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Article Summary: The Nebraska State Historical Society, a state-supported institution, administers historical activities funded by the state, except formal classroom instruction. It collects and preserves basic sources for the history of Nebraska and the Plains, advances knowledge of this history, and disseminates it to the general public as well as scholars. To this end the Society administers museums and historical sites; supports archaeological field work; surveys historical buildings; collects manuscripts and newspapers; preserves records of state and local government; marks places of historical interest; maintains a library of books, maps and photographs; and publishes a quarterly journal and other works on historical and archaeological subjects.

Chapter I: Before the Nebraska State Historical Society; Chapter II: Origins of the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1878-1900; Chapter III: Growth and Development, 1901-1916; Chapter IV: The Sheldon Years, 1917-1943; Chapter V: The New Building; Chapter VI: The Recent Years, 1963-1978; Appendix A: Officers of the Nebraska State Historical Society; Appendix B: Historic Sites Maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society, Historic Sites Maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation. Members of the Board of the Nebraska State Historical Society

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Robert W. Furnas, Nebraska governor, newspaper publisher, and horticulturalist, initiated the drive to organize the Nebraska State Historical Society and served as its President (1878-1890, 1904-1905).

A CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE
NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
1878-1978

By Anne Polk Diffendal

CHAPTER I

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Traditionally an anniversary, whether of an individual or of an institution, provides an occasion for reflection upon the events which have led to the milestone. This custom is particularly appropriate during a centenary. It seems fitting, therefore, that the centennial anniversary of the founding of the Nebraska State Historical Society would be marked by the publication of a history of the Society. Perhaps those whose lives it now affects can better evaluate its current condition and can more intelligently decide on its future course by learning of its development to the present.

The Nebraska State Historical Society, a state-supported institution, administers all manner of historical activities funded by the state except that of formal classroom instruction. The Society collects and preserves basic sources for the history of Nebraska and the Plains, advances knowledge of this history, and disseminates it to all—the general public as well as scholars. In this respect the Society is unique in the state which it serves. It is an educational institution in which the learner examines subjects of particular interest to himself; one where the student proceeds at his own pace; one which offers assistance to the classroom teacher but does not impose its own curriculum. Books, documents, and artifacts are collected and maintained for the use of persons who have the knowledge and preparation to study these materials for themselves. At the same time, a staff of specialists interprets these sources through exhibits, publications, and other such programs for those who may have

neither the time nor the training to investigate historical questions on their own.

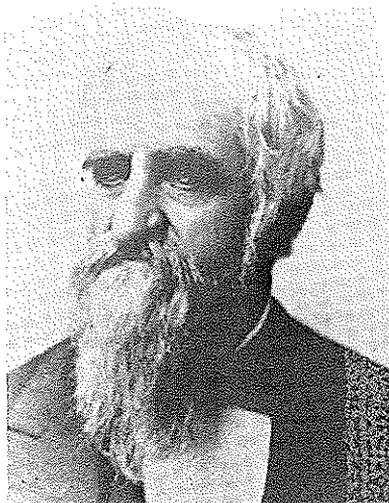
To these ends the Society administers museums and historical sites; supports archeological field work; surveys historical buildings; collects manuscripts and newspapers; preserves records of state and local government; marks places of historical interest; maintains a library of books, maps, and photographs; and publishes a quarterly journal and other works on historical and archeological subjects.

The Society has not always existed as it appears today. Contemporary programs have developed from the aims of its founders as expressed in 1878 by the articles of incorporation and the first constitution. The history of the Society may be understood as the conversion of these general goals into particular projects. New programs have been developed and old ones altered in response to changing conceptions of the nature of historical study, following new views of the Society's proper role, and as a result of fluctuating financial resources.

The Nebraska State Historical Society represents a type of institution typically found in the midwestern United States. The model for this kind of organization is the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, founded in 1848 as the first publicly supported state historical society. Other examples include the societies in Minnesota, founded in 1848, Iowa (1857), Kansas (1875), Missouri (1898), and South Dakota (1901).¹ Such associations were usually incorporated shortly after the organization of the state primarily because of the founders' belief that they were participating in great historical events which should be documented as they occurred. Soon after their founding the societies began receiving state funds to maintain their activities. As new programs, such as collecting state and local records, marking historical sites, and preserving historical buildings, began to receive state support, they were generally assigned to the existing historical society, particularly in the cases of Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Kansas.

As a result of public funding, the midwestern historical societies differed from their older counterparts in the east and south. The latter were private, restricted organizations with memberships whose meetings resembled gentlemen's clubs of a small, cultured elite. Initially, the midwestern societies appeared to take a similar form including constitutional

Gilbert C. Monell, Secretary of the Nebraska Historical Society organized in 1858, was elected to the original Board of the Nebraska State Historical Society in 1878.



requirements for elective membership. After they began receiving tax support, however, the midwestern groups sought large memberships and directed their programs to a wide audience.

The founding of the Nebraska State Historical Society in 1878 was not the first attempt to organize an historical association in Nebraska. In 1858, only four years after the creation of the territory, the Nebraska Historical Society was founded in the capital city of Omaha. Gilbert C. Monell, the Corresponding Secretary, issued an appeal through the newspapers for historical data and artifacts. According to Monell, the objectives of the organization were "to collect and preserve in form, reliable information in regard to all that concerned the early history of this country, and its recent settlement . . . [and] to collect and preserve specimens in every department of Natural History incident to the Territory." The Society particularly wanted "reliable information as to Indians formerly or at present occupying this region, or as to the first occupations and present condition of various white settlements. . . . Articles of Indian curiosity, Specimens of Mineralogy, and Geology, Skins or Skeletons of Animals, Birds, Insects, preserved wild flowers, etc." All such material received would be studied, made available to the public, and carefully preserved for future use.² This society died for lack of support, but it did manage to collect about one hundred volumes, mostly printed records and reports of the United States Congress. These books, housed in the state



Thomas P. Kennard (left) and John Gillespie were two of the commissioners who laid out the city of Lincoln in 1867 and set aside Block 29 for the State Historical and Library Association. They were also among the incorporators of that Association.

library in the Capitol building, were lost during the capital removal from Omaha to Lincoln in 1868.³

The next attempt to form an historical society occurred when the city of Lincoln was established. The three state-appointed commissioners, who located the new capital in July, 1867, set aside Block 29 on the plat of the original city for the "State Historical and Library Association."⁴ The commissioners reserved this land near that designated for the state university, intending that the association, as an auxiliary to the university, might in future erect a building on the site. Such a structure, they believed, could also house a geological museum and a state library. On September 26, 1867, the same day that the plat for the city was filed, articles of incorporation for the State Historical and Library Association were also filed. Among the incorporators were Thomas P. Kennard and John Gillespie, commissioners who had laid out the city, and Augustus V. Harvey, the surveyor. The association, which could raise funds by issuing capital stock to the amount of \$25,000, was to operate a library in Lincoln, open to the public, "composed of good and

useful books of ancient and modern history and other miscellaneous literature.”⁵

An organizational meeting was held shortly after the incorporation of the new association, S. B. Galey, clerk of Lancaster County, was elected secretary, and Augustus V. Harvey was probably named a trustee. Records are so few that the names of other officers are not known. A few meetings may have been held in the early years, but little or no effort was made to collect or preserve historical items. This group came to public notice again in 1875 at the outset of the controversy known as the “historical block question,” which was to continue intermittently for three decades. The contest, settled long after the demise of the State Historical and Library Association, was to have a significant effect on the Nebraska State Historical Society, which had not yet been founded when the controversy began.

Because the State Historical and Library Association never used the historical block nor derived any income from it, the property was listed in a state law of 1875 authorizing the sale of all unappropriated lots in the city. Legislators from Lancaster County wanted the block retained for public use because of its advantageous location. The city’s original market square had been donated to the federal government for a post office building, and a new site for the market was needed. In February, 1875, the governor signed a law stipulating that the block should be used for market square purposes only. This law prompted the State Historical and Library Association to action, though not until 1879.

By the year 1878 two attempts had been made to organize state historical societies in Nebraska. Although the Legislature seemed willing to aid such an organization by reserving land for its support in the new city of Lincoln, the inactivity of the State Historical and Library Association caused the state to transfer this property to the city. This measure rejuvenated the association, which instituted legal action to recover the land. Before the lawsuit commenced, however, another historical society was founded, one destined to endure as a permanent organization.

CHAPTER II

ORIGINS OF THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1878-1900

The Nebraska State Historical Society, founded in 1878, was the third historical society organized in the state. During the initial period of development, which lasted until 1900, the most fundamental concern of its leaders was to find adequate financial support. This pursuit drew the fledgling Society briefly into the historical block question and impelled it to seek recognition as a state institution in order to secure permanent public funding. A second essential was to build a public recognition of the organization's existence and popular support for its programs. To that end the Society solicited memberships, issued publications, and encouraged attendance at meetings. A third necessity was to acquire suitable facilities at the University of Nebraska to house a growing collection of books, state publications, newspapers, photographs, and artifacts.

The manner in which these collections developed, another important feature of the first period in the Society's growth, followed from the interests and activities of the first three men to hold the office of Secretary. Members of the university faculty, they collected and administered the Society's acquisitions with little help and small remuneration. Not until 1893 did the Society establish a salaried, appointive staff position of Assistant Secretary and Librarian. Because of its intimate relationship with the university, the Society in its own formative period participated in significant changes in curriculum and instructional methods at the university as they related to the teaching of history.

Former Governor Robert W. Furnas took the initiative in founding the Nebraska State Historical Society by sending a letter to several friends on August 12, 1878, in which he explained that "feeling, as I presume every citizen of the state does, the necessity for a state historical association, after some consultation with persons in several parts of the state, it is thought advisable to call a meeting of a 'state historical society.' Would like your views, and, if favorably entertained, to use your name to such a call."⁶

The response encouraged Furnas to issue an invitation in the state's papers over the names of nineteen individuals:

The undersigned, impressed with the importance of collecting and preserving, in particular, such historical material as shall serve to illustrate the settlement and growth of the State of Nebraska, and knowing that much valuable to that end can now be obtained from living tongues and pens of those familiar from organization, and which may be lost by further procrastination, adopt this method of securing the organization of a State Historical Society. We call on friends of the object in view throughout the State, to meet at the Commercial Hotel in the city of Lincoln, on the evening of Wednesday, September 25, 1878, for the purpose herein indicated.⁷

The individuals whose names appeared in support of the appeal included some of the most prominent in the state. Among them were former Territorial Governors J. Sterling Morton, Algernon S. Paddock, and Alvin Saunders, and incumbent Governor Silas Garber. The roster of founders and early members also included US senators, state legislators, newspaper publishers, bankers, real estate investors, lawyers, and merchants. A total of thirty-six men representing seventeen different counties attended sessions of the organizational meeting.⁸

According to the constitution and bylaws adopted at the first meeting, the name of the new organization was to be the Nebraska State Historical Society; it was to have a president, two vice presidents, a treasurer, a corresponding secretary, a recording secretary, and a board of five directors. A subsequent constitutional change included the officers as part of the board. New members were to be elected and would pay an initial fee of three dollars as well as dues of two dollars annually. The general purpose of the society was "to encourage historical research and inquiry, spread historical information, especially within the State of Nebraska, and to embrace alike aboriginal and modern history."

As a means of achieving its objectives the Society planned to support specific programs:

First, the establishment of a library of books and publications appropriate to such an institution, with convenient works of reference, and also a cabinet of antiquities, relics, etc.

Second, the collection into a safe and permanent depository, of manuscripts, documents, papers, and tracts possessing a historical value and worthy of preservation.

Third, to encourage investigations of aboriginal remains, and more particularly to provide for the complete and scientific exploration and survey of aboriginal monuments as exist within the limits of this State.⁹

The Secretary was given responsibility for the collection, arrangement, and preservation of documents, books, and other historical matter. As the Society grew, the Secretary, under a succession of different titles, became the chief administrative

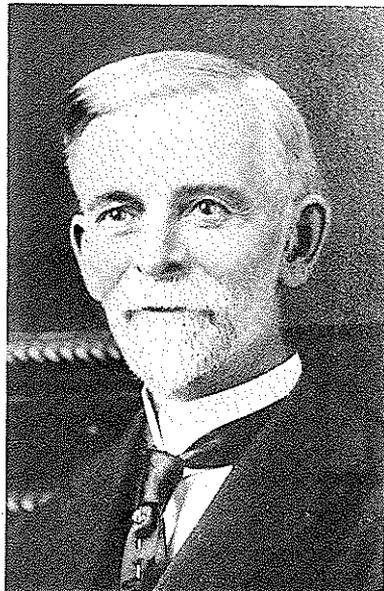
officer. This official was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Society between infrequent meetings of officers and Board and even less frequent meetings of the membership. The original officers elected at the organizational meeting on September 26, 1878, and reelected at the Society's first annual meeting on January 23, 1879, were Robert W. Furnas, President; Dr. George L. Miller, First Vice President; Elmer S. Dundy, Second Vice President; W. W. Wilson, Treasurer; Samuel Aughey, Secretary; Daniel H. Wheeler, Corresponding Secretary; and Silas Garber, J. Sterling Morton, C. D. Wilbur, Gilbert C. Monell, and Lorenzo Crounse, members of the Board. Furnas' tenure as President ran from 1878 through 1890, when he was replaced by Morton, who served until his death in 1903. After Morton's death Furnas was again elected in 1904 and 1905. Samuel Aughey, a professor at the university, served as Secretary from the beginning until he took a position elsewhere in 1885.

The first regular meeting of the Society was held on January 23, 1879, in rooms of the university's only building. The Secretary reported that several persons in the state had responded to his request for "historical matter and data." He had also received "historical documents" from other state societies. (These were probably publications of the societies.) He obtained permission to purchase letter files for Society correspondence and to have a bookcase built for the collections, providing the cost did not exceed sixteen dollars. The university donated space for the bookcase and other Society property.

At that first meeting the question of the historical block was discussed, and a committee was appointed to "memorialize" the Legislature to restore the block to its original purpose for the support of an historical society.¹⁰ An undated, handwritten memorial is found in the Society Board files requesting an appropriation to support the Historical Society. It also asked for repeal of the legislation transferring the historical block to the city. No memorial is to be found among the legislative records, but a bill to repeal the act of 1875, which had granted the city Block 29, was introduced on February 20, 1879. It passed the House, was referred to a Senate committee on the day before adjournment, and was never reported out. At the next Society meeting a year later, January 20, 1880, the question was discussed again. Aughey reported that the Legislature had been memorialized but "by efforts of citizens of Lincoln the prayer was not granted."¹¹



Samuel Aughey (upper left) was the first Secretary of the Nebraska State Historical Society. J. Sterling Morton served on the Society Board (1878-1879, 1885-1890) and as President (1891-1903). George E. Howard (below left) was Society Secretary from 1886 to 1891. (Courtesy, UNL Archives) Howard W. Caldwell was Society Secretary from 1892 to 1906.



The city's acquisition of the historical block caused some resentment in other parts of the state. This feeling threatened to hamper the work of the new Society, which could ill-afford such sentiment, despite the fact that it had not yet been founded when the block was taken away. Society leaders knew that antipathy toward the capital city frequently appeared in outlying areas of the state. Feelings were still strong from the controversy over removal of the capital from Omaha to Lincoln. One letter to Secretary Aughey from Niobrara illustrated how the new Society could be harmed by such feelings:

I have the historic materials you speak of, but don't feel like giving it to your Society, since Lincoln has stolen the historical block. In fact I will see the Society in hell first before I will do anything until Lincoln gives it up, unless its Seat is moved somewhere else—Nebraska City or Omaha or the North Pole.¹²

After lengthy discussion of the question, the Society appointed a committee to report on the legal aspects of the situation and to try and obtain "unity of action on the part of the old and dormant 'Nebraska Historical and Library Association' and this organization."¹³

Meanwhile, the State Historical and Library Association held its first meeting in several years on August 5, 1879. It met again on December 20, 1879, and elected the following officers: John Gillespie, president; S. B. Galey, vice president; J. E. Philpott, secretary; Thomas P. Kennard, treasurer; and W. J. Abbott, librarian. All of them were men who had been associated with this group earlier. None were involved in the formation of the Nebraska State Historical Society. Bylaws were adopted calling for regular meetings in January and July and giving the librarian charge of all books and other material belonging to the association.¹⁴

On April 1, 1880, a petition was filed by the association in Lancaster County District Court against the city of Lincoln. During the trial the plaintiffs offered evidence to show that Block 29 had originally been intended for historical purposes. John Gillespie, Thomas P. Kennard, and S. B. Galey testified that the State Historical and Library Association had been incorporated specifically to utilize this land. In its defense the city offered the act of 1875 in which the Legislature donated the block to the city for market purposes. Representatives of the city testified that a well had been dug, a scale set up, and a school house built on the site and that the block had been used as a market square for several years. District Court Judge Stephen B.

Pound ruled in favor of the city on June 18, 1880. Upon the request of the association for a new trial, the judgement was vacated that same day and the case postponed to a later term of the court.

Meanwhile, the committee appointed by the Nebraska State Historical Society to study the matter prepared a report dated July 31, 1880, which was not formally submitted until the Society's meeting the following January. The report summarized the various state laws affecting the property in question and recommended that a committee of the Society be appointed to confer with the Historical and Library Association to unite their interests, and either together or independently to institute legal proceedings to regain title from the city. The report was adopted but its effects are unclear. There is no evidence that the Society joined the older organization in its court action.

Judge Pound ruled again in favor of the city on November 8, 1881, and the association filed an appeal with the Nebraska Supreme Court on February 24, 1882. In the January term of 1883, the Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision. It ruled that the State Historical and Library Association had never taken any action which constituted an acceptance of the gift of the 1869 Legislature which had approved the 1867 plat of Lincoln. Therefore, the Legislature had acted lawfully in transferring the property in question to the city.¹⁵ The judicial proceedings seem to have marked the demise of the State Historical and Library Association. No trace has been found of this group after 1881. The Supreme Court decision also marked the end of the first phase of the historical block question. Two decades later the Nebraska State Historical Society would revive the question in an attempt to acquire a site for a much needed building.

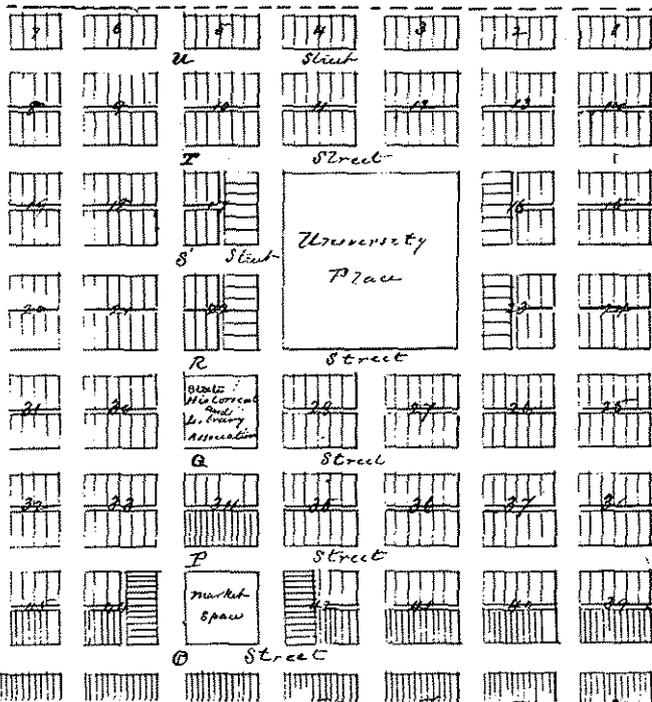
During the meeting of January, 1881, at which the Society voted to join its companion association in court action, it also appointed a committee to draft a bill for legislative recognition as a state institution. Although the first attempt to get public funds was unsuccessful, this tactic proved to be a more successful route to financial support in the Society's early years than did an appeal for return of the historical block. A second request for funds in 1883 resulted in a law recognizing the Nebraska State Historical Society as a state institution. This same act granted an annual appropriation of \$500 "to be used under the direction of its officers exclusively in defraying expenses, collecting and

A Plat of LINCOLN, the CAPITAL of NEBRASKA.

Location is situated upon the S E ¼ of Section 23
the N E ¼ of the N W ¼, and the N E ¼ of the S W ¼ of
Sections 25 and 26 of Township No 10 North of
Range No 6 East of the 6th principal Meridian
and is located upon said several tracts of
land by the undesignated Commissioners
under and by virtue of an act of the Legislature
of the State of Nebraska entitled "an act to provide
for the location of the seat of Government of
the State of Nebraska and for the erection of
public buildings thereat." Approved June 19 1867
Dated at Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska this
14th day of August A. D. 1867 Thomas our hands this
day last at the mentioned.

In presence of
A. B. South
Aug & Harry

David Butler } Comm-
Thos P. Hammond } Comm-
John Gillispie }



Detail from the plat of the original city of Lincoln shows Block 29 reserved for the State Historical and Library Association.

preserving historical matter, data, relics, for the benefit of the state."¹⁶ This annual appropriation gradually increased to \$2,500 in 1900.

Recognition as a state institution meant that the Society's annual report would be printed as a state publication. This reliable support for a publications series enabled the Society to realize several goals. Among them was to make known its existence so as to broaden public interest. Recognizing this need immediately after the organizational meeting, President Furnas had used his own funds and the resources of his newspaper, the *Nebraska Advertiser*, to print and distribute a circular on the nature and goals of the new organization in order to "put the society on its feet." Shortly thereafter he paid for printing the constitution and bylaws hoping that he would be reimbursed later by the Society. He was optimistic about financial prospects, saying that "the legislature ought to make an appropriation—will I think."¹⁷

Furnas' hopes were indeed justified. A series supported by public funds began in 1885 and is now known as the *Publications of the NSHS*. The first five volumes carried the title *Transactions and Reports*, and the series has undergone several title changes. Issued irregularly, the first eight volumes had appeared by 1900. In 1894 and 1895 the series was published as a quarterly, but such a schedule could not be maintained. Some volumes contained a variety of articles, while others were devoted to a single subject. Volume One, which was produced almost single handedly by Furnas, set the model for the six subsequent ones. These publications contained proceedings of the Society, including minutes of meetings, lists of officers, copies of the constitution and bylaws; and less frequently, lists of members, reports on donations, and news notes. Also printed were papers on historical subjects, often ones that had been read before annual meetings. Pioneer reminiscences were sought and published. Biographies of important Nebraskans recently deceased were included. Manuscripts loaned to the Society for copying were published. The Society reprinted a few of the county histories written on the occasion of the US Centennial in 1876. However, its original intention of reprinting all such histories that could be found was never realized. The eighth volume, which appeared in 1899, subtitled *Provisional Government of Nebraska Territory and the Journals of William Walker*, represented the first example of an issue devoted to a

single subject. This type of publication was to become more frequent in later years and would eventually replace collections of miscellaneous papers and reports.

The first volume of the *Transactions and Reports* was received very favorably. Secretary George E. Howard was enthusiastic because this occasion was evidence of the Society's maturity. As he explained, "We have been brought at one into active and friendly relations with our fellow societies throughout the country. For the first time we have received full recognition and taken an honorable and accredited place in the ranks of those fraternities which are taking the lead of all other agencies in preserving the origins of American history."¹⁸

The Society acquired another badge of identity with the adoption in January, 1888, of an official Society seal, designed by Sarah W. Moore, instructor in art at the university. The seal shows the figure of a white man, his foot on a stump, holding an open book. Next to the seated figure of an Indian is an animal, apparently a dead buffalo. Behind them the sun is rising. Circling the figures is the name "Nebraska State Historical Society" and the Latin phrase "Cedant Armatogae," meaning "let arms yield to the toga" or "let military power give way to civil power."

The Society's first activity, and for a time its only one, was to sponsor meetings. Many of the early gatherings were sparsely attended. There was, for example, no annual meeting held in 1882 because almost none of the officers could attend. In an effort to promote state-wide interest, the mandate that the annual meeting be held in Lincoln was stricken from the constitution in 1880. The following year plans were made for a quarterly meeting in Nebraska City and another in Plattsmouth, but neither was held.

Except for 1882 the Society did hold annual meetings in January in Lincoln (the constitutional change notwithstanding), usually in rooms at the university, less frequently in a downtown hotel. Two or three sessions were held over a two-day period. The members conducted Society business and listened to papers generally on Nebraska and western historical subjects, many by persons who had participated in the events they recounted. At the business meeting new members were admitted by vote of three-fourths of the members present, as provided in the constitution. Though potentially restrictive, elective membership did not prove in practice to be so exclusive as in eastern societies.

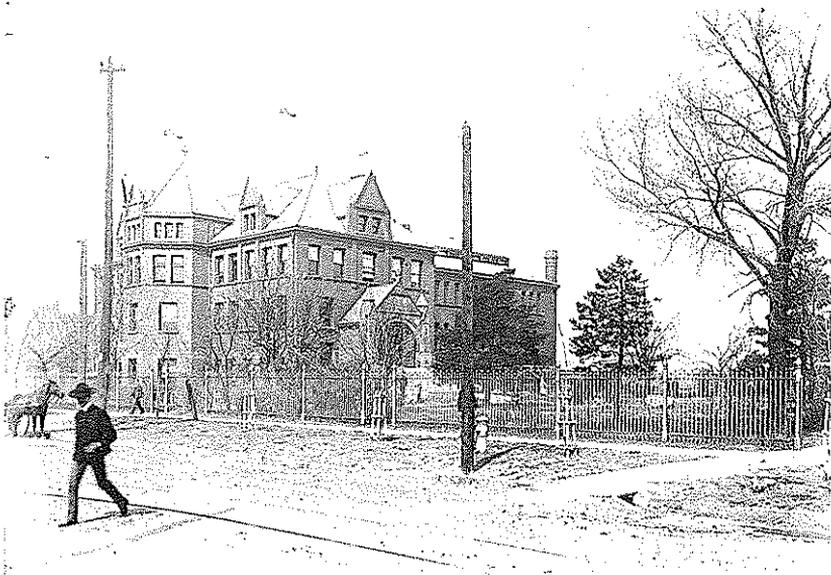
Any resident of the state was eligible, and the list of potential members was routinely accepted. In a circular of 1879, individuals were invited to "become connected with the Society" simply by forwarding the amount of yearly dues to the treasurer. The formality of elected membership was continued into the 20th century, long past the time when it might have had any practical consequences.

In spite of a relatively open membership policy, requests for public support, and wide distribution of its publications, the Society in its initial period appealed primarily to a cultured elite. It, like other midwestern historical societies, may have been more democratic than its eastern counterparts, but it was far from the popular institution it would become in the next century. Meetings had the tone of a "gentleman's club."¹⁹ Members tended to come from among the political, intellectual, and economic leaders of the state. Because the university faculty was represented in significant numbers among the officers and members, the Society was especially close to the university in its early years.

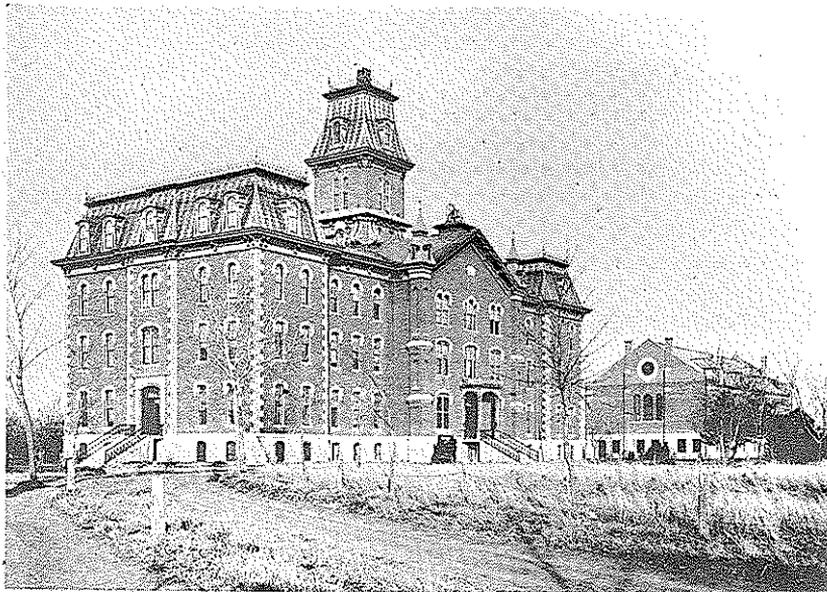
Together with securing financial support and promoting interest among the state's citizens, a major concern of the Society's leaders was finding adequate facilities for its meetings and its growing collections. The "case" which Aughey had purchased in 1879 was reported "crowded" by 1881. This case was kept in his lecture room next to his office, while a second desk in his office served for the Society's records and correspondence. When George E. Howard replaced Aughey as Secretary in 1886, he moved the material to a room next to his own lecture hall on the second floor of the main university building. In 1892 one other small room was obtained for storage.

Portions of the new three-story University Library building, now known as Architecture Hall, were built for the Historical Society, including the ground floor of the fireproof north wing which was designed for library stacks. When the initial appropriation allowed only partial completion of this wing, the Society began moving into its unfinished quarters in 1893. Assistant Secretary and Librarian Jay Amos Barrett was the first to occupy the area. As he recalled,

the fireproof wing was erected as a shell with only funds enough to rough in the tiling between the basement and next floor. Into that big room I moved the case or two of book cases from Prof. Howard's rooms in . . . the original University building. . . . The new room had no heating apparatus but a big round heater, something the size of a hogshead only taller was brought in from the college farm (I think) and with it out in the big room, a



The ground floor of the University Library, now known as Architecture Hall, was built for the Society, which was housed there from 1893 to 1934. . . . (Below) University Hall, the first building on the university campus, was the site of early Society meetings as well as the offices of its first secretaries.



chimney stovepipe was run to the N.E. corner into the air flue. There I camped down for two years before the building was completed.²⁰

When the other wing was completed in 1895, the Society also had a reading room, offices, and a room for receiving collections.

The new quarters were essential because of the growth of the Society's collections. From its founding the Society had intended to accumulate sources for Nebraska and western history, as explained in its first collecting policy printed as a pamphlet in 1879. That statement, reproduced here in full, is interesting both for the scope of subject matter envisioned and for the enumeration of the items desired:

DONATIONS ESPECIALLY DESIRED.—Books and pamphlets on American history, biography, and genealogy, particularly those relating to the West—works relating to our Indian tribes, and American archeology and ethnology; statistical and scientific publications of states or societies; books or pamphlets relating to the great rebellion; privately printed works, newspapers, maps, and charts, engravings, autographs, coins, antiquities, and encyclopedias; dictionaries and bibliographical works of every kind. Entire sets of works are especially solicited, or collections of books on any subject, but single volumes or pamphlets even will be gratefully received.

WORKS RELATING TO NEBRASKA.—Especially do we desire everything relating to our own state.

1. Travels and explorations, city directories, copies of the earlier Laws and Journals of our legislature, ordinances of cities, and in short, every book on any subject printed in the state or elsewhere, relating to it.

2. Pamphlets of all kinds, catalogues of Nebraska Colleges, and other institutions of learning; annual reports of societies, sermons, and addresses delivered in this state; minutes of church conventions, synods, or other ecclesiastical bodies of Nebraska; political addresses; railroad and board of trade reports, and every other pamphlet relating to this state.

