

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



History
NEBRASKA

Hiroshi Tajima, Consul General of Japan in Chicago, speaks at the Nebraska History Museum for the opening of “Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II” and “Preserving a Legacy: Japanese in Nebraska”.





Who We Are

We are a state agency dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Nebraska. Founded in 1878 as the Nebraska State Historical Society, today's History Nebraska is a statewide team of professional employees, student workers, and volunteers.

We exist because Nebraskans believe that our history matters. History shapes our present and future. It strengthens our connection to place. It teaches us the skills of informed citizenship. It shows how Nebraskans play a vital role in the larger story of the United States.

What We Do

Places you can visit: The Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln and historic sites from Chimney Rock and Fort Robinson in the west, to the George W. Norris House in McCook, Neligh Mill in Neligh, the John G. Neihardt State Historic Site in Bancroft, and the Thomas P. Kennard House and Nebraska Statehood Memorial in Lincoln—plus more than 500 historical markers across the state. In addition, we:

Educate. We have programs for all ages, and our publications range from scholarly articles to classroom materials to popular blog posts at history.nebraska.gov.

Preserve the state archives and collections of rare manuscripts, photographs, and objects. We assist researchers from professional historians to genealogists and students. We do this through tax credits, education, and recognition via the National Register of Historic Places.

Assist property owners, communities, and local governments as they preserve their historic buildings. We do this through tax credits, education, and recognition via the National Register of Historic Places.

Conserve fragile and damaged objects, paper, and paintings for museums and individuals at our Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha.

Discover and interpret our state's rich archeological heritage, chronicling more than 12,000 years of human life and culture in Nebraska.

OUR AUDACIOUS GOAL

**TO BE THE MOST ENGAGING AND
RELEVANT STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY IN THE NATION. BUT
HOW DO WE GET THERE?**

STRATEGIC PLAN

✓ GROW OUR AUDIENCES

INCREASE ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

GROW FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

EXPAND OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

INCREASE TEAMWORK & ACCOUNTABILITY

Museum and Historic Sites

More than 30,000 people visited our museum and historic sites in 2022-2023.

The Nebraska History Museum brought in several traveling exhibits this year. We hosted National Geographic's *Women: A Century of Change*, plus two Smithsonian exhibits, *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* and *Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II*.

American Democracy was the largest traveling exhibit we have hosted so far. *Righting a Wrong* was accompanied by a related Nebraska exhibit, *Preserving a Legacy: Japanese in Nebraska*, which was created through a partnership between History Nebraska and the Legacy of the Plains Museum in Gering. Both Japanese exhibits were sponsored locally by Kawasaki.

Educational Programming

Summer workshops are provided to summer daycares and day camps. Topics included the history of working dogs and the K-9 unit at Ft. Robinson during World War II, and "Play Unplugged," our new exhibit-in-the-works in which students learn how kids played in the past, before electronics. More than 800 students attended our 25 summer workshops in 2022-23.

Onsite field trips are held onsite at the Nebraska History Museum for K-12 students from across the state. This fiscal year we provided 89 field trips for 4,183 students, including 1,517 students from 30 Title I schools.



History Nebraska archeologists lead a volunteer dig at Fort Atkinson.

Museum events are held for the general public, usually centered on current exhibits or seasons. “Taking Care of Business: Women Leading the Way” was held in Omaha, Lincoln, and Hastings to celebrate National Geographic’s *Women* exhibit. Other events included “Evening with an Archeologist,” “Lincoln’s Birthday Party,” and the “Interpreting Lincoln” panel discussion.

Virtual education programs connect History Nebraska with students statewide. This fiscal year more than 6,000 students participated in virtual field trips, show-and-tells, Q&A sessions with History Nebraska experts, and outreach projects in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education and other state organizations. Topics ranged from Buffalo Soldiers of Fort Robinson to Senator George Norris and rural electrification.

