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Article Summary: Kivett's 1968 concerns included membership growth, development of local historical organizations, legislative appropriations and expansion of the Headquarters building.

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Photographs / Images: construction of the mall across 15th Street from the headquarters building; Lynn Kathleen Holden, Don Shriner, Frank Marsh, and Fern Hubbard Orme at dedication ceremonies at the Nebraska Statehood Memorial; visitors at the Kennard House; unveiling of the ninetieth Historical Land Mark Council marker; Robert N Manley speaking to Society members; Charles W Martin, James Olson and Guy N Henninger; Beta Theta Pi pledges helping to clean the Kennard House; painting the picket fence at the Kennard House; excavations in Deuel County; reconstruction of the 1874 adjutant's office at Fort Robinson; school children on tours of the Museum led by Junior League members; a mobile museum; Louise Small assisting a university student doing research in the Society library; an exhibit of archival material related to the La Flesche family; Archivists Duane Reed and James Potter



Construction of a mall closed 15th Street, but visitors continued to arrive at the Society building by the busload.

THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN 1968

By MARVIN F. KIVETT, Director

THIS has been a year of unprecedented activity for your Society. Much of this was due to the Statehood Centennial, but equally responsible was the growing awareness and appreciation of our historical heritage in all areas of the state. Just one year ago we reported some eighty local historical organizations in Nebraska. This year we find there are more than one hundred such organizations with more than sixty having preservation and display programs.

The reporting year started July 1, 1967, with your Society hosting royalty. We were visited by Miss Alaska Centennial, Colleen Pettit of Palmer, Alaska, and Nebraska Centennial Queen Nancy Griffin of Atkinson. This set the stage for a series of Centennial observances which have continued beyond the Centennial year. Many of the activities begun in 1967—county histories, museums or restorations, for example—have not yet reached their conclusion, but will continue to benefit Nebraska history in the years to come.

The Society's *Historical News Letter*, now in its twenty-first year of publication, has become not only a record of your state society's activities but also a tabulation

Mr. Kivett delivered this report at the Society's Annual Fall Meeting, held October 5, 1968, in Lincoln.

of the achievements of the many local organizations. Thus, there has developed a great army of dedicated people working for a common goal: the maximum preservation of our history. This cooperative activity has received regional and national recognition.

Your Executive Board, headed by Dr. James C. Olson, has provided leadership and guidance throughout the year. The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation has in a sense "come of age" this year with the institution of an enlarged Board of Trustees and, under the direction of Maurice S. Hevelone of Beatrice, gives promise of providing vital assistance not only to the Society but to the total effort of preserving and interpreting our history.

I am reminded on many occasions that the common link between the Society and many of our members is found only in the newsletter and *Nebraska History*. The latter publication has reached maturity and this year commemorated its fiftieth year of publication by re-issuing a souvenir copy of the first issue of 1918.

For the first time during the past five years, our staff has remained relatively stable with a considerable decrease in the loss of professional staff members. However, Robert Gant, Curator of Anthropology, resigned to accept the position of Museum Director at the South Dakota Historical Society. Carl H. Jones replaced Mr. Gant. This retention of staff has resulted primarily from the careful consideration given our needs by the Legislative Budget Committee.

It might interest you to learn that the Society processed more than thirteen thousand pieces of mail during the year. A total of 2,223 individual letters were answered, and there were 2,137 telephone calls requesting information. Thousands of additional inquiries were answered by providing educational leaflets, photographic reproductions, and other printed materials.

During the year staff members attended a total of seventy-one meetings at which they gave addresses or in some way participated. Of this number, I attended forty-eight and other staff members twenty-three. Members of the staff

DEDICATION HIGHLIGHTS ANNUAL MEETING



Taking part in dedication ceremonies at the Nebraska Statehood Memorial were Lynn Kathleen Holden, great-great-granddaughter of Thomas P. Kennard, Don Shriner, representing the Nebraska Centennial Commission, Secretary of State Frank Marsh, and State Senator Fern Hubbard Orme. The ceremony was held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting.



Dedication of the Statehood Memorial gave many an opportunity to visit the restored home for the first time.

