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Article Summary: This presentation, by Marvin F Kivette, Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society in 1975, reviews the year's activities. It discusses various meetings, the Lincoln Museum, branch museums, historic preservation program, State Archives, and the Library. Many photos of staff and patrons and supporters accompany the article.



*The lack of parking near the Society's Lincoln Museum makes it very difficult for school groups to visit the building.*



*Eric S. McCready, director of the Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin at Madison, made the principal address at the Annual Fall Meeting in the Lincoln Hilton.*

# **THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

## **IN 1975**

By MARVIN F. KIVETT, *Director*

Presented at the Annual Meeting in Lincoln, September 6, 1975

As we stand on the threshold of the Nation's Bicentennial, it is evident that Nebraskans, like most others in our nation, are becoming increasingly aware of our history and the need for its preservation and interpretation. In Nebraska this may in part be a result of the various milestones or centennials observed in recent years starting with the Territorial Centennial in 1954 and the State Centennial in 1967. Community and county centennials have been observed, starting in 1954 and progressing westward to mark the pattern of settlement in the state, with others yet to be noted. There is no evidence that this interest in local and state history will decrease. Your State Society will observe its centennial in 1978, and it will be appropriate that this occasion be observed.

As we review the progress of the Society this past year, one must conclude that our major problem remains, that of building expansion to provide adequate space to carry out the required functions of the Society. The past year saw little measurable progress toward our goal of preparing plans for the construction of a Historical Heritage Center adjacent to the Capitol. The 1973 Legislature in passing L.B. 704 designated the Nebraska Historical Heritage Block for this purpose. Almost every phase of Society activity is limited by inadequate space. It is essential that state government take steps to bring about the additional space. There is not only a need for additional space to construct an exhibits building, but of perhaps greater urgency is the need for adequate space for the State Archives. This is a

critical need and is long overdue. It would be most appropriate if positive steps could be taken in 1976 to realize this historical goal. Soon we shall be forced to drastically curtail the accessions for the State Archives. Such steps have already been taken in the case of the museum program.

Interest in the work of the Society remains high. Despite an increase from \$2.00 to \$3.00 for annual membership, we still recorded a slight increase over that of last year. The most notable gain in support has been in the Contributing membership. One of our important goals is to encourage effective historical organizations on the county or local level. This program has been most effective, with many local organizations now carrying out comprehensive programs. An important factor here may be the willingness of the local taxpayer to aid in the support of such organizations. During the last two years, buildings designed for historical work and individuals trained for that role are developing throughout the state.

The administrative division of the Society has had a busy year. Leigh DeLay, with limited staff, has not only found time for the editing of regular publications but has also contributed to such special projects as the Woods Fellowship Grants and work on the reprinting of the 1882 *History of Nebraska* by Alfred T. Andreas. A number of archeological publications have also been prepared for publication. A comprehensive report of archeological excavations carried out by the Society at the site of Fort Atkinson during six seasons of field work by Gayle Carlson is presently in process of publication.

The weekly "Out of Old Nebraska" newspaper columns are now in their twenty-ninth year. The definitive study by Professor Everett N. Dick "Conquering the Great American Desert" will soon be available as Volume XXVII of the Society *Publications Series*. Your Executive Board has also approved the publication of "The Letters of Bartlett Richards, Pioneer Cowman," which has been edited by Nellie Snyder Yost and Ruth Van Ackeren. In reaching a decision to publish these letters, your Executive Board noted that the full details of this pioneering effort have not been fully recognized.

An increasing workload for the Administrative division has been that of the Director also serving in the position of State

Historic Preservation Officer for purposes of all federal laws and environmental impact statements. During the past year the transfer of federal historic property to local adaptive use, such as Fort Omaha and the Federal Building in Norfolk, has involved the Society. As of this date our efforts and those of the Iowa Historical Society to retain the cargo of the 1865 Steamboat *Bertrand* in the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge have received good support from our congressional delegations, and we are hopeful of success.

The Spring Meeting hosted this year by the Dawson County Historical Society in Lexington was the occasion for the presentation of the Addison E. Sheldon Memorial Award to Paul and Helen Henderson of Bridgeport. The trail history of Nebraska was a subject of dedicated interest to Dr. Sheldon. It is therefore appropriate that the Hendersons' pioneering studies of the trails be recognized. We were fortunate to have Merrill Mattes, author of *The Great Platte River Road*, as speaker on this occasion.

Our statistics continue to increase. If you found our phone was busy it was because we were receiving 11,396 phone calls and at the same time processing 19,295 items of mail. The staff was involved in 449 meetings as compared to 346 for last year.

As Director of your Society, I have continued to serve on a variety of boards and commissions. Among these are the Hall of Fame Commission, the Bicentennial Commission, the Hall of Agricultural Achievement, the State Records Board and others. An important study which can have lasting impact on the historical resources of Nebraska is presently being carried out by historian Merrill Mattes for the State of Nebraska. Representatives from four departments of state government including the University of Nebraska, Department of Economic Development, State Game and Parks Commission, and the State Historical Society serve on an advisory board for the study which is to be presented to the Governor and the Legislature.

