



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: Chancellor Reuben Gustavson, Internationalism, and the Nebraska People

Full Citation: John P McSweeney, "Chancellor Reuben Gustavson, Internationalism, and the Nebraska People," *Nebraska History* 57 (1976): 378-397.

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1976Gustavson.pdf>

Date: 7/15/2015

Article Summary: Reuben Gilbert Gustavson became chancellor of the University of Nebraska in 1946, serving through 1953. At the time, he was a nationally known biochemist, having worked on the Manhattan Project during World War II. This background profoundly influenced his attitudes toward peace in the world. Though not a pacifist, he opposed the stockpiling of nuclear weapons and a proposed system of universal military training. He supported the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and started a UNESCO program at the University of Nebraska in 1947.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Reuben Gilbert Gustavson, James Gustavson, Hildegard Gustavson, A J Carlson, George Norlin, Robert Stearns, Harry Bridges, Robert Hutchins, Harrison Brown, Ray Lyman Wilbur, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, James H Canfield, John M Swomley Jr, Fred Marsh, Paul Douglas, Frank Sorenson, Trygve Lie, Ralph Bunche, Robert G Simmons, James Olson, James L Sellers, James E Lawrence, Nathan J Gold, Otis J Morgans, Royce H Knapp, H G Schrikel, Leo Black, Frank E Henzlik, Paul L Bogan, Raymond A McConnell, Philip Schug, Earl W Wiltse

Keywords: the United Nations Organization; Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists; National Council Against Conscription; UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization); Abraham Lincoln Friendship Train; Rural Overseas Program; Church World Service; Lutheran World Relief; University of Nebraska's Extension Division; Citizenship Education Project; Resources for the Future Inc.; Ford Foundation

Photographs / Images: Chancellor Reuben Gustavson and the University of Nebraska band, 1948; Chancellor and Mrs Gustavson with farewell gifts from the University of Nebraska Foundation, 1953; US Attorney General Herbert Brownell Jr, former Chancellor Gustavson, and Senator Dwight Griswold during University of Nebraska commencement exercises, June, 1953; Breaking ground for Nebraska Historical Society at 1500 R Street, Lincoln. Robert G Simmons, James Olson, James L Sellers, James E Lawrence, Nathan J Gold, and Reuben G Gustavson



Chancellor Reuben Gustavson and the University of Nebraska band, November 3, 1948. Below (left): Chancellor and Mrs. Gustavson with farewell gifts from the University of Nebraska Foundation, June 9, 1953. (Right, l to r): U.S. Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr., former Chancellor Gustavson, and Senator Dwight Griswold during University of Nebraska commencement exercises, June, 1953. (Courtesy of Lincoln Journal and Star)



**CHANCELLOR REUBEN GUSTAVSON,
INTERNATIONALISM,
AND THE NEBRASKA PEOPLE**

By John P. McSweeney

When Reuben Gilbert Gustavson became chancellor of the University of Nebraska in 1946, he was a scholar-administrator in his mid-50's. He brought to his new position experiences and views on education which had a profound influence on his administration at the university. During his formative years Gustavson had parental, tutorial, and administrative models which helped to form his moral code and views on education. The new chancellor had earned an international reputation as a biochemist, beginning with his work in this field as a graduate student at the University of Chicago. He had twenty-eight years experience as a teacher and administrator at the university level and in these positions had dealt with many of the same problems which he faced as twelfth chancellor of the University of Nebraska. His participation in the atomic bomb project during World War II and the results of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were experiences which deepened his concern for the survival of mankind.

The chancellor was born on April 6, 1892, the only son of James and Hildegard Gustavson, Swedish immigrants. A reporter from the *Omaha World-Herald* wrote that the Denver house of the Gustavsons was located "on the wrong side of the tracks."¹ Gustavson's father was a carpenter who had hoped that his son would work with him in the trade, but a boyhood injury weakened Reuben's leg to the extent that his father realized a career as a carpenter was impossible. A practical man,

the elder Gustavson sent his son to high school to learn typing and stenography. The chancellor's mother was a very devout Lutheran and his father a follower of Robert Ingersoll, a renowned American atheist. Gustavson recalled that the major portion of the books available at home for his sister and himself were copies of the Bible and the works of Ingersoll.

Although he may have lacked intellectual stimulation in his childhood home, Gustavson gained from his parents a strong belief in an individual's moral responsibilities to his fellow man. During his childhood his father had once shocked a customer when he informed the man that he felt responsible to rebuild the customer's porch without charge because the porch had been blown down by a storm.²

In high school he became an award-winning commercial student. It was prophetic that a course in science kindled forever his interest in chemistry. After graduation he was employed by the Colorado Southern Railroad, and in three years had risen to the position of secretary to the auditor.

