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Article Summary: Legislative appropriations in 1969 added Neligh Mills to the properties managed by the Society. Funding also increased Society staff and services.

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Photographs / Images: Merrill J Mattes at the annual Society banquet, Everett N Dick receiving the Sellers Award, a session at the annual meeting, dedication of the Senator Norris Home, Union Pacific Golden Spike Centennial car at a stop in Utah, Herbert Thomas and Alice Balderson designing UP displays, Carl Jones and crew beginning development of prehistoric flint quarries of Nehawka, restoration of an 1887 officers' quarters adobe duplex at Fort Robinson, Harold Sutton with a watch display in the Society Museum, a guided tour through the Museum led by a Junior League member, Joleen Smith and Elizabeth Arnold microfilming weekly newspapers, Pat Peel and Connie Robertson researching newspaper files, Jim Potter and helpers unloading records transferred to the Society, the completed 15th Street Mall near the Nebraska State Historical Society building, Opal Jacobsen and Dee Harmonie assisting a researcher



Speaker at the Society banquet was Merrill J. Mattes of the National Park Service. His book, The Great Platte River Road, was published by the Society in 1969.



Dr. Everett N. Dick of Union College (at microphone) received Sellers Award. Standing with him is Charles W. Martin, president of the Society.

THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN 1969

By MARVIN F. KIVETT, *Director*

Like all years, in my experience, your Society during the past year has been active. An important factor for the Board and for the staff was the Eightieth Session of the Nebraska Legislature. A number of laws were passed affecting not only the State Society but also in some cases local and county historical organizations. A number of these laws particularly affect the State Archives.

The 80th session appropriated a total of \$866,016 from the general fund for the 1969-1971 period as compared to \$658,074 for the 1967-1969 biennium. Of this amount \$35,288 was designated for the purchase and operations of the Neligh Mills, an additional responsibility. The budget of \$830,728 for the present programs represents an increase of 26 per cent. Among the important increases provided will be a full-time building supervisor at Fort Robinson, a Curator of Manuscripts for the State Archives, and extended services for the mobile museum program.

Another legislative action of importance was the passage of Resolution 90 which provides for a study of the present and future building needs of your Society. Your Executive Board sponsored this resolution and is most interested in working with the Legislative Study Committee to solve the pressing problem of adequate space.

There is an unprecedented interest in the history of the state which has not diminished with the 1967 Centennial year. The number of county and local historical organizations increases almost daily. Buildings are being moved, restored, reconstructed, and preserved. Research and interest in our local history is evident throughout the state. Your Society staff has been active this year in rendering assistance to many of the more than one hundred local and county organizations.

The Society's *Historical News Letter* has continued to serve not only as a record of your state Society's activities but also to document the progress and achievements of the many local organizations. *Nebraska History* in its fifty-first year of publication has published articles dealing with the variety of Nebraska history. For the first time in a number of years we have added to the *Publications in Anthropology* series with Number 3, titled "Pawnee and Lower Loup Pottery" by Dr. Roger T. Grange, Jr., a former staff member. Vol. XXV of the *Publications* series titled "The Great Platte River Road" represents a major contribution to our trail history by Merrill J. Mattes. This study was made possible by a Woods Fellowship Grant administered by the Society. Funds for this grant and others were made available by the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc. This is the first addition to the *Publications* series since 1958 and one of the most extensive since the series started in 1885. The publication was made possible by donations to the Society Foundation.

The James L. Sellers Memorial Award instituted by the Foundation in 1967 for a period of five years is given to the author of the most outstanding article published in each volume of *Nebraska History*.

Professor Everett N. Dick, author of *Sod House Frontier* and many other important publications, has been named the recipient of the 1968 award. His prize-winning article titled "Water, A Frontier Problem" appeared in the Autumn 1968 issue of *Nebraska History*. Professor

Dick was awarded a plaque and given a check for three hundred dollars.