Print Media, TV, Radio

We continue to produce our quarterly *Nebraska History Magazine* for members, plus a monthly email newsletter, monthly “A Brief History” column for *NEBRASKAland* magazine, weekly Nebraska History Moments delivered by email, and daily Nebraska History Moments for the legislature during their annual session.

In the past year, TV and radio reporters have interviewed various History Nebraska employees. We share news about History Nebraska projects and provide historical background for current events.

Website and Social Media

Social media allows us to engage the public and share news and historical content. This fiscal year we saw audience growth of nearly 30 percent on Facebook, 19 percent on Instagram, and 14 percent on Twitter.

History Nebraska launched a re-designed website on November 1, 2022. Our website at history.nebraska.gov is the internet’s largest source of Nebraska history. This year our number of website users grew by 5 percent.

STRATEGIC PLAN

GROW OUR AUDIENCES

✓ INCREASE ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

GROW FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

EXPAND OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

INCREASE TEAMWORK & ACCOUNTABILITY

Digital Curation

We continue digitizing photos, documents, and objects from our collections to make them available online. Since 2020 we’ve scanned nearly 170,000 pages of material, and this year we added 1,381 object and archeological collection records to our public database. At nebraska.access.preservica.com you can search maps, library materials, moving images, photographs, government records, manuscripts, and History Nebraska publications.

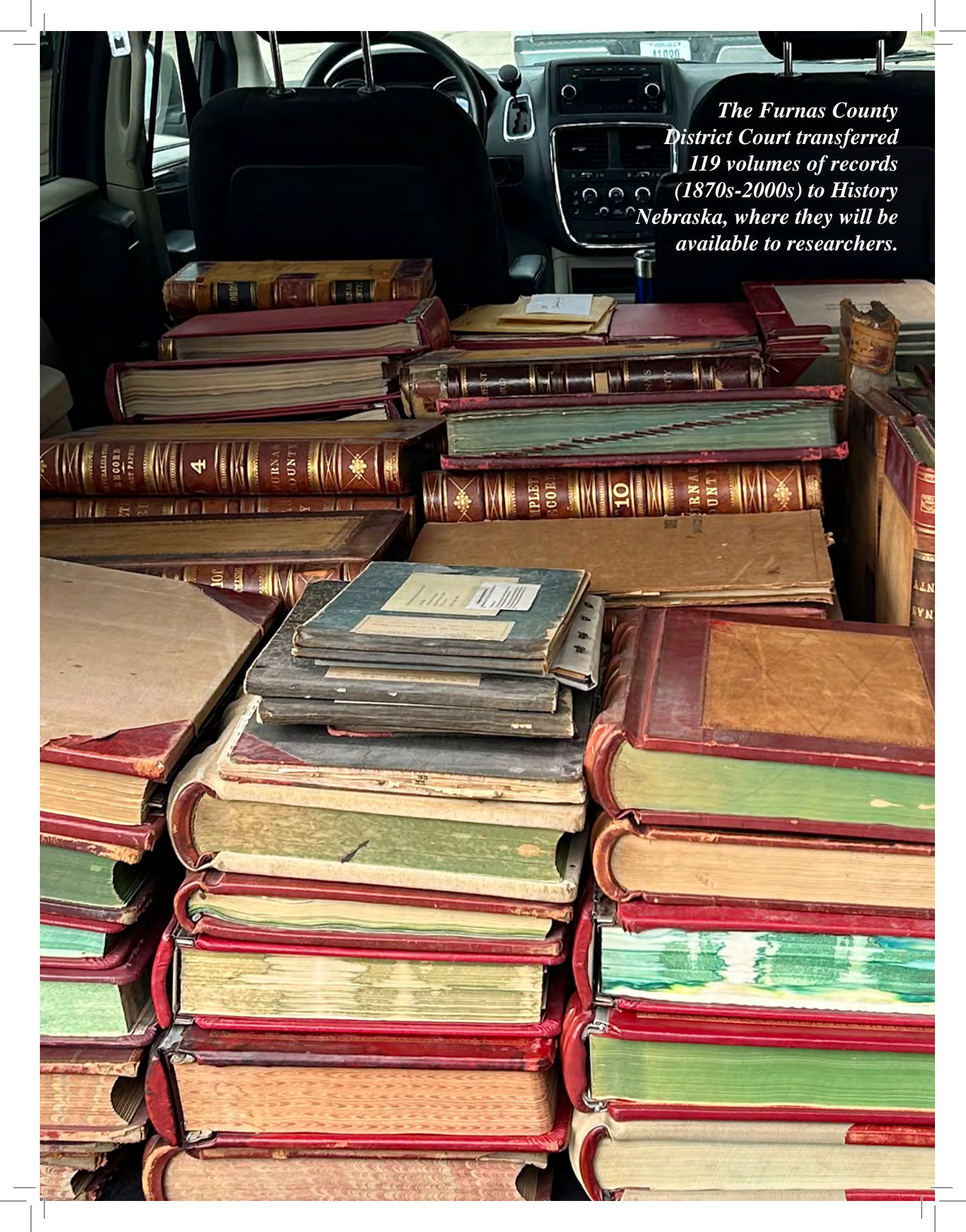
This year we completed our new digitization lab and acquired a new microfilm scanner and an oversized book scanner. The digitization team embarked on a legacy metadata cleanup project to make online searches more effective. A June 2023 grant from NHPRC (National Historical Publications and Records Commission) will make our collections “finding aids” easier to search. Starting in FY23-24 we will migrate data from Word or PDF into our ArchivesSpace database.