With the money he had saved, augmented by a work grant from the University of Denver, he enrolled in college as a science student. He remained there until he received an M.A. degree in 1917. After working a short time as a chemist with the Great Western Sugar Company, he joined the faculty of the Colorado College of Agriculture at Fort Collins.

His record as a researcher brought him an offer to rejoin his alma mater. He returned to Denver University in 1920 as an assistant professor of chemistry; he became an associate professor in 1921, a full professor in 1927, and remained on the faculty until 1937. During these years he worked toward a Ph.D. degree (awarded 1925) from the University of Chicago, where his career in biochemistry began.

As part of Chicago University requirements, he enrolled in physiology under Professor A. J. Carlson, whose teaching methods Gustavson admired. While chancellor at Nebraska, he recommended to a national meeting of graduate school deans the adoption of Carlson's techniques. When a class first met, Carlson told students he would not explain contents of textbooks because it "would be an insult to their intelligence" and that he would not let them know what to expect in laboratory experiments. He wished to maintain their curiosity and believed giving expected results would blunt their performance. The

greatly respected Carlson was never forgotten by Gustavson. At Chicago Gustavson took part in the sex hormone research project which achieved widespread acclaim. He was selected to present the findings at an international meeting in London.³

While at Denver, he was the school's representative to the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference. The pressure to have winning inter-collegiate teams caused coaches and administrators to condone practices Gustavson believed unethical. When conference representatives singled out Denver for criticism, Gustavson presented a documented report indicating other universities' violations. He believed an overemphasized athletic program took athletes away from essential academic work. The University of Denver administration rejected Gustavson's views, antagonism developed, and he resigned. When Gustavson was considered for a position at McGill University at Toronto, Canada, he was told some colleagues rated him "outstanding"; others, a "troublemaker."

The University of Colorado then invited Gustavson to Boulder as professor of chemistry, and the department faculty named him its chairman. He believed he was so honored because of his reputation in glandular and sex hormone research.

As department administrator Gustavson made changes which he believed were needed to improve the undergraduate instruction. One innovation inaugurated the system of awarding outstanding chemistry undergraduates part-time positions as laboratory assistants and teacher aides in the university's freshman course. This system of involving capable science students early in their careers with teaching younger students was a practice Gustavson had admired when attending the University of Denver as an undergraduate. Outstanding students were a great help to the chemistry professors, but Gustavson thought that the greatest benefit derived was the joy undergraduates received when they realized they were helping freshmen to discover the wonders of science.

From 1937-1942 he remained at the University of Colorado, part of the time as dean of the graduate school. When the dean became ill, Gustavson temporarily filled the vacancy.⁴ Quite satisfied with his responsibilities as department chairman, he sought no other administrative responsibilities but agreed to the arrangement.

The performance of President George Norlin during the Ku Klux Klan miasma of the 1920's impressed Gustavson. Norlin protected Jewish and Catholic academicians against the threats of the Colorado governor, a Klansman. Norlin also defended the academic freedom of professors and sought to reform intercollegiate athletics.

Norlin's successor, Dr. Robert Stearns, a comparatively young man, left the campus in 1942 to become an Air Corps officer in World War II. Gustavson suddenly found himself elevated to the interim presidency. An effective administrator, he was on good terms with students, faculty, citizens, and governmental officials. He did, however, become the center of controversy because of his apparent approval of a speech by Harry Bridges, the controversial West Coast labor leader. Some members of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and other groups requested that the regents remove Gustavson. He defended his actions on the principle of freedom of speech. The regents supported his stand and voted not to establish a committee to censor convocation speakers.

In 1945, President Robert Hutchins brought Gustavson to the University of Chicago as vice president and dean of faculties. Gustavson respected Hutchins' ability, but he did not agree with him on undergraduate education: Humanities was important, but it should not be the sole or even primary curriculum for all undergraduates. Gustavson wanted to be associated with a university offering comprehensive undergraduate curricula. He resigned in 1946.

While at Chicago, Gustavson served as liaison between the Army and the atomic bomb project. He became acquainted with the military and worked with scientists Albert Einstein and Enrico Fermi. He served as director of the physiological research project on high altitude and as a member of the committee for the V-12 Navy education program.

