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Article Summary: 1964 was the tenth anniversary of the Society in its new building. This article presents a discussion of the problems facing the Nebraska State Historical Society, as well as its accomplishments during the previous year: staffing, membership, building space, library and archives, museum activities, and archeology.

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Photographs / Images: A panorama of Nebraska [photo of display in the Nebraska State Historical Society building in 1964]; School students visiting the educational displays; Dr Danker in reading room conferring with Mr Carl Nygren, President of the Saunders County Historical Society; school students using the library catalog; stove door from the excavations at Fort Kearny; excavation at Fort Kearny





Students visit the museum exhibit.

## THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN 1964, MARVIN F. KIVETT, DIRECTOR

**A**LTHOUGH Nebraska will not celebrate its State Centennial until 1967 the interest in this coming observance affected the work load at the Nebraska State Historical Society during the past year. As each town, community and county look toward their future, they also look to their past. County centennial committees, and historical organizations are all working toward a historical birthday in 1967. There is a growing interest in every section of the state as well as over the nation.

This is the goal toward which your Society has worked for eighty-six years—to stimulate full interest in our historical past. With this historical awareness, the Society has several responsibilities. We must make our resources available to all to assist them in carrying out their individual projects. We must also serve as the State's historical conscience. We have an obligation to do all within our power to see that each and every project has the benefit of the best available historical research and advice. It matters little whether the project is a local museum, a historical reconstruction, a pageant or a text book; all share a need for authenticity. This can be achieved by proper research done by qualified individuals. We have a responsibility to those founders of the State and of the Society, such as Robert Furnas, J. Sterling Morton, Silas Garber, George L. Miller and others to see that our history is factual and known to all.

Dr. Aeschbacher in his report of last year summarized the progress of the Society during the first decade in the new building. His report noted outstanding progress in many areas. At the same time he pointed out the relative stability and continuity in the professional staff to carry out the various assignments. He noted that this situation had

recently changed with several experienced staff members accepting assignments elsewhere. It might be pointed out that at this time there has been a change in several positions. One factor in this great loss has been our inability to compete with academic and other historical institutions for salaries and related benefits. Your Society has served somewhat as a training school during the past fifteen years with a relatively high loss of our professional staff.

The major problem during the past year has been to recruit a competent staff and train them in the work and traditions of the Society. We have a competent staff and will do all we can to retain their services. Despite a limited staff, the Society has experienced one of its most active and successful years. There are many ways of measuring our progress. One measurement may be by the number of new members. I'm pleased to report that our total membership the past year has increased by 382 persons as compared with an average of 80 per year during the past ten years. The membership now stands at 3242 as compared to 2960 reported last year. Your Executive Board has set a membership goal of 5,000 by 1967. We need the support of each of you to reach this goal of broadened support for the preservation of our historical resources.

The report of last year noted the increasing need for additional building space. This need is particularly critical in the Archives and Library divisions. By law and by obligation we are a collecting agency—the safety deposit box and attic for Nebraska history. Certain of the materials collected may be reduced to film, or by other technical processes adequate copies made so that the original record may not be vital. Such processes, however, are primarily useful in reducing possible damage to original records from frequent use. There is no adequate substitute, in most cases, for the original document or artifact. Therefore the Society must plan for orderly additions to their physical plant in the foreseeable future. This may be less true for the museum where the general program of display may be eventually carried out in various parts of the State by branch museums or by local historical organizations. Certainly that point

has not yet been reached. There is a need for traveling displays, an agricultural museum and educational exhibits relating to many subjects.

*Nebraska History*, the *News Letter* and the "Out of Old Nebraska" columns have continued without major changes. Our goal is to improve each of these to meet the growing interest in Nebraska history. In *Nebraska History* the articles have been varied in their nature and will continue to deal with all aspects of the state's past.