Historic Buildings Photos

The State Historic Preservation Office has tens of thousands of photos of historic buildings across the state. We’re reviewing and organizing this vast photo library to prepare it for online public access, bringing together data from multiple sources and researching any missing information.

Assisting Researchers

Staff responded to 1,489 distance reference requests and served 611 researchers in the James E. Potter Research Room, nearly double last year’s numbers. We also saw a steady increase in research appointment requests. A growing number of visitors used our micro-



*The Furnas County
District Court transferred
119 volumes of records
(1870s-2000s) to History
Nebraska, where they will be
available to researchers.*

film scanning stations to make digital copies that are easy to save and share.

The James E. Potter Research Room hosted tours of high school and college students throughout the year and tailored research examples to each group. On one tour, a high school student was elated to find a newspaper photo of her mother after being crowned Rodeo Queen. She called her mother to ask, “Why didn’t you TELL me about this?” Mom replied, “You didn’t ask.”

We saw a wave of requests from county officers seeking copies of original county incorporation papers. This was prompted by new federal requirements for identification of entities receiving federal funding. The documents are found in the records of the territorial legislature or in handwritten meeting minutes.

Acquisition highlights

A “Mrs. America” 1956 collection was donated this year by the family of Ramona Dietemeyer of Lincoln, the only Nebraskan to hold the title so far.

The Furnas County District Court transferred 119 volumes of records (1870s-2000s), which will be available to researchers.

We hold the official records of all Nebraska governors. Former Gov. Pete Ricketts’ administration transferred a combination of paper and digital records when he left office in January 2023. The effort involved staff across three departments and collaboration with other state agencies.

STRATEGIC PLAN
GROW OUR AUDIENCES
INCREASE ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS
✓ GROW FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
EXPAND OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT
INCREASE TEAMWORK & ACCOUNTABILITY

Earning Revenue

History Nebraska receives about 50 percent of its funding from state appropriations, and relies on earned income, grants, contracts, foundation support and direct gifts for the remainder. This past year we earned more than \$2.7 million.

Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center, Omaha

History Nebraska’s Ford Center continued its work as a regional conservation facility while undergoing a major renovation this past year. The Ford Center relies heavily on earned income. As with most years, our 2022-23 fiscal year was focused on helping our clients preserve their institutional and family treasures.