The Historical Markers program which is coordinated by the Administrative program processed fifteen orders for historical markers with subjects ranging from the Golden Link of I-80 to Ak-Sar-Ben Field and the U.S. Mail. A number of markers were ordered in cooperation with the Department of Roads and



*Guests at the Fall Meeting register with Jackie Goldsmith and Dorothy Jackson, Society Secretaries.*



*Society Treasurer Arthur Carmody, Trenton, makes his Annual Report at the Fall Business Meeting. At left are Nellie Snyder Yost, President, North Platte, and Marvin F. Kivett, Director.*



*A panel discussion on local historical society programs in Nebraska was arranged by State Archivist James E. Potter (at microphone) for the Fall Meeting.*



*Eric S. McCready (left) is presented the James L. Sellers Award by Maurice S. Hevelone, Beatrice, President of the Society Foundation; Dr. George C. Frison (right), University of Wyoming anthropologist, receives Asa T. Hill Award from Board Members Charles C. Osborne, Hastings, and Nellie Snyder Yost.*

Tommy Thompson, coordinator for that department. This excellent program has provided for historic markers in I-80 Rest Areas and Scenic Overlooks. Many other historic markers are sponsored by local historical organizations and service groups. The total number stood at 178 on June 30 of this year. Rising costs have forced us to seek other styles of markers which utilize a masonry base and less metal.

Your Society operates with four major programs including Administration, State Archives, Library, and Museum. A growing activity is that of the Historic Preservation program.

#### LINCOLN MUSEUM

The Lincoln Museum, under the immediate supervision of Wendell Frantz, continues to have major problems not only in lack of space for exhibit and acquisition of specimens but also in the almost total lack of parking space for museum visitors. The attendance for this year was 47,432 compared to 45,732 for last year.

It should be noted that the Lincoln museum staff provides all display work and recording of collections for exhibit at the six branch museums and at the three mobile museum trailers. In addition, the staff provides consulting services for displays in local communities. Special seasonal exhibits at the Thomas P. Kennard House in Lincoln included a Victorian Christmas and June Wedding of the 1890 period which resulted in an increased visitation; in all, 9,383 persons visited the Kennard House. Last year we were forced to convert the auditorium in the Society Headquarters to office space, and this has resulted in a greater use of gallery talks or lectures. A total of 10,252 visitors in 295 groups were given special tours. The museum and its Educational Division has increased its service to Nebraska teachers in the form of Educational Packets and in consultation on Bicentennial projects for classroom use. Special programs were provided at teachers' workshops and college classes on the use of the Society museum as a teaching aid.

Special exhibits were prepared for the Chautauqua '75 shows, a Statehood Day display at the Capitol, and a special display of the Art of Thomas B. Johnson, whose collection was recently donated to the Society. The museum staff also assisted in the

project to develop the Historical Heritage display at the State Fairgrounds. On view for the first stage of the project is the Hudson log cabin and a one-room schoolhouse. The problem of a lack of space cannot be stressed too much. Presently there is inadequate space for constructing displays in the Society's workrooms, and collection-storage space is filled to near capacity. In addition, materials are stored at some six other locations in the vicinity of Lincoln and at Fort Robinson. We have reached the point where we ask, "Is it larger than a bread box?"

Our museum collections, as well as those at other locations, are receiving increased national attention. This year the museum loaned some 120 items to twenty-two institutions. Among those who borrowed items were the Boston Museum of Fine Arts for its traveling exhibit, "Frontier Times." Other items were made available to the American Freedom Train and the Mid-American Arts Alliance exhibit, "Quilts from Nebraska Collections."

### BRANCH MUSEUMS

Museum operations outside Lincoln are supervised by Curator Carl Jones. They include the seasonal operations at the George W. Norris Home in McCook, Neligh Mills at Neligh, Mud Springs near Sidney, the John G. Neihardt Center at Bancroft, and Chimney Rock near Bayard. The Society also operates three mobile museum trailers, with one being near Chimney Rock, one at the Maxwell I-80 Rest area, and the third at the Phillips I-80 Rest area east of Grand Island. The major branch operation is at Fort Robinson near Crawford, where the operations are headed by Vance Nelson, Curator. Here the Society is responsible for historic interpretation and has direct responsibility for a total of eleven buildings, as well as for the Red Cloud Indian Agency area and Post Cemetery. A recent agreement between the state agencies involved has served to more fully define the roles of the various agencies at the post.

This year marked the twentieth year of responsibilities by the Society at Fort Robinson, the Museum having been dedicated the spring of 1956. The Society had been directed by the 1955 Legislature to establish a western branch of the Society at Fort Robinson.



*At the Spring Meeting on June 14 in Lexington, the speaker was Merrill Mattes (left), Littleton, Colo. Others (from left): Mrs. Paul Henderson, Mrs. James Rawley; Paul Henderson; James Rawley, Lincoln, Board Member; Mrs. Nellie Snyder Yost, North Platte, Society President. The Hendersons of Bridgeport received the Addison E. Sheldon Memorial Award for service to Plains history.*



*Others at the head table at the Lexington banquet were (from left) Mrs. Arthur Carmody; Board Members, Arthur Carmody, Trenton, and Charles Osborne, Hastings; Wylie Ward and President Henry Orthman of the Dawson County Historical Society.*



*The William H. Ferguson Mansion near the Capitol in Lincoln has been transferred by the state to the Society for preservation and maintenance. The historic old structure (built 1909) is entered on the National Register of Historic Places.*



*The Hudson Log Cabin, one of Lincoln's earliest dwellings, was restored this year at the State Fairgrounds in cooperation with the State Fair Board as a memorial to pioneer settlers.*

This is also the first year that major steps have been taken to carry out restoration work. Some \$50,000 for this purpose was appropriated by the State, with an additional amount of some \$50,000 being provided by the National Park Service. A second appropriation this year of \$50,000 if passed by the Legislature and approved by Governor Exon will permit us to continue this restoration work. Major emphasis with the present appropriation will be directed toward the Veterinary Hospital building and its use as a Museum of the Horse.

