



Nebraska History posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

Article Title: Adversity, Challenge, and Change: The Nebraska Board of Control During Governor Cochran's Administration, 1935-1941

Full Citation: Mary Cochran Grimes, "Adversity, Challenge, and Change: The Nebraska Board of Control During Governor Cochran's Administration, 1935-1941," *Nebraska History* 80 (1999): 169-177

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1999Cochran.pdf>

Date: 1/14/2013

Article Summary: Nebraska's penal, reform, and charitable institutions were all in need of restructuring in 1935. Governor Cochran appointed advocates of social welfare reform and long-term planning. He also applied for all available federal assistance.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Robert Leroy ("Roy") Cochran, Charles Bryan, Adam McMullen, R V Clark, Charles W Eubank, Maud Nuquist, A C Tilley

Nebraska State Agencies: Commission for the Control of Feeble-Minded Persons, Board of Control, Planning Board, Child Welfare Bureau

Nebraska State Institutions: University of Nebraska, Genoa Indian School, Soldier's and Sailor's Home (Milford/Grand Island), Hastings State Hospital (Ingleside), Reformatory for Women (York), School for the Deaf (Omaha), School for the Blind (Nebraska City), Institution for the Feeble-Minded (Beatrice), Girls' Training School (Geneva), Industrial School (Kearney), Penitentiary (Lincoln)

Keywords: Robert Leroy ("Roy") Cochran, Charles W Eubank, Maud Nuquist, A C Tilley, US Works Progress Administration (WPA), US Public Works Administration (PWA), Board of Control

Photographs / Images: Governor Robert Leroy Cochran; Lincoln Building at the Soldier's and Sailor's Home, Grand Island; campus of the Nebraska Hospital for the Insane, Lincoln; Dr Alma Chapman, superintendent of the Reformatory for Women, York; Ned C Abbott, long-time superintendent of the School for the Blind, Nebraska City; Maud Nuquist; State Industrial School, Kearney; Institution for the Feeble-Minded, Beatrice; School for the Blind, Nebraska City

ADVERSITY CHALLENGE & CHANGE

The Nebraska Board of Control During Governor Cochran's Administration, 1935–1941

By Mary Cochran Grimes

In 1935 Robert Leroy "Roy" Cochran, the new governor, and the last session of Nebraska's two-house legislature faced urgent needs for legislation dealing with federal relief and social security. The year 1935 brought other crises. Cochran called out the National Guard an unprecedented three times to handle a turbulent tram strike in Omaha, a disastrous flood in the Republican River valley, and a bitter water dispute on the Wyoming border. The 1935 legislative session was the longest in the state's history.

Cochran inherited a crisis in the state's penal, reform, and charitable institutions. Deteriorating buildings and increasing population in some facilities had reached a critical point. Governor Charles Bryan had cut the budgets of the state institutions during his first term (1923–25), and he made further cuts during his later terms (1931–35). Between Bryan's terms, in 1926 Governor Adam McMullen found "many of the state institutions in a condition of neglect and lack of repair, whereby the health, comfort, and opportunity for improvement of the unfortunate wards of the state were materially lessened."¹ Cochran was a practical forty-eight-year-old civil engineer, not a politician. As state engineer for eleven years he had built up the state highway system and was well known.² Arthur Mullen, state Democratic chairman, recruited him to be the Democratic candidate for governor in 1934. An experienced administrator of the Department of Roads and Irriga-

Mary Cochran Grimes of Hamden, Connecticut, has written several previous Nebraska History articles about the administration of Nebraska Governor Robert Leroy Cochran.



Governor Robert Leroy Cochran.
NSHS-RG3447:1-36

tion, Cochran knew how to deal with federal agencies in getting federal funds for roads. He had gained legislative acumen from watching highway legislation and from talking to legislators. Although Cochran was a Democrat who supported the New Deal, he was of an independent stripe. In his appeals for

economy and the use of business methods in government, and with his insistence on no new taxes, Cochran often sounded like a Republican, many of whom voted for him. But he assiduously courted the federal government to obtain as much money as possible to help Nebraska. The son of a farmer in the arid western part of the state, Cochran was particularly sympathetic to the trials of farmers and sought federal help for them in the dust bowl days.³

