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Article Summary: Kivett's 1970 report draws attention to projects involving local historical organizations and interested individuals statewide. An expanded Society publications program won several awards that year.

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Photographs / Images: A R Owens, elected Society President in 1970; awards received by the Society for publications and museum programs; Breakneck Hill historic site visited as part of the spring meeting at Fort Robinson; historical marker in Stanton County; Professor Joe B Frantz at the fall meeting in Lincoln; Fort Robinson marker; Mobile Museum; James L Sellers Memorial Award plaque presented to Professor James S King; workshop session for historical organizations; Lincoln Junior League volunteers providing tours; reconstructed kitchen in the Thomas P Kennard House; reconstructed Pawnee earthlodge section; archeological excavations in prehistoric earthlodge sites near the Nehawka flint quarries; foundations for the southeast corner of Fort Atkinson; restoration work on the Constance M Syford home ; expanded yard of the Kennard House; Mrs. Louise Small showing young visitors historical reference sources; researchers using microfilm



*A. R. Owens of Loup City was elected President of the Society at the 1970 Fall meeting.*

## THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN 1970

By MARVIN F. KIVETT, *Director*

I N COMPILING an annual report it is always interesting to look back to earlier years for comparison with our activities of today. Fifty years ago, in 1920, the annual meeting was held on January 13 with President Don Love presiding. Among the areas of discussion were a report by Robert Harvey and Society efforts to mark the Oregon Trail. The members also discussed the desirability of "setting aside a part of Scotts Bluff by the U. S. Government as a permanent reserve." Due to the coal strike, Society operations had been suspended for lack of steam heat the week prior to the meeting. The theme of the meeting was "Nebraska in the World War" with Governor S. R. McKelvie being the principal speaker. At least we haven't run out of coal and steam during the past year.

As never before in the history of the Society our efforts during the past year were directed toward projects outside of the Society headquarters building. Staff members directed their attention to all parts of the State in addition to assisting those patrons who visited the building. We have become involved, and all the state is becoming increasingly involved, with the State history. Particularly active in this aspect was the Archives program in its efforts to record and collect significant records and documents. The Historic Preservation Survey has also resulted in close cooperation between the State Society and local historical organizations and interested individuals. As a result of this survey and the development of a state historic preservation plan, an increasing number of our sites are receiving state and national recognition. This recognition will aid in their preservation. A total of 40 buildings and sites in Nebraska are now on the National Register of Historic Places.

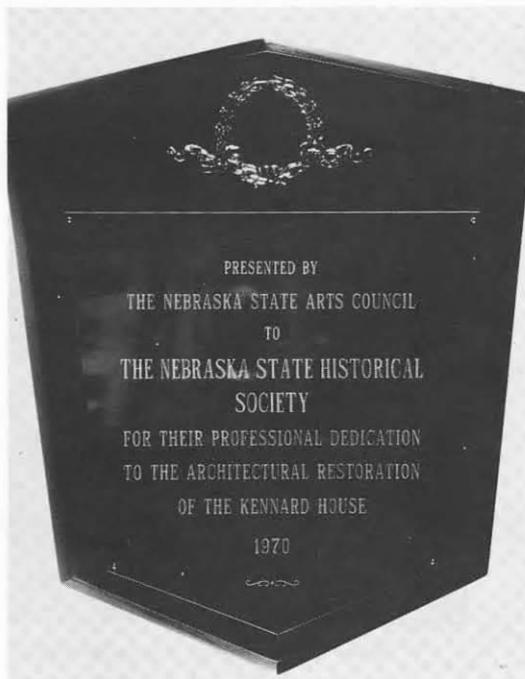
The regular services and programs of the Society have continued and in most cases have expanded as a result of public demand. An increased emphasis in the Administration program has been directed toward publications. The Society's *Historical News Letter* is a monthly report of historical activities throughout the State. *Nebraska History* has attracted an increasing number of contributors and readers. For the second

consecutive year we have added to the *Publications in Anthropology* series with Number 4, titled "Prehistoric Villages in Eastern Nebraska" by Dr. David Mayer Gradwohl. Dr. Gradwohl is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Iowa State University, and much of his study is based on prehistoric archeological collections at the Society. Numbers 1 and 2 of this series in anthropology have been reprinted and again made available.

