



*Nebraska History* posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

Article Title: Annual Report for 1967

Full Citation: Marvin F Kivett, "Annual Report for 1967," *Nebraska History* 48 (1967): 343-352

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1967NSHS.pdf>

Date: 2/26/2016

Article Summary: The Historical Society played an important part in statewide Nebraska centennial activities in 1967.

#### Cataloging Information:

NSHS Divisions Discussed: Administration, Museum, Library, Archives

Keywords: Historical Land Mark Council, Pony Express route, Nebraska Centennial Exhibits Caravan, Fort Robinson

Photographs / Images: James C Olson; Maurice S Hevelone, James C Olson, Gale McGee and Charles C Osborne at annual meeting, 1967; attendees at lunch tables at annual meeting; NSHS Articles of Incorporation, 1867; Centennial Exhibits Caravan; reconstructed guard house at Fort Robinson; special exhibit; historical marker dedicated by the Historical Land Mark Council; researchers utilizing microfilm records; Duane Reed and Mrs. Roy Green in the Reading Room

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1967

MARVIN F. KIVETT, DIRECTOR

**I**N a sense this is also the Centennial year for the Nebraska State Historical Society. The Historical Society was founded and incorporated as "a State Historical and Library Association" in 1867, the year Nebraska became a State. Sixteen leading citizens representing Nebraska City, Omaha, DeSoto, Rulo and Lincoln signed the Articles of Incorporation on the 26th day of August 1867. Article 4 of the incorporation stated that "Said Library shall be composed of good and useful books of ancient and modern history and other miscellaneous literature." These Articles of Incorporation were duly filed for record by S. B. Galey, Lancaster County Clerk, at 8:00 P.M. on August 26, 1867. However, despite this business-like procedure, the organization existed largely on paper until 1878 when it was reorganized as the Nebraska State Historical Society and became a state organization by action of the Nebraska Legislature in 1883.

From these pioneer efforts your Society has grown to perform a major role in the educational and preservation processes of the state. This has never been more evident than during the past year when Nebraska observed its Centennial of Statehood. Requests for Society services have come from all segments of the state—schools, historical organizations, publishers and a great number of busi-

ness firms. In addition to these increased public services, the Society has carried out a number of special projects which required extra staff effort in addition to their normal work.

Your Executive Board, headed by President Charles C. Osborne of Hastings, had an active year. During the fiscal year, the Board met in regular session on three occasions with a considerable number of additional consultation meetings. The Trustees of the Foundation held two meetings during the year. Board members represented the Society at a variety of historical events, ranging from historical marker dedications to Centennial Year observances.

The annual spring meeting, held in North Platte May 13, was sponsored by the Lincoln County Historical Society. Despite somewhat inclement weather the meeting was well attended. The luncheon speaker was Mr. Don Russell, an authority on the American West and the life of William F. Cody. We were fortunate to have an outstanding Nebraskan, Major General Butler B. Miltonberger of North Platte, as our dinner speaker.

The Legislature was in session during the past year, and a number of laws pertaining to the Society, including the 1967-69 budget bill, were enacted. Legislative Bill 719, designating the Society as the agency to act on behalf of the state in terms of Public Law 89-665, the Historic Preservation Act, was passed 40-0. Under the terms of this law, the Society is directed to carry out a comprehensive historic survey. A program to provide matching federal grants-in-aid for certain preservation projects is expected to develop from this survey.

*Nebraska History*, now in its 49th year, continued to publish a wide variety of articles on Nebraska's past, and the 19 year old *Historical News Letter* provided an exchange of information on the Society as well as the many historical organizations in the state.

Our membership now stands at 4,462 as compared to 3,933 a year ago. This total gain of 529 (13+%) members

represents a major increase in the area of special members. There was an increase of 127 new members in the Contributing category and 42 new Life Members. The additional support provided by special memberships is important to Society activity.

The Society has also carried on an active program of public speaking engagements. The Director spoke on 32 occasions; Dr. Donald Danker, Historian, at 21 meetings; Paul Riley, Research Associate, at 13; and various other staff members spoke on a total of 70 occasions.