In our function of encouraging historical preservation in all areas, we have worked closely with many historical organizations. During the year I have met with fifteen local or county organizations and assisted in the organization of five new societies. We now list fifty-three county organizations.

The entire staff has worked closely in carrying out the work of the Historical Land Mark Council, in adequately recognizing our historical sites. This program has doubled the number of markers during the past year. I would like to pay tribute to the fine cooperation of the Nebraska Department of Roads in this program. We have also assisted in the work of the Hall of Fame Commission, Nebraska Civil War Commission, National Pony Express Centennial Commission, Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, Nebraska Centennial Commission and a number of other organizations.

Another measurement of our services may be found in the number of visitors to the building. A total of 89,285 individuals came to the Society to view exhibits, utilize our Library and Archival collections or to seek advice from the staff. At the State Fair the Society's museum exhibits drew 57,592 visitors. During the past ten years we have utilized space in any area available at the fair. There is a need for the permanent assignment or construction of a historical building at the State Fair.

At our branch in western Nebraska, the Fort Robinson Museum was visited by 35,269 persons, an increase of about

19% above the previous year. The historical potentials at Fort Robinson are great. There is a need for funds to preserve and develop these potentials. The total number of visitors to exhibit areas in Lincoln and at Fort Robinson reached 182,146.

In the museum Dr. Roger T. Grange, Jr., who had been on the staff since 1955 assumed the position of Museum Director in October 1963. At the end of the fiscal year the position of Museum Director was vacant following Dr. Grange's resignation to accept a position at the University of Florida. Despite the staff changes the museum continued its usual active program. Some 39 exhibit units were installed in the main building and others constructed for the State Fair.

The museum staff presented more than twenty lectures outside the building. The Educational Program carried out the past year under the immediate supervision of David Drury, Curator of History, served 14,742 persons in 342 groups. Fifty-four groups with 4,186 persons participated in auditorium programs presented by the staff and the Lincoln Junior League. Without this service organization the activities in this area would be much curtailed. This is particularly true in the cooperation for the operation of the Wm. J. Bryan Home. Here the Junior League has provided funds for the refurbishing of the home under the supervision of the Society staff. The Bryan Memorial Hospital Board has also cooperated closely in the Fairview project in providing maintenance costs and other facilities. The Society staff has guided this work to provide a major historical exhibit. The historical value of this restoration was recognized during the year by its designation by the Federal Government as a National Historical Landmark. Similar recognition was given the Fort Robinson-Red Cloud Agency area and the site of Fort Atkinson. The Society has been active in bringing all three of these areas to public attention. More recently seven archeological areas in the state have been similarly designated. The major research at six of these was carried out by your Society, primarily under the direct supervision of the late A. T. Hill.

Like the museum, the Library and Archives carried out their program during the year with an inadequate staff. Despite these problems, considerable progress was made in their programs. More than 3,000 persons visited the building to make use of the collections. As an example of the work load, the reference services answered more than 700 mail inquiries. A similar number were answered by other departments of the Society.

Perhaps some of the most unique collections at the Society are the newspapers, archives and photographs. These are the materials from which our historical past can be reconstructed. The Society Archives are particularly pertinent to a study of our territorial and state governments since no similar collections exist. This includes papers relating to our past governors, congressmen, and senators as well as business leaders and pioneer in the State. The Hugh Butler papers turned over to the Society in 1954 were removed from the restricted category during the year and made available to qualified researchers.

The library collections with more than 48,000 books and pamphlets are in many cases the only source relating to the history of Nebraska and the region. This collection receives constant additions not only of current Nebraska publications but earlier published studies relating to Nebraska and the West.

The photographic section of the library provides constant reference use. There is hardly a week that we do not receive a telephone call from a publisher in New York, or San Francisco requesting a particular photograph to illustrate articles or publications. During the year photographs were utilized on television programs from Lincoln to England. If you visited the New York World's Fair you may have seen photographs of Nebraska sod houses. Thus this collection serves not only as a study reference collection but does much to publicize the state and our rich historical past.