The experience of working on the atomic bomb project was to have a lasting effect on him. The devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, 1945, convinced Gustavson that mankind's salvation was to end war as a means of solving disputes among nations. Schools throughout the world, he believed, should teach the young to appreciate and get to know people from other countries. The recently created and imperfect United Nations Organization Gustavson believed the only hope for world peace.

A study of his record before he was named chancellor of the University of Nebraska in 1946 indicates Gustavson's position on academic freedom and overemphasis of athletics was well known. He had shown the ability to stand by his convictions when under attack. While chancellor at Nebraska his views never changed. Gustavson's confidence in education as the means of providing answers to many of man's problems rose from his immigrant family origin. That he had become an administrator in American universities reinforced his belief in the opportunities available for men through education, and he wanted men all over the world to have similar opportunities. As chancellor at Nebraska, he sought to demonstrate to the state that their university could serve the people.

Chancellor Gustavson feared that the increasing tension between the communist and democratic nations could result in an atomic holocaust. He encouraged mutual understanding between nations, not a race to gain greater armaments for their nations' arsenals. If there were differences between nations, these differences must be settled at a conference table and not through atomic warfare. Chancellor Gustavson at an international meeting of scientists was reminded of the use by the United States of the atomic bomb against civilians. He told a Russian scientist that the United States government and people desired peace. The Russian replied that the United States was the only nation ever to use atomic energy in warfare.⁵

During his administration at the University of Nebraska he joined with other scientists in forming an organization to oppose atomic weaponry. Albert Einstein invited him to "become a trustee of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists" in 1948, and Einstein explained that members of the committee believed it was their responsibility to inform the public that the danger of atomic warfare had grown in the post-war period of confusion.⁶

The Committee of Atomic Scientists disbanded in 1951 during the Korean War, and Gustavson acknowledged that it had not been as effective as many of the members had hoped. In a letter to Dr. Harrison Brown, the committee's executive vice chairman, the chancellor expressed regret that he had not been able to do more. In addition, he stated: "I do think, however, that the Committee made a contribution which will be more evident as time goes on."⁷

Gustavson joined still other concerned Americans in voicing objections to the atomic races. He opposed the policy that recommended stockpiling atomic bombs in order for the United States to maintain supremacy over the Soviet Union. This policy of stockpiling arms was opposed by Gustavson from both a humanitarian and a national interest point of view. In speeches to Americans, Gustavson stressed that another war would mean "the destruction of civilization."⁸ The study of history, he said, showed him that almost every generation of men had to face wars, and men's problems were still not solved. Within his lifetime, the two most destructive wars in history, World Wars I and II, were waged. The enormous destructive capacity developed in World War II was due, he said, "primarily as a result of the discovery of ways and means of releasing atomic energy."⁹

An atomic bomb was the equivalent of 20,000 tons of TNT, and its presence in the world made war an impossible alternative in solving the problems of society. The only defense against an atomic attack was not to be where the bomb was dropped. In addition, he pointed out, there were other destructive forces discovered during World War II. Biological warfare had been developed to the point that one nation could starve the enemy's population by releasing chemicals which would destroy their crops.

"It is worth knowing," stated Gustavson, "that every discovery that man has made gives him the choice of creating or destroying."¹⁰ If the United States engaged in an atomic war with the Soviet Union, it would result in the partial destruction of civilizations, which would be an advantage to the Soviet Union and to world communism and a blow to Americans and other believers in democracy. He believed that another war would be an all-out atomic one, because "War is the killing business, and when you're in the killing business it is better to play it to the maximum and kill efficiently." After a global atomic war, Gustavson said the resultant chaos would be opportune for communism to spread throughout the world.¹¹

Americans who believed that they could maintain supremacy over the Soviet Union by keeping the secrets of atomic energy from the Russians were disillusioning themselves and the American people. Before the Soviets had developed atomic fission, Gustavson predicted: "It's just too bad that Communists

have the same brains as any one else. . . . Nature doesn't ask what party a scientist belongs to, she just gives the answer to the question."¹²

It had taken the United States atomic energy program four years to develop the bomb, but the chancellor believed that it would take the Soviets a shorter period. The American program took so long because such a weapon had never been developed before, and scientists were not sure that it could be done. Soviet scientists would not be working under the same handicap, so they should have the bomb in a relatively short time. "The basic facts on which the atomic energy program was based," submitted Gustavson, "were so well known that you could get them all out of the Encyclopedia Britannica."¹³

Soviet advances in atomic development in the late 1940's and early 1950's proved, according to Gustavson, his contention that "this idea of thinking you could hold scientific facts a secret is a myth."¹⁴ The progress of the Soviets was so great that they were ahead of the United States, he thought, in the detonation of a hydrogen bomb.