A small sample of our wide range of projects includes conservation treatments of paper items from artists such as John Steuart Curry, Jasper Johns, Birger Sandzen, and Karl Bodmer, plus a Hubert Humphrey campaign poster. We treated a thirteen-star US flag (believed to have been made for a 75th anniversary of U.S. independence), and cleaned and repaired fire-damaged furniture from the J. Huston Tavern in Arrow Rock, Missouri. Built in 1834, the tavern is the oldest continuously operating restaurant west of the Missouri River.

Archeology at Construction Projects

The State Archeology Office (SAO) conducted nearly \$1 million worth of contract work for the Nebraska Department of Transportation, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and a variety of environmental consulting firms and local governments. Archeologists surveyed more than 100 proposed construction projects covering over 2,100 acres of land across Nebraska.



Reference staff serve patrons online at history.nebraska.gov and in person at the James E. Potter Research Room at History Nebraska's Lincoln headquarters.

Completion of these projects helps meet the SAO's mission of preserving, exploring, and interpreting any of Nebraska's archeological sites and other historic resources that may be negatively impacted by construction activities. Such work is mandated by state and federal cultural resource laws and regulations.

Grant Acknowledgments

History Nebraska projects and services are funded in part by the History Nebraska Foundation and the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation.

The State Historic Preservation Office of History Nebraska is financed in part with federal funds from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior under Grant Number P22AP01544, P21AF11386, and P22AF01254. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic

properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the

Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to:

*Office of Equal Opportunity
National Park Service
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240*

The State Historic Preservation Office of History Nebraska is financed in part with federal funds from Cultural Resources Management monies, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior under Grant Number P21AC11701. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s)

and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

Digital education and outreach is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, grant number CAGML-247732-OMLS-20.

Long-term curation of collections controlled by the Bureau of Reclamation/US Department of the Interior is funded in part by grant number R18AP00014 and R22AP00494.

Funding for the State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) provided in part by grant # RC-103493-23 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

Funding for the *Righting A Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II* exhibit and the education event *Taking Care of Business: Women Who Set the Standard for Success* was provided in part by Humanities Nebraska (HN) and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

Funding for the *WOMEN: A Century of Change* exhibit supported in part by the Nebraska Arts Council, which receives support from the State of Nebraska and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Funding for the *Righting A Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II* exhibit provided in part by the Lew Ehn Foundation.

Marketing for the *Righting A Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II* exhibit was funded in part by Lancaster County Visitor Promotion Fund.

Membership

Membership supports History Nebraska financially. Our current membership total is 1,950.

Staff at History Nebraska's Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha treat a 13-star U.S. flag believed to date from the 75th anniversary of independence in 1851.



STRATEGIC PLAN

GROW OUR AUDIENCES

INCREASE ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

GROW FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

✓EXPAND OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

INCREASE TEAMWORK & ACCOUNTABILITY

Historic Preservation Partnerships

This year the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO) hosted webinars in partnership with Nebraska Main Street Network; hosted training for Omaha realtors to talk about the National Register of Historic Places, local landmarking, historic tax incentives, and covenants; and sponsored Joslyn Castle's "This Old Castle" series. NeSHPO also held historic preservation commission training for Certified Local Governments in Sidney and online, and celebrated rehabilitation projects in Grand Island and Beatrice.

NeSHPO assists property owners with applications to the National Register of Historic Places. Being listed on the NRHP makes a property eligible for certain federal and state tax incentives, potentially providing material assistance in preserving communities' historic buildings and keeping them in use.

We have launched a three-year project to survey the state's historic farming and ranching structures. Our survey projects gather data on communities' surviving historic resources. Survey projects are the foundation of all historic preservation programs, outreach, and economic development, and are available to the public.

Historical Marker Equity Program

This program funds historic markers that will broaden the historical narrative presented to the public. It also acts as a tool for relationship and trust building with underrepresented communities. Eleven new markers were developed and ordered this past year; another five are in the development stage.

Nebraska Archeology Month


September 2022 marked a big return to Nebraska Archeology Month activities, led by History Nebraska archeologists.

After two years of limited content due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in September 2022 the State Archeology Office (SAO) jumped back into programs and activities to engage with over 1,100 members of the public and highlight Nebraska's rich archeological record.