The Historical Land Mark Council, a Society-related activity, dedicated 16 markers during the reporting period as compared to nine for last year. This program, which is attempting to effectively provide the traveling public with information on our historic sites, has now been in operation since 1960. At the end of our 1967 Centennial Year the first 75 markers will have been erected and dedicated. Emphasis for the placement of such markers is given to highway locations where they are readily available to the traveling public. At the present time four markers have been approved for rest areas on Interstate 80.

A second marking program, carried on by the National Pony Express Centennial Association with the approval of the Historical Land Mark Council, has as its goal the marking of the Pony Express Route in the western United States. These attractive bronze plaques in three sizes are available on approval to sponsoring agencies who will provide the proper stone mounting. Nebraska has now erected 27 plaques at 14 different locations ranging geographically from Scottsbluff to Jefferson County. Six additional plaques have been provided to museums in the state for display purposes. Nebraska officers of the organization include Paul Henderson of Bridgeport, Merrill Mattes formerly of Omaha and the Society Director.

The Director continued to serve on a number of special committees or boards with historically related interests. Among these are the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural

Achievement, Nebraska Centennial Commission, Historical Land Mark Council, Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission, Lewis and Clark Trails Commission, National Pony Express Centennial Association and the State Records Advisory Board. A major activity is the assistance given by the Director and staff members to the more than 80 local historical organizations throughout the state.

An area that continues to be of major concern to your Society is the retention of a trained professional staff. During the past year there have been changes in each of the department head positions, and we have lost Dr. Danker who so capably filled the position of Historian. It is necessary for us to meet competition, not only from other historical organizations, but also from the academic field. Thus far, we have not been successful in securing equal consideration in our budget proposals with other academic institutions in the state. Other areas of the Society program that are greatly in need of more adequate funding include our education program, the publication of historical and archeological studies and a greatly needed expansion of the present building.

Some of these important needs can be met by an increased number of donations to the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation. This may be done by becoming a Contributing or Supporting Member, by giving direct and regular gifts to the tax-exempt Foundation, or through bequests of property or funds in a will. As of the audit date on June 30, 1967, the Society Foundation had investments and assets in the amount of \$109,725.55 as compared to a balance of \$74,915.38 a year ago. The balance in 1957 stood at \$1,436.55.

This increase of more than 30 percent in Foundation assets resulted largely from bequests from the late Constance M. Syford and Helen Nance Anderson and from donations to the James L. Sellers and Mamie Meredith Memorial Funds. This major increase in the Foundation assets gives every indication that members are interested in providing such support when our needs are adequately

known. The Trustees of the Foundation have already completed some supporting activities from income derived and an expanded program can be expected in the future.

Our Society operates through four basic programs: The Administration section under the immediate supervision of the Director, the Museum, the Library and the Archives. The Library and Archives provide the published and unpublished books, photographs, and documents from which all phases of our history may be reconstructed, while the Museum places a greater emphasis on the collection and interpretation of tangible objects used by Nebraska people.

## MUSEUM

The Museum program is headed by Wendell Frantz, a member of our staff since 1964 and Museum Director since July 1967. As in all areas of the Society, much of the Museum effort this year reflected the Centennial and the increased interest in local history. Attendance at the Lincoln headquarters totaled 87,019 including 25,665 in 509 organized groups. Attendance at the Fort Robinson Branch Museum totaled 36,783 and an additional 69,036 persons visited the Society exhibits at the State Fair. The Chimney Rock Information Center, operated by the Society for the second year in cooperation with the City of Bayard and the National Park Service, was visited by some 5,000 travelers..

One of the major projects requiring special effort on the part of the museum staff was the Nebraska Centennial Exhibits Caravan. This was an official project of the Nebraska Centennial Commission with the Society serving as coordinator. The caravan consisted of three specially constructed 35-foot house trailers with air conditioning units. Two units were concerned largely with Nebraska history while the third, prepared under the supervision of the Joslyn Art Museum of Omaha, contained a special exhibit of Nebraska art.