3. Files of Nebraska newspapers and magazines, especially complete volumes of past years, or single numbers even. Publishers are earnestly requested to contribute their publications eagerly, all of which will be carefully preserved and bound.

4. Materials for Nebraska history; old letters, journals, and manuscript narratives of the pioneers of Nebraska; original papers on the early history and settlement of the territory; adventures and conflicts during the Indian war of the late rebellion; biographies of the pioneers of every county, either living or deceased, together with their portraits and autographs; a sketch of the settlement of every town and village in the state, with names of the first settlers. We solicit articles on every subject connected with Nebraska history.

5. Maps of town sites or counties, of any date; views and engravings of buildings or historic places; drawings or photographs of scenery; paintings, portraits, etc., connected with Nebraska history.

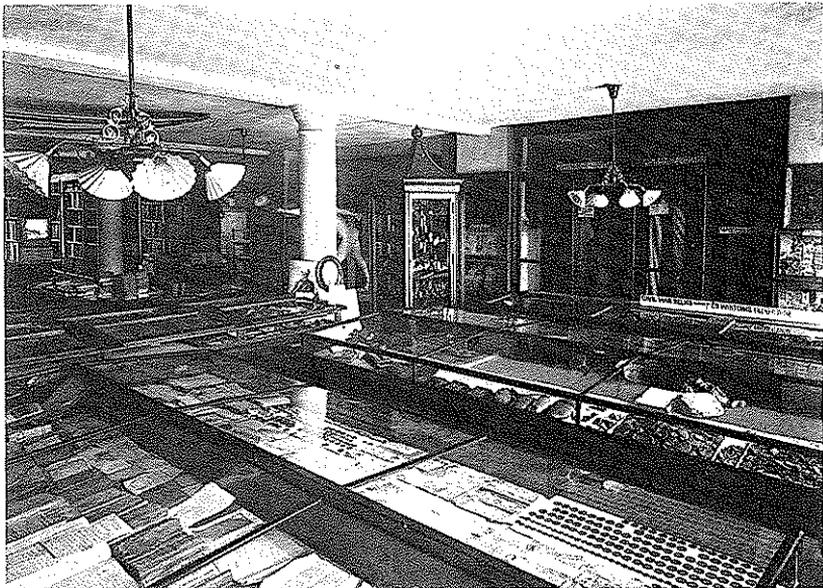
6. Curiosities of all kinds for our museum; coins, medals, paintings, portraits, engravings, statues, war relics, autograph letters of distinguished persons, etc.

7. Facts illustrative of our Indian tribes; their history, characteristics, religion, etc.; sketches of their prominent chiefs, orators, and warriors, together with contributions of Indian weapons, costumes, ornaments, curiosities, and implements. Also, stone axes, spears, arrow-heads, pottery, or other relics of the pre-historic races.

In brief, *everything* that, by the most liberal construction, can illustrate the history of Nebraska—its early settlement, its progress or present condition—which will be of value or interest to succeeding generations.²¹



Assistant Secretary and Librarian Jay Amos Barrett is seated in the Society's office in the University Library building. . . . (Below) The Society's collections nearly filled its space in the north wing of the Library about 1900.



From the beginning the Society intended to collect information about and artifacts representative of the Plains Indians. "Curiosities" for the museum were requested, and, although articles of white and Indian cultures were received, they remained during the early period simply "curiosities." With one notable exception, that relating to the Sioux uprising of 1890, there was no concerted effort to collect museum items. An appointed committee secured a Ghost Dance shirt and other articles, as well as accounts of the military campaign. Two new display cases, purchased in 1895 for the "relics" and "curios," were filled by 1898.

The Society's major efforts, however, were directed toward collecting books, pamphlets, and newspapers. Items were acquired by donation, by exchange, and occasionally by purchase. The appearance of the *Transactions and Reports* was a great benefit because the Society was then able to exchange this series for those of other historical societies. The Society secured a law in 1893 authorizing it to receive fifty copies of each state publication to be used for exchange and so had additional means by which to acquire publications of other states and of the federal government.

The Society had always planned to preserve Nebraska newspapers. Not until Jay Amos Barrett was hired as Assistant Secretary and Librarian in 1893, however, did a systematic attempt to collect papers begin. Barrett initiated the practice of keeping a record of all newspapers in the state and requested the publishers to send copies of each issue to the Society. The *Nebraska State Journal* and the Lincoln Newspaper Union agreed to keep bags in their offices where duplicates or copies of unwanted papers which they received could be set aside for the Society. Barrett solicited back files of contemporary papers and files of discontinued papers. By 1900 the Society had secured appropriations sufficient to begin binding the newspapers.

Despite the initial statement of purpose, the Society collected very few unpublished papers, such as letters, diaries, and the like. The manuscripts it did receive were generally reminiscences, eye-witness accounts, or remembered tales. Frequently such papers were read at meetings and submitted to be published in the *Transactions*. Most were loaned to be copied and the originals returned to the donor. Nevertheless, when a particularly valuable set of papers was located the Society might attempt to secure it. In 1896 Barrett found papers of the

Chouteau family, important in the Missouri River fur trade. The manuscripts were "stored in six great dry goods boxes in a warehouse in St. Louis." Upon approaching the family he found them divided concerning the disposition of the papers. Some of the items had been offered to the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis, which had shown little interest at the time. Some members favored giving them to Montana because the state had named a county after the family. Barret reported to Society President J. Sterling Morton that there was thought of giving at least part of the collection to Nebraska. Morton quickly responded:

The State Historical Society of Nebraska would, through its officers, if necessary, proceed on foot from Lincoln to St. Louis to secure such treasures as you intimate the elder Choteau [*sic*] was ready to give to the Missouri organization.

It is not too late for Nebraska to change the name of Gosper County to Choteau, or to organize a new county in honor of that Pioneer of Commerce in the Northwest.

At an early day I shall address a letter to Governor Furnas in regard to the matter. Meantime, perhaps you may possibly make extracts from this letter yourself, and officially address the Choteaus.²²

Such blandishments proved to no avail. Eventually, the Missouri Historical Society obtained the Chouteau collection. Fortunately, such extreme measures as Morton suggested were not needed to acquire most of the Society's holdings.

The main responsibility for the Society's operations devolved upon the elected Secretary, who, according to the constitution, was responsible for the collections. The first three Secretaries were all members of the faculty of the University of Nebraska. Samuel Aughey, professor of natural history, was succeeded in 1886 by George E. Howard, the university's first professor of history. When Howard went to Stanford University in 1891, he was replaced by Howard W. Caldwell both as Society Secretary and as professor of history. Largely because of these men, the Society found rooms in university buildings. Also because of their vigorous efforts the Society library was established. In 1886 an expense allowance of \$100 per year was allotted to the office. In 1893 an appointive, salaried position of Assistant Secretary and Librarian was created, and Jay Amos Barrett was employed for half-time at an annual salary of \$500. He carried out the ordinary work of the Society under supervision of the Secretary. After Barrett was hired, classification of the library according to the Dewey decimal system was begun, and the Society's rooms were opened several hours daily so the collections were more easily accessible.



Sarah W. Moore, university art instructor, designed the Society seal.

Because of the Society's location at the university and the important position in its affairs held by faculty members, it participated in two fundamental changes in university education during the last two decades of the 19th century and was in turn affected by them. The first change was a revision of curriculum and methods in undergraduate instruction in the early 1880s.²³ Patterned after innovations introduced at Harvard University by President Charles W. Eliot, the University of Nebraska replaced a single set of courses required of all students with an elective system. Students were still required to take certain courses but could also choose from among several sequences of advanced studies in different fields. At the same time, recitation was replaced as the sole method of teaching in many disciplines. Under the new program students of history attended lectures supplemented with assigned readings in textbooks. Documentary sources were read and discussed, and research papers prepared from the Society's library.

As the undergraduate curriculum was altered, a graduate program was started. Masters' degrees were first authorized by the university in 1886. History was among the early disciplines to develop graduate programs in American universities. By

initiating graduate training, historians hoped to establish themselves as professionals and to develop standards for research. Influenced by programs in German universities which had been first copied in this country by Harvard and Johns Hopkins Universities, historians advocated the seminar method of graduate instruction. At Nebraska this method was introduced in the history department by George E. Woodbury from Harvard; George E. Howard, a graduate of Nebraska who had done graduate work in Germany; and Howard W. Caldwell, trained at Johns Hopkins.

Howard and Caldwell, in their positions as Secretary of the State Historical Society, were eager to use the resources of the Society in their teaching and, consequently, built up certain portions of the collections for that purpose. Their generation of historians tended to be nationalistic as they rejected the antiquarianism which characterized the writing of local history. The value of the Society for them lay in its library of publications from other historical societies and from state and local governments, as well as in its potential to enlarge these collections through exchange. Older historical societies, both in the East and Midwest, had produced substantial series of documentary publications. Encouraged by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, established as a standing committee of the American Historical Association in 1895, such series were proliferating. At the turn of the century, the Nebraska State Historical Society also began issuing documentary publications in its own series. In his annual report for 1886, Secretary Howard proudly proclaimed that "the most recent innovation in methods of instruction adopted by the great universities consists in the adoption of the society plan to academic work."²⁴

As the century closed, so also did the first period of the Society's growth. In these years the organization acquired permanent funding and adequate facilities. It began systematically collecting books and newspapers. Although its membership grew steadily, it still appealed mainly to an intellectual and cultural elite. The following years would bring changes which enlarged the extent of the Society's activities and enabled it to serve the people of the state in greater numbers.

CHAPTER III

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, 1901-1916

In many ways the year 1901 marks no significant break in the Society's work. Howard W. Caldwell remained as Secretary and Jay Amos Barrett as Assistant Secretary and Librarian until 1907. The library continued to be the major program, newspapers were collected, and the publications were issued. The onset of a new period in the Society's development was characterized, however, by the appearance of three men whose presence would be of profound effect to the Society: Addison E. Sheldon, Elmer E. Blackman, and Clarence S. Paine. The period closed in 1916 upon the death of the then Secretary Paine. During these years the Society was able to pursue its responsibilities more vigorously and to adopt many new programs. One reason for this expansion was a legislative appropriation in 1901 double that of the previous year.

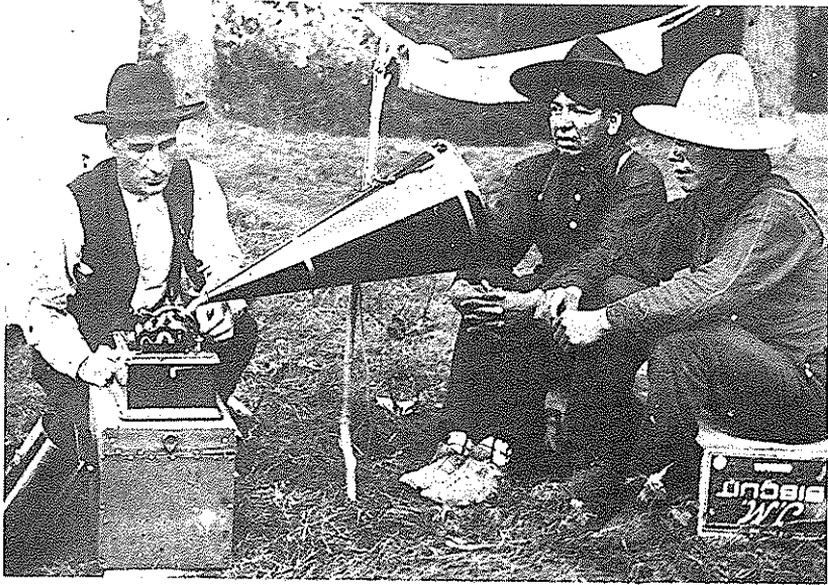
The new programs were of two types, called "field work" and "extension work." The first consisted of actively seeking historical materials so that the collections were augmented not only by additional material but by new kinds of documentary sources. Such new programs included archeological research, photography, and sound recording. "Extension work" meant educational services to all segments of the public. The program included lectures, travelling exhibits, museum tours, university courses, and historical markers. During these years a museum was established, state records were inventoried, and a research bureau for the Legislature was formed. Affecting all of these programs was a conflict, both personal and professional, between Paine and Sheldon, which eventually included Blackman, an archeologist, and Albert Watkins, who joined the staff in 1909 to fill the new position of Historian. Increased staff and growing collections aggravated the Society's perennial problem of shortage of space. Efforts to relieve this shortage resulted in a successful attempt to acquire land and a legislative appropriation to begin construction of a building. No further funds were allotted for this purpose, however.

The addition of Addison E. Sheldon to the staff in 1901 as "Director of Field Work" enabled the Society to take a more

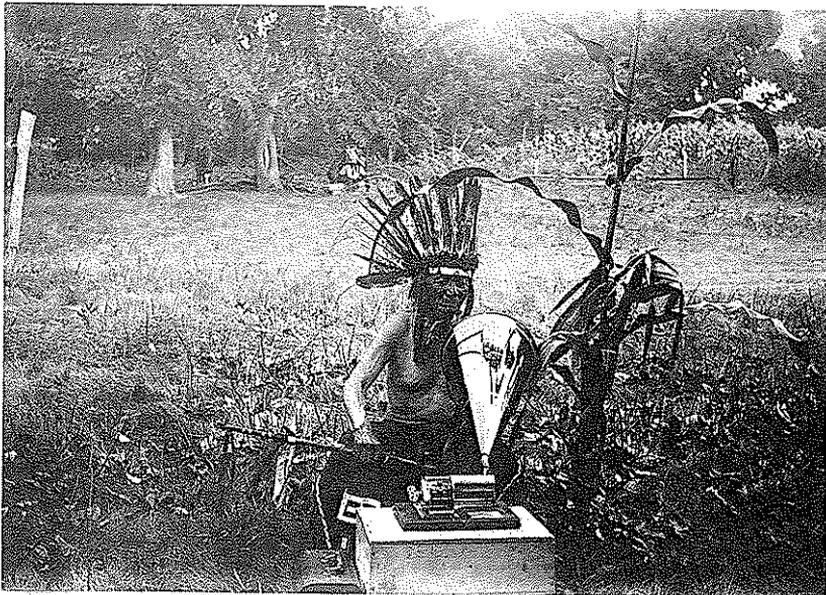
active role in documenting Nebraska history. Sheldon's varied background and wide acquaintance with the state made him well suited for this work. A former homesteader and newspaper editor in western Nebraska, he earned an MA in history from the University of Nebraska in 1904 and a PhD from Columbia University in 1908. As a member of the Populist Party he had been elected a delegate to two of its national conventions and a representative to the Nebraska Legislature in 1897. Because the duties of this new position were ill-defined, few restrictions limited Sheldon's great energy and imagination. To him all aspects of the lives of all people—ordinary ones as well as the outstanding ones—called for study. He travelled extensively on passes provided by the railroads, collecting manuscripts, diaries, and reminiscences of settlers. Group portraits of legislators were secured, and portraits of other persons sought. After the Society purchased a camera in 1902, Sheldon travelled "carrying the burden of camera and equipment on all occasions . . . wading in the mud of swamps and fighting mosquitoes by the hour while trying to get a wished-for view of some bit of striking Nebraska scenery."²⁵ He visited reservations and recorded songs of the Omaha and Pawnee Indians. A representative of the Society went to Kansas to interview the last known surviving member of the first Nebraska Territorial House of Representatives. (In fact the Society practiced oral history long before that term was coined.)

Yet another aspect of Sheldon's field work was a survey of the condition of the state's public records. The Public Archives Commission had been set up by the American Historical Association in 1899 to investigate and report upon the state of the records of public agencies.²⁶ The commission appointed an "adjunct member" in each state and encouraged interested persons in the states to organize and begin publication of the public records. Sheldon was appointed adjunct member of the commission in Nebraska in 1901 and began an inventory of the records stored in the Capitol building. This survey was funded by a grant of \$100 from the AHA supplemented with \$150 from the Society. The results were published in the annual report of the AHA for 1910 as one of a series on the condition of state archives. Investigation found the state's records in deplorable condition:

Tons of these papers are burned by the janitors every year, without the least discrimination and without any investigation as to their importance. There is a notable collection in the vaults of the State Treasurer, most of which date back to the beginning



Melvin R. Gilmore (left) prepares to record songs of Omaha Indians. . . (Below) Lone Buffalo, an elder of the Omaha tribe, records the corn song.



of territorial days, that have been water-soaked, and have been left there on the floor until the odor arising from their decaying condition is at times almost unbearable.²⁷

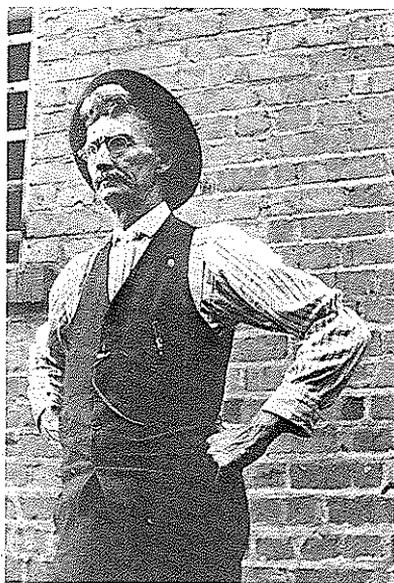
A bill drafted by Sheldon and passed by the state Legislature in 1905 allowed Nebraska public records of historical value more than twenty years old to be transferred to the Historical Society. Inquiries revealed that some county officials were willing to turn over these records to the Society. The law, however, had not set forth procedures to facilitate the transfer, nor had the Society's appropriation been increased to permit the added responsibility. The Society did receive records from the vaults of the auditor, the insurance commissioner, and the state treasurer. It was especially pleased to acquire the transcript of the debates of the 1871 Constitutional Convention to include in its publication of the records of the several state conventions. Thereafter, the Society sporadically accessioned state and local records but not until the late 1960s, after the state records management system was established, was there an adequate administrative organization and staffing to permit the regular transfer of public records.

The Society's field work departed in a new direction with the employment of Elmer E. Blackman as State Archeologist in the spring of 1901. The founders had felt that archeological research should be a function of the Society. More than twenty years passed, however, before it was able to pursue this goal seriously.²⁸ Blackman, a school teacher in Roca, Nebraska, originally turned to archeology as an avocation. With no training (as was common in that period) and virtually no precedents to guide him, Blackman undertook an intensive archeological survey of the Roca area, the first survey of its kind in the state. Not satisfied with merely finding artifacts of Indian manufacture, he began writing short articles about his research which he submitted for publication in local newspapers—among them J. Sterling Morton's *Conservative*. By 1899 Blackman was so immersed in his hobby that he decided to give up his teaching position and devote his full time to archeology.

In the spring of 1901, the Society's Executive Board allocated \$300 to be spent on archeological research, and in September Blackman was hired. The appropriation and Blackman's selection to the position were due largely to the influence of Society President Morton. Apparently the creation of the new position did not have the wholehearted support of the Board. Members questioned whether other projects might have a higher



Society field camp, Omaha Indian Reservation near Macy, in August, 1905: (from left) Addison E. Sheldon; his son Philip; Carey LaFlesche, son of Omaha Chief Iron Eye (Joseph LaFlesche); and Melvin R. Gilmore, an ethnologist later employed by the Society.



Elmer E. Blackman was the Society's first archeologist and curator of the Museum.

priority, especially considering the Society's small budget. As a result, Blackman's performance over the first few months was crucial to a continuing archeological program.

With his dedication and inexhaustible energy, Blackman was fitted for the task. During the first four months of his employment, he travelled approximately 4,000 miles throughout eastern Nebraska in search of archeological sites. Whenever possible he travelled by train, generally as a guest of the railroads. In January, 1902, the Board voted to extend the program for one year. This year by year approach to archeology was followed throughout the nine years of Blackman's first association with the Society.

Blackman's pioneering efforts in archeology were surprisingly professional. He was adamantly opposed to speculations and insisted that any hypotheses be supported by factual data. This attitude carried over into his field work, where he made an extensive photographic record of excavations to document all phases of the work. An intrepid field worker, Blackman carried on despite obstacles such as he described in his report for 1902:

As we neared the Platte river at Louisville we found very soft roads; the soil had washed from the surrounding fields until it lay two feet deep in the roadway; this was so soft that the ponies went through it at every step and the hubs of the wagon often nearly touched the top of the soft mud. After pulling a few miles in this condition of roads we were informed that the Platte was over the road near the bridge and were given directions how to get across. "You must keep to the middle of the road while in the water; if you get too far to the right the water is twenty-five feet deep; to the left it is seven or eight feet deep. You can make it, but be careful." With these instructions still ringing in our ears we came in sight of the water, at least a quarter of a mile wide, one sheet of rapidly flowing water with only fence posts on one side sticking a few inches out of the great lake to guide us. Cross we must as the river was constantly rising and there was no place for a camp on account of water on every side.²⁹

Blackman's research was not limited to prehistory but included the historic tribes as well. He compiled lists of all tribes known or suspected to have lived in Nebraska and wrote brief histories of each based upon his own interviews, the work of other scholars, and reports of early explorers. Another of his major projects was an attempt to locate the camp sites of the Lewis and Clark expedition as it ascended the Missouri River past Nebraska in 1804.

In addition to his surveys and writings, Blackman was Curator of the Museum. The Society had previously acquired a few artifacts but their number was small. When it moved into new quarters in the university library in 1893, "its entire exhibit consisted of a few Indian relics from the battle of Wounded Knee

which the Society had purchased and a very few odd articles that had been presented by the pioneers that organized it."³⁰ On account of the field work, museum items were acquired in increasing numbers, particularly as a result of the archeological research.

The Society's Museum was established at the end of a period of museum-founding in Europe and the United States. Numerous world's fairs and expositions during the last half of the 19th century revealed and in turn encouraged an enormous public interest in the material products of man's culture. The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1892 especially stimulated concern for anthropology. Until the 1930s most anthropological research in the United States was carried on by museums, although not necessarily museums in historical societies. Anthropologists were trained by museum curators, not by university professors. During this same period virtually the only archeological research in Nebraska was conducted by the Historical Society. Blackman's responsibility for the museum set a pattern which has been followed to the present. Persons in charge of the Society's museum have always been archeologists, as has the majority of the professional staff.³¹

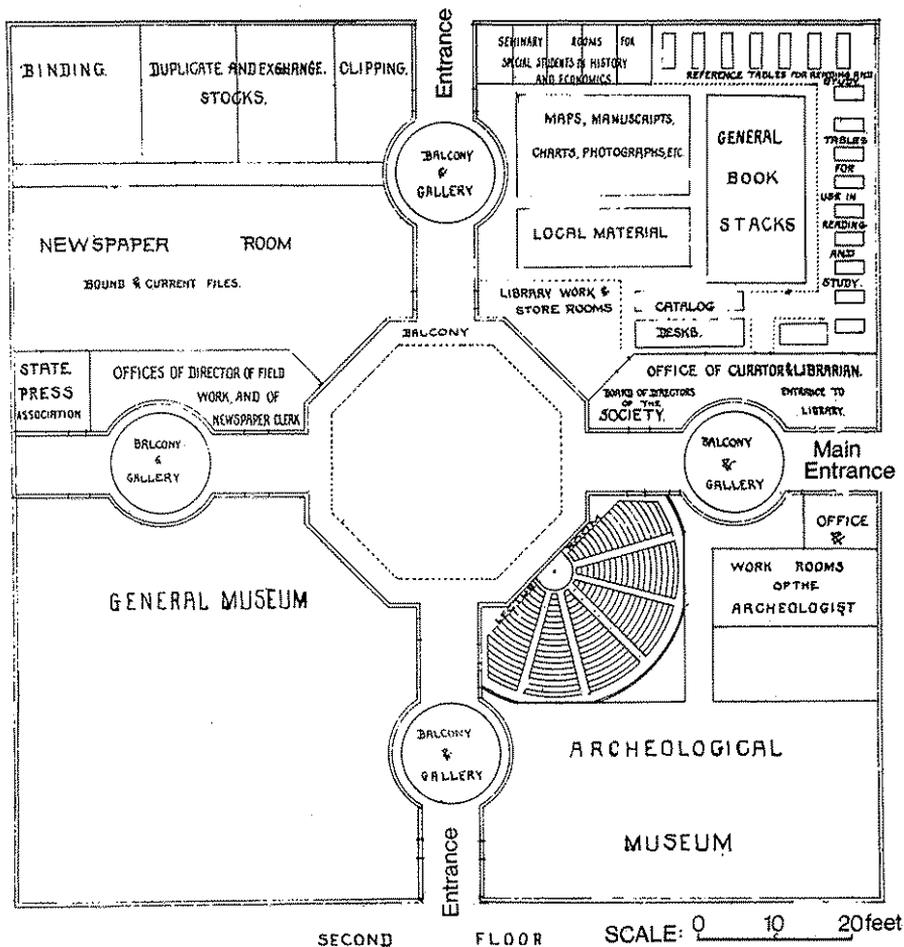
In addition to the acquisition of collections, Blackman's duties as curator included the systematic cataloging of specimens and the arrangement of exhibits. He prepared the museum's first catalog, which was published in 1907. He was also responsible for the exhibits in which, according to the theories of that day, as much as possible of the collections was displayed. Because labels were few, the intelligent selection and interpretation of this over-abundance of material was left to the visitor. Such exhibits might be helpful to the specialist or to the advanced student but were woefully inadequate for providing information to the general public. The "open-storage" concept required ever-increasing numbers of display cases and frequent rearrangement of the museum to utilize fully the available space as new collections were loaned or donated to the Society. Finally, in 1907 the display and storage areas were so crowded that for a time the Society refused to accept additional collections.

In 1909 a sequence of events began which resulted in Blackman's leaving the Society under unhappy circumstances.³² These incidents were part of a general controversy between Sheldon and Paine. According to Blackman, Clarence S. Paine, elected Secretary in 1907, demanded Blackman's resignation on April 16, 1909. When he refused, Paine said that he would force

Blackman to resign. At a meeting on April 26, the Board approved hiring Albert Watkins for a new position as Historian, raised the salary of the Librarian, and cut Blackman's pay in half for half-time work. He responded with a long, written report in which he described the work he had performed for the Society and presented letters on his behalf from archeologists in neighboring states. He refused to accept Paine's claim of financial exigency as sufficient reason for the reduction. Blackman believed that the Historian's position was unnecessary and that Paine had reduced his salary in order to hire Watkins, who had been associated with Paine in the production of the Morton-Watkins *Illustrated History of Nebraska*. In addition to loss of employment, Blackman was concerned about the fate of some artifacts on loan to the museum. He felt personally responsible to the owners of these collections. After considering Blackman's statement, however, the Board reaffirmed its earlier decision to cut his salary. He resigned effective March 31, 1910, and took employment in Kansas City. Before Blackman left, Paine accused him of using his personal influence to secure the return to donors of loan collections held by the museum.

After Blackman's departure daily care of the Museum was assigned to the Librarian, and the archeological program lapsed. Because of the salary cut, Blackman's departure left no position vacant. When Sheldon resigned in April, 1911, under circumstances to be explained below, his position of "Superintendent of the Archives and Newspaper Department" was filled by Melvin R. Gilmore. Gilmore had taught biology at Cotner University in Bethany, Nebraska, while working on a master's degree in history at the University of Nebraska. His specialty was ethnobotany, a relatively new field concerned with the relationship between native Americans and their floral environment. With a strong recommendation from James Mooney (then the nation's premier ethnologist employed in the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology), Gilmore was hired by the Society with the understanding that most of his time would be spent caring for the Museum. To learn the latest techniques he took an extended tour of the leading museums in the eastern United States.

While employed by the Society, Gilmore began working on his monograph, *Uses of Plants by the Indians of the Missouri River Region*, published in 1919, which was to become a classic of American ethnobotany. With the Board's permission he cultivated, on land owned by the Society in Lincoln, native plants



Jay Amos Barrett made this sketch of one floor of a proposed building to house the Society and the art and natural history museums of the University in 1903. Although the building was never constructed, the plan illustrates the work of the Society after its expansion in 1901.

and plants used by native Americans. Gilmore also collected data on the facets of Indian life other than those related to ethnobotany. In 1914 he accompanied White Eagle, an elderly Pawnee, on a trip through the Pawnee homeland in central Nebraska, where White Eagle was able to identify many abandoned village sites. Gilmore also spent three weeks in Oklahoma conducting interviews with the Pawnee about their traditions.

In 1916 Gilmore accepted an offer of a higher salary from the State Historical Society of North Dakota. After his departure the program in anthropology, as well as the Museum, drifted for a time. Gilmore's first replacement was hired, then changed his mind and quit before arriving. George R. Fox and Frank Peterson worked for short periods in the latter part of 1916. Finally, Blackman was brought back as museum curator by Sheldon, who took charge of the Society after Paine's death.

One of the main characteristics of this period of the Society's development was its emphasis upon what was then termed "extension work." This phrase encompasses educational activities designed to appeal to a wider audience than the Society had heretofore reached. Staff members lectured before school groups and organizations. Sheldon and Blackman were increasingly in demand—the former for his lectures on Indian customs, the latter on archeology. Both made use of the stereopticon lantern and the phonograph to illustrate their talks. Librarian Minnie Prey Knotts was a frequent visitor to schoolrooms, where she read or told stories of historical events. She preferred, however, that classes be brought to the Society, where these tales could be illustrated by museum exhibits.

The Museum was a great asset to the extension work. In 1907 Paine estimated that 80 percent of the Society's visitors came to see the exhibits. Blackman, in particular, willingly answered all questions from visitors about the collections on display. These visits increased to such an extent that the staff complained that they were being kept from other duties. Impressed by practices in some museums of science in the east, Blackman advocated what he called the "museum idea of teaching Nebraska history." Cases were fitted with exhibits to be loaned to schools in the state. A manual accompanying the cases provided an outline of Nebraska history. Mrs. Knotts arranged with the state Library Commission to equip travelling libraries in Nebraska history. Under Blackman the Society began to exhibit regularly at the

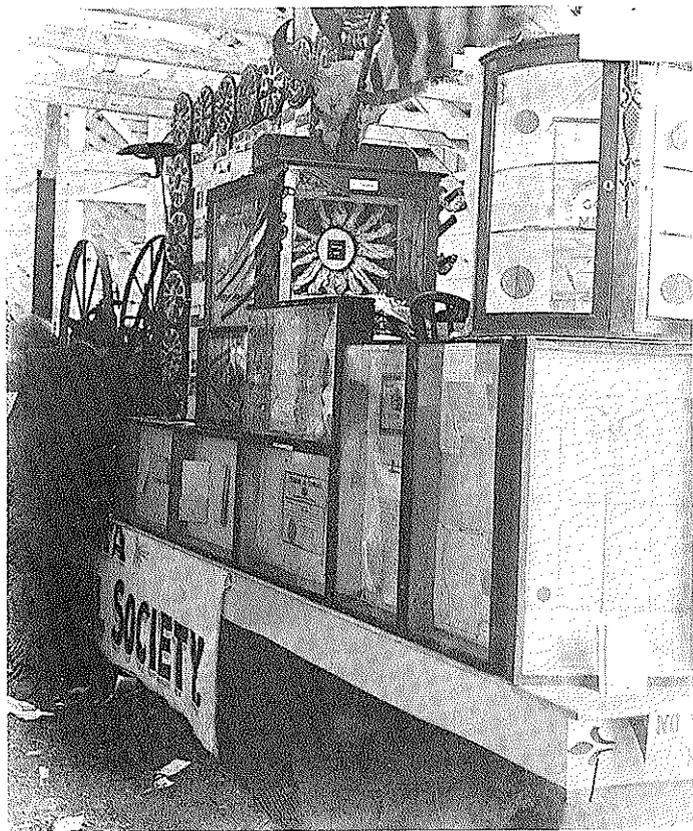
State Fair and at other gatherings such as meetings of the State Teachers' Association. In 1902 each visitor to the Society's exhibit at the State Fair was given a fragment of pottery and a flint chip from a prehistoric archeological site. Blackman estimated that 150 pounds of pottery were given away. Fortunately for the future of the Society's collections, however, the practice was discontinued after one year.

