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Article Summary: Presented in part at the Annual Meeting in Lincoln, September 23, 1978, this article reviews the progress of the historical society during the previous year. It contains references to the Archives, Historic Preservation, the Library, the Lincoln Museum, the Branch Museums, and Archeology. This is a very extensive report with many illustrations. It is recommended that any reader interested in the history of the historical society read it in its entirety and not rely on this elementary indexing of names and images.

### Cataloging Information:

Names: Due to the large number of names included in this article within the text and under the photographs, only primary names have been listed here.

Dr Anne Diffendal, Otto Kotouc Jr, Dr James C Olson, James Potter, Fern Hubbard Orme, Dr and Mrs Jon P Gilligan, Marvin Kivett, Dick Spencer, Joleen Smith, Judith Jones, Anne Reinert, John Carter, Dr Vladimir Kucera, Carl H Jones, Thomas R Buecker, John Kyle Davis, Gene Bang, Georgene Sones

Photographs / Images: Otto Kotouc Jr; National Trust for Historic Preservation grant presentation; Fall meeting guests; guest registration for Fall Meeting; Reception at Fall Meeting; Addison E Sheldon Memorial Awards; Sheldon award winner Fern Hubbard with others; United Airlines contribution presentation; Nebraska City Gilligan home; Society Centennial staff celebration; Curator of Education Dick Spencer with students; Retired Volunteer Program group; May visit of staff to Southwest Minnesota Historical Center; Society Microfilm use; Examination and preservation photos; Examination of materials for Nebraska's Bicentennial time capsule; Salvaging of pressed metal ceiling panels from the ZCJB Hall in Niobrara; Photo Room; Nebraska Genealogical Society President Gene Bang and Genealogical Society Publications Director Georgene Sones; A Society exhibit on Abraham Lincoln; William H Ferguson House restoration; Branch Museums Curators meeting; July 4 Old Mill Day at Neligh Mills; John G Neihardt Center August 6 festivities; Fort Robinson Curator Vance Nelson with students; Mobil Museum exhibits; State Historical Markers; The Willa Cather Home; former Farmers and Merchants Bank in Red Cloud; Ash Hollow Visitor Center dedication; Missouri River history museum sign; Summer archeological activities

# THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN 1978

*By Marvin F. Kivett, Director*

Presented in part at the Annual Meeting in Lincoln, September 23, 1978.

On September 25-26, 1978, an organizational meeting was held at the Commercial Hotel, Lincoln, to organize the Nebraska State Historical Society. At the call of Robert Furnas 17 counties sent 35 delegates for all or part of the two-day session. One has to be impressed with the efficiency of their work. Their accomplishments included the decision that the name of the organization be "Nebraska State Historical Society," the designation of five officers, the adoption of a constitution and bylaws. Former Governor Robert W. Furnas was elected president with other leading citizens serving as officers and board members. In the initial meeting there seems to have been no expenditures approved, probably because the balance in the treasury was zero. The organization held its second meeting on January 23, 1879, and authorized the expenditure of \$16.00 for a bookcase and \$20.00 for expenses of the Secretary's office for the year.

It is not my purpose to detail the history of this organization today since this has been done by Dr. Anne Diffendal to be published in *Nebraska History*. I should note, however, that we have another anniversary this month. It was on September 26, 1953, at the 75th annual meeting of the Society that the Society Headquarters Building was dedicated. Perhaps I should also note that the new building in 1953 was the only building under the administration of the Society. Today the Society administers a variety of historic structures and sites throughout the state. Geographically these range from the *Lewis* dredge in Nemaha County, southeast Nebraska, to Fort Robinson in northwest Nebraska.

Overall the goal of the founders of the Society a century ago has not been altered. As stated in the Constitution it is: "The general object of this society shall be to encourage historical research and enquiry, spread historical information, especially



*Otto Kotouc, Jr. of Humboldt was elected Society President at the September 23 Fall Meeting in Lincoln.*

within the State of Nebraska, and to embrace alike aboriginal and modern history." Perhaps our methods have changed, and our staff has increased, as has our budget.

Today I would like to provide a summary report on some of the activities of the past year. A major problem still not fully resolved is that of increased space for the Society operations. I'm sure that all of you are aware of the time and effort your Executive Board has devoted to this matter. In summary with excellent legislative support we have taken steps toward the goal of an adequate building to more properly serve as the repository for the proud history of Nebraska. A block of ground immediately adjacent to the Capitol was designated in 1974 as the site for the Nebraska Heritage Center. Total funds in the amount of \$180,000 have been made available for architectural plans. Projected costs for the 90,960 square foot building are estimated at a total amount of \$6,265,300 over a three year building period. An initial request of \$2,039,160 will be made in the 1979-1980 budget for the start of actual construction. It will require the support of all concerned citizens if this goal is to be realized.

Dr. James C. Olson, Society Director, reported as we moved into the new building in 1953, a permanent staff of 17 employees and 12 temporary and part-time employees. Today our permanent staff numbers 80 and there are 40 temporary or part-time employees.

As Director of your Society, I have served on a variety of boards and commissions, including the Hall of Fame Commission, the State Records Board, Arbor Day Foundation, Capitol Environs Committee, and the Capitol Archives Committee. I also serve as coordinator for the Nebraska Historical Records Advisory Board, which makes recommendations for federal grants to various state organizations which have archival collections. The Hall of Fame Commission, once a separate state agency, is now a program of the Historical Society.