It is not always simple to document progress or increased service to the public. One may cite 12,000 pieces of mail handled, thousands of educational leaflets distributed, as well as the thousands of telephone calls which requested research and information. In the final analysis, the evaluation of an educational and research institution is based on service to each individual. We hope that we have been successful in providing this service.

Our membership continues to increase at a slow but steady rate. Our present membership stands at 4,452 as compared with 4,322 reported last year. Five years ago our membership was 3,242, a gain of more than 1,200 members. We presently have 393 Contributing memberships of which 89 are from out of the state. There are 14 Supporting members and 39 new Life memberships were taken out last year.

During the year staff members represented the Society at a total of 62 meetings ranging from local to national in their scope. Some of these included meetings of the Nebraska Museums Conference, Plains Archeological Conference, Missouri Valley Conference of Collegiate Teachers, Oral History Conference, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. James Potter, Assistant Archivist, attended the training course offered at the 24th Institute of Archives Administration held in Washington, D. C. Linda Greene, Editorial Assistant, attended the American Association for State and Local History Seminar on the editing of historical publications in Nashville, Tennessee. Duane J. Reed, State Archivist, was particularly active in work with the State Records Advisory Board in formulating legislative bills relating to archival materials.

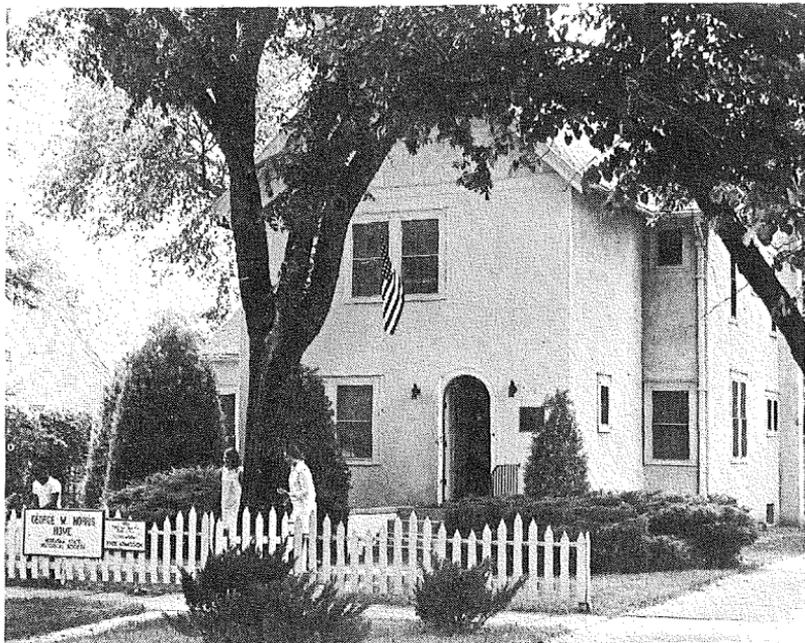
The Director continued to serve on a number of boards and committees with historically related interests. Among these are the Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission, Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, National Pony Express



Sessions of the Ninety-first Annual Meeting of the Society were well attended.

Centennial Association, State Records Advisory Board, State Historical Preservation Board, and the Historical Land Mark Council.

Your Society operates with four major divisions, each of which receives a specific appropriation and is supervised directly by a department head. These include Administration, the Museum, the Library, and the State Archives. Each department has submitted a detailed report of the year's activities. I would like to provide a few highlights from these reports.



Dedication of the Senator Norris Home occurred at the Spring Meeting of the Society April 26 in McCook.

MUSEUM

The museum program, headed by Museum Director Wendell Frantz, is responsible for the research, preservation and interpretation of our history largely through the use of artifacts. The staff consists of fifteen full-time employees and a part-time staff largely made up of students, numbering from five to a high of twenty during the summer season. Exhibit areas during this last year included the headquarters building and Statehood Memorial in Lincoln; George W. Norris Home at McCook; Fort Robinson near Crawford; and three mobile museums, two located on I-80 and one at Chimney Rock. The attendance for last year at these exhibits numbered 170,000. Fort Robinson attracted 36,726 visitors. These figures do not

include 568,674 people who visited the Union Pacific Centennial Train car museum or those in special areas such as the Gavins Point reservoir. It is our goal to have Society exhibits in all sections of the state. The Society has also continued in the cooperative effort to make the Wm. J. Bryan home available for visitors.