As another aspect of extension work, some staff members taught courses at the university. Sheldon taught administration and law and in 1907 offered the first seminar in Nebraska history ever taught there. Gilmore lectured on Indian geography.

An additional field into which the Society ventured during this period was the preservation and marking of the sites of historical events. It offered limited support for preservation of sites, an activity in which it would become more involved in the 1960s. The Board passed a resolution commending Congress for creating Cliff Dwellings National Park in Colorado. It praised efforts to establish old Fort Kearny as a national reserve. It sent a resolution to the Nebraska congressional delegation asking that the federal government donate overland trail landmarks, such as Scott's Bluff, Chimney Rock, and Court House Rock, to the nearest town or to the Society.

Through the efforts of Francis LaFlesche, the noted ethnologist and member of the Omaha tribe, Congress directed that the site of the Presbyterian Mission on the Omaha Reservation be given to the Society. The patent for this land was never issued, however, because of confusion among the tribe, the Society, and the government over establishing boundaries which would include sites of all historical structures.

The Society did pursue vigorously the marking of historical sites, due largely to the efforts of Robert Harvey, who, in addition to holding other offices, chaired the Committee on Historic Sites. Harvey was especially interested in overland trails, forts, battles, and Indian attacks on trains and stagecoaches. Through research in documents, interviewing, and mapping, Harvey sought to identify the exact sites of events whose locations had either been forgotten or were erroneously placed. The Society supported a federal act to locate and mark the Oregon Trail and cooperated with the state organization of the Daughters of the American Revolution in marking the trail across Nebraska. The first marker in the state was erected near Kearney in April, 1910. In the following year the Legislature appropriated funds to



The Society has exhibited at the Nebraska State Fair for many years. These displays were prepared in 1903.

continue the project and the Oregon Trail Memorial Commission was established to direct the effort, with the Society's Secretary acting as secretary-treasurer of that organization.

One of the most useful means of extending the work of the Society was to encourage and support the activities of other organizations with similar goals. Paine, in particular, wanted to make the Society a clearinghouse for study clubs, local historical societies, educational institutions, patriotic societies, and old settlers' associations. One of his first actions was to reorganize the Nebraska Territorial Pioneers' Association, which began to hold joint annual meetings with the Society. With Paine as secretary-treasurer, the association's business was conducted out of the Society's offices.

In addition to encouraging historical organizations within Nebraska, Paine had the dream of "uniting into closer union all of these agencies and activities in the states of the Missouri Valley thus promoting historical study and research in the larger field of general interest to all the societies."³³ A Conference of State and Local Historical Societies, founded in 1904, met in conjunction with the American Historical Association. Because this group was not satisfying the needs of many western members, Paine called a meeting of the secretaries of midwestern state historical societies in Lincoln on October 17, 1907. At that meeting the Mississippi Valley Historical Association was formed, and Paine elected secretary-treasurer. The association did not become the kind of organization that was envisioned at the first meeting. Soon more of the members were engaged in college teaching than in historical society work, and it became a professional organization of academic specialists in American history. Nevertheless, the head of the Society continued to fill the office of secretary-treasurer of that organization until 1963.³⁴

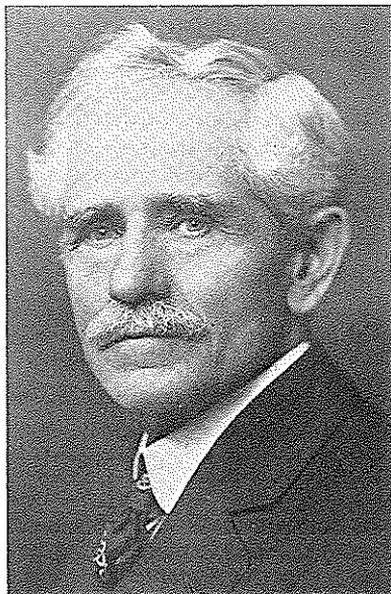
Among the Society's extension activities, by far the most ambitious and expensive was the Legislative Reference Bureau. Not only was it costly in money and staff, but the existence of the bureau was the major cause of conflict between Paine and Sheldon.³⁵ The bureau was proposed by Sheldon, who had modelled the plan after one operating in Wisconsin.³⁶ It offered a means to improve the legislative process by making expert advice available to legislators as they drafted and voted on laws to govern an increasingly complex society. Advocates of this plan believed that the people would be better served if legislation regarding, for example, taxation or railroad regulation, was

based on the best available information rather than on the influence of "special interests." Such bureaus, established in many states, drafted bills, answered reference questions from legislators and other state officials, and published research reports on public issues.

With the support of Secretary Caldwell, Sheldon received general approval from the Board in May, 1906, to set up a Legislative Reference Bureau under the State Historical Society. He viewed the bureau as an aspect of the Society's extension work. He also believed that this service to the Legislature would bring increased appropriations to the Society. That summer Sheldon spent several weeks in Madison studying the Wisconsin bureau. In October the Board approved financing for the Nebraska bureau and left decision on personnel to the Secretary and to Sheldon. When the Legislature met in January, the operations of the bureau were moved into the Capitol, as they would be during subsequent sessions. Sheldon hired William E. Hannan, then a graduate student at the university, as his assistant.

Meanwhile, in January, 1907, Clarence S. Paine replaced Caldwell as Secretary by a vote of 20 to 17 in the first contested election in the Society's history. After various experiences in business and a period of field work for the Iowa State Historical Society, Paine had been brought to Nebraska in 1897 by J. Sterling Morton to handle business matters regarding the publication of a history of Nebraska sponsored by Morton. Secretary Caldwell allowed Paine desk space in the Society's rooms to facilitate his work, and in 1901 the Board granted him the title of "Collector." Paine participated actively in Society affairs, especially as a member of the Museum committee.

Profound differences, both personal and professional, existed between Paine and Sheldon. The two men held opposing political views. Paine had been a protege of Morton, a conservative, gold-standard Democrat. Sheldon was an ardent Populist who had broken with Morton's faction of the Democratic Party. Personally more reserved than Sheldon, Paine preferred to follow established procedures in pursuing his programs. Sheldon was frequently more concerned with goals than with the means to achieve them. Sheldon believed that Paine had stolen the office of Secretary from Caldwell by taking unfair advantage of traditionally poor attendance at Society business meetings to fill the 1907 meetings with his own supporters.³⁷ Sheldon was classed by Paine with a "university faction" which wanted to



Clarence S. Paine (left) was Secretary of the Society from 1907 to 1916. Albert Watkins, Society Historian from 1909 to 1923, was responsible for editing its publications.



Minnie Prey Knotts, Society Librarian, served as Acting Secretary from June through December, 1916.

bring the Society under direct control of the regents. In turn Sheldon charged Paine with planning to hinder university faculty and students in their use of the Society library by advocating a site for the Society's proposed building near the Capitol rather than one more convenient to campus.

Paine favored the idea of a Legislative Reference Bureau but opposed Sheldon's preference for its location in the Society for two reasons. First, because the bureau dealt with significant public questions, Paine feared that the Society would be drawn into harmful political controversy. Second, he was convinced that the bureau was far too costly and that it expended more of the Society's resources than it attracted in increased appropriations. From the outset of his term, Paine repeatedly asked the Board to separate the Legislative Reference Bureau from the Society.

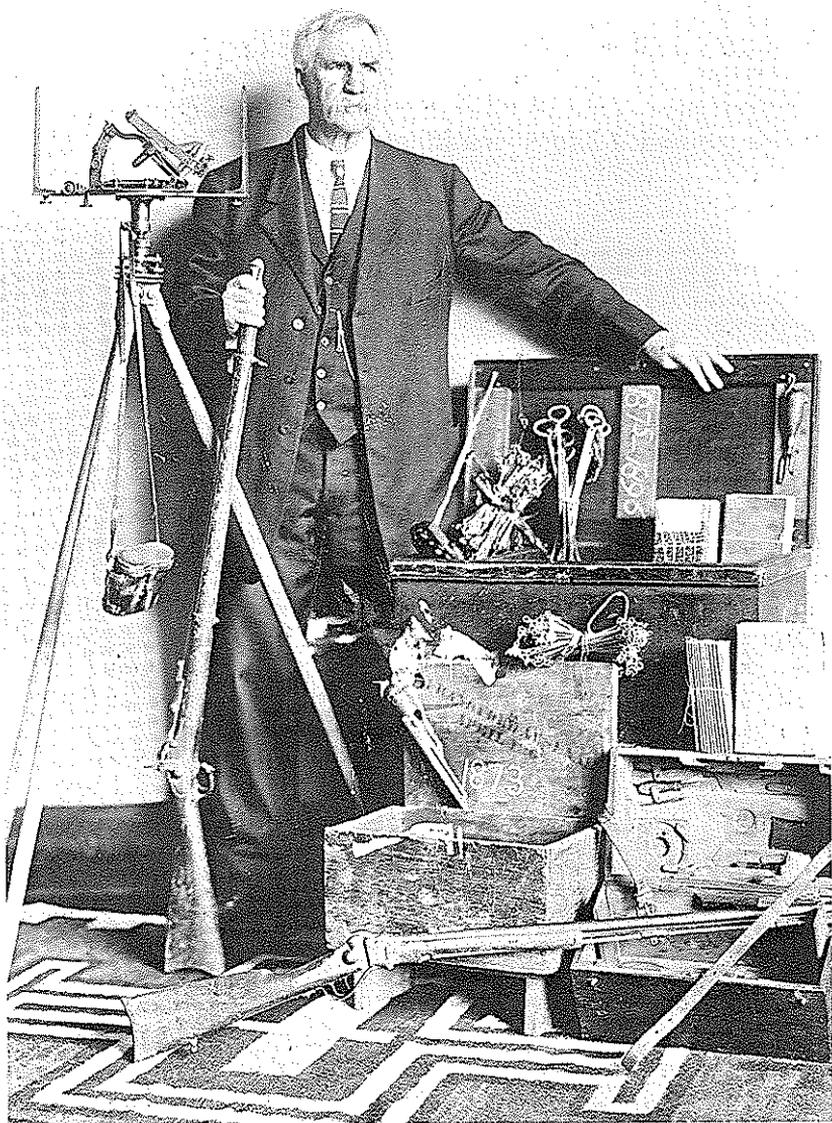
Relations between Paine and Sheldon continued to grow worse. Paine accused Sheldon of appropriating the services of clerical employees and of spending money without authorization. Paine refused to sign vouchers for expenditures not approved by him and asked the Board for a clarification of the Secretary's powers. In April, 1909, the Board adopted rules and regulations for the Society which stated that no Society funds could be disbursed except upon written order of the Secretary or with consent of the Board. It would not grant authority to the Legislative Reference Bureau independent of the Secretary. Sheldon refused to accept what he called a "subordinate position" and announced that he would seek an act separating the Bureau from the Society at the next legislative session. Sheldon continued to seek permission to sign correspondence for the bureau in his own name. The Board finally approved his request at its meeting in March, 1910, at the same time it accepted Paine's recommendation to ask the Legislature to sever all connections between the Society and the bureau. In that month Sheldon's name disappeared from the official lists of Society employees. The controversy between the two men split the Society, forcing the staff to ally with one or the other. Blackman, who attempted to remain neutral, left the Society convinced that Paine had forced him out because he would not support Paine against Sheldon.

In February, 1911, the Legislature put the Legislative Reference Bureau directly under the regents of the university. Sheldon was made its director and William Hannan went with him as his assistant. Sheldon continued as director of the bureau,

even after replacing Paine as Secretary of the Society in 1917, and finally resigned from the bureau in 1921. When the bureau was separated, it moved into other rooms in the university library building. Bad feelings continued after the formal division. Disputes arose over the ownership of material in Sheldon's possession, including photographs, lantern slides, and recordings of Indian songs made by Sheldon while in the Society's employ. A committee was appointed by the Board to discuss ownership of this material. Although the matter was not settled to the satisfaction of all, the problem was solved when Sheldon returned to the Society, bringing the material with him.

Contributing to bad feelings between the factions was the creation of the office of Society Historian and the appointment of Albert Watkins to fill the post. In April, 1908, the Board agreed with Paine's recommendation to establish the office of Historian to "record all things of historical interest to the state and supervise the publications of the Society."³⁸ Both Paine and the Board felt that the Society's publications had suffered for lack of an experienced person who could devote his full attention to editorial work. The Board agreed that if the Legislature funded the position it would consider Albert Watkins, whom Paine suggested for the post. And so when funds became available, Watkins was hired to begin in August, 1909.

Watkins was not a newcomer to the Historical Society. A former newspaper editor, he had been a strong supporter of Morton and an advocate of the gold standard. In 1898 a group headed by Morton began planning for a multi-volume history of Nebraska. The publication was to consist of two volumes of narrative history and a third volume of biographical sketches. Ultimately three versions of the third volume were published, each containing different biographies, in order to increase the potential market. As a means of raising money, subscriptions were sold which would permit the purchaser to receive a copy of the history at cost. Morton brought in Paine to oversee the business arrangements and persuaded Watkins to help with the editorial work. After Morton's death in 1902, the latter burden fell upon Watkins alone. Because he had written the bulk of the history, Watkins demanded and received the right to have his name appear on the title page. And so the publication is known as the Morton-Watkins *Illustrated History of Nebraska*. The actual writing of the history, whose publication was finally completed in 1911, was nearly finished when Watkins began working for the Society. However, controversy over its financial



Robert Harvey, a surveyor, chaired the Society's Committee on Historic Sites and was responsible for identifying the locations of many historical events.

aspects were just then becoming heated. The *History* proved to be a financial failure from the start. Continual quarreling among the printers, editors, publisher, and distributors, together with complaints from subscribers, marked its entire course. The controversy reached a crisis in March, 1913, upon the death of D. W. Clendenan, one of the owners of the Western Publishing and Engraving Company which had been organized by Paine to publish the *History*. Accused of graft, Paine denied that he had ever profited from the venture. Accusations and denials, charges and counter-charges have so clouded the issue that the truth may never be determined. What is certain, however, is that the controversy over the Morton-Watkins *History* exacerbated tension within the Society.

Watkins seemed to escape personal opprobrium during the controversy. As he finished working on the *History*, he took on the Society's editorial work and assumed responsibility for editing the state constitutional debates when Sheldon departed. He was named to edit a history of the Nebraska Press Association, with which the Society had agreed to co-operate. Watkins was also responsible for volumes 16 through 20 of the *Publications* series.

In addition to his editorial work, Watkins contributed articles on historical subjects to both scholarly and popular publications. The Board frequently requested him to prepare articles for the press. One such occasion arose as a consequence of the Society's continuing search for adequate quarters. In January, 1913, the Board resolved to use all of its means to complete the erection of a building for the Society on lots at 16th and H Streets near the Capitol. The officers instructed Watkins to write a series of articles for the newspapers explaining the Society's position. Watkins never prepared them because he felt that the Society should remain on the university campus and, in fact, would be better served if it were administered by the university. Paine reacted strongly to his refusal because of recent threats to the Society's independence from a "university faction" identified with Sheldon.

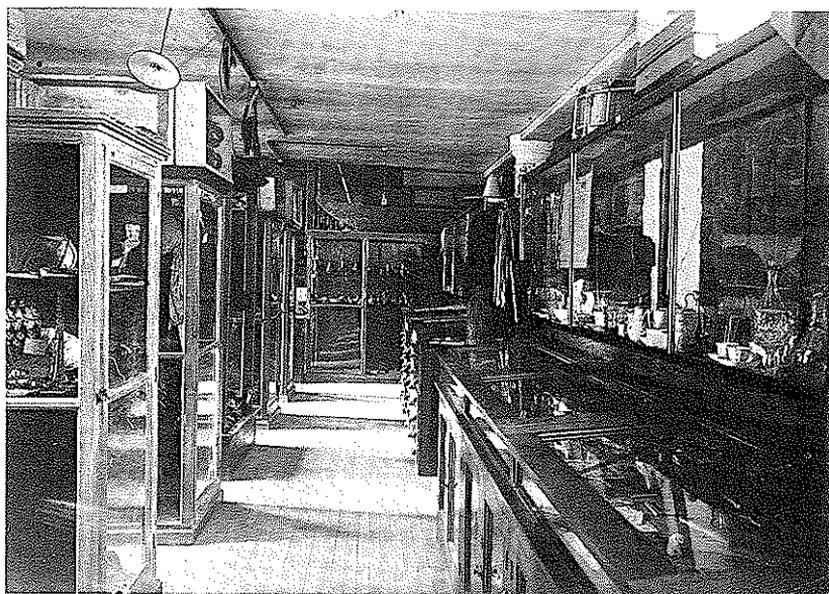
At the April meeting of the Board the following resolution was adopted:

It shall be . . . the duty of all employees of this Society to support and follow out its policy and plans as they may be declared by the membership of the Society at its annual meetings and by its Board of Directors. . . . That any employee of the Society who shall not adhere to and follow out such plans and policy shall be deemed to be guilty of lack of duty and fidelity to the Society. And such lack of fidelity shall be ground for summary removal of any such employee of the Society.³⁹

At that same meeting a committee was appointed to investigate Watkins' loyalty. The report of this committee exonerated him completely. He was found not to be the author of some articles derogatory to the Society. His refusal to write the series requested by the Board was found to have come from a genuine conviction and not from any desire to be disloyal to the Society or to undermine its programs. Watkins seems not to have suffered permanently from this episode. In fact, he could even enjoy the irony when three years later the Board reversed its position and tried to secure quarters in a new building proposed for the university campus.

Not surprisingly, the factional controversy affected the Society's seemingly endless quest for adequate facilities. As has been true for most of the Society's history, the search for quarters occupied Board members, officers, and staff for this entire period. The rooms built for the Society in the university library had seemed spacious when they were occupied in 1893. In 1901, however, the Board appointed a committee to devise plans for a new building and intended to ask the next Legislature for funds. A growing staff and increasing accessions demanded more space. Furnishings as well as rooms were needed. Paine reminded the Board that "the Society owns no chairs, the dozen or so of common wood chairs about the rooms having been borrowed at different times from various departments of the university and given a coat of black paint to prevent identification."⁴⁰

A bill for additional funds failed in the 1903 Legislature, and an attempt to secure private subscriptions for a building and grounds also met with failure. Interest in the "historical block" was rekindled when Furnas addressed the annual meeting in January, 1905, on the history of that piece of ground. Sheldon was instructed to draft and have introduced a bill giving the Society \$100,000 for a facility to be built on land donated by the city of Lincoln. Because that sum was considered too large to be granted at one time, the bill as finally approved in April, 1907, appropriated \$25,000 for the basement of one wing of a library and museum building. Implied was the promise that additional appropriations would later be made to complete the building. The legislation acknowledged that the Society was carrying on the work for which Block 29, the historical block, had originally been set aside. The money was appropriated on condition that the city of Lincoln would convey that site or some other property of equal value to the Society for the erection of the building. Passage of the bill was largely due to the efforts of Sheldon, and



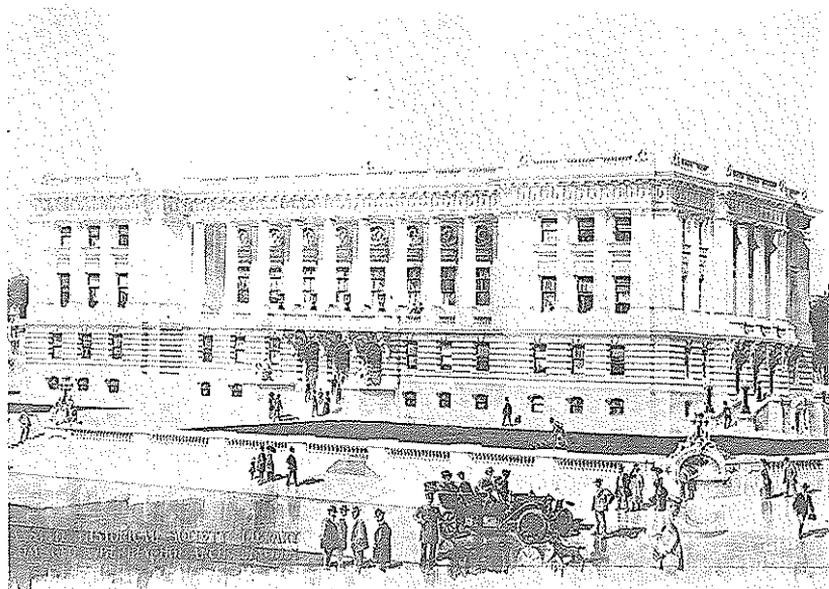
The Museum in the University Library about 1916 featured exhibits arranged according to the "open-storage" concept, in which all items were visible and labels were few. . . . (Below) This ceremony in 1912 was one of a series dedicating markers along the Oregon Trail. Addison E. Sheldon is at far left.



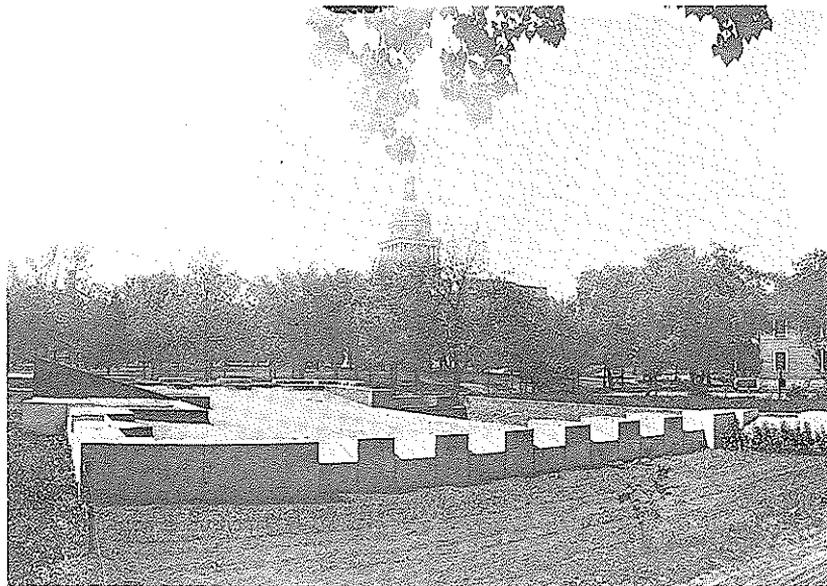
despite their many differences, Paine always credited Sheldon with this accomplishment.

As soon as the bill became law, the Board appointed a committee consisting of Caldwell, Paine, and Sheldon to negotiate with the city for a site. The summer of 1907 was filled with attempts to secure a meeting with city officials and contacts with influential citizens. Sheldon wrote a series of articles in the newspaper to turn public opinion towards the transfer. Paine preferred to find another site because, although Block 29 was convenient to the university campus, it had great potential for commercial development. He believed that the city would more easily give up a less valuable property. Paine approached the Commercial Club of Lincoln, whose president William E. Hardy was also serving on the Society Board. Through the intercession of a committee from that organization, the city and the Society agreed upon one-half of a block just east of the Capitol, facing 16th Street between H and J Streets. The city appropriated \$27,000 to purchase the land and the Society agreed to rent the three houses then on the northern half of the block to raise the additional \$10,000 to cover paving and other assessments outstanding. Several businessmen advanced their own money so that funds would be immediately available, and the property was deeded to the Society in May, 1908.

Meanwhile, the Board had chosen Lincoln architect George A. Berlinghof to design the building. In July he and Paine visited libraries in Chicago as well as the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Madison. Berlinghof's final design for a four-story building in the Second Renaissance Revival style was remarkably similar to that of Wisconsin's. The Society had funds, however, only to begin, and so Berlinghof planned the building to be constructed in stages. The initial appropriation allowed for the construction of the basement of one wing. Bids for that foundation were accepted in April, 1909, and the basement was virtually complete in December, 1909. Consisting of a room 46 by 100 feet, it was fireproof and equipped with metal shelving. The room was not lighted sufficiently for detailed work; it was never heated. Portions of the collections not in frequent use were to be stored there. The first material moved in April, 1910, was that which had been stored in the Capitol basement for the preceding two years. Space for the expansion of exhibits in the university library was acquired by moving additional material into the basement that summer.



George A. Berlinghof designed this building to be constructed for the Society on 16th Street at the northeast corner of 16th and H Streets in Lincoln. . . . (Below) The roofed basement of the north wing, built in 1909 and used for storage until the late 1940s, was the only part of the building ever constructed. The State Capitol is visible toward the northwest.



Paine estimated that an additional \$200,000 would be needed to complete the building according to Berlinghof's plan. In order to make the prospect more attractive to the Legislature, he suggested that the structure could be shared by the Grand Army of the Republic, the Supreme Court, the Library Commission, and other state offices, thus relieving overcrowding in the Capitol. A bill to appropriate part of the amount failed in the Legislature of 1911. At that time Paine also was forced to fight attempts to cut the Society's regular budget and then an attempt to place the Society under control of the university regents. He blamed these problems on "slandorous statements made to certain leaders in both Houses of the legislature by discharged and discredited former employees of the Historical Society, whose services were dispensed with for the good of the work."⁴¹ These unnamed "former employees" were probably Sheldon and Hannan, who staffed the Legislative Reference Bureau, recently separated from the Society. Two years later Paine again fought for the Society's independence by successfully opposing an amendment to the general appropriation bill which placed disbursement of the Society's funds under control of the regents. He was convinced that the same persons were responsible for this act as for the previous one.⁴²

Meanwhile, the officers and Board never lost sight of their desire to complete the Society's building. When the attempt to secure funds according to Berlinghof's design failed, the Board proposed that a plain brick building of one or two stories could be constructed and a facade added later. In fact, the Society was never able to complete this building. A roofed basement was its only facility on that site.

In 1915 the regents requested that the Society vacate their rooms on campus because space was needed for expansion of the university library. The Board authorized a drive to solicit private funds for a temporary structure on the Society's land but had little success. Late in 1916 a joint committee of the Society and the university recommended that a building be erected near the university to house the Historical Society, the university library, the Legislative Reference Bureau, and the State Library Commission. In the midst of investigating the question of suitable quarters, Clarence S. Paine died of pneumonia on May 25, 1916. Librarian Minnie P. Knotts served as Acting Secretary to the Board until a new head of the Society was elected in January, 1917.⁴³

CHAPTER IV

THE SHELDON YEARS, 1917-1943

The death of Clarence S. Paine occasioned the return of Addison E. Sheldon to the Historical Society as Superintendent, the chief executive officer. The individual in this new position, created by a constitutional amendment in 1916, has traditionally served also as Secretary to the Society Board. Under Sheldon the Society broadened its programs of service to the public. He emphasized collecting sources to document contemporary events for future generations. *Nebraska History*, a new publication, was aimed at a popular audience. After several years in suspension, archeological field work was resumed. The availability of federal funds under New Deal programs such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) enabled the Society to increase its staff. Yet another significant feature of these years was the Society's move into the new state Capitol.

From his election in January, 1917, to his death in November, 1943, Sheldon was the dominant force in Society affairs. A man of enormous energy, he was an optimist and a dreamer with a definite vision for its future. He believed that the country's greatest problem was the struggle of the people against special interests. He had worked to break the power of monopoly, especially that of the railroads; to adopt the silver standard; to block speculation in public land; to redistribute the tax burden; and to remove government from the control of corporate power. The purpose of the Legislative Reference Bureau, as he had envisioned it, had been to provide information on public policies so as to counter the claims of special interests.⁴⁴

Not content to rail against these interests, Sheldon preferred to elevate the common man. To him, American political and social institutions offered the best life for the individual. It was essential that evidence for the development, operation, and accomplishments of those institutions be collected, preserved, and disseminated to all. Not only did this conviction guide his own historical research, but it was also the basis for his conception of the purpose of the Historical Society and its programs. According to Sheldon, the Society had a significant

role in support of democratic institutions. The two world wars brought forth statements on this subject. In 1918 Sheldon wrote:

There are so many splendid examples of faith, fearlessness, and sacrifice in the story of our country that when these are properly presented to children they cannot fail to respond. The war is proving that we need a more thorough and rapid Americanization of our various elements to be ready for a great crisis. Of the many legitimate methods for achieving this result none will be found more effective than the true teaching of American history in our common schools. . . . It should not exalt war as the sole form of patriotism.⁴⁵

In 1940 he affirmed that

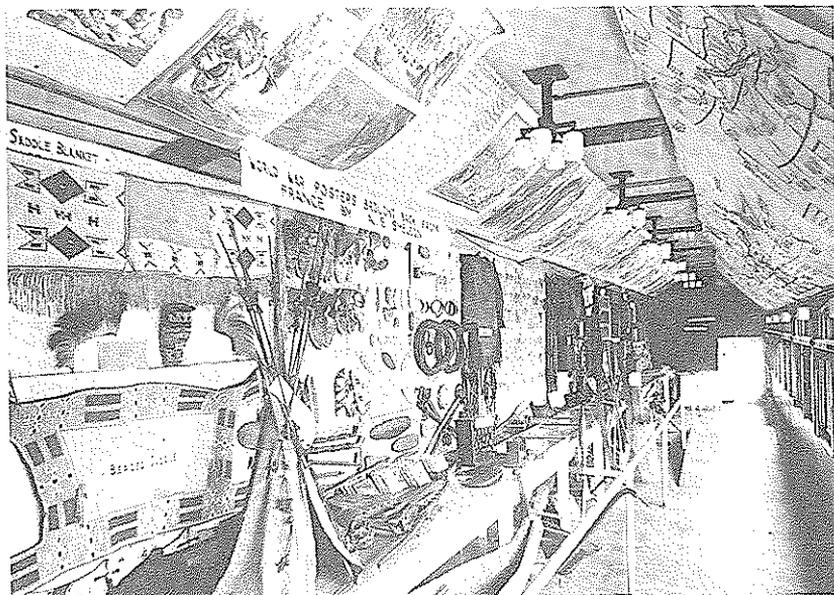
the Historical Society has an important part in . . . this patriotic vision of English-speaking peoples: world peace and world destiny. . . . the real American Line of Defense is in the hearts of her people—their faith in their government; in the social opportunity and justice there is here for the common people.

Where is the Nebraska Line of Defense? . . . It is in our inspiration drawn from the heroic history of our state. . . .