The Society Administration was charged with phasing out the Nebraska Bicentennial Commission by June 30, 1979. The last outstanding bills of the Bicentennial have been paid and the editorial staff under Historian L. G. DeLay completed the publication of the Bicentennial Commission's illustrated *Final Report*. An unusual phase of the final commission activities was also handled by the Society—the assembling of material for a



*Ruth Goltzer of the National Trust for Historic Preservation presents a \$10,000 grant for exhibit construction aboard the Captain Meriwether Lewis boat to Society Director Marvin Kivett. Observing are Board Member M. S. Hevelone (second from left), Beatrice, and luncheon speaker Patrick Horsbrugh, Notre Dame University. . . . (Below) Fall Meeting guests included Mrs. M. S. Hevelone (left), Beatrice; Society Treasurer Arthur Carmody, Trenton; Mrs. Marvin Kivett (partially obscured), Lincoln; M. S. Hevelone; and Everett Sutton, Benkelman.*





*Society Secretary Jackie Goldsmith (right) helps guests to register at the William H. Ferguson House reception following the Fall Meeting. . . . (Below) Mrs. Ron Kivett (right), Lincoln, assists at the reception serving table while guests view the interior of the Ferguson House.*



time capsule which was sealed in a vault at the State Office Building September 22, 1978. The capsule is to be opened on July 4, 2075. Pat Gaster, Editorial Assistant, coordinated the Society's part in the project.

Also published by the Society were the quarterly *Nebraska History*, a journal in its 60th year; monthly *News Letter*; weekly "Out of Old Nebraska" newspaper columns; and a number of smaller brochures and pamphlets.

Another function of the Society Administration is the operation of the Historical Markers program. Processed last year were sixteen orders for historical markers. A new type of marker—single-post, measuring 30 by 42 inches—was designed for reading by pedestrians and used to mark historical buildings in the state.

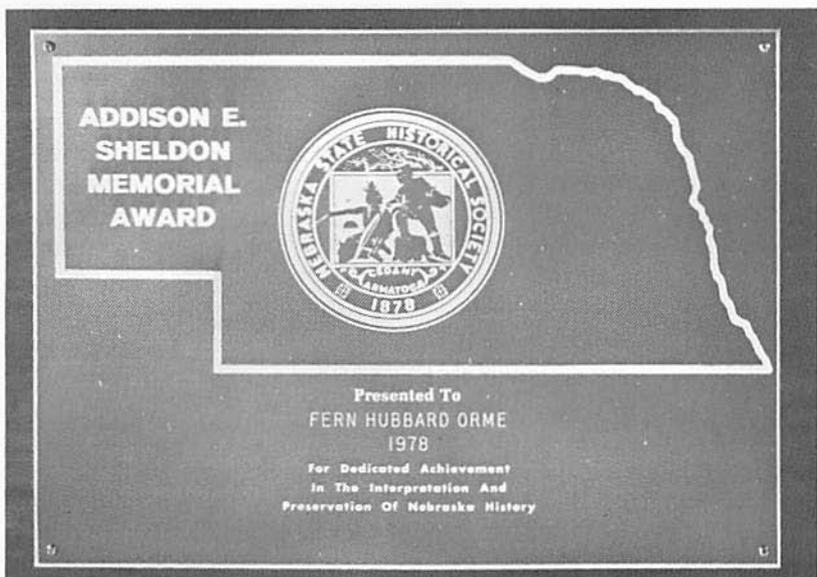
The Spring Meeting this year was hosted by the Buffalo County Historical Society at Kearney. Author-journalist David A. Dary of Kansas University spoke on "The History and Lore of the American Buffalo" at the meeting. Those in attendance also toured the historical Frank House on the Kearney State College campus.

Now I would like to provide a summary of activities by each department during the past year.

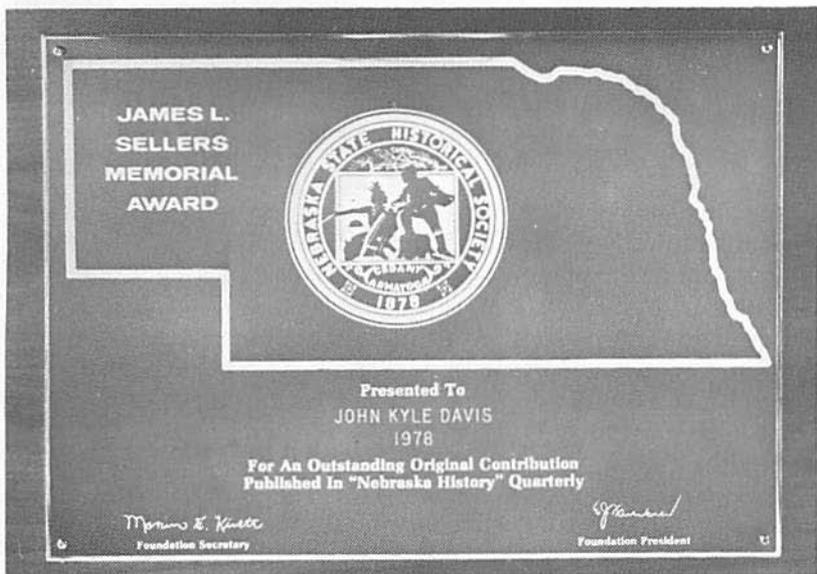
## ARCHIVES

The Archives program under the direction of James Potter, State Archivist, has experienced another busy and at times discouraging year. The discouraging aspect relates to constant concern with lack of space to properly carry out functions assigned by state law. Perhaps the greatest change in the Archives is the increased public service requests. The greatly increased interest in genealogy has placed a heavy load on the Archives and Library alike.

The Archives has become more active in the collection of public as well as private records. During the year Assistant State Archivist Donald Snoddy accessioned records from 34 agencies of state or local government. Some examples include Douglas County marriage records dating from 1856; naturalization records from Otoe County, 1855-1935; and Douglas County, 1864-1964. From private sources came such important records as those of Major General Butler B. Miltonberger a distinguished



*The 1978 Addison E. Sheldon Memorial Award was presented to former state senator Fern Hubbard Orme, Florida, for assisting with the preservation of the Kennard and Ferguson houses, Lincoln. . . . (Below) The 1978 James L. Sellers Memorial Award went to John Kyle Davis, Bellevue, for his paper on political boss Tom Dennison of Omaha.*



Nebraska military leader. The business community has increasingly seen the importance of preserving their records. Among these was the Union Pacific Railroad and the Omaha Livestock Market in Omaha. The Archives serves as a repository for the records of many state organizations ranging from the Nebraska Flying Farmers and Ranchers to the League of Women Voters of Nebraska.