Vol. XXV of the *Publications* series titled "The Great Platte River Road" by Merrill J. Mattes was available in preview copies at last year's meeting. It should be noted that our expectations for this study have been fully justified. It has received state and national citations, one of which was its selection as the national winner of the 1969 Western Heritage Award in the non-fiction book category by the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. Wrangler Awards were presented to author Mattes and to the Society as the publisher. A second national recognition was an Award of Merit presented by the American Association for State and Local History. It should be noted that this book resulted from a study grant provided by the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc. and from publication funds provided by the Society Foundation. Efforts have also been directed during the past year toward the editing of Vol. XXVI in this series. This comprehensive study is by Professor William E. Lass, of Mankato State College, Minn., and will deal with Overland Freighting in Nebraska and on the Western Frontier. Another recognition of Society effort was the award presented to the Society by the Nebraska Arts Council for "Professional Dedication to the Architectural Restoration of the Kennard House."

Our present membership stands at 4,522 as compared with 4,452 of a year ago. Supporting memberships now number 16 and contributing members have increased from 393 to 423. Thirty-four new Life Memberships were taken out last year.

We have already noted the aid of the Society Foundation in our publication program. It should be evident that the aid of the Foundation under the leadership of President M. S. Hevelone has made it possible for the Society to acquire certain unique collections important to the history of Nebraska. Among those acquired during the last year were the John A. Anderson frontier photographic collection and eight paintings representing historical subjects from the late Terence R. Duren collection. The Foundation has also worked during the year to restore the exterior features of the Constance M. Syford home on the University campus. This home represents one of the last tangible features of the early campus. In



*The Society received awards for its publications and museum programs.*

October the house was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places.

The statistics of mail received, questions answered, and other details are impressive. All of these relate to an increased interest in our history. We are aware that the primary contact between the Society and many members lies in the publication program. However, the two annual meetings, and particularly the Spring meeting, have attracted increased interest and attendance. More than two hundred attended the two-day meeting held at Fort Robinson in May where Father Peter J. Powell was the featured speaker. The second day was devoted to tours of the historic sites in the area. This successful meeting was largely the result of the excellent sponsor, the Crawford Historical Society.

During the year the Society was represented at 186 meetings, mainly in the State. The Society was, however, represented outside the state at the National Trust for Historic Preservation meeting, and the Plains Archeological Conference. The Director continued to serve on a number of committees or boards with historically related interest. Among these are the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, Nebraska Hall of Fame,



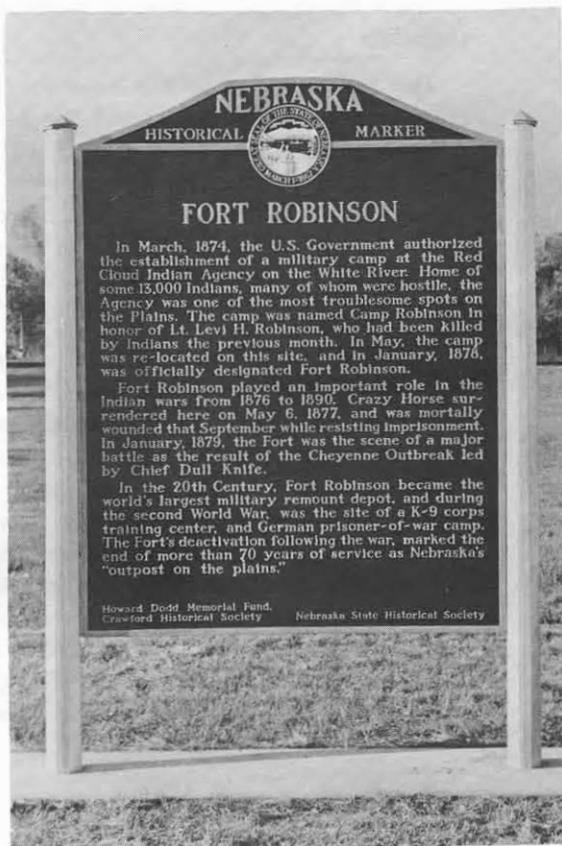
*Many of you who attended the Spring meeting at Fort Robinson stood on historic sites such as Breakneck Hill on the Sidney-Black Hills Trail.*



