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Article Summary: Achievements of the Society in the period ending in 2003 include the construction of the permanent visitor center at Chimney Rock and important advances in conservation and digital imaging. A "Milestones" section at the end of the article lists historic properties, exhibitions, awards, publications, and members of the governing board.

Cataloging Information:

Nebraska State Historical Society Directors, 1979-2003: Marvin F Kivett, James A Hanson, Lawrence J Sommer,

Historic Properties Mentioned: Willa Cather State Historic Site, Red Cloud; Chimney Rock National Historic Site (Morrill County); William Jennings Bryan home ("Fairview"), Lincoln; William H Ferguson house, Lincoln; *Capt Meriwether Lewis* dredge (Museum of Missouri River History), Brownville; John G Neihardt State Historic Site, Bancroft; Neligh Mill State Historic Site, Neligh; Fort Robinson Museum, Crawford

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Photographs / Images: Robert W Furnas, photo superimposed on a Furnas letter announcing a meeting of a "State Historical Association" in September 1878; Melvin Gilmore recording Omaha Indian songs for the Society in 1907; Historical Society Library; new Society building at 1500 R Street (1953); architect's plan for a modern heritage center south of the state capitol (unfunded); former Elks Club building at 15th and P, purchased for use as the Society's museum; interior view of the R Street building; Museum of Nebraska History exhibit, "Building the State"; Marvin F Kivett, director 1963-1985, examining a painting of John G Neihardt; James A Hanson, director 1985-1992; Lawrence J Sommer presiding at the 1993 ground-breaking of the Ethel and Christopher J Abbott Visitor Center at Chimney Rock; President Gerald R Ford and "Pat" Paxson Gould cutting the ribbon to open the Gerald R Ford Conservation Center, Omaha; employee working on digital imaging; Historic Preservation Office photos; Ford Conservation Center; Ethel and Christopher J Abbott Visitors Center; the motto of the Society, "Here open to all is the history of this people," carved in stone at the headquarters entrance



TWENTY-FIVE MORE YEARS THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1979-2003

My dear Sir:

By James E. Potter

Feeling, as I presume every citizen of this state does, the necessity of a "State Historical Association," after some consultation with persons of several parts of the state, it is thought advisable to call a meeting at Lincoln on some day of the State Fair, to effect the organization of a "State Historical Society." Would like your views, and if favorably entertained, to use your name to such call. Please advise me at your earliest convenience.

Very Truly,

Robt W Thomas

Twenty-five More Years

The Society's history is really the record of attempts to meet its prodigious obligations," concluded Anne Polk Diffendal in her 1978 centennial history of the Nebraska State Historical Society. "While this situation has at times created great distress and frustration, it has often offered exciting challenge and opportunity."¹ No less can be said of the most recent quarter century, which brings the society to another milestone, its 125th anniversary.

The "prodigious obligations" that the Society embraces are implicit in its mission statement: "To safeguard and interpret Nebraska's past and make it accessible in ways that enrich present and future generations." As long as the past remains prologue, the Society's mission statement will remain both an inspiring guide and an elusive ideal. The officers, trustees, and staff will always face difficult choices about how best to apply limited resources in responding to virtually limitless aspirations and opportunities to preserve and interpret the history and culture of Nebraska. A brief review of the twenty-five years since 1978 reveals the Nebraska State Historical Society's remarkable success in meeting this challenge.

The Nebraska State Historical Society was founded in Lincoln on September 25–26, 1878, at the call of former governor Robert W. Furnas and other prominent Nebraskans. In 1883 the state legislature declared the Society a state institution and granted its first appropriation of \$500. Although this and subsequent appropriations enabled the Society to begin publishing reports and books and gathering material on state history, the search for adequate space to house, catalog, and make accessible its growing collections dominated the Society's first century.