In other accomplishments Manuscript Curator Anne Diffendal completed preparation of a revised *Guide to the Newspaper Collections* which has not been published. She also completed a centennial history of the Society for publication in the fall issue of *Nebraska History*. Manuscripts Curator Dave Hooper worked on the oral history program.

In December, 1979, formal agreements were concluded between the Society and the Board of Trustees of State Colleges to establish branch Archives at Chadron and Kearney State Colleges. This cooperative effort has great promise for the future as a greater service not only to students but for the general public.

At the request of the Society Executive Board Governor J. James Exon appointed a Nebraska Historical Records Advisory Board in August, 1977, to review grant applications for funds from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Despite the frustrations of a heavy workload and inadequate facilities the Archives staff has provided outstanding work during the year.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

As the year began our historic sites survey crew was in the field, continuing efforts begun earlier in the summer. Chase and Dundy counties were surveyed in July and Pierce County in August. Throughout the summer Cass County was surveyed by a preservation intern assigned through a matching grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. As a result of proposed federal involvement projects requiring review, additional survey work was carried out at Humboldt and Nebraska City, with archeological surveys being done at Lewellen, Ord, and Genoa.

Industrial archeological sites were surveyed at Ames and Hastings. Architectural elements were salvaged from buildings in old Niobrara as a result of an agreement with the US Corps of



*Sheldon Award winner Fern Hubbard Orme (right) Fort Myers, Florida, chats with Arthur Carmody and Mrs. Marvin Kivett.*



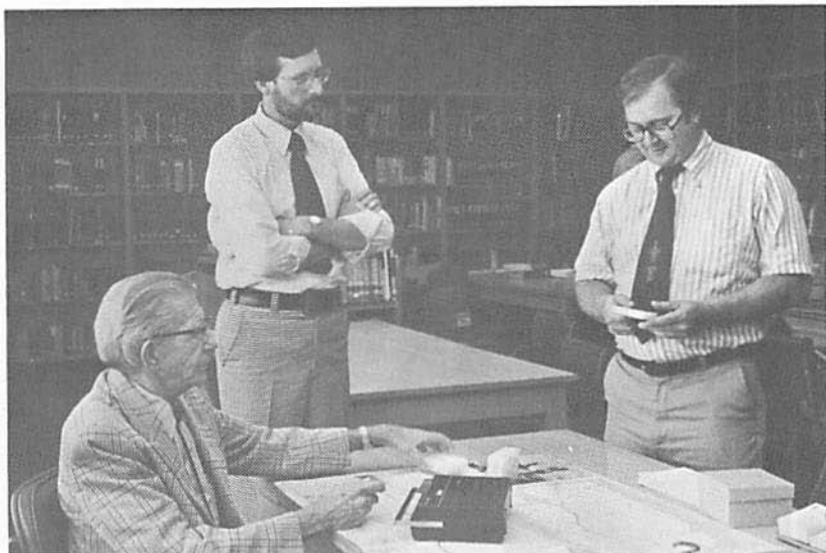
*Hugo J. Moirano, United Airlines, presents a contribution to Foundation President Edwin J. Faulkner at a July 12 luncheon in Lincoln. At left is Society Director Marvin Kivett. The gift will be earmarked for the transportation section of the proposed Nebraska Heritage Center, shown in background. . . . (Below) Dr. and Mrs. John P. Gilligan donated their 97-year-old house in Nebraska City to the Foundation, which will preserve the home as part of the Nebraska City Historic District.*





*Celebrating the Society Centennial Sept. 26 are staff members (standing, from left) Anne Diffendal, Penny Chatfield, Don Snoddy, Wendell Frantz, Janet Jeffries Spencer, Jackie Goldsmith, Pam McGovern; (seated) Al Riggert, James Potter, Ron Kivett, and Society Director Marvin Kivett. . . . (Below) Curator of Education Dick Spencer presents a 1st place Student Historian Award to Shamrock Explorers of O'Neill, Helen Martens, advisor, at Kearney spring meeting. Luncheon Speaker Professor David A. Dary is seated behind microphone.*





*Gifford D. Mullins (left), Retired Senior Volunteer Program, confers with State Archivist Jim Potter and former Manuscripts Curator David Hooper. Courtesy, Nebraska Commission on Aging. . . . (Below) Art Finnell (center), Southwest Minnesota Historical Center, Marshall, talks with directors of the Centers for Archives and History and with Archives staff members, who visited in May: Librarian Reta King (left), Chadron State College; Professor Gene Hamaker, Kearney State College; Jim Potter; and Manuscripts Curator Anne Diffendal.*





*Society Microfilm Supervisor Joleen Smith aids a patron in the Microfilm Library. . . . (Below) Patrons reading newspapers on microfilm.*





*Manuscripts Curator Anne Diffendal examines archival material. . . .  
(Below) Conservation Specialist Judith Jones cleans the surface of  
maps.*



Engineers. Several buildings in the town were determined to be eligible for the National Register, and salvage was the final mitigation of the effects of the corps' project to move the town. Earlier in the summer the buildings were recorded with drawings and photographs done by a team under corps sponsorship.

During the past year 12 nominations were submitted to the National Register and sites were enrolled, some carried over from previous years. Among new listings are the *Meriwether Lewis* at Brownville, Fort Hartsuff near Elyria, and the Buffalo Bill Cody Ranch at North Platte.

The grants-in-aid program received an increased appropriation this year. Nebraska's allocation jumped from \$187,758 to \$561,000. With the increase came new spending guidelines which call for states to use the money quickly or lose it. As of June 30, 1978, grants projects were in progress at Fort Atkinson, Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney, and Tecumseh. Soon to be underway are projects at Brownville, Fort Robinson, Fremont, and Lincoln.