During Cochran's administration conditions were favorable for improving social welfare in Nebraska. Federal relief projects, such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (and the Civil Works Administration under its wing), Work Projects Administration, Public Works Administration, and the Social Security Act were catalysts for change and demanded state cooperation. For Nebraska 1935 was a banner year for progressive legislation dealing with social welfare. The sum of \$70,000 was appropriated for establishing prison industries. State institutions were required to buy from the Board of Control all supplies made by convicts. A county levy was required to care for the indigent insane committed to state hospitals. County aid was established for the indigent blind, and education and maintenance provided for deaf-blind children. A state Commission for the Control of Feeble-Minded Persons was established to prevent their reproduction (a state list of mental deficient to be filed with county judges, who "shall refuse marriage license unless parties sterilized.") These measures were not completely humanitarian. The overall goal was to keep



The Lincoln Building at the Soldier's and Sailor's Home, Grand Island, was constructed in 1895. It had been remodeled by the 1930s. NSHS-RG3451:3-86

costs low while rehabilitating inmates or patients. In addition a free state employment service was established.⁴

Governor Cochran made efficient, economical, and humane administration of the state institutions a top priority. He believed it was "false economy" to allow buildings to deteriorate so that costs of repair exceeded the costs of maintenance. While the population in the penal and charitable institutions had been increasing in the past eight years, appropriations for the institutions had decreased.⁵

A nonpartisan Board of Control governed the state institutions. The electorate had approved at the general election of 1912, a constitutional amendment creating the Board of Commissioners of State Institutions. The new board was given powers of governance over the state institutions formerly possessed by the governor and by the Board of Public Lands and Buildings. An emergency act of April 21, 1913, provided for organization of the Board of Commissioners effective July 1, 1913. By accident the revisor of statutes used the term "Board of Control" in place of the term "Board of Commissioners of State Institutions" in a paragraph heading when the *Statutes* were published. The

resulting confusion over the new board's proper name was finally resolved by the adoption of a constitutional amendment in 1920, which legalized the name of the Board of Control.⁶

The new board removed the administration of the state institutions from the spoils system. The governor appointed the three Board of Control commissioners for six-year staggered terms. In 1935 Cochran appointed his capable colleague from the Department of Roads and Irrigation, Charles W. Eubank, to the Board of Control. He thought an engineer would eliminate the cost of hiring a trained technical advisor to consult on the need for repairs and maintenance costs of the state institutions. The roads department was experienced in long-range planning, economy, and efficiency. Other commissioners were Walter E. Hager, chairman, and Henry Behrens.

Early in 1935 Cochran also appointed a nine-member State Planning Board as requested by the federal Public Works Administration. The board, chaired by State Engineer A. C. Tilley, was to help plan state projects receiving federal funds. The planning board was to collect data on a broad range of topics, including climate, water resources, agri-

culture and land use, parks and recreation, industrial trends, and penal, correctional, and charitable institutions. In his second inaugural address in 1937 Cochran asked for, and the legislature passed, a bill giving the State Planning Board statutory authority and a specific mandate to prepare a ten-year building plan for Nebraska penal, charitable, and educational institutions. The board would report to the governor, who would use the plan to make budget recommendations.⁷

The two largest expenditures from the state's property taxes went for higher education (43 percent for the University of Nebraska and four normal schools) and for the state institutions (40 percent). Both systems needed new and renovated buildings; Cochran considered the crowded and crumbling charitable and penal institutions the greater urgency. Their population of 7,700 had increased 70 percent in the past twenty-two years. The governor proposed a ten-year building program for both systems based on the pay-as-you-go method to avoid a tax increase. The university system should make plans but would have to wait for money for improvements.⁸

In his first budget message Governor Cochran had recommended that the former Genoa Indian School, which the federal government gave to the state in 1934, be supervised by the Board of Control and used as a prison farm. Its 640 acres of farm land produced income and provided work for inmates who were deemed trustees. The veterans at the Nebraska Soldiers and Sailors' Home at Milford, whose numbers were declining, were moved to the similar facility at Grand Island. Caring for veterans at one home would save \$100,000 for the biennium, according to the Board of Control. The Milford facility was needed to house "insane patients" on an emergency waiting list.⁹

A significant aid to planning was a WPA-sponsored survey of the state's social resources and institutions, requested by the Conference of Social Work and the Nebraska Child Welfare