In-person activities included presentations to local community organizations, activities at the archeology facility, the Nebraska History Museum, and Morrill Hall, plus our first volunteer excavation since 2019, held at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park. Digital activities included virtual field trips and artifact show-and-tells for Nebraska K-12 students, plus content for History Nebraska's blog and social media channels.

Efforts to Locate the Genoa Indian Industrial School Cemetery

History Nebraska archeologists continued their collaboration with the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, Midwest Archeological Center (National Park Service), Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, and other organizations to locate the cemetery associated with the Genoa Indian Industrial School. From 1884 to 1934, the school was one of over 500 such boarding schools that operated across the United States. Investigations carried out in 2022 included use of a human cadaver detection dog team and multi-instrument geophysical survey to narrow down the possible cemetery location.

A close-up photograph of a pumpkin sculpture. The top of the pumpkin is cut off, revealing several realistic rabbit heads inside. The rabbits are light brown with dark eyes and small ears. The pumpkin's surface is decorated with a pattern of small, dark, irregular spots. The rabbits are arranged in a cluster, with some heads overlapping others. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

This Sergio Bustamante pumpkin with rabbits had flaking paint and surface instabilities, but staff at History Nebraska's Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha successfully treated it for a client.

STRATEGIC PLAN

GROW OUR AUDIENCES

INCREASE ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

GROW FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

EXPAND OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

✓ INCREASE TEAMWORK & ACCOUNTABILITY

The exhibits, programs, and activities described above involve teamwork within History Nebraska departments, but often involve members of various HN teams working together. A single exhibit might involve curatorial staff, museum educators, and marketing team, not to mention support from accounting, IT, and facilities staff members. The photos in this report show only a small sample of HN teams based in various locations, from Omaha to McCook, to Chimney Rock and Fort Robinson.

National Accreditation is a Milestone for History Nebraska

History Nebraska has achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums. While HN's Lincoln-based Nebraska History Museum has been accredited since 1973, accreditation for HN as a statewide organization is new.

Alliance Accreditation brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement. Of the nation's estimated 33,000 museums, 1,102 are currently accredited. History Nebraska and its sites and museums are one of only nine museums accredited in Nebraska.

Volunteers

In addition to employees, we benefit from the work of volunteers. This fiscal year our 129 volunteers have contributed 4,088 hours of work—a value of \$122,499.

Archeologists from the Midwest Archeological Center (National Park Service) conduct geophysical surveys searching for the unmarked Genoa Indian Industrial School cemetery. History Nebraska participated in the ongoing investigation.



Financial Report
History Nebraska
Fiscal Year 2023

Revenues

State Appropriations	56.19%
\$5,044,781.59	
309 Funds	13.29%
\$1,193,585.23	
Earned Income & Membership	15.25%
\$1,369,461.25	
Federal Grants & Contracts	11.04%
\$991,450.38	
Foundation Support	2.37%
\$212,798.82	
Donations, Grants & Special Events	1.85%
\$166,023.23	