Visitation at the Fort Robinson Headquarters Museum numbered 32,425, and a total of 18,337 visitors were counted at the other buildings. These include the Blacksmith Shop, Harness Repair, Wheelwright, Bandmasters' Quarters, an 1887 Officers' Adobe Duplex, and the 1874 reconstructed Guardhouse and the Adjutant's Office of that period. The second annual School Field Trip Day resulted in some 1,200 students and teachers of the area viewing various Fort-related activities. The interest and visitations at the Fort have increased each year and may be expected to follow a similar pattern in the future.

Major restoration work at the Neligh Mills has continued with a combination of state and federal funds. A project carried out this year was the excavation and reconstruction of the mill race, which will serve to demonstrate the importance of water in such pioneer industries. A total of 2,974 visitors toured the Mill this last year, an increase of 11.5 percent over last year.

A major branch development is the John G. Neihardt Center now under construction. This project is being completed in cooperation with the John G. Neihardt Foundation through a \$200,000 state appropriation. Under the provisions of the law, the Society will directly administer the Center with the close cooperation of the Neihardt Foundation.

In summary, a total of 109,167 persons visited the Society operations at various Nebraska locations out of Lincoln. This represents a 5 percent increase over last year and has served to bring the Society services into an expanding geographical area. Presently Fort Robinson is the only branch to operate with a full-time staff. It is expected that the present appropriation will also provide for permanent staff at the Neihardt Center and at the Neligh Mills.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Although much remains to be done, the Historic Preservation Program under the immediate supervision of Tim Turner has made substantial progress during fiscal 1974-1975. For the first time the Society has developed a methodology for a comprehensive professional survey of historic and architectural sites on a county-by-county basis. These expanded efforts are due to a great extent to the addition of Historian Janet Jeffries and Architect David Murphy to the preservation staff.

During the year a massive reorganization effort was initiated to put existing records and photographs into an easily retrievable format. A method for cross-referencing photographs, maps, slides, and historical resource files was established. Staff members going into the field are thus aware of all resources available and the integration of new materials gathered through survey efforts is thus simplified.

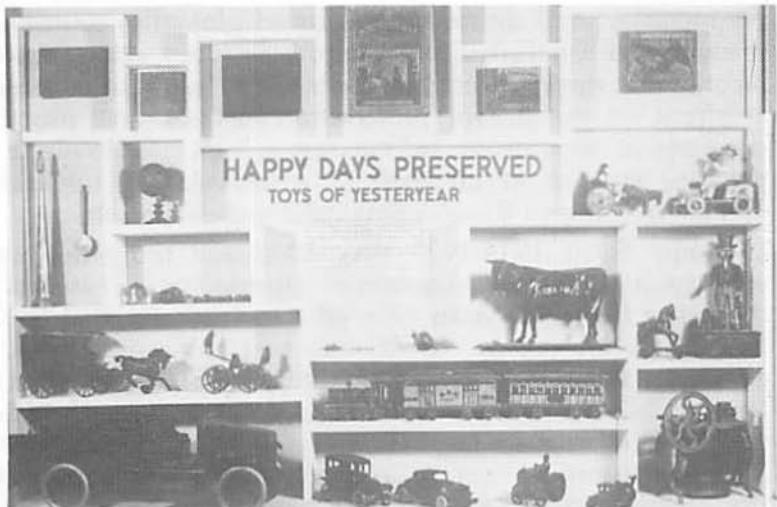
Field surveys were completed during the fiscal year in Cheyenne and Hall counties. In addition, surveys were conducted for towns in Knox and Dixon counties and in Nebraska City, Tecumseh, Syracuse, and parts of Lincoln. Properties were photographed and mapped. On selected properties courthouse research was conducted, using mortgage, deed, and assessor's records. All survey efforts are designed to place an increasing emphasis on the role of preservation in the overall planning processes of government. Information will be made available to planning agencies at all levels of government. A substantial number of National Register nominations should result.

During fiscal 1974-1975 fifty additional properties were enrolled in the National Register of Historic Places as compared to twenty for the previous year. Of these, seven related to historic white archeology, twenty-one to historic or prehistoric aboriginal archeology, seven to history, and fifteen to architecture. Included was the enrollment of Arbor Lodge and other properties relating to J. Sterling Morton at Nebraska City as a National Historic Landmark. This nomination was prepared by the American Association for State and Local History in consultation with the Society staff.