This year 5,000 photographs were added to the collection bringing the total to 80,000 Nebraska related views pre-

served by the Society. Among the larger collections received during the year were the Hubert Mann collection of 1,000 photographs and some 300 views from the Townsend Studio in Lincoln.

In our efforts to preserve our invaluable newspaper collections and other records, 589 rolls of micro-film were produced. Some 1600 persons made use of the newspaper collections in their research.

Without the outstanding support of thousands of Nebraskans as well as individuals in other states our progress during the year would not have been possible. Many individuals have been most generous not only in their donations to the Society collections but in time and effort spent in their local historical organizations to preserve our historical resources.

I hope each of you as you read this report conclude that your Society has made progress this year. This has been a busy year for me. I would like to pay tribute to a most loyal and dedicated staff who carried out their many duties in a most effective way. I would also like to thank an understanding Executive Board, and particularly President Warren C. Wood, for their patience and guidance with a new director. I look forward to the next year with confidence and expectation that we will be able to report greater service at this time next year.

Following are detailed reports on the activities of the various departments of the Society during the year.

## **LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**

Serving authors, professors, students, publishers, and program directors in this country as well as abroad, the holdings in the library and archives are becoming more important because of the increasing interest in the history of the West.

We have continued to add to the library collections. The following table gives some indication of the continued growth of the library.

<i>Category</i>	<i>1963 total</i>	<i>Additions</i>	<i>1964 total</i>
Volumes	47,891	900	48,791
Maps	5,489	16	5,505
Microfilm reels	7,847	589	8,436
Moving picture films	17	10	27
Pictures	74,354	5,000	79,354

One of the important divisions of the Society is the Archives. As the official custodian of State records the Society archives holds unique materials including records of almost every government agency including many counties. In addition, the archives maintains a historical manuscripts collection of Nebraska pioneers and leading political and business figures. Many of the papers of past governors and congressmen from the state are included. The search for this type of materials is constant, and the Society is making a concerted effort to gather more. All of the state's congressmen have been contacted personally, as well as some of the state's leading businessmen. There is a great interest in gathering records of private businesses and ranches in the state. Furthermore, realizing that fewer records are kept because of the modern means of communication, the archival program is continuing to broaden its collection of oral history. The archives is now in the process of reorganization, and it is hoped that in the near future a guide will be produced to enable wider use of its holdings.

Another area of equal importance is the Library with its 48,791 books and pamphlets relating to the history of Nebraska and the region. In the past year, more than 3,000 people used the library's facilities. However, the library's service is not limited to people who come to Lincoln, for it maintains a reference service where nearly 700 letters were received and answered this year. Inquiries come from all over the United States and several foreign countries as well as numerous school children and citizens of the state.

The photographic section of the library also provides a widely used reference service. This year five thousand pictures were added to the collection bringing the total to nearly 80,000 photographs now preserved by the Society.

In another area, the newspaper collection, the Society is continuing its effort to preserve Nebraska's papers on microfilm. 589 rolls of film were produced this year bringing the total number of rolls now on file to 8,436. To safeguard this film, the Society is starting upon a program to store a master negative in a vault in another part of the country, while a positive print will be available to users in Lincoln. Moreover, 1600 people made use of this material.

Besides filming newspapers, the Society has micro-filmed a nineteen volume set of scrapbooks concerning Mayor James C. Dahlman's administration in Omaha and the records of Bellevue College. Also to make our manuscript holdings more accessible to scholars, a number of them have been put on microfilm. Over 200 reels have been mailed to various people throughout the nation.

