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Article Summary: This article is the text of a presentation by Marvin F Kivett, Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society to its members at the Annual Meeting held in Lincoln, September 4, 1976. Photographs of various meetings and projects are included, as well as sections including State Archives, Library, Lincoln Museum, Historical Preservation, and Archeology.

THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN 1976

By Marvin F. Kivett, Director

Presented at the Annual Meeting in Lincoln, September 4, 1976

“The creation of a great library of American, and especially of western history, is, in my judgment, the noblest task which our state historical society can undertake. The exploration of aboriginal remains, the collection of antiquities, the recording of our early annals, the commemoration of the deeds of our founders of our commonwealth are assuredly worthy objects of our endeavor. The state historical society should become a permanent institution, with a fixed habitation. In time it must have its own buildings; its body of officers and clerks.” These were the goals set out by Professor George E. Howard in 1891, thirteen years after the founding of the Society in 1878. His guidelines were to collect everything, written or unwritten, that might be necessary for a complete history of Nebraska. This is basically our goal today and we seek to meet this goal in a variety of ways.

Our requests for public service have never been as great as in 1976, our Bicentennial year. It is evident that Nebraska has come of age in its appreciation of our historical resources. This increased interest is reflected in the statistics of the Society, from letters written to telephone calls. It may be noted that Society staff were participants in 946 meetings this year as compared with 449 for last year.

Our major problem during the year has been to find space to house the increasing collections that represent our Nebraska history. Presently our collections are scattered from Fort Robinson to Lincoln in storage space often inadequate for preservation. In Lincoln we have collections at five locations with some 6,000 square feet additional warehouse space being rented during the past year. We recognize that there is never a good time to request funds for building expansion. However, if Nebraska is to preserve its historic documents and artifacts, it must give attention to adequate space to house them. We have significant history ranging from the prehistoric Indians to the homesteaders with the related artifacts. The motto at the entrance to the present building is "The Spirit of a People Lives in their History." Many phases of our proud history cannot be adequately told in the limited space now available for exhibit. Perhaps one-tenth of the artifacts in our collections are in storage and unavailable to those who would learn from the past. We propose a new Historical Heritage Center where the full story of our people can be told and the younger generation may learn how Nebraska was developed by a dynamic people. The 1974 Legislature agreed that such a structure is needed by their passage of L.B. 704, which set aside a block of ground immediately adjacent to the Capitol for the construction of a Historical Heritage Center. The present Society building would be converted to the full use of the Library and State Archives. This is a long delayed need, and full public support is needed if this goal is to be met. We urge individuals and organizations to consider this matter and give it their support.

Our work with local historical organizations continues to be an important part of our operation. With the organization of some 140 local historical organizations, thousands of individuals are devoting their full or part-time effort to Nebraska history. Their projects range from building preservation to archival procedures. New museum buildings rivaling the museum space available to the State Society are being constructed over the state.

A definitive study by Professor Everett N. Dick *Conquering the Great American Desert: Nebraska*, was published during the year as Volume XXVII of the Society Publications Series. This study as well as others published during the last few years were made possible by a grant from the Woods Charitable Fund Inc. The Society Foundation has provided funds for publishing

the studies. A technical report of archeological excavations at the Crow Creek Site in Buffalo County, South Dakota, has also been published by the Society. Work was carried out in this area in 1954-55 by the Society under an agreement with the National Park Service to salvage information from prehistoric Indian village sites subject to the rising waters of the Fort Randall Dam. The remains consist of two occupations with one dating at about 1000 A.D. and the other at 1400 A.D. The weekly "Out of Old Nebraska" newspaper columns started in 1946 by former Director James C. Olson are now in the thirtieth year. I might add that our publication program has been made possible by the dedicated effort of Leigh DeLay and his limited staff.

As noted elsewhere in this report an increasing work load has resulted from the Director also serving as State Historic Preservation Officer in the review of federal environmental impact statements. A staff of six full-time with additional summer students is authorized for this work. It has provided Nebraska with national recognition for certain of its sites and structures as well as grants-in-aid to a number of projects.

The Historical Markers program has been popular in 1976 with the Bicentennial. Unfortunately, the factory which processes markers for many states was unable to meet the demand. Many of you who ordered Bicentennial markers will probably dedicate them in 1977. There continues to be some problem in damage to markers by vandals. Major progress has been made in cooperation with the Department of Roads in placing Historic Markers in I-80 Rest Areas throughout the length of the State.

The Spring Meeting, hosted this year by the Garden County Historical Society at Oshkosh, provided an opportunity to tour their historic buildings which house their museums, eat buffalo, and learn more of their local history.