The Grants-in-Aid program has markedly increased in recent



*Each year scores of school groups tour the Museum in Lincoln. Here youngsters in the Indian Gallery watch a slide show as Guide David Waskowiak talks on Nebraska history.*



*Society Museum personnel are constantly arranging new displays for the cases in the halls of the Society. In the "Collector's Lane" area an especially popular one has been "Toys of Yesteryear" (above).*



*A special "Victorian Wedding" exhibit at the Society's Kennard House in Lincoln increased attendance during June and July.*



*Gail Potter, Museum Registrar, works in cramped quarters cataloging recent accessions to the Museum. Storage space increasingly becomes a problem.*

years. For Fiscal Year 1972-1973 the Society received an appropriation from the National Park Service of \$79,332; in Fiscal 1973-1974 funding was increased to \$102,200. For Fiscal Year 1974-1975 the Society received an appropriation of \$233,316. Projects have ranged from large restorations conducted by the Society at Neligh Mill and Fort Robinson to a \$5,300 grant to the Western Heritage Society for the preparation of plans and specifications relating to the restoration of Omaha's Union Passenger Terminal. Other projects initiated during the year included work on the Episcopal Church of Our Most Merciful Saviour on the Santee Reservation in Knox County, painting of the Thomas P. Kennard House (Nebraska Statehood Memorial) in Lincoln, restoration of the Woral C. Smith Limestone House near Fairbury, and the Holt County Historical Society's acquisition of the old Nebraska State Bank building in O'Neill (Moses P. Kinkaid Law Offices).

In addition to these efforts, a number of other important activities have been conducted during the past fiscal year. Ronald L. Kivett, archeologist, assisted Ronald C. Corbyn of the National Park Service in establishing the boundaries of Nebraska's National Historic Landmark Archeological Sites. The staff has reviewed an increasing number of A-95 and environmental impact statements during the past year, creating a burden on staff time in some cases.

The Society has expanded its contacts with other organizations who are participating or interested in historic preservation. The Society's annual meeting featured workshop sessions in historic preservation for local historical societies. In November, 1974, the Society co-sponsored an Omaha conference with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Omaha Landmarks, and other interested groups. The Society has worked closely with Professor Keith Sawyers of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln toward the publication of a guidebook to Nebraska architecture. Contacts have been made with the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Society of Interior Designers, and the Association for Preservation Technology.

Some problems have been encountered in the program. Because of a negative Attorney General's ruling, it has been deter-

mined that the Society does not have the authority to transfer Grants-in-Aid funds to properties enrolled in the National Register which are in private ownership. A second problem has been the assignment of responsibility for surveys when there is not sufficient information in an environmental impact or A-95 review statement to determine if potential National Register properties will be affected by a federal project. Emergency surveys are becoming necessary more often as review responsibilities expand. If the Society is to accept responsibility for surveys, increased staffing will be necessary.

#### STATE ARCHIVES

The Archives, under the direction of James E. Potter, also has major space problems. In a sense these are more acute, since their responsibilities are perhaps more specifically defined by law and such records may be more unique or one of a kind.

The addition of a fourth archivist to the professional staff in fiscal 1974-1975 has enabled the State Archives program to devote increased attention to its primary responsibility for the accession, arrangement, and description of public records and manuscript collections documenting every aspect of Nebraska's history. Unfortunately, secure archival storage within the Society headquarters is exhausted and only the acquisition of costly rented facilities has enabled the continued preservation of historical and archival materials as directed by statute. The use of outside storage areas creates access problems for the staff and the public, provides only marginal security and environmental control, and makes appeals to donors for the deposit of personal papers and manuscripts increasingly difficult. Moreover, rented facilities for archival preservation can be regarded only as a short-term solution to the critical space problem that all divisions of the Society now face. Beginning in the next fiscal year, accessions of records may in some cases be deferred until a building expansion becomes a reality.

Despite the difficulty of securing adequate storage and working space, the efforts of the State Archives staff have resulted in the accession of several significant collections and record groups. On January 15, 1975, a formal agreement was signed authorizing the transfer to the Archives of the "Boston and New York



*The restored Neligh Mills in Antelope County on the Elkhorn River is one of the Society's branch museums. The mill operated between 1874 and 1956.*



*Reconstructed during 1975 was the Neligh Mills millrace, designed to carry water to the turbine which developed power to run grinding machinery between 1899 and 1920.*



*Completed during 1975 was the Neihardt Center at Bancroft, a Society-administered museum built as a memorial to John G. Neihardt, Nebraska Poet Laureate from 1921 until his death in 1973.*



*Daughters of the Poet Laureate, Hilda Petri (front) and Alice Thompson, both of Columbia, Missouri, take part in ceremonies at the Neihardt Center.*

Papers," 1863-1894, of the Union Pacific Railroad. These papers reflect the early history of the Union Pacific and its branches and deal with such diverse topics as government regulation of railroads, development of natural resources, land policy, state and national politics, community building, labor history, and technological development. Although the "Boston and New York Papers" will not be made available for research immediately, pending the completion of a microfilming project, they represent an important future source for historical research.

Manuscript Curator David Hoober has written or personally visited many individuals or organizations seeking personal papers and business or institutional records for preservation within the Manuscript Division. Aside from the Union Pacific Railroad papers, other important manuscript accessions in 1974-1975 have include the papers of Clarence Davis, attorney and former Under-Secretary of the Interior in the first Eisenhower administration; Congressional files of David Martin from Nebraska's 3rd District, 1970-74; corporate papers of the Kilpatrick Brothers, Beatrice contractors and railroad builders, c. 1879-1950; the Cather family letters, 1870-1877, relating to the Cathers' early Webster County years; scrapbooks documenting the career of Congressman Harry B. Coffee, 1935-1943; and the Ray Page-Lincoln Aircraft Company aviation scrapbook, 1925-1966, which was made available for microfilming.