Between May 3 and September 23, the Caravan toured the state, visiting 92 of the 93 counties. The trailers traveled 4,500 miles, stopped at 104 locations and were open for viewing 117 days. A total of 102,977 visitors toured the exhibits. Such traveling exhibits can serve an important educational function, particularly in the rural sections of western Nebraska where there are a relatively small number of permanent museums. For example, the Sandhills town of Brewster, population 44, had a visitation of 492.

The museum art staff prepared some 80 separate exhibits during the year, many of which remained in the main building. Others were prepared for the traveling exhibits and special displays related to the Centennial over the state.

One of the services of the museum program is to make available to the public certain types of material for educational and research purposes. This year 79 loans of 893 items were provided to the general public. In the museum educational program, guided tours were provided for 8,174 people and films shown to 2,760. In addition, puppet programs with a Nebraska history theme were performed by volunteers of the Lincoln Junior League for 3,794 elementary school children. Five educational kits containing Indian and pioneer artifacts were loaned on 49 occasions to social studies teachers. In the past year the Society continued its cooperative program with Channel 12, Educational Television. One of the many products resulting from this effort was the Educational Television Heritage Series used by many schools in the state. Educational leaflets and a second publication in the Pictorial Heritage series, dealing with military forts in the state, were issued. As evidence of the increased interest in the Society by educational organizations, Society membership for schools and libraries now stands at 409 compared to 287 one year ago.

A total of 161 donors contributed 4,609 items to the Museum collection. As noted previously, one of the major donations came from the bequest of Helen Nance Anderson who willed all personal property including household

furnishings to the Society. Received were some 1,500 separate items relating to Governor Albinus Nance, her father, and to her husband Walter L. Anderson, a prominent attorney, legislator and war veteran.

Reconstruction work at Fort Robinson which started last year with the excavation of the 1874 Guardhouse was continued. Work on the Guardhouse has progressed well, and it will be ready for visitors during the next season. In addition to the archeological work at Fort Robinson, The Highway Archeological and Historical Salvage program was continued with one full time archeologist, Mr. Robert Gant, carrying out the work. Over 1,000 miles of highway right-of-way were surveyed and 33 new sites recorded. Laboratory work included the cataloguing of 7,725 artifacts. Excavations were carried out on a limited scale at 25NC20, the historic Pawnee village near Genoa, where important materials were in danger of destruction by road building activities. Other sites in Keith County which lay in the path of Interstate 80 were tested and found to relate to the history of early military and trail travelers. The Society also served as the host institution for the 24th Annual Plains Archeological Conference.

### LIBRARY

The Library was without the services of a professional librarian for a period following the resignation of Mrs. Hazel Abbuhl and prior to the addition of the present Librarian, Mrs. Louise Small. Despite this limitation, regular service was provided to an increased number of patrons. Although statistics are not a full measure of the services performed, they do have some value. The reference section of the Library provided service to approximately 1,500 persons by direct research, answered 1,302 telephone calls and replied to 1,468 letters. Some 700 new titles were catalogued and a total of 436 volumes were bound.

Partially because of the State Centennial, the photographic section of the library under the immediate supervision of Miss Myrtle D. Berry experienced one of its most