Where is the wellspring of this inspiration for Nebraska? Its chief source is in the Nebraska State Historical Society collections and publications. . . . A sound patriotic education in the history and the government of Nebraska. A glowing state pride in the story of our achievements. A firm faith in our institutions—in their rational evolution to meet needs and in the freedom of debate which guarantees the progress of a free people. These are some of the things which center in the State Historical Society.⁴⁶

Several consequences for the direction of the Society's activities flowed from these certainties. First, the daily lives of ordinary Nebraskans needed to be documented. Such diverse activities as the process of land settlement, the development of irrigation, and the methods of agricultural production were to be chronicled. The experiences of various national groups who settled the Plains needed to be described. In pursuit of these goals, for example, Sheldon saw that a remarkable collection of glass negatives were purchased from photographer Solomon P. Butcher, who occupies a special place in the history of photography because he purposefully created a photographic document of a certain manner of life. Best known for its sod house photographs, the collection records the social and material culture in central Nebraska in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Of immediate concern was the collection of information about periods of past history before the participants were gone. Sheldon visited reservations in Oklahoma to question members of tribes which had formerly inhabited Nebraska. He acquired the manuscript collection of Eli S. Ricker, including his interviews with participants of the Indian wars of the last quarter of the 19th century. Realizing that many incidents had passed leaving insufficient records, Sheldon was prompted to collect material to document contemporary events. One of his first



The "Historical Train" interior featured exhibits prepared by Elmer Blackman, including World War I posters gathered by Superintendent Addison E. Sheldon.

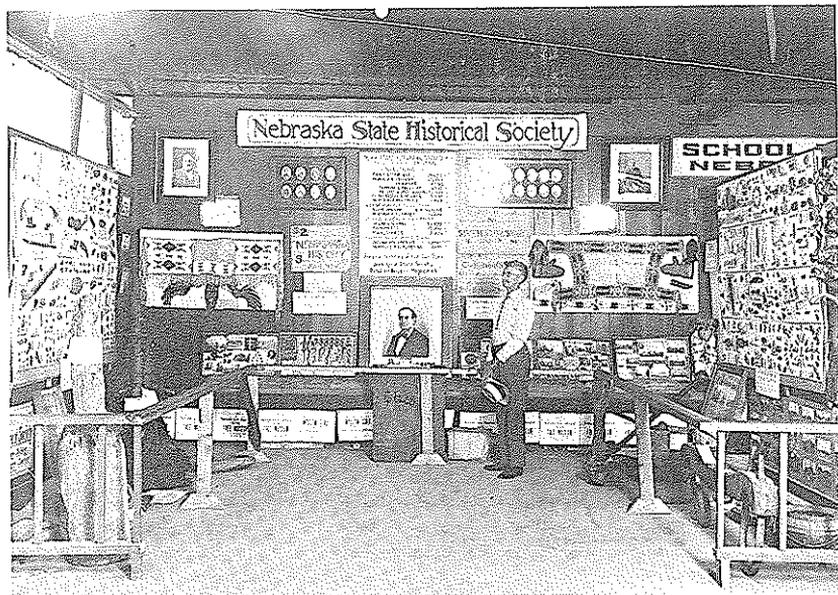


Sheldon travelled to France in 1918 as a press correspondent and collected information about Nebraskans in the war.

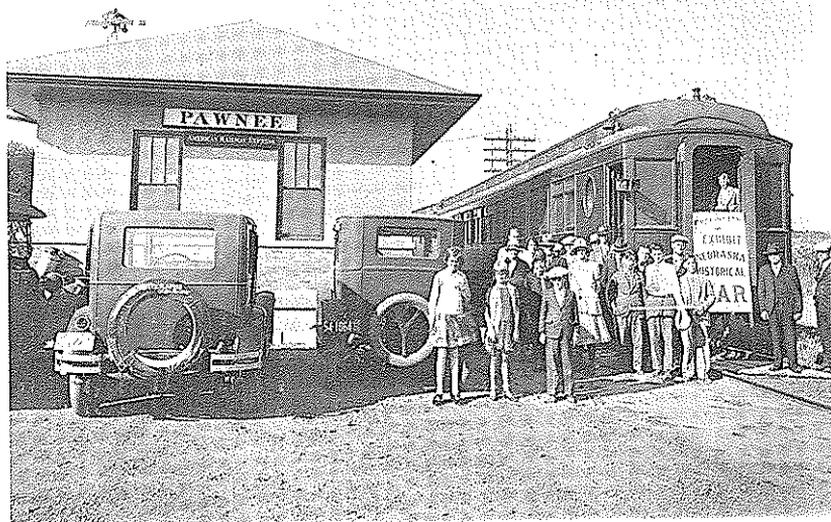


The George Ball family of Woods Park, Custer County, from the Solomon D. Butcher photograph collection. . . . (Below) Sheldon frequently travelled by car on his collecting trips throughout the state. An Oregon Trail marker is visible in the background.





Blackman was in charge of the Society exhibit at the 1927 Nebraska State Fair. . . . (Below) Blackman is standing in the door of the "Historical Train" car during its Pawnee City stop in 1928.



projects upon becoming Superintendent was to visit battlefields in France during the fall of 1918 as a press correspondent. He talked with Nebraskans serving on the front lines and returned with banners, uniforms, shell casings, and other artifacts for the museum. He gathered a collection of posters exhorting domestic support for the war effort. Soldiers and civilians were urged to donate memoirs and memorabilia to the Society. Sheldon was responsible for a law transferring records of the State Council of Defense, the agency promoting the domestic war effort, to the Society. Contemporary history was to be documented through contemporary methods. As had been his practice during his earlier work for the Society, Sheldon took many photographs himself. He also made motion pictures of persons, places, and events in Nebraska.

According to Sheldon historical information should be widely disseminated, as well as being collected and preserved. He brought with him the idea for a new series which had been planned initially as a publication of the Legislative Reference Bureau. The Society Board approved a monthly periodical entitled *Nebraska History and Record of Pioneer Days*, which first appeared in February, 1918. Intended as a popular rather than an academic journal, it aimed "to present in clear and attractive form fact, story, comment and criticism relating to the history of Nebraska . . . giving the news of historical research and discovery, trying to inspire a sincere love for our commonwealth and an active interest in the truthful record of its affairs."⁴⁷ The burden of a monthly deadline could not be met even through the first volume, and in its second year it was officially changed to a quarterly publication, which it remains today. In 1925 the name was shortened to *Nebraska History*. The journal was the responsibility of Sheldon and various assistant editors. During his tenure it combined articles, essays, memorials, and reminiscences with notes of Society affairs and of historical activities throughout the state. Occasionally, entire issues were devoted to reports on Society-sponsored archeological field work.

Meanwhile, Albert Watkins continued to edit volumes of the *Publications*. After his death in November, 1923, the duties of the Historian were assumed by the Superintendent. Only one other volume appeared in the original format of the *Publications* series. The next volume, *Land Systems and Land Policies in Nebraska*, published in 1936, was based on Sheldon's PhD

dissertation. Thereafter, the series was suspended for twenty years and the energies of the staff were devoted to *Nebraska History*. Sheldon, with permission from the Board, contracted with a Chicago publisher for a history of the state. *Nebraska: The Land and the People* appeared in 1931 and consisted of one volume of narrative history by Sheldon and two volumes of biographical sketches contributed by various individuals, including Society staff members.

As Sheldon designed *Nebraska History* to amplify the effect of the Society's work, so also did he and other staff members promote and participate in the activities of other organizations whose purposes complemented their own. In January, 1917, Clara S. Paine, widow of Secretary Paine, was hired to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Librarian Knotts. Mrs. Paine succeeded her husband as secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association. In 1941 the American Association for State and Local History was founded from the Conference of State and Local Historical Societies of the American Historical Association. Through publications and programs the AASLH promotes the popularization of history and offers practical help to small societies. Although he was not able to attend the organizational meeting, Sheldon sent a strong letter of support and the NSHS was enrolled as a charter member.⁴⁸

Within the state the Society encouraged organizations which would further interest in all varieties of historical activity. Due largely to the efforts of Mrs. Paine, who had a strong personal interest in genealogy, state and local chapters of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Grand Army of the Republic, and the Veterans of the Spanish-American War deposited their records with and donated their libraries to the Historical Society. The Society also tried to keep informed of and to encourage local historical societies. During June and July, 1935, Sheldon travelled in northwest and north-central Nebraska, where he not only collected historical materials but also encouraged the organization of thirteen county historical societies.

During its early years the Society had supported the Nebraska Territorial and State Pioneers' Association. As the numbers of these people dwindled, membership in the association declined and meetings ceased. Seeing the need for a new society which could attract a younger generation, Margaret Thompson

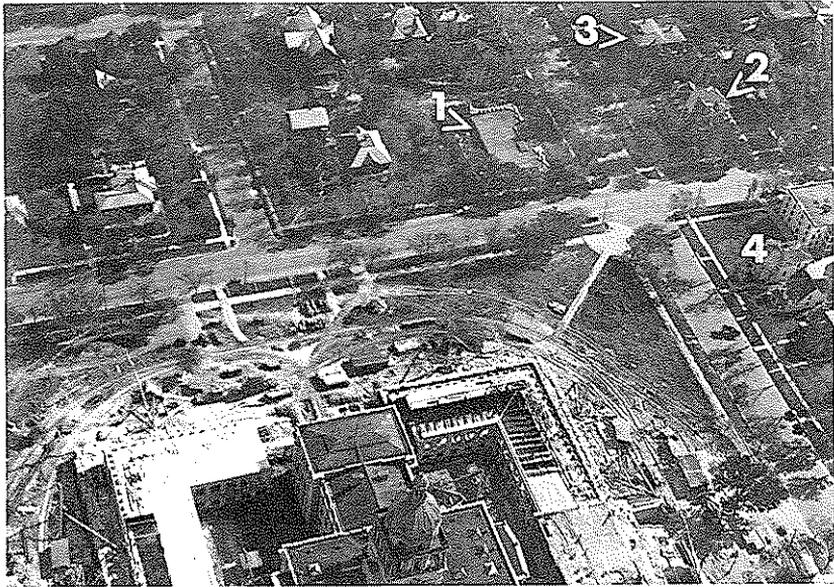
Sheldon, wife of the Superintendent, founded the Native Sons and Daughters of Nebraska in January, 1924. For many years it met in conjunction with the annual meeting of the NSHS. The major event sponsored by the Native Sons and Daughters was an annual essay contest initiated in 1929 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Nebraska Territory. Cash prizes were offered for essays about the contributions of individual Nebraska pioneers, and winning essays were published yearly in *Nebraska History*. The prestigious panel which judged the first contest consisted of author Bess Streeter Aldrich; Flora Bullock, professor of English at the university; Robert P. Crawford, president of the Nebraska Writers' Guild; L. C. Wimberly, editor of the *Prairie Schooner*, the literary publication of the university; and George Grimes, literary editor of the *Omaha World-Herald*.

The results were a bit unexpected, as the president of the Native Sons and Daughters explained:

The first prize of \$200 was awarded to James Francis Connell, who gave his residence as 6933 Lancaster Place, Lincoln. We were a little surprised at the address, for we had known Lincoln pretty well, but anyway that address brought his mail for we found to our greater surprise when the prize was awarded to James Francis Connell, that his number was 6933 in the penitentiary of Nebraska. The award was fully earned and fairly deserved and the money was paid to Mr. Connell. Mr. Connell had gone to the penitentiary because he had been convicted of robbing a bank and in doing so of participating in the death of two men. I have referred to this fact particularly for it seems through winning this prize he had his case brought to the attention of the Board of Pardons and they have since commuted his sentence to such an extent that he will be out in five years. I think this can no doubt be traced to his winning this essay contest.⁴⁹

Because the Museum had lacked a regular curator since Gilmore left in 1916, Sheldon brought Blackman back from Kansas City in January, 1917, with the understanding that he would stay only until the Museum was reorganized. By April he had decided to remain and was placed on a regular salary. Because of the lack of space, Blackman did not solicit museum collections nor did he undertake archeological field work. Much of his time was spent in cleaning, mounting, and cataloging specimens and arranging displays. He also conducted visitors through the museum and explained exhibits.

Blackman had time to pursue extension work, as it had earlier been termed. In the Society's first venture, though not its last, into the broadcast media, he inaugurated a series of radio talks over Omaha station WOAW. The initial lecture concerned his archeological discoveries in the Loup Valley. He prepared a lantern slide show about the museum which he delivered to



Near the construction site of the present State Capitol are: (1) the Society's building begun in 1909; (2) the William H. Ferguson house; (3) Thomas P. Kennard house; (4) the block designated in 1974 by the Legislature for the Historical Heritage Center. . . (Below) The Museum occupied rooms in the new Capitol's southwest wing.



interested groups. He assembled displays for a number of exhibitions, such as the Semi-Centennial Exhibition in Lincoln honoring the state's founding. Exhibits at the State Fair were continued. Blackman was in charge of a "Historical Train" sponsored by the Burlington Railroad, which travelled over 5,000 miles in the state from June through November, 1928. The railroad had fitted one car with exhibits showing its growth, and the Society filled a second car with displays tracing the development of the region from prehistoric times to the present. At the request of the State Park Board, Blackman prepared displays for Arbor Lodge, the home of J. Sterling Morton in Nebraska City.

In the early 1930s Blackman, then in his early 70s, was replaced by Asa T. Hill both as Curator of the Museum and as Field Archeologist. The official reason for replacing Blackman was the need for a "scientifically trained" person (which Hill incidentally was not) to prepare museum exhibits for quarters in the new state Capitol into which the Society was moving. Probably more important were two unstated reasons. The first was the fact that Hill could afford to work without pay, very significant at a time when a serious economic depression forced drastic budget cuts. A second influence was the desire to resume regular archeological field work, no doubt encouraged by Hill himself, who had become a member of the Society Board in 1926. Hill had been conducting excavations at his own expense. Upon his new appointment in November, 1933, it was agreed that he would serve the Society for no salary but that his expenses would be paid. Blackman's field work had generally consisted of solitary excursions or expeditions in the company of other archeologists. He had neither the inclination nor the experience to direct crews of untrained workers. Hill's administrative abilities were to be very useful to the Society by enabling it not only to resume systematic archeological field work but also to take advantage of large sums of federal money to hire unemployed persons to work on summer field crews.

Hill's business acumen was also ultimately to benefit the Society in another fashion. In January, 1935, a bill was introduced into the state Legislature to abolish the Historical Society as it was then constituted and to replace it with a commission consisting of the clerk of the Supreme Court, the librarian of the University of Nebraska, the head of the

American history department of the university, and two other persons appointed by the governor. The committee hearings and attendant publicity which followed brought vitriolic personal attacks upon Sheldon. The substantive charges centered upon mismanagement of Society affairs. Hill confined his field work that spring to an area near Lincoln so that he would be available to testify whenever necessary. Whatever merit the charges may have had was ultimately found to be due not to any misuse of funds, but rather to misunderstandings, sloppy accounting practices, and poor record-keeping. Sheldon had no interest in business, and so it was to the Society's advantage that Hill, who had been named Business Manager in December, 1934, assumed responsibility for its finances. The legislative bill was killed in May, and the Society has never again faced a similar threat.

When he replaced Blackman as Archeologist, Hill continued in the tradition of his predecessors. An amateur archeologist like Blackman, Hill also had a life-long interest in history and archeology, but the necessities of making a living had precluded any very intensive pursuit of these interests during his early years. In 1910 Hill was employed by a Hastings, Nebraska, automotive firm and travelled extensively throughout central Nebraska, thus giving him the opportunity to talk to local collectors and to identify sites.

In 1906 Hill had attended the unveiling of a monument commemorating a site in Republic County, Kansas, where it was believed that in 1806 the explorer Zebulon Pike met with the Pawnee and replaced a Spanish flag which flew over the village with an American flag. Hill read the accounts of the Pike expedition and was convinced that the Kansas location was incorrect because the terrain around the site, and other factors as well, did not match the contemporary description. In 1923 Hill found a site near Red Cloud, Webster County, Nebraska, which fit all of the requirements of the village visited by Pike. An argument ensued between the Kansans and the Nebraskans over its proper identification, which culminated in an issue of *Nebraska History* entitled, "The War Between Nebraska and Kansas," devoted to both sides of the dispute.⁵⁰ In time it was conceded that the Nebraska site was the correct location of the Pike-Pawnee village. Hill purchased the farm and for several years conducted excavations there as time permitted. Later excavations were carried out by the Society with WPA crews.

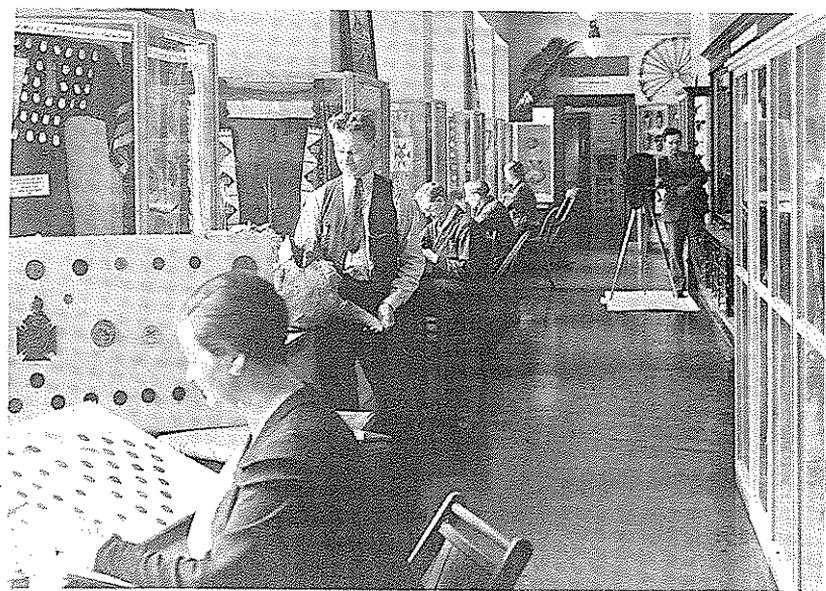


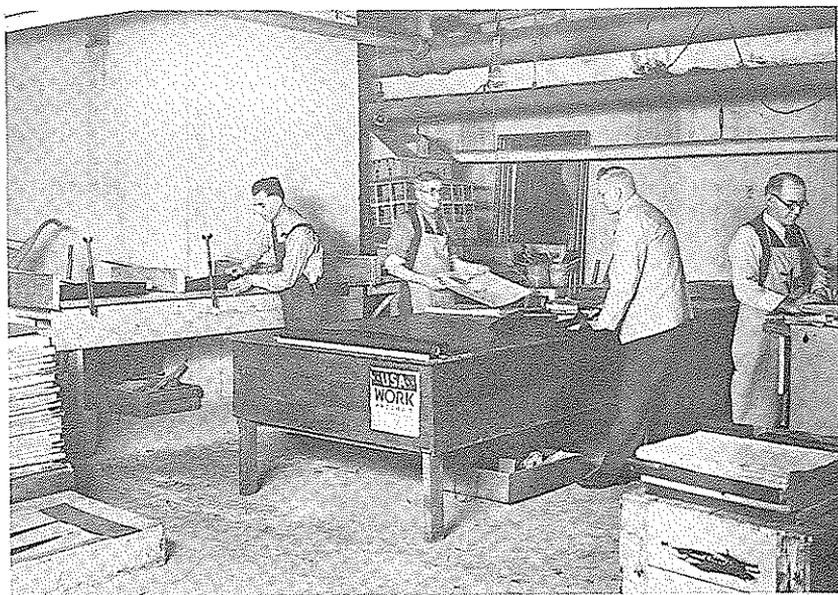
Society staff members in the Museum office at the Capitol are (from left) Caroline Ritchey (Mrs. Marvin F.) Kivett; Loretta Griffin, who remained with the Society until 1973; and Bernice Hermonie, secretary to A. T. Hill. . . . (Below) Mari Sandoz (rear) supervises WPA workers clipping newspapers in the Capitol basement.





During the 1930s Addison E. Sheldon (right) supervised an office staff augmented with WPA workers. . . . (Below) WPA workers prepared Museum exhibits.





WPA workers bind newspapers in the Capitol basement. . . . (Below) George Lamb (left) supervises pottery restoration.



During the 1920s Hill was especially active in archeological surveying. He began testing sites whenever possible and through trial and error learned effective excavation techniques. He also discovered that pottery was a more sensitive index of cultural change than stone and gave the former class of artifacts additional consideration in identifying the different cultural complexes. From this research Hill was becoming aware of the major prehistoric cultures in the state while archeology was only his hobby.

In 1933 Hill was appointed Curator of the Museum and the Society's Archeologist and, at the age of 62, was finally able to devote all of his energy to his major interest. Hill's outlook on archeological field work was succinctly described in an anecdote related by Waldo Wedel, one of Hill's field assistants for several seasons and briefly a Society employee. Wedel is today one of the foremost authorities of Plains archeology and curator-emeritus of the United States National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. According to Wedel, Hill firmly believed that archeology came before personal comfort. While the two of them were investigating near the forks of the Dismal River in 1931, they were

wading down the knee-deep stream, reveling in its coolness and searching with our eyes for archeological features in the banks high above us. Hearing an exclamation, [Wedel] turned to see Hill shoulder deep in the water. Cameras, rifle, and everything else he carried—entrusted to him because my hands were to be free for climbing the bank if anything of promise showed up—were thoroughly water-soaked and filled up with fine sand. He had stepped into a large under-water spring, whose upwelling current was strong enough to keep his head above water. Speedily fished from the chill spring waters, he spurned my suggestion that we return at once to camp for a change of clothing, and we continued our inspection of the river banks to the destination originally selected.⁵¹

Another anecdote, this one recalled by Hill himself, revealed that camp life was not lacking for amusements. In the summer of 1934

the archeological survey party took on a bunch of five pet coons. We soon discovered that they were going to be an expense, as it took about a quart of milk a day, and we knew that as they grew larger it would take more. As we were trying to keep down the cost of the expedition to the lowest possible cent we were somewhat worried about the prospect of this additional expense. We had discovered that the coons liked to play with bright pieces of tin and other bright objects, and as we were having lots of visitors in camp we conceived the idea of getting an old dirty washpan, filling it full of muddy water and inviting our visitors to drop a bright coin in this pan and watch the coons fish it out, knowing that they would not have the heart to pick up the muddy coin and take it away from the baby coons. When our visitor had gone, we would add this coin to our milk fund, and in that way we obtained enough money to feed the coons.

When the Nebraska State Historical Society Board met us we pulled the trick on them. There was only one man in the crowd with generosity enough to put any money in the pan

to see the coons perform. Of course, as was customary, he did not retrieve the muddy coin. However, he being decidedly scotch, when we told him to drop a bright coin, which of course meant silver or at least nickel, polished up a penny. We still have the penny and are going to put it on exhibition under the explanatory note, "Donated by Dalbey to the Baby Coons' Milk Fund." Think that will be a good example of Scotch Thrift. What do you think?⁵²

The response of Board Member Dwight S. Dalbey is not recorded.

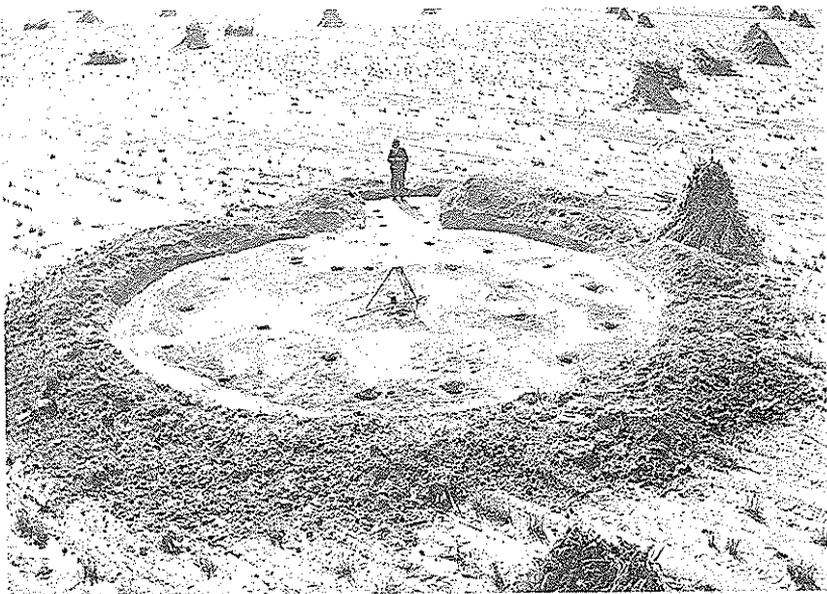
The period from 1922 until the outbreak of World War II saw major advances in the study of Nebraska archeology. Not long before, the professional community had ignored the Plains believing that it had little time depth and, therefore, would not be a rewarding area for archeological research. However, pioneer archeologists were gathering data which would change this opinion. Besides Blackman and Hill, there had been a few others who attempted systematic archeological field work in Nebraska before the 1930s. Robert F. Gilder, an Omaha newspaperman, spent the first decades of this century exploring in the vicinity of Omaha. Between 1912 and 1915 Fred H. Sterns investigated some of Gilder's sites with funds from the Peabody Museum of American Anthropology and Ethnology of Harvard University. This field work provided the basis for his dissertation for a PhD.

The University of Nebraska began archeological research in 1929 when William D. Strong was hired as professor of anthropology. Strong stayed in Nebraska only three years before accepting a position with the Smithsonian Institution, but his impact upon the study of prehistory of the area was greater than his brief stay might suggest. In 1935 he published *An Introduction to Nebraska Archeology*, which has become a classic work. Earl H. Bell replaced Strong, and the university has continued archeological research through both its Department of Anthropology and the University of Nebraska State Museum. After John C. Champe succeeded Bell, the Society frequently worked closely with the university in many aspects of archeological research in the state.

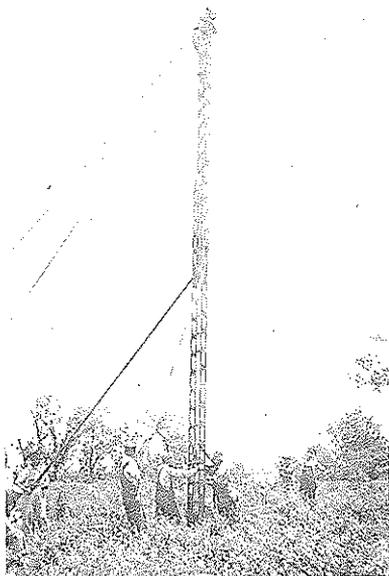
With the growing interest in Plains archeology, sentiment developed concerning the need for an organization to serve as a means of communication for investigators in the area. In 1931 the Plains Anthropological Conference met in Vermillion, South Dakota, and the following year in Lincoln. Thereafter it convened at irregular intervals until after the war, when it was more firmly organized and began a publications program.⁵³

Shortly after professional interest focused on Plains archeology, federal funds became available through the WPA program to hire summer field crews for surveys and excavations. Under Strong the university had begun investigating sites on the Missouri River, and, when the Society began its field work under Hill in 1934, it decided to concentrate on the central and southern portions of the state. At the Society the emphasis was upon the Upper Republican and Lower Loup periods (12th to 18th centuries AD), but other complexes were not ignored. Because of the extensive excavations and surveys carried out during the 1930s, an enormous quantity of data was gathered. From this a broad picture of Nebraska's prehistory began to emerge. There were major gaps, some of which still exist, but enough was known so that specific problems could be recognized and attacked. Attention to these problems lagged, however, and virtually the entire archeological program was curtailed with the outbreak of World War II.

Throughout Sheldon's tenure as Superintendent, as seems to have been true for most of the Society's history, the search for adequate facilities was a constant concern. Even before Paine's illness the Board had conceded that it was unlikely that funds to complete the building planned by Berlinghoff on the half-block at 16th and H Streets would be appropriated. At the time of Paine's death the idea of a new joint building for the Historical Society and the University Library was being discussed. The Board approved such a plan and urged its funding by the Legislature, which failed to respond to these requests. Through the decade of the 1920s, collections were moved into storage in Bessey Hall and the Social Science Building at the university, in addition to occupying the Society's main facility in the University Library and its roofed basement on the half-block. The poor conditions in this basement were a source of worry. Unheated and ill-lit, the area was subject to flooding both from leakage through cracks in the foundation and from the roof. A large portion of the oldest newspapers were stored in the basement. The staff tried to bring papers for use by patrons to the University library, but requirements of some researchers necessitated other arrangements. University students, for example, who needed to use many issues were allowed to work in the storage area. Author Mari Sandoz recalled several months spent doing research for *Old Jules* in the basement "with



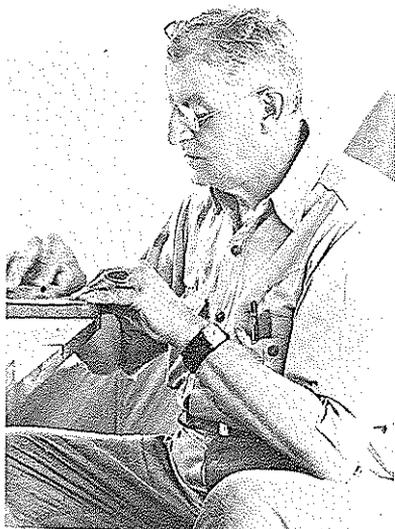
In 1941 a Society crew excavated earthlodge floors at the site of the Pike-Pawnee village in Webster County.



Local firemen provided a ladder for Paul L. Cooper to photograph prehistoric archeological remains, Douglas County, 1938.



Asa T. Hill directed the Society's archeological field work from 1933 through the 1940s.



Hill at work in camp.

'gullaches' [overshoes] because the floor was wet and unheated and a flashlight for light."⁵⁴

A committee of the Legislature investigating the Society's request for additional funding found the following conditions in the basement:

The whole space is occupied with volumes of newspapers, periodicals and books of all descriptions until there are only narrow paths to get through. Everything is stacked full to the roof. . . . The newspaper files are laid flat and held off the floor by board slats holding the files about an inch from the floor. . . . There is evidence that water has stood between two and three inches deep on the floor. . . . the water on the floor keeps the whole basement damp and all the papers draw this dampness. . . . All along the east wall is a solid wall of books. These are very damp and the bindings are very moldy with some water seepage through the wall.⁵⁵

In June, 1929, a parent sought reimbursement from the Society for medical expenses incurred when his child was injured falling through the basement roof. The Board eventually authorized erection of a fence around the structure to prevent persons from walking on the roof.

The University of Nebraska repeatedly asked the Society to move in order to give the university library space for expansion. As it was apparent that no money would be available for a Society building because the state had committed millions of dollars to a new Capitol, the Society Board formally requested space in the new statehouse in 1928. The following year the Capitol Commission authorized space for the Society on the first floor of the west wing, which was scheduled for the final phase of construction. Meanwhile, the Society was promised temporary space in the tower then nearing completion. In July, 1931, the offices were moved into the ninth floor of the tower, as well as part of the tenth. Storage was also made available in the basement. In December, 1933, keys to the first floor in the southwest wing were officially presented, and during the following year the Museum, the archeological collection, the photographs, the art collection, part of the Library, and the current newspapers were moved into the first floor. Two years later the remainder of the newspapers was moved from the University Library to the Capitol basement. Gradually material was moved from the basement on the half-block to be stored in the Capitol, and at the same time the tower floors were vacated.

