

Annual Report

2010-2011



Carrying on the Founders' Work

Robert Furnas and others created the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) in 1878, barely a decade after we became the thirty-seventh state. In taking that action, the founders made clear that the story of Nebraska and its people was to be a continuing part of the glowing future they anticipated. And so the story has played out; the NSHS celebrated its 132nd anniversary in 2010. It has consistently taken care to:

- Record the stories of Nebraska and all the Nebraskans who have occupied these 77,000 square miles for hundreds, indeed thousands of years.
- Collect and preserve the official records, artifacts, documented histories, traditions, and ideals of the many peoples of the state.
- Research and study the historical record as contained in items as diverse as the papers of the governors to the playthings of the children of every ethnic and national group, both in the past and today.
- Share that historical record with the people of each succeeding generation so that they can better understand their own times.
- Encourage other organizations including county, city, and town historical societies and museums, genealogical groups, schools and colleges, churches, and others to develop their own histories.
- Ensure that our children learn our history so they will better understand the commitment and the sacrifices of their forebears and thus be inspired to emulate and even improve upon that record.



Former Congressman Doug Bereuter delivers the keynote address at the rededication of the NSHS headquarters building, September 18, 2010.

Other photos of NSHS events can be seen on [our Facebook page](#).

The 2010-2011 annual report provides the briefest of overviews of the ongoing work of the NSHS. Nevertheless, it is an excellent introduction to the mission and the activities of your Nebraska State Historical Society. Please take a few minutes and get up to date on what it takes to carry on the work of our founders more than thirteen decades later. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Pratt".

Bill Pratt
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Smith".

Michael J. Smith
Director / CEO



Left to right: Doug Bereuter, Sarah Olson, Governor Dave Heineman, NSHS Trustee Board President Cheryl Clark, NSHS Chief Financial Officer Michelle Furby, NSHS Director/CEO Mike Smith.

NSHS Rededicates Headquarters Building

“Our Nebraska history is part of our living heritage as Americans.” So said NSHS Superintendent James Olson during the dedication of the Society’s new building, the first built expressly to house the NSHS, on September 27, 1953. Olson’s daughter, Sarah, read these words during the renovated building’s re-dedication ceremony on September 18, 2010.

Governor Dave Heineman was on hand, officially declaring it Nebraska State Historical Society Day. Former Congressman Doug Bereuter delivered the keynote address, celebrating the completion of the two-year, \$5 million project.

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*Elected at April 11, 2011, Trustee meeting, to replace James Whittaker.

“We the People” The Nebraska Viewpoint

The U.S. Constitution begins with “We the People,” and in 2011 the Nebraska State Historical Society has explored Nebraska’s role in figuring out who “We” are. Public presentations, an exhibition, a special issue of *Nebraska History* magazine, and broadcasts investigated the changing course of our constitutional rights over our national history, and in particular how the struggle for inclusion played out in Nebraska.

The “*We the People*” exhibition opened at the Nebraska History Museum in January 2011, and offers provocative stories and lessons from Nebraska’s past. The project also included two Community Conversations in which we invited the public to discuss current civil liberties-related controversies.

Through “conversations” in which panelists of different viewpoints interacted with the audience, the NSHS provided a safe and civil place to discuss difficult issues. One event centered on the recently decided Supreme Court case, *Phelps v. Snyder*, which upheld the right of the members of Westboro Baptist Church (Topeka, Kansas) to picket the funerals of American soldiers. Another event dealt with illegal immigration. These public events were held in partnership with the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and supported in part by the Nebraska Humanities Council, the Cooper Foundation, and the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc.



Panelists at the April 18, 2011, Community Conversation were State Sen. Charlie Janssen, Rev. David Lux of Lincoln’s St. Paul United Methodist Church, Leticia Rodriguez, a recruiter for the Nebraska Department of Education’s Migrant Education Program, and University of Nebraska at Lincoln student Benjamin Kantack. The topic was immigration.

NSHS Annual Awards

People who have made history by helping preserve the past are recognized annually by the NSHS. The 2010 [awards](#) were presented September 17, 2010, at the NSHS Annual Meeting and Luncheon in LaVista.