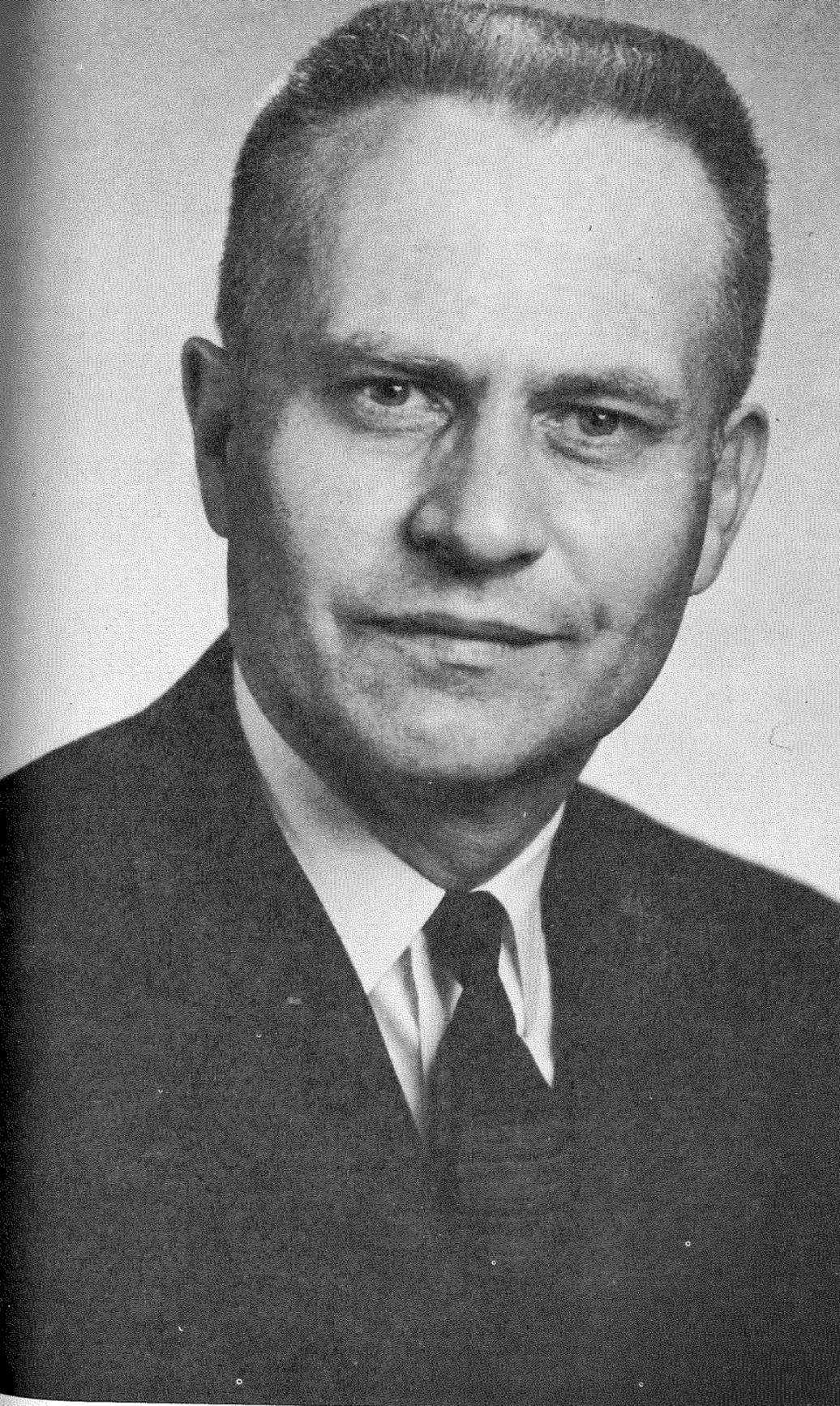
active years. The demand for photographs has been constant and varied. Some uses included the Nebraska Centennial Pictorial History, Centennial issues for many Nebraska newspapers, the *Nebraskaland* Centennial Issue and many county and regional histories. The University of Nebraska Educational Television drew heavily on Society publications and photographic collections. Requests were not restricted to Nebraska. National publishers and commercial firms featuring Nebraska and the Centennial also made extensive use of the collections during the year.

Major additions to the photographic collection came from the Helen Nance Anderson bequest, from copy views of the Omaha area courtesy of the Omaha Public Library, and from one hundred copy views from the Lloyd Ernst collection relating to the Kenesaw area.

