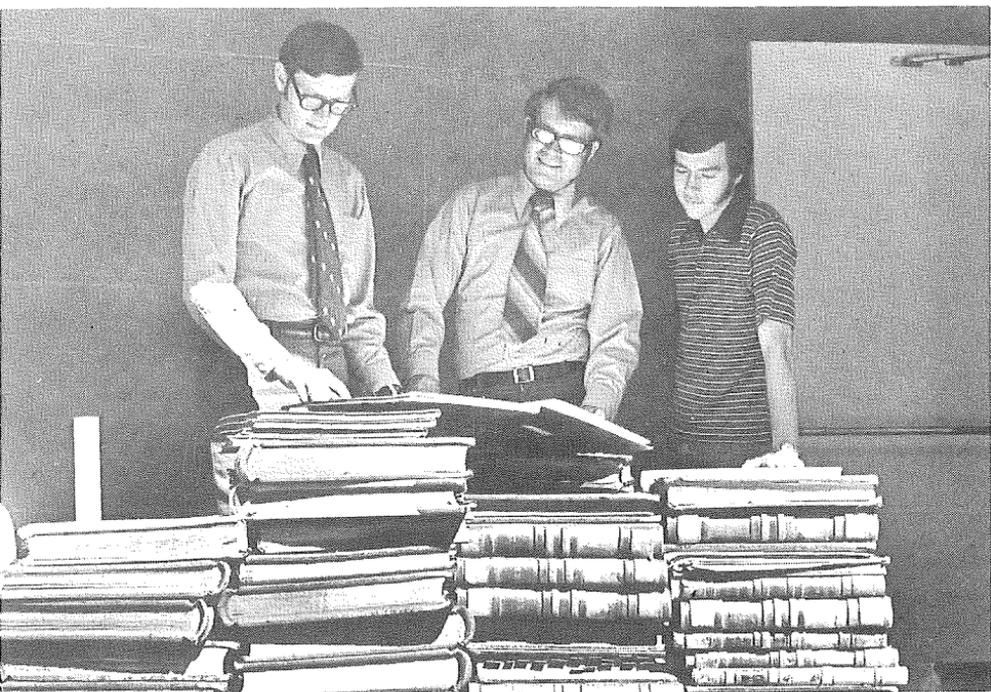
“Second, a larger income for the purchase of books, the publication of collections, the binding of newspapers, and the employment of labor.

“Third, the endowment of the Society by gift to its general fund or by testamentary bequests so that we may not be wholly dependent upon uncertain legislative appropriations. Small sums producing regular revenue would be helpful and larger funds are much needed.

“Fourth, a larger interest on the part of the members in the work of the Society. This latter is possibly more important than all the other needs, for with it all the others will be possible of achievement.”

Remember, these were the needs as listed by Society Secretary (1907-1917) Clarence Paine in the 1911 Annual Report. However, with some modification, they are pertinent today. In summary, the activity and progress reported today would not be possible without a dedicated Board headed by President A. R. Owens and a willing and able Society staff.

The Society Foundation, headed by President M. S. Hevelone with some fifty Trustees representing all areas of the



*An increasing number of original county records are received in the State Archives. From left Archivist James Potter, assistant David Johnson, and David Smith.*

state, continues to be an effective supporting force for the Society. Without the Foundation much of the progress, particularly in the publication program, would not be possible. We urge you to consider Secretary Paine's suggestion in terms of gifts or bequests.

Although we have an excellent physical plant we are long overdue in needs for expansion. Your Society Board and the Legislature have both conducted studies in this area with a common conclusion that additional space is needed. A request made to the last Legislature for expansion funds was "deferred." Such a request will again be presented but it is evident that we will need great support if we are to compete successfully for the limited funds. Your Society, active since 1878, has a long and distinguished record of service to the people of Nebraska. Equally distinguished has been the dedicated service of public-spirited people serving on the Board. Our goal during the coming year and succeeding years is to continue to seek ways of expanding this service.



*State Archivist James Potter and Tim Turner consult original architectural drawings for the State Capitol.*