The Nebraska Board of Control

Bureau in 1936. Its purpose was to give state social welfare agencies expert advice on more efficient functioning and to provide a basis for repairing and planning new buildings at state institutions. Maud Nuquist, who was appointed director of the state Child Welfare Bureau by Cochran, was chairman of the survey advisory committee. She had been president of the Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs, and in the 1934 Democratic primary Nuquist ran against Cochran and seven other men. Her platform advocated a nonpartisan, long-range planning commission (similar to the State Planning Board) to improve welfare and education. Most of the survey committee were experts in

medical or social welfare fields.¹⁰

The WPA survey dealt with programs, treatment, and personnel, as well as with the physical plants. As expected, examiners found many state buildings in poor condition. The most appalling conditions were at the state hospitals for the mentally ill, especially at Hastings, where there was extreme crowding, inadequate plumbing, and "fire trap" buildings. Tubercular patients were not isolated and received practically no care. More than 250 patients who were waiting for a vacancy in a state hospital were receiving "deplorable care in jails" or were housed in private hospitals at a cost of \$1 a day, much more than the cost of care in a state institution.¹¹ Dr.

Juul C. Nielsen, superintendent of the Hastings State Hospital at Ingleside, in 1935 wrote to Cochran: "I cannot conscientiously crowd any more patients into the institution with all of this tuberculosis staring me in the face, and it would be rather disastrous should these conditions be known to the public and no attempt be made to remedy them."¹²

Cochran felt a patient's relatives should assume the responsibility for state hospital bills at the nominal rate of \$16.10 per month. The counties should pay for indigent cases. The legislature approved this principle.¹³ There was also an increase in the population of state hospitals for the insane at Lincoln, Norfolk, Hastings, and Beatrice. Expan-



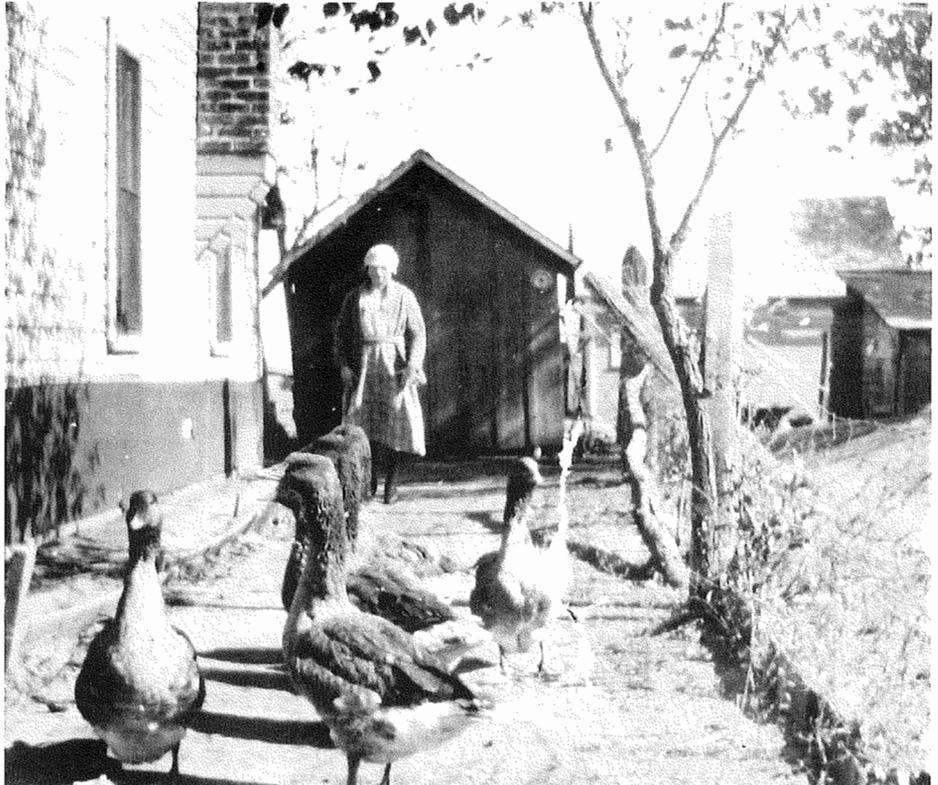
The campus of the Nebraska Hospital for the Insane at Lincoln. NSHS-RG2158-387

sion was urgently needed. The hospitals were understaffed. This increase in mentally ill patients could have been partly caused by the strains of coping with the Depression.