Archivist Anne P. Diffendal, who joined the staff in September, 1974, has devoted much of her time to internal processing or re-organization within the Manuscript Division. Major collections which were arranged for research during the year have included the Otto Liebers papers (State Legislator, 1951-1959, and dairyman); the J. J. Waldron papers (State Legislator, 1967-1974); the Dan V. Stephens papers (U.S. Congressman, 1911-1917); the P. S. Vig Danish immigration collection; and the records of the Crete Mills, Crete, Nebraska, 1883-1926.

By law, the State Archives is responsible for the preservation of non-current records from state and local government which may have historical, archival, or legal value. Such records contain important information about the ongoing operations of government and how government activities affect the rights and privileges of the citizen. Assistant State Archivist Donald

Snoddy has visited eleven county courthouses since July 1, 1974, and arranged for the transfer into archival custody of nearly 1,400 cubic feet of valuable records from thirty-two state and local agencies. Accessions of public records have included Kimball County assessment schedules, 1908-1960, and tax lists, 1887-1953; Chase County tax lists, 1886-1961; Dodge County court records, 1868-1948, and tax lists, 1869-1962; Sarpy County tax lists, 1859-1967; Cass County tax lists, 1858-1950; and Polk County assessment schedules, 1882-1955. A major accession of state records was the journals of the Nebraska Workmen's Compensation Court, 1937-1957.

Along with the preservation of original records, some 1,834 reels of security microfilm from local and state agencies were deposited with the State Archives last year. These are master negative microfilm copies of public records. The microfilm is preserved for security purposes at no cost to the creating agency. Since 1970, 7,370 reels of microfilm have been stored in secure, climate-controlled facilities for permanent storage.

Inventory and accession of local records has proceeded through close cooperation between the State Archives and the Records Management Division, Office of Secretary of State. In many cases personnel from both agencies work together in courthouses or offices. Their efforts have resulted in the disposal of hundreds of cubic feet of worthless records and the transfer of important archival materials into the State Archives. The public official receives assistance in the lawful disposition of his records, acquires much-needed storage for current records, and has assurance that the permanently valuable materials will be well preserved within the Archives where they can be made available to his office or to the public. Public inquiries or agency requests for information from public records are a routine aspect of the State Archives' total program of service to government and the citizen.

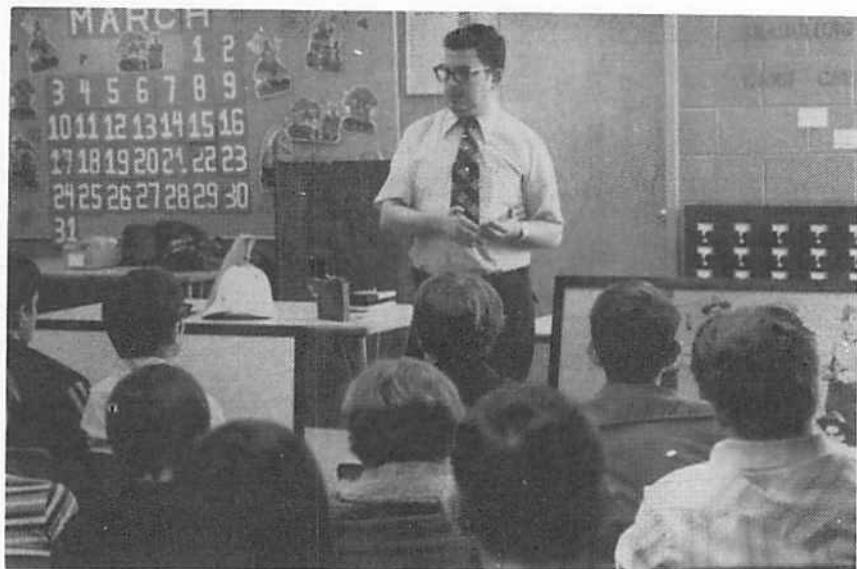
The Archives, through its Microfilm Division, also provides limited microfilming services to local government. City council minutes, county board proceedings, and abstracts of election are borrowed, microfilmed, and returned to the agency of origin. The filming is completed at no cost to the agency, provides security for the original record, and results in a centralized



*An agreement between state agencies at Fort Robinson provides for the Society to start work on the Veterinary Hospital Building. The Legislature has appropriated \$50,000 for this purpose to be matched with federal funds.*



*During Field Day in the spring of 1975 hundreds of school pupils from three states toured Fort Robinson. Bill Dodd, wheelwright, explains the craft to students.*



*Curator Vance Nelson of the Fort Robinson Museum talks to a class in the public schools at Hemingford.*



*Near the site of the famous landmark Chimney Rock, rural Bayard, the Society operates a Mobile Museum during the tourist season.*

research collection for local history. During the last year county board proceedings or election records were filmed from Dodge County, 1881-1949; Polk County, 1881-1966; Lincoln County, 1866-1974; Perkins County, 1888-1974; and Kimball County, 1889-1970. City Council minutes of Weeping Water, 1953-1961; and Lincoln, 1871-1974, were also microfilmed.

