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## Article Title: The Nebraska State Historical Society in 1981

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Article Summary: Kivett describes 1981 as "one of the most trying and also one of the most gratifying" years of his long career as a Society staff member. Public support had helped to avert LB 537, which threatened the role of the Society as an independent department of state government.

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Photographs / Images: H G DeLay, Marvin Kivett, and Patricia Gaster with copies of *Bartlett Richards, Nebraska Sandhills Cattleman*; former Elks Building to be renovated as an expanded historical museum; James Denney addressing Society Annual Meeting; unveiling of the Roscoe Pound bust in the Hall of Fame, State Capitol; Eileen Worth of the Union Pacific Railroad presenting Kivett with a check for the microfilming of UP construction records; researching genealogical sources in the Society Library; Ann Reinert with Helen Brooks, compiler of the *Checklist of Printed Maps of the Middle West to 1900: Nebraska*; Paul D Riley, veteran Society staff member; "Pastimes and Playthings: A Festival of Old Toys and Games for Children" at the Kennard and Ferguson Houses, Lincoln; Dick Spencer leading students through Lincoln Museum; excavations at Rock Creek Station, Jefferson County; Exhibits department staff; Custer County excavation along Highway 2 near Berwyn; cache pit with bison scapula hoes at the excavation; Joni Gilkerson and Mary Lynn Forst; Richard E Jensen and Deb Bucholz McWilliams; Slim Pickens at the Veterinary Hospital, Fort Robinson; foundation stabilization on the Post Engineers' Building; Denzle Minyard and Barbara Jones at July 4 festivities at Fort Robinson; Jones making soap; Nebraska vacation guides touring Neligh Mill; Don McPherson of General Mills presenting Tom Buecker with a "Gold Medal" flour sack; Willa Cather Historical Center; Charles Thone at Neihardt Day festivities, Bancroft; Schuyler City Hall, Colfax County

# The Nebraska State Historical Society in 1981

BY MARVIN F. KIVETT, DIRECTOR

Presented at the Annual Meeting in Lincoln, September 12, 1981

This past year has been one of the most trying and also one of the most gratifying that I have experienced in my some 30 years as a Society staff member. We are always aware of, and can predict the need to monitor legislative actions and their possible effect on the Society and other historical agencies throughout the state. We are also aware that we must fully justify our budget requests. The budget request has increased each year largely as a result of public demand that we assume greater responsibility, or from legislative direction. During the past 20 years we have grown from some 12 staff members to more than 100 who are scattered from the *Lewis* Dredge at Brownville in the southeast corner of the state to Fort Robinson in the northwest. We are well on our way toward the goal of bringing our activities to all segments of the state.

Perhaps our most gratifying experience this year was the decision by Governor Thone to request that LB 537 be withdrawn from legislative consideration. As I'm sure you know, this bill if enacted into law, would have placed the Society directly under each governor and could have subjected its operations to political rather than historical considerations. Rarely in state government have the people of Nebraska opposed an issue with a more united front. The press of Nebraska was particularly helpful with editorials and a dissemination of information on the issue. Thus, we believe that "the Salvation of the State is Watchfulness in the Citizen" must be our motto, and we look forward to our centennial as an independent department of state government in 1983.

Some definite steps have been taken during the past year to reach a goal long urged by your Executive Board—that of increased physical space for the operation of the Society. There was some discussion during the past year by state governmental

leaders of considering the originally proposed Heritage Center on the block of ground immediately south of the Capitol. For various reasons there were no positive steps taken to achieve this goal.

We will in the near future accept bids for the renovation of the former Lincoln Elks Building into an expanded museum of Nebraska history. An amount of \$950,000 was earlier appropriated for the purchase of the building with an additional amount of \$1,635,000 available for renovation. We are doubtful that this appropriation will fully cover the renovation, exhibit, and furnishings costs. It is our estimate that some \$400,000 to \$500,000 in additional funding will be required for exhibits and furnishings. It seems likely that much of this amount must come from sources other than state government. It is expected that the Society Foundation will assist in a fund drive to provide some of these projected costs. We welcome the aid and support of all. There is still some support among the citizens of Nebraska, including certain governmental officials, for the original Heritage Center plan south of the Capitol. We therefore do not rule out a possible move in this direction during the 1982 legislative session. It will, however, require that strong support be expressed to members of the Legislature and to the Governor if this is to come about. It is evident that the former Elks Building was purchased by the Society at a bargain price and could well be utilized by one or more other state agencies which are now renting inadequate space at a considerable cost.