Rain dampened the outdoor ceremonies, but the ninetieth Historical Land Mark Council marker was unveiled.



Robert N. Manley of Hiram Scott College discussed the history of the University of Nebraska as he spoke to Society members at the evening banquet.



Charles W. Martin, newly-elected President of the Nebraska State Historical Society.



Outgoing President and retiring Executive Board member Chancellor James C. Olson (right) receives parting words from General Guy N. Henninger.

represented the Society at a number of national and regional meetings, including a conference of the Society of American Archivists, the Missouri Valley Conference of Collegiate Teachers of History, the Plains Archeological Conference, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Nebraska Museums Conference, which was hosted by the Society. Curator Vance Nelson of the Fort Robinson Museum was one of a limited number selected throughout the nation to attend a two-week seminar on historical site administration coordinated by the Association for State and Local History. Beth Cowgill, Editorial Assistant, was also selected by the Association to attend a seminar on historical publications.

Our membership presently stands at 4,322. It should be twice this number, and we urge each of you to assist us in gaining new members. The most encouraging phase of our membership is the increased number of libraries and schools which belong to the Society. This includes 380 such memberships. There are 359 Contributing Members, 14 Supporting Members, and 32 new Life Members. The additional support provided by these special memberships can be of considerable importance to Society activities.

The Director continued to serve on a number of committees or boards with historically related interests. Among these are the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, the Historical Land Mark Council, the Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission, the National Pony Express Centennial Association, and the State Records Advisory Board.

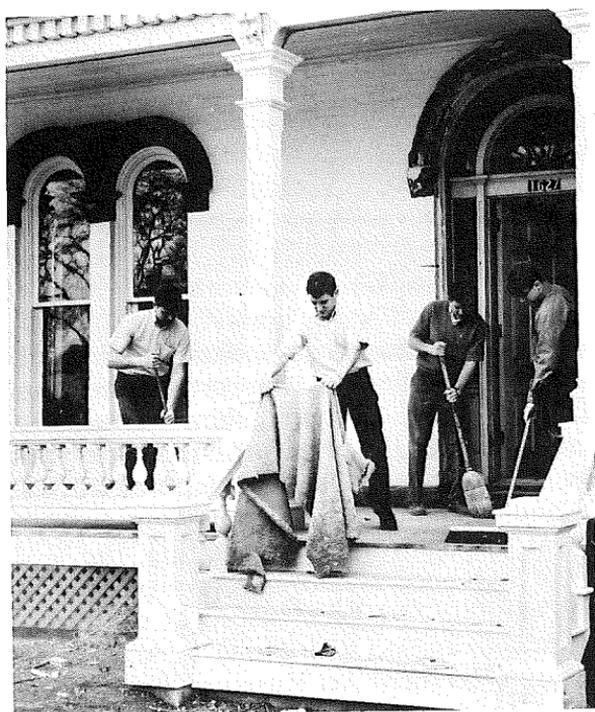
Your Society operates through four basic programs, each of which receives a specific appropriation. These include the Administrative department under the immediate supervision of the Director, the Museum, the Library, and the Archives. Each department head has submitted a detailed report of his division's activities throughout the past year, and a few details of these reports follow.

MUSEUM

The museum program, headed by Museum Director Wendell Frantz, is responsible for the preservation and interpretation of our history through the utilization of artifacts ranging from those of the prehistoric Indian to those of the last decade. This past year exhibit areas were located at Fort Robinson and in three mobile display museums, as well as in Lincoln at the main museum building, the W. J. Bryan home, and the Statehood Memorial restoration. As the year ended special exhibits had been placed at the Gavins Point power house in cooperation with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and Joslyn Memorial Art Museum. Plans are also being developed in cooperation with the Union Pacific Railroad for a special museum train car to be featured during the 1969 centennial of the Continental Railroad. A total of ninety-two displays were constructed by the exhibits staff.