Total Revenues
\$8,978,100.50*

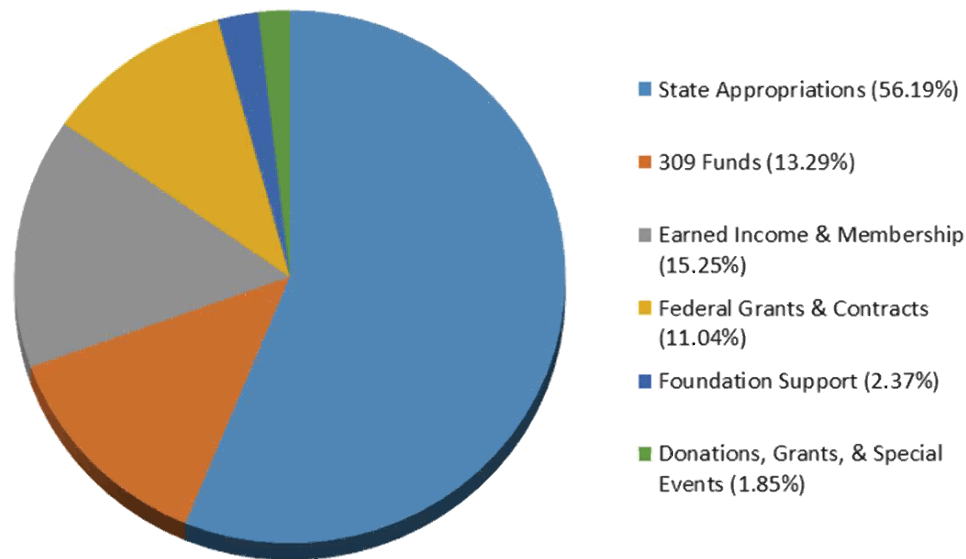
Expenditures

Administrative Services	21.93%
\$2,019,486.94	
Museum & Historic Sites	24.71%
\$2,276,028.67	
Collections	10.78%
\$992,658.14	
Archeology	11.99%
\$1,104,435.19	
Historic Preservation	11.27%
\$1,038,383.01	
Conservation	13.49%
\$1,242,743.19	
Research & Publications	5.83%
\$536,953.08	

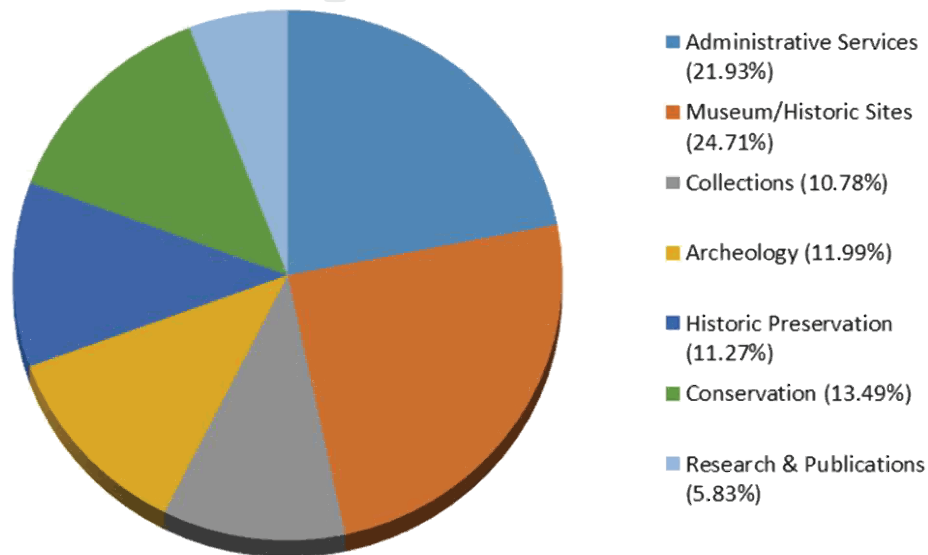
Total Expenditures
\$9,210,688.22

*Does not include indirect and in-kind support from other organizations.