- Longtime NSHS volunteer Vince Goeres of Lincoln received the **Robert W. Furnas Award**, which recognized his outstanding contribution to the NSHS over a decade of research and writing to produce the book *Wings Over Nebraska*.
- Gary Kastrick, a teacher at Omaha South High School, received the **James C. Olson Memorial Award**, for inspiring and guiding his students to discover the histories of South Omaha and its stockyards.
- Dr. Harl Dalstrom, retired professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, has made numerous contributions to Nebraska history through his publications, teaching, and public involvement, for which he received the **Addison E. Sheldon Memorial Award**.
- The **James L. Sellers Memorial Award** went to Anne Beiser Allen of Fitchburg, Wisconsin, for “A Scandal in Niobrara: The Controversial Career of Rev. Samuel D. Hinman.” History faculty from Peru State College served as judges, selecting the article as the best published in *Nebraska History* in 2009. The NSHS Foundation, through support of Catherine Sellers Angle, provided a cash prize of \$1,000.
- Jerry and Nancy Carlson of Genoa, Nebraska, were honored with the **A. T. Hill Award**, which includes a \$300 cash prize. The Carlsons have been involved in many projects in Genoa, including the Pawnee Reburial Monument and the U.S. Indian School, as well as archeological projects around the state.
- The **Nebraska Preservation Award** went to the Plattsmouth Conservancy for its promotion of the revitalization of its National Register downtown historic district. To accomplish preservation projects, the group formed partnerships, and raised both funds and awareness.



Award winners at the NSHS Annual Meeting and Luncheon, September 17, 2010: Members of the Plattsmouth Conservancy, Gary Kastrick (second from left), Harl Dalstrom (sixth from right, in back), Vince Goeres (fourth from right), Anne Beiser Allen (third from right), and Nancy and Jerry Carlson (right).

Financial Report: Fiscal Year 2011

Revenues

State Appropriations	56.76%	\$4,211,687.49
Earned Income & Membership	13.91%	\$1,031,918.35
Federal Grants & Contracts	15.73%	\$1,166,920.01
NSHS Foundation Support	2.49%	\$ 184,801.40
Donations, Grants & Special Events	2.19%	\$ 162,830.10
Nebraska Capital Construction Fund	8.92%	\$ 662,068.45
Total Revenues		\$7,420,225.80

Expenditures

Administrative Services	17.69%	\$1,320,968.90
Museum & Historic Sites	23.29%	\$1,738,617.18
Library & Archives	13.70%	\$1,022,679.64
Archeology	6.09%	\$ 454,361.91
Historic Preservation	16.31%	\$1,217,478.70
Conservation	6.95%	\$ 519,281.22
Research & Publications	7.10%	\$ 530,371.53
Headquarters Renovation Project	8.87%	\$ 662,068.45
Total Expenditures		\$7,465,827.53



Willa Cather has long been famous for her mastery of words, but a recent exhibit at the Nebraska History Museum showcased her mastery of fashion. At an early age Cather began to carefully manage her appearance for the public, using clothing as symbols and statements. NSHS RG 1951-204

Experience [Nebraska History Museum exhibitions online](#) at nebraskahistory.org.



Dr. James Hewitt discusses the courts and civil liberties as part of the NSHS's *We the People* programming. Staff prepared this and other lectures for posting on the NSHS's YouTube channel.

Nebraska History Museum and Historic Sites

More than 71,000 people visited [NSHS historic sites and museums](#) during the 2010-2011 fiscal year—including nearly 29,000 at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln, and more than 24,000 at Chimney Rock National Historic Site near Bayard.

What did all those people come to see?

Exhibitions:

- “*We the People*”: *The Nebraska Viewpoint* (p. 2), the year’s largest project.
- *Willa Cather: A Matter of Appearances* at the Nebraska History Museum.
- *Nebraska and Agriculture* at the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island.

Public Programming:

- *I Hear America Singing: The Neligh Mill Jamboree*, Neligh Mill State Historic Site in July 2010.
- “*The Civil War in the American West*”: *The Eighth Fort Robinson History Conference* at Fort Robinson State Park in April 2011.