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Photos, facing page: **The Nebraska State Historical Society dates from September 1878, when Robert W. Furnas (Governor 1873–1875) called a meeting in Lincoln.** NSHS-RG2411-1727; NSHS-RG1013-AM

As that period drew to a close, cautious optimism prevailed that a new heritage center might soon replace the congested building at 1500 R Street in Lincoln, which had housed all Society functions since it opened in 1953. In 1979 the Society did receive a legislative appropriation for a building, but it was not to be the hoped-for heritage center originally envisioned rising south of the state capitol. Instead of the more than \$2 million the Society sought to begin construction of the heritage center, the

Cloud properties formerly belonging to the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation. At the same time, dry-docking and conversion of the former U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredge *Meriwether Lewis* to a "Museum of Missouri River History" was underway at Brownville. The William H. Ferguson house in Lincoln, assigned to the Society by the state in 1976, was being renovated as a center for Nebraska folklife. Paralleling the Society's acquisition of historic properties was the Nebraska



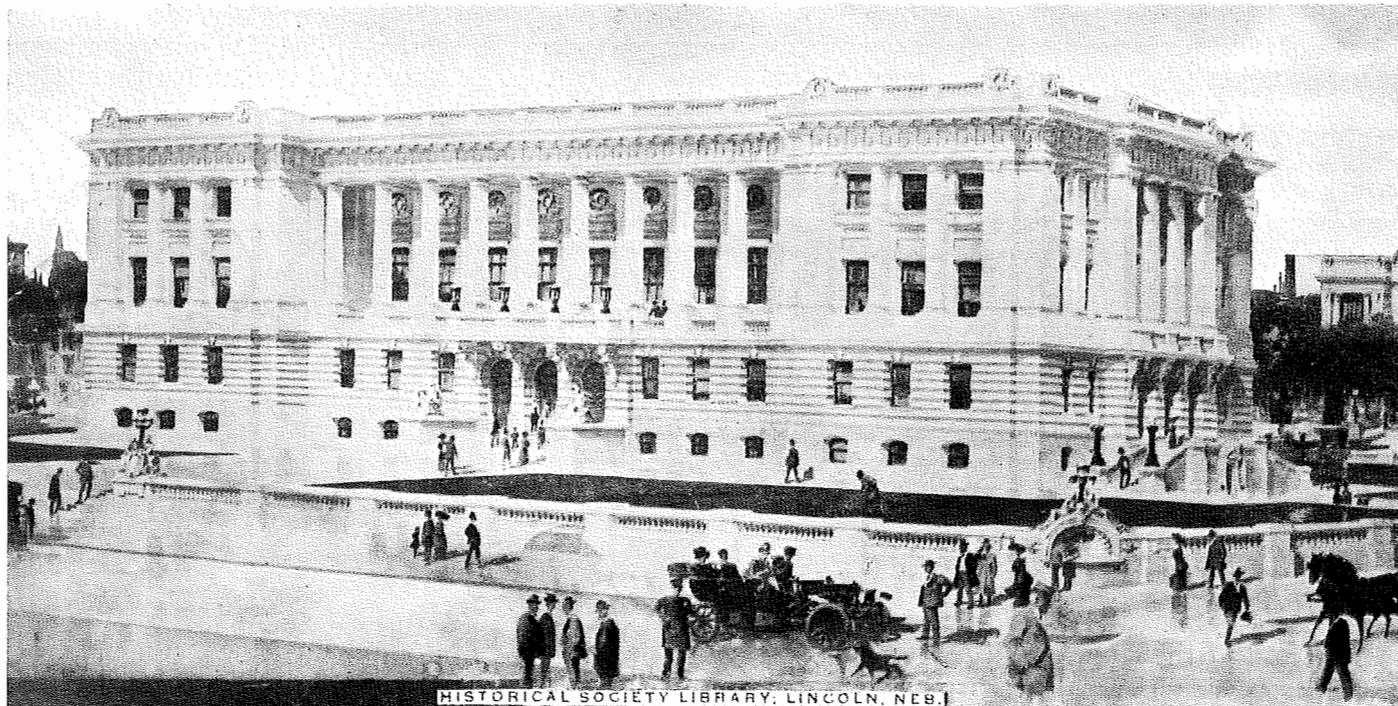
Melvin Gilmore records Omaha Indian songs in 1907. Fieldwork remains an important part of the Society's mission. NSHS-RG2039-LS-20

legislature, in spring 1979, appropriated \$950,000 to purchase the former Lincoln Elks Club at Fifteenth and P streets for renovation as the new home for the Society's museum.

Though it was not the building the Society's leaders and staff had dreamed of, acquisition of the Elks club coincided with a significant period of physical and programmatic expansion during the latter years of Director Marvin F. Kivett's administration. With legislative authorization, the Society in late 1978 assumed ownership and operation of the Red

State Historical Society Foundation, for which Kivett also served as secretary and defacto director. In late 1979 the Foundation purchased the 1806 Pike-Pawnee village site in Webster County.