The State Archivist and the Director of the Society are permanent members of the State Records Board which oversees the retention and disposal of public records under Nebraska's Records Management Statutes. The Board meets periodically to develop retention and disposal schedules and the State Archivist must, by law, be given the opportunity to review for possible accession all records prior to their disposal. During the last year the State Archivist and the staff have reviewed some 450 individual applications for records action.

Activities of the Microfilm Division during the year have been highlighted by the elimination of the backlog of master negative microfilm reels which had remained within the division since the 1950's. Only six years ago some 4,558 reels of irreplaceable negatives were still stored in the Society building because of the lack of funds to produce duplicate positive copies for reference use. During this time potential deterioration or damage to these negatives was a constant concern. Since 1969 approximately \$30,000 has been expended to alleviate this problem and all master negatives are now stored off-premises at the Micro-Photo Division of Bell and Howell Company. Negative film from current production is sent to Bell and Howell for duplication and storage each month so that another backlog will not be allowed to accumulate.

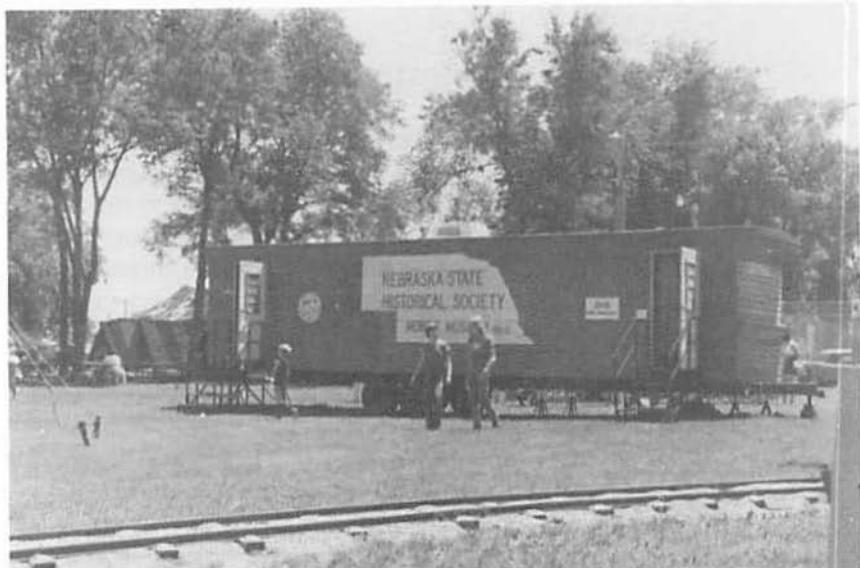
Our efforts to acquire a complete file of the microfilm edition of the *Omaha World-Herald* continue. The Microfilm Division purchases commercially produced film of this newspaper in lieu of more costly filming of our own files now stored within the Archives. Last year, microfilm spanning the period 1925-1938 was purchased. In 1975-1976 additional purchases may nearly complete the film holdings of the sunrise edition of the *World-Herald*. As the microfilm is received, the original newspapers are replaced, thus opening space in the stack areas for storage of manuscript collections and public records.

According to Microfilm Supervisor JoLeen Smith there has been a 10 percent increase in the number of patrons using the microfilm collection during the past year. Genealogists, students, local historians, and professional scholars find much important information within the extensive files of Nebraska newspapers, public records or manuscripts, census and military records, and the U.S. Land Records, all of which are available on microfilm. The division receives numerous telephone inquiries and 7,687 hard-copy prints were made directly from microfilm in response to public or staff requests.

Since 1953 the Society has been the sole agency which microfilms Nebraska's weekly newspapers for permanent preservation. The newspaper collection, dating from 1854 to the present, is an important source for local history, vital statistics, and other legal data, much of which is available nowhere else. Continued filming of newspapers will remain the primary goal of the Microfilm Division. Most publishers have been extremely cooperative over the years by providing copies of each issue of their newspaper for microfilming purposes. Many editors or local historical societies later purchase microfilm copies from the Society to be used for reference purposes. Major newspaper titles microfilmed during the year have included the *Omaha Evening Bee*, 1914-1937; *Den Danske Pioneer*, Omaha, 1887-1959; *Beatrice Daily Express*, 1886-1902; *Dawson County Pioneer*, 1874-1937; *Waverly Watchman*, 1892-1934; *Humphrey Democrat*, 1888-1917; and the *Sumner News*, 1914-1939. In all, fourteen major titles and numerous shorter files, comprising 752 reels of microfilm, were completed.

Printed state documents and reports are also being microfilmed as part of the State Archives' responsibility for the permanent preservation of public records. By law the Archives preserves two copies of each state publication but deterioration of the often poor-quality paper record dictates that such publications be microfilmed for security. The Microfilm Division has completed filming the *Nebraska Blue Book*, 1899-1972; Annual and Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General, 1871-1974; and the Biennial Reports of the Nebraska State Treasurer, 1868-1972, during 1974-1975.