In an overall view our cooperative relationship with other state agencies is excellent with benefit to the Society and the people of Nebraska. Among those departments that should be cited are the State Game and Parks Commission with whom we work in a variety of ways, from archeological and historical research to exhibits for State Historical Parks. The Department of Roads has been particularly supportive of our efforts to ensure that historical and archeological resources will be preserved. Under agreement with this department, they fund two full-time archeologists on the Society staff. Cooperative archival projects are also carried out with the Records Management Division of the Secretary of State and the State College Board. Branch archives are presently located at Chadron and Kearney State Colleges. The branch archives program deserves increased future support if we are to provide adequate archival support to the people of

the state. We have the records and the state colleges generally have the physical structures to house the records. The increased support is needed largely in the area of trained staff with adequate time to serve the public at the branches.

Another of our concerns this past year, one which remains today, is the future of our Historic Preservation section. During the past 10 years this activity, carried out in cooperation with the federal administration, has produced outstanding results in our efforts to identify and preserve sites and structures of historical importance. Under the original budget submitted by the President, federal aid would cease. We would agree that this program, like many other federal programs, can be reduced in scope. We cannot, however, operate without a continuation of some federal support.

During the year I have continued to represent the Society on a number of different commissions and boards whose functions are related to the goals of the Society. Some of these include the Nebraska Hall of Fame, the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, the State Records Advisory Board, Historic Preservation Review Board and the State Historic Publications Board. Today I'm presenting summary reports by division and department which will indicate the wide range of activities by the Society staff over much of the state.

The Administrative Division is headed by John Caleca, who handles business affairs, including budget preparation. Historian L. G. DeLay and Editorial Assistant Patricia Gaster edit Society publications, which include *Nebraska History* quarterly now in its 62nd year.

Each of the departments and divisions of the Society have provided detailed reports. Only the highlights of these reports are presented:

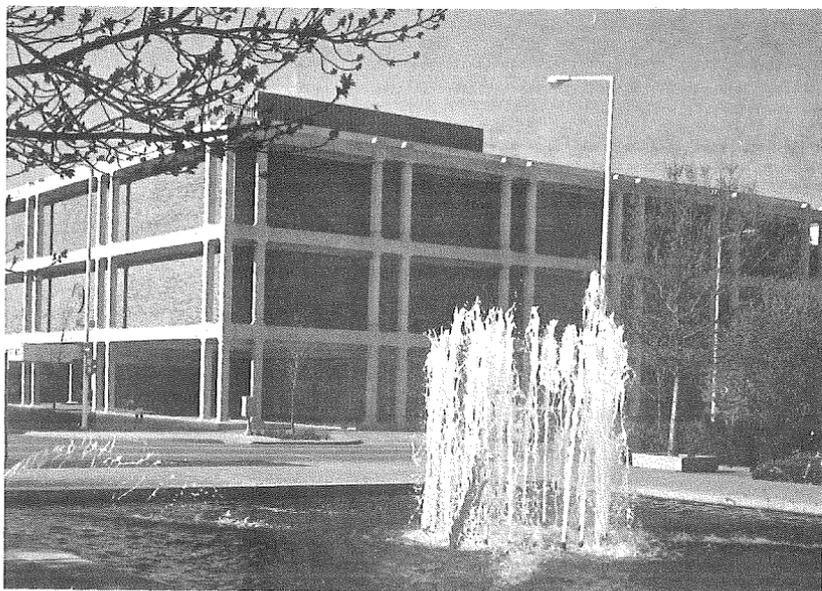
#### STATE ARCHIVES

Due to lack of space, only limited quantities of public records and manuscripts were accessioned by the State Archives in 1980-1981, according to State Archivist Jim Potter. However, the staff has undertaken a number of special projects to improve the preservation and accessibility of the archival holdings, and public service and reference activity has continued to increase.

Manuscripts Curator Andrea Paul reports that over 11,000



*With copies of the 1981 Society publication Bartlett Richards, Nebraska Sandhills Cattleman, by Bartlett Richards Jr. and Ruth Van Ackeren, are Historian L. G. DeLay (left), Director Marvyn Kivett, and Editorial Assistant Patricia Gaster. The book received a Wrangler Award from the Western Heritage Center, Oklahoma City. . . . (Below) Plans were developed during the year to renovate the former Elks Building as an expanded historical museum. Renovation funding is over a two year period.*