As Director of your Society, I have continued to serve on a number of boards, committees and commissions. Among these are the Hall of Fame Commission, the Bicentennial Commission, the Hall of Agricultural Achievement, the State Records Board, Arbor Day Foundation, Capitol Environs Committee, Capitol Archives Committee and Fort Atkinson Foundation. At the invitation of Senator George Syas, Chairman of the Constitutional Review and Recreation Committee, visits were made to several areas administered by the Nebraska Game and



Society President Mrs. Nellie Snyder Yost of North Platte listens as C. L. Sonnichsen, Editor, Journal of Arizona History, addresses the Fall Meeting on "The Ambidextrous Historian."



Executive Board Member Dr. James A. Rawley of Lincoln, addresses the Fall Business Meeting. At left are Society Director Marvin F. Kivett, Lincoln, and Treasurer Arthur Carmody, Trenton.



Edwin J. Faulkner (left) of Lincoln, President of the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation, presents the Asa T. Hill Memorial Award to Waldo R. Wedel, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. In the foreground is Society President Nellie Snyder Yost of North Platte. The James L. Sellers Award for the best article in Nebraska History in 1975 went to David Wagaman for his paper on the IWW movement.



Society member Emil Roeser (center) of Grand Island registers for the Fall Meeting with Secretaries Jackie Goldsmith (left) and Dorothy Jackson.

Parks Commission, including Fort Atkinson and Fort Hartsuff, both State Historical Parks.

As I reviewed the detailed reports from each department this year, one fact stands out. Our efforts to provide effective and efficient service in the preservation of things important to record Nebraska history are being hampered by lack of space. Nebraska's history is deserving of a more adequate building to portray this history.

Each of the reports contains evidence of positive steps in our goal to serve all the people of Nebraska. Perhaps outstanding in the museum program was the completion and dedication of the new John G. Neihardt Center in Bancroft. This project would not have become a reality without the support and cooperation of the Neihardt Foundation. Increased emphasis has also been given this year to the establishment of Student Historian Chapters. It perhaps is not surprising in this Bicentennial year that the statistics show an increased demand in services in every department. More people visited our exhibits, wrote us more letters, and called us more often than ever before in our history. Our staffing as of July 1, 1976, stood at 111 permanent and part-time people.

Your Society operates with four major programs which include Administration, State Archives, Library, and Museum. The Museum program is further divided for administration into the Lincoln operations with display and collection work, branch museum or State Historical Sites, Anthropology section, and Historic Preservation. A few highlights from these programs will be presented today with a complete report being published in the Winter Issue of *Nebraska History*.

STATE ARCHIVES

A dramatic increase in virtually all areas of public service highlighted the activities of the State Archives during 1975-76. The number of researchers using the microfilm collection increased 20 percent and the archival staff wrote and answered 1,500 more letters than during the previous fiscal year. They also provided nineteen tours of the Archives and Microfilm Division, attended forty-two meetings or conferences, and represented the Society on ten occasions ranging from historical marker dedications to county historical society and service club meetings. Some of this activity was a result of the Bicentennial

year, but the steady growth in the use of archival resources during the past decade reflects a long-term interest in Nebraska and Great Plains history and genealogy. The historical awareness sparked by the Bicentennial will continue and promote use of archival materials in the future.

The two main goals of the State Archives program are the collection and preservation of historical materials and their administration so that they may be made available to the public. The holdings of the Archives include manuscript collections of private papers and institutional records; an extensive collection of Nebraska newspapers on microfilm; and various series of official public records from state and local government.

The Manuscript Division accessioned several important collections. Among them were the records of the Union Stockyards Company of Omaha (now the Kay-Omaha Livestock Market), 1883-1960; Records of the Nebraska Society of Radiological Technologists, 1931-1971; Records of the Nebraska Broadcasters' Association, 1975; Rudge and Guenzel Department Store of Lincoln records, 1911-1941; papers of U.S. District Judge T. C. Munger, 1907-1941; papers of U.S. Senator E. J. Burkett, 1892-1906; and sketches and tracings of the work of noted Nebraska wood-carver Keats W. Lorenz, 1923-1951. Several organizations have designated the Society as the official repository for their institutional records and plan to deposit archival materials on a periodic basis. The Union Pacific Railroad has deposited additional records, 1885-1925, to supplement the papers donated in 1974-1975.

Manuscript Curators David H. Hooper and Anne P. Diffendal have worked closely with potential donors by mail or personal visits in order to provide a full explanation of the Manuscript Division's preservation program. Although traditional political or pioneer materials have not been neglected, the Division has sought to broaden its holdings by accessioning records and papers reflecting all aspects of state development, including our more recent history. Last year's accessions illustrate the wide variety of primary source materials which document Nebraska history.

The Public Records Program of the State Archives is coordinated by Assistant Archivist Donald Snoddy. Under statutory authority, records were accessioned from thirteen counties and eleven state agencies in 1975-76. The staff visited or



Assistant Archivist Don Snoddy and Archives worker John Mills, Jr., examine records in the Clay County Courthouse, Clay Center.