In April, 1975, completion of a reel-by-reel inventory of the



*One of the Society's Mobile Museums followed the Nebraska University-sponsored Chautauqua on its tour in the summer of 1975. The shows played in Chadron, Scottsbluff, McCook, Hastings, Norfolk, and Nebraska City.*



*Mrs. Ralph G. Brooks retired in 1975 as Curator of the Norris House in McCook. The former first lady of Nebraska has also been Educational Director of the Society in Lincoln.*



*William J. Fox (left), Vice President of operations for the Union Pacific Railroad, and Marvin F. Kivett, Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society, sign agreement which transfers historically significant railroad papers to the State Archives.*



*State Archivist James E. Potter (right) and Assistant Donald Snoddy discuss procedures in preserving documents.*

microfilm collection indicated a total of 18,704 individual microfilm reels on file. Like other society divisions, room to house the ever-growing collection is at a premium along with adequate space for use of the microfilm readers and other public reference activities.

During the past year scholars and researchers from some fifteen states and two foreign countries used the manuscript collections, public records, and microfilm files in the preparation of seminar papers, local histories, dissertations, articles, and books. Major emphasis recently has been devoted to research in women's history. A thesis entitled, "Pioneer Women of the Central Plains, 1875-1900" drew heavily upon our collections. Archival sources have also been used to prepare weekly newspaper columns on notable Nebraska women in observance of the International Women's Year. Willa Cather remains a popular subject for a variety of studies. Staff members from *Time-Life Books* have visited the archives and made numerous mail and telephone inquiries for source material in connection with books about "The Rivermen" and "The Expressmen" as part of their series on the history of the West. Requests for material on the Sioux, the ghost dance religion, the battle of Wounded Knee, and Indian education indicate continued interest in Indian history and culture.

The value of congressional papers for recent political history has been confirmed by the frequent use over the past several years of the files of Senators Kenneth Wherry and Hugh Butler, as well as the papers of Congressman Karl Stefan. These collections were consulted for a book about the career of Senator Joseph McCarthy; for studies of American isolationism; and for an evaluation of Nebraska's role during World War II. The Senator Gilbert M. Hitchcock papers were examined for a paper on the congressional debate over U.S. entry into the League of Nations. Other books on midwestern agriculture, 1933-1939; and the early years of Louise Pound's career used sources from the Val Kuska-Burlington Railroad Collection and the Louise Pound Papers, respectively.

In all, there were nearly 4,500 individual uses of public records, manuscript materials, or microfilm during 1974-1975. The staff of the State Archives received or wrote 1,383 letters

and xeroxed 3,648 pages of material. Over 730 telephone calls requested information from or about archival resources.

### LIBRARY

The Society Library maintains a unique collection of historical publications and photographs which document Nebraska and western history. Portraits and biographies of Nebraskans, maps, description and travel material, state, county, and town histories, books by Nebraska authors, genealogical publications, governmental reports as well as reports of antiquarian, anthropological, and historical societies can all be found in our library. In addition it contains many reference books used by staff members in identifying archeological and historical artifacts. Thus, it is a valuable research library to all Nebraskans interested in their history or to anyone interested in Nebraska and its past.

The Library, which includes the Photo Room and the Fort Robinson Branch Library, experienced a year of growth during the 1974-1975 fiscal year and staff members were very much aware of the increased activity. On January 1, 1975, Mrs. Louise Small turned over her duties as librarian to Mrs. Ann Reinert, but remained on the staff as assistant librarian.

The growth of the Library is reflected in both the increase of reference service and the acquisition of additional material. Much of our new material is due to the generosity of donors who feel that our facilities provide the best access for others interested in Nebraska, western, and family history. This past year 181 donors contributed material to the Library. The following list illustrates the type of material we received: William Jennings Bryan's *Letters to a Chinese Official*; *Nebraska Pocket Map, 1893*; a pioneer reminiscence, *The Platte I Knew*; *Pioneering the Union Pacific* by Charles Edgar Ames; "plat" books of Thayer and Kearney Counties; centennial histories of communities and organizations; thirty-nine family histories; Nebraska directories of all types; and many photographs and post cards of Nebraskans and scenes in Nebraska.

It was the area of public service that we experienced the greatest growth during the last year. Approximately 4,600 patrons, an increase of 22 percent, used our library facilities for research purposes. Though most of these patrons were



*Assistant Archivist Donald Snoddy (center) and Manuscripts Curator Anne Diffendal (right) usurp Library space to process documents. Assisting is Holly Kinsley (left).*



*John Mills, Jr. (left) and Mitchell Tebo, Archives workers, store records in warehouse maintained by Society to provide for "overflow" from the Lincoln Headquarters building.*



*Curt Peacock, left, and Terry Mahlman, staff members, at work in the Society's Archeology Laboratory in the Lincoln building.*



*New Head Librarian Ann Reinert and Research Associate Paul D. Riley occupy desks in the Library Office, which also holds the Society's fragile and rare books.*

Nebraskans, visitors from nineteen states and two foreign countries were also represented. By telephone, letter, and in person over 7,500 reference queries were answered, a dramatic increase of 44 percent over the previous year. Immigrant groups, rural electrification, history of land grants, reed organs, the "Salt Flats," Nebraska's Territorial Legislature, clocks, railroad history, Fort Niobrara, shelterbelts, and aviation history are examples of the topics of interest. The number of personal queries about family history nearly doubled and requests for information by mail and telephone increased 15 percent over the previous year. Census information, homestead records, obituaries, and other biographical information are the most usual types of requests.