## MUSEUM

1963, the 10th anniversary of the Society building, was a year of eventful change and transition for the museum. Most notable was a series of staff changes. Marvin F. Kivett, Museum Director for 14 years, was appointed Director of the Society in August. Roger T. Grange, Jr., Assistant Museum Director, served for a month as Acting Museum Director following Kivett's promotion and was then appointed Museum Director in October, 1963. David L. Drury joined the museum staff in July, 1963, as Curator of History. John W. Garrett, formerly Highway Salvage Archeologist, was appointed Curator of Anthropology in October, and Wendell Frantz joined the staff as Highway Salvage Archeologist in February, 1964.

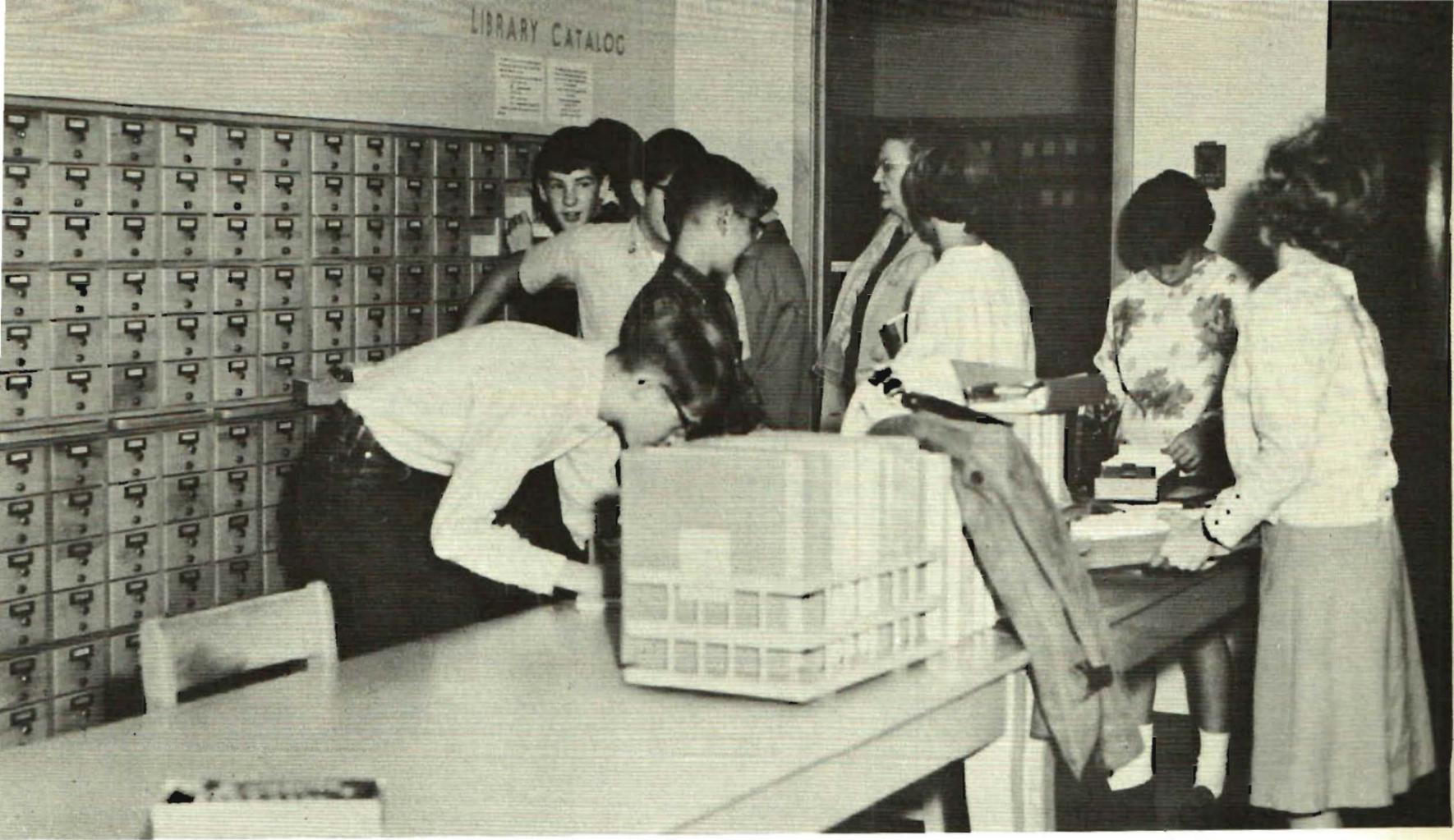
During the year 39 exhibit units were completed and installed. The east side of the entrance gallery was re-installed, thus completing a two year project to refurbish the introductory galleries and special displays.