An important part of the museum program is the educational service under the immediate supervision of Mrs. Elsie Sailors, Curator of Education. The Junior League of Lincoln has provided volunteer assistance to this program for some fifteen years. This activity ranges from guide service to special educational programs for thousands of school children. From October to May puppet programs are provided two days a week by these League volunteers. Much of this educational effort would not be possible without the assistance of the League. Tours of the Statehood Memorial have been increased through the volunteers aid of the Heritage League of Lincoln. Another major service of the educational section is the distribution of educational leaflets and related materials to the teachers and students of the state. We were aided in the publication of a leaflet this year on the State Capitol by a grant from the Federated Women's Clubs of the State.

Museum artists completed some sixty separate units of display with some seventeen displays being constructed for the Union Pacific's Golden Spike Centennial Exposition train. I might add that this museum car has traveled from Nebraska to California and has resulted in a great number of letters inquiring about some phase of our history. Another major acquisition to the museum for the year was the Senator George W. Norris Home donated to the state by the family and dedicated April 26 of this year at the Spring Meeting.

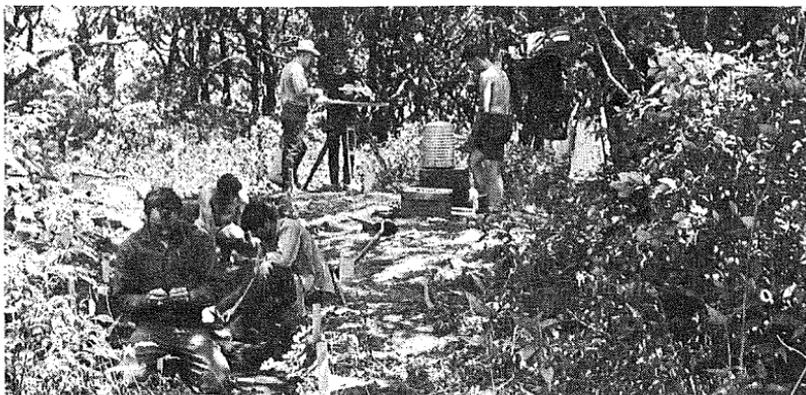
A total of 171 individuals donated some 3,245 items to the museum collection. Students and others made use of the museum collections in their studies. Presently two graduate students are utilizing society anthropological collec-



One of the many stops made by the Union Pacific Golden Spike Centennial Car was at this Utah town. Displays for the car were constructed by Museum personnel.

Artists Herbert Thomas and Alice Balderson design U.P. displays.





Curator of Anthropology Carl Jones (white hat, center) and crew begin development of pre-historic flint quarries at Nehawka.

tions for advanced degrees. Dr. David Gradwohl has completed his dissertation on the Society archeological collections from Cass County and has been granted his Ph.D. from Harvard University. This study is in process of publication to be issued as Number 4 in our *Publications in Anthropology* series.

Our staff photographer made some 1,548 prints and processed more than 2,000 negatives for museum exhibits, research, and patrons. A considerable amount of house-keeping has taken place in the building this year, ranging from the completion of the cleaning and waterproofing of the building to the improved storage and lighting systems in the museum section. A special setting was also completed to represent an officers quarters at Fort Atkinson.