The chancellor criticized the United States government's policy of strict secrecy on atomic energy research because it "stifled progress." Progress, he thought, resulted from an exchange of ideas and information which permitted scientists to "cross fertilize each other's minds."¹⁵

Gustavson believed that "attempts to keep all research in atomic energy under the cloud of Government secrecy" would lead to an inevitable armament race between the western countries and the Soviet Union and her allies. Americans who believed that the United States had greater wealth than the Soviet Union and her allies and could maintain a supremacy over her potential enemy in an armament race were mistaken. These people did not realize, he said, that "The atomic bomb is the cheapest destructive agent known." If the two sides, after stockpiling weapons, were to engage in an atomic war, Gustavson predicted that "civilization will be destroyed."¹⁶

He resisted the position held by many Americans in the late 1940's that universal military training would serve as a deterrent to another world war. It was believed that if the United States and her allies were to keep their military forces in a state of readiness, the Soviet Union and any other potential enemy would not dare to attack. Gustavson argued that the mass training of

manpower was not a constructive avenue toward lasting peace, and he opposed a system of Universal Military Training proposed by the Truman administration.

In January, 1948, he joined nineteen other Americans, including Einstein, former Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur, and the author Dorothy Canfield Fisher, in support of a booklet entitled *The Militarization of America*. (Mrs. Fisher was a Nebraska University student while her father, James H. Canfield was NU chancellor, 1891-1895. The booklet was published by the National Council Against Conscription. This organization took the position that a system of universal military training would tend to further eliminate healthy criticism which Americans had traditionally made of the military. Members of the organization cited the number of military men who had moved into key governmental positions and the fact that the Army and Navy were extending their influence into science and education.¹⁷

Leaders of the National Council Against Conscription did not receive Gustavson's support on all the statements they issued, however. After reading a proposed statement for a press release, he wrote to John M. Swomley, Jr., at the national headquarters, "I do not believe that I care to have you use my name in connection with the proposed release."¹⁸

The danger of the military obtaining too much power so concerned the chancellor that he spoke out against what he believed to be this danger—both as an individual and as a member of the council. In April, 1948, he presented an address at a conference of Nebraska ministers in which he warned of the growing influence of military men in our federal government. He did not oppose military men as individuals, he said, but he expressed his opposition to "destructive thinking" in solving our national problems. Such thinking would lead to war, and "war always leads to the destruction of human and physical resources, the result of which is starvation, disease, and a lower standard of living."¹⁹ He continued: "I fear that America is becoming drunk today with military and economic power. We are beginning to feel the right to dictate to the rest of the world."²⁰

Military resources for the United States were necessary, Gustavson explained to his audience, and said anyone who recommended that these resources be destroyed would be foolish. In the post World War II era, complete demobilization

of our armed forces was out of the question, said Gustavson, but to think that the greater build-up of our military would solve international relations "is one of the tragedies of the present age." An indication of the importance of our military, Gustavson stated, was that 80 percent of our national research budget in 1946 was for military research, while only 5 percent was allocated for research in agriculture.²¹

He opposed the American foreign policy of military aid to such non-communist countries as Greece and Turkey. He believed that the Truman doctrine of aid to these countries was conceived without considering its implications and thought that military aid to these countries another example of a destructive approach to international relations.

Even though he had a strong abhorrence to war, Gustavson did not consider himself to be a pacifist in the legal sense of the word. In a letter to Fred Marsh in December, 1950, he stated his position:

I would go a long, long way to avoid war. I have a feeling that in the long run, wars settle nothing. I would not, however, call myself an out and out pacifist because this would mean I would register as a conscientious objector in times of war. This I could not conscientiously do.²²

This letter was written during the Korean War, and the chancellor indicated that he did not see how some kind of compulsory military training could then be avoided. He explained a proposal of the Association of American Universities for all youngsters to enter a 27-month period of service before their 19th birthdays.

In April, 1951, the chancellor told Nebraska University students at a convocation that while the United States was engaged in a war, many Americans would be unable to choose "the contribution to the national welfare which . . . [they] wish to make. This is as it should be and is the essence of democracy." Students were encouraged to apply to their draft boards for the qualification tests. Gustavson advised:

Please remember that it is your government's wishes, and your draft board's wishes, to make the wisest use of our manpower not only for today, but for tomorrow. . . . It is my hope that you will be good citizens and cooperate fully in this endeavor. . . .²³

Although he supported this country at war, Gustavson continued to work for peace.