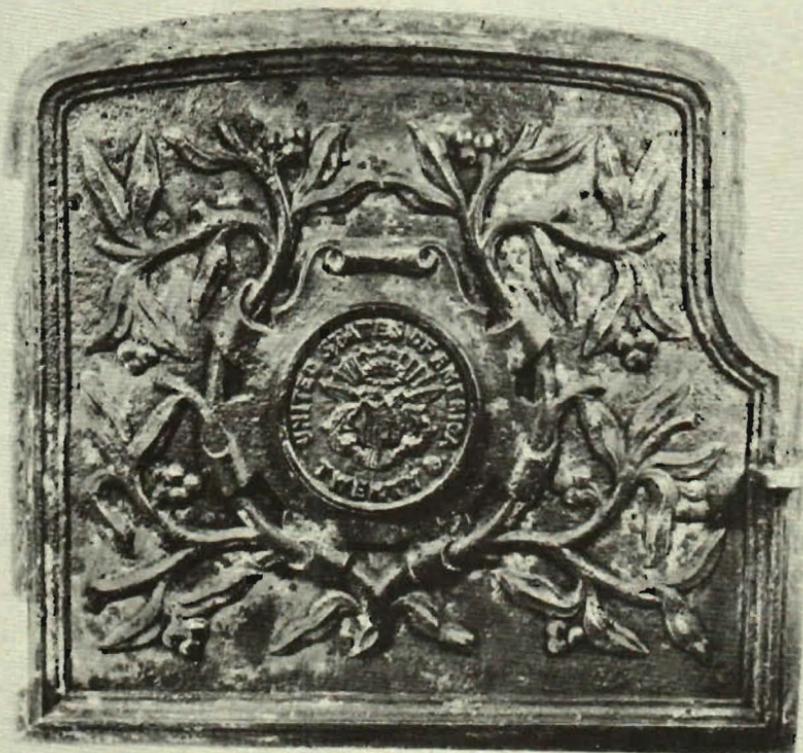
The museum staff was active, giving some 22 talks before civic groups and answering hundreds of inquiries by mail and telephone. The staff also gave numerous gal-