While the Society was still moving into the Capitol, it became clear that the space would not be sufficient for all its needs. The Society never received all of the space initially allotted because the Capitol was filled with the new workers staffing federally

funded programs. Therefore, the Board decided to leave the most significant part of the Society's Library in the university library building under the care of the university librarian. Another factor influencing this decision was the frequent use made of this collection by university faculty and students, who would be inconvenienced by the distance between campus and the Capitol. On March 1, 1934, an agreement between the Society and the university went into effect whereby the university would administer the Society's collection of Nebraska publications, genealogy, and general and western history. The salary of Clara Paine, Society Librarian, would be paid by the university, which would be responsible for ordering and cataloguing books for the Society. The collection would be kept together and identified as belonging to the Society, which would continue to pay for serials to which it subscribed. There was an additional advantage to this arrangement. Under Mrs. Paine the Society had attempted to avoid duplicating book purchases of other libraries in Lincoln. This policy was maintained while the library was administered by the university, and the Society continued to specialize in Nebraska and western history, genealogy, and the publications of other state and local historical societies. The arrangement lasted until the University library moved into a new building of its own, Love Library, in 1942, and the Society's library was transferred to the Capitol.

Just as the Society moved into the Capitol, programs under the New Deal made federal funds available to support its functions. In Sheldon's words, "the United States of America joined the Nebraska State Historical Society . . . thereby making the largest land mark in the annals of the Society and of Nebraska history. Sixty years of accumulations of library, photographs, newspapers and museum material, a total of over half a million separate items have awaited the aid of Franklin Roosevelt and his project for the employment of jobless educated patriots in Nebraska."⁵⁶

The Board applied for the first workers in December, 1933, and the last ones were terminated on January 12, 1943, when war diverted national resources to other ends.⁵⁷ Programs through which the Society acquired workers underwent several reorganizations and name changes. For most of the time, however, they were administered under the WPA.⁵⁸ The Society's relationship with WPA was of two types. First, the Society was able to employ persons for its routine work. In addition it sponsored or

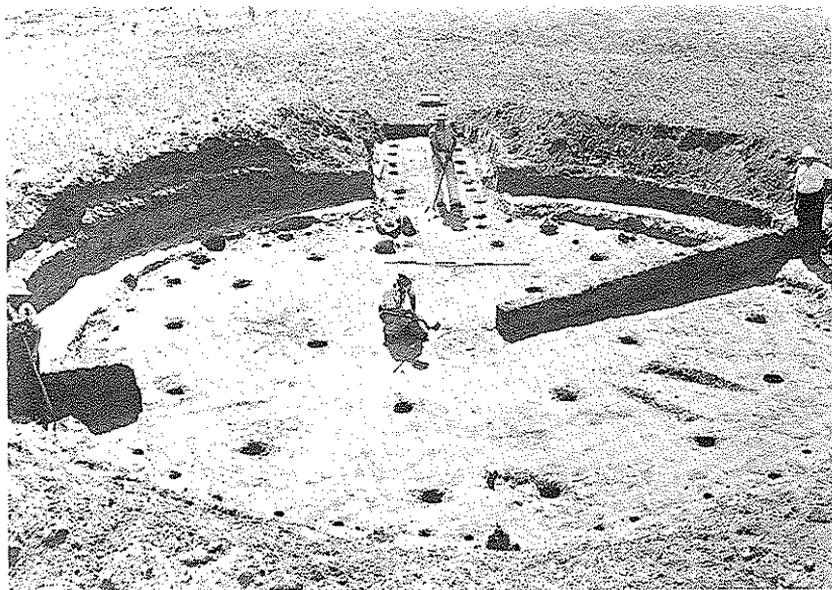


At archeological field camp in Valley County, 1939, are (from left) A. T. Hill, George Metcalf, and Marvin F. Kivett. . . . (Below) WPA employees excavate a prehistoric Indian earthlodge floor in Howard County, 1939.





Earthlodge floor, Upper Republican culture, was excavated in 1934 by A. T. Hill and Dr. Waldo R. Wedel on Medicine Creek near Stockville. . . . (Below) Excavations were carried out in Butler County, 1936, in an early Pawnee Indian village by Alfred Simpson (left), Wedel (kneeling), Marvin F. Kivett, and Hill.



cooperated with other federal projects in the state. During nine years the Society received approximately \$600,000 in salaries from the federal government and directly employed 500 different individuals. The average number of WPA workers employed at any one time was about 40. The effect of these numbers upon the Society is suggested by the fact that throughout the 1920s the staff had consisted of only six salaried employees, including a janitor. WPA workers performed a wide variety of tasks. They inventoried, indexed, and filed newspapers; indexed county histories and biographical directories; clipped papers and mounted clippings in scrapbooks; typed copies of manuscripts; prepared bibliographies on historical subjects; performed research in response to reference requests; catalogued photographs; cleaned, repaired, and catalogued artifacts; prepared museum exhibits; built display cases, shelves, and card files; and served as field crews on archeological expeditions.

While the Society was making the initial application for federal workers, Sheldon urged Mari Sandoz to file necessary forms enabling her to be assigned to the Society when its request was approved. Sandoz was well-known to Sheldon from her years of research at the Society, and he wanted her to supervise the WPA employees. By early spring of 1934, Sandoz was in Lincoln, not only supervising the federal workers but also taking unofficial charge of the office during absences of Sheldon and Hill, as well as editing several issues of *Nebraska History*.⁵⁹ For her additional work the Board granted her a small monthly salary from Society funds. After Sandoz left, her supervisory and editorial duties were assumed by Robert Burleigh, who in turn was replaced by Raymond J. Latrom.

Beginning in March, 1939, the Society's federal funds were channelled through a joint project with the University of Nebraska consisting of four divisions: historical research under Sheldon; archeological research under Hill; archeological research under Earl H. Bell of the Department of Anthropology; and paleontological research under C. Bertrand Schultz of the University of Nebraska State Museum. Paul Cooper, a noted Plains archeologist previously employed by the Society, was general supervisor of the joint project and maintained its headquarters in the Society's rooms.

The Society also co-sponsored several WPA programs in the state. Among the most important were the Federal Writers'

Project, the American Imprints Inventory, the Historical Records Survey, the records copying project of the Deborah Avery Chapter of the DAR, and the Workers' Service Project. Workers on these projects were not directly employed by the Society but most of them did a considerable amount of research there and were practically indistinguishable from the Society's own federal employees. Researchers on the Writers' Project comprised the largest single group of patrons using the newspapers and the library. In addition to Society sponsorship of the Writers' Project, Sheldon and other staff members edited many of its publications, such as the *Nebraska State Guide*, the *Lincoln City Guide*, and the *Almanac of Nebraska*. The Historical Records Survey, originally an independent project, inventoried public records in municipal, county, and state offices, church records, and manuscripts. When it was required to find a state sponsor in July, 1939, the Society assumed responsibility for its staff of 85 and found offices for the project in the Capitol basement.

The nine years of WPA funding was an exciting, though sometimes frantic, period. Not until the 1970s would the size of the staff approach that of the 1930s. The program succeeded in its goal of employing "white-collar" workers. Federal funds more than replaced the decreasing state appropriations, and much work of great value was accomplished. There were, however, certain disadvantages. The large number of new employees, together with those on cooperating projects, burdened the small regular staff. Though these people were educated, they needed to be trained and supervised and their work reviewed. Because workers were employed under temporary grants which were not always renewed promptly or at the same level of funding, many worthy projects were begun and left unfinished. The cessation of funds on January 12, 1943, required a great adjustment by the Society. When the last fifteen of the WPA workers were terminated, the Society was able to transfer five of them to the state's employ to join the six members of the regular staff. Among them were several who spent many years with the Society including Myrtle D. Berry, Manuscript Librarian, who was transferred from WPA service, and Martha M. Turner, Newspaper and Photograph Librarian, who had been on the state payroll. In support of his successful appeal for the transfer to the Legislature's appropriations committee, Sheldon ex-



Members of Iowa Indian tribe visit archeological excavations in Richardson County, 1935. George Lamb, assistant field supervisor, is holding range pole; to his left is Chief Dan White Cloud. . . . (Below) Archeological field camp near Bellwood, 1936, during the period that A. T. Hill worked with small crews excavating a number of sites each summer.



plained that the funding cuts left no one to supervise researchers who used the newspaper collection. "Miss Mari Sandoz this day applied for access to the newspaper files," he reported as an example. "To give this service we locked Miss Sandoz in the newspaper rooms and later unlocked and let her out."⁶⁰

Keeping the Society's collections scattered in a variety of locations caused many problems. Because quarters in the Capitol proved to be no real solution to the space problem, the Board discussed applying for a federal grant to construct a building on the Society's half-block. Under President James E. Lawrence, a building fund campaign was begun. In 1944 the Board adopted articles of incorporation for the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation to accept these funds. The Legislature of 1943 levied a tax of 1/10 of one mill upon all taxable property of the state for the years 1943-1947 to reimburse the permanent school fund for losses reported by the auditor. A companion bill introduced by Senator Daniel Garber provided that any money collected in excess "shall be used for the construction and equipment of an historical building for the Nebraska State Historical Society, when a specific appropriation is made therefore by the Legislature."⁶¹

After his years of effort it seems fitting that Sheldon lived to see the passage of legislation that would at last permit the Society to have a building of its own. Because he was not in good health during most of 1943, his daughter Ruth took a leave of absence from her job to help her father. After his death in November, she remained for several weeks to assist in the transition. The departure of Addison E. Sheldon truly marked the end of an era. At no other time did the vision of a single individual so profoundly influence the undertakings of the Society.



Breaking ground for the new building at 1500 R Street are (from left) Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court Robert G. Simmons; Superintendent James C. Olson; Board member James L. Sellers; President James E. Lawrence; Treasurer Nathan J. Gold; and NU Chancellor R. G. Gustavson. . . . (Below) Superintendent Olson watches as the cornerstone is laid.



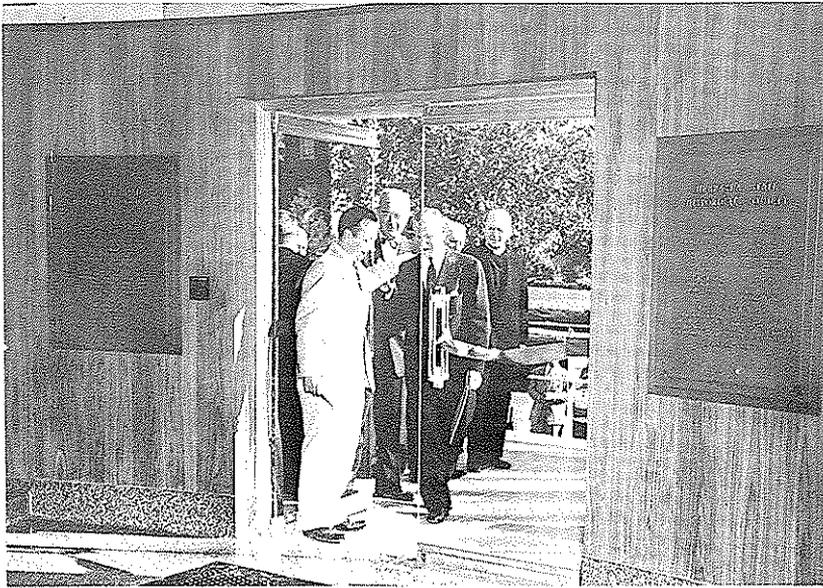
CHAPTER V

THE NEW BUILDING, 1943-1963

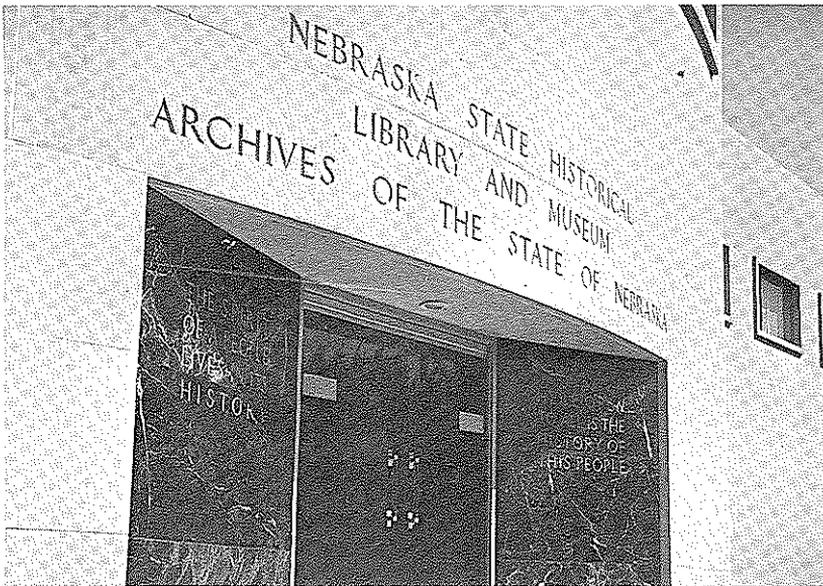
This period of the Society's history encompasses the terms of James C. Olson (1944-1956) and of William D. Aeschbacher (1956-1963) as chief executive officers. (In 1956 the title of this office was changed from Superintendent to Director.) Shaping these years was the acquisition of a building designed especially to serve the requirements of the Society's various programs. This interval was not unlike that at the turn of the century when increased funding had permitted the hiring of new staff to pursue, among other duties, what was then called extension work. By mid-century the concept, now termed "educational services," included a multitude of programs designed to reach increased numbers of persons from all segments of the Society's constituency. The NSHS was not alone in its desire to disseminate historical knowledge to a wider audience. This impetus toward popularization, evident throughout the country, was encouraged by the American Association for State and Local History.⁶² In Nebraska its manifestations included the introduction of a new style of interpretative museum exhibits, the use of radio and the infant medium of television, and an increase in the number and variety of publications including aids for teachers of history. The opening of a branch museum at Fort Robinson, initiation of a uniform marker program, and the beginning of the Nebraska Hall of Fame brought the Society more visibly to the attention of the public. The traditional support for field work shifted to salvage archeology, or attempts to rescue sites threatened by construction.

After Sheldon's death in 1943, A. T. Hill acted as Superintendent until the selection of James C. Olson in September, 1944. Olson, a PhD in history from the University of Nebraska, was then serving as a historian with the Army Air Corps. James L. Sellers, professor of history at the university, was appointed Acting Superintendent and Hill managed financial affairs until Olson assumed his duties in March, 1946.

The primary concern of the officers and Board was to realize construction of the promised building. While the money



Governor Robert B. Crosby, after cutting the ribbon, escorts President James E. Lawrence into the Society's new building. Following are Nathan J. Gold and Bishop Howard R. Brinker of Omaha. . . (Below) Inscriptions by James L. Sellers flank the building's entrance.



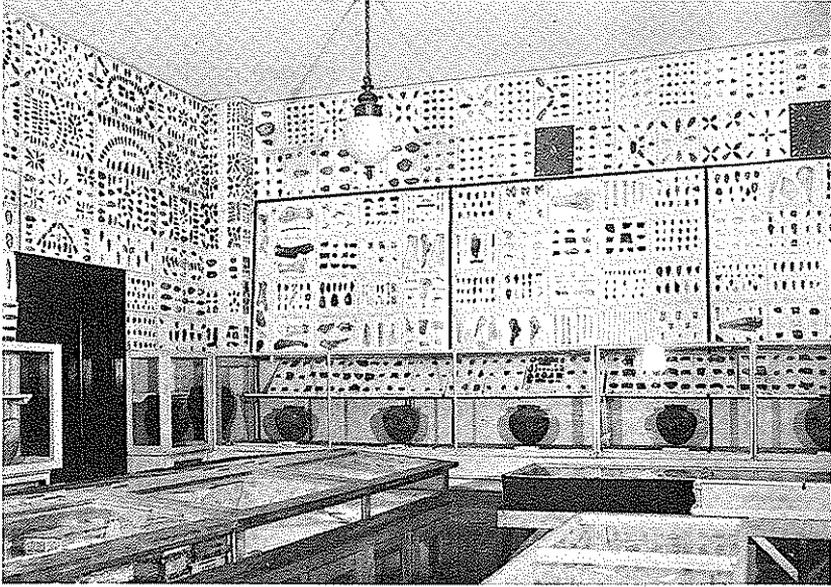
earmarked for the Society by the legislation of 1943 was invested, negotiations were begun with the Board of Regents for a site on the university campus. Eventually lots on R Street at 15th Street were chosen and the Society's half-block on 16th Street exchanged for the new property. Construction of the building, designed by the Lincoln firm of Davis and Wilson, began in August, 1951. Fashioned of Indiana limestone like the Capitol which it faces, it was intended to serve as a link between the University of Nebraska and the state government. Society officials decided early in their planning that they wanted a modern building—in part for efficiency and in part to impress upon Nebraskans that their history is an important element of their contemporary lives. Inscriptions drafted by Sellers flanking the front entrance proclaim that "The Spirit of a People Lives in Its History" and "Here Open to All Is the History of This People."

The main part of the building contains two floors and a basement. The first floor was designed for museum exhibits and the second floor for offices and reading rooms. Also on the second floor are period rooms furnished to illustrate modes of life in various periods of Nebraska history. The basement contains workrooms, storage areas, and originally included an auditorium. At the rear of the building are six stack levels for books, manuscripts, and newspapers.

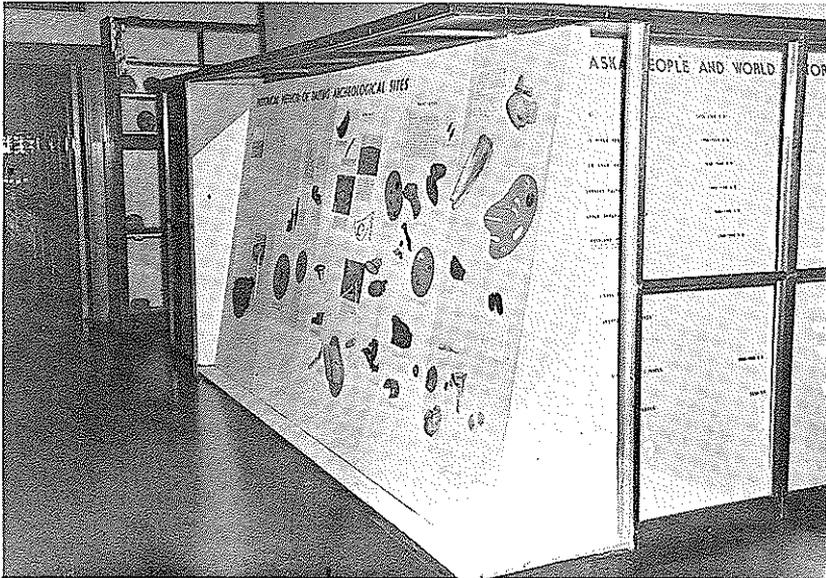
As the building was being planned, the staff turned its attention to the collections which would be moved into the building and to the exhibits which would fill the galleries. An inventory of library materials revealed a great number of duplicate publications as well as volumes not related to the library's primary interest in Nebraska and western history and genealogy. An act of the Legislature confirmed the Society's authority to dispose of unwanted material in an appropriate manner, generally by giving it to another repository in Nebraska or elsewhere. The newspapers presented a special problem. Their bulk made them expensive to store and difficult to use, and the paper on which they were printed was too poor to survive more than a few decades. Olson suggested microfilming as a means of eliminating these difficulties. Developed in the 1930s, microfilm and microfilm equipment had been improved during the war and came into popular use thereafter. The Society purchased its first camera and began filming Nebraska newspapers in 1952.

Another important task was to plan exhibits for the new building. Because Hill asked to be relieved of certain duties, Marvin F. Kivett had been appointed Assistant Director of the Museum. When Hill retired in August, 1949, with the title of Director-Emeritus, Kivett became head of the Museum. He began to experiment with new displays for the Museum and to prepare for the new building. The new facility was the first Society building which had been designed especially for a Museum. The exhibits were to be confined to the story of people in Nebraska and on the Plains, in keeping with the Society's particular objectives. They were not to present a catch-all collection of subjects, many of which were more properly the responsibility of other types of museums or ones in other parts of the country. Galleries were laid out in chronological order from the earliest known prehistoric Indians to the present day. Individual displays were designed according to modern museum techniques which were then becoming accepted. According to the new ideas displays should offer an interpretation; only a few select items, rather than an entire collection, should be shown. Artifacts should be chosen, not as curiosities in themselves, but for their value in illustrating a concept. Large, attractive labels should interpret a period or an episode and describe the significance of the objects. The use of color and lighting enhanced the effect of the objects. This design of interpretive exhibits was a relatively new practice being used in only a few museums at the time. Both the building and the exhibit program set the style for historical museums in the Plains states for a number of years. While plans for the new building progressed, the new-style exhibits gradually appeared in the display areas in the Capitol.⁶³

After years of preparation the move began in June, 1953. Dedication ceremonies were held on the 75th anniversary of the Society's founding in September, 1953. Heightening the importance of the new physical facilities was an expansion of staff and programs made possible by an increased appropriation for the 1951-1953 biennium, 115% above the previous one. Probably the most spectacular result of this affluence was the growth of a variety of new educational programs designed to spread services to a wide audience. Phyllis Winkelman, who filled the new position of Director of Educational Services, encouraged classroom teachers to use the Society's facilities,



Old style exhibits from the Society's Museum in 1936 featured many similar objects crowded into every available space with few labels. . . . (Below) A new style of exhibit, developed in the late 1940s while the Museum was still in the Capitol, displays a few selected objects with labels interpreting their significance.





Researchers and staff in the new building's newspaper reading room include Archivist Donald F. Danker (left) and Newspaper Librarian Elizabeth Radtke (standing at right). . . . (Below left) Dale Young microfilms newspapers in April, 1952, in Capitol basement. . . . Elizabeth Radtke works in newspaper stacks.



especially the Museum, as part of their teaching. To this end a brochure was prepared explaining how a class visit to the Museum could be integrated into the regular course of study. A series of Educational Leaflets was inaugurated in 1952. This series, which continues today, contains essays on topics from Nebraska and Plains history which can supplement regular curricular materials in the elementary school classroom. Other forms of teaching aids were offered. For example, the Nebraska History Filmstrip Series, eight filmstrips produced by the Society in co-operation with the Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction of the university, were based largely on the Butcher collection of photographs. Intended primarily for classroom use, some of the strips were also recommended for adults and were made available at reduced rates to local historical societies. A series of thirteen audio tapes were written by Society staff and produced with the co-operation of the university for their "Tapes for Teaching Library." These programs, released in 1954 on the occasion of the Nebraska Territorial Centennial, were devoted to aspects of territorial history. The tapes were suitable for schools, radio stations, and organizations of all types.

Teachers were urged to schedule tours of the museum guided by volunteers from the Lincoln Junior League. Puppet shows dramatizing historical events were regularly scheduled, featuring Junior League members as puppeteers. Also popular were auditorium programs designed for particular grade levels, followed by special museum tours emphasizing exhibits related to the programs.

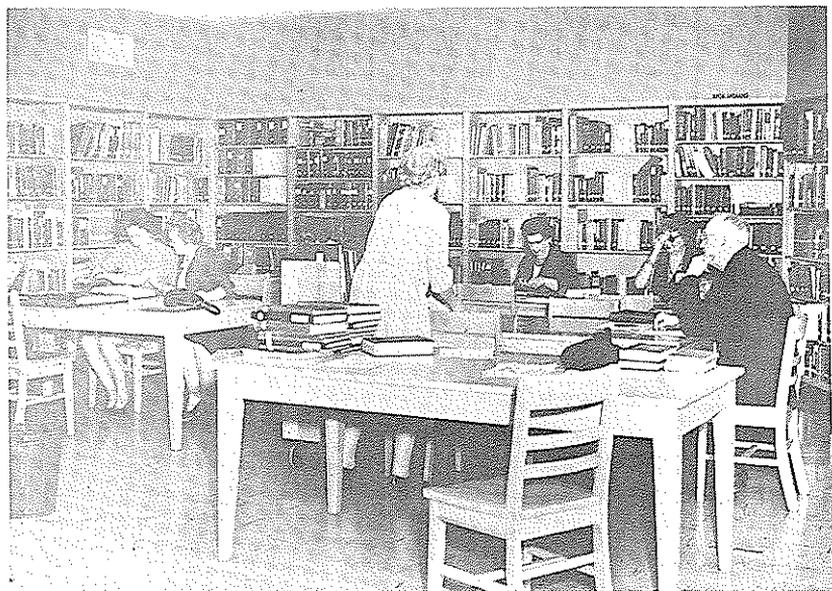
Another type of audience was reached by Society programs over Nebraska radio and television. In November, 1951, the Society presented the first of many radio lectures with a talk by Superintendent Olson on KRVN in Lexington. For the next three years 13-15 week series were aired over stations in other towns, including Grand Island, Alliance, Omaha, and Norfolk.

Beginning in 1954 the Society switched from radio to television and began a close association with KUON, Channel 12, the educational television station licensed to the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. One of the first educational television stations to begin broadcasting, KUON needed programming to fill its air time. The Society was happy to extend the scope of its activities into the new medium. The staff wrote scripts, prepared visual aids, and appeared on camera for programs produced and

distributed by KUON. From 1954 to 1963 the Society had a weekly half-hour live broadcast under the title "Yesterday in Nebraska." In addition, five different series were filmed and made available to other ETV stations as well. The first, a part of the commemoration of the Territorial Centennial, contained 39 half-hour programs explaining the significance of the Great Plains in American history. Financed in part by a grant from the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, the series, "Great Plains Trilogy," consisted of three sets of thirteen programs each. The first part, dealing with animal life, was presented by C. Bertrand Schultz, director of the University of Nebraska State Museum. The second, concerning prehistoric peoples, was the responsibility of Society Museum Director Kivett and E. Mott Davis, Curator of Anthropology at the State Museum. The final part, white occupation of the Plains, was prepared by Society Superintendent Olson.

A second special series was a course for college credit on the history of Nebraska offered by Olson. Yet another production consisted of ten films, each concerned with one decade in the history of Nebraska from the 1850s through the 1950s. In 1959 one film entitled "Land of Their Own" used Butcher photographs and a script based on letters of the Oblinger family, settlers in Fillmore County in the 1870s. This program won second place in a contest for radio and television productions sponsored by the AASLH. The next year three more programs using letters and diaries from the Society's collections were produced and combined with "Land of Their Own" into the "Western Heritage" series.

The printed word, a more traditional means by which the Society spread historical knowledge, was also affected by the expansion of educational services in this period. *Nebraska History* continued as a quarterly journal intended by its contents and style to appeal to a general readership. Beginning under Acting Superintendent Sellers, it took on its modern appearance. A book review section was added. In the interests of accuracy citations of sources used appeared with most articles. Other new publications eliminated the need for some of the features previously a part of *Nebraska History*. The monthly *News Letter*, instituted by Olson in 1948, provided a vehicle for news and notes about Society affairs and other historical activities. It has become a means for spreading information about county



A group of genealogists take advantage of the Library reading room.



Artist Iris Daugherty prepares exhibits.

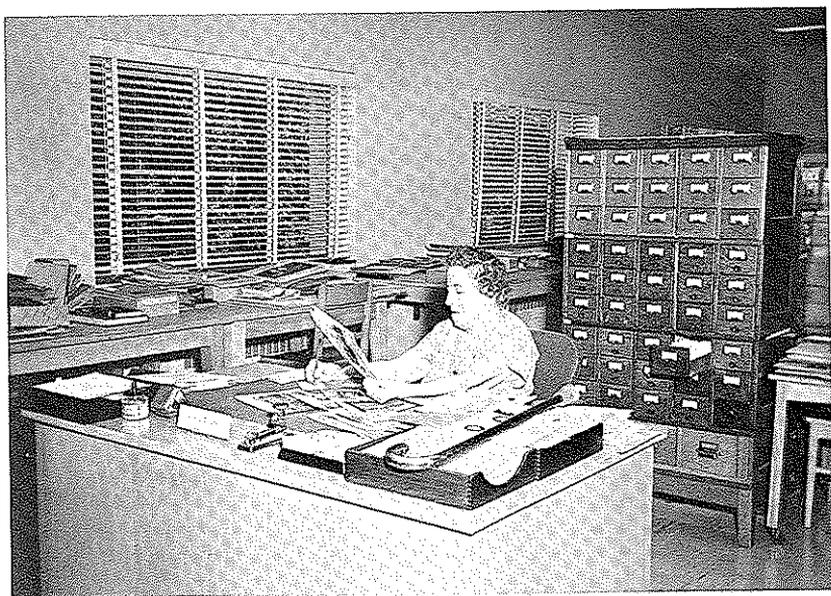
historical societies and other local historical organizations. "Out of Old Nebraska," also begun by Olson, is a column distributed weekly since January, 1947, to all Nebraska newspapers. It is devoted to articles about interesting persons and events, of the sort that might previously have appeared as notes in *Nebraska History*. Holidays, anniversaries, and seasonal activities provide frequent opportunities for columns on traditional celebrations of such events. Since the 1930s archeological reports had been published in *Nebraska History*, and occasionally entire issues had been devoted to archeology. Because of the mass of accumulated data and the length of some of the reports, the Board approved a new series entitled *Publications in Anthropology*. The first issue, published in 1952, was *Woodland Sites in Nebraska* by Marvin F. Kivett. This monograph dealt with a group of related cultures in Nebraska during the period from about 1 AD to 800. Since then seven issues have appeared covering a broad range of prehistoric and historic sites.

The regular *Publications* series was resumed after twenty years with two bibliographic works by Society Librarian John B. White, *Published Sources on Territorial Nebraska* and *Index-Guide to the Contents of the Publications, 1885-1956, and the Magazine, 1918-1958, of the Nebraska State Historical Society*. Subsequent books in this series have been the results of a grant from the Woods Charitable Fund for detailed studies of important aspects of Nebraska history which have not been given adequate treatment. The volumes are *The Great Platte River Road* (1969) by Merrill J. Mattes, retired National Park Service historian; *From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake* (1972) by William E. Lass, professor of history at Mankato State College, Minnesota; and *Conquering the Great American Desert: Nebraska* (1975) by Everett Dick, noted frontier historian and professor of history at Union College, Lincoln. All three books were given the Award of Merit by the American Association for State and Local History, and Mattes' *Great Platte River Road* received an award from the prestigious Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City.

In addition to these publications the Society supported other research and writing, especially that of Superintendent Olson and Historian Donald F. Danker. Olson's *History of Nebraska*, a one-volume general survey for both the college student and the general reader, was published by the University of Nebraska



Sandra Shaneyfelt (left), Librarian John B. White, and Archivist Donald F. Danker examine the papers of Christian A. Sorensen relating to politics, public power, and irrigation in Nebraska and the John T. Link collection on Nebraska place names. . . . (Below) Myrtle Berry is seated at her desk in the Photograph Library.