*Historical markers such as this example in Stanton County were erected throughout the State with the cooperation of the Department of Roads.*



*Professor Joe B. Frantz  
(above) of Texas  
addressed the Fall meeting  
in Lincoln.*



*A highlight of the Spring  
meeting was the dedication  
of a Fort Robinson marker  
(right) sponsored by the  
Howard Dodd Memorial Fund.*

and the State Records Advisory Board. The Governor also took steps during the year to set up a Nebraska Commission for the observance of the American Revolution Bicentennial. The Governor has appointed the Society Director the Chairman for Nebraska, and he attended a national meeting in Washington last October. It is expected that members of the Commission will be appointed in the near future.

Your Society operates with four major divisions, each of which receives a specific appropriation and is directly supervised by a department head. These include Administration, Museum, Library, and State Archives. Although each has different types of programs, each is directed toward the preservation and interpretation of Nebraska history.

## MUSEUM

The museum program headed by Wendell Frantz operates at various locations throughout the State in its effort to present Nebraska history to the public.

The past year has been a busy one for the museum. The Lincoln Museum had 73,326 visitors and the Kennard House 7,563. The Fort Robinson Museum was visited by 33,017 people while 10,718 viewed other Fort Robinson buildings or were given tours of the fort. The George W. Norris Home at McCook had an attendance of 2,859 people. The three Mobile Museum Units had a combined attendance of 43,044. These figures indicate that more than 170,000 people viewed Society display areas.

The museum area most important to public service, other than basic attendance, is the education section. This year 15,574 visitors were served. Tours were given to 5,453 and special programs to 6,991. The special programs include puppet shows put on by Lincoln Junior League volunteers. This year the Junior League program served 3,581 people. Educational materials, which include a series of educational leaflets and the Society's Heritage Picture packets, are distributed to the public. Teachers' packets, which are complete sets of the Society's educational leaflet series, are given to Nebraska teachers and all school libraries. This year 375 of these packets were distributed. One free leaflet and accompanying promotional material were given to 912 persons requesting literature on Nebraska history. The museum continued to serve as a



*The Mobile Museum program continued to carry the story of Nebraska history to the traveling public.*



*The James L. Sellers Memorial Award with plaque was presented to Professor James S. King for his article "A Better Way," published in the Fall, 1969, issue of Nebraska History.*

resource for educators, educational television producers, and scholars, as well as a back drop for TV, newspapers, and publishers.

In other areas of public service the museum staff handled over 500 phone calls, more than 3,300 pieces of mail, and spoke at over a dozen meetings. The museum was represented at the annual meeting of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Nebraska Museum Conference, and the Plains Archeological Conference. Materials from the museum collections were loaned 47 times with 570 individual items being used. Donors to the museum numbered 140 and items donated 2,970. Items cataloged include 3,515 historic items and 12,500 archeological specimens. Displays made by the art section include 26 for use in the Lincoln Museum, 17 for the Mobile Museums, five for Fairview, and four for loan use. Major exhibits were also completed in the museum galleries. A full-scale Pawnee earthlodge was completed in the Indian Gallery. An enclosed display area now showing fashions of former Nebraska's First Ladies was constructed in the Pioneer Gallery. The cowboy display and the fur trading post were also enclosed and revised.

The Statehood Memorial (Thomas P. Kennard House) and Senator George W. Norris Home were improved by installation of air conditioning systems. The museum staff assisted the Lincoln Junior League in the restoration of the W. J. Bryan bedroom at Fairview. The George W. Norris home at McCook received exterior painting and signs were purchased to be placed on highways leading to the city to alert the traveling public to this historic attraction.

At Fort Robinson restoration of the 1887 adobe Officers' Quarters duplex continued. Exterior restoration is now nearing completion. One set of quarters in this building has been modernized to provide quarters for the Fort Robinson Curator, thus placing him in a close proximity to the museum building and the activity in that area. The reconstructed Adjutant's Office was furnished and opened to the public.