The survey found the care at most of the institutions merely custodial and sometimes punitive. They lacked constructive programs for rehabilitation and education, and paid little attention to individual needs and problems. There were no long-range plans. Inmates and patients did much of the work, which was considered therapeutic as well as economical. For example, at the Norfolk State Hospital patients helped in the maintenance of 615 acres of farmland and garden, as well as caring for poultry and 139 dairy cows.

Both the men's and women's reformatories were considered failures. A "forlorn austerity" hovered over the Reformatory for Women at York. The superintendent, Alma Chapman, was a medical doctor "of the old school," a strict disciplinarian. "[S]he selects her matrons on the basis of their high Christian character and expects them to exert a religious influence on inmates." She has "little understanding of the problems of people with whose care she is charged." No vocational or health programs were offered, except a "general warning against association with men." The survey recognized that the superintendent was limited by a lack of funds, low salaries, and poorly qualified personnel, and that the reformatory had been neglected by previous Boards of Control. "It is strictly custodial, is repressive, is not reformatory, is not clean, and has no redemptive features beyond the treatment of venereal disease." The inmates at the Reformatory for Women did practically all the domestic and yard work, as well as raising vegetables and caring for poultry.¹⁴

The investigators found more progress at the State School for the Deaf in Omaha, where inmates spent two hours a day in vocational training classes, and at the State School for the Blind in Nebraska City, where students studied pi-



Dr. Alma Chapman, superintendent of the Reformatory for Women at York.
NSHS-RG2418:14-5

ano tuning and repairing, typing, sewing, cane-seating, and basketry. The Board of Control restored employees dismissed from the school for the blind during Governor Bryan's cost cutting—a teacher, a maid, and an assistant engineer.¹⁵

The Nebraska Institution for Feeble-Minded at Beatrice was overcrowded with 227 on the waiting list. Due to poorly trained and poorly paid staff, inadequate records, and a "deplorable" lack of special diagnostic and treatment measures, such as x-ray machines, inmates received only custodial care, and that often inferior. At that time sterilization was practiced; the 1935 legislature created a State Commission for the Control of Feeble-Minded Persons. The survey suggested a name change of the Institution for Feeble-Minded to one with less social stigma, such as the Nebraska State Training School.¹⁶

"Due to the riots in the 1920s" the state penitentiary at Lincoln was the "most re-

formed" of institutions, the survey found. A ten-year building program, the only instance of long-range planning, had resulted in a physical plant in "excellent condition." With the theory of individual treatment in vogue, specialized programs were being designed for treatment of criminals of various types.¹⁷ It is ironic that prison inmates, whom society deemed the most dangerous, should have received the most progressive programs and resided in the best buildings in the state system. Cochran suggested using the University Extension Service to make the penitentiary a place of reform and education.

Spearheaded by Mrs. Nuquist, the survey committee concluded that education, training of personnel, and salaries must be improved at state institutions. The committee emphasized the need to apply more scientific methods, with specialists such as social workers, psychiatric nurses, and more qualified teachers.

The Nebraska Board of Control

The survey committee realized that the old punitive-moralistic methods of treating "unfortunates" were yielding to more individualized and educated approaches. The Medical Advisory Board recommended expert consultants to the Board of Control, such as Child Guidance Clinics and a state hospital architect.

The Board of Control soon reorganized the management of the state institutions. It set up divisions to supervise different activities, such as the structural engineering division, which would handle all major repairs and construction, write all specifications, and manage purchasing of commodities. The Board of Control instigated a policy of hiring its own construction supervisor, an engineer. Rigorous competitive bidding and testing, a practice of the Department of Roads and Irrigation, was instituted. Bidders were required to submit samples of their products, which were tested at the state university laboratory. This procedure contrasted with previous purchasing practices. When she was head of the Federated Women's Clubs of Nebraska, Mrs. Nuquist had noted corruption in supplying the institutions. An equipment inventory was introduced at all institutions. Each piece of large equipment was marked with a code number and noted in a card index. Equipment not in use was transferred to institutions where it was needed. Some clerical jobs were performed by WPA-funded workers.¹⁸

In the Board of Control's financial department, where "no records of value" had been kept, a double entry system of accounting was installed in 1936. Each institution had to give a quarterly financial statement with fund balances, inventory valuation, accounts payable, operating costs, and per capita costs. The board's auditor made frequent visits to institutions to help with accounting problems.¹⁹