The State Historic Preservation Office in its function of reviewing federally funded or licensed projects within the State reviewed 788 applications during the past year. This accounts for a considerable amount of staff time. As our survey records become more complete, this task will be made easier.

This year publication of the *Cornerstone* was inaugurated. A bimonthly newsletter, it is sent to anyone interested in preservation activities. It serves to notify planners and others when properties are considered or approved for National Register listing. We are pleased with the response as indicated by the increasing number of requests for copies.

Early in 1978 the federal agency with which we deal underwent a reorganization. Offices which were formerly part of the National Park Service were transferred to a new agency called Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. No major procedural or personnel changes occurred, and the program remains under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior.

Due to a change in federal regulations, all states will be required to have both an architect and an architectural historian on the preservation staff effective October 1, 1978. At present we have one person doing both jobs. The 1978 session of the Legislature approved another position, and we are adding another staff member. This is necessary if Nebraska is to



*Examining materials for Nebraska's Bicentennial time capsule, presented to the state during the Bicentennial year by the Reynolds Metals Company, are Curator of Collections Robert Pettit (left), Editorial Assistant Patricia Gaster, and State Archivist Jim Potter. . . . (Below) Members of the US Army Corps of Engineers, supervised by Society personnel, salvage pressed metal ceiling panels from the ZCBJ Hall, Niobrara, when the town was relocated in 1977 due to rising water behind the Gavins Point Dam.*



continue receiving federal assistance for historic preservation.

Passage of LB 628 in the 1978 legislative session allows individuals to receive federal preservation grant funds. In the past only governmental bodies and preservation organizations could do so. We believe that this will broaden our base of support for preservation activity throughout the state by getting more private capital invested in projects. As the year ended we began receiving applications for 1979 funds, many of them from individuals.

### LIBRARY

The Library supervised by Ann Reinert, Librarian, provided its research facilities for 5,800 daily patrons and advice to over 9,000 queries for assistance. Thirteen percent of our visitors represented 39 other states and seven foreign countries. Ethnic studies was a major interest, but others included steamboats, Civil War regimental histories, old farm equipment, opera houses, Old West trails, Presbyterian missions, and early radio.

The greatest interest, however, was family history, which accounted for 48 percent of the total queries for information this year. This is a 3 percent increase over last year's requests. A slide-tape production and a series of historical reference leaflets for genealogists have now been developed to give patrons a better understanding of our resources.

This year several valuable Nebraska history references have been compiled using our library research materials. These references include a bibliography of reference to specific ethnic groups in Nebraska, as found in local historical and biographical accounts, sponsored by the UNL English Department; and an analytical bibliography and index to the large collection of reminiscences preserved in our library recounting life in Nebraska from the days of the fur traders and freighters to the present day which was compiled by Sherrill Daniels as a graduate research project. Mrs. Rudie Sobotka of the Eastern Nebraska Genealogical Society translated the list of Czechs in Nebraska as published in the *Hospodar*, a Czech language newspaper, during the 1890s.

We also co-sponsored the Nebraska phase of the Newberry Library Map Cataloging Project by the Newberry Library in Chicago, which plans to publish a list of maps of the Great Plains region. Using our map collection as the core collection,

Helen Brooks, a graduate student at the UNL Department of Geography, surveyed pre-1900 Nebraska maps at the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the Denver Public Library, and the Newberry Library as well as the Nebraska libraries and historical societies.

Though the Photo Room showed a decline in the number of daily patrons, it showed a 14 percent increase in number of photographs used. Forty nine publishing companies in the US, along with companies in Australia, Canada, Germany, and England purchased photographs. *Time-Life* and *Reader's Digest* published the greatest number. As usual, our Solomon D. Butcher collection of sod houses and Indians of the Great Plains was of major interest, but aeronautics and railroads, women and Nebraska authors, architecture, and the State Capitol, early settlement and local farm and town scenes were also in much demand.

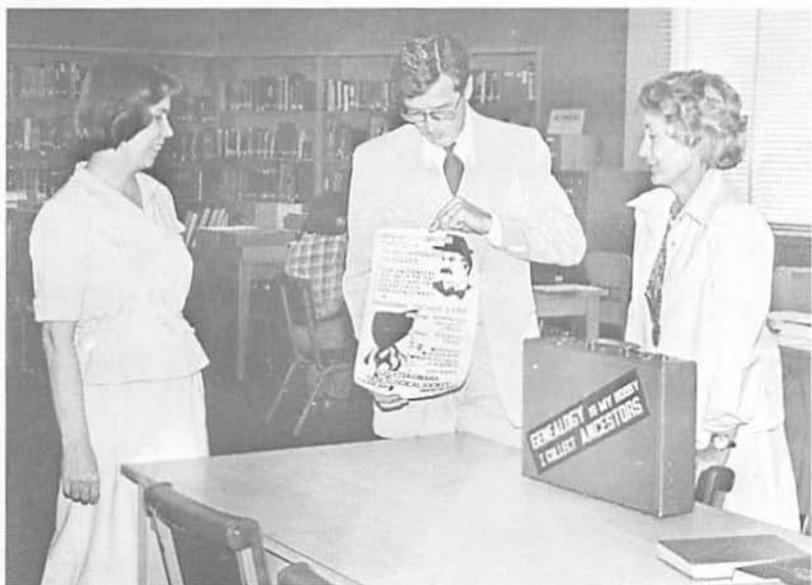
A major exhibition of photographs from the Butcher collection of glass negatives produced by the Mid-America Arts Alliance began during 1978. The University of Nebraska Press is publishing a book in 1978 of selected Butcher photographs edited by Curator of Photographs John E. Carter.