The Fort Robinson Branch Library, supervised by Mrs. Dora Hale, also had a great deal of activity as nearly 1,600 titles of Nebraska and western history were available for visitors to look through. A considerable number of these books are from the Emil Kopac Memorial Collection.

In the Photo Room, under the direction of Mrs. Opal Jacobsen, fifty-one donors contributed to the photographic collection and increased reference service was provided. Examples of these photographs include the 51st Infantry Scout Platoon, a group picture of the Lincoln Business College class of 1920, an album of World War I pictures of the Base Hospital 49 in Allerey, France, physicians associated with Creighton Medical School about 1900, the interiors and exteriors of Hardy's Furniture Store, a number of pictures of the Chautauqua era, and a few additional views of Nebraska City, Laurel, and Louisville. Numerous post cards, a few tintypes, and fifty original glass negatives of the 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha were also acquired.

The reference work in the Photo Room increased 39 percent this year over the past fiscal year as over 2,000 requests for information and pictures were provided to individuals and publishers throughout the world including twenty-nine foreign countries. *Time-Life Books*, American Heritage Publishing Company, Inc., Coronet Instructional Media, BBC Publications of London, England, the Scott, Foresman Co., TBS-Britannica Co., Ltd. of Tokyo, Japan, and the Department of Psychology,

State of Connecticut were some of the publishers who used our photographs. Though the Solomon D. Butcher Collection of sod house pictures is our most popular file, other obscure topics researched for patrons included Indians of the Plains, Spalding & Rogers European Circus advertisements, prairie chickens, Mme. Canutson (bullwacker), log cabins, and merry-go-rounds.

Though most of our public service is conducted on a person-to-person basis, several tours of the library were given to interested school and genealogical groups. Mrs. Reinert described the Solomon D. Butcher Collection of photographs on television and presented a program on Nebraska's heritage to a local organization. She is a member of the Nebraska Publication Clearinghouse Advisory Committee and the Nebraska Bicentennial Committee of the American Mothers Association.

Paul Riley, research associate, gave seven programs on several aspects of Nebraska history and spoke on two radio bicentennial time slots. He serves on the membership committee of the Western History Association.

The urgent problems which concern the Library are space, preservation, and available staff time. Current shelf space in the Reading Room and stack area is full and new shelf space must be found for library materials including security copies of state documents sent by the Nebraska Publications Clearinghouse. It is necessary for us to ask that only small groups of persons who plan to do genealogical research visit us at one time. The Photo Room is also very congested when over four persons are selecting pictures at once, and available storage space is at a premium.

The public service we give is essential. However, attention must be given to careful preservation of our important historical items. Also our total collection must be carefully developed because of its significance to Nebraska and western history. The increase of our reference service without the comparable increase in staff time decreases the amount of time which may be spent on management and preservation duties. The shortage of available space compounds the other problems. Since care and management of our valuable history records for future generations is as important as present-day public service, ways must be found to overcome these problems beginning with planning for additional physical and human resources.



*Filing security copies of state publications from the Nebraska Publications Clearinghouse is Library Shelver Cynthia Bowsman. Stack space in the Library is at a premium.*

### IN SUMMARY

As indicated throughout this report and in each directors' report for the last fifteen years, we have a major problem in the need for building expansion. The subject has been well studied by your Executive Board. A legislative study committee has concluded we need more space. A law (L.B. 704) was enacted last year designating a block of ground adjacent to the capitol for a Historical Heritage Center. We have received a total appropriation of \$20,000 for preliminary planning. The need now is the support of all Nebraskans interested in our history. We have reached the critical point in many of our activities. We need your help in giving Nebraska Heritage a priority sufficient to complete this much needed project. It would be ironic in our history-oriented year of 1976 if we must, in effect, sharply curtail our efforts to preserve the state's history due to lack of space. It should be noted that L.B. 704 authorizes the Society to accept both public and private funds to reach our building goal. Your Executive Board has set up the Historical Heritage Fund. It is expected that donations to this fund will be utilized for special recognizable features of the building which will provide that adequate credit be given donors.

In my twelfth year as Society director and twenty-fifth as a staff member I have seen the work grow each year with excellent support from the Legislature and each Governor throughout the years. When I joined the staff in 1949, there were twelve permanent and four temporary employees. In 1975 the authorized staffing is fifty-seven full-time and forty-six part-time employees. We are fully aware that the addition of staff is not necessarily a measurement of achievement. We do subscribe to a statement made in 1949 by the director Dr. James C. Olson: "Economy will always be a primary consideration in this administration of the Society's affair; it is to be hoped that out of that practice may come continued expansion for the future. We still have a long way to go if we are to give the people of Nebraska the kind of historical society their glorious history deserves." With the support of the Society Executive Board under the direction of Nellie Snyder Yost and the Foundation headed by M. S. Hevelone we seek to achieve these goals. None will be possible without the support of Nebraska citizens.



Louise Small (right), Head Librarian of the Society from 1966 to 1975, retired this year. At left is Sheila Jacobs, Library Assistant.



From this cramped corner of the Library, Society patrons select illustrations from one of the finest collections of frontier photographs in the Midwest. From right, standing: Librarian Ann Reinert, Photo Room Supervisor Opal Jacobsen, Library Assistant Carol Callahan. Seated are Patrons Barbara Markey, Janice Penrose, Walter Murphey, Mitchell Tebo.