Of the recent programs, the mobile museums show much promise as a means of reaching a large number of visitors for a minimum expenditure. The unit located near Chimney Rock, in cooperation with the City of Bayard, attracted more than eight thousand visitors. This indicates the desirability of a permanent visitors' center there, especially since the Society has title to some eighty acres, including Chimney Rock itself. A second unit, located on an Interstate 80 rest stop near Grand Island, was visited by more than twenty thousand persons despite the lack of advance signs on the highway.

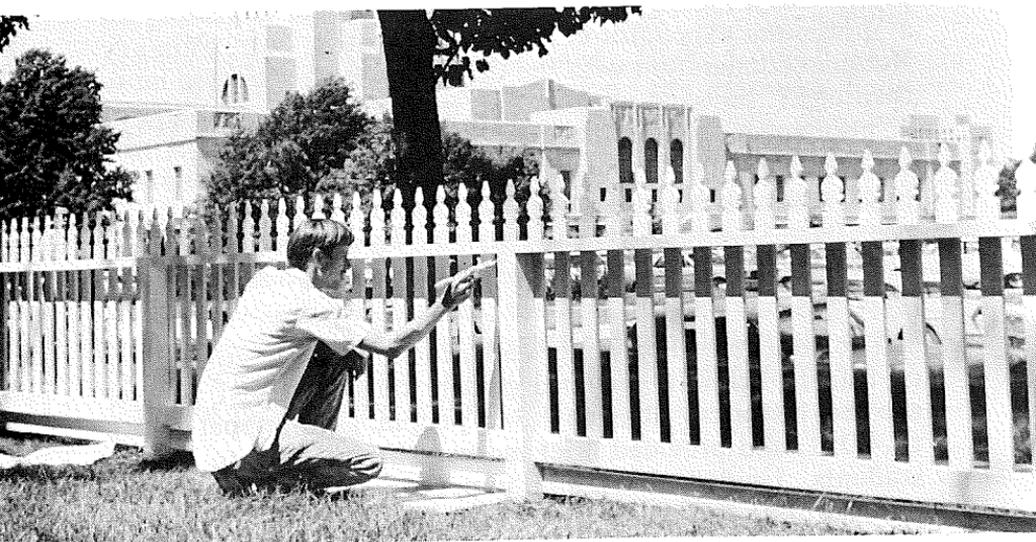
The educational program, under the immediate supervision of Marbro Eckholt, provided guided tours for 6,431 people, showed historical films to 1,347 people, gave puppet shows to 4,051, and provided brief museum orientations to 10,863 students. Guided tours and puppet programs were made possible by volunteers from the Lincoln Junior League.



*Beta Theta Pi
"pledge power"
helped clean the
Kennard House in
February.*

MUSEUM CONTINUES DIVERSE PROJECTS

A finishing touch at the Kennard House was this picket fence, like the ones which originally surrounded both the house and the State Capitol.





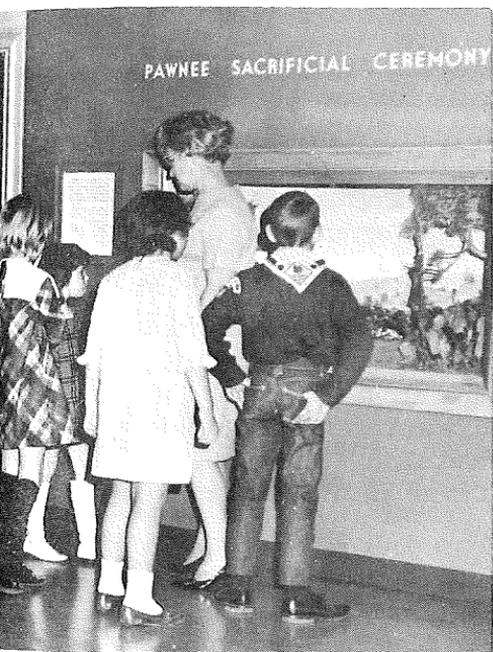
Excavations in Deuel County exposed building remains believed to date from 1850 to 1860.



At Fort Robinson, reconstruction progressed on the 1874 adjutant's office.



Three mobile museums brought special exhibits to outlying areas of the state.



Aided by the Lincoln Junior League, the Museum gave guided tours to well over six thousand persons.