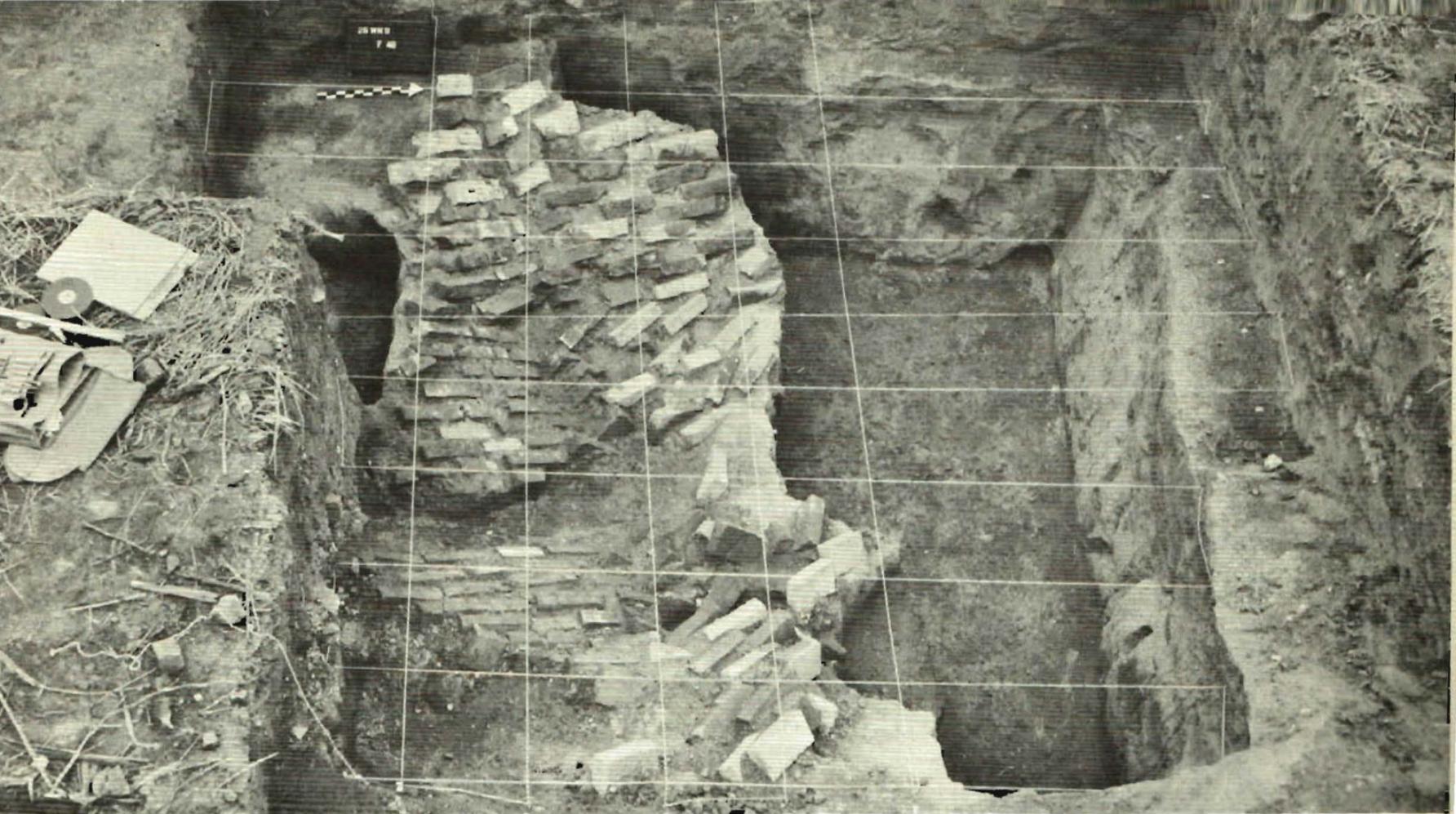
Dr. Danker in reading room confers with Mr. Carl Nygren,  
President of the Saunders County Historical Society.

LIBRARY CATALOG





Excavations at Fort Kearny revealed a stove door.



lery tours and auditorium talks as part of the school program.

Publications and manuscripts by the museum staff were also among the accomplishments of the year. John Garrett completed a manuscript report entitled "Highway Archaeological and Historical Salvage Program," which was submitted to the State Department of Roads as part of this cooperative program. Roger Grange completed a manuscript report entitled "Archaeological Survey of the Davis Creek Reservoir and the Calamus River Reservoir, Nebraska, 1963," for submission to the National Park Service in fulfillment of a salvage contract. Publications by the museum staff include "The Garnier Oglala Winter Count" (in the *Plains Anthropologist*) and "The Walter J. Charnley Firearms Collection" (in the *Western Museums Quarterly*), both written by Roger Grange, and book reviews by staff members.