Press in 1955 with a subvention from the Society. A body of material relating to the history of the Sioux, accumulated by Sheldon, prompted Olson to further research resulting in *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, published by the University Press in 1965. On the centennial of Arbor Day, the Society reprinted Olson's biography of J. Sterling Morton based on his PhD dissertation and originally published by the university. Two other volumes, also published by the university, were edited by Donald F. Danker, who served for a time as Archivist and then filled the position of Society Historian which had been vacant for many years after the death of Albert Watkins. *Mollie: The Journal of Mollie Dorsey Sanford in Nebraska and Colorado Territories, 1857-1866* (1959) documents social aspects of pioneer life on the Plains, of the Colorado Gold Rush, and of the Civil War as it affected the Colorado frontier. *Man of the Plains: Recollections of Luther North, 1856-1882* (1959) recounts the experiences of Frank and Luther North who commanded the Pawnee Scouts during the Plains Indians wars of the 1860s and 1870s.

Several other kinds of programs extended the Society's presence to all parts of the state. Some of these activities were new, while others represented a resumption of traditional functions. In May, 1952, the Society held a spring meeting in Omaha, thus beginning the practice of holding a yearly meeting outside of Lincoln, a custom proposed in the 1880s but never before pursued. To honor the Territorial Centennial in 1954, the museum staff constructed exhibits in a special "Centennial Car," which travelled throughout the state courtesy of Nebraska's railroads, terminating at the State Fair. The Society resumed its annual exhibit at the State Fair in the following year.

The Society initiated legislation and led celebrations in the state for recent centennials including that of the Nebraska Territory and State, the Civil War, the Pony Express, Arbor Day, and the United States Bicentennial. It supported a state law of 1957 which permitted counties to tax themselves to finance local historical societies and museums. This legislation has been a boon to local history in Nebraska. Inspired by observances of state and national anniversaries as well as by the centennials of many Nebraska communities, citizens' groups have founded many local historical societies in the past two decades. Currently more than twenty of them are receiving local tax support.

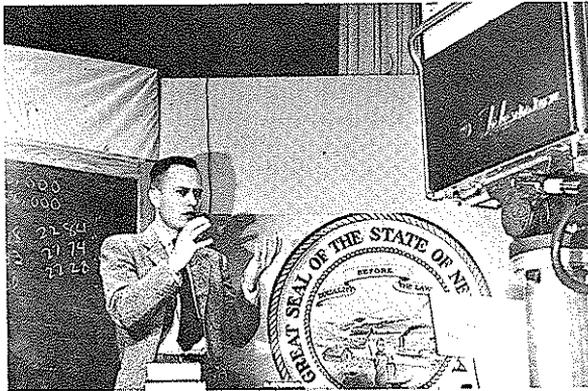
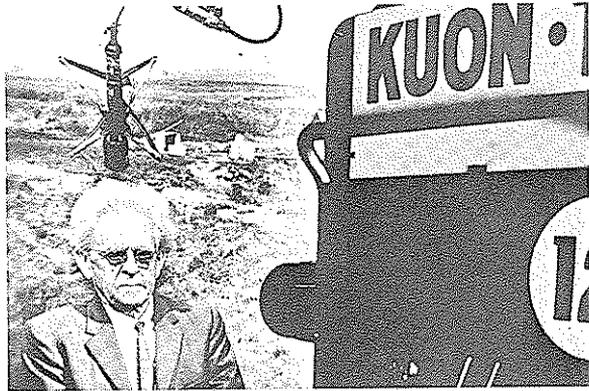
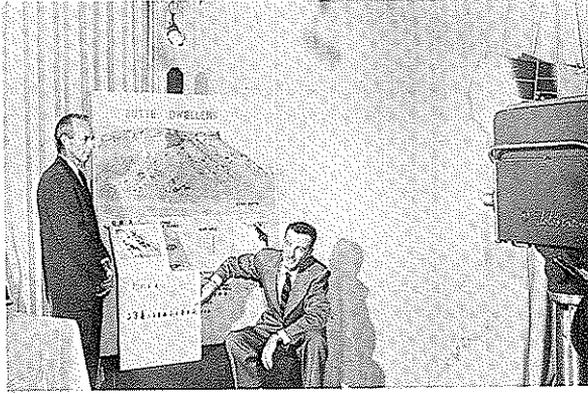
Yet another law passed in 1957 enabled the Society to implement a long sought program of uniform markers for

historic sites. The Society had been actively concerned with designating historic sites since 1900, encouraging and sharing in local efforts. During the 1950s the Board became particularly interested in promoting a standardized historical marker program in Nebraska. Markers would be placed mainly along highways in cooperation with the Department of Roads. In 1957 the Legislature established an Historical Landmark Commission composed of the director of the Division of Natural Resources, the state highway engineer, and the Superintendent of the State Historical Society. After changes in name and membership the separate agency was abolished and its functions transferred to the Society in 1969. Under this program requests for markers are submitted by local groups or public agencies, and the Society staff prepares the final text for the marker which is manufactured according to a standard design. To date over 225 markers have been erected under this program.

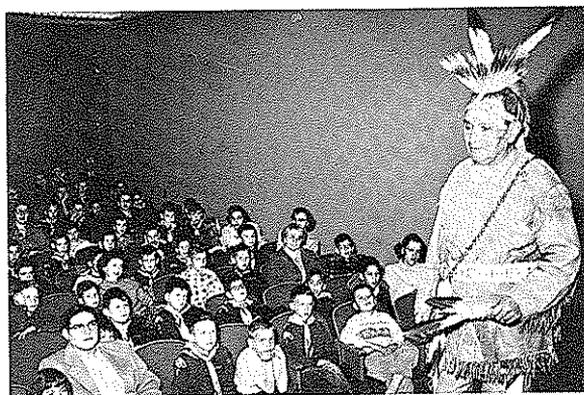
In 1961 the Hall of Fame Commission was created to bring public attention and official recognition to outstanding Nebraskans. This commission includes the governor, the Society's Director (who serves as secretary to the commission), and other members appointed by the governor. Persons elected by the commission to the Hall of Fame are honored with a bust in the Capitol. Although it is a separate agency, the commission's affairs are conducted from the Society's administrative offices.⁶⁴

The most significant presence of the Society in outstate Nebraska appeared in 1956 with the opening of a branch museum at Fort Robinson near Crawford in Dawes County. Fort Robinson, administered by the Society, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the University of Nebraska is a state park consisting of the original military reservation of over 10,000 acres, of which the Fort's building complex occupies only a small area. About seventy of the nearly 200 original buildings survive, including some of the oldest and most historic.⁶⁵

Fort Robinson served as a military post from 1874 through World War II. Unrest among Sioux Indians at the Red Cloud Agency led to the establishment of this post to keep the peace during clashes caused by the Black Hills gold rush and subsequent white civilian invasion of Indian treaty lands. One event of the aftermath was the arrest of Chief Crazy Horse in 1877 and his death there, reportedly from a soldier's bayonet. Also famous was the Cheyenne outbreak from imprisonment in



(From top) Marvin F. Kivett (left) and E. Mott Davis film an episode of the "Great Plains Trilogy" over KUON-TV. . . . John G. Neihardt, poet laureate of Nebraska, narrates a "Land of Their Own" segment. . . . James C. Olson films an episode of the "Great Plains Trilogy."



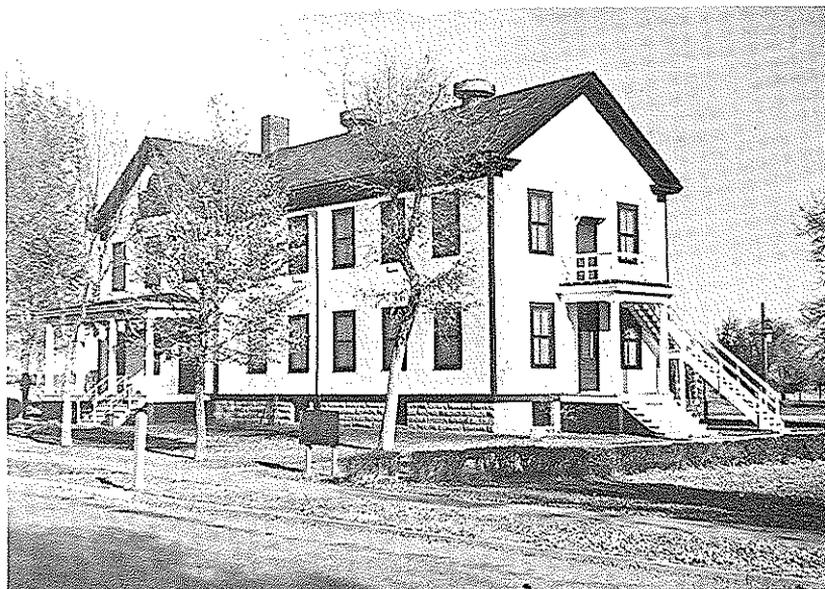
(From top) A school group tours the Indian gallery guided by Lincoln Junior League volunteer Carolyn Romjue. . . . Junior Leaguer prepares for a puppet presentation in the Society's auditorium. . . . Peter LeClair, historian of the Ponca tribe, dances for a group of Scouts during an auditorium program.

1879, which resulted in the deaths of many soldiers and Indians. After the battle of Wounded Knee in 1890 near Pine Ridge, South Dakota, garrison life was relatively peaceful. In later years the fort served as a remount depot and in World War II as a dog training center and POW camp.

After World War II Fort Robinson was declared surplus by the War Department and turned over to the US Department of Agriculture. In the early 1950s the state of Nebraska investigated possible uses of the area for recreation. At the request of Society President James E. Lawrence, a member of the Governor's Committee on Fort Robinson, Olson and Kivett visited the area in April, 1953, to consider means of interpreting the significant history of the fort area. In 1955 agreements were reached for the state to share Fort Robinson with the Bureau of Animal Industry of the US Department of Agriculture, and to set up a recreational park plan and a "western branch" of the Historical Society to preserve and interpret the Fort's history. The land was leased until 1963, when buildings and grounds totaling 74 acres were transferred outright to the state. In 1974 the entire reservation became the property of the state.

In 1955 the Society Board agreed to lease certain buildings at the Fort in order to develop a Museum, provided that the Legislature appropriated sufficient funds for that purpose and that such a Museum did not hamper the Society's other activities. Funds were provided and a Museum, developed in the post headquarters building, opened in 1956 under Roger T. Grange. Since then the number of buildings entrusted to the Society has increased to eleven. Scattered about the area, they were selected for their historical importance or for their potential for restoration or interpretation.

Starting in the early 1960s the Historical Society Board became concerned that authenticity be a primary factor in developing parks that were chiefly historical in nature. Attempts in the state Legislature to define the roles of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Society in developing Fort Robinson and other historical areas resulted in preliminary "memorandums of understanding" between state agencies. Finally, in 1975 Merrill J. Mattes, former National Parks Service administrator, produced his *Historical Resources Management Plan* to guide such development. In 1976 another memorandum, based on Mattes' recommendations, was signed by heads of the



The Society's first Branch Museum was opened in 1956 in the Post Headquarters at Fort Robinson, Dawes County. . . . (Below) The Centennial Car toured the state in 1954 during the anniversary of Nebraska Territory.



Commission and the Society. The new agreement recognizes the Society's primary role in providing research and technical assistance for restoration of historical structures and in developing exhibits at State Historical Parks. Examples of this spirit of cooperation are already evident. The Society is currently designing exhibits for the interpretive center at Ash Hollow State Historical Park. The *Captain Meriwether Lewis*, owned by the Society, is being placed in dry-dock in the Brownville State Recreation Area, administered by the Commission. Plans call for the boat to house a Museum of Missouri River history.

World War II had interrupted archeological field work. By the late 1940s, however, research in Plains archeology resumed largely as salvage archeology, a form which continues to predominate.⁶⁶ After hostilities ceased, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation began constructing dams for flood control and electric power in the Missouri River basin. Because hundreds of archeological sites would be destroyed by construction activities and by rising waters behind the dams, the Missouri River Basin Survey was hastily formed as a branch of the Smithsonian Institution with funding from the National Park Service to save as much archeological material as possible. The survey began in 1946, directed first by Waldo Wedel and later by Paul Cooper. Because the problem was too massive for the River Basin Survey to handle alone, the Park Service provided grants to local agencies with archeological experience to assist the survey. This flurry of activity was the beginning of two decades of frantic salvage work which made the term "river basin archeology" a byword in the profession. During this time the prime consideration was data retrieval from threatened areas. Solving specific problems and excavating sites outside the proposed reservoirs were deferred until later.

In the beginning the River Basin Survey was woefully under-funded, and in 1947 and again in 1948, the Society authorized the expenditure of \$1,000 to carry out surveying in conjunction with the RBS. In 1949 the Society entered into the first of several cooperative agreements with the National Park Service to salvage sites in Nebraska and South Dakota (prehistoric cultures did not recognize state boundaries). In the mid-fifties the Society withdrew from these agreements as the RBS staff increased, thus becoming able to cope more adequately with the reservoir salvage.

In September, 1949, Marvin F. Kivett assumed the position of Museum Director upon the retirement of Hill. A trained archeologist with field experience under Hill and Wedel, Kivett's interest grew from his boyhood hobby of collecting archeological artifacts near his home in Cass County, Nebraska. In 1935 he had volunteered to assist in the Society's excavation of sites in eastern Nebraska under Hill's direction. The following year he received \$30 per month for digging and cooking for the crew. While continuing his education at the University of Nebraska, he worked under Wedel in the summers on excavations in Kansas by the United States National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. Occasionally he directed WPA crews for the Society in the fall. After serving in the armed forces and with the River Basin Survey, Kivett had come to the Society as Assistant Museum Director. Although much of his time was devoted to the Museum, he actively participated in the archeological program. He was in charge of several reservoir salvage projects in cooperation with the National Park Service, as well as excavations sponsored solely by the Society.

The Missouri River Basin Survey discontinued its formal operations in 1968, but the reservoir salvage program had revealed the need for salvage of archeological and historical resources in other areas. The rapid expansion of urban areas, new road construction, and land leveling for irrigation were some of the kinds of projects destroying these resources at an ever accelerating rate. In 1956 the pressure of urban development made further delay on work at the site of Fort Atkinson, near present-day Fort Calhoun, seem unwise. That summer Kivett supervised the partial excavation of that military post. This work marks the beginning of major research in historical archeology of white origin by the Society. The historic period, beginning in the 16th century in Nebraska, is usually defined by the presence of Euro-American artifacts at archeological sites of native American origin. However, significant written records, another indicator of the historic period, are not available until about 1700 A.D. for sites in the state. From 1956 to the present, nearly one-half of the Society's archeological projects have dealt with historic sites such as the trading posts of Jean Pierre Cabanne and of Lucien Fontenelle, and structures at Fort Robinson.

Also in 1956 Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act, which allowed federal funds to be used in highway salvage.



Society crews dug at the site of the Fontenelle Trading Post south of Omaha in Sarpy County, 1972. At left is Preservation Archeologist Richard Jensen. . . . (Below) The Society excavated the Washington County site of Fort Atkinson, exposing a brick basement on the east line, 1956.





Archeological salvage work in 1950 resulting from construction work from the Trenton Dam included (from right) Board Member Arthur Carmody, Harold Williams family, Harry Meyers (facing camera), Mrs. Marvin F. Kivett with Ron Kivett, and Mrs. Arthur Carmody. . . . (Below) Roger T. Grange, (left) Assistant Museum Director, and Richard D. Rowen, Curator of History, in Archeology Lab.



Thereafter, the focus of salvage archeology shifted from river basin to highway salvage. This law presented certain problems. That is, state statutes were required to authorize the expenditure of funds and Nebraska had none; the state highway department could approve or disapprove the expenditure of salvage money; and, finally, the law was interpreted as applying only to known sites with no provision for surveys to locate unrecorded sites.

The Society took the first steps to organize a highway salvage program in 1957. Numerous meetings were held with the state roads department but no formal policies were defined. During 1958 and 1959 the Society attempted to conduct its own highway salvage program but was hampered by lack of funds. Kivett continued to work for the removal of barriers in the Federal Aid Highway Act. In 1959 the necessary state legislation was passed, with the approval of State Engineer Roy Cochran. A memorandum from the Federal Highway Administration broadened interpretation of the federal act to include surveys and added a provision for the employment of a full time salvage archeologist in each state. With these legal difficulties resolved there remained only the formulation of an agreement between the Society and the State Department of Roads for a Highway Archeological and Historical Salvage Program. Agreement was reached in 1960 by which the new program would be, in effect, a division of the Society while maintaining a very close liaison with the Department of Roads. The first Highway Salvage Archeologist was hired the following January, making Nebraska one of the first states to organize and implement such a program. Meanwhile, a separate agreement between the Department of Roads and the university provided for paleontological salvage.

The conclusion of this period of the Society's development was signalled by the departure of Director William D. Aeschbacher in 1963. Aeschbacher, like Olson before him, was an historian, a student of James L. Sellers with a PhD from the University of Nebraska. A professor at Murray State College in Kentucky before he came to the Society, Aeschbacher had replaced Olson who resigned in 1956 to become head of the department of history and later dean of the graduate college at the university. Olson continued his association with the Society as a member of the Board, serving as President in 1968.

Aeschbacher left to become Director of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, part of the presidential



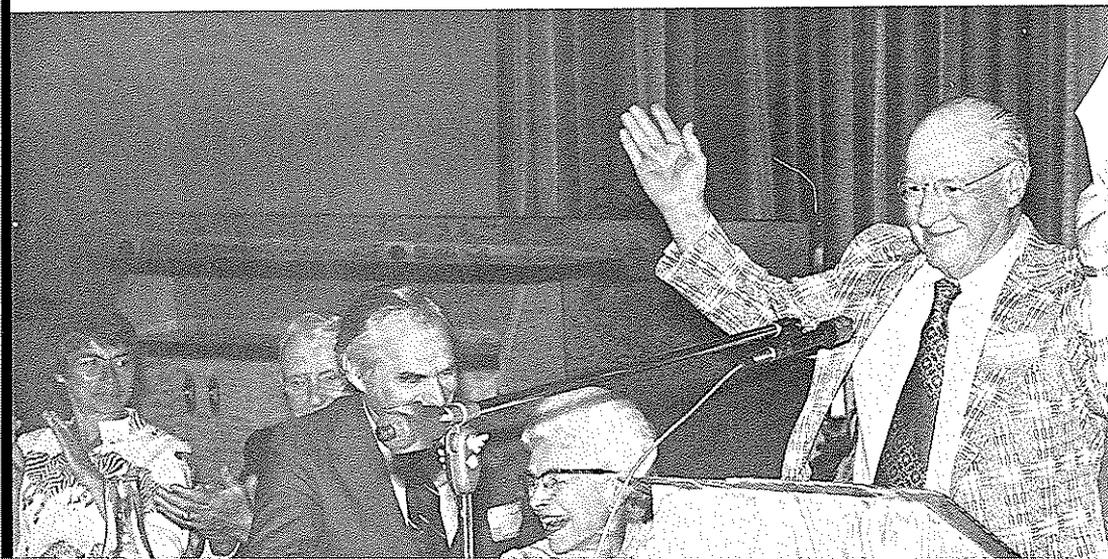
Fort Atkinson was commemorated by one of the first uniform markers erected by the Historical Land Mark Council. Present at the dedication were (from left) Dr. Edwin Jipp, Society Director William D. Aeschbacher, and J. R. Johnson.

library system of the National Archives. When Aeschbacher went he took with him the office of secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, thus ending an arrangement whereby the Society had housed the business office of that organization since its founding in 1907. The Society continues to maintain the archives of the association, which changed its name to the Organization of American Historians in 1965.

The departure of Aeschbacher represented the end of an era in the Society's history in ways other than might normally be expected from a change of administrations. By 1963 the Society had exhausted the potential for expansion afforded by completion of the headquarters building. During the next phase the Society continued to grow, quite dramatically in some respects, but such growth occurred in spite of rather than because of adequate facilities in which to function.



Dr. Everett Dick, Union College (left), receives James L. Sellers Award, given yearly for best Nebraska History article, from President Charles W. Martin at 1969 Annual Meeting. Other awards given by the Society: Addison Sheldon Award (est. 1973) to individuals or institutions contributing to preservation and interpretation of Nebraska history, and Asa T. Hill Award (est. 1974) to persons for distinguished work in Plains archeology. . . (Below) At 1975 Spring Meeting, Lexington, are (from right): Treasurer Arthur Carmody, President Nellie Snyder Yost, Board Member James A. Rawley, Paul Henderson, and Mrs. Rawley.



CHAPTER VI

THE RECENT YEARS, 1963-1978

The final period of the Society's first hundred years began in 1963 with the appointment of Museum Director Marvin F. Kivett to his present position as Director of the Society. These years have been marked by the phenomenal growth of three programs: the State Archives, branch museums and historic sites, and the State Office of Historic Preservation. This growth, together with the relatively more modest expansion of other programs, has made the problem of inadequate facilities again a critical one. The Society has been forced to rely on rented space outside of its main building for storage of collections. Acquisition of new material, especially large items, has been somewhat curtailed. Some educational services have been reduced since the auditorium had to be converted into offices.

Yet another feature of these years has been the revival of the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation. Established in the early 1940s under the leadership of Society President James E. Lawrence, the Foundation had been intended to raise money for a new building. Because the facility was constructed and furnished largely with state funds, the Foundation languished. Regular meetings of the Foundation Board had resumed in the late 1950s, and Kivett determined to reactivate the organization. The Foundation received its first significant donation in 1966 when it accepted a house and a monetary bequest from the estate of Constance M. Syford. The following year witnessed a 31 percent increase in the Foundation's assets with legacies from Rosanna Carson and Helen Nance Anderson.

In 1968 the articles of incorporation were amended to increase the number of Trustees, and the purposes of the Foundation were re-stated as follows: "to solicit and accept gifts or real or personal property . . . for the use and benefit of the Nebraska State Historical Society . . . to own, buy sell . . . property of historical interest . . . to work for the endowment, continuance, development, and extension of the work of the Nebraska State Historical Society."



Architect Larry Enersen displays plans of the John G. Neihardt Center, Bancroft, to Members (standing from left) M. S. Hevelone, Otto Kotouc, Jr.; (seated) Director Marvin F. Kivett and (partially obscured) President Nellie Snyder Yost. . . (Below) John G. Neihardt Center in Bancroft features Sioux Prayer Garden near entrance.



Assets of the Foundation have increased to over one quarter of a million dollars by the acquisition of real estate such as the Taylor-Shewell-Gilligan house in Nebraska City and of capital stock in the Pioneer Village Exhibits Corporation in Minden, Nebraska, as well as other donations. The foundation has become the major financial support for the Society's publications program and has helped fund the restoration of historical structures such as the Kennard House/Nebraska Statehood Memorial, the Ferguson House and the *Captain Meriwether Lewis*. In 1976 it began raising funds for the proposed Historical Heritage Center to house the Society's Lincoln Museum.

One of the main reasons for the need of additional space has been the establishment of a sound archival program for the state.⁶⁷ The Legislature of 1905 had designated the Historical Society as the official custodian of historical records and required notification of the Society whenever government agencies had custody of material over twenty years old and no longer in active use. However, the permissive nature of this legislation and the absence of any administrative machinery to implement it rendered it of limited value.

One of Kivett's first acts as Director was to recommend to the Board the creation of the State Archives as a separate department of the Society with responsibility for public records, private manuscript collections, Nebraska newspapers, and the Society's microfilming program—all of which had been formerly administered by the Librarian. Although the Society had hired Robert W. Richmond for the position of Archivist in 1951, he was hampered by lack of help and the demands on his time for public relations and general library reference service. Only limited attention could be given to the acquisition and arrangement of archival and manuscript collections. Inventories were few or non-existent, and the archival materials were sometimes mingled with the library holdings and recorded on the library accession record. In 1956-1957 state and county officers were contacted to remind them of the Society's responsibility for historical records, but there was little or no response. This is probably fortunate for the Archivist, who would have been overwhelmed with records had many agencies replied.

In November, 1963, Dr. Ernst Posner visited the Society while doing research for his important study of American state

archives.⁶⁸ He reported several major problems evident in the Society's archival program, among which were lack of sufficient staff; the mixing of public records and manuscript collections within the stack areas; and lack of an adequate records management program in the state. Considerable progress has been made toward a solution to these problems. A workable records management program is now a reality in Nebraska. A law of 1961 laid out the framework for a program to manage current records of the state and counties for efficiency and economy as well as to see that permanently valuable records are identified and preserved. Initially no money was appropriated for the program. In 1969 the original law was amended to provide funds for the operation of a Records Management Division of the Office of the Secretary of State. The division has developed retention-disposal schedules for most state and local records with the co-operation of the State Archives and the State Records Board. Microfilm standards have been adopted and the division provides technical services to state and local government and processes all requests for records action.

In addition to funding the records management program, the 1969 legislation contained several provisions of direct importance to the State Archives. First, the Archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society was recognized as the official state Archives of Nebraska, even though the Society had performed that role since 1905. Second, the State Archivist and the Director of the Society were made members of the State Records Board, and the Archivist was given authority to designate public records as having permanent historical value. Finally, the legislation provided that the State Archivist could petition the Records Board for the transfer of public records into the archives whenever he determines them to be in danger of destruction or deterioration. Additional amendments to the Records Management Act in 1973 brought other permanently valuable records under the jurisdiction of the State Archivist and allowed for their transfer into the Archives. These records include county and municipal board minutes and certain records of the Legislature. In addition, a statutory penalty for the willful destruction or negligent abuse of public records promises to contribute to the effectiveness of the Records Management Program.

The 1969 legislation established a firm legal basis for the acquisition and preservation of public records. Since then

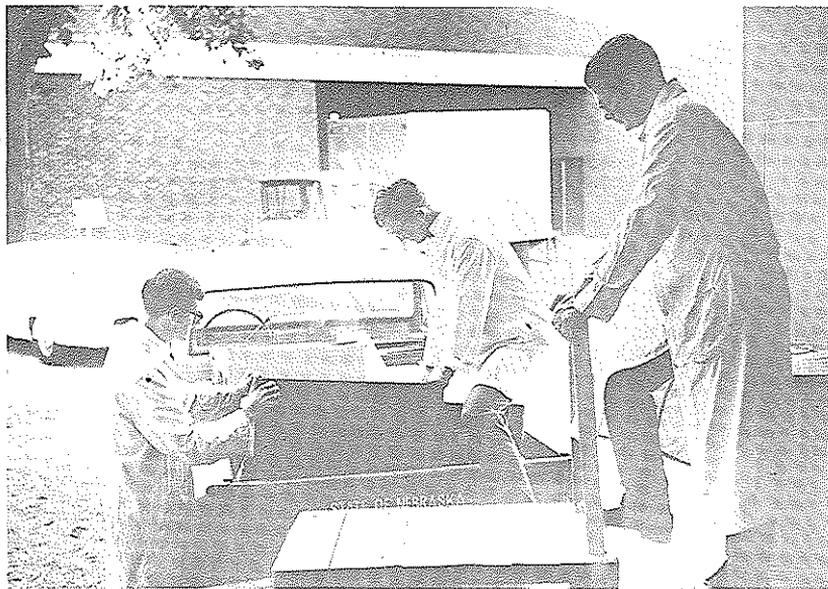
considerable progress has been made in the inventory of the various records within the state-house vaults, and many have been transferred to the archives. A large volume of accessions was made in 1977 when several agencies moved into the new State Office Building. Records of the major constitutional Offices of the Governor, the Secretary of State, the Legislature, and the State Railway Commission are well represented. Most of the early records of agencies such as the Office of the Adjutant General, the Board of Educational Lands and Funds, and the Department of Insurance are now available in the State Archives. Fortunately, most of the 20th century governors have chosen to deposit their official files with the Society, although it has not been determined whether they are legally obligated to do so under the provision of the Records Management Act. The records of the territorial and early state governors are quite limited. In most cases they simply took their files with them when they left office. Some may have been lost in the moves from one capitol building to another.

County and municipal records are a significant problem. The Archives has accessioned some records of permanent value from nearly two-thirds of Nebraska's ninety-three counties, but fewer than one-third of these counties are represented by a substantial volume of material. Municipal records remain virtually an unknown quantity, and recent efforts to acquire these materials have been limited primarily to rescue operations. Many counties and a few municipalities have begun microfilm programs because this form is now accepted as a legal document and it offers security for the original record. Many local subdivisions, however, probably will not have the financial resources to microfilm their records in the foreseeable future, and at the present time neither the Archives nor the Records Management Division is able to undertake extensive filming of county and municipal records. Beginning in 1970 the Archives offered security storage for negative microfilm of records filmed by counties and of state records filmed by the Records Management Division. Also in recent years the Archives has offered to film at no cost to the county or municipality certain records, especially board minutes, election returns, and school censuses, which are of special interest to historians and genealogists. Both of these services have become increasingly popular as more and more local governmental units begin to film their records.

When the Archives was made a separate department within the Society, it was given responsibility for the extensive collection of Nebraska newspapers which date from 1854 as well as for the Society's microfilming program. The latter program was instituted in 1952 as a means of preserving the valuable information contained on deteriorating newsprint and of reducing the storage space needed for bulky newspapers. To date approximately 18,000 rolls of newspapers have been produced on microfilm. Because the backfile of papers collected since 1893 has been reduced, filming of newspapers is now devoted primarily to recent issues of contemporary papers and missing issues of older papers, discovered and loaned or donated for filming. Information recently compiled by the National Newspaper Project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and directed by the Organization of American Historians, has revealed that through the Society's efforts Nebraska has one of the most comprehensive and successful programs of any state in the nation for preserving its newspapers.

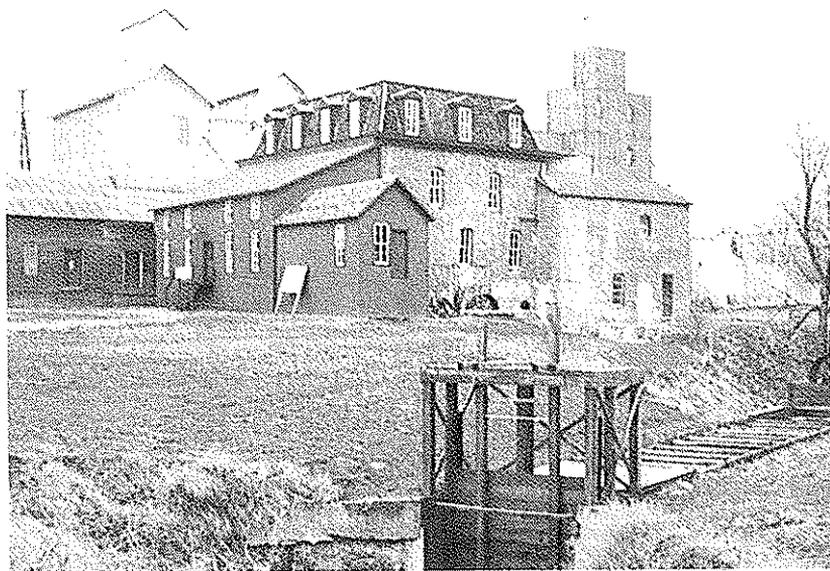
As the volume of newspapers to be filmed was reduced, the Archives has been able to give more emphasis to filming selected public records and manuscript collections. In 1966-1967 several important manuscript collections were microfilmed through a grant from the National Historical Publications Commission. These included the records of the Nebraska Farmers' Alliance, the papers of J. Sterling Morton and of Robert W. Furnas, and of other individuals. During the last few years such material as the plat and tract books and the field notebooks of the federal land survey of Nebraska, burial records of the Nebraska Grand Army of the Republic, the Ricker interviews regarding Indian wars of the last century, county atlases and plat books, and city directories have been placed on film. Private individuals and organizations who wish to retain valuable materials in their possession have allowed the Society to borrow them for filming. In this way, the Archives is building a significant collection of church records, for example.