Library/Archives

The [Library/Archives](#) division is surprisingly quiet for such a busy place: this year reference staff served more than 4,200 people in the Reference Room and answered more than 3,000 correspondence requests and 2,700 phone queries. That’s over 10,000 served overall.

Public programming included:

- “Picture Perfect,” a photography collections care seminar for Archives Week in October (and offered again in March due to popular demand).
- “*Just a Punk Kid from Nebraska*”: *A Robert Taylor Centenary Tribute*, a winter film series at the Nebraska History Museum.

Collections additions:

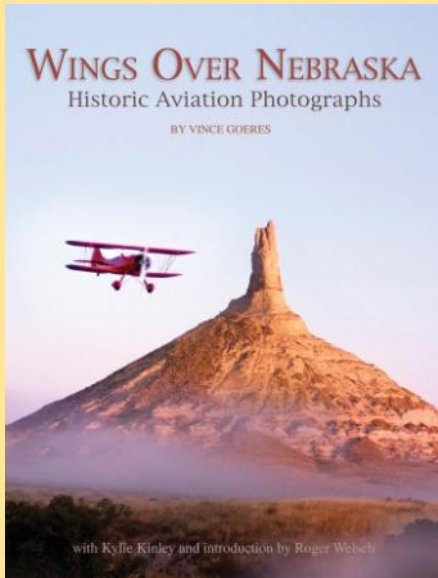
- More than 500 new titles to library collections.
- Numerous photos, audio recordings, and films (including rare moving images of William Jennings Bryan circa 1910).
- 292 boxes of material from the Grand Island Veterans’ Home; after this collection is processed and confidential medical information purged, we hope to have it available for researchers in 2012.

Storage space improvements:

- New Space Saver compact storage systems were installed when Microfilming and Library Technical Services operations moved from the Nebraska History Museum back to the NSHS headquarters. Congressional collections of Douglas Bereuter and Edward Zorinsky are among the materials stored in the new systems.

Increased public access to collections:

- Another 100,000 pages of Nebraska newspapers were added to the Library of Congress’s *Chronicling America* website (chroniclingamerica.loc.gov) with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Digitized newspapers covering 1880-1920 include titles from Omaha, Broken Bow, Nebraska City, Norfolk, Valentine, McCook, Alliance, Lincoln, and Columbus.



Wings Over Nebraska features more than 200 historic aviation photos, and one new photo staged especially for the book: photographer Tom Downey waited near Chimney Rock as Gary Petersen of Walton, Nebraska, flew his vintage Waco biplane for the cover photo.



Douglas County Courthouse in Omaha, September 28, 1919, the day of the infamous Courthouse Riot and lynching of Will Brown, featured on the cover of the award-winning Fall/Winter 2010 issue of *Nebraska History*.

- Our backlog of unfiled newspaper issues will be microfilmed by The Advantage Company of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, thanks to local organizations that are providing funding to help us have up-to-date microfilmed newspapers for several Nebraska communities.
- Detailed inventories of three important collections (Union Pacific, Val Kuskas, and CB & Q-Lines West) will be produced and posted online thanks to a grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) program to support the cataloging of hidden special collections and archives. NSHS received this grant in partnership with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Research and Publications

Through books, periodicals, and online publications, the NSHS seeks to build the ongoing written record of Nebraska's history and make it accessible to the public. Major accomplishments:

- "African Americans in Nebraska," a special double issue (Fall/Winter 2010) of *Nebraska History* was honored with an Award of Merit by the Mountain-Plains Museums Association in its annual Publications Design Competition. Due to high demand, the [entire issue has been posted online](#), part of an ongoing volunteer-led project to [scan and post back issues](#) of the magazine.
- [*Wings Over Nebraska: Historic Aviation Photographs*](#), by Vince Goeres, with Kylie Kinley and introduction by Roger Welsch, published by the NSHS.
- In process: two forthcoming NSHS-authored volumes: a new edition of [*Eyewitness at Wounded Knee*](#), by Richard E. Jensen, R. Eli Paul, and John E. Carter (University of Nebraska Press, September 2011), and [*Scenery, Curiosities, and Stupendous Rocks: William Quesenbury's Overland Sketches, 1850-1851*](#), by David Royce Murphy, with contributions by Michael L. Tate and Michael Farrell (University of Oklahoma Press, December 2011).
- Another staff-authored book, [*Standing Firmly by the Flag: Nebraska Territory, the Civil War, and the Coming of Statehood, 1861-1867*](#), by James E. Potter, has been accepted by the University of Nebraska Press for publication in Fall 2012.
- A new subscription [membership](#) category starting in the 2011-2012 fiscal year will expand our readership. Subscribers will receive *Nebraska History* and *Nebraska History News* for \$29 per year.

Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center

What do Nebraska's museums, libraries, and archives need to do to be responsible stewards of the state's collections? This challenging question was the focus of a year-long effort involving NSHS Ford Conservation Center staff and curators, plus staff and volunteers from cultural heritage repositories around the state. An online survey, an intensive two-day planning meeting, regional listening sessions, and collections care workshops in Chadron, Kearney, Norfolk, and Omaha resulted in a statewide plan, "Assuring the Future of Nebraska's Cultural Heritage Collections."

Statewide needs for easily accessible training, resource sharing, and fund-



A June 2010 flood on the Elkhorn River damaged the 1910 bridge at Neligh Mill State Historic Site (top), and dumped eight feet of sand in the mill's flume. The sand was cleared out of the flume last December (below), and the riverbank itself was later restored (next page) with assistance and funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



ing were evident in the survey data and addressed in the plan. The project, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services Connecting to Collections initiative, supported workshops by Objects Conservator Deb Long and NSHS Curator of Photographs Karen Keehr.

Find resources you can use to preserve objects of importance to you at:

- www.nebraskahistory.org/connect (statewide plan and survey data)

Expanded collections care resources are now available at

- www.savingtreasures.org. (expanded collections care resources)
- www.connectingtocollections.org. (online training and assistance)

Ford Conservation Center objects and paintings labs staff:

- Served 106 distinct clients and 1,566 objects from collections throughout the region.
- Extended assistance and temporary storage to museums threatened by Missouri River flooding.
- Provided workshops to participants in the Connecting to Collections project.
- Served as faculty for online webinar training on metal objects sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Ford Center Conservation activities are supported through partnerships with the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

State Historic Preservation Office

Your comments have been important to us in creating the 2011-2015 State Historic Preservation Plan to be finalized by the end of 2011. More than 500 people responded to our online survey. Thank you for voicing continued support for these important programs:

- The [Nebraska Historic Resource Survey and Inventory](#), which identifies buildings, sites, and districts worthy of preservation. Dawson County and rural Douglas County were surveyed in 2010-2011.
- Improving public access to survey findings by digitizing the photo negatives produced in the course of survey work since 1974. Nearly 30,000 negatives were scanned this past year.
- [Nebraska Archeological Surveys](#) identify properties of cultural and archeological importance. Staff completed a survey of the lower Platte west of Omaha to identify sites worthy of preservation as urban areas expand.
- [National Register of Historic Places](#) listings are based in part on survey findings. This year, nineteen properties were entered in the National Register; total listings have topped 1,000.
- Rehabilitation of historic properties for special [tax benefits](#). Between July 2010 and June 2011, our office reviewed applications for seventeen Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit projects. Of these, five were completed and certified by the National Park Service. They had qualified rehabilitation expenditures worth more than \$54 million. The remaining twelve projects are progressing and have anticipated qualified rehabilitation expenditures worth over \$25 million.
- [Valuation Incentive Program](#) projects included several owner-occupied house rehabilitations. Current projects have qualified rehabilitation expenditures worth more than \$850,000.