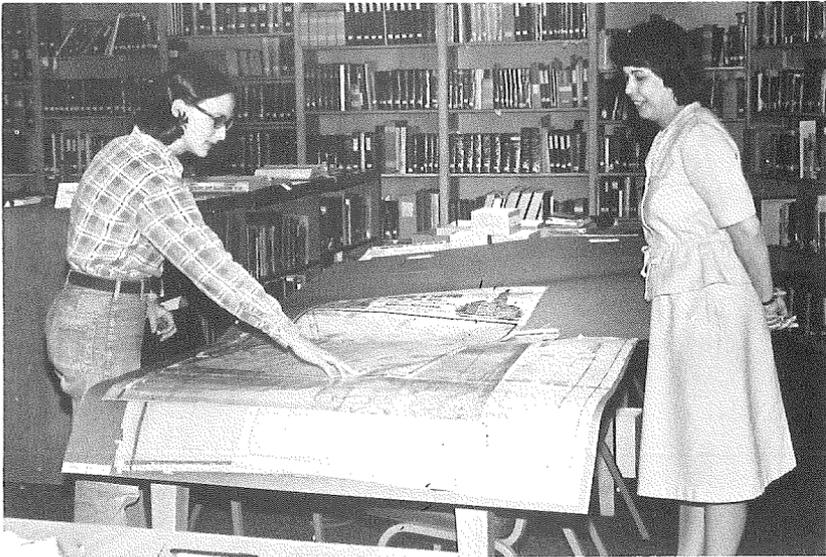
Omaha World-Herald writer-photographer James Denney addressed the Society Annual Meeting in Lincoln, September 12. At right is Society Foundation President Edwin J. Faulkner. . . . (Below) Participants in the March 1 unveiling of the Roscoe Pound bust, placed in the Hall of Fame, State Capitol: Governor Charles Thone, State Supreme Court Chief Justice Norman Krivosha, State Senator Richard Marvel, Mrs. Fred Wells, John Kingsbury, William Reece Smith Jr. and Secretary of State Allen J. Beermann.



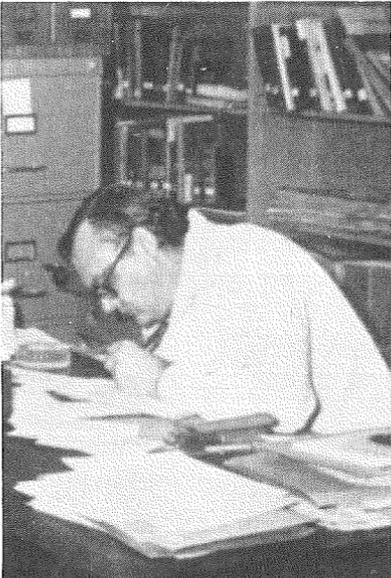


*Eileen Wirth, Union Pacific Railroad, presents a \$23,773 check to Director Marvin F. Kivett to microfilm UP construction records. At left is Assistant State Archivist Don Snood; at right, State Archivist Jim Potter....(Below) Researching genealogical sources in the Society Library are Alice Clopton (left), Sylvia Nimmo, Joyce Cook, all of Papillion; and Carolyn Moody, Lincoln.*





*Librarian Ann Reinert (right) consults with Helen Brooks, compiler of the Checklist of Printed Maps of the Middle West to 1900: Nebraska, one of a series sponsored by the Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography, Newberry Library, Chicago.*



*Paul D. Riley, veteran Society staff member, died August 9 in Lincoln.*

persons used one or more of the resources available within archival holdings during the year. Over 6,000 pieces of mail and more than 1,000 telephone calls were handled. As in the past family and local history prompted much of this activity. Reference use of the Archives was up in 1980-1981, despite the fact that limited staff required the closing of the reference room on Sunday afternoons. Some 767 different manuscript or archival collections were examined by researchers, who identified 47 different topics for study in the preparation of books, articles, and theses.

Though the volume of public record accessions declined, the Archives staff still faced the administration and preservation of a vast quantity of public records stored in the Society building and in two outside warehouses. Assistant State Archivist Don Snoddy oversees these facilities and also coordinates the storage of master negative security microfilm as a service to the state and local government agencies. By June, 1981, the number of film rolls in storage exceeded 44,000. Among public records transferred during the year were District Court case files, 1857-1930, the Naturalization records, 1868-1952, from Washington County probate and estate records, ca. 1857-1930.

Manuscripts Curator Anne Diffendal was involved in the accession and processing of several important manuscript collections. In addition to her archival duties, Mrs. Diffendal also serves as the book review editor for our quarterly, *Nebraska History*. Microfilming continued to be a primary preservation tool under the direction of Microfilm Supervisor Joleen Smith. In 1980-1981, 545 rolls of film were produced which contained newspapers, church records, manuscripts, public records, and other deteriorating materials. The total microfilm reference collection was increased to 24,740 rolls.

The Society's paper conservation program continued to develop under the guidance of conservation specialist Judith Fortson Jones. Slide tape programs on "Encapsulation" and "Surface Cleaning" of paper, completed in 1980 with the assistance of a grant from the NHPRC, have been loaned or sold to numerous archival and library institutions. The Society was awarded a Certificate of Commendation from the AASLH for the production of these programs. A second year federal grant in 1980-81, supported a project to assist local government officials with the storage of records and with disaster planning. She has

completed writing a disaster planning and records preservation manual which has been distributed to county and municipal officials throughout the state. Two additional slide-tape programs on records storage and environment are in preparation and will soon be available. The basic paper conservation workshop was presented by the Archives staff on three separate occasions. Based on the conservation survey and disaster plan completed in 1979-80, several improvements have been made within the building which are directly related to conservation of archival, library, and museum collections.