Secretaries (from left) Jackie Goldsmith, Cheryl Talbot, Barbara Poltack, and Dorothy Jackson mail Nebraska History, the Society magazine.



Archivist Jim Potter (left) receives from Beaver City resident, Dr. Paul Fleming, the Beaver City GAR Post Records.



John Mills, Jr. (left) and Keith Ludden, Archives workers, unload new acquisitions for the Archives.

appraised thirty-six state and local offices as more agencies began to devote some attention to proper records management techniques. The impact of the upcoming move of many state agencies into a new state office building could result in additional accessions during the next year as vaults and storage areas are inventoried and cleaned out prior to the move.

The passage of L.B. 641 during the 1976 session of the Unicameral has streamlined the operation of the records management law by providing that the State Records Administrator and the State Archivist make most decisions regarding the retention and disposition of public records. The State Records Board remains in an advisory capacity, but no longer must it take action on each and every records series scheduled for disposal or transfer.

Political history was not the dominant theme pursued by archival researchers in 1975-76. This may be a reflection of the trend toward more diverse research interests and the availability of a broader range of primary sources. Women's history, Indians, and entertainment were three important fields last year. Willa Cather's career continued to be studied, as did the history of ethnic groups. As usual, Archival research at the Society contributed to seminar papers, theses, and dissertations, and a variety of published articles and books. Book topics which drew upon the collections included studies of Japanese-Americans, Populism, the Teton Dakota Sioux, Mormons, Central Great Plains weather, and railroad history. Also important was research in local history, as many communities or organizations commemorated the Bicentennial by publishing books, pamphlets, or newsletters. General research involved a wide range of topics. In all, some 190 researchers used 228 collections or record groups.

Special projects making use of archival resources included background research for an ETV documentary of the Chautauqua movement; the Lincoln *Sunday Journal-Star* eight-part Bicentennial newspaper supplement, "Nebraska: 200"; a State University of Nebraska-Extension Division newspaper series in conjunction with a history of Nebraska course; and the North Central Nebraska Resource Conservation and Development Project master plan. We responded to numerous requests from agencies of state and local government for information from archival records.

Additional rented storage space has been developed during 1975-76 with the leasing of the third floor of a downtown Lincoln warehouse. This provides 6,000 sq. ft. of space in addition to an equivalent amount occupied at the same location last year. Certain county and state records with a lower reference use have been transferred to these facilities and shelving is being constructed to allow their full use. We view this outside storage area only as a temporary solution to the critical space problems faced by the State Archives. Maximum efforts should continue toward development of an expansion program for Society headquarters so that archival materials may be preserved under proper environmental conditions in a central location.

Fifty-three hundred patrons used the collections of the Microfilm Division last year. Upon occasion, crowded conditions and lack of sufficient microfilm readers have required us to turn researchers away. The staff of the division, headed by Joleen Smith, also produced 12,500 photocopies from microfilm requested in person or by mail. Despite the heavy demands for public service, the division produced 773 rolls of new microfilm consisting of 19 newspaper titles, manuscript collections, and public records series. Major newspaper titles placed on film included the *Harrison Sun*, 1900-1923; the *Holbrook Observer*, 1908-1975; the *Lawrence Locomotive*, 1892-1974; the *North Bend Eagle*, 1897-1914; and the *Peru Pointer*, 1899-1961.

Adding to the workload of the microfilm division are the numerous special filming projects undertaken each year. These include church records, manuscript collections, selected county and state records, and printed state documents. Among special filming projects completed in 1975-76 were county board minutes and election abstracts from Saunders County, 1866-1975; Nance County, 1879-1974; Boone County, 1871-1974; and Saline County, 1867-1976; case files of the U.S. vs Richards and Comstock, 1903-1914; minutes of the directors of the Union Stockyards Company of Omaha, 1883-1967; the *Nebraska Reports* of the State Supreme Court 1871-1974; the Henry M. Pomeroy overland travel diaries, 1857-1860; and the Sim family Otoe County letters, 1856-1880.

The next year should see the completion of our holdings of the *Omaha World-Herald* on microfilm. During 1975-76, film covering the years 1939-1954 was purchased. Acquisition of the microfilmed files for 1955-1967 will allow the disposal of the last

remaining bound volumes of the *World-Herald* and save considerable space. When complete, the film collection of the *World-Herald* will exceed 1,000 rolls.

In order to provide maximum service to patrons outside the Society as well as those who visit here, a limited inter-library loan service was initiated. Selected microfilms, mostly manuscript and archival materials with a lower reference rate, are now made available for loan to libraries and other institutions. Newspapers may not be borrowed because of the heavy use by in-house researchers, but as funds allow us to duplicate selected titles, it may be possible to broaden the scope of our loan program. For several years, the Archives has been able to borrow federal census microfilms from the regional branch of the National Archives in Kansas City. Last year use of this service expanded greatly in conjunction with the developing interest in family history and genealogy. There were 170 individual requests for census microfilms through this program. Studies are now underway as to a feasible method of establishing regional branches of the Archives throughout Nebraska. We believe this is a logical step in providing service to the people of Nebraska.