The Archives was also given charge of the Society's collection of manuscripts, that is, the papers of private persons and organizations. The Society had for many years made attempts to collect such material. Most notable, perhaps, were its efforts to document the experiences of Nebraskans in the two world wars. However, many valuable sources have been lost for lack of staff

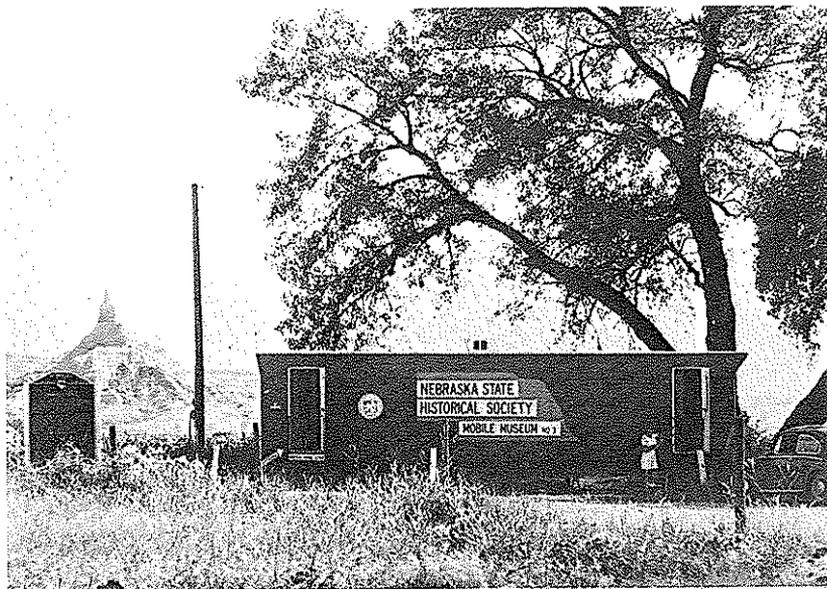


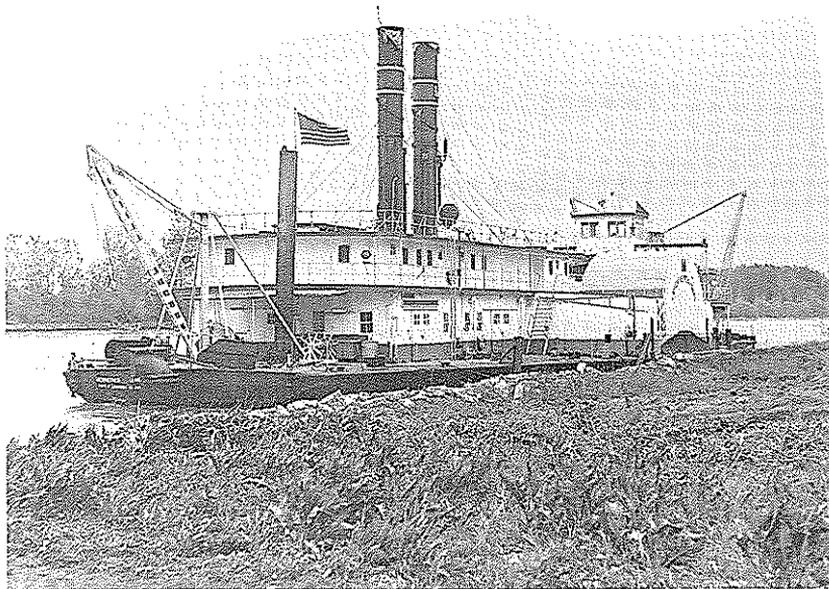
Records are unloaded by State Archivist James E. Potter (left) and archival aides. . . (Below) Assistant State Archivist Donald D. Snoddy (left) and John Mills box records at Clay County Courthouses.





Neligh Mills, restored to its early 20th century appearance, was opened to the public in 1973. . . . (Below) A Mobile Museum and historical marker interpret Chimney Rock, an Oregon Trail landmark administered by the Society.





The Captain Meriwether Lewis, a side-wheel steamer used on the Missouri River and now drydocked at Brownville, is being restored for use as a museum of Missouri River history. . . . (Below) This Arrow Sport was manufactured by the Arrow Aircraft Company in Havelock (now part of Lincoln) in 1929. Purchased by the Society Foundation in 1977, it is displayed at the Lincoln Airport.



to discover and to solicit such material and for lack of adequate storage for collections. Until recent decades the bulk of the manuscript collections has generally been diaries and reminiscences of pioneer settlers and the letters of political and military men, and, to a lesser extent, papers of persons whose interests and activities reveal information about Plains Indian history. Elected representatives, such as US senators and congressmen and state legislators, have not been ignored. Lately, however, the search for manuscripts has broadened to include the papers of women and the records of businesses, churches, and social, literary, and fraternal organizations. These efforts have resulted in the deposit of several important collections relating to the grain industry and trade, such as the William F. Ferguson Collection; to livestock trading, the archives of the Union Stockyards Company of Omaha; to ranching, the papers of the Milldale Ranch; to railroading, the Union Pacific papers; and to other commercial and agricultural activities in the state.⁶⁹

Guides to the archival and manuscript collections have been issued periodically since 1965. Early guides included both public records and private manuscripts. In 1974 a comprehensive *Guide to the Manuscript Division* was issued and a separate guide to the state and local records is planned. The 1969 *Guide to the Newspaper Collection* was replaced with a revised version in 1977.

In that year also two new programs were instituted which will expand the services offered by the Society to the state and promise to improve the means by which the Archives can fulfill its legal and cultural responsibilities for preserving documentary sources of Nebraska history. At the Society's request the governor appointed the first Nebraska Historical Records Advisory Board. This group consists of the Director of the Society, the State Archivist, and other persons broadly representative of organizations throughout the state with an interest in preserving historical records. The board reviews applications for federal grants to assist in the identification and preservation of records through the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. This program may produce benefits in addition to those offered by the grants which are funded. While answering inquiries about the program and reviewing applications, the State Archivist can encourage

persons throughout the state to seek out and preserve manuscripts.

Also in 1977 the Society's Board approved an agreement with the Board of Trustees of State Colleges to establish branch repositories at the state colleges. To date agreements for such repositories, called Centers for Archives and History, have been made with Chadron State College and with Kearney State College. When this system is operating, students and faculty at the colleges will have greater access to archival resources and an opportunity to receive some introduction to archival methods. The general public will also have easy access to historical materials. The Society can make its resources more widely available and can coordinate the gathering of source materials which might otherwise be lost.

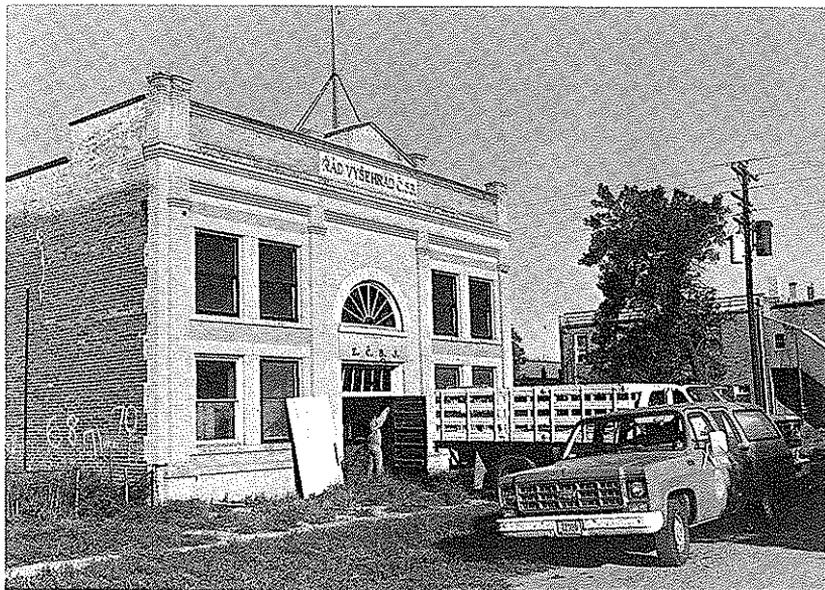
A second area to expand dramatically during Kivett's term as Director was the acquisition and administration of historic properties. Besides the main headquarters building the number of sites owned by the Society has increased from three in 1963 to fourteen in 1978; these are now operated as museums or are awaiting restoration and staffing to be opened as museums or interpretive centers (See Appendix B). In addition, the Society maintains interpretive centers in four "mobile museums," trailers which are placed in rest areas along Interstate 80 or on other important highways during the summer tourist season. Because of the expansion of this program, the Branch Museum division within the Museum was created for administering sites outside of Lincoln.

Formerly, Society officers and Board members had been somewhat reluctant to acquire historical properties primarily because they feared that the expense might threaten the operation of other programs. This particular problem has been somewhat overcome by the policy that each site will be operated as a separate item in the Society budget. If sufficient funds are not appropriated for the restoration or operation of a particular property, then that venture will be curtailed, and funds will not be diverted from other programs. That expansion occurred at this time was due to several factors. Partly responsible may have been a certain competition with the Game and Parks Commission, which began in the early 1960s to acquire new properties qualifying as Historical Parks. Another cause was the conviction that the Society was neglecting an opportunity to

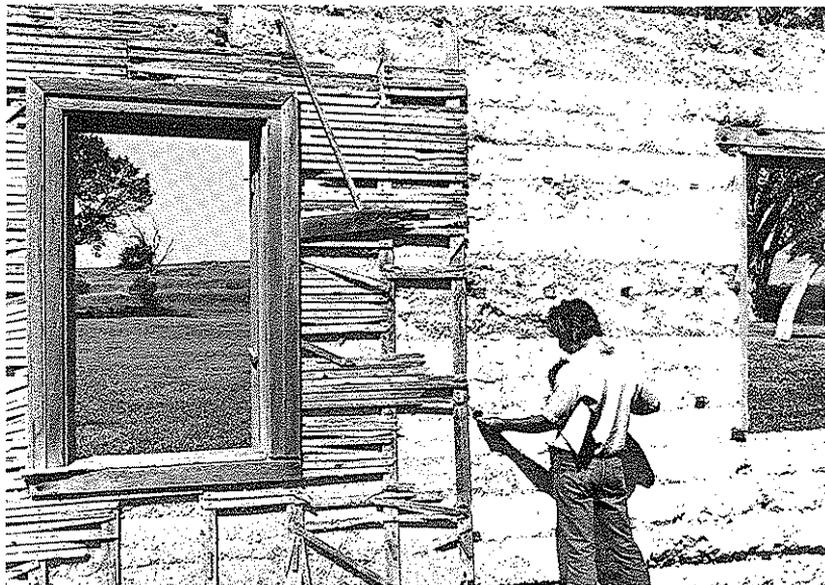
bring history more immediately to the attention of Nebraskans. Many aspects of the state's history could best be preserved and interpreted on the sites and in the structures in which they took place. In addition, a growing national interest in the preservation of historic buildings resulted in federal funds being made available for this purpose. The Society Director was designated as the State Historic Preservation Officer to administer preservation grants. Federal funding has facilitated the development of certain of the sites, as has the expertise of persons hired to staff the Historic Preservation office.

In one sense the Branch Museum program is simply the continuation of the Society's concern for historic sites in another guise. In some cases placing a marker at an historic site is not sufficient. Some sites, either because of their significance, a threat to their integrity, or their availability, seem appropriate to be acquired and developed for public education and enjoyment. Currently the Society is entrusted with a variety of sites in many different stages of development.⁷⁰ They span the historic period in Nebraska; there are, however, no sites primarily of Indian history. The time ranges from the overland trails days, represented by Chimney Rock and Court House and Jail Rocks, to modern days, denoted by the *Captain Meriwether Lewis*, a Missouri River dredge boat. There are museums representing Nebraska politicians (the homes of William Jennings Bryan and of George W. Norris) and authors (John G. Neihardt and Willa Cather). There are notable examples of domestic architecture such as the Kennard House (known as the Nebraska Statehood Memorial), the Ferguson House, and the Syford House, all in Lincoln, and the Taylor-Shewell-Gilligan House in Nebraska City. Some sites, such as Fort Robinson and Mud Springs, recall the troubled history of the Plains Indians during the last century. Neligh Mills represents aspects of the development of agriculture and water power.

The properties are scattered throughout the state from the *Captain Meriwether Lewis* on the Missouri River at Brownville in the southeastern corner of the state to Fort Robinson in the northwestern corner of the panhandle; from the Norris Home at McCook in the southwest to Neligh Mills at Neligh in the north. Some sites were purchased, others were donated to the Society Foundation, and still others were acquired by the state and assigned to the Society by the Legislature. The Society has held



Supervised by Society staff, US Army Corps of Engineers workers salvaged ceiling panels from the ZCBI Hall, Niobrara, when the town was relocated in 1977 due to rising water behind the Gavins Point Dam. . . . (Below) Ken Wrightsman, summer survey assistant in the Historic Preservation office, documents the remains of grout-walled company quarters at Fort Hartsuff, Valley County.



title to some sites for many years. A small area at Mud Springs, for example, was obtained in 1939 and Chimney Rock in 1941. Still others have been acquired quite recently, the Gilligan House in 1977 and the Cather properties in 1978. Fort Robinson, opened in 1956, was the first Branch Museum to be established; development of the others has occurred since 1963.

Also administered as Branch Museums are "mobile museums" in trailers, which originated as the Nebraska Centennial Exhibits Caravan, an official project of the Nebraska Centennial Commission coordinated by the Society. From May through September of 1967, three specially constructed 35-foot house trailers travelled 4,500 miles throughout the state. Two of the units were devoted largely to Nebraska history while the third, prepared under the supervision of the Joslyn Art Museum of Omaha, contained a special exhibit of Nebraska art. So popular did this caravan prove that the following year the Society placed one trailer near Chimney Rock and a second at the rest area near Grand Island on I-80. The following year a third trailer was operated at another spot on the Interstate and in 1977 a fourth was added at Court House and Jail Rocks.

Another program whose recent development is most significant is the State Office of Historic Preservation. Like the establishment of Branch Museums, this program is another modern manifestation of the Society's enduring interest in historical sites.⁷¹ An early architectural and historical preservation effort in Nebraska was undertaken in 1934 by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), a Civil Works Administration program which photographed and made measured drawings of eleven of Nebraska's significant buildings, seven of them standing today. The local chapter of the American Institute of Architects provided district officers who conducted the work in their own areas. The Historic Sites Act of 1935 gave the Department of Interior the responsibility to develop a national policy of historic preservation and charged it to make a national inventory of especially significant sites dealing with United States history.

Richard D. Rowen, Curator of History on the Society's staff, was very interested in architecture and historic preservation. He initiated a statewide survey of historic sites in 1962, conducted by correspondence with interested parties throughout the state. Survey forms were sent to local and regional historical



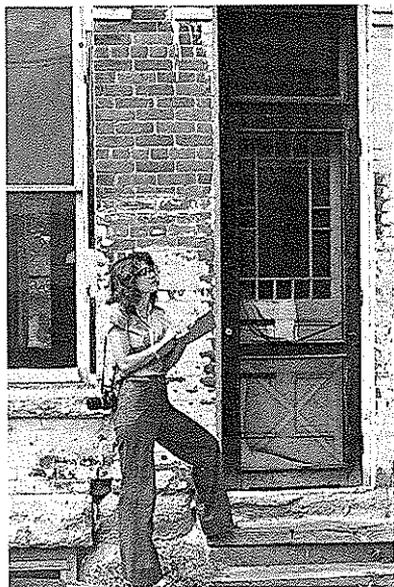
The 1887 Adobe Officers Quarters building at Fort Robinson has been restored by the Society.



Students assist in the excavation of the Cabanne Fur Trading Post, Douglas County, 1976.



The Wilber Hotel, built in 1895 in Wilber, has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.



Janet Jeffries Spencer, Preservation Historian, inspects the hotel.

organizations requesting historical information, construction notes, a sketch map showing location, and a photograph. The forms, returned to the Society to be filed, were to be used in preparing evaluations and recommendations for preservation of these buildings. By 1963 this inventory consisted of 125 sites in thirty-four counties.

More public interest developed in that year, probably due to Rowen's survey, and many local organizations, such as those in Webster County, Brownville, and Bellevue, became active. Although some of these associations were primarily concerned with providing museums for the preservation of artifacts, it was, nevertheless, through such organizations that interest was developed in the architectural heritage of individual communities as well. Also during 1963 the highway salvage archeologist, while surveying road beds in Omaha, recorded historically and architecturally significant buildings in the path of construction in addition to archeological sites to be destroyed. This project was one of the first on-site field surveys by Society staff members in which architectural sites were specifically recorded.

Preservation in Nebraska continued to emphasize collection of survey forms by museum staff until the middle 1960s, when a definite direction was defined for historic preservation by the federal government. The Historic Preservation Act of 1966 broadened the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and expanded the program nationwide for the preservation of all significant cultural properties. The Department of the Interior was authorized to maintain an inventory of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology and culture. This list is known as the National Register of Historic Places. In 1967 the Nebraska State Historical Society was designated by state law as the agency to implement the act, with the Director of the Society serving as the state liaison officer, now called the State Historic Preservation Officer. The federal law directed the state to carry out a comprehensive survey and from this inventory to nominate sites to the National Register. The Society's Board serves as the State Historic Preservation Board which approves nominations of sites to the Register. Selected National Register properties are then eligible to receive matching federal grants for restoration.

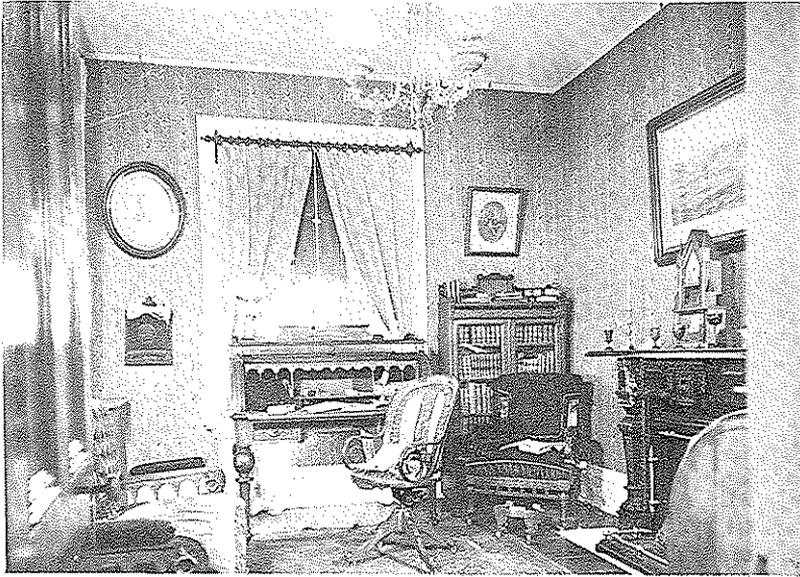
Federal funding for survey and planning was not appropriated until 1969, and so Nebraska, like other states, did not launch its National Register program until then. By December 31, 1969,

Nebraska had twelve sites approved by the National Park Service for entry in the National Register of Historic Places. During this year a grant was received from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development which allowed the Society to survey Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee and Richardson counties. This survey, conducted by the Museum staff, resulted in a report published in May, 1969.

In 1971 the preservation effort at the Society gained more strength. A survey of historical, architectural and archeological sites in eleven eastern Nebraska counties was completed and a report published on the 262 sites found. Also in this same year Nebraska's statewide preliminary plan for preservation was published as required by the National Historic Preservation Act in order for Nebraska's program to receive its allocation of federal funds for the 1971-72 fiscal year grant program. Entitled *Historic Preservation in Nebraska*, the report contained the state's inventory of significant sites, both by county and by theme, and also included a section outlining Nebraska's preservation goals. This plan has since been updated yearly. Continued emphasis on the enrollment of significant sites in the National Register during the early 1970s resulted in the entry of seventy-three Nebraska sites by the end of 1973. An appropriation of \$41,000 in 1971 enabled the first historic preservation grant-in-aid to be given to a project at Fort Robinson. Nebraska's funding allocation had doubled by 1974 and has been steadily increasing ever since. The 1977-1978 apportionment for matching grants totaled \$561,000, and fourteen preservation projects are currently receiving funds.

In 1974 and 1975 the program was greatly enlarged with the addition of an Architect, a Historian, an Archeologist, and a Grants Administrator to the staff. A comprehensive method for surveying to determine the architectural and historical resources in the state was developed. A system of photographing and mapping sites on a county-by-county basis through field work was initiated using teams of two persons each. Courthouse research and interviews with local historians also became regular procedure. Perhaps the most massive project accomplished since 1974 has been the reorganization of the preservation data files. Cataloguing methods for photographing, slides, maps, and historical materials have been developed.

Twenty-one counties have been surveyed in the last three years, and many potential National Register sites identified. The



Furnishings in the library of the Kennard House, Nebraska Statehood Memorial, include Governor David Butler's desk; bookcase and secretary from Governor James W. Dawes' family; cast-iron fireplace from the razed 1876 home of Governor Arthur J. Weaver, Falls City; and wooden cups from an 1885 collection of Governor Robert W. Furnas.

survey files now contain information on hundreds of sites. Since January 1, 1974, eighty-seven properties have been entered into the Register. In 1977 a bimonthly newsletter, *The Cornerstone: Historic Preservation in Nebraska*, was begun to publicize preservation activities.

The expansion of programs in the last twenty-five years has forced the Society once again to face a critical shortage of space. An increasing staff has occupied every available area in the present headquarters building. Growing collections, especially those of the State Archives, have compelled the Society to lease accommodations elsewhere. Such off-site storage limits access to the material by both staff and researchers, and much of the rented space does not provide environmental conditions necessary for preserving priceless records and artifacts. The number of researchers, especially genealogists who visit the Society to use the Library and the Archival collections, has increased so dramatically in recent years that there is not sufficient space in reading rooms to allow adequate reference service.

When attempts to secure land from the University of Nebraska for expansion of the present building proved fruitless, Senator Fern Hubbard Orme acted to secure an appropriation of \$20,000 for a study of space needs and of the possibility of erecting a museum building at another location in Lincoln, while remodeling the present one for the Library and the Archives. The Board decided that the block directly south of the Capitol, bounded by 15th and 16th, G and H Streets, was the most practical. If the Museum were moved to a new building on that site, public parking there would also be convenient for visitors to the Kennard House (Statehood Memorial), the Ferguson House, and the Capitol. In 1974 the Legislature set that block aside for construction by the Society of an Historical Heritage Center. In 1977, \$160,000 was appropriated for planning this building. Preliminary plans prepared by the firm of Clark Enersen Partners have recently been approved by the Board. A cautious optimism prevails that funds will be appropriated for the Center. If so, its construction would mark a fitting conclusion to this segment of the Society's history, as opportunities for improved service to the public, which a new facility promises, would certainly open a new era.

The nature of the work of the Society is such that there can never be an appropriation large enough to do it all. It must ever be a case of adjusting the work to the amount of money set apart for it. There are many lines of collection, classification, and research, any one of which might easily require the work of one or more persons. The Board and the staff officers are endeavoring to place the work which our appropriation will furnish along those lines where it seems most desirable to have it done.

These words of Assistant Secretary and Librarian Jay Amos Barrett from his annual report for 1901 could describe the Society in any period of its history. The goals and purposes of the Society as set forth in its original constitution are so ambitious that no amount of money, no number of staff seems sufficient to fulfill them adequately. While this situation has at times created great distress and frustration, it has also offered exciting challenge and opportunity. The Society's history is really the record of attempts to meet its prodigious obligations. Board members, officers, and staff have directed limited resources into programs which they deemed most effective for the preservation and dissemination of Nebraska's history. The Society's accomplishments during its first hundred years are the result of the imagination, dedication, and energy applied to this effort.

APPENDIX A

OFFICERS OF THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Presidents

Robert W. Furnas, 1878-1890, 1904-1905
 J. Sterling Morton, 1891-1903
 H. T. Clarke, 1906
 George L. Miller, 1907-1909
 John Lee Webster, 1910-1916
 Samuel C. Bassett, 1917-1918, 1920
 Don L. Love, 1919
 Robert Harvey, 1921-1922
 Hamilton B. Lowry, 1923-1924
 N. Z. Snell, 1925
 William E. Hardy, 1926
 J. F. Hanson, 1927-1928, 1930
 Ned C. Abbott, 1929, 1930
 D. S. Dalbey, 1932-1933
 E. P. Wilson, 1934-1935
 A. B. Wood, 1936-1937
 A. J. Weaver, 1938-1939
 James E. Lawrence, 1939-1955
 Arthur Carmody, 1956
 James Lee Sellers, 1957-1958
 Louis A. Holmes, 1959-1960
 Frank Latenser, 1961-1963
 Warren C. Wood, 1963-1964
 Charles C. Osborne, 1965-1967
 James C. Olson, 1968
 Charles W. Martin, 1969-1970

A. R. Owens, 1971-1972
 James A. Rawley, 1973-1974
 Nellie Snyder Yost, 1975-1976
 M. S. Hevelone, 1977-

Secretaries

Samuel Aughey, 1878-1885
 George E. Howard, 1886-1891
 Howard W. Caldwell, 1892-1906
 Clarence S. Paine, 1907-1916
 Minnie P. Knotts, 1916 (acting)
 Addison E. Sheldon, 1917-1943
 James L. Sellers, 1944-1945 (acting)
 James C. Olson, 1946-1956
 William D. Aeschbacher, 1957-1963
 Marvin F. Kivett, 1963-

Treasurers

W. W. Wilson, 1878-1884; 1886
 George E. Howard, 1885
 Charles H. Gere, 1887-1905
 Stephen L. Giesthardt, 1906-1913
 Philip L. Hall, 1914-1922
 Don L. Love, 1923-1939
 Nathan J. Gold, 1939-1953
 A. R. Owens, 1954-1970
 Arthur Carmody, 1971-

APPENDIX B

HISTORIC SITES MAINTAINED BY
THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Captain Meriwether Lewis: side-wheel dredge built in 1932; one of four such vessels used to clear the Missouri River for navigation; given to the Society in 1976 by the US Army Corps of Engineers; drydocked along the river at Brownville in 1978; presently being restored to be developed as a "Museum of Missouri River History"; open to the public during the summer, restoration work permitting.

Chimney Rock: Oregon Trail landmark near Bayard, Morrill County; given to the Society in 1941 by the estate of Roszel F. Durnal; a mobile museum located on land provided by the city of Bayard serves to interpret the site during the summer.

Court House and Jail Rocks: Oregon Trail landmarks near Bridgeport, Morrill County; given to the Society in 1976 by Alta Seybolt Herbrick; a mobile museum serves to interpret the site during the summer.

Fairview: home of William Jennings Bryan, Populist politician, built in 1902 in Lincoln; administrative responsibility accepted by the Society in 1976.

Ferguson House: mansion with carriage house built in Lincoln in 1909-1911; purchased by the state in 1961 and assigned to the Society in 1975; restoration began in 1976 and it will be opened as a center for recording and exhibition of Nebraska folk arts and crafts.

Fort Robinson: U.S. Army cavalry post active between 1874 and 1948, located near Crawford, Dawes County; administered jointly with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the University of Nebraska; land transferred to the state by the federal government; Fort Robinson Museum, located in the 1905 post Headquarters building, opened in 1956; other historic structures include reconstructions of the guardhouse (1874), the adjutant's office (1874), and adobe officers' quarters (1887); original structures remaining include the wheelwright shop (1884), the blacksmith shop (1904), and the harness repair shop (1906); currently being restored are the granary (1895) and the veterinary hospital (1909), which will be developed as a museum devoted to the horse on the Plains; nearby is the site of the Red Cloud Indian Agency.

George Norris Home: home of U.S. Senator George W. Norris in McCook; built in 1886 and remodeled in 1932; given to the Society in 1969 by Mrs. Norris.

Kennard House/Nebraska Statehood Memorial: home of Thomas P. Kennard, first Secretary of State of Nebraska; built in Lincoln in 1869; purchased by the state in 1961; designated as the Nebraska Statehood Memorial in 1965 and assigned to the Society; open to the public in 1968.

Mud Springs: site of a pony express and stage station near Dalton, Cheyenne County; active between 1857 and 1873; site of an 1865 battle between the Sioux Indians and the US Army; given to the Society in 1939 by Mrs. J. N. Scherer; interpreted by a highway historical marker.

Neihardt Center: interpretive center housing exhibits on the life of John G. Neihardt, Nebraska's Poet Laureate, in Bancroft; includes a library, Sioux Prayer Garden, and the poet's study; land and study given to the Society by the Neihardt Foundation in 1974; opened to the public in 1976.

Neligh Mills: water-powered flour mill built in Neligh in 1873; purchased by the Society from Jay Ames and Adina Vidstedt in 1969; restored to its early 20th century appearance; open to the public in 1973.

State Fair Heritage Village: structures moved to the State Fair grounds in Lincoln; includes a log cabin built in Lincoln in 1863 or 1864 by Thomas J. Hudson; cabin donated to the Society by former Lincoln mayor Dean Petersen in 1974; opened for the 1975 State Fair Heritage Village.

Willa Cather Historical Center: six historic structures in and near Red Cloud, Webster County, related to the life and writings of author Willa Cather—her childhood home (1878), the Burlington depot (1897), St. Juliana Catholic Church (1883), the Garber Bank (1889), Grace Episcopal Church (1883), and the Pavelka farmhouse (date uncertain); given to the Society by the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation in 1978.

HISTORIC SITES MAINTAINED BY THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDATION

Lewis-Syford House: built about 1878 in Lincoln; given to the Historical Society Foundation in 1966 by the estate of Constance M. Syford; plans for interpretation not yet developed.