Another important educational service of the Society and the Museum is the writing and distribution of educational leaflets. Teachers' packets, which include the entire series of educational leaflets, are distributed free to Nebraska teachers and libraries. We were aided in this program the past year by a grant from the Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs.

Through the cooperation of the State Department of Education, more than one thousand Pictorial Heritage packets were distributed to school libraries. A cooperative project to reprint selected columns from "Out of Old Nebraska," the weekly press release, was also made possible by the State Department of Education. Requests for educational materials were received from all fifty states and six foreign countries.

In other statistics, a total of 2,268 museum items were accessioned from 122 donors. As the number of local museums grows, an increasing number of donors are referred to a particular museum where their materials will have greater local significance.

The Statehood Memorial in the 1869 Thomas P. Kennard home has occupied much of the Museum staff's time during the past year. John Q. Magie, Curator of History, has had immediate responsibility for supervising the restoration while Robert Pettit, Curator of Collections, has been responsible for its furnishings. A great deal of effort has gone into this restoration to make it truly authentic. Approximately one-fourth of the cost of the project has come from private funds, including various civic and historical organizations. The Nebraska Centennial Commission Non-Profit Association made major contributions.

Our branch at Fort Robinson, now consisting of nine buildings, attracted 43,721 visitors this year. The program to make Fort Robinson truly a branch of the Society in western Nebraska has progressed under the immediate supervision of Curator Vance Nelson. A major step has been taken by the establishment of a small research library with microfilm reader. Thirty-nine school groups used Society facilities at the Fort by visiting the main museum or receiving guided

tours of the area or special educational programs. Added during the year was a meeting room seating approximately one hundred persons, which is located in the old veterinary research stable. Special evening film programs were provided during the height of the tourist season.

From its start with one main museum building at Fort Robinson in 1956, the Society has developed others according to an overall plan. Among these have been the blacksmith shop and the harness and saddle repair shop. During the past year, the 1884 wheelwright's shop was restored, furnished, and opened to visitors. Reconstruction work on the earliest period at the fort has been underway for the past two years. As the first phase, archeological work was carried on at the sites of the 1874 guardhouse and adjutant's office. We were successful in locating remains of the original foundations as well as in learning many details of their construction. The guardhouse was completed and open to the public this summer. The adjutant's office will be completed next summer. The next project will be the restoration of an 1887 adobe officers' quarters. If funds are available, this building will be fully restored and furnished in the period.

Archeological work during the past year included the continuing cooperative project of highway salvage with the Department of Roads. During the fall and spring excavations were carried out in an important historic Pawnee earth lodge village in Butler County. Excavations near Chappell in Deuel County on the Interstate 80 route uncovered the remains of buildings and artifacts that may date from the 1860 period.

LIBRARY

The Library program under the able direction of Librarian Louise Small has continued its traditional service to all patrons through letters, telephone calls, and personal contacts.

Mrs. Small was directly involved in the selection and establishment of books for the branch library collection at Fort Robinson. Some 762 volumes representing 361 titles have been placed there with accompanying library catalog cards. Already this collection has been utilized by a considerable number of researchers in the area.

In early 1966, the Society received the entire genealogical collection of the Nebraska State Library. These publications, combined with those already in our collection, form one of the most extensive genealogical libraries in this region. Awareness of this resource developed gradually during the past year but was stimulated by the Centennial. Teachers used family interest to encourage a historical perspective in their classes. Some 277 genealogical queries were answered by the Library staff.

A total of 623 new titles were cataloged and processed for addition to the Library collection, and 567 volumes were added to existing titles. A major acquisition was 117 filmed theses, written during the last two decades for degrees at the University of Nebraska. Many of these were available only in the form of a single copy located in the University library. These copies were loaned to the Society for microfilming.