Donations were received from 232 donors. A major collection of genealogical books was presented to the Library by Genevieve Roberts Johnson. The Omaha Prospect Hill Cemetery Burial Records for the Greater Omaha Genealogical Society and several other cemetery enumerations were added, as were a number of county landowner atlases, directories, and cookbooks from church and social organizations. Other donations were 28 institutional, county, community, church, and ethnic histories and 65 family histories and biographical accounts of individuals. Three atlases originally published in Germany, dated 1839-1844, are useful additions to our reference collection.

Over 4,000 photographs have been added this year to the photo collection. One unique collection is 260 photographs of war posters as they appeared in Nebraska during World War II. Nearly 2,000 soil conservation slides documenting the 40-year history of the Soil Conservation Service's assistance to farming in Nebraska was another major donation. Five hundred prints and negatives showing the construction of the Harris Overpass in Lincoln; local communities and buildings; scenes of farming operations; copies of stereographs of William Jennings Bryan;



*Curator of Photographs John Carter aids patrons in the cramped confines of the Society Photo Room. . . . (Below) Librarian Ann Reinert (left) confers with Nebraska Genealogical Society President Gene Bang of Fremont and Genealogical Society Publications Director Georgene Sones of Omaha.*





and a bird's eye view of Long Pine, Nebraska, in 1884 are other examples of interesting contributions.

Forty books and pamphlets were sent to our Branch Library at Fort Robinson relating to horses and the Veterinary Hospital. A set of the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion* was also added to the Fort Robinson collection of military history.

Reprints of books by John G. Neihardt were placed in the Library at the John G. Neihardt Center. Two recent publications, *Patterns and Coincidences; A Sequel to All Is But a Beginning* by John G. Neihardt and *John G. Neihardt: A Critical Biography*, by Lucile F. Aly have been added to this collection.

Cataloging the Emil Kopac Memorial Library of Western History, a collection of several thousand books, is in progress. Volunteer-worker time totaled nearly 1,500 hours, a major portion of which was spent in typing and filing index cards. A specific program to care for fragile pamphlets was implemented. Volunteer help also assisted with vertical file reorganization.

Eleven special programs were given by Library staff members and 16 group orientations were delivered during the year. Research Associate Paul Riley took part in a panel discussion at the Neihardt Conference at Wayne State Teachers' College. John Carter consulted with several local museums on the care and preservation of photographs. Ann Reinert is a member of the Nebraska Library Commission Clearinghouse Advisory Committee and is vice-president of the Nebraska Library Association.

### LINCOLN MUSEUM

The Society's centennial year has not been notable in any major way in the Museum, but many projects have been completed. Working space became more and more crowded.

Attendance at the Lincoln Museum rose for the fourth consecutive year with a total of 53,862. The Education Department reports 9,329 people served in 264 groups. The lack of parking close to the Museum continues to be a problem to visitors, especially tourists who are not familiar with the city and who have difficulty driving its streets. The future Heritage Center with its own parking lot adjacent to the State Capitol should greatly change the visitation pattern. The Nebraska Statehood Memorial Thomas P. Kennard house had a total attendance of 9,164.

Dr. Vladimir Kucera, Kennard House Curator, retired June 30. Kucera, a former Czechoslovakian newspaperman, came to the United States in 1949. He had been with the Society since 1952, and served as Kennard House Curator since 1968.

The Education Department handled 2,593 pieces of mail, distributed 556 teachers packets, and circulated 537 educational leaflets. The Curator gave presentations on the Historical Society, its work and its educational programs at Educational Service Unit workshops in North Platte, Crete, South Sioux City, Sidney, Broken Bow, and Nebraska City. Nine public service radio announcements, television and radio announcements for Christmas displays and nine news releases were produced. Public service announcements broadcast by WNAG of Norfolk had a value of \$1,177.50. KOLN-KGIN TV of Lincoln and Grand Island broadcast public service announcements valued at \$8,232.00. We would like to acknowledge this service and express thanks to these and other broadcasters who helped make people aware of the Museum.

The Curator of Education directs the Junior Historian program. Six newsletters were distributed during the year and the Curator visited seven of the Junior Historian chapters. Nine chapters with a total membership of 250 students took part in the program this year. Awards given at the Society's Spring Meeting were: Senior Division, 1st place to Raymond Central High School; Junior Division, 1st place to the Shamrock Explorers of O'Neill. Honorable mention awards were given to the Murdock Student Historical Society and the Nebraska Buffs of Columbus. A slide show was developed on "The Sod House" for use in gallery talks and audio-visual projects used as parts of various exhibits were produced by the Curator of Education.

The Art Department produced 62 exhibits, the major project being exhibits for the new interpretive center at Ash Hollow State Historical Park. Twenty exhibit units were installed, and although several exhibits still have to be researched and put together on the environment and prehistoric occupants of the area, the story of the trail history of Ash Hollow is complete. Park Superintendent Dennis Shimmin has reported that he has received numerous comments from visitors stating that they are impressed with the quality and attractiveness of the exhibits.

The other 42 displays made were used at the Lincoln Museum, various branches, the Lincoln Air Terminal, the State Office



*Restoration of the William H. Ferguson House, Lincoln, continues. The three-story mansion, located between the State Capitol and the Kennard Statehood Memorial, is to be named the Nebraska Folkart Center and will function as a multi-purpose facility.*



Building and for various loans. The Museum has taken the responsibility for keeping art work of some type on display in the lobby of the State Office Building. Exhibits to date have included paintings from the collections, photographs of the construction of the present Capitol; an exhibit of photographs by Bill Ganzel, Margaret MacKinchen, Roger Brahn, Larry Ferguson, and a collection of state-bird prints loaned by the Nebraska Library Commission.

The Art Department, besides producing exhibits, functions as a shop for the Museum, this year constructing such objects as signs for the Neligh Mills; book and brochure racks for the Neihardt Center; room-measuring devices for the Historic Preservation Department; specimen storage and shipping boxes for the Collections Department; and various signs, tables, and racks for use by the Museum, Library, and Archives.