- Partnerships with local governments and Nebraska Tribes. [Certified Local Governments](#) benefit by technical assistance and grants. More than \$97,000 in grants were given to governments with this status. Training and technical assistance have also been provided to the four Nebraska Tribes, which can be certified to participate as federal Tribal Historic Preservation Offices. Due to assistance extended through the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, both the Ponca and Santee Sioux tribes have been certified, and applications for the Omaha and Winnebago tribes are in process.
- The [Review and Compliance](#) program, through which federal agencies must identify and where possible avoid or lessen a federal project's potential for damage to historic properties. Many local, state, and federal agencies process these reviews, which totaled more than 3,000.

Archeology

[Archeology](#) staff traveled the state to:

- Help with an archeological survey along the Missouri River bluffs in northeastern Nebraska.
- Complete GPS mapping of Overland Trail ruts on NSHS-owned property at the California Hill site west of Brule—which will help in the planning of long-term preservation of these physical remains.
- Salvage an Archaic Period prehistoric Native American storage pit at a Platte River bluff southwest of Fremont; the pit dates to about 1,735 years before present.
- Conduct archeological testing at the Cabanné fur trading post site north of Omaha; this is part of the mitigation for a pedestrian/bicycle trail to be built across a portion of the site.
- Complete a survey of a forty-three-acre portion of the Neligh Mill property to determine the condition of various mill-related remains on that property.
- Help move a small, early Omaha Indian Reservation cemetery that was to be impacted by highway construction.
- Supervise University of Nebraska-Lincoln field school students in a roads-related testing project near the territorial Rockport town site north of Omaha.

Staff also completed:

- A multi-year cataloguing, re-housing, and long-term curation project with the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Moved NSHS Archeology offices from the Lincoln Children's Museum to the Nebraska History Museum and NSHS Headquarters building.
- Promoted awareness of its work through the Archeology Week event (actually ten days) at the Lancaster County Super Fair in August 2010.



The restored riverbank at Neligh Mill.

NSHS Volunteers

Sharing their passion for history, volunteers with a wide range of skills are vital to our continued work. Students, retirees, and working adults contributed 6,867 hours of service this past year.

** NSHS Board of Trustees*

⁰ State Historic Preservation Board

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Carol Gale, Landmark Store at Capitol

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Nancy Gillis⁰

Vince Goeres, Library Collections, Publications

Cheyenne Gottula, Landmark Store - NHM

Lori Gottula, Landmark Store - NHM

William Gustafson, Interpretation & Education



Manufactured in Havelock, Nebraska, the NSHS's 1918 Patriot truck was part of our agricultural exhibit at the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island in August 2010. An estimated 103,000 people saw the exhibit.

Jonathan Hackanson, Museum Collections
 Alexander Hain, Library Collections - K Street
 Nancy Haney*⁰
 John Hansen, Jr., NHM Docent
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 Thomas Hastie, Library Collections
 Evelyn Hastings, NHM Docent
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 Steven Hunt, Library Collections

Jean Johnson, Library Collections
 Sally Johnson, Landmark Store - NHM
 Chuck Jones, Library Collections - K Street

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 Leona Kuhlen, George Norris State Historic Site

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 Nebraska A.R.M.A, Library Collections - K Street
 Kari Nelson, Interpretation & Education
 Katherine Norgard, Museum Collections
 Lorelee Novak, NHM Docent
 Christine Nycz, Highway Archeology (UNL Field School)



Mariachi Zapata performed at the Neligh Mill Jamboree on July 4, 2010.

Linda Oehlerking, NHM Docent
Rich Oehlerking, NHM Docent
Nancy Ofc, Neligh Mill Historic Site

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Marcia Stewart, Library Collections
Paula Stone, Interpretation & Education
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Donald Swing, NHM Docent

Duane Tappe, George Norris State Historic Site
Whitney Tyrrell, Neligh Mill State Historic Site

Kristen Weber, Museum Collections
Rory Wedelin, Interpretation & Education
Brent Wegher, George Norris State Historic Site
Roger Wehrbein*
Lisa Westerholt, Library Collections
Lacy Wika, Highway Archeology (UNL Field School)
Karen Windhusen, NHM Docent
Mickey Winter, Library Collections
David Wishart*
Dan Worth⁰

Kenny Zoeller, Interpretation & Education



The Nebraska State

*Historical Society collects,
preserves, and opens to all,
the histories we share.*