LIBRARY

The Library, under the supervision of Ann Reinert, Librarian, also experienced a year of growth and service. The activities of the Library this year were marked by an increase of nearly 20 per cent over last year in reference service to the public.

Under the direction of Mrs. Opal Jacobsen, now retired, our fine photograph collection accounted for one-fourth of the total patron reference service of the Library. Approximately 2,700 photographs were made available to patrons, including sixty-four publishing and media production companies. Ten of these companies are located in other countries. BBC-TV ordered forty photographs, this being the largest order from a foreign country. Photographs from the Solomon D. Butcher collection of sod houses accounted for one-fourth of the total. Patrons who came to the Photo Room were primarily interested in research on their local history. National television networks made use of our photograph collection. The "NBC Today" program used a selection of pioneer Nebraska photographs as a part of their Bicentennial salute to the state and CBS used several

photographs as a segment of "Charles Kuralt on the Road" for their nightly news.

Special projects which have made major use of our photograph collection this year are the University of Mid-America's historical video-tape production series for college undergraduates; the Adams County Historical Society's development of Western Heritage motion pictures; and the series of historical articles, "Nebraska: 200", published by the *Lincoln Journal-Star* in recognition of the Bicentennial. Another major project has been the loan of some forty negatives from the John A. Anderson Collection of Brule Sioux Indian photographs to the Mid-America Arts Alliance for the production of the Rosebud Trilogy Photographic Exhibition scheduled to tour a four-state area beginning at the Mountain-Plains Museum Conference at Grand Island, Nebraska, in October, 1976.

Patrons who visited the Library were from 34 other states and two foreign countries. Topics researched included pioneer women, the fur trade, ethnic groups, grasshoppers, railroads, kitchen stoves, irrigation, Mormon history, Indians, army uniforms, Nebraska's territorial Legislature, automobiles, and pioneer ministers.

Local and family history was of major interest. The number of genealogical queries this year was 2,135. Several genealogical groups, including representatives from the Mormon Stake Library in Omaha, visited our Library to discover reference material which would be helpful to them. Scouting groups, 4-H clubs, and schoolteachers are making genealogical projects part of their educational programs. Extensive research by Society staff is not possible. Staff members do assist patrons in checking our major name indexes and give suggestions and addresses about where to search for further information.

A major collection of nearly 1,000 negatives and prints from the Omaha Union Stockyards was received to be added to our photograph collection. Other interesting additions to this collection were stereographic views of Grand Island, Nebraska, in the 1880's; a photograph of the University of Nebraska girls' basketball team of 1905; additional photographs of John G. Neihardt; a unique album of William Jennings Bryan photographs; a number of photographs of Fuller cars and the Angus Auto Factory in Angus, Nebraska; and a variety of postcards.



*Professor Everett Dick (center) of Union College, Lincoln, has been granted the 1976 Award of Merit by the American Association for State and Local History principally for his book *Conquering the Great American Desert: Nebraska*. Formal presentation ceremonies will be at Union College in February, 1977. At left is Society Director Marvin F. Kivett and at right, L. G. DeLay, Historian.*



Photo Librarian Opal Jacobsen (standing), now retired, in the Society Photo Room. In the foreground patrons examine portions of the Society's photo collections.



Society employee Virginia Suesz and a patron examine the 1885 Official State Atlas of Nebraska in the Microfilm Library.



Librarian Ann Reinert and Research Associate Paul Riley assist Tammy Mehuron and Ronald Briel in the Research Library.

Two hundred reference books and indexes were purchased for the Library this year. Computerized indexes of federal census enumerations of states are now being published and are very helpful to our patrons doing family history research. Additional published material relating to the Germans from Russia has also been purchased. Xerox copies of 24 theses have been obtained and 50 items have been added to our vertical file.

A special project was undertaken to collect and index as much information as possible on cemeteries in Nebraska, especially abandoned ones and those on private property. We have gained some important information, but will continue to request more enumerations, for information about many of these cemeteries is fading with time. A volunteer project was started by a Lincoln genealogical organization to add index cards to our "pioneer index."

The Fort Robinson Branch Library, supervised by Mrs. Dora Hale, has continued to grow with the addition of 49 books to its western history collection. A new branch library was begun at the John G. Neihardt Center. The core collection in this library comprises the various editions of books written by John G. Neihardt.

The Photo Room storage can only be described as critical. At present the only space available to add more file cabinets is in the already crowded center aisle. As the Photo Room work increases, it becomes more and more difficult to serve patrons in such a crowded area. The process of placing much of our photograph collection in acid-free storage containers has recently started. This must be done to insure preservation for future generations.