I am sure that most thinking people regret that . . . [Universal Military Training is] necessary, but in view of the international situation I am not sure that there is any way to avoid it. I shall continue to work for peace on every occasion.²⁴

As the only sensible alternative to engaging in an armament race with the Soviet Union, Gustavson proposed that Americans "develop a moral boldness to work for peace."²⁵ Instead of a military approach he thought destructive to our nation, the leaders of the United States should devise ways in which creative capacities might be used to lead the world from its state of perpetual crisis. If our leaders used the advances of science in a productive way, human and natural resources would not be destroyed and the world's standard of living would rise.

The challenge of young Americans was to realize they lived in a favored position "and learn in the process . . . to share" selflessly, Gustavson told the students. The only solution to the problem of uneven distribution of the world's goods was in voluntary sharing with other peoples. Such voluntary sharing, made possible "through our creative efforts," would produce the "abundance of the good things in life" he called for.²⁶

The United States *should* compete with the Soviet Union, but the competition should be for the minds of the "primitive nations," Gustavson said, and not a competition for atomic superiority. Western nations would win the struggle for the minds of men by helping emerging nations, he was certain, if energies were applied for improvement in these fields: (1) health standards; (2) education and educational facilities; (3) right to own land; (4) modern farm methods; (5) self-government and freedom and honesty in elections; (6) the right of people to control their own resources.

It would be of little benefit to improve underdeveloped countries in one or two of these categories without the others, Gustavson told a *Summer Nebraskan* reporter. A nation with improved health standards has only eliminated the cause of death, but if the citizens did not have nutritious food, "the suffering, starvation and desire for better living" remained. Furthermore, free people in the western world would not court underdeveloped nations by merely opposing communism. They must demonstrate that the free system is better than state-directed communism. He suggested that people in the western world should not live luxuriously lest this arouse jealousy in the have-nots.²⁷

The United Nations and its agencies were the means by which advanced countries could provide underdeveloped countries the

means of improving their standards of living, Gustavson told the Nebraska Legislature in August of 1946:

In the light of the tremendous destructive capacity in man's hands, sharing becomes a 'must.' Perhaps no greater problem faces the scholar of our day than to be a leader in a world where the lesson of sharing is still to be taught in practically every phase of our life.²⁸

An equally important United Nations function was the maintenance of peace in the world. Speaking at a Nebraska all-university convocation, Gustavson told the students: "Your generation must learn to use the United Nations, or some organization which might grow of it, to build a structure for peace." The tragedy of the League of Nations was that the large nations did not give it their full support. If they had, he thought World War II might have been prevented.²⁹

Although the chancellor did not believe that the UN was a perfect organization, it was the only organization in the world established to help maintain peace. It was, he said, "the only hope we have. Our choice is not between a weak and imperfect structure and a perfect United Nations Organization. Our choice is between an imperfect organization and nothing."³⁰ And atomic energy produced such devastating weapons that control of its use had to be established among nations. Gustafson hoped the UN could bring agreement to its use. In late 1948, when the Atomic Energy Commission of the United Nations reported that it had reached no agreement on controls, he applauded the action of the United Nations General Assembly in instructing commission members to continue work on finding an acceptable agreement.

In addition to his public addresses in support of the United Nations, Gustavson contributed his talents to the work of one of the United Nations' important agencies, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and was a member of the American delegation to its Mexico City International Conference in 1947. The six fundamentals of UNESCO became a part of the homilies Gustavson presented to his audiences:

(1) men helping men to recover from ravages of war; (2) men talking to men across national boundaries; (3) men helping men to know (attacking illiteracy); (4) men helping men to live together; (5) men helping men to share the best they have in arts and letters; (6) men helping men to understand the world in which they live.³¹

Gustavson thought UNESCO would become a force in a

secure world—to replace military power, a force in an insecure world. It would be an agency to improve relations between communism and western ideologies during the next five to twenty-five years. But UNESCO would not become effective without the full participation of the Soviet Union, and here his hopes hit a snag. Gustavson criticized the Soviets for not accepting UNESCO's invitation to become a member. And when the United States delegation to the Mexico City meeting of UNESCO abstained from voting on the membership of Hungary, by order of the State Department, he held "that this type of policy worsened rather than improved relations between the Communist and western blocs."