In 1980 a grant application to the NHPRC for the purpose of microfilming records of the Union Pacific Railroad was approved, with funding to begin in September, 1981. However, federal budget cuts may eliminate this source of funding. Nonetheless, the Union Pacific Filming project will begin in the fall of 1981 with support of a grant from the Union Pacific Foundation of \$23,773. It is anticipated that it may take several years to microfilm all important material within the Union Pacific Railroad Collection and additional sources of funding will be sought for this project.

The Kearney and Chadron Centers for Archives and History have remained relatively dormant due to lack of staff and funding earmarked for this project. The Archives staff intends to devote considerable effort in the coming year toward enhancing the holdings at the Centers and working with Center Directors to develop viable archival programs. Efforts will be made to place materials at the Centers which will stimulate public use by genealogists and local historians.

#### LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

The Library Department under the direction of Ann Reinert, experienced another busy year of growth and service. It is estimated that the staff assisted with over 10,000 queries for information and photocopies of our materials number over 20,000 pages. Although 90 percent of the patrons who did research in the Library were Nebraskans, the other 10 percent represented 40 states and three foreign countries. Patrons interested in family history research outnumbered patrons interested in other historical research by two to one.

Curator of Photographs John Carter, reported the use of the photographic collections approached the level of the record

setting Bicentennial year. Requests for the use of our photographs came from all 50 states in the U.S. and seven foreign countries. A documentary film on photography in Nebraska called *Sandhills Album* produced by the Nebraska Educational Television Network dealt in part with the photography of Solomon D. Butcher, whose photographs make up one of our outstanding collections.

This has been a notable year for donations. five hundred volumes of western history, 192 maps and atlases, 132 family histories and other genealogical records, several thousand photographs, and 164 publications relating to Nebraska were donated.

There has been nearly 1,000 hours of volunteer time donated as well which has proved invaluable. Our volunteers contributed their time typing and filing cards, repairing library materials, and assisting with processing collections.

The Library staff presented 30 programs, workshops, and orientations to groups interested in special information about family and Nebraska historical research. In addition to representing the Society by acting as consultants they have also served as officers of professional library and museum organizations.

Former Library staff member Paul D. Riley was presented posthumously the Addison E. Sheldon Award for service to Nebraska history at the September 12 Annual Meeting at the Lincoln Hilton Hotel. Riley, a Research Associate, had worked for the Society from 1966 until his death on August 9 of this year. The James L. Sellers Award was given to Professor Arthur Bud Ogle, Northwestern University, for his prize-winning article in Volume 61 (1980) of *Nebraska History*.

#### LINCOLN MUSEUM

The Lincoln Museum under the direction of Wendell Frantz recorded an attendance of 50,385; this included 8,240 people in 200 scheduled tour groups. The Kennard house had an attendance of 17,502. The Ferguson house was visited by 10,026 people and Fairview by 3,043. The Society exhibits at the 1980 State Fair included a new exhibit on the making of the small town and an exhibit area and information desk to provide information about the Society's operations. The Heritage Village exhibit was enhanced by the display of antique small gasoline engines brought to the fair by local collectors.

As well as providing tours, the Education Department handled 1,766 pieces of mail including such things as orders for Society publications and requests for information on Nebraska history. Curator of Education, Dick Spencer, continued to direct the Junior Historian Program, which had 15 chapters with 354 members this year. KOLN-TV gave the Society the equivalent of \$2,137 in television time in running public service announcements. Mr. Spencer and Judith Fortson Jones of the Archives Department produced two slide-tape shows on paper conservation. The Curator of Education also assisted with audio-visual programming for the Lincoln Museum, special exhibits at the Ferguson House, Governor's Mansion, and State Fair this year.

The Collections Department, headed by Curator Robert Pettit logged 201 accessions from 162 donors, of which 96 were new donors to the museum. Cataloging was completed on 2,401 items during the year. Curator of Collections Gail Potter worked with 10 interns from the University of Nebraska who research various areas such as clothing fashions, the restoration of Arbor Lodge, furnishing and interior decoration of Nebraska homes in the later 1800s and early 1900s, holiday entertainment and related subjects.