One of the major events of the year was the acquisition of the Neligh Mills. Built in 1873 on the Elkhorn River, this mill was the first building in the present town of Neligh. In operation until 1969, the mill and its equipment are excellent examples of the roller milling operation of an industry that was once found in nearly every community. The first stages of restoring the mill to its appearance at the peak of its operation are now in progress.



*The workshop session for historical organizations provided time for consultation in the storage and work areas of the Lincoln headquarters.*



*Lincoln Junior League volunteers continued to provide special educational and tour programs.*

Archeological work included excavation in the area of the aboriginal Nehawka Flint Quarries in Cass County. Several of these quarry pits have been opened for investigation. Prehistoric Nebraska Culture earthlodge sites in the area have also been excavated to find out if the occupants of these houses were using the quarries. Salvage work was carried out at the Gray Site, a proto-historic period village north of Schuyler, and at the historic Pawnee village site at Genoa. Highway salvage archeological work was carried out in 43 counties during the year on 65 projects totaling 433 miles of travel. New sites located numbered 15, and 20 previously recorded sites were revisited. Work was also carried out at the site of Fort Atkinson under an agreement between the State Game and Parks Commission and the Society.

#### STATE OF NEBRASKA 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 increased activity during the past fiscal year. Working in close cooperation with the Records Management Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, the inventory, appraisal, and scheduling of official series of records within state agencies were continued. This activity resulted in the accession of increased amounts of historically significant records to the State Archives.

The addition of a professional Manuscript Curator to the Archives Staff has resulted in increased development within that division. Manuscript Curator Donald D. Snoddy has undertaken a project whereby each of the county historical societies throughout the state has been supplied with biographical and historical incident forms through which regional histories may be compiled. In addition, Mr. Snoddy personally visited thirty-three county groups providing information on the nature of archival materials and determining the scope and content of private manuscripts within the state. This activity has resulted in the preservation of additional newspapers, diaries, letters, and other manuscript materials of historical significance. This has also resulted in an expansion of the Archives oral history program of collecting taped interviews with notable individuals in Nebraska.

Research activity continued to show a steady increase with a record number of 3,340 individuals using the combined facilities of the Archives



*Thousands of visitors viewed the reconstructed kitchen in the Thomas P. Kennard House in Lincoln.*



*A major new exhibit is a reconstructed Pawnee earthlodge section.*

during the year. In addition, 783 letters were written by the Archives staff in response to individuals throughout the nation regarding questions of legal, social, economic, and historical importance.

Collections utilized in major studies during the year included the papers of former United State Senators Hugh Butler and Kenneth Wherry in a study of Congressional opposition to the foreign policies of Harry S. Truman; the papers of John J. Pershing used in a biography of his life; the papers of C. A. Sorenson, James E. Lawrence, and former Governor Robert L. Cochran used in a biography of George W. Norris; the records of the Nebraska State Council of Defense used in study of Nebraska Populism; and records of Fort Robinson used in a study of the Negro on the frontier.

The Microfilm Division continued its important service to individuals throughout the state and nation. During the year a record number of 997 reels of microfilm containing Nebraska's newspapers were added to the division expanding the collection to 13,724 rolls of microfilm. Major additions among the 52 titles filmed were the *McCook Daily Gazette*, 1925-1954; *The Nebraska City News-Press*, 1912-1948; *The York Daily News-Times*, January 1911-September 1924; and the *Grand Island Independent*, 1884-1944. In addition, the Division's special filming projects included abstracts of elections of the Office of the Secretary of State, 1855-1920, Civil War Burial records of the Office of the Adjutant General, and the German-Russian census of Lincoln, Nebraska, 1913-1914.

Research activity within the division reached an all-time high with the staff providing instruction and service to 3,140 individuals using microfilm facilities during the year. Available through purchase, 625 rolls of microfilm and 2,050 hard copy microfilm print-outs were distributed to individuals and institutions throughout the nation.

The holdings of the division were also expanded through the purchase of the 1860 census enumerations of the State of Iowa. Funds for this purchase were provided by the Lincoln Norden Club which has sponsored research and development of the Scandinavian history within Nebraska.