In reviewing Gustavson's contributions in evangelizing UN programs, Milton S. Eisenhower, then president of Kansas State College and chairman of the American delegation to UNESCO during its formative period, said:

Dr. Reuben G. Gustavson was an enthusiastic and effective member of the United States National Commission for UNESCO. In the early days of the organization, when he and I were intensively active in it, we most earnestly believed that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the structure of peace must be built.³²

As chancellor of the university, Gustavson strove mightily to show Nebraskans the urgency of accepting the concept that wealthy nations should share with underdeveloped nations, and in that exchange the United Nations could be the constructive force in maintaining world peace. He explained that without military agreement there remained the chilling prospect of atomic weapons uncontrolled.

Nebraskans responded to his appeals for aid to low-standard-of-living nations, and Gustavson was proud of their accomplishments. He served as general chairman in 1948 of the Abraham Lincoln Friendship Train, an arm of the Christian Rural Overseas Program sponsored by Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief.

In order to gain as much support as possible for the program which sent food to starving Europeans, the chancellor enlisted the support of county agents, home extension agents, mayors, secretaries of chambers of commerce, and ministers of all faiths. Eleven states participating in the program produced enough goods and provisions to fill 283 railroad cars. An indication of the high level of Nebraska support for the program is that almost half of the total—110 car loads—were collected there. In

congratulating Nebraskans on their support of the train, Gustavson explained: "The real value lies in the spirit of good will and neighborliness which it represents in world peace and international understanding which it will help to create."³³

Ernest Smith, who had participated actively in the program, congratulated Gustavson on his leadership and expressed the belief that "the response to leadership in the Friendship Train Campaign speaks eloquently as to what we think of you—truly you did a grand job."³⁴

Gustavson was proud of other Nebraska programs to assist people in foreign countries. In a letter to Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois, he told him of Bloomfield, Nebraska, which had adopted a city in Germany. Bloomfield citizens had contributed goods and clothing, and some people from Bloomfield visited Germany in furthering the project. Those who had become genuinely interested in the problems of the German community wrote to Gustavson at times to seek his advice.³⁵

The program which the citizens of Bloomfield had established with the German community was an excellent one, in the chancellor's opinion, because the people were not only sharing their material goods with people from a foreign land but were also meeting with German people on a person-to-person basis. After returning from a trip to Sweden made in the furtherance of his program, Gustavson told civic groups that he would like to see businessmen of Lincoln meet with businessmen of Stockholm or Gothenburg. These meetings would not only improve trade relations between the two countries, but each group would become acquainted individually with people from a foreign land.

During the Gustavson administration at the University of Nebraska, increased contacts were made with people in foreign lands through educational services provided by the university Extension Division. Courses of instruction were sent to individuals in fifteen foreign countries including Japan, Germany, Argentina, Ecuador, and Peru. The Extension Division worked with the government of Ethiopia to provide secondary education for its students. The Ethiopian government and missionary societies also had been sponsoring the education of selected students at the high school and university level in the United States or some other country. With the courses provided by the University of Nebraska's Extension Division in Ethiopia, youngsters were able to remain in their own country for

secondary schooling. A staff of American instructors who met the University of Nebraska's requirements supervised the Ethiopian program. Such instructors were appointed by the Ethiopian government, official sponsor of the courses. Gustavson believed that in programs such as this one, the university was fulfilling the UNESCO purpose of providing knowledge to people from under-developed countries.³⁶

From the start of his administration, Gustavson had gone to the people of Nebraska in meetings throughout the state to inform them of his creed that Americans should learn to share with people from underdeveloped countries and that international control of atomic energy was urgent. It was not until the chancellor returned from an international meeting of UNESCO in 1947, however, that he decided to start a United Nations educational program in Nebraska. His association with delegates from other countries and his knowledge of the programs that UNESCO had started convinced him Nebraskans should know more about the United Nations and its agencies.

"After I conferred with deans and faculty members," Gustavson recalled, "I decided that the University of Nebraska students were not being adequately informed about the United Nations."³⁷ The chancellor met with some university students and found enthusiasm for conducting a mock United Nations meeting. Gustavson was asked to act as the secretary general of the student United Nations and to speak on the importance of international controls for atomic energy.³⁸

The program at the University of Nebraska grew. From this initial model UN meeting, students formed the Nebraska University Council for World Affairs. In addition to continuing model UN General Assembly meetings, law students demonstrated the World Court's operation by staging a hearing before a model International Court of Justice. Students at the university sent representatives to meetings of the Collegiate Council for the United Nations. In strengthening the program Gustavson sent Dr. Frank Sorenson to New York to visit the United Nations Headquarters. Sorenson conferred with staff members at the United Nations and returned to Nebraska with ideas for the formation of a state-wide program. Accompanying Sorenson was a group of Nebraskans representing different levels of education: University of Nebraska Teachers College, Peru State Teachers College, Wayne State Teachers College,

Nebraska State Department of Education, Omaha Public Schools, and the Lincoln Public Schools.