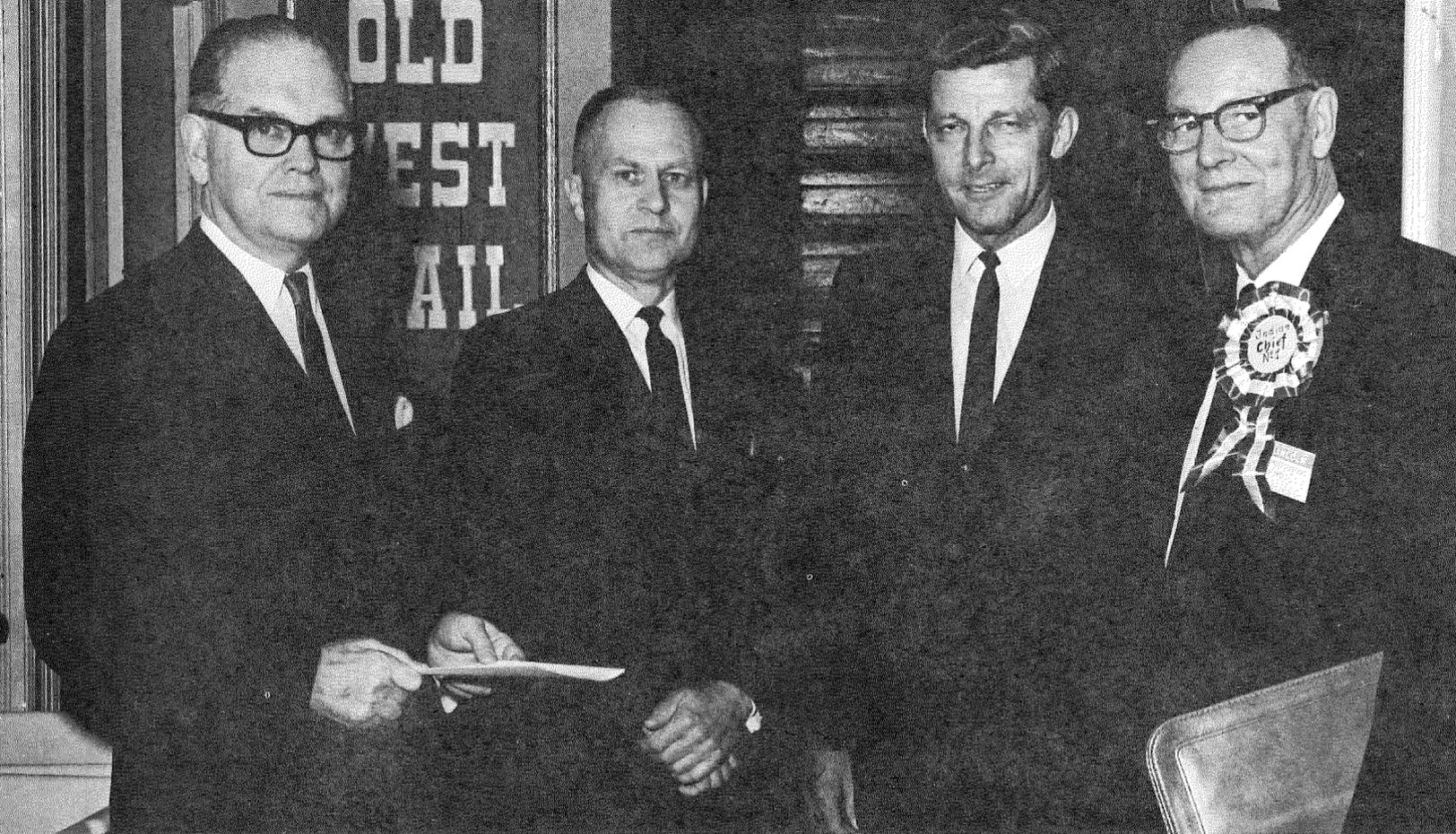
## ARCHIVES

The Archives program was carried on under the supervision of Douglas Bakken, Archivist; and Duane Reed, Assistant Archivist. An important achievement was the completion of the first project sponsored by a grant from the National Historical Publications Commission. This program enabled the papers of J. Sterling Morton, Robert W. Furnas, Samuel M. Chapman, Samuel Maxwell and the Nebraska Farmers' Alliance to be placed on 116 rolls of microfilm. Guides to the papers were produced in five printed pamphlets. The culmination of this two-year project means that the papers of important Nebraskans may be purchased by the public, or the microfilm may be obtained through inter-library loan.