Mrs. Louise Small, Librarian at the Society for seven years, retired in December, 1975, and was replaced by Mrs. Ann Reinert. This year Mrs. Reinert gave several slide programs on pioneer living to church groups in this area. She was a member of the Nebraska Bicentennial Committee of the American Mothers Association. She is currently Secretary of the Special Libraries section of the Nebraska Library Association and was a representative to the Governor's Conference on Library Services.

LINCOLN MUSEUM

The Lincoln Museum operations under the immediate supervision of Wendell Frantz continue to face space limitations. The exhibits section headed by Herb Thomas provides all display work for the primary Lincoln museum as well

as seven branch operations and three mobile museum trailers. Some twelve exhibits displaying the life and writings of John G. Neihardt were completed for the new memorial building on August 1.

The Museum has been busy this Bicentennial year, as many people have requested information on various aspects of life in the past. Visitation at the Lincoln Museum for the year was 49,196. This is a 7% increase over last year. Recent changes in on-street parking may aid this increase in the future.

Services to Nebraska schools, establishment of Student Historian Chapters, and general public relations were the major functions of the Education Department, along with presentation of special programs and guided tours. The 1975-76 year showed a 25 per cent increase in both the number of tours and number of students involved. A total of 363 guided tours were provided, with 12,781 in the groups.

Limited facilities have been a detriment to having a variety of programs in the museum. Many requests come into the museum for tours combined with a meeting or lecture. Brief gallery slide talks were developed last year to meet these requests and have proved most successful, attracting groups to the museum from the adult segment that had not been using the facilities for group meetings. Programs developed are: "Agriculture on the Plains," "The Plains Indians," "Fashion in Review, 1850-1960," and scenes from the Butcher collection. In addition, we have designed a special Christmas tour, which we plan to repeat this coming season, and a show-and-tell type Indian artifact demonstration for gallery use.

The program of direct contact between the museum and schools was continued. Four programs were presented outside the museum, explaining how to use the Society and its facilities as an educational tool. Material was made available at the district NSEA meetings in Omaha, Lincoln, and Kearney; at four University of Nebraska education classes; and to eleven other outside groups.

There are presently twelve Student Historian Chapters in Nebraska. A program on community research has been developed for Student Historian use by educational staff. Monthly letters containing project ideas were sent to the chapters each month from September through May. Historical projects undertaken by the various chapters include such things as the



Curator of Collections Robert Pettit. Clockwise from above, sleigh made by Henry Howland, Plattsburgh; girl's jacket, ca. 1900; stoneware crock marked "Seymour & Bosworth, Hartford, Conn.," pre-1850; Victorian side chair with needlepoint seat.



Constructing Society exhibits. Above left, Draftsman Steve Ryan setting type for exhibit legend (close-up, lower right). Above right, lower left, and center: Staff Artist Curt Peacock cutting, measuring, and painting board for exhibit. Center, finished displays.



Clockwise from above left, Society Receptionist Jill Carl; Naval Reservists repainting the Constance C. Syford House, Lincoln; two members of Student Historian Chapter, Cody-Kilgore Unified School of Cherry County, working on audiovisual history project; Roger Zabel (striped shirt) presenting spinning demonstration at 1976 Nebraska State Fair; Vince Casalaina, director, and Rudyard Norton, narrator, in Lincoln Museum filming "Heartland," a documentary tracing the development of farming in Nebraska, for Channel 26 TV.

publication of a pictorial history of Beaver City, an audio-visual presentation, volunteer assistance to local museums, and school programs. Outstanding chapters will receive awards at the Luncheon today.

The museum education staff worked closely with the Lincoln Junior League, Nebraska Department of Education, Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women, *Nebraska Living* magazine, Omaha public schools, and numerous individual teachers in planning programs and projects for the year. Two major slide-talk presentations were prepared by Curator of Education Elouise Soukup for public presentation. One was carried out in cooperation with the Lincoln Junior League for their fall workshop—"Lincoln, Growth of a Capital"; the second, "Noted Nebraska Women," was created by the Nebraska International Women's Year Coalition and presented at their state recognition day in February. Both of these have been used extensively for outside program requests, especially "Noted Nebraska Women," which is already booked extensively for the coming year.

The Curator of Education has been the coordinator for staff members appearing each month on the Mike Seacrest show, "Woman's World," on KOLN-KGIN/TV. Four radio interviews from the Society were presented on KFOR and several on KUON. Five feature TV shows on Society exhibits were aired on KMTV, KETV, and KOLN-TV. Fourteen special news releases announcing new displays and programs in the museum and the Kennard House were issued to all members of the Nebraska Press Association and received major newspaper, radio, and television coverage. Close cooperation was established between the capitol guides and the Department of Economic Development Tourist Division.

Visitors at the Kennard House during the year numbered 15,271, an increase of almost 50 per cent over last year. This increase probably reflects increased advertising and the use of special exhibits in the house such as the Victorian wedding display during spring and summer, Christmas decorations during the holiday season, and a quilting bee and tea party during late winter and spring.