The board hired a director of education to coordinate the educational programs in institutions having schools. The goal was to raise the standards to those of Nebraska public schools. The board

sought new personnel at the state Department of Education and at the education department of the University of Nebraska. All teachers in the institutions, old and new, had to obtain Nebraska teachers' certificates. The board also bought new textbooks and school supplies.²⁰



Ned C. Abbott was the long-time superintendent of the School for the Blind in Nebraska City. NSHS-RG2411-10

Another move toward centralization was the hiring of a supervising dietician who was based in the Board of Control's office and four dieticians who worked in the four major institutions. Their goal was to feed patients and inmates "more scientifically" at a lower cost. A year after the board hired a laundry superintendent and bought new laundry equipment the costs for supplies were "materially decreased."²¹

Medical care was a big expense in a system with nearly eight thousand patients and inmates. The board hired a

pharmacist to supervise the purchase of drugs for all the institutions. Almost all drugs were bought on competitive bids, resulting in significant savings. The pharmacist set up inventories of drug supplies in each institution. These were checked each month when orders for drugs came in. Some drugs were made in the institutions.²²

The Farming Division in 1938 coordinated an agricultural program to raise much of the food needed by each institution. A state dairyman supervised thirteen herds of cattle, improving production with scientific feed and lowering costs with better accounting methods. Poultry flocks at eleven institutions contained nine thousand producing hens. Breeding hens and cocks were tested for pullorum disease, and the diseased fowl were killed. The result was lower chick mortality and larger and healthier birds.²³

Most cash crops on the collective 4,900 acres were eliminated because they required too much time to maintain, and every acre was needed for furnishing feed for livestock and poultry. Because of drought it was necessary to plant "camel crops" that required less moisture. For example, atlas sorgo replaced corn for silage. Pasture rotation over several years increased productivity. In 1940 some 700,000 young trees were planted on state institutional lands, serving as shelterbelts to decrease wind erosion and to trap snow. The U.S. Forestry Service and U.S. Soil Conservation Service furnished most of the trees, an example of cooperation between federal agencies. The university's College of Agriculture assisted in the agricultural projects, and the state Bureau of Animal Industry helped in disease control.²⁴

The garden program supplied over two million pounds of vegetables and fruits annually. Most were consumed, but the excess was canned, pickled, dried, and stored. All of the garden seed for 1939 was bought at one time through competitive bidding. Samples were tested by the state laboratory for purity and germination. The result was better seed at lower cost.²⁵

While the Board of Control addressed management issues at state institutions, the physical plants also received attention. Early in 1936 Cochran and State Engineer Tilley went to Washington, D.C. to the National Resources Committee to plead for federal assistance for state planning. They obtained a \$54,500 WPA allotment, the help of a part-time NRC consultant, and a full-time associate consultant to assist in studies the Planning Board undertook.²⁶ To obtain hotly contested federal funds from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) or Public Works Administration (PWA) required knowledge and persistence. Cochran and other state officials had “constant demands” from federal agencies to send someone to Washington to attend meetings dealing with proposed national legislation or with the administration of national laws already existing.²⁷

The first PWA projects were built at Hastings State Hospital: two new wards and a sewage treatment plant. Other PWA projects were new dormitories at the Institution for Feeble-Minded at Beatrice, a patient ward and employees’ building at the Norfolk State Hospital, and a two-hundred-bed addition at the Lincoln State Hospital.²⁸

WPA projects included irrigation systems and landscaping at the Soldiers and Sailors’ Home, Grand Island; sewer pipes at the Hospital for Tuberculous, Kearney; a dairy barn at the State Penitentiary, Lincoln; plumbing and heating at the School for the Deaf, Omaha; a horse barn at the Reformatory for Men, Lincoln; repairing of roofs and an irrigation project at the Genoa State Farm; and painting at several facilities. The total spent for construction, remodeling, and repair at state institutions from 1935 to 1941 was \$3,691,219. Of this \$1,879,813 came from state funds and \$1,811,406 came from federal PWA and WPA funds.²⁹

In 1938 Cochran appointed Maud Nuquist to the Board of Control for a six-year term. After two years as head of the Child Welfare Department she could continue her mission of improving pub-

lic welfare, part of her platform when she unsuccessfully sought the Democratic nomination for governor in 1934.³⁰