The Collections Department reports logging in 191 accessions, including material from 99 new donors and 59 new accessions from previous donors. A total of 4,452 items was cataloged. Cataloging includes numbering an object and its appearance, size, color, and condition. Often to record the history of an object and properly identify it research in books, magazines and catalogs is necessary. Other research is done by the Collections Department staff in selecting specimens for exhibits and in answering inquiries from people who have objects they would like identified.

The Museum office recorded the usual mail and telephone traffic with approximately 300 letters and almost 10,000 phone calls received. Museum staff gave a number of lectures to clubs and organizations. Several organizations were given advice on exhibit programs, on starting a museum, and other aspects of museum operation. Museum staff continued to take part in professional organizations including the Nebraska Museum Conference, the Mountain-Plains Museum Conference, and the American Association of Museums. Curator Wendell Frantz, the Society's representative of the Upper Midwest Conservation Association, was elected to the board of trustees of that organization.

### BRANCH MUSEUMS

The division of Branch Museum headed by Curator Carl H. Jones includes installations outside of Lincoln. The Legislature



*Attending a meeting of Branch Museums Curators are Carl Jones (left), Lincoln Museum; Eli Paul, Lincoln Museum; Vance Nelson (obscured), Fort Robinson; Thomas Buecker, Neligh Mills; Robert Pettit, Lincoln Museum; Robert Ray, George Norris Home, McCook; John Lindahl, John G. Neihardt Center, Bancroft; and Ann Billesbach, Willa Cather Historical Center, Red Cloud.*



*Dr. Vladimir Kucera, Kennard House Curator, retired in June.*

passed LB 567 which authorized the Society to accept the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation at Red Cloud and to operate the Willa Cather Historical Center starting in the 1978-1979 budget year. We are still in the process of completing that transfer and are looking forward to the challenge of encouraging visitation to this fine operation. At the time the transfer takes place, Ann E. Billesbach, a graduate of Cooperstown, New York, Graduate Programs in American Folk Culture and Museum Studies, will become Curator. Under her care will be six buildings: the Willa Cather House, the Garber Bank, the St. Juliana Catholic Church, the Grace Episcopal Church, the Burlington Depot, and the Antonia Farmhouse. The interpretive center and offices will be located in the bank building.

The Lincoln staff of the Branch Museums Division increased in size with the addition of Robert Eli Paul, in October, 1977. Mr. Paul completed an MA degree in anthropology with museum studies at George Washington University, Washington, DC, in May. His BA is in anthropology from the University of Missouri. He assists in the operation of the ten branches and was the principal researcher for exhibits for the Game and Parks Commission interpretive center at Ash Hollow State Historical Park. During the year Curator Jones traveled some 13,566 miles in conducting the Society's business in the various branch museums:

*Fort Robinson:* The fort continues the most popular of Branch Museums, with 31,606 visitors at the main museum and a 10 percent increase to 25,343 visitors at the six other exhibit buildings on the post and at the Red Cloud Agency. Part of this increase is due to greater coordination with the Game and Parks Commission.

The Society has continued preservation of the buildings by stabilizing the foundations and tuckpointing the exterior of the Veterinary Hospital and Stable, as well as painting it inside and out. The Society plans to turn this structure into a "Museum of the Horse," covering this animal's history on the Plains. Plans for stabilizing the foundations and tuckpointing and reroofing the 1895 Granary were completed this spring, and the work is now underway.

Staffing at Fort Robinson has been supplemented this year by one person on the Green Thumb program sponsored by the

National Farmers Union; one person on a Ceta work-experience program; and four high school students working on a SPEDY grant. These programs have allowed us to increase our services to the visiting public and have been an asset to the eight summer attendants and four permanent full-time staff members at the fort.

*Neligh Mills:* The effect of a full-time Curator was realized at the mill this year with attendance reaching an all time high of 4,766 people, an increase of 66 percent over last year. Much of the interest can be attributed to Curator Thomas B. Buecker, who has promoted the mill in the local community and in state and national publications. Two well-received special exhibits were held during the year: a local art show, and displays of the photographs of Wright Morris. School groups have been coming to the mill in increased numbers, and the Curator has presented programs to area schools.

During the year the large flat roof on the main mill was replaced. Two high school boys have helped as guides and mill hands by cutting the grass and keeping the building clean. Research in old newspapers of Neligh has continued, adding to knowledge about the history of the mill. Much of this work was carried out by a secretary-receptionist working on a SPEDY grant.

*Neihardt Center:* The Society has continued to make improvements at the Neihardt Center. This year we added seven mercury-vapor lights to illuminate the grounds and parking lot at night. A 30-foot aluminum flagpole was installed, and an oak lintel naming the center was placed in the iron gate in front of the building by the John G. Neihardt Foundation. The porch floor of the study was replaced. This carpentry work and the painting of the exterior of the study was carried on by Ann Kai, building and grounds supervisor.

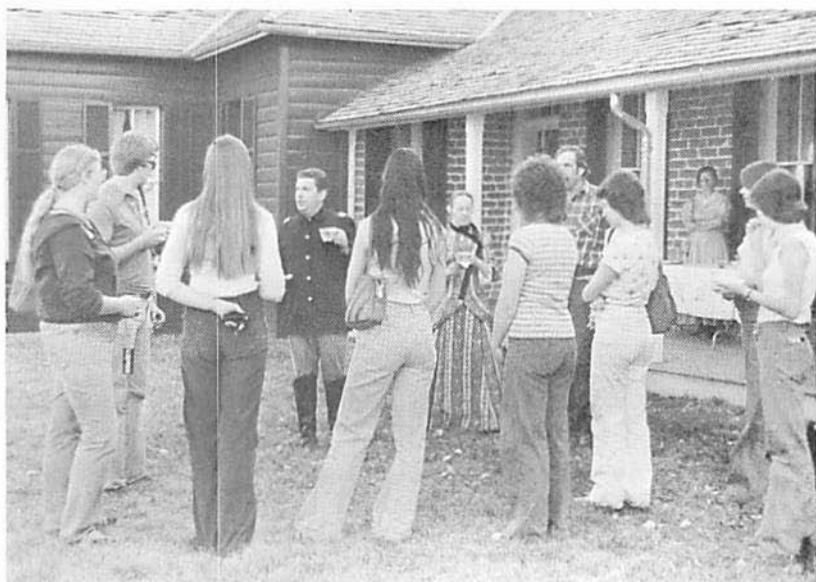
Curator John Lindahl reports attendance figures of 4,805 coming from 45 states and nine foreign countries. He and his staff also gave tours to 67 groups who visited the center.