The Society accepted administrative responsibility for Fairview, the home of William Jennings Bryan, during May of 1976. The house is open to visitors six afternoons a week. Attendance at Fairview indicated that there is a great interest on

the part of both Lincoln residents and national travelers in visiting Bryan's home. Future plans are to expand the restored area of Fairview in cooperation with the "Friends of Fairview" and the Bryan Hospital Board. Seasonal displays will permit increased advertising and expanded use of Society collections.

The museum art staff produced fifty-five exhibits this year. Twenty of these were used in the Lincoln Museum, one at the Kennard House, four at Fort Robinson and nine displays were built for the memorial room of the John G. Neihardt Memorial Center at Bancroft. Displays for outside use include one at the Lincoln Airport advertising Historical Society sites in Nebraska, six displays for educational loan use, and fourteen displays or panels for outside use.

The Society invites local and county historical societies to send museum volunteers to Lincoln. Here they can see museum display preparation taking place and discuss various techniques and "tricks of the trade." During this Bicentennial year a number of such groups visited the Society for such consultation. The Society staff regularly provides Nebraska historical organizations with assistance and advice on exhibit techniques, building utilization, and other phases of museum operation through on-site inspections, slide talks, and meetings with museum workers. This year the museum staff worked with groups from the Harlan, Lincoln, Nuckolls, Phelps, and Rock County Historical Societies, and from the Great Plains Black Museum.

The major concern in the area of collections continues to be lack of space.

The collections continue to grow daily and each new donation must be properly cataloged, cared for, and stored along with the materials already in the collections. Therefore, adequate work and storage space are necessary to fulfill the basic responsibility of the museum to preserve and interpret materials relating to Nebraska's past.

During this year items from the collections continued on loan for exhibit in the American Freedom Train, and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts traveling exhibition "Frontier America." Two quilts from the collections also continued on tour with the Mid-America Arts Alliance "Quilts From Nebraska Collections" exhibit. A painting from the collections, "The Homestead of Ellsworth L. Ball" is included in the European tour of the Boston

Museum of Fine Arts' "Frontier American" Exhibition. The exhibition will be shown this summer and fall in museums in The Hague, Zurich, Essen, and Vienna. The painting by homesteader artist Sallie Cover depicts the sod house of the Ball family in Garfield County in the 1880's. A beaded vest was loaned to the Flint Institute of Arts of Flint, Michigan, for use in an exhibit entitled "The American Indian and The American Flag."

In addition to retrieving and preparing specimens for numerous displays, the collections department furnished the log cabin at the Fair Grounds; set up seamstress, Christmas, quilting and wedding displays at the Kennard House; furnished the four period rooms with Christmas decorations and gifts; and dressed staff members in period costumes for photographs by the Lincoln Journal; dressed three manikins in military uniforms for loan to the Veterans Administration offices; and provided a Victorian table setting for the Flaming Festival in Omaha.

Aid was also given to other museums seeking information on cataloging and other museum procedures. The research materials in the department were, as in the past, used by the interior design and textile students of the University of Nebraska's Home Economics Department in their projects. The Bicentennial year brought numerous requests for the use of artifacts and information for Bicentennial projects. In addition to providing information on period costumes for Bicentennial activities, requests were also received for photographs of museum objects by Time-Life books and others.

We must stress that if the museum is to meet its responsibilities to preserve and display representative artifacts representing our Nebraska history it must secure more adequate space.

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

As outlined in the National Historic Preservation Act, state enabling legislation, and federal policies and procedures, the State Historic Preservation Office of the Nebraska State Historical Society has five major functions: the survey and inventory of historic, architectural, archeological, and cultural properties in Nebraska; the development and maintenance of a state historic preservation plan; the nomination of significant properties to the National Register of Historic Places; the administration of a federal grants-in-aid program for the



Summer Assistant Matt Dalton makes architectural notes on the Hat Creek Ranch in Sioux County. (Below) Summer Assistant Ken Wrightsman measures the remains of a grout-walled bachelor officers' quarters building at Fort Hartsuff.



acquisition, restoration, and/or preservation of eligible National Register properties; and the review of federal actions to determine the effects of those actions on properties enrolled in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. During the past year the State Historic Preservation Office has continued to show steady growth and development toward the fulfillment of these important responsibilities. Of particular assistance in defining responsibilities for budgetary purposes was the designation of historic preservation as a sub-program of the Museum Operations in July of 1975.

The past year has seen the initiation of the state's first major county-by-county survey of historic and architectural buildings and structures. Under the leadership of Historian Janet Jeffries and Architect David Murphy, a comprehensive methodology has been developed. During the past year over 2,000 buildings and structures were identified in Hall, Buffalo, Dawson, Lincoln, Sheridan, Dawes, Sioux, Box Butte, Dodge, Gage, Adams, and Richardson Counties. Records made include photographs, map locations, and courthouse research notes on the more significant properties. For future uses in lectures and programs, slides are often taken of more significant properties. Methodology includes the complete survey of urban areas and directed samplings of rural properties.