The Board of Control gained more authority and responsibility when Cochran asked in 1938 for legislation that would transfer the Division of Assistance and Child Welfare (operated un-



Maud Nuquist. Courtesy of Elizabeth Raby

der the Social Security Act) from the State Assistance Committee to the Board of Control. Nuquist probably recommended this merger, which placed all state activities concerning the care of the state’s inmates and patients under one agency, governed by a nonpartisan board. The move also eliminated duplication of personnel. The governor warned against a gradual increase of federal control over the administration of state assistance activities, and he reassured legislators that the transfer

would not mean an increase in social workers or the reduction of local control, both sore spots in the administration of welfare.³¹

A new merit system at the State Industrial School at Kearney reflected Nuquist’s influence. A general punitive approach was replaced by consideration of each boy’s problems and needs. After Child Welfare consultants provided a record of the boy’s previous environment, the superintendent would interview him upon entrance and give him temporary work and housing until a plan for his rehabilitation was completed. A committee composed of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, physician, and physical education teacher would meet each month to discuss the boy’s progress. Records of these meetings would serve as a basis for his parole plans. After a boy was determined eligible for parole, the Child Welfare Division would find a suitable work home and supervise the boy during the parole.³²

Educational programs at the institutions improved. At the Kearney State Industrial High School better qualified teachers and equipment were added, curriculum content was increased, and the library was improved. These changes led to accreditation for the school; its graduates could enter any Nebraska school of advanced learning. Efforts were made to teach boys a trade with bakery, laundry, print, shoe, and tailoring shops. Health and dental clinics were added to the hospital building. A concerted effort was made to rehabilitate boys.³³

The Nebraska School for the Blind in Nebraska City tried to raise school standards to conform to those of public schools “as much as possible.” The school added many volumes of Braille books, and teachers attended local educational meetings and programs for the blind. In 1939–40 the most extensive remodeling and repair program in the school’s sixty-five-year history was done by the WPA in cooperation with the Board of Control.³⁴

The Nebraska Board of Control

There was more psychological testing in the children's institutions, in cooperation with the Child Welfare Department and the state Director of Education. As the Board of Control tried to upgrade education and personnel there were changes in employees that disturbed some. In the summer of 1937 Commissioner Eubank was criticized for the dismissal of R. V. Clark, who had been superintendent of the State Industrial School at Kearney for more than twenty-four years. Eubank made innovations that Clark did not like, such as adding two more teachers to the three-teacher staff. Eubank also objected to the dining room routine: A supervisor counted "one" as the boys bowed their heads; "two" as he said a blessing; "three" as food was passed; and "four" as the boys began eating. Clark responded by saying that the routine helped discipline and called Eubank the governor's "Little Boy Blue."³⁵

There was a change in philosophy, too. Rather than the religious-moralistic attitude of some superintendents, the board wanted professional training. By 1937 the superintendent of the State Reformatory for Women had been replaced. In the summer of 1938 Lena and Suede Ward (sisters), who believed "religion is the foundation of education," resigned as superintendent and assistant superintendent respectively of the Girls

Training School at Geneva. The next two years saw greater emphasis there on education: 92 percent of the girls were in school, and forty-nine girls graduated from Geneva High School in 1940-41. The school was able to obtain a calculator, ediphone, twelve typewriters, and new library books. Girls were trained for stenographic and cosmetology jobs as well as for domestic service.³⁶

An increase of 101 employees in charitable and penal institutions was recorded in 1937-38. (Some of these were part-time employees not reported in 1937.) Additional teachers were hired at correctional institutions for juvenile delinquents, and more attendants were added at hospitals for the insane because of the increase in number of patients. However, due to low wages there was "enormous turnover" in personnel at the state hospitals, which detracted from efficiency in caring for patients. Employees found better paying positions in other states.³⁷

At the end of Cochran's third, two-year term in 1941, improvements at the state charitable and penal institutions were impressive. The capacity of the state mental hospitals had been increased by 1,348 beds, leaving only a few prospective patients on a waiting list. Methods of treatment at these hospitals had been improved and more efficient purchasing practices adopted at

all institutions, resulting in more humane and economical care. Significant funds had been spent on repair and remodeling. The State Planning Board had mapped out a ten-year building program for the state institutions.³⁸

An *Omaha World-Herald* editorial said:

Under Governor Cochran's administration, Nebraska has for the first time built an integrated program for the care of its needy and its unfortunate. For the first time a human, progressive, intelligent approach has been made to the problems of poverty, crime, and delinquency; for the first time all the state's institutions and social services have been overhauled, their purposes and methods re-examined, their direction re-established . . . it is important to Nebraska that taxpayer money spent in caring for the insane, the needy and the criminal should be handled efficiently. It has been spent efficiently under Governor Cochran.³⁹

When Cochran left office, Nebraska's economy was still shaky—farm income had decreased 50 percent in the past ten years, and property value assessments had decreased from \$3.3 billion in 1936 to \$1.9 billion in 1940. In his outgoing message to the legislature, Cochran admitted that the state's economy would not permit an ambitious building program for the state institutions, no matter how desperately it was needed. "The big problem of today," he noted, "is to maintain existing buildings."⁴⁰



Buildings at the State Industrial School in Kearney were constructed between 1880 and 1890. NSHS-3213:2-58



Institution for the Feeble-minded, Beatrice. This photo was taken before 1926, when the top floor was removed from the 1895 administration building (left center). NSHS-RG3372:3-86

The breeze of social welfare reform blew into conservative Nebraska along with the scorching winds of drought and depression. Governor Cochran was in tune with this more liberal climate as long as it didn't require increasing taxes or state indebtedness. His administration in six years brought some positive changes to the management and operation of state departments and institutions. He appointed and supported proficient engineers like Charles Eubank, who enabled structural and administrative improvements. His appointment of Maud Nuquist provided the vision of reform, and his advocacy of a state planning board helped provide a blueprint for the future. Reorganization, planning, and an aggressive effort to take advantage of federal assistance all benefitted the state institutions. Governor Cochran showed what intelligent administration can accomplish during particularly difficult times.

Notes

¹ Addison E. Sheldon, *Nebraska, the Land and The People*, vol. 1 (Chicago/New York: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1931), 1028.

² Governor Frank B. Morrison Sr. to Allan L. Abbott, director-state engineer, Apr. 7, 1935, in author's possession. Morrison wrote that Cochran "deserves the title 'Father of Nebraska's modern highway system.'"

³ Cochran helped to get corn and hog checks, feed and seed loans, and WPA work projects for farmers. Cochran radio address, Nov. 2, 1936, S. 6, RG1, SG31, Robert L. Cochran Gubernatorial Pa-

pers, NSHS (hereafter cited as Cochran Papers).

⁴ *Nebraska Survey of Social Resources* 2 vols. (Lincoln: Nebraska Emergency Relief Administration, 1936). Works Progress Administration Official Project 65-81-1605, Work Project 1010, 54-55.

⁵ Cochran address at Axtell, Aug. 1, 1935, S. 6, Cochran Papers. Cochran's complaints echoed Republican criticism of Governor Charles Bryan's "more spectacular economies during the years 1923-25." They "were not economies at all, but simply book juggling or actions which resulted in serious crippling of state services and state institutions." James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 283.

⁶ Marion D. Mitchell, "A Survey of the Nebraska Board of Control" (master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1949), 42-43. State institutions governed by the Board of Control on January 1, 1936: Institution for Feeble-Minded, Beatrice; Girls' Training School, Geneva; Soldiers and Sailors' Home, Grand Island; Hastings State Hospital, Ingleside; State Industrial School, Kearney; Hospital for Tuberculous, Kearney; Lincoln State Hospital, Lincoln; Orthopedic Hospital, Lincoln; State Penitentiary, Lincoln; Nebraska Industrial Home, Milford; Soldiers and Sailors' Home, Milford; School for the Blind, Nebraska City; Norfolk State Hospital, Norfolk; School for the Deaf, Omaha; State Reformatory for Women, York; Home for Dependent Children, Lincoln; Reformatory for Men, Lincoln; Genoa State Farm, Genoa. The 1961 Nebraska Legislature created a Department of Public Institutions to govern state institutions.

⁷ *The Nebraska Blue Book, 1936* (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1936), 205. LB531, passed Apr. 13, 1937, with the emergency clause, created a fourteen-member State Planning Board, including the state engineer, state tax commissioner, and twelve members appointed by the governor. *Laws of Nebraska, 1937* (Lincoln: Secretary of State, 1937), 831-34.

⁸ Cochran radio address, Dec. 20, 1936, S. 6, Cochran Papers. Cochran said that the successive

droughts had been too hard on farmers; it was "an inopportune time to provide added taxes."