During the year, internal housekeeping has received increased emphasis in relation to the overall archives program. In keeping with the reorganization of collections which was initiated in 1968, the series of official state records within the Archives has been segregated from the manuscript materials. In addition, an expansion of storage facilities into an area not previously utilized for archival storage facilities has provided an



*Archeological excavations were carried out for the second season in prehistoric earthlodge sites in the vicinity of the Nehawka flint quarries in Cass County.*



*The foundations for the southeast corner of Fort Atkinson, 1820-1827, in Washington County were uncovered by a Society crew working under an agreement with the State Game and Parks Commission which administers the site. In the background is a brick basement first uncovered in 1956 by Society excavators.*

additional 4,000 cubic feet of storage space. Accessioning activity during the year has completely filled this additional area and storage space within the archives is monthly reaching a crisis stage.

During the year work was completed on a joint project with the State Department of Education in which an educational packet consisting of facsimilies of significant documents will be placed in school libraries throughout the state. The documents, emphasizing various phases of Nebraska history from the Spanish Colonial period of the 1790's through 1900, will serve as a classroom supplement in teaching Nebraska history in the public school system. This project was initiated to provide an additional awareness of the nature and importance of archival and manuscript materials.

Major accessions during the year included the records of the Neligh Mills, Neligh, Nebraska (1886-1955), the Nebraska Library Association (1954-1962), Lancaster County (1864-1900), Hitchcock County (1886-1910), District Court records of Buffalo County (1872-1891), City of Grand Island (1883-1906), State Railway Commission (1906-1932), and the records of the Nebraska Capitol Commission (1919-1936). Added to the Manuscript Division were the papers of former Omaha Mayor Roy N. Towl, Gilbert M. Hitchcock and William Jennings Bryan (1894-1895), Chief Justice Robert Simmons (1922-1959), John V. Beck (1955-1968), Barney Oldfield (1960-1970), and Mr. and Mrs. Roy Green (1940-1970).

### LIBRARY

Under the able supervision of Mrs. Louise Small, one of the most significant developments in the Society Library during the year has been the remarkable increase in service to patrons, both personally and by mail. The number of patrons who used the Library, including the Photo Room, increased some 15% over the previous year. Specific reference questions increased some 30% and general reference 60%. Questions relating to genealogy showed a 10% increase by mail.

The Society's fine collection of photographs and pictures came in for increasing national attention and use. Seven hundred pictures were made available to individuals, publishing houses, television stations preparing documentary films, and authors preparing historical publications. The famous Solomon D. Butcher Collection of pioneer sod house photographs was augmented by the acquisition of the John A. Anderson Collection,



*The Foundation continued the restoration of the Constance M. Syford home near the University of Nebraska campus.*

consisting of more than 350 glass negatives, taken in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

The Society Library was able to procure a new horizontal map case, enabling the staff to take some necessary precautionary steps in preservation of the maps. An actual inventory of maps was taken, which resulted in a more realistic knowledge of the Society's map holdings. No actual count of the maps used by patrons has been attempted, but there is constant activity in this area.

School groups using the resources of the Society Library have increased. Such groups have included 20 sixth graders from newly-opened Goodrich School in the Belmont district of Lincoln, 25 sixth graders from Saratoga School, and members of a summer school class from Holmes School, who were all studying the history and development of Lincoln. The latter group varied widely in age and grade levels, so the Photo Room staff prepared for them a visual exhibit which we hope to have the opportunity to use again. Various groups such as members of the Adams County Genealogical Society have spent an entire day at the Society. A list