Special events during the year included Neihardt Day on August 7. Dr. Phillip Heckman of Doane College gave three dramatic readings from *Black Elk Speaks*, and the daughters of Black Elk and Dr. Neihardt, Lucy Looks Twice and Hilda Neihardt Petri, gave a special presentation of *Black Elk's Prayer*. Three special exhibits were held at the center during the year:



*The July 4 Old Mill Day celebration at Neligh Mills included an ice cream social. Also featured were an art show and tours of the mill. Courtesy of Neligh News and Leader. . . . (Below) Visitors view Memorial Room at the John G. Neihardt Center, Bancroft, during August 6 Neihardt Day Festivities. In foreground is a 700-pound petri-fied cycad plant symbolizing the "tree of life."*





*Fort Robinson Curator Vance Nelson (fourth from left) hosts Raymond Central students on the back lawn of the officers' quarters, where apple cider and cookies were served. . . . (Below) Mobile Museum exhibits interpret Court House Rock, Morrill County.*



western paintings from the collection of Dr. John Christlieb of Bellevue; the photographs of Wright Morris and a display of Cuna Indian Molas touring from the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery; and in the spring a gem and mineral show featuring Neihardt's lapidary equipment. There was also a number of programs in cooperation with Wayne State College staff. The John G. Neihardt Foundation has cooperated in all these projects.

*Missouri River Museum:* Progress may seem slow to those who are watching the restoration of the *Captain Meriwether Lewis* during the year, but it has been steadily continuing. During the late fall and early spring a new fiberglass deck was put on the dredge. With the deck completion it was possible for the paint crew (made up of high school students on the SPEDY program and our CETA painters) to start repainting the interior. By the end of June many of the cabins and the galley were completed. Although the contract has been let to build the drydock cradle, it will be spring before the *Lewis* can be floated onto it. We are also in the process of preparing bid documents to paint the entire exterior of the dredge.

Captain Raymond Holland, Curator, reports a total of 10,972 visitors this season. Most of these were only able to see the machinery on the head and in the engine room because we were not prepared to let visitors over the entire boat. We did have an open house on July 23-24, when 1,600 visitors were accommodated. We are anticipating an increase in attendance this coming year.

This past summer the boat served as the stage and shelter for a series of performing artists who performed every Sunday, May 28 through September 3. The series, called "Arts Aboard the Meriwether Lewis," was sponsored by the Brownville Fine Arts Association and the Nebraska Arts Council in cooperation with the Society.

*Norris Home:* In September, 1977, Robert T. Ray, a retired military man, was hired to replace Irma John as Curator of the Norris House. Ray, a carpenter and maintenance man, and a high school student on the SPEDY program have made improvements on the home.

*Chimney Rock National Historic Site:* Mobile Museum No. 3 was again at its post at the city park on Nebraska Highway 92, one-half mile west of its junction with US 26. This season the

trailer was staffed 77 hours a week by Geneva J. Bowers and Crystal Howard. The trailer had 20,236 visitors for the year, up a fraction of one percent from last year. This slow rate of growth is partly due to the fact that this year we only counted those that entered the trailer whereas last year all traffic in the roadside park was counted. This trailer is now more heavily visited than any of the four trailers.

*Court House and Jail Rocks Historical Site:* These two landmarks, located in Seybolt Park on Nebraska Highway 88, south of Bridgeport, were interpreted in a small trailer located at the entrance of the park. We have yet to achieve a full year's activity at this site because we closed about three weeks early last August. Attendance for the fiscal year, July 1 to June 30, was 1,997.

*Trailer No. 2:* This trailer is located in the Maxwell-Brady eastbound rest area on Interstate 80. A total of 8,578 travelers visited this trailer. The trailer operation is ten years old this summer. The Mobile Museum Program developed from the State Centennial Commission, which had the trailers built and circulated during the state Centennial in 1967. The two trailers on the interstate have had a combined attendance of 397,632 during the decade, some of it from state fairs, the Bicentennial Chautauqua circuit, and other fairs and celebrations.

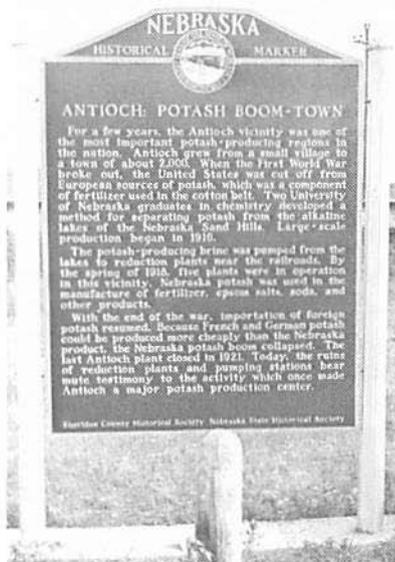
Trailer No. 1 is located in the Grand Island west-bound rest area and has been at the State Fair the last two seasons. A total of 14,014 visitors toured during the year. We estimated 15,000 tramped through the trailer at the 1977 State Fair. The trailer was open 11 hours a day from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week, from May 24 to August 25.