Restoration of the first and second floors of the Ferguson House was completed, and the house was opened in October with the installation of the exhibit "Plain and Fancy Needle Work in Nebraska," sponsored by the Society and the Lincoln Junior League. League volunteers helped with sorting the Society's needle work collection, preparation of the exhibit, and staffing the house during the exhibition. Four thousand visitors saw the exhibit. During this time the Kennard House had a related exhibit "Wreaths, Tidies and Tussy Mussies, Victorian Fancy Work of the Home." In December an exhibit "Decorating for the Holidays" involved both the Ferguson and Kennard houses. Approximately 4,400 visitors viewed this exhibit. In March an exhibit on "New Homes in the New Century" was opened and the Ferguson House went to a regular schedule which expanded in July to match the Kennard house schedule. In April a special four-day program "Pastimes and Play Things" was held at the two houses. Almost 2,000 children and adults saw exhibits of old toys and participated in games popular in the past.

The Center for Nebraska Folklife received a grant for \$10,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Program to



*Nearly 2,000 attended "Pastimes and Playthings: A Festival of Old Toys and Games for Children" at the Kennard and Ferguson Houses in Lincoln, April 23-26. Assisting were Kennard House Curators JoAnne Kissel (with clipboard) and Janet Jeffries Spencer (not shown). . . (Below) Curator of Education Dick Spencer (left) conducts students through Lincoln Museum.*



survey four regions of the state to locate local folk artists and crafts persons. Kay Young was assigned to this project and worked out of Society Branch Museums at Red Cloud, Bancroft, Neligh, and Crawford. Following the survey there was a folklife event at each Branch Museum involving demonstrations by craft persons from the area.

The Lincoln Museum continued to be responsible for the hanging of art work in the lobby of the State Office Building.

Staff members presented a number of public programs and responded to numerous patron requests for help. Wendell Frantz assisted in the formation of the new National Roller Skating Museum in Lincoln and worked with the Jefferson County Historical Society.

#### ARCHEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The fiscal year just completed was a busy one for the staff of the Archeology Department, including Gayle Carlson, John Ludwickson, and Steven Holen. Six major projects were carried out during the period: archeological excavations at Rock Creek Station State Historical Park; archeological survey of the proposed site of a fossil fuel power plant near Comstock, Custer County; preparation of a report on the known Native American cultural resources of the new Missouri National Recreational River in northeastern Nebraska; a highway salvage excavation at Camp Newman in Cass County; and a major highway salvage excavation at two sites near Berwyn in Custer County. In addition, survey of new highway projects for archeological remains continued.

Excavations at Rock Creek Station, where David McCanles was shot and killed by Wild Bill Hickok, took place between June 3 and September 5, 1980, and again from June 1 to mid-August, 1981. Both years' excavations were supervised by Gayle Carlson, with the assistance of Thomas McGinnis. During the 1980 excavations, a building tentatively identified as the west ranch building was uncovered. Excavations revealed remains of a domestic structure which produced a wide variety of household refuse. Part of the 1980 season and the majority of the 1981 season were spent in an effort to locate structural remains at the "East Ranch" at Rock Creek. Hand excavation and large-scale stripping with a scraper failed to reveal significant archeological

remains. A ranch house, a bunk house, and a barn are known from historic records and photographs to have existed here. The existence of a later farm yard on the east side of Rock Creek, with attendant disturbance of the earth by livestock and equipment and by severe erosion, have had the effect of removing the archeological deposit on the east side. Interpretation of the site east of Rock Creek will have to depend almost entirely upon written records and photographic images.

Gayle Carlson and Tom McGinnis spent the period from September 15 to 26, 1980, executing an archeological survey of several hundred acres near Comstock, Custer County, under an agreement with the Nebraska Public Power District; NPPD is planning to place a fossil fuel power plant in the area.

John Ludwickson spent from September to March preparing a report on known Native American cultural resources in the area of the Missouri National Recreational River. Mr. Ludwickson was coordinator, and one of three co-principal investigators on this project, the other two being Professor Donald Blakeslee of Wichita State University, and Professor John O'Shea of the University of Iowa. The Missouri National Recreational River consists of a relatively unimproved stretch of the Missouri River from Ponca, Nebraska, to Gavin's Point Dam. The area will be developed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to enhance its scenic, recreational, and historic values. The work performed by the investigators entailed the discovery and documentation of all presently known Native American archeological and historic sites in northern Dixon and Cedar counties, Nebraska, and southern Union, Clay, and Yankton counties, South Dakota. A synthesis and regional overview incorporating these data were written under the terms of a contract with the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Interagency Archeological Services-Denver.

Highway Survey Archeologists Steve Holen and John Ludwickson conducted excavations on the proposed Camp Newman access road, in Cass County. Surface finds of pottery, chipped stone tools and debris, and burned clay led to the conclusion that a burned Nebraska Phase earthlodge ruin existed here. The plow zone was removed with a motor patrol along a several hundred meter long stretch of the new right-of-way but no structure could be found. It was apparent that the suspected lodge had been destroyed by over a century of cultivation and by erosion.