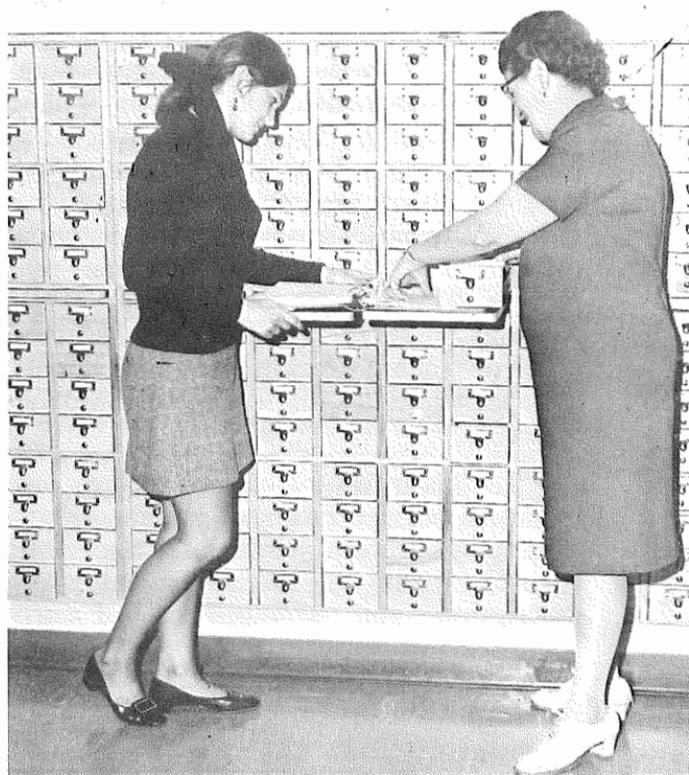
The Society regularly receives and processes 567 periodical titles and 257 newspaper titles. This involves processing 4,822 periodical issues and 17,836 newspaper issues in a single year.

At the start of the 1968 calendar year, the Society bindery was discontinued after a study which indicated that as a result of microfilming and other changes, the process was no

longer economically practical. An increased number of daily newspapers are being placed on microfilm by their publishers, and thus positive prints are now available.

Requests for photographs during this past year reached a new all time high. Their uses included illustrations for the Centennial's official publication, *Nebraska: A Pictorial History*, as well as for newspapers and local histories. The Solomon D. Butcher collection of sod house photographs was in particular demand. A special book utilizing this collection was issued in Nebraska, and requests for Butcher photographs have come from as far away as Stockholm, Sweden, where a Butcher photo is being included in a new textbook for Swedish primary schools. The photographic collections, now numbering more than eighty-five thousand views, are unique; but like all departments, they are in need of more adequate space.

LIBRARY CATALOG



Librarian Louise Small assists a University student doing research in the Society Library.

ARCHIVES

Under the direction of Archivist Duane J. Reed and Assistant Archivist James Pöfter, a major activity of the Archival staff during the past year has been the transfer of official state records into the State Archives for permanent preservation. Working in cooperation with the office of the Secretary of State, the appraisal and transferral of historical materials was completed in the offices of the Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, State Auditor, and State Treasurer. Additional materials were obtained from the Department of Agriculture, Office of the State Surveyor, Department of Veterans' Affairs, and the State Liquor Commission. This activity has resulted in the preservation of over one thousand cubic feet of historical materials dating from 1854 to 1960. Each cubic foot comprises approximately six hundred documents.

Due to the increasing accumulation of records in county courthouses and city halls throughout the state, the Archives staff contacted each county clerk and district judge in the state, reiterating the statutes under which the Archives is to be notified prior to any destruction of county records. At the present time, the preservation of local records is largely a rescue operation due to the limited archival budget and staff. As the archival program is expanded, the staff will begin a more systematic program of assisting county and local officials in the proper disposition of their non-current records. The transfer of historical materials into the State Archives relieves valuable storage space and promotes efficient record keeping for individual city and county agencies while insuring the preservation of essential historical materials.

With this influx of official records into the Archives, an extensive reorganization of present collections was initiated. This reorganization provides for the creation of a Manuscript Division within the Archives and allows for the proper description and arrangement of official records. In

conjunction with this project, work is underway on the publication of a comprehensive guide to the collections which will serve as a finding aid to the holdings of the Archival and Manuscript divisions of the Archives.