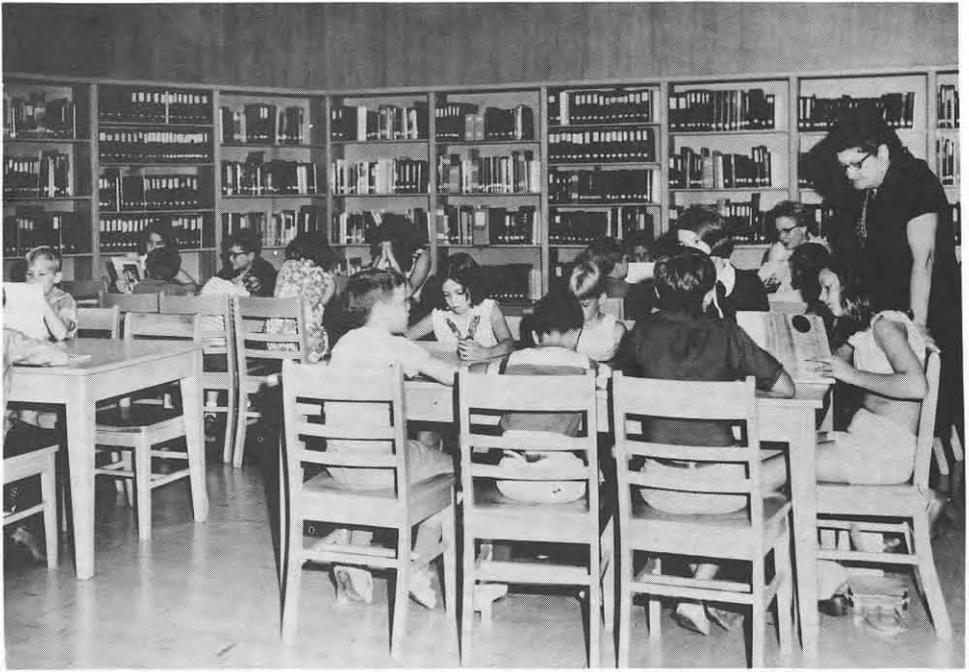
*Through the cooperation of the Capitol Building Commission, the yard of the Thomas P. Kennard House has been expanded to provide landscaping.*

of our significant holdings in the performing arts was prepared for inclusion in a bibliography being prepared at the University of Kansas International Theatre Studies Center.

#### IN SUMMARY

The activity and progress reported here today would not have been possible without a dedicated Society Board, headed by President Charles W. Martin, and a willing and able staff. This year the Society Foundation headed by President M. S. Hevelone has demonstrated its support of the Society in the publication program and in the acquisition of important collections. The Foundation, with some fifty Trustees representing all areas of the State, promises to be a major force in the future of your Society.

It perhaps is appropriate at this point that we speak of future plans for your Society. It will be our goal to provide continued service to the



*The younger generation is introduced to historical reference sources under the direction of Mrs. Louise Small, librarian.*

individual, and particularly to work with the educational institutions of the State, for an increased appreciation of the State's history. One effective way to carry out this goal is to work with the more than one hundred county and local historical organizations. We share a common goal. An increasing number of such organizations are now receiving limited tax funds from local government to support their efforts. Were it not for their dedicated effort, much of our history would be lost. Working together we will demonstrate that our history represents an important resource, which once lost cannot be regained.

Your State Society has expanded its effort into all parts of the State. The mobile museums program has been most effective and has received national attention. It is expected that this program will be expanded to provide for one mobile unit which will visit rural schools, particularly those in the west half of the State. Our educational program will be further expanded to provide additional Educational Leaflets for use in the classroom. This publication program has received assistance from the Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs.



*Researchers use the extensive collection of Nebraska history on microfilm.*

Although private funds have greatly supplemented our programs, like other departments of State Government, the Society is dependent on the decisions of the legislature for our major support. As I review reports of my predecessors I find that many of their goals, such as an adequate historical marker program, an able staff, and expanded publications and collections, have been fully or partially realized. However, common to all reports since 1955 has been a realization that our headquarters building, barely adequate in 1953 when dedicated, must at some future time be expanded. Dr. Aeschbacher in his final report for 1963 predicted that the space problems of the Society would become more critical. He has proven to be a true prophet. These space problems have developed largely because the function of the Society is to be the collecting agency for items that must be preserved. It should be emphasized that the decision of what must be preserved is not entirely the decision of your Society but rather is set by law. This is particularly true for the State Archives program, which has the legal responsibility to preserve certain records produced by state and local political sub-divisions. Your executive board has devoted a great deal of attention to this matter of expansion without reaching a solution other than that there is a need for additional space. In the 1971-1973 proposed budget we have requested funds for such an addition. As indicated, much of this proposed expansion will be devoted to the State Archives program,

work areas, and storage. It is also proposed that space be provided for an Agricultural Hall to tell the story more adequately of our most important industry.

The year ahead promises to be even more active than the past. We look forward to the future with confidence and with a determination to conduct the affairs of your Society in a way that will continue to merit the support of the members and all people of Nebraska.