More productive were excavations carried out at two sites near Berwyn, Custer County. Survey of borrow pits to be used during reconstruction of Highway 2 between Berwyn and Ansley disclosed the presence of prehistoric Indian sites, two of which required extensive salvage excavations. The first, 25CU23, was excavated from late May to July, 1981. Two earthlodges, several midden or trash areas and a number of other features were excavated. The site may be classified as a Loup River Phase occupation of perhaps 750 to 600 years ago. Important collections of paleo-environmental as well as artifactual remains were saved for analysis.

The other site disturbed by this project was 25CU25. This site is an early Lower Loup Phase or prehistoric Pawnee campsite approximately 400 years old. The remains of two lightly constructed structures, probably tipis, were excavated along with extensive midden deposits. Comparison of this site with early Lower Loup Phase villages south and east of 25CU25 will aid in learning of the hunting activities of the early Pawnee.

During the past year 54 highway projects were surveyed for archeological sites; 12 sites were identified (in addition to those discussed above). Several of these are in Otoe County, south of Nebraska City near a projected highway, and at least one will require salvage.

Finally, considerable time during the past year has been spent in responding to requests for information from interested citizens and scholars. A report on the stone tools from the Schuyler site, 25CX1, was completed during the winter of 1980-81.

#### EXHIBITS DEPARTMENT

The Exhibits section under the direction of Eli Paul with the assistance of Herb Thomas is responsible for the design and production of all museum exhibits for the Society. Its staff consists of seven persons: the Curator of Exhibits, three artists, two draftsmen, and a photographer.

A total of 104 display units were completed. Major exhibit projects included the Dredge *Lewis*, new displays for the two mobile museums now permanently stationed at Heritage Village on the State Fairgrounds, and numerous temporary exhibits prepared for the Kennard and Ferguson houses. Also, Curator of

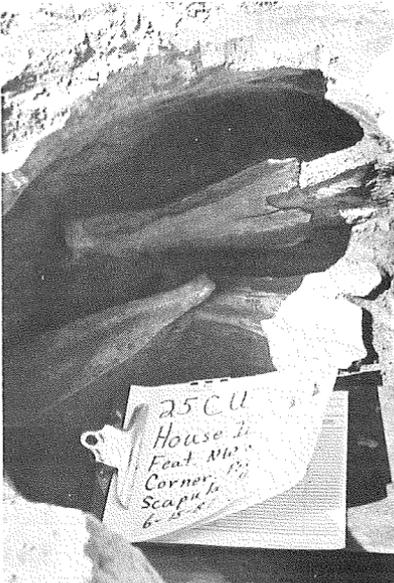


*Society Research Anthropologist Gayle Carlson (not shown) participated in excavations at Rock Creek Station, Jefferson County, undertaken by the Society and State Game and Parks Commission. . . (Below) During the year 104 displays were completed by the Exhibits department: Curt Peacock (seated), artist; Steve Ryan (standing at left), Ed Bukacek, draftsman; Herb Thomas, artist; Eli Paul, curator of exhibits; Margaret Lange, CETA trainee; Alice Filbert, artist; Ken Kopta, photographer.*





*Highway Salvage Archeologists John Ludwickson and Steve Holen (not shown) supervised this Custer County excavation (25CU23) along highway 2 near Berwyn.*



*Cache pit at 25CU23 with bison scapula hoes.*

Exhibits Eli Paul helped develop a preliminary exhibit plan for the new museum. In addition numerous signs, maps, flyers, and drawings were produced for other Society departments. Photographer Kenneth Kopta was present at a number of Society gatherings to make a record of the events.

We continue, although in a smaller way, our help to outside groups engaged in museum display work. Technical assistance was given to the Nebraska Farmers Union on the installation of their traveling exhibit, "The American Farm," at the State Fair.

Increased staffing and equipment purchases this past year have been planned with an expectant eye to our eventual move to the new museum. As our preparations for this move continue, the Exhibits Department looks forward to the prospect of working on the exhibits for the new museum.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The State Office of Historic Preservation headed by Richard Jensen and assisted by David Murphy has undergone some major changes during the 1981 fiscal year. In November, 1980, the office was moved to temporary quarters in the Heritage Center (the former Elks Building). Another move to the State Office Building will be necessary when renovation of the Heritage Center begins in the near future.

In December, Architectural Historian Daniel Kidd resigned to take a position with the planning department of the City of Lincoln. On June 30, 1981, two staff members were transferred to other positions within the Historical Society. Grants Administrator William F. Munn became the Curator of Branch Museums and Historian Janet Jeffries Spencer became the Curator of the Kennard House. Some of these actions resulted from the uncertainty of future federal funding.

The survey of architectural/historical sites during July and August of 1980 continued with a major effort in Platte, Colfax, Saunders, and Butler counties. Survey work during the following summer was very limited in anticipation of a reduction in the program's federal appropriation.