Curator Vance Nelson continued work on the restoration and reconstruction program at Fort Robinson. The society presently has responsibility here for nine buildings, including the Post Headquarters which houses the major museum exhibits. The reconstruction of the 1874 Adjutant's office was completed during the year just east of the Post Guardhouse completed last year. Work has also started on the restoration of an 1887 Adobe officers' quar-

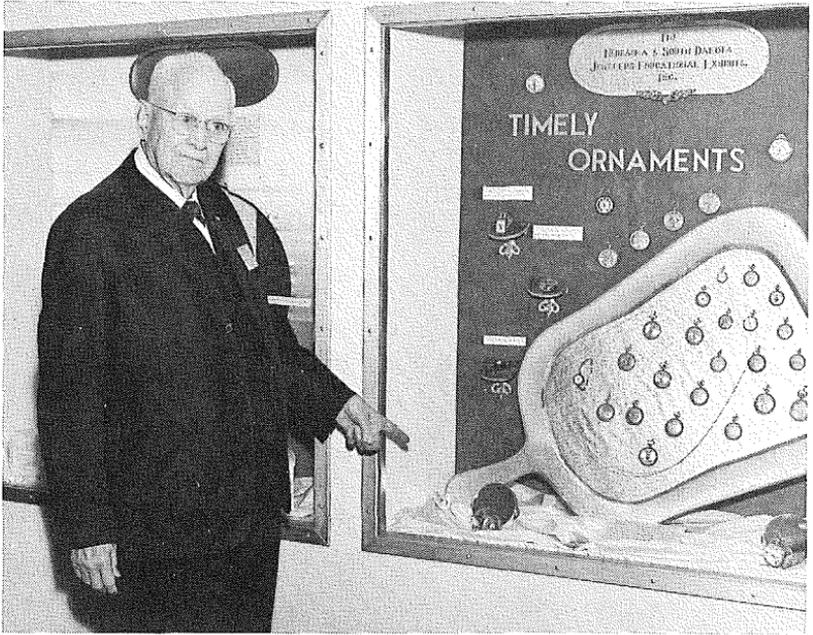


Restoration of an 1887 officers' quarters adobe duplex is under way at Fort Robinson.

ters which will eventually be furnished and opened to the public. Progress has also been made at Fort Robinson to expand our library and reference service for researchers of western Nebraska.

As a result of a grant from the Department of Economic Development, the Society has completed a detailed survey of the archeological, architectural, and historical features for Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, and Richardson Counties which is now in process of publication. Similar studies are in process for all areas of the state to complete a comprehensive state-wide plan of preservation as provided by the National Preservation Act of 1966.

Our archeological research has continued with salvage operations being carried out in many areas of the state. Excavations of prehistoric Indian flint quarries and a prehistoric Indian earthlodge floor in Cass County were carried out this summer by a student crew under the direction of Carl Jones, Curator of Anthropology. Gayle Carlson, Highway Salvage Archeologist, traveled 8,705 miles in 32 counties to survey 76 highway building projects. The Highway Salvage Program is made possible by the close cooperation of the Nebraska Department of Roads.



A watch display in the Society Museum is made possible through cooperation of Nebraska and South Dakota jewelers. Pointing to oldest watch in display (ca. 1700) is Harold Sutton, McCook jeweler.



Almost a daily occurrence are guided tours through the Museum. Assisting are members of the Junior League.

STATE ARCHIVES

The State Archives, under the immediate supervision of State Archivist Duane J. Reed and Assistant Archivist James E. Potter, has experienced a period of extensive program development during the past fiscal year. Significant in this development was the passage of two pieces of legislation which have strengthened and broadened the legal responsibility of the State Archives. L.B. 512, as passed by the legislature, constitutes a revision of the 1965 Records Management Act and sets forth the responsibilities of the State Archives as a program of the Society. Under this law the State Archives has the expressed authority to accession for permanent preservation any historical record which has been submitted to the State Records Advisory Board for disposition or transfer. In addition, the Director of the Society and the State Archivist have been designated as permanent members of the State Records Advisory Board. The law further specifies that no agency of the state, county, or municipal government shall dispose of any historical material other than through transfer to the State Archives without the written consent of the State Archivist. Whenever historical material is determined to be in jeopardy of destruction or deterioration, it is the prerogative of the State Archivist to petition the agency of origin and the State Records Advisory Board for the transfer of such material into the State Archives at the Society. The additional passage of L.B. 1148 amended R.S. 82-105 so as to provide that the Society shall obtain possession of historical materials within any department of state, county courthouse, or city hall in Nebraska by repealing the twenty-year age restriction under which an agency could retain historical documents. Upon passage of this bill the State Archives was directed to assume the responsibility for the



Joleen Smith, microfilm supervisor (right), and Elizabeth Arnold transfer weekly newspapers to film.