During the past year twenty-eight nominations to the National Register were completed. As of June 30, 1976, fourteen had been enrolled and the remainder were pending final review in Washington. Included in last year's nominations were three large historic districts in Nebraska City, which involved a substantial investment of staff time. In addition to these nominations, the Nebraska State Capitol was enrolled as a National Historic Landmark on January 7, 1976.

The grants-in-aid program showed a slight decline in funding, in spite of the fact that Nebraska demonstrated a greater ability to match federal funds than at any time in the history of the program. The decline was due in part to the federal transition from a fiscal year beginning October 1 rather than July 1. Nebraska's apportionment was some \$230,000 as compared with \$233,000 for the previous year. Regarding funding for federal Fiscal Year 1977, however, Nebraska has shown another growth in interest. In Fiscal 1976, thirty-three applicants indicated a state matching capability of \$1.2 million. For Fiscal 1977,

thirty-five applicants have shown the ability to match \$2.53 million, an over 100 per cent increase in only one year. Since Nebraska's award is based upon the state's ability to match federal funds, it is hoped that the state will receive a substantial increase in funding for the upcoming year.

Grants-in-aid funding is currently supporting twenty-five projects throughout the state including: restoration of the Woral C. Smith Limestone House near Fairbury, sponsored by the Jefferson County Historical Society; acquisition of the Cook Blacksmith Shop in Ponca by the City of Ponca; restoration of the Johnson County Courthouse by the Commissioners of Johnson County; restoration of the Bachelor Officers' Quarters at Fort Sidney by the Cheyenne County Historical Association; stabilization and restoration of the roof on the Frank House by Kearney State College. The Nebraska State Historical Society has been able to continue work at Fort Robinson and Neligh Mills because of continued federal participation through the National Park Service.

Finally, the State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed over 750 federal projects to determine what effects those projects might have upon important historical or cultural resources. In some cases this has involved on-site inspections by Society staff members to more fully determine the possible existence of archeological remains which might be destroyed by construction activity. To more fully integrate our planning activities with those of federal agencies operating in Nebraska, office staff have conducted mini-conferences explaining federal laws and procedures relating to historic preservation.

In addition to these required activities, the staff of the State Historic Preservation Office have also greatly expanded their public information and education activities. During the past year the office responded to some 430 written inquiries and over 700 telephone requests. Clientele included federal, state, and local governmental agencies, private businesses, organizations, and individual citizens. Staff members have attended and participated in a number of state and regional conferences during the past year, and were also represented at national meetings of the Association for Preservation Technology, State Historic Preservation Officers, and Society of Architectural Historians.

STATE HISTORICAL SITES

A total of 130,501 persons visited branch museums operated by the Society outside Lincoln this year compared with 108,474 visitors last year. These operations, supervised by Curator Carl Jones, include responsibility for a number of buildings and land areas at Fort Robinson, the George W. Norris Home at McCook, the Neligh Mills at Neligh, and three trailer museums, two on I-80 and one near Chimney Rock. The Society also has responsibility for Chimney Rock and some eighty acres of surrounding ground. A small portion of Mud Springs Station in Cheyenne County with an adjacent schoolhouse museum is also administered by the Society. Other areas include the John G. Neihardt Center at Bancroft and plans are being developed for the conversion of the U.S. Engineers dredge boat to a Museum of the Missouri River to be permanently located at Brownville.

At Fort Robinson the operations are ably supervised by Curator Vance Nelson, who has direct responsibility for eleven buildings including the museum in the Post Headquarters building. Specifications and plans have been developed this year for full restoration of the Veterinary Hospital building as a Museum of the Horse. This work is being carried out with a \$50,000 appropriation from the Legislature, which is matched with Historical Preservation Funds from the National Park Service. One of the successful events started at Fort Robinson three years ago is the Annual School Field Trip Day, which is attended by schools from northwest Nebraska and adjacent states.

The John G. Neihardt Center was opened to the public and dedicated on August 1, the 11th Annual John G. Neihardt Day, with more than 800 persons present. Curator John Lindahl, in cooperation with the Neihardt Foundation, has been working to expand the services to school groups as well as the general public.

The trailer museums, in use since 1967, are starting to show their age and an orderly plan for replacement must be considered if this program is to continue. The two stationed on I-80, in particular, are the subject of many favorable comments by national travelers.



Interior of John G. Neihardt Center, Bancroft. In the foreground is a cycad, the petrified stump of a prehistoric palm, symbolizing the "tree of life."