Taylor-Shewell-Gilligan House: mansion in Nebraska City built about 1880; given to the Historical Society Foundation in 1977 by Dr. and Mrs. John P. Gilligan; plans for interpretation not yet developed.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Abbott, N.C., 1925-1947
Albert, Isaiah L., 1911-1912

Aldrich, Chester H., 1911-1912
Anderson, Victor E., 1955-1958

- Apling, E. R., 1957
 Aughey, Samuel, 1878-1885
 Avery, Samuel, 1909-1926
 Barrett, Jay Amos, 1893-1896
 Bassett, Samuel C., 1910-1924; 1926
 Bessey, C. E., 1890-1892; 1909
 Bogue, Robert, 1963
 Boucher, Chauncey S., 1938-1946
 Brainerd, Henry Allen, 1914-1916
 Brooks, Ralph G., 1959
 Brown, W. A., 1925-1926
 Bryan, Charles W., 1923-1924; 1929; 1931-1934
 Buckles, Doyle L., 1933-1934
 Beuchler, A. F., 1929; 1931-1934
 Beuchler, Walter E., 1959
 Burnett, E. A., 1927-1939
 Burney, Dwight W., 1960
 Caldwell, Howard W., 1892-1907; 1909-1922
 Carmody, Arthur, 1945-
 Cass, Lyman P., 1934-1935
 Clarke, H. T., 1880-1890; 1904-1906
 Cobbe, Joseph E., 1911-1912
 Cochran, Roy L., 1934-1939
 Colby, Mrs. Clara B., 1883-1890
 Cordeal, John F., 1916-1924; 1926
 Cox, Ralph L., 1939
 Cramer, J. Alan, 1973
 Crosby, Robert B., 1953-1954
 Crouse, Lorenzo, 1878-1891; 1893-1894
 Dalbey, Dwight S., 1927-1946
 Davidson, William M., 1911-1912
 Davis, Clarence A., 1919; 1921-1922
 Dietz, Gould, 1940-1947
 Dinsmore, J. B., 1891
 Dodge, Nathan P. Jr., 1918-1922
 Dundy, Elmer S., 1878-1886
 Eaton, Henry M., 1938-1939
 Edgecombe, John, 1971
 Edgecombe, Tyler, 1960
 Exon, J. James, 1971-
 Faulkner, Edwin J., 1972-
 Furnas, Robert W., 1878-1891; 1895-1905
 Garber, Daniel, 1945-1953
 Garber, Silas, 1878-1886
 Geisthardt, S. L., 1906-1913
 Gere, Charles H., 1887-1905
 Glassburn, L. A., 1933
 Gold, Nathan, 1939-1957
 Goss, Charles A., 1925-1937
 Green, T. L., 1945-1954
 Greenlee, W. F., Jr., 1955
 Griswold, Dwight, 1940-1946
 Gustavson, R. G., 1947-1952
 Hall, Philip L., 1914-1922
 Haller, Frank L., 1911-1914
 Hansen, George W., 1913-1917
 Hanson, James F., 1923-1928; 1930
 Hardin, Clifford M., 1955-1969
 Hardy, William E., 1917-1933
 Harpst, Don C., 1965
 Hart, J. M. Jr., 1974-
 Harvey, Robert L., 1906-1923
 Hauge, J. E., 1953-1954
 Henningsen, A. H., 1961
 Hevelone, Maurice S., 1964-
 Hicks, J. D., 1929; 1932
 Hiebda, Clarence, 1974
 Hill, A. T., 1925-1952
 Holmes, Louis A., 1954-1955
 Hosford, Willard D., Jr., 1963-1969
 Howard, George E., 1885-1891; 1906-1907
 Huse, E. W., 1945-1946
 Isaacson, J. J., 1970-1973
 Israel, Will C., 1919
 Jones, Will O., 1927
 Kelly, Ralph J., 1937
 Kennedy, R. F., 1951
 Kotouc, Otto, Jr., 1972-
 Kroh, J. S., 1923
 Kuhn, Arnold E., 1966-1967
 Lambertson, G. M., 1899-1900
 Latenser, Frank, 1951-1972
 Latenser, Nes, 1973-
 Lawrence, James E., 1938-1956
 Lee, Earl J., 1957-1963
 Leggett, E. C., 1946
 Leggett, H. D., 1927
 Leggett, Kerry E., 1968
 Letton, Charles B., 1913-1916
 Ley, Rollie, 1947-1956
 Lobingier, Charles Sumner, 1901-1905
 Lough, Jack, 1958
 Love, Don L., 1917-1938
 Lowry, Hamilton B., 1911-1924
 Ludi, Derral, 1964
 Ludi, Guy T., 1948
 Ludi, Nelson J., 1909-1910
 Magee, Wayland, 1948-1962
 Manatt, I. J., 1885-1889
 Martin, Charles W., 1961-
 Martin, Grant G., 1911-1914
 Marvin, E. M., 1947-1956
 Miller, George, 1978
 Miller, George L., 1878-1879; 1907-1909
 Monell, G. C., 1878-1879
 Montgomery, E. R., 1962
 Moorehead, John H., 1913-1916

- Morrison, Frank B., 1961-1966
 Morrissey, Andrew M., 1915-1924
 Morton, J. Sterling, 1878-1879; 1885-1903
 McKelvie, Samuel R., 1919; 1921-1922
 McMullen, Adam, 1925-1927
 McMurphy, John A., 1887-1890
 Neville, Keith, 1917-1918; 1920
 North, J. E., 1908
 Norval, T. L., 1891
 O'Furey, J. P., 1923
 Olson, James C., 1957-1968
 Osborne, Charles C., 1957-
 Osterman, Thomas, 1929; 1931
 Owens, A.R., 1945-1972
 Paine, Clarence S., 1907-1916
 Perkins, Clark, 1917-1920
 Peterson, Val, 1947-1952
 Pinkerton, Robert, 1972
 Plourd, W. H., 1936
 Pollock, Jack, 1976-1977
 Pont, Nathan B., 1940-1945
 Pound, S. B., 1891-1895
 Ramsey, William C., 1934-1937
 Rawley, James A., 1968-
 Reed, Willis E., 1915-1918; 1920
 Reese, Manoah B., 1911-1914
 Reutzel, Emil W., Jr., 1969
 Robbins, John W., 1924-1932
 Rodman, James S., 1933-1934
 Rose, Fred W., 1975
 Roskins, Ronald, 1977-
 Seacrest, J. C., 1934-1937
 Selleck, John K., 1953-1954
 Sellers, J. L., 1945-1965
 Shallenberger, Ashton C., 1909-1910
 Sheldon, Addison E., 1917-1922
 Shine, The Rev. Michael, 1918-1926
 Simmons, Robert G., 1938-1962
 Smith, W. H., 1947
 Snell, Novia Z., 1917-1926
 Snow, George C., 1921-1922
 Stocking, Moses, 1880-1881
 Summers, W. S., 1897-1898
 Sweet, J. H., 1932; 1948-1960
 Tanner, John M., 1912
 Taylor, H. G., 1913
 Thurber, S.W., 1938
 Tiemann, Norbert T., 1967-1970
 Tihen, The Rt. Rev. J. Henry, 1916-1917
 Varner, Durwood B., 1970-1976
 Vaughan, Byron B., 1956
 Von Seggern, E. M., 1939
 Vosoba, Joseph T., 1963-1971
 Wakeley, E., 1896
 Wattles, Gurdon W., 1915-1917
 Weaver, A. J., 1928; 1930; 1935-1945
 Webster, J. F., 1928; 1930
 Webster, John Lee, 1910-1916
 Weeks, Mrs. Marie, 1924
 Wheeler, D. H., 1878
 White, Paul W., 1963
 Wiggins, Horace S., 1911-1916
 Wilber, C. D., 1878-1884
 Wilhelm, Alton W., 1970
 Wilson, E. P., 1925; 1927-1945
 Wilson, W. W., 1878-1884; 1886
 Wolbach, S. N., 1973-
 Wood, A. B., 1911; 1928-1944
 Wood, Warren C., 1949-1950; 1956-
 Woods, Thomas C., Jr., 1958-1971
 Woolworth, J. M., 1880-1891
 Yost, Nellie Snyder, 1966-
 Zimmer, Fred R., 1950

NOTES

The major source for this history is the Society's own records, maintained by the State Archives division of the Society in Lincoln. Among these records is a set of official minutes of meetings of the Board and of the members known as the Secretary's Record. Before 1920 correspondence, reports, and memoranda are frequently bound with the minutes. For the later years such material, as well as other supporting papers, is to be found in the Board Files. The Director's correspondence contains letters of the Society's executive officer. The early files also include correspondence of board members and other officers.

Several of the Society's publications contain reports of its activities. The present series of *Publications* began in 1885 and has been issued irregularly since then. The first five volumes carried the title *Transactions and Reports*. After volume five a "second series" was begun and the title changed to *Proceedings and Collections*. In subsequent volumes

the series was titled *Publications* and also *Collections*. In 1917 the title of *Publications* was again used and has been continued to the present. Beginning with volume sixteen the "second series" designation was dropped and the entire series re-numbered consecutively from volume one in 1885. The first eight volumes and volumes 10, 15, and 18 contain minutes of meetings and information about Society activities.

The quarterly journal *Nebraska History*, which began in 1918, contains news notes through the early 1940s. Since 1946 the final issue of each volume has included the narrative portion of the Director's annual report. The monthly News Letter first issued in July, 1948, has a wealth of detail about activities and programs.

In order to reduce the number of references, material found in the Society's own records and publications generally will not be footnoted. References to actions of the Nebraska Legislature, unless otherwise noted, can be found in volumes of the *Legislative Journal* and *Laws of Nebraska* for the appropriate year. Likewise, decisions of the Nebraska Supreme Court can be found in *Nebraska Reports*. Citations to specific sources will be made in the following instances: (1) all direct quotations; (2) sources other than the Society's own records and publications or those of the Nebraska Legislature and the Supreme Court; and (3) Society files in which information is found where it would not normally be expected.

1. The best single account of the history, organization, and functions of historical societies in the United States is Walter Muir Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies* (Boston, 1962). Briefer and more general treatments of the same subject are David D. Van Tassel and James A. Tinsley, "Historical Organizations as Aids to History," in William B. Hesseltine and Donald R. McNeil (eds.), *In Support of Clio: Essays in Memory of Herbert A. Kellar* (Madison, Wisc., 1958), 127-152; Julian P. Boyd, "State and Local Historical Societies in the United States," *American Historical Review*, XL (1934-35), 10-37; Ralph Budd, "The Historical Society and the Community," *Minnesota History*, XX (1930), 365-376; Wilder W. Daniel, "Historical Societies in the United States," *Kansas State Historical Society Transactions*, VII (1902), 155-161; Dixon Ryan Fox, "Local Historical Societies in the United States," *Canadian Historical Review*, XIII (1932), 263-267; Evarts B. Greene, "Our Pioneer Historical Societies," *Indiana Historical Society Publications*, X (1931), 83-97; Andrew C. McLaughlin, "The Uses of an Historical Society," *North Dakota Historical Society Collections*, I (1906), 53-69; Reuben Gold Thwaites, "State and Local Historical Societies," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, IV (1906), 245-256.

Clifford L. Lord (ed.), *Ideas in Conflict: A Colloquium on Certain Problems in Historical Society Work in the United States and Canada* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1958) is a transcript of a lively gathering of historians and administrators of state and local historical societies.

Histories of state historical societies in the Midwest include: Mary Wheelhouse Berthel and Harold Dean Carter, "The Minnesota Historical Society: Highlights of a Century," *Minnesota History*, XXX (1949), 293-330; Edgar Langsdorf, "The First Hundred Years of the Kansas State Historical Society," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, XLI (1975), 265-425; Clifford L. Lord and Carl Ubbelohde, *Clio's Servant: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1967); and Floyd C. Shoemaker, *The State Historical Society of Missouri: A Semicentennial History* (Columbia, 1948).

2. *Nebraska Advertiser*, September 23, 1858.

3. Gilbert C. Monell to Robert W. Furnas, January 20, 1879, Nebraska State Historical Society, Board Files, 1882. Hereafter cited as NSHS, Board Files.

4. The story of the State Historical and Library Association and Block 29 is found primarily in the case file of the *State Historical and Library Association vs the City of Lincoln* filed in the Nebraska Supreme Court on February 24, 1882, and decided in the January term of 1883. The most important portions of this file are the Bill of Exceptions containing the transcript of testimony given in the original trial in Lancaster County District Court, briefs of the plaintiff and defendant, and a copy of the plat of the original city of Lincoln introduced as evidence. Copies of the case file are found in NSHS, Board

Files, 1882. See also "Report of Commissioners to Locate the Seat of Government of the State of Nebraska," *Nebraska Senate Journal*, 1869, 303.

Summary accounts of the Association's activities can be found in NSHS, *Transactions and Reports*, I (1885), 18-19; Addison E. Sheldon, "Lincoln Must Put It Back," *Lincoln Nebraska State Journal*, July 14, 1907, and "History of Market Square," *Ibid.*, July 21, 1907; and in an unpublished manuscript by former Society employee Bradley Baltensperger, "State Historical Organization Interest in Nebraska to 1879."

5. Articles of Incorporation of the State Historical and Library Association, September 26, 1867, found in the Supreme Court case file cited above.

6. NSHS, *Transactions and Reports*, I, 14.

7. *Nebraska City News*, August 31, 1878.

8. NSHS, *Transactions and Reports*, I, 14-16.

9. NSHS, *Constitution and By-Laws with List of Members* (Lincoln, 1879).

10. Sources for the entire historical block question are cited above in note 4. In addition see Appearance Docket, I, 246, and Complete Record, R, 153, Records of Lancaster County District Court, NSHS.

11. NSHS, *Transactions and Reports*, I, 18.

12. B. N. Sandhurst to Samuel Aughey, May 8, 1880, NSHS, Director's Correspondence.

13. NSHS, *Transactions and Reports*, I, 17. The appointment of a committee to consider merging with the State Historical and Library Association and discussion about joining that Association in its legal action seem to indicate that the founders of the NSHS considered the Society to be a new entity and not a reorganization of or a successor to the Association. During the period 1905-1908 when the Society renewed the historical block question in order to obtain land for a building, officials, especially Addison E. Sheldon, frequently recounted the circumstances of the Society's founding in 1878. No claim was made that the present Society was a direct successor to the earlier one. During the years 1908-1912, some brief references to the Society's founding give the date of 1878 and others give 1867. The earliest detailed account which attributes the Society's founding to a reorganization of the State Historical and Library Association is found in a circular letter of September 25, 1934, by Superintendent Sheldon. Used to solicit memberships in the Society among residents of Lincoln, the letter proclaims the Society as "the oldest state institution in Lincoln . . . founded August 26, 1867." Sheldon made the same assertion in his annual reports of 1937 and 1941. Similar statements about the Society's origins have appeared subsequently.

14. *Lincoln Nebraska State Journal*, December 21, 1879.

15. *Nebraska Reports*, XIV, 337-340. The court proceedings revealed that the city was not using the square only for market purposes as required in the 1875 law but had also built a schoolhouse on the site. Accordingly, C. C. Burr, who had initiated the previous legislation, introduced an amendment to allow the city to use the block for any public purpose.

16. *Laws of Nebraska*, 1883, 340-341.

17. Furnas to Aughey, October 13, 1878, and November 9, 1879, Silas Garber Papers, NSHS.

18. NSHS, *Transactions and Reports*, II, 358.

19. The term "gentlemen's club" is almost literally correct. It is likely that women attended the meetings, especially the wives of members, but there is little evidence of their taking any important role in Society affairs during the 19th century. The one exception was Clara B. Colby of Beatrice, the national women's suffrage leader. She served as corresponding secretary, 1883-1886, and as a member of the Board, 1887-1890. Occasionally a woman such as Mrs. Stephen B. Pound, wife of the judge, served on a committee. After 1900 women's names appear more frequently on membership lists.

20. Jay Amos Barrett to Mari Sandoz, January 9, 1936, Mari Sandoz Collection, Love Library, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

21. This statement is an example of one of the many ways in which the western

historical societies modeled themselves after their counterparts in neighboring states. It is almost identical to one appearing in the *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, I (1872).

22. Barrett to J. Sterling Morton, [February, 1896]; Morton to Barrett, February 14, 1896, NSHS, Director's Correspondence.

23. For a general treatment of the changes at the University see Howard W. Caldwell, *Education in Nebraska*, US Bureau of Education Circular of Information No. 3 and No. 32 in *Contributions to American Educational History*, edited by Herbert Baxter Adams (Washington, DC, 1902), 70-113. See also Boyd C. Shafer, et al., *Historical Study in the West* (New York, 1968), and Michael Kraus, *The Writing of American History* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1953). For an account of the nature of recent graduate training in history see Walter Rundell, Jr., *In Pursuit of American History: Research and Training in the United States* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1970).

24. NSHS, *Transactions and Reports*, II, 358.

25. Report of the Director of the Legislative Reference Department, January 4, 1909, NSHS, Secretary's Record.

26. Victor H. Paltsits, "An Historical Resume of the Public Archives Commission from 1899 to 1921," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1922*, I (Washington, DC, 1926), 152-163; G. Philip Bauer, "Public Archives in the United States," in Hesselstine and McNeil, *In Support of Clío*, 49-76; Addison E. Sheldon, "Report on the Archives of the State of Nebraska," *AHA Annual Report for 1910*, 365-420; Lord and Ubbelohde, *Clío's Servant*, 151-154.

27. NSHS, Secretary's Record, 1908.

28. For the discussion of the archeological program at the Society in this and succeeding chapters, I am indebted to Richard E. Jensen, Curator of Anthropology, Nebraska State Historical Society.

29. "Report of the Archeologist for 1902," in Nebraska State Board of Agriculture, *Annual Report for 1902* (Lincoln, 1903), 303.

30. A Summary of the Work of the Nebraska State Historical Society for 1906, NSHS, Board Files, 1906.

31. For the development of museums in general and of anthropology in museums see H. H. Frese, *Anthropology and the Public: The Role of Museums* (Leiden, Netherlands, 1960); Valerie W. Nammour, "Problems of Museums in Anthropological Research," MA thesis, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (1967); S. Dillon Ripley, *The Sacred Grove: Essays on Museums* (New York, 1969); Alma S. Wittlin, *The Museum, Its History and Its Tasks in Education* (London, 1949); Donald Collier and Harry Tschopik, Jr., "The Role of Museums in American Anthropology," *American Anthropologist*, LVI (1954), 768-769; Herbert and Marjorie Katz, *Museums USA: A History and Guide* (New York, 1963); and Alvin Schwartz, *Museum: The Story of America's Treasure Houses* (New York, 1967). A special issue of *Museums*, XXIX (1977), 57-180, surveys the current status of historical museums throughout the world with photo-essays on twenty-five institutions.

For archeological research in Nebraska see George C. Frison, "The Plains," in James E. Fitting, *The Development of North American Archeology* (New York, 1973), 151-179; Waldo R. Wedel, *Prehistoric Man on the Great Plains* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1961), 79-129, 278-311; and William D. Strong, *An Introduction to Nebraska Archeology*, XCIII, No. 10 in *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections* (Washington DC, 1935).

32. Blackman's account of the controversy among the Society staff can be found in a reminiscence, hand-written in 1934, and a copy of his statement to the Board upon his departure in the spring of 1910. Both of these documents are in the E. E. Blackman Collection at NSHS. Also useful are Blackman's letters to Warren Upham, an archeologist, who headed the Minnesota Historical Society. Correspondence exchanged from April through August 1909 is found in the Archives of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota. Copies of these papers were furnished by Lydia Lucas of MHS.

33. NSHS, Secretary's Record, December 31, 1913.

34. Van Tassel and Tinsley, "Historical Organizations as Aids to History," 136-139; James L. Sellers, "Before We Were Members—The MVHA," *Mississippi Valley*

Historical Review, XL (1953), 3-24; James L. Sellers, "The Semicentennial of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association," *Ibid.*, XLIV (1957), 494-518; Ray A. Billington, "From Association to Organization: The OAH in the Bad Old Days," *Journal of American History*, LXV (1978), 75-84; and Thomas D. Clark, "Our Roots Flourished in the Valley," *Ibid.*, 85-107.

35. Hints of and comments upon various aspects of the complicated controversy appear throughout the minutes, reports and correspondence which are the Society's official records. There are, however, a few summary statements by the participants. Blackman's reminiscence and correspondence is cited above. An undated account by Paine of Sheldon's employment by the Society and of the status of the Legislative Reference Bureau appears in the Board files for 1906, although it was probably written in the summer of 1907. Three typescripts can be found in the miscellany of the Clarence S. Paine Collection at NSHS. One was written by Sheldon in 1938. Another entitled "The Trouble in the Nebraska State Historical Society" was probably written by Sheldon in 1913 or 1914. The third, "Nebraska State Historical Society Situation," was probably written in 1907 or 1908. Because of the style it cannot be definitely attributed to Sheldon, but the position it expounds is certainly his. The three statements refer primarily to problems relating to the Morton-Watkins *History*, but other issues are mentioned. A statement by Watkins written in 1920 concerning the 1913 investigation of his alleged disloyalty is found in the Secretary's Record for 1912-1913.

36. A good summary by Sheldon of the work of the Legislative Reference Bureau while it was a part of the Society is in *Nebraska Blue Book, 1915*, 246-250. In 1911 the Bureau was transferred from the Society to the University of Nebraska where it remained until 1939. In that year it was abolished and its functions transferred to the newly established Legislative Council of the Legislature.

Details regarding the removal of the Bureau from the Society are found in the correspondence of Chancellor Samuel Avery, Archives of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Love Library.

37. In addition to the official minutes see also *Lincoln Nebraska State Journal*, January 18, 1907.

39. NSHS, Board Files, 1913.

38. NSHS, Secretary's Record, 1904-1908.

40. NSHS, Secretary's Record, 1904-1908.

41. Clarence S. Paine to F. L. Haller, March 30, 1911, NSHS, Director's Correspondence.

42. Paine to Haller, March 8, 1913, *Ibid.*

43. The process of selecting a new head of the Society can be traced in the correspondence of University Librarian Malcolm G. Wyer, Archives of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Love Library. These letters also touch upon the controversy over the proper relationship of the Society to the university.

44. Evidence of Sheldon's Populism can be found throughout his writings. For the most developed statement see the first volume of his history, *Nebraska: The Land and the People* (Chicago, 1931).

45. *Nebraska History*, I (March, 1918), 1.

46. Annual Report of the Superintendent for 1940, NSHS, Board Files, 1940.

47. *Nebraska History*, I (February, 1918), 1.

48. Sellers, "Semicentennial of the MVHA," 505-508; Van Tassel and Tinsley, "Historical Organizations," 136-139.

49. NSHS, Board Files, 1930.

50. *Nebraska History*, X (1927), 157-261.

51. *Ibid.*, XXXIV (1953), 77-78.

52. A. T. Hill to D. S. Dalby, December 11, 1934, NSHS, Board Files, 1934.

53. Frison, "The Plains," 160-162, 173-174; and David M. Gradwohl, "Fred H. Sterns: A Pioneer in the Pursuit of Plains Prehistory," *Nebraska History*, LIX (1978), 180-209.

54. Sandoz to Barrett, February 4, 1936, in Mari Sandoz Collection, Love Library, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. See also John D. Hicks, "My Nine Years at Nebraska," *Nebraska History*, XLVI (1965), 12-13.

55. Nebraska, *House Journal Special Session*, 1931, 94-95.

56. NSHS, Board Files, 1934.

57. For general information on federal employment programs which affected the Society see Arthur W. Macmahon *et al.*, *The Administration of Federal Work Relief* (Chicago, 1941); Jere Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943* (Boston, 1972); and J. T. Paterson, *The New Deal and the States* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1969).

58. Federal funds were channeled to the states through many different agencies. Those through which the Society programs were funded included the Civil Works Administration (CWA) created on November 7, 1933, which was succeeded by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was established May 6, 1935. Its name was changed to the Works Projects Administration on July 1, 1939, by a reorganization plan which consolidated several agencies into the Federal Works Agency.

59. In addition to correspondence in the Society's files, there are letters on this subject between Sheldon and Sandoz in the Mari Sandoz Collection, Love Library, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. 60. NSHS, Board Files, 1943. 61. *Laws of Nebraska*, 1943, 767.

62. For a discussion on the need for and methods of popularizing history, see the transcript of a program sponsored by the AASLH including remarks by James C. Olson in Lord (ed.), *Ideas in Conflict*.

63. Lord and Ubbelohde, *Clio's Servant*, 340-341; Ripley, *Sacred Grove*, 112-125; Katz, *Museums USA*, 160-208; Schwartz, *Museum*, 149-163.

The professional quality of the Museum program has constantly improved. The Lincoln Museum was accredited by the American Association of Museums in 1973, three years after the accreditation program had begun. The Society Museum thus became one of the three Nebraska museums among the 233 in the country found to have met "the basic definition of a museum and the standards of operation established by the museum profession."

64. To date the following persons have been elected to the Nebraska Hall of Fame: George W. Norris, United States senator; Willa Cather, novelist; General John J. Pershing; Father Edward Joseph Flanagan, founder of Boys Town; William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill), army scout and western showman; William Jennings Bryan, Populist politician; Bess Streeter Aldrich, author; John G. Neihardt, poet; J. Sterling Morton, Nebraska and national political figure; Grace Abbott, social worker; Roscoe Pound, jurist; Mari Sandoz, author; Standing Bear, Ponca chief. By act of the Legislature, Congressional Medal of Honor winners from the Civil War to date are also Hall of Fame members.

65. The discussion on Fort Robinson and the Society's relations with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission relies heavily upon Merrill J. Mattes, *Nebraska State Historical Resources Management Plan (final report)* (Lincoln, 1975). Known and hereafter cited as the *Mattes Report*.

66. Frison, "The Plains," 157-160.

67. Description of the archives is based on a paper by State Archivist James E. Potter, "The Archival Program at the Nebraska State Historical Society," read at a meeting of the Missouri Valley Conference in Omaha on March 9, 1973, and subsequently published in *Nebraska History*, LIV (1973), 307-317.

68. Ernst Posner, *American State Archives* (Chicago, 1964).

69. For a brief, general account of the administration of archival and manuscript collections in the United States see Robert L. Brubaker, "Archive and Manuscript Collections," *Advances in Librarianship*, III (1972), 245-278. For a description of the manuscript collecting practices of another state historical society see Lucile M. Kane, "Collecting Policies of the Minnesota Historical Society, 1849-1952," *American Archivist*, XVI (1953), 127-136.

70. Much of the information on the branch museums is taken from the *Mattes Report*.

71. *Ibid.*, 1.

72. *Ibid.*, 143-144.

73. I am indebted to Janet Jeffries Spencer, Preservation Historian, Nebraska State Historical Society, for this account of the historic preservation program.

Plains: Recollections of Luther North, 1856-1882 "Historical Resources Management Plan" "Captain Meriwether Lewis" "River Basin Survey" "Federal Aid Highway Act" "Highway Salvage Archaeologist" "Dwight D Eisenhower Library" "National Archives" "Taylor-Shewell-Gilligan House" "Pioneer Village" "Records Management Act" "State Office Building" "Nebraska Farmers' Alliance" "National Historical Publications Commission" "Grand Army of the Republic" "National Endowment for the Humanities" "William F Ferguson Collection" "Union Stockyards Company of Omaha" "Milldale Ranch" "Union Pacific" "Guide to the Manuscript Division" "Guide to the Newspaper Collection" "Historic Preservation" "Historic American Building Survey" "HABS" "Civil Works Administration" "Historic Sites Act" "National Register of Historic Places" "Historic Preservation in Nebraska"

Photographs / Images: Robert W Furnas; Gilbert C Monell; Thomas P Kennard; John Gillespie; Samuel Aughey; J Sterling Morton; George E Howard; Howard W Caldwell; Detail from Plat Map of Lincoln showing Block 29 for NSHS; University of Nebraska former University Library (now Architecture Hall); University Hall; Amos Barrett in the University of Library Building; Society's collections in the north wing of the Library; Sarah W Moore; Melvin R Gilmore; Lone Buffalo; Society Field camp, Omaha Indian Reservation, 1905: Addison E Sheldon, Philip Sheldon, Carey LaFlesche, Joseph LaFlesche, Melvin R Gilmore; Elmer E Blackman; Sketch of one floor of a proposed building to house the Society; 1903 Nebraska State Fair Exhibits (2); Clarence S Paine; Albert Watkins; Minnie Prey Knotts; Robert Harvey; The Museum at the University Library about 1916; 1912 Ceremony dedicating a marker on the Oregon Trail: Addison Sheldon; Building designed by George A Berlinghof (two photos); Elmer Blackman exhibit on the "Historical Train"; Sheldon on ship in 1918 as a press correspondent; George Ball family, Custer County; Sheldon in his automobile; 1927 State Fair Exhibit; Blackman in front of the "Historical Train" car 1928; Aerial view of Capitol building and surroundings, 1909; Museum in the Capitol's southwest wing; Society staff members Museum office at the Capitol: Caroline Ritchey Kivett, Laurette Griffin, Bernice Hermonie; Mari Sandoz and WPA workers; Shelton in 1930s with staff; WPA workers preparing exhibits; WPA workers binding newspapers; George Lamb supervising pottery restoration; Pike-Pawnee village excavation, 1941; Paul L Cooper on ladder photographing prehistoric archeological remains, 1938; Asa T Hill (2 photos); Valley County archeological field camp, 1939: A T Hill, George Metcalf, Marvin F Kivett; WPA employees excavating a prehistoric Indian earth lodge floor, Howard County, 1939; Earth lodge floor excavation; Early Pawnee village excavation, 1936; Richardson County, 1935, Iowa Indian tribe visit to archaeological excavation; Archaeological field camp near Bellwood, 1939; Ground breaking for the new building at 1500 R Street: Robert G Simmons; James C Olson; James L Sellers; James E Lawrence; Nathan J Gold; R G Gustavson; Cornerstone is laid; Robert B Crosby, ribbon cutting; James L Sellers inscriptions at the building's entrance; Old style exhibits from 1936; New style exhibit, developed in the 1940s; Newspaper reading room: Donald F Danker and Elizabeth Radtke; Microfilming Newspapers, 1952: Dale Young; Elizabeth Radtke working in the stacks; A group of genealogists in the Library reading room; Iris Daugherty preparing exhibits; Sandra Shaneyfelt, John B White, Donald F Danker; Myrtle Berry in the Photograph Library; Marvin F Kivett, E Mott Davis; John G Neihardt; James C Olson; Junior League volunteer Carolyn Rojue with school group; Junior League puppet show; Peter LeClair Ponca dance; Fort Robinson Post Headquarters 1956; The Centennial Car 1954; Fontenelle Trading Post dig with Richard Jensen; Washington County Fort Atkinson excavation; Trenton Dam salvage work 1950 with Arthur Carmody, Harold Williams family, Harry Meyers, Mrs Marvin F Kivett, Ron Kivett and Mrs Arthur Carmody; Roger T Grange and Richard D Rowen in Archaeology Lab; Fort Atkinson commemorative marker with Edwin Jipp, William D Aeschbacher and J R Johnson; Everett Dick receiving the Sellers Award, Charles W Martin, 1969; 1975 Spring Meeting with Arthur Carmody, Nellie Snyder Yost, James A Rawley, Paul Henderson, and Mrs Rawley; Larry Enersen M S Hevelone, Otto Kotouc Jr, Marvin Kivett; John G Neihardt Center in Bancroft with Sioux Prayer Garden; James E Potter; Donald D Snoddy and John Mills; Neligh Mills 1973; Mobile Museum at Chimney Rock; *Captain Meriwether Lewis*; Arrow Sport in 1929; Niobrara salvage by US Army Corps of Engineers in 1977; Ken Wrightsman at Fort Hartsuff, Valley County; 1887 Adobe Officers Quarters at Fort Robinson; Students at excavation of Cabanne Fur Trading Post, 1976; the Wilber Hotel, 1895; Janet Jeffries Spencer; the library at the Kennard House, Nebraska Statehood Memorial