

NSHRAB Meeting in Beatrice
30 March 2006

Attending:

After introductory comments, the participants discussed their records preservation needs.

Beatrice Public Library: BPL is home to the Nebraska State Genealogical Society collection, which they cataloged and reorganized. They have many local history resources and are working collaboratively with the Homestead National Monument. Electronic records an issue of concern.

Preservation--preservation microfilming, conservation
Education and training--conservation, grant writing, etc.
Access--electronic finding aids, websites

Penn Colony Historical Society of Nebraska:
8 families 1874-1888 historical period
Since 1922, there have been reunions in Dawson, Nebraska (125 attendees descended from the families in a particular county in Pennsylvania; dues paying 200-250 families.)
1890s farmhouse being preserved.
Donations of objects and a few 1700s-1800s German language books
Officers all over the country
Big issue: training and workshops for grants desired in the future.
Donations being housed in an unairconditioned warehouse in Dawson (piano dealer's warehouse)
Incorporated as a non-profit in Nebraska. Tourism component possibilities.
They have a website.

Homestead National Monument: Federal agency under Dept of the Interior. Their concern is preservation of and access to Homestead records.
Trying to acquire copies of documents. Focusing first on Nebraska. Case files on acidic paper. Working on microfilming of documents. Preservation first; access later. Making available to the public. Homestead records = 2 million individual files; 30 million pieces of paper.
50 microfilm rolls have been produced of the records from the Broken Bow Land Office; indexing will follow.
Personalization of records is striking. Intimate information.
Fundraising biggest issue. Unfunded mandate.

Undergrad library school student from Univ. of Maine internship at Doane College library; writing retention and disposal schedule. Flooding problems. College archives history of Doane College. College historian and Peg Smith spend time on it. Dedicated to preserving the archival materials, though these are not used much. (One person who has used the archives is the author of *College on the Hill*, Donald Zigler. Used microfilm for class projects. The intern indicated that they would like to digitize the

archives for preservation. Kay discussed differences between preservation and access. She recommended preservation microfilming, with online finding aids to the collections, and web exhibits to feature important topics or documents.

Doane College also has yearbooks, playbills, and papers relating to Robert Taylor (Arlington Brugh).

Johnson County Assessor: The materials that need preservation are government records. Records retention schedules. Some have been given to the state. Storage issues. Land records fragile over 100 years old, and yet are being handled, particularly by genealogists. Throwing on the photocopying machine is bad for the originals. Plats torn out. Getting pretty rough. No room for these any more. Microfilming sometimes is done, but it is given low priority in the budget. Old mortgage records have been shipped to Lincoln. Genealogists have free range in the vault. No security in the vault. Open records law must be available, but not unlimited access!

Goals? Training needs to continue and be repeated. Crucial issues for the next plan? All of the existing goals are still important, and a sixth issue of electronic records, or some reference to electronic records in the first five goals would be appropriate. Bunny noted that they have few late 20th century materials at the NSHS. Many items have been lost (blogs instead of diaries; email instead of mail). Pictures of downtown. AV. Home movies may be part of the record.

Society of American Archivists archives fundamentals series was recommended.

Kay asked if educational programs in partnership with NACO would be useful. The Johnson County Assessor believed that this would get the attention of county officials. She noted that microfilming of records is difficult due to funding limitations. County boards need to know about the importance of funds and records retention laws. Currently, in her county, the county board only wants to do what is absolutely necessary. Like many other courthouses, space issues are difficult.

Penn Society. They are concerned about the inaccessibility of birth records pre-1904. Apparently, the state health laws did not require that these be transferred to the State until 1904. This means that birth records are scattered, not kept consistently, and some may have been destroyed. May be in doctors' records. For the most part, one has to use census records in order to find the birth information.