Michelle Furby, Chief Financial Officer



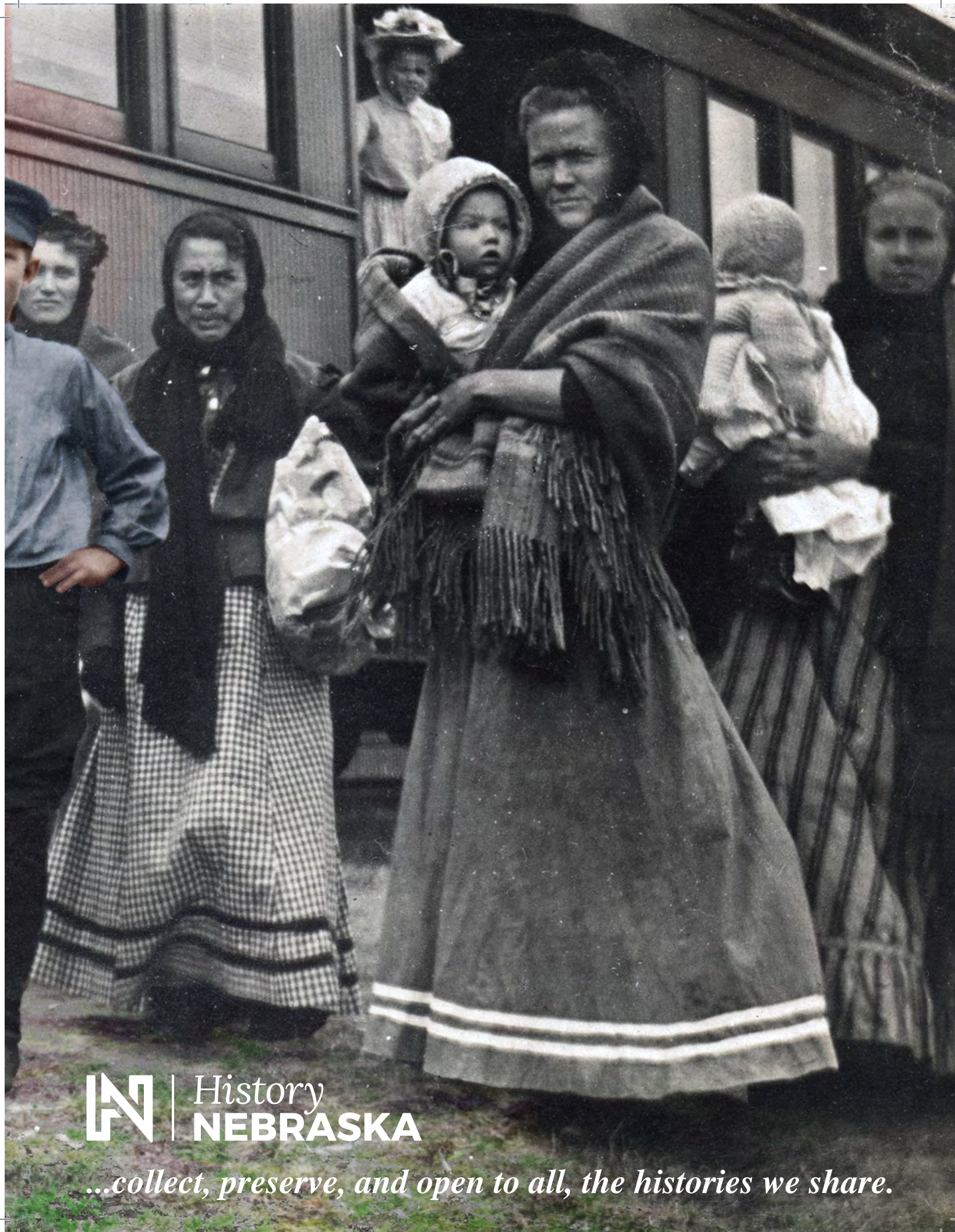
State Appropriations	56.19%	\$5,044,781.59
309 Funds	13.29%	\$1,193,585.23
Earned Income & Membership	15.25%	\$1,369,461.25
Federal Grants & Contracts	11.04%	\$991,450.38
Foundation Support	2.37%	\$212,798.82
Donations, Grants & Special Events	1.85%	\$166,023.23
Total Revenues		\$8,978,100.50



Administrative Services	21.93%	\$2,019,486.94
Museum & Historic Sites	24.71%	\$2,276,028.67
Collections	10.78%	\$992,658.14
Archeology	11.99%	\$1,104,435.19
Historic Preservation	11.27%	\$1,038,383.01
Conservation	13.49%	\$1,242,743.19
Research & Publications	5.83%	\$536,953.08
Total Expenditures		\$9,210,688.22



*Volga German immigrants arriving in
Lincoln, early twentieth century. From
History Nebraska's photo collection*



History
NEBRASKA

...collect, preserve, and open to all, the histories we share.