Although faint hopes glimmered for a revival of the heritage center project after Governor Charles Thone proposed that such a structure might also provide underground parking for state employees and be shared with other state agencies, these hopes soon faded when the necessary state and private funds were not forthcoming. Renovation of the Elks



In 1907 work began on a new library and museum. A basement was completed and used for collections storage until the 1940s, but no more money was ever appropriated. NSHS-RG2133-L244-12-261

club began in fall 1981, launched by a legislative appropriation of some \$1.1 million. Meanwhile, on April 1, 1981, the Society recorded its two millionth visitor to the R street building.

In October 1982 the archeology department began moving from R Street to the Elks building, which the Society board had voted to name the State Museum of History (renamed the Museum of Nebraska History in 1989). Although a November special legislative session deferred some renovation money, enough work had been completed by June 30, 1983, that moving the museum collections could begin. Construction of new museum exhibits, aided by some \$44,000 in donations from Society members, was already well underway. On October 8, 1983, the State Museum of History was dedicated and formally opened to the public.

Kivett and the Society board had always seen the new quarters for the museum and archeological programs as the first in a two-phase solution to the

Society's space problems. Once the museum had moved out, the R Street building (now known as "the headquarters building") would be renovated so the library, state archives, administration, and historic preservation functions could expand. Kivett called the 1984–85 Society budget "a major disappointment" because no funds had been appropriated to start renovation of the headquarters building. Nonetheless, the departments remaining there began to occupy the space recently vacated by the museum. Kivett and the board resisted Governor Bob Kerrey's suggestion that the Society begin charging admission to help make up the budget shortfall.

While moving into and opening the new museum had seemed to dominate the Society's agenda, other work went on. The State Historic Preservation Office had accomplished the identification and listing of nearly two hundred properties in the National Register of Historic Places since the program's inception in 1969. In the state archives, a fledgling paper

conservation program received a \$14,588 federal grant for planning. The archives also began using a "mini-computer" to catalog records of the Union Pacific Railroad, the first tentative step in the technological revolution that would transform the way the Society staff performed its work. Through seventeen "junior historian" chapters, a precursor to the Society's later involvement in "History Day: Nebraska," the staff sought to engage elementary students in various historical projects. A \$25,000 grant to the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation from Hastings businessman Thomas Creigh was earmarked to support history publications and programs for students.

The Society continued to carry out archeological work, both under the federally funded highway salvage program and at state-owned historic sites, including Fort Atkinson and Rock Creek Station under contract with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. In addition to *Nebraska History* and the monthly news-

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In 1953, the Society moved into a new, state-of-the-art building at 1500 R Street.
NSHS-RG14-8-1 (The following photos are also from the NSHS RG14 collection.)

letter, the Society published *Bartlett Richards: Nebraska Sandhills Cattleman* (1980), *Perkey's Nebraska Place-Names* (1982), an interpretive booklet on the

history of Nebraska's water-powered flourmills (1983), and an index-guide to *Nebraska History, 1959-79* (1983). Major exhibitions included *The Doll*

Show, accompanied by a catalog based on the Society's outstanding collection and funded by the Junior League of Lincoln, and the recreated studio of Nebraska-born illustrator John Falter, along with an important collection of his works, unveiled at the 1983 opening of the new museum.

The historical markers program, established by the legislature in 1957, continued under the Society's aegis in collaboration with local organizations and the Nebraska Department of Roads. The program provided a means to recognize and interpret historically significant events, sites, and personalities in all areas of the state, and enhanced both tourism and community pride. By 1983 the familiar silver and blue metal markers numbered 283. Although budget cuts in 1981 had eliminated the use of state matching funds for a portion of each marker's cost, public interest in the program remained high; today more than four hundred markers dot the highways and byways of Nebraska.

A small step that was to have major consequences for the future was the formation in early 1980 of a "Friends of the Nebraska State Historical Society" group that would evolve into today's robust volunteer program. Although the Junior League of Lincoln had long furnished museum docents and other volunteers, the "Friends" organization was the first to engage Society volunteers from the public at large. By May 1984 twenty-four volunteers were working as docents and in other departments. The first part-time volunteer coordinator was hired in September 1984 with funds provided by a federal grant.