Research activity in the Archives reached the highest level of the Society's history with 2,531 individuals using Archival facilities during the past year. Growing public awareness of the significance of archival materials is revealed in the increasing amount of staff time devoted to public service. During the year the staff wrote 854 letters, which constituted a 100 per cent increase in correspondence over the previous year. Numerous academic degrees were obtained at the University of Nebraska and other institutions throughout the United States at least partially as a result of research conducted in the Archives. In addition, local, regional, and national histories were compiled through the study of archival and manuscript materials. Collections which drew particular attention from scholars were the papers of Senator Hugh Butler, used in a study of President Truman and the Eightieth Congress; the papers of Bess Streeter Aldrich, used in a dissertation on her life; the records of the Nebraska Farmers' Alliance, used in a study of Populist influences on Nebraska politics; the records of the Governor's Office, used in a study of Governor William A. Richardson; and the records of the State Board of Education, used in a study of influences on education in Nebraska. In addition, questions of legal, social, economic, and historical importance were resolved through study of archival materials.

Through its Microfilm Division, the Archives continued to provide service to individuals throughout the United States. The work of this division is primarily devoted to placing the back files of Nebraska's newspapers on microfilm. Present holdings date from 1854 to 1968 and consist of 11,980 rolls of microfilm, comprising the largest existing collection of Nebraska newspapers. Titles placed on film during the past year include: the *Fillmore Chronicle*, 1876-1957; the *Nance County Journal*, 1887-1966; the *Nebraska Signal*, 1882-1966; the *Genoa Leader-Times*, 1895-1965; and the *Pawnee Republican*, 1874-1966.

From the Archives.

DISTINGUISHED NEBRASKANS

THE JOSEPH LA FLESCHE FAMILY



The La Flesche family provided the theme for this special exhibit of Archival material.

During the year 698 rolls of film were produced by the division, a 10 per cent increase in film production over the previous year. Through selective filming, the division also provided security for the records of numerous state agencies, including the offices of the Secretary of State, State Fire Marshal, and State Surveyor. A major accomplishment of the division was the placing of 280 volumes of original 1854-1895 Nebraska land surveys on microfilm. This project provided security for the records and furnished the Archives with an excellent historical source.

In addition to their filming duties, employees in the Microfilm Division provided instruction and service to 2,364 individuals who used microfilm while conducting research in the Archives. In conjunction with this service, they responded to 113 telephone inquiries and produced hard copy print-outs from the microfilm at the request of the public. Available through purchase, 450 rolls of microfilm

were distributed to individuals and institutions throughout the nation.

The Archives continued to obtain historical materials related to the development of Scandinavian settlements in Nebraska. In conjunction with this project, which is carried out in cooperation with the Lincoln Norden Club, the Archivist corresponded with individuals and institutions throughout the United States and in Europe. Data obtained through this project provided the basis for the compilation of a bibliography of historical publications related to the settlement and development of Scandinavians in Nebraska. In addition, an agreement was reached with Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, whereby the Archives will obtain microfilm copies of Scandinavian newspapers which have been published in Nebraska and maintained by the Augustana library.

It is evident that major progress has been made in all departments, but none of our staff is satisfied with his present achievements. An increasing number of Nebraskans must become aware of the work of the Society and join in its efforts to preserve the state's history. Our membership must be increased as well as that of each local historical organization. The Society must work closely with these local organizations aiding and advising them in every possible way. The job is too large and too complex for a single state organization. There must be many volunteers.

In addition, Society programs must receive adequate budget consideration from the State Legislature if we are to maintain a strong central organization with trained people.