Archives Assistants Pat Peet (left) and Connie Robertson research newspaper files.

appraisal, arrangement and description, and preservation of an additional twenty-year accumulation of historical records within state and local government.

Working closely with the Records Management Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, guidelines for effective records management and archival administration within state government were formulated as prescribed by L.B. 512. These guidelines constitute an efficient approach to records maintenance, destruction, and preservation. Contemporary records of an administrative non-historical nature fall within the jurisdiction of the Records Management Division while those records of historical significance are assured protection and preservation within the State Archives.

A systematic approach to records management and archival administration was initiated with an inventory of the records within the offices of the Lancaster County courthouse by the staffs of the State Archives and Records Management Division. Following this inventory, schedules detailing retention, destruction, and transfer recommendations on each record series inventories were submitted to the Lancaster County officials. These schedules serve as a basis for implementing a sound program of archival administration within the offices of the remaining Nebraska counties. In addition, similar schedules are planned for each municipal office throughout the state as well as for each agency of state government. This approach to archival administration should eliminate the rescue operation that has typified the preservation of state archives in the past.

Research activity continued at an active pace with 2,570 individuals using the combined facilities of the State Archives during the year. Collections utilized in major studies included the papers of George D. Meiklejohn, former Under Secretary of War, in a study of American Colonialism in the Philippines, 1899-1904; the records of the State Department of Education in a study of the development of social science in secondary education in Nebraska; the pa-



Assistant Archivist Jim Potter (right) and helpers unload records transferred to the Society.

pers of Samuel Maxwell, Charles Wooster, and Governors William Poynter and Silas Holcomb in an analysis of the relationship between the Populist and Progressive political parties in the western Middle West, 1890-1912; and the papers of Willa Cather, used in a biography of her life. An important aspect of public service is the daily correspondence of the Archives staff with individuals who are unable to carry out research within the Society building. During the year a record number of 894 letters regarding social, legal, economic, and historical questions were answered by the Archives staff.

The Microfilm Division of the State Archives under the immediate supervision of Mrs. Joleen Smith continued

to provide important service to individuals throughout the state and nation. Although primarily concerned with microfilming Nebraska's newspapers, the Division has placed increasing emphasis on the collection and filming of historical records not available for physical acquisition. This emphasis is reflected in the record number of 50 rolls of microfilm containing selected church, school, and official state records filmed by the Division during the year. Microfilmed editions of Nebraska's newspapers continued to be the major product of the Division, with 697 rolls of film being added to the shelves during the year. This work expanded the size of the collection to a total of 12,727 rolls of microfilm consisting of newspapers, 1854-1969; church records, 1860-1969; school records, 1880-1945; census enumerations, 1820-1890; selected state and federal records, 1854-1958; dissertations; and manuscript collections. Major newspaper titles placed on film during the year include *The Hebron Journal-Register*, 1892-1969; *The Falls City Journal*, 1908-1949; *North Loup Loyalist*, 1903-1943; *The Phonograph*, (St. Paul), 1878-1967; and *The Commercial Advertiser*, (Red Cloud), 1908-1968.

Aside from its filming responsibilities, the Division provided public instruction and service to 2,470 researchers who used the microfilm facilities during the year. Over 1,597 hard-copy prints were produced from the microfilm at public request. Available through purchase, 526 rolls of Society microfilm were distributed to individuals and institutions throughout the nation.

Work has been completed on a guide to the newspaper holdings of the State Archives. The guide contains a summary history of the early newspaper industry in Nebraska and serves as a finding aid to both microfilmed and original editions within the newspaper collection.