As Kivett neared retirement, undercurrents of discontent among some Society staff and members began to surface. Among their concerns was a perception that the Society's long-range planning was inadequate, that rigid departmentalization had hindered staff productivity, and that the self-perpetuating Society governing board had become ineffective. The Society Foundation, which continued to acquire property

such as the Lageschulte-Weese farm near Lincoln in 1984 for future use as a “living history farm,” seemed to be forging commitments independently that would someday have consequences for the Society.

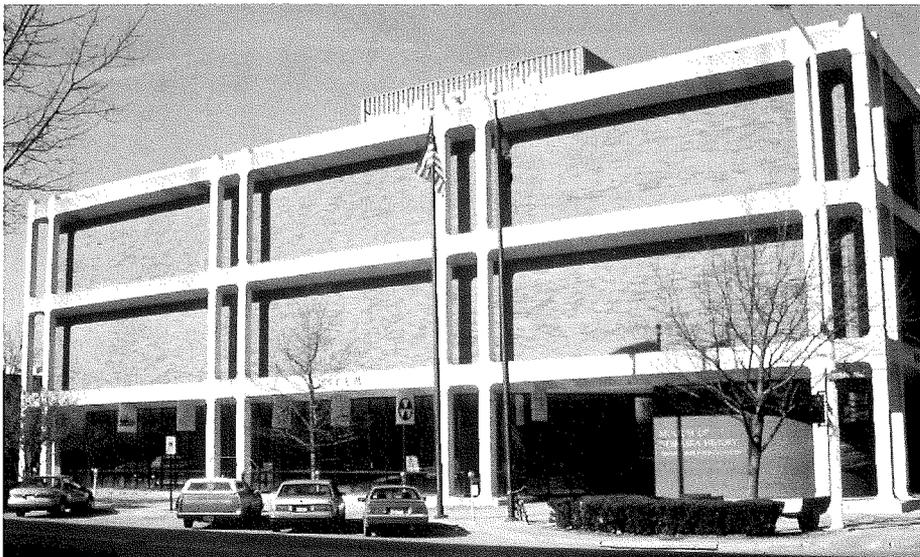
Perhaps because of the criticism, Society departments began program reviews. The library, archives, and museum each conducted assessments offered through their respective national professional organizations. In December 1984 the museum received its initial accreditation from the American Association of Museums and has twice been reaccredited. The assessments of the library and archives programs produced various recommendations, including the “weeding” of superfluous material from the collections and closer interdepartmental collaboration.

Discontent with the Society’s governance was reflected during the fall 1984 annual meeting, when several members challenged the traditional reelection of sitting board members by presenting an alternate slate. Although the slate was defeated, the effort prompted the board to begin a study of its election procedures and consider mail balloting so all members, not just those attending the annual meeting, could vote.

On October 3, 1984, Kivett announced his retirement, effective as soon as his successor could be hired. He had worked for the Society for some thirty-six years, first as an archeologist, later as the museum director, and since 1963, as director. During his administration, Kivett had overseen the extension of Society programs and operations to virtually every area of the state. When he became director, the Society had a single branch museum at Fort Robinson. By 1980 the institution had responsibility for twenty-seven individual structures and 225 acres of real estate. Under his oversight, the Foundation had also acquired several properties that most expected would someday be administered by the Society. In November 1984 he announced that Omaha businessman James Paxson had donated some



By 1978 the R Street building was bursting at the seams, and plans were afoot for a modern heritage center south of the state capitol.



The heritage center was not funded, but in 1979 money was appropriated to purchase the former Elks Club building at Fifteenth and P streets for a new museum.

\$2 million to the Foundation, which Kivett envisioned would provide a Society branch library and archives in Omaha. As he prepared to leave office, one of his greatest concerns remained “our need to renovate the 1500 R headquarters building.”

On June 1, 1985, James A. Hanson assumed the directorship of the Nebraska State Historical Society. He had worked previously at Chadron’s Museum of the Fur Trade, the Wyoming State Museum, the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum in Texas, and the Smithsonian Institution.

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With new museum quarters, the Society's library and archives in the R Street building could expand, providing better services to patrons.



Opened in 1983, the Museum of Nebraska History had space for new permanent exhibits including the most recent, "Building the State."

Although he took office just as the state's economy forced cuts in state appropriations, including the Society's, Hanson announced that his goals for the Society would include qualitative program improvements and enhanced services to Nebraska citizens.