Participants in the July, 1976, Fort Robinson Style Show (from left): Kathy Mitchell in a black 1920's dress; Missie Mitchell; and Judy Anderson in a 1905 wedding dress.



John G. Neihardt Center dedication at Bancroft, August 1, 1976. Neihardt was Poet Laureate of Nebraska from 1921 until his death in 1973.



Hilda Petri, Columbia, Missouri, daughter of Poet Laureate Neihardt, speaks at dedication ceremonies. Behind her on the platform are Society President Nellie Snyder Yost and Master of Ceremonies Ron Hull, ETV program director.



Lowell S. Hamblen, pilot, and Captain Hugh Johnson, dredgemaster, in the pilot house of the Meriwether Lewis during dredging operations near Kansas Bend between Nebraska City and Peru in 1956.



Dredge Meriwether Lewis at Gibson Bend near the South Omaha Bridge heading downstream to Kansas City in July, 1954. The Lewis will become a Branch Museum at Brownville. (Photos courtesy U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)



Indian dance shade, Fort Robinson, spring, 1976. Shown are Albert Runs Along the Edge (left), Albert Long Soldier, Bill Red Bear, and Albert Red Bear, who helped build the dance shade with Fort Robinson Centennial Commission funds.



Fort Robinson ceremony—In WW II uniforms (l. and r.) Warrant Officer Douglas Topham, Crawford; Sergeant Frank Ehlers, Crawford; (center) Curator Vance E. Nelson in 19th century cavalry dress.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Archeological research continued during the year as a method of reconstructing the history of Nebraska people. The general areas of emphasis are: (1) to provide adequate data in reference to federal involvement of possible damage to sites in terms of the Historic Preservation programs, (2) Highway Archeological Salvage, and (3) selected research at certain sites which may be expected to provide additional information on the history of the fur trader, military, and early white settler. Special attention has been directed since 1972 to the fur trade history in the historic Council Bluffs area from the mouth of the Platte to Fort Atkinson. Work on the Joshua Pilcher-Lucien Fontenelle post in Fontenelle Forest was completed in 1973. This year work was carried out at a site reported to have been that of Cabanne's Post in northern Douglas County.

Extensive excavations were carried out at this site during a nine week period this summer in cooperation with the Western Heritage Society and the city of Omaha. Some 30 young people were made available through a Youth Conservation Corps project. The work was directed by staff member Richard Jensen assisted by Ronald Kivett. In summary, the data recovered, including limited numbers of artifacts, lend support to the historic tradition of this site being the location of J. P. Cabanne's Trading Post.

A second project this summer involved the partial excavation of the territorial town of DeSoto, north of Fort Calhoun in Washington County. This was a cooperative project with the State Department of Roads made necessary by the projected relocation of Highway 73. A crew of twelve supervised by Archeologists Terry Steinacher and Gayle Carlson uncovered extensive areas of the town site and recovered thousands of artifacts ranging from bricks to buttons. A study of the artifacts and the community plan will provide new information on this territorial settlement.

In Summary:

I believe that we have made some progress this past year in a broad range of projects. All have a common goal of preserving and interpreting the history of Nebraska people, whether it be a stone artifact of our pre-historic Indians or a document of



Archeological members establishing a two-meter grid system for June, 1976, excavations at Cabanne's Trading Post, 25DO8, near Omaha.



Crew members excavating a storage cellar. Portions of the walls were lined with logs.



Summer, 1976. Highway Salvage archeological excavations in progress at the DeSoto Site (25WN16), south of Blair, Nebraska. This site was the location of a Nebraska territorial town occupied from 1854 to the early 1870's.



Brick foundation remains uncovered at the DeSoto Site. They probably mark the location of a former saloon near the center of town.

yesterday. Each day that passes becomes history and increases our responsibility for adequate documentation.

As we have indicated throughout this report and in reports for earlier years, Nebraska's attic has reached the limits of capacity. It is essential that State government and the general public fully recognize this fact and move forward toward completion of plans for the Heritage Center.

Throughout the history of your Society our efforts have been aided by public and private support. Your Society Board and the Foundation Trustees recognize we must secure a portion of the funds from interested citizens if we are to secure state funds. I am reminded frequently that we are not trying to keep up with our neighbors. Presently, however, building plans are being developed or buildings are under construction in Kansas, Colorado, and North Dakota. All of these states have received significant public support for their buildings. I was surprised, however, to learn that North Dakota citizens have already pledged in excess of four million dollars for a structure to house their history. Can they be more proud of their history than Nebraskans? Matching funds have been committed from State government. Our goal of total building costs is much less but certainly Nebraska has a history deserving of a proper setting. The State Historical Society Foundation exists to support the Society. Under the leadership of E. J. Faulkner, President, plans are being developed to provide every individual an opportunity to contribute to this project.

Again I would hope that you feel your Society has progressed. Your Society Board, headed the past two years by President Nellie Snyder Yost, has worked to ensure such progress.