These school leaders and other interested educators developed a United Nations educational program for Nebraska, the first state (except for the immediate New York area) to have such a program.³⁹ Training sessions were held in Lincoln for educators who wished to learn the best methods of implementing the program in Nebraska. Important international dignitaries associated with the United Nations visited the university to present commencement addresses or to talk to groups of Nebraska educators. Trygve Lie, secretary general of the United Nations, presented the university commencement address in 1952. Dr. Ralph Bunche, a close personal friend of Gustavson and the leading United Nations mediator in the dispute between Jews and Arabs, addressed an all-university convocation. Dr. Chung-fu-Chang, advisor to China's United Nations delegation, addressed a United Nations clinic for Nebraska educators sponsored by University of Nebraska summer school.

Some University of Nebraska faculty members became well acquainted with the work of UNESCO through their participation in the Mountain-Plains Regional Conferences of UNESCO. From the information faculty members received at these meetings, they could better explain the work of the United Nations to their students and to the Nebraska public. Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower and Chancellor Gustavson, members of the National Commission of UNESCO, organized these conferences.

The curricula of the University of Nebraska and the state teachers colleges increasingly reflected interest in the United Nations and world affairs. In February, 1948, Dean Charles H. Oldfather of the University of Nebraska College of Arts and Sciences announced a new group major in international affairs would be offered to undergraduates. The objective was to provide the student with an understanding and interest in the problems confronting the nations of the world. Its courses were not considered professional training, but it was anticipated that outstanding students could prepare for foreign service careers or for graduate study in international administration. The international affairs program was a joint effort of the following departments of the College of Arts and Science: economics, geography, history, political science, sociology, and anthropology.⁴⁰



Breaking ground for Nebraska State Historical Society building at 1500 R, Lincoln. Left to right: Robert G. Simmons, James Olson, James L. Sellers, James E. Lawrence, Nathan J. Gold, and Reuben G. Gustavson.

Peru State Teachers College offered a course on the United Nations' background and activities. Dr. Otis J. Morgans taught the course based on materials developed at the University of Nebraska seminars. The course covered "the historical background, structure, aims, principles and key problems of the United Nations."⁴¹ Dr. Morgans explained that his course was part of the "Nebraska Plan," which had grown from the concern by Reuben Gustavson over the lack of knowledge about the United Nations among the people of the state.⁴²

The Teachers College at the university was active in promoting the study of the United Nations in primary and secondary schools, which sent students to the university to attend programs on the United Nations. During the summer of 1947, Dr. Royce H. Knapp and educators from many Nebraska school districts, prepared a pamphlet entitled *UNESCO and Nebraska Secondary School Youth*. Gustavson wrote in the foreword: "This pamphlet is a timely one for Nebraska's secondary schools.

It is worthy of the attention of all serious school people. Dr. Knapp and the Workshop Group have rendered a service in making this material available to us."⁴³ In November, 1948, 250 students attended an institute sponsored by the university, the State Department of Public Instruction, and the Nebraska High School Activities Association. Dr. Knapp, Dr. H. G. Schrikel of Teachers College, and Dr. Leo Black from the State Department of Public Instruction spoke to program sessions.⁴⁴

In June, 1950, Dean Frank E. Henzlik announced an "educational offensive" in Nebraska to instill in youngsters the positive values of democracy and to combat communism and facism. Teachers College of Columbia University awarded the University of Nebraska \$21,400 to establish such a program which concentrated on the problem of teaching citizenship in the rural public schools. The funds originated from the Carnegie Foundation which had sponsored a "citizenship education project" by granting \$400,000 to Columbia University. Several eastern states had participated, but Nebraska was the first mid-western state to start a program. Knapp was named by the Board of Regents to serve as director of the project.⁴⁵

At the time the program was announced, Dean Henzlik outlined its purpose: (1) to discover and analyze the present practices in citizenship education revealed among select school systems in Nebraska, using the 81 high schools in the Nebraska Co-Operative School Improvement Association as a starting group; (2) to formulate plans and activities for improved programs in a few carefully selected schools; (3) to disseminate among schools information about best practices revealed in citizenship education, not only to member schools but to interested schools generally; (4) to evaluate the present program and new programs for citizenship education in rural and small communities.⁴⁶