Closely related to this publishing activity was the production of the *Supplement to the Guide to the Archives and Manuscripts*, June 1966, and in June 1967, a third edition of the *Guide*. These printed items were sent throughout Nebraska and the nation to inform researchers of the holdings in the Archives. During the past year a number of significant collections were received, including items relating to Frank B. Morrison, John F. Kinney, Mamie Mere-



Dean James C. Olson, newly-elected president of the Society.



Annual Meeting, left to right Maurice S. Hevelone, president of the Society Foundation; Dean James C. Olson, president of the Nebraska State Historical Society; Senator Gale McGee, speaker at the Annual Meeting, Charles C. Osborne, immediate past president of the Society.



Annual Meeting of the Society held at Lincoln, September 23, 1967.





Nebraska Centennial Exhibits Caravan.



Reconstructed Guard House at Fort Robinson.



One of many special exhibits completed during the year.

# NEBRASKA

HISTORICAL

MARKER



## LA GRANDE ISLE

Grand Island, in the Platte River, has given its name to the city of Grand Island. The island was formed by a narrow channel branching off the Platte River approximately 28 miles upstream from the present city of Grand Island and rejoining the main river about 12 miles downstream from the city.

The name "Grand Island" came from the French name "La Grande Isle", meaning the large or great island. The island probably was discovered and named by French fur traders in the late 1700's. Grand Island or Grand Isle was a well-known landmark for fur traders by 1810. The name Grand Isle appears on a French map published in 1821 and on American maps published in 1822 and 1823.

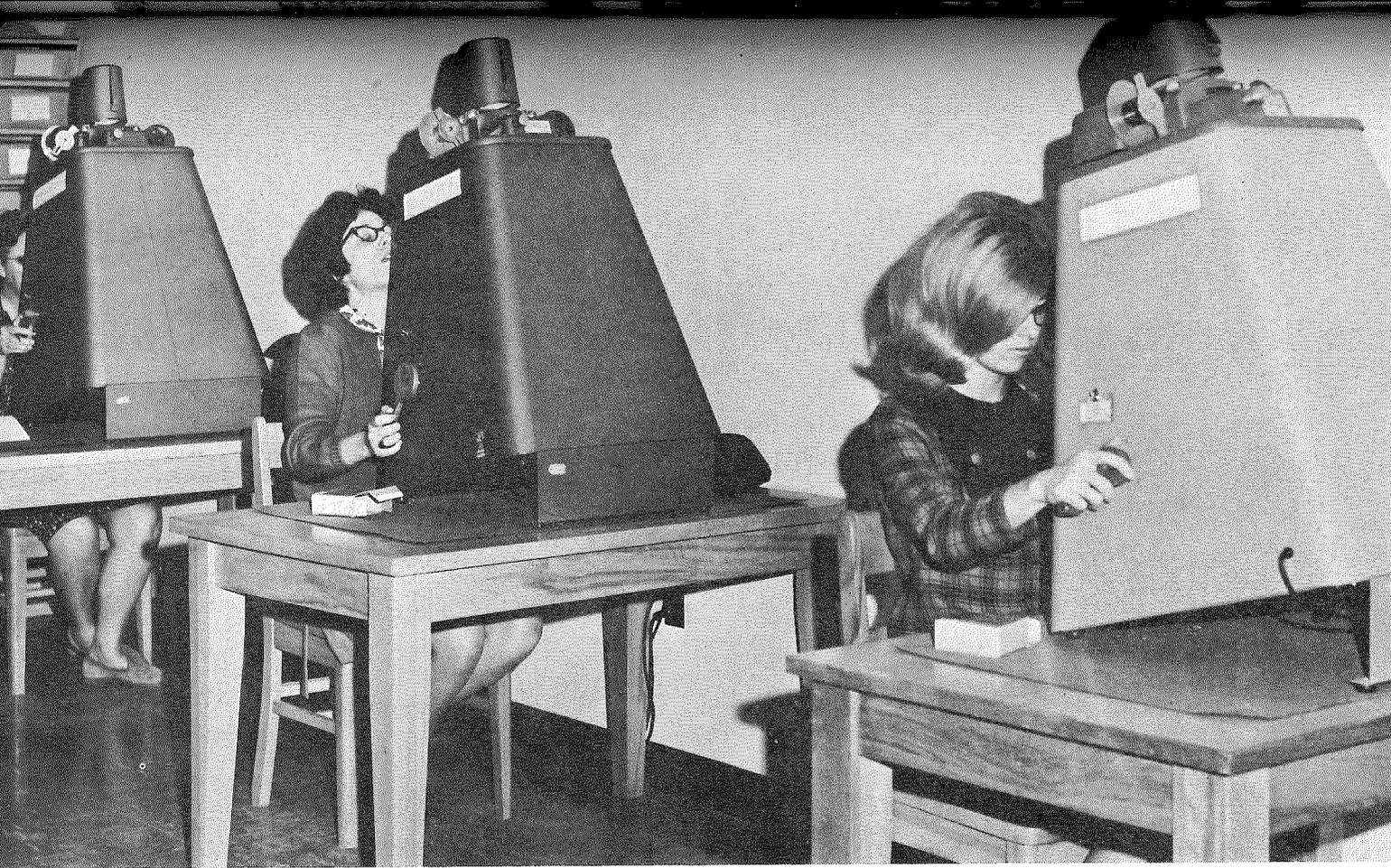
Both the Long and Fremont exploring expeditions of 1820 and 1842 took note of the size of Grand Island and west-bound travelers of the 1830's often mentioned the island as the most conspicuous feature of the Central Platte Valley.