## ARCHEOLOGY

During the period May-September, 1978, a cultural resource survey was conducted in western Nebraska by Gayle F. Carlson, Curator of Anthropology, and Terry Mahlman, Archeological Assistant. The survey involved an examination of approximately 300 miles of the right of way of a proposed 345 KV transmission line to be built by the Nebraska Public Power District in Cheyenne, Deuel, Keith, Lincoln, Custer, Sherman, Buffalo, Frontier, and Red Willow counties. Twenty-eight archeological sites, as well as evidence for four early trails, were discovered



*A single-post state historical marker, measuring 30 by 42 inches and designed for reading by pedestrians, was erected in Edison, Furnas County, to commemorate one of the smallest schoolhouses in Nebraska. Courtesy of Oxford Standard.*



*The Sheridan County Historical Society sponsored, with the State Society, a state historical marker west of Antioch commemorating the potash industry.*



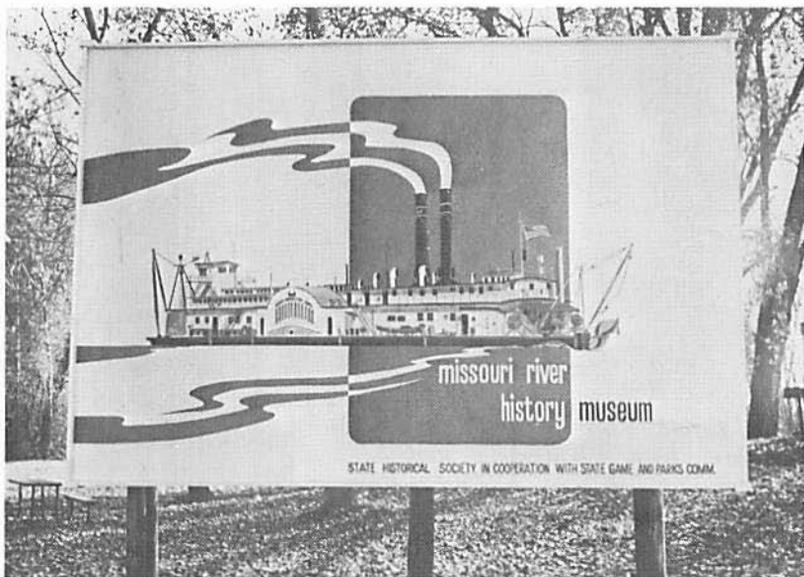
*The Willa Cather Home at Red Cloud is one of six buildings transferred to the Nebraska State Historical Society from the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Foundation. The Society's newest Branch Museum, it will be known as the Willa Cather Historical Center. The Foundation will now devote its efforts to educational and research programs.*

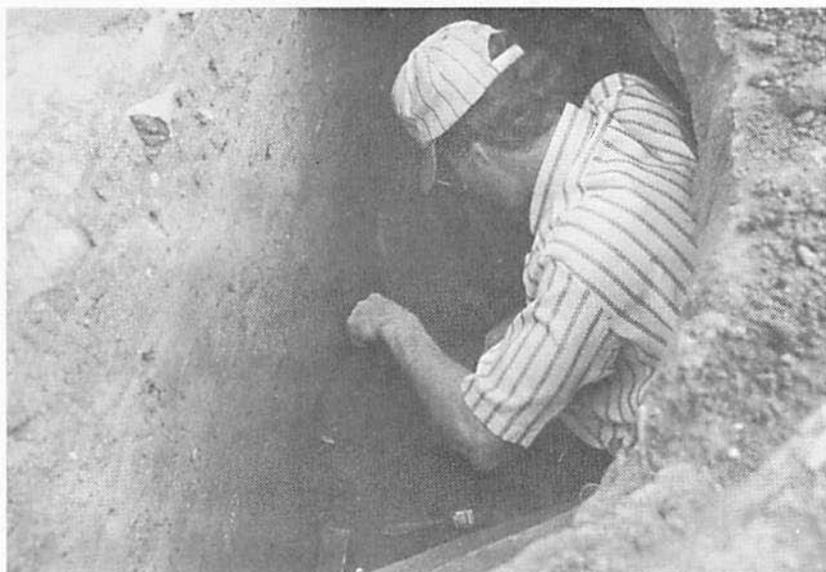


*The former Farmers and Merchants Bank building, Red Cloud, now houses a Cather library and museum.*



*State Game and Parks Commission Director Eugene Mahoney helps greet guests to the Ash Hollow Visitor Center on August 6, dedication day. The Society prepared exhibits for the Center. . . . (Below) Rendition by Brownville artist Tom Palmerton of the Captain Meriwether Lewis boat, which the Society is preparing for use as a Missouri River history museum.*





*Summer archeological assistant Ron Koziol of Columbus profiles a cache pit (25PT1) during highway salvage excavations near Monroe. . . . (Below) Under the supervision of Society personnel, Neligh junior high school students help excavate an Upper Republican village site (25AP35) in Antelope County.*



during the survey. A final report, including results of the survey and recommended mitigatory measures, is in preparation.

Highway Salvage excavations were carried out at the Larson Site, 25PT1, in August and September, 1978, by John Ludwickson, Highway Salvage Archeologist. This site, located in Platte County, was occupied by ancestors of the Historic Pawnee, sometime between A.D. 1600 and 1700. Storage pits, containing village refuse and other material left behind by the former inhabitants, were found and excavated. Also during this period, 24 proposed highway construction projects were surveyed, resulting in the discovery of 16 previously unrecorded archeological sites.

In summary this has been another busy year with responsibilities expanding in all programs. A major problem that remains is that of adequate space to carry out the responsibilities assigned by law. In this area, however, we have continued to make some progress. Detailed plans are in preparation for the Nebraska Heritage Center, which will serve not only to house our historical artifacts but also provide space in the present building for the expanding collections of the State Archives and Library. We need your support if the Heritage Center is to become a reality.