In addition to educators, the University of Nebraska involved other groups in its UN educational programs. At clinics representatives from the press, radio, motion pictures, libraries, government, and civic clubs actively participated. An example of a joint effort by University of Nebraska educators and community leaders was a radio panel discussion on the subject, "What is UNESCO? What Can It Do For Us?" Gustavson, Knapp, and Paul L. Bogan, an instructor in speech and radio, represented the university, while Raymond A. McConnell, editor of the *Lincoln Journal*, and the Reverend Philip Schug, pastor of the Unitarian Church, were community representatives. In 1953 the American Legion approved a proposal of its education committee under the direction of Dr. Earl W. Wiltse, school

superintendent at Grand Island, to support a study of citizenship programs in the United States. Knapp and Wiltse worked together on plans for the project.⁴⁷

The United Nations project during the Gustavson administration became widely known. In addition to faculty members who participated in the program, the assistance of administrators and teachers representing all levels of education was enlisted. Leading citizens of Nebraska's communities and organizations gave their support to the program. Nebraska had the distinction of being the first state outside the immediate United Nations headquarters area of New York to have such an extensive program.

Gustavson was proud that his staff had developed an educational program which captured the imagination of conservative Nebraskans. His own contributions, as a member of the national commission, were significant. Chancellor Gustavson considered the Citizenship Education Project and the entire United Nations education program to be major accomplishments of his administration.⁴⁸

After Dr. Gustavson resigned his position as chancellor at the University of Nebraska in 1953, he joined Resources for the Future, Inc., an organization sponsored by the Ford Foundation which concentrated on conservation of natural resources. He served as its president and executive director from 1953 to 1959. He then was on the staff of the University of Arizona in Tucson.

He died at Bartlesville, Oklahoma, on February 23, 1974, at the age of 81, survived by his wife, a son, and a daughter.

NOTES

1. *Omaha World-Herald*, February 20, 1949, 4C.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Interview with Reuben G. Gustavson, August 28, 1971.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Interview with Gustavson, August 28, 1971.
6. Letter, Albert Einstein to Gustavson, February 5, 1948, MS, University of Nebraska Archives, Gustavson Collection.
7. Gustavson, "Address to New York Bar Association," *New York Times*, June 30, 1946, 2.
8. Gustavson, "Address to the Conference of Nebraska Ministers," April 19, 1948.
9. *Ibid.*

10. Gustavson, "Address to Members of Legislature," August 28, 1946.
11. *Daily Nebraskan*, Lincoln, October 19, 1949.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Interview with Gustavson, August 28, 1970.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Gustavson, "Address to the New York Bar Association."
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Lincoln State Journal*, January 19, 1948, 2.
18. Letter, Gustavson to John M. Swomley, Jr., April 8, 1948.
19. Gustavson, "Address to the Conference of Nebraska Ministers."
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. Letter, Gustavson to Fred Marsh, December 11, 1950.
23. Gustavson, "Address at an All-University Convocation," April 19, 1951.
24. Letter, Gustavson to Marsh, *Ibid.*
25. *Daily Nebraskan*, Lincoln, February 12, 1950.
26. Gustavson, "Address at All-University Convocation," April 19, 1951.
27. *Summer Nebraskan*, Lincoln, June 12, 1952, 1.
28. Gustavson, "Address to the Members of the Legislature," August 28, 1946.
29. Gustavson, "Address to All-University Convocation," April 23, 1947.
30. Gustavson, "Address to the New York Bar Association."
31. Letter, Gustavson to Minnesota U.S. Senator Joseph H. Ball, January 30, 1948.
32. Letter, Milton S. Eisenhower to author, September 28, 1970.
33. Letter, Arnold N. Lambert, Field Director of Abraham Lincoln Friendship Train, to Committee Members, March 1, 1948.
34. Letter, Ernest Smith to Gustavson, n.d.
35. Letter, Gustavson to Illinois U.S. Senator Paul Douglas, December 15, 1951.
36. *Omaha World-Herald*, September 12, 1940, 12A.
37. Interview with Gustavson, August 28, 1970.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Daily Nebraskan*, May 19, 1948, 2.
40. *Bulletin Board of the University of Nebraska*, February 14, 1948.
41. *Omaha World-Herald*, July 25, 1948, 8A.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Royce H. Knapp, editor, *UNESCO and Nebraska Secondary School Youth*, iii.
44. *Omaha World-Herald*, November 14, 1948, 11A.
45. *New York Times*, June 19, 1950, 23.
46. *Omaha World-Herald*, July 8, 1950, 3.
47. Letter, Royce H. Knapp to Earle W. Wiltse, February 12, 1953, MS, Knapp Papers.
48. Interview with Gustavson, August 28, 1970.