Grand Island was ceded to the United States Government by the Pawnee Indians in 1848. The modern history of the island begins with the arrival of the first permanent settlers on July 5, 1857.

Hall County Historical Society

Historical Land Mark Council

More than thirty historical markers were dedicated by the  
Historical Land Mark Council.



Researchers in Nebraska history utilize the microfilm records.



Duane Reed, Society Archivist, consults with Mrs. Roy M. Green in the Reading Room.

dith, Mari Sandoz, numerous church records, and records of the Tax Commissioner, Secretary of State and the Department of Health.

Guides to collections and acquiring records are but a part of Archival activities, and the staff continued to process and arrange collections and to service all of the material in our holdings. Centennial activities led many Nebraskans to pose questions for the staff, and the Archivist corresponded with 430 patrons. The Newspaper Room had 2,485 researchers, which was a substantial increase over ten years ago when 1,251 people used the microfilm.

A significant part of the work in this department is the microfilming of newspapers, and some of the titles produced included the *Stromsburg Headlight*, *Alliance Times-Herald*, *Cherry County News*, *Hickman Enterprise* and the *Hastings Daily Republican*. Publishers of these newspapers as well as those in Holdrege, Geneva, Exeter, Fairbury, and Ashland cooperated with the Society by loaning issues not in our files. An increasingly important aspect of the microfilming program has been the emphasis given to making positive copies, and during the year 1,238 such reels were added to the shelves. The total number of reels climbed from 10,491 in 1966 to the present figure of 11,130, of which 9,812 are devoted to newspapers and 1,318 to manuscripts.

There are many other figures that might be cited of the increased work load at the Society during the past year. Nebraska, as never before, is becoming conscious of its historical heritage. We believe that we have been responsible in part for this new appreciation of our historical resources. With adequate support your Society can continue to serve and provide such leadership.

I would like to pay tribute to a most able staff. Progress noted in this report would not have been possible without their dedicated service. Your Executive Board, under the leadership of President Charles C. Osborne, has devoted much time during this year to the guidance of your

Society. We have been fortunate in past years and at the present time in the able service and leadership provided by distinguished Nebraskans to the welfare of the Society.