Major accessions during the year include records of the State Department of Agriculture, 1942-1963; the Nebraska State Education Association, 1895-1937; the State Department of Banking receivership files, 1929-1942; the



The completed 15th Street Mall has added to the attractiveness of the area near The Nebraska State Historical Society Building.

Women's Committee of the State Council of Defense, 1914-1919; and the Nebraska Public Library Commission, 1902-1928. Added to the holdings of the Manuscript Division were the papers of former Congressman Lawrence Brock, 1946-1968; former State Senators Kenneth L. Bowen, 1959-1966, and Otto H. Liebers, 1909-1967; and Congressman David T. Martin, 1960-1966.

The past year has continued to be a period of challenge and growth within the State Archives. Public service has been extended to an all-time high and significant collections have been accessioned. Most important, a firm legal base has been established for the implementation of a sound archival program. It is the goal of the Society to develop a strong archival program consistent with public service and the collection of the public and private documentation which is basic to the preservation of the continuing history of Nebraska.

LIBRARY

Society Librarian Mrs. Louise Small has spent a busy year inventorying and re-arranging some parts of the collection in order to provide better service for our steadily increasing number of patrons. Despite the inclement winter, users of the Library increased by over five hundred people during the year.

Researchers in our genealogical section have increased almost 100 per cent this year. Mrs. Small prepared detailed genealogical information and instruction sheets to aid the user of the Library and guide the patron inquiring by letter. In January she spoke to members of the Deborah Avery Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, on the subject "What's My Line?" Genealogical groups from the Lincoln Ward of Latter Day Saints Church have visited the Library accompanied by skilled genealogists to familiarize themselves with the material available in our collection.

A major inventorying project involved the MSS collection. This is a manuscript collection of unbound secondary material on subjects frequently requested by our patrons. Primary source material, which has previously been included, is being removed and transferred to the archival area. A final count of the subject folders in this collection showed 4,429 still in the Library. In a similar operation the Society's map collection is being transferred to a new steel map case, with repair and inventory as concomitant parts of this operation.

In an effort to serve special research interests among our patrons, we have established in the Reading Room a collection on the history and development of irrigation in the West, with emphasis on Nebraska. A cumulative index

on cards has been made available to the recent issues of Nebraska History, for which no cumulative index has been published. This has been placed in the area of the Library Card Catalog.

The library has worked with the Archival staff to help school and college classes use the resources of the Society. In November, 1968, classes from the University of Nebraska and Union College met in the Library and toured the Archives preparatory to using our material throughout the ensuing term. Grade school classes, well prepared by cooperative planning, have learned more about "Outstanding Nebraskans" and "Indians of Nebraska."



Photo Librarian Opal Jacobsen (left) and Dee Hermonie, assist a researcher.

SUMMARY

In summary, there is a growing awareness of your Society throughout not only the state but also the country. This can be noted not only by the increased number of people outside Nebraska who request service but also in the number who become Contributing members of the Society.

Before concluding this report I would like to report briefly on another major development, the Foundation, which gives every promise of being an important factor in assisting not only the Society but also in assisting the effort to preserve and interpret Nebraska history. Under the leadership of President M. S. Hevelone of Beatrice the Foundation has been reorganized and the Board of Trustees now includes fifty community leaders representing all areas of the state.

During the past year the income from investment, donations, and bequests amounted to \$40,876.98, making a total assets of \$190,900.34 as of June 30, 1969. One of the benefits of the Foundation is Volume XXV, "The Great Platte River Road," publication. As many of you know, the Foundation also owns the Constance M. Syford home at 700 North 16th Street in Lincoln. Major restoration work is presently being carried out by the Foundation on this property. The Foundation also made substantial contributions to the restoration of the Statehood Memorial. We need your support for the Foundation, which has already demonstrated that it can be an important supplement to the available tax funds.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to a dedicated Society staff. Your Executive Board Members, under the leadership of Charles W. Martin and your Foundation Trustees headed by M. S. Hevelone, have devoted many hours at their own expense to provide leadership to your Society.