Seventeen properties in Nebraska were enrolled in the National Register of Historic Places during the past year. Several other nominations were prepared before the passage of the



*Survey Associate Joni Gilkerson (right) discusses survey cataloging procedures with volunteer Mary Lynn Forst. . . . (Below) Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Richard E. Jensen confers with Preservation Secretary Deb Buchholz McWilliams.*



National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980. The act directs the Secretary of the Interior to promulgate regulations allowing property owners a period of time to concur in the nomination of a property to the National Register. Until these regulations are forthcoming submission of nominations for privately owned properties will be withheld.

Grants-in-aid for the National Register properties declined again this year to \$225,000. This was the lowest amount since fiscal 1977. These funds were allocated on a matching basis to owners of National Register sites for preservation and restoration, and have helped to preserve many important historical sites throughout the state. At present it seems unlikely Congress will allocate funds for a continuation of this portion of the program but we are still hopeful of some federal funds to provide for staffing.

#### BRANCH MUSEUMS

The number of Branch Museums headed by Bill Munn, and assisted by Ron Kivett, was reduced by two from the previous year, when the Mobile Museums were removed from Interstate 80, so our total attendance figures were affected slightly by that move. Attendance at the remaining eight branches was 129,093, which is an increase of 0.7 percent.

The Neihardt Historical Center at Bancroft is directed by John Lindahl. Attendance at the Center showed a 6 percent increase over the previous year. Special displays and events included the John Anderson photographs, "Dreams in Dry Places" and a photo exhibit of Mona Martinsen Neihardt's sculpture work. The 15th annual Neihardt Day celebration featured Vine Deloria, Jr., noted Indian author, and in May the Neihardt Centennial Symposium was held. Curator John Lindahl continued the monthly radio series over WJAG, Norfolk.

At Neligh Mill in Neligh Curator Tom Buecker continues to investigate and record mill sites throughout the state, and had a related article published by the Society for Industrial Archeology. The mill was included in the "Know Nebraska" tour this past year. Special exhibits included "Dreams in Dry Places" and wildlife paintings sponsored by the local Arts Council. Updating of exhibits has continued as additional artifacts and materials have been donated, enhancing our interpretation of the mill.



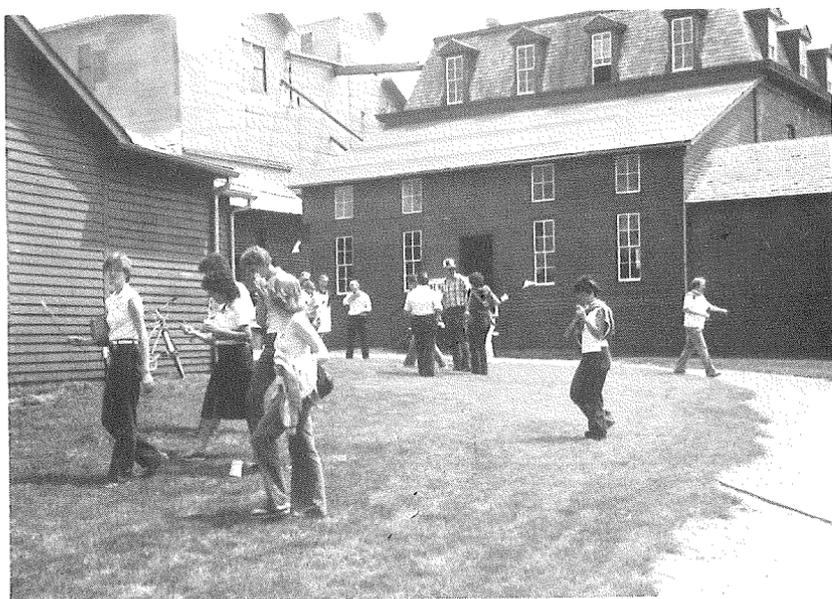
*Actor Slim Pickens toured the Veterinary Hospital at Fort Robinson in July. The building contained a display of movie posters. . . (Below) Workmen proceed with foundation stabilization on the Post Engineers' Building.*





*Society employees Denzle Minyard (left) and Barbara Jones (center) demonstrate pioneer laundry techniques during July 4 festivities at Fort Robinson. . . . (Below) Barbara Jones makes soap at the fort.*





*Nebraska vacation guides toured Neligh Mill May 26.*



*Dan McPherson (left) of General Mills presents Curator Tom Buecker with a "Gold Medal" flour sack. This brand, once manufactured at Neligh, in 1940 was sold to General Mills. Courtesy Neligh News and Leader.*

Attendance was just over 5,500, about the same as last year.