⁹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 31, 1937.

¹⁰ "Governor Cochran thought so well of Maud Nuquist as a worthy opponent and as a representative of a large, potent group of women who had a sincere objective, that he appointed her as director of the state Bureau of Child Welfare." Elizabeth Raby, "'Yours for Political Housecleaning': Maud E. Nuquist, First Woman Candidate for Governor of Nebraska," *Nebraska History*, 79(Spring 1998): 21.

Members of the resources survey advisory committee were Dr. E. Glenn Callen, Mrs. Roy L. Cochran (the governor's wife), Helen Eastman, Mark W. English, Charles W. Eubank (Board of Control member), Dr. J. O. Hertzler, Esther Powell, Dr. J. M. Reinhardt, Dr. Hattie Plum Williams, and Ernest F. Witte (NERA administrator).

¹¹ *Survey of Social Resources*, 420.

¹² Juul C. Nielsen, M.D., superintendent, Hastings State Hospital, to Robert L. Cochran, Jan. 23, 1935, Board of Control file, 1935, Cochran Papers. The Hastings State Hospital was established in 1888 at Ingleside, then two miles west of Hastings, and was sometimes called "Ingleside." The site is now part of Hastings.

¹³ Cochran radio address, Jan. 31, 1937, S. 6, Cochran Papers.

¹⁴ *Survey of Social Resources*, 500, 501, 502, 510.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 348, 355, 389.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 55, 429, 440.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 446, 454.

¹⁸ *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Board of Control for the Period Ending June 30, 1937*, 5-6 (hereafter cited as *Biennial Report*).

¹⁹ *Fourteenth Biennial Report, 1939-41*, 35-36.

²⁰ *Twelfth Biennial Report*, 7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

The Nebraska Board of Control

²² *Ibid.*, 8.

²³ *Fourteenth Biennial Report*, 19–20.

²⁴ *Thirteenth Biennial Report*, 1937–39, 39–40; *Fourteenth Biennial Report*, 21–22.

²⁵ *Thirteenth Biennial Report*, 38–39.

²⁶ Cochran radio address, Feb. 16, 1936, S. 6, Cochran Papers.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Feb. 21, 1937.

²⁸ PWA and WPA projects sponsored by the Board of Control, as of 1938, Board of Control file, 1938, Cochran Papers. See also "Statistical Supplement" to *Ten-Year Building Program for the State Board of Control Institutions* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Planning Board, 1938) (WPA Project 465-81-3-121, Work Project 4095), and table, "Board of Control Construction Program from 1935 to 1941," *Thirteenth Biennial Report*, 19–21.

²⁹ See *Thirteenth Biennial Report*, 21, and table, "WPA Program Project Expenditures, July 1, 1939 to June 30, 1941," in *Fourteenth Biennial Report*, 16.

³⁰ Nuquist had promoted "professional, not political, control of state departments." She felt that "Nebraska was behind the procession in public welfare." Raby, "Maud Nuquist," 17.

³¹ *Omaha World-Herald*, May 5, 1938.

³² Board of Control file, 1938, Cochran Papers.

³³ *Thirteenth Biennial Report*, 169–72, 185.

³⁴ *Fourteenth Biennial Report*, 85–89.

³⁵ *Kearney Daily Hub*, Aug. 17, 1937. The article claimed that Eubank was a relative of the governor by marriage (untrue) and questioned whether a "good engineer" was equipped to run state institutions.

³⁶ *Twelfth Biennial Report*, 47; *Thirteenth Biennial Report*, 70; *Fourteenth Biennial Report*, 47–48.

³⁷ Nebraska Legislative Council, summary of officers and employees and monthly payroll, Jan. 1937–Jan. 1938, typescript, NSHS Library, 5; *Thirteenth Biennial Report*, 213.

³⁸ Cochran's outgoing message to the legislature, Jan. 9, 1941, in *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854–1941*, vol. 4 (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society and University of Nebraska, 1942) (WPA Project 165-1-81-317), 381–82.

³⁹ *Omaha World-Herald*, Nov. 5, 1938, 1.

⁴⁰ Both the property value figures and the comments about state institutions are in Cochran's 1941 outgoing message.



School for the Blind, Nebraska City. The building was built in stages from 1882 to 1896.

NSHS-RG2352:4-28