The museum staff represented the Society at several professional meetings. All staff members participated in the Nebraska Museum Conference fifth annual meeting, of which the Society was a co-host and sponsor for the speaker, H. J. Swinney, Director of the Idaho Historical Society. Museum Director Grange was elected to the Advisory Board and to the post of Editor of the Conference Newsletter. Curator David Drury attended the meeting of the American Association for State and Local History. Roger Grange attended the meeting of the American Anthropological Association, presented a paper at the meeting of the Society for American Archaeology and served as Chairman of the of the Anthropology Section, Nebraska Academy of Science. The section meeting was held in the Society auditorium.

Public generosity continues to build up our collections of museum specimens. A total of 152 donors contributed 3,117 new museum items. Of these, 49 donors (1198 items) were people who had previously contributed, while 103 (1919 items) were new donors. Hundreds of archaeological specimens were collected by the scientific expeditions of the museum.

The Historic Building Survey was continued during the year, although at a somewhat reduced pace. To date 34 counties are represented and over 125 buildings are listed.

With the resignation of Mrs. Phyllis Winkelman, former Director of Education, the administration of the school tour program became a museum function and was directly supervised by Curator of History David Drury. A total of 352 groups with a combined total of 14,742 visitors were served by the tour program. The museum staff was assisted by the Lincoln Junior League volunteer guides and puppeteers in this program, and we are grateful to Mrs. Donald Etmund, Mrs. Jack Hoyt, Mrs. E. M. O'Shea, Jr., Mrs. Gerald Merritt, Mrs. Lee Chapin and Mrs. George Lewis for their service. A new puppet stage was completed during the year.

Another cooperative project, the restoration of Fairview, the Lincoln home of William J. Bryan, made progress during the year. The Lincoln Junior League, the Bryan Memorial Hospital Board and the Society all cooperated on the Fairview project. A message repeater was installed during the year, gift of the Colonial Dames, and visitors can now hear Bryan giving a portion of his famed Cross of Gold speech. The restoration of the Tower Room was begun during the year. Fairview was designated a National Historic Landmark by the U. S. National Park Service.

As noted above, the number of visitors continues to increase at Fort Robinson. Little beyond operation has been accomplished at the Fort Robinson Museum during the past year. Fort Robinson and Red Cloud Agency were designated as a National Historic Landmark by the U. S. National Park Service, further enhancing the significance of the Society's effort at the frontier post. Many serious and expensive problems face the museum at Fort Robinson. Routine maintenance, painting, and reconstruction of the porches are all essential if the present museum building is to remain safe for public use. Sufficient funds must be found for this and similar work. Full development of Fort Robinson will require the appointment of a full time professionally trained curator, and continued increase in

the visitor loads will make more seasonal staff necessary. These and other problems were noted in a developmental plan prepared for the Fort.

The problem of adequate storage and display space remains a major problem for the museum as well as other departments. At the present time some temporary storage space is being utilized in several locations outside the building. This presents a serious problem in not having the collections readily available for display and for research.

Despite the staff changes in the museum, the necessary transitions have been accomplished smoothly and with a minimum of disruption to the routine.

### ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The Nebraska State Historical Society this summer continued a long tradition of archeological field research. Working in cooperation with the State Game and Parks Commission under a continuing program of Historic Parks development, excavations were conducted at two of Nebraska's historic forts. The party was under the immediate supervision of John Garrett, Curator of Anthropology, and Lyle M. Stone, graduate student in anthropology.

At Fort Kearny (1848-71) the first problem was to determine an area where a park interpretive center could be located without destroying any fort remains. The second objective was the complete excavation of the Post Blacksmith-Carpenter Shop for eventual reconstruction. The shop proved to be 70 by 35 feet, partitioned by an interior wall into two sections, one occupied by the blacksmith, one by the carpenter. The main door of this sod block building probably faced to the west, towards the main fort buildings with an additional opening near the northwest corner. Here was located the blacksmith's iron pile containing about 400 horse and pony shoes as well as many additional iron objects. The shop contained interesting artifacts including tools, wagon parts, personal items and several parts of iron stoves.