*Fort Robinson—Crawford, Nebraska*—The interpretation of Fort Robinson headed by Vance Nelson, in cooperation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, continues to be a very popular attraction. A variety of activities ranging from the annual school field day to special exhibits such as the Western Art Show contributed to total attendance of 70,000 plus visitors this past year. A special display in June was the Western Movies Poster Exhibit in conjunction with the Society Spring Meeting June 14, at which Robert (Red) Fenwick, *Denver Post* writer, made the principal address, in addition to his interpretive duties. Curator Vance Nelson supervised restoration activities on the Veterinary Hospital, Post Engineers' Building and Harness Repair/Blacksmith Shops. This work was funded by the State Deferred Building Renewal Task Force and federal funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior. Steps are also being taken to provide barrier free access to more of the Fort's historic buildings.

The *Captain Meriwether Lewis* Museum of Missouri River History at Brownville was dedicated in June, 1981, with Governor Thone heading the program. The *Lewis* continues to be a major visitor attraction with 22,395 for the year. Work continues on interior restoration as funds and staff time permit. Visitors are now able to tour the upper decks which are being fitted with exhibits. We now have a water supply to the boat which allows for more efficient cleaning and some fire-fighting capacity. At the end of the year, Captain Raymond Holland retired as Curator and was replaced by Carl Jones.

Activities at the Willa Cather Historical Center this past year included a folk arts festival during Red Cloud Streetcar Days, an art workshop in cooperation with the Nebraska Arts Council and the Cather Foundation, the annual Spring Conference and a National Conference on Willa Cather. Curator Ann Billesbach assisted in the listing of Cather-related properties in the National Register of Historic Places and the placement of historical markers at four Center properties. Also showing interest in the Cather sites were the publishers of *Ford Times*, *Cobblestone*, *National Geographic*, and *British Vogue*, all of whom have published or will feature articles on Cather. Attendance for the year was nearly 9,000.

Senator George Norris House attendance at McCook increased over the past year by about 18 percent, with a total of



*The Willa Cather Historical Center, Red Cloud, which includes the Cather childhood home (above), was the site of the May 2 Cather conference, attended by over 300 persons. Courtesy Hastings Tribune . . . (Below) Governor Charles Thone presents proclamation August 2 at Neihardt Day festivities, Bancroft. Courtesy Dick Manley, Wayne State College.*



2,513. Curator Robert Ray has improved the appearance of the property by rebuilding the fence and rejuvenating the lawn.

Court House/Jail Rocks and Chimney Rock Trailer Museums again were operated through the summer months at these landmarks. Road construction during the summer of 1981 had some effect on visitation, which was 10,783 at Chimney Rock and 3,296 at Court House and Jail Rocks.

I'm sure that this report suggests a busy year. However, it is evident that the next two or three years will be even more busy. In our long-range plans it is expected that the museum program with its Lincoln staff will be moved into the former Lincoln Elks Building, with a doubling of the present available space. It is expected that renovation of the present Society Building will be completed for an expanded use by the Library, Archives, and Administrative divisions.

Through the years, and now, the Society has been fortunate in having dedicated leaders of the state on its executive board. Improvements by the Society to be provided by state appropriations have always come slowly. The situation of the Society today is somewhat similar to that when I first joined the staff on a permanent basis in 1949. Then as now we are deeply involved in plans for a new building to better preserve our history and to serve the people of Nebraska. With your support we will accomplish this goal.

I must note that now we have a helping hand in meeting this goal. The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation headed by E. J. Faulkner, President, has given increasing support to Society activities. This is made possible from donations and bequests from the people of our state. We are still a modest foundation in terms of assets. However, during the past two years the Foundation has made definite contributions in a number of areas. It has provided some funds for the *Meriwether Lewis* Dredge at Brownville and the Ferguson House in Lincoln. It has contributed to a grant with the National Endowment for the Humanities to historian Merrill J. Mattes for a search and definitive study of Oregon Trail journals. It has funded a Carl T. Curtis exhibit at Pioneer Village in Minden. The Foundation is in the process of purchasing a 283 acre farm in Webster County which is the site of a Republican Pawnee Indian village visited by Lieutenant Zebulon Pike in 1806. It has set up a special fund to be utilized in the new museum. We particularly welcome your support in this area.



*The Schuyler City Hall, Schuyler, Colfax County, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. The two-story masonry structure was designed in 1907-1908 by Joseph P. Guth.*

The book *Bartlett Richards, Nebraska Sandhills Cattleman*, published by the Foundation, was judged the best non-fiction book of the year by the Western Heritage Association, and the Society and its authors received Wrangler Awards from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. Editing the book for the Society were Historian L. G. DeLay and Editorial Assistant Patricia Gaster.

During the past year the Foundation received bequests from the late Edith Neale of Fort Calhoun, and Mathilde Steckelberg estates. Many other donations were made with the largest coming from the James M. Paxson Foundation. With your help we can all do more to make our membership and the citizens of Nebraska aware of the Foundation. It is deserving of your consideration.