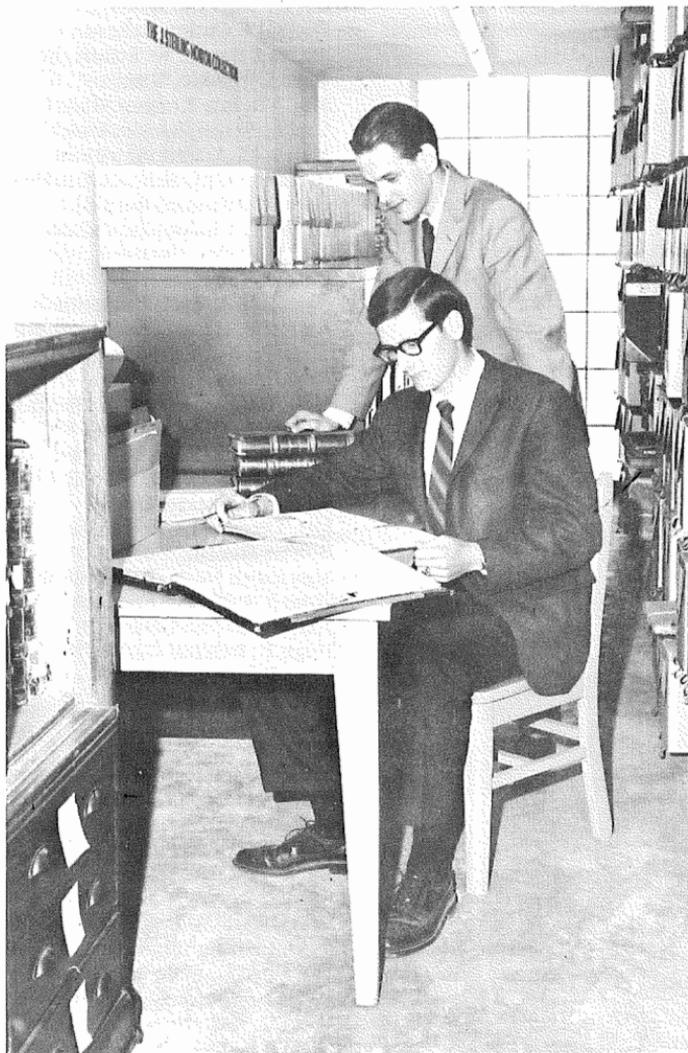
A major concern of your Executive Board, and one for which an immediate solution has not been found, is an expansion of the headquarters building. This building, barely adequate in size when dedicated in 1953, is now fifteen years old. The major need if we are to meet our legal responsibilities is increased space for the State Archives. However, each and every department is badly in need of increased storage and work facilities. Many of our collections

are now poorly housed at four separate locations outside the headquarters building. Soon we will be forced to rent commercial storage if we are to meet our responsibilities. Although desirable, the records now coming to us from state government have accelerated this need for additional space.

Our budget request for the 1969-1971 biennium has received a great deal of attention from the Society staff and your Executive Board. This budget will be acted upon by the Legislature which will convene in January, 1969. In it we have proposed a continuation of our present services, expansions in certain areas, and the introduction of two additional staff members—a building supervisor at Fort Robinson and a manuscript curator in the Archives. We have proposed the funding of a mobile museum program which would provide service to all of the Nebraska schools, particularly those in the rural areas of the state. Additional funds for a comprehensive historical survey of the state will be needed if Nebraska is to become acquainted with its historical resources and qualify for matching federal funds. The last session of the Legislature appropriated five thousand dollars for this purpose. Increased appropriations are also being requested to aid in the important microfilm program. Much of our microfilm is presently available only on negative prints. Positive prints must be made if the collection is to be adequately preserved.

Last year our Foundation balance stood at \$109,725.55. During the past year the income from investments, donations, and bequests amounted to \$44,333.51, making a total of \$154,059.06. This increase of about 40 per cent as compared with slightly more than 30 per cent the year before indicates increased interest in the work of the Foundation and the promise of support in the future. Major additions to the Foundation during the past year resulted from bequests from Rosanna Carson and Helen Nance Anderson. The Nebraska Centennial Commission Non-Profit Association also provided substantial donations for the Statehood Memorial and the historical markers program. Adequate support of the Foundation can be an important supplement to the limited tax funds available to the Society.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our able Society staff. Their efforts this past year in providing public services to an increased number of people have been outstanding. Members of the Executive Board, under the leadership of President James C. Olson, have devoted much time and effort to the Society and its activities.



Archivist Duane Reed (standing) and Assistant Archivist James Potter transferred increased amounts of historical materials into the Archives during the past year.