Among the initiatives Hanson implemented soon after taking office was the rotation of curators at two of the branch museums, the establishment of museum stores at the Lincoln museum and the branches, a collections policy review, the merger of the library and archives

departments, "weeding" of the library collections, and computerizing the Society membership files. The board approved a modest admission charge at the branch museums, and also proposed amendments to the Society constitution providing for election of board members to fixed terms by mail ballot.

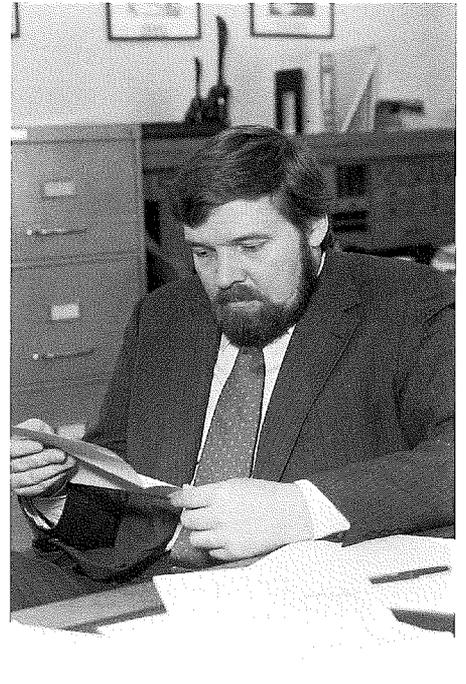
Hanson also believed the Society would benefit by more public programming and media outreach, additional volunteers, and more aggressive fundraising for special projects and exhibits. While the museum stores soon began to generate significant revenue, the Junior League of Lincoln funded new radio spots entitled "History Minutes," and the Nebraska chapter of the Colonial Dames of America supported construction of *The First Nebraskans*, a new permanent museum exhibit that opened in September 1987 and represented a significant departure from the traditional "exhibit case" displays. Two *Nebraska Treasures* temporary exhibits in the state capitol rotunda highlighted the most historically significant and visually attractive items from the Society collections. The Society journal, *Nebraska History*, received a facelift for the 1987 volume, providing a modern design and more illustrations.

Although the 1984 departmental self-studies and peer evaluations marked a first step toward setting future agendas, the first serious effort at agency-wide long-range planning began in 1986, when a series of staff planning retreats identified goals that the Society wanted to accomplish within the next ten years or so. In December 1987 the board adopted the Society's first formal mission statement.

Not all the changes Hanson implemented were without controversy. Some employees and board members resisted the rotation of branch museum curators, reassignment of staff in Lincoln, and weeding the library, attracting media attention reminiscent of that sparked by the members' "revolt" during the waning days of the Kivett administration.



Marvin F. Kivett, director, 1963–1985 (left), examines a painting of John G. Neihardt.



James A. Hanson became director in 1985 and served until 1992.

Although a majority of the board affirmed the director's authority over staff assignments and agreed with the need for the library weeding, the controversy was finally laid to rest only when an anti-Hanson slate of board candidates was defeated in the Society's first mail ballot election in 1986.²

Despite the attention focused on the Society's Lincoln activities and administration, significant improvements were underway at its facilities across the state. Donation of the adjacent elevators and warehouse at the Neligh Mill broadened the site's interpretive potential. A major renovation of the Fort Robinson Museum included new exhibits and the installation of security and fire suppression systems. The Society's first field archeology office opened when a historic preservation archeologist was stationed at Fort Robinson.

There were also losses. Budget cuts imposed during a December 1986 special session prompted the legislature's appropriations committee to recommend the Society close the *Meriwether*

Lewis dredge/Museum of Missouri River History, where visitation had never reached projected levels and maintenance costs were high. The board subsequently negotiated a conditional sale of the dredge to a Brownville-area foundation. Also being considered was the fate of the William H. Ferguson house in Lincoln, which the Society had administered since 1976, first as a folklife center and later as a historic house museum, and Fairview, William Jennings Bryan's Lincoln home, owned by Bryan Memorial Hospital and operated by the Society.

While state budget problems were forcing a reevaluation of the Society's involvement in certain sites and structures, funding from the private sector provided the opportunity to pursue other goals. A case in point was the renovation of the Fort Robinson Museum, supported by a \$25,000 donation. The director, board, and staff also began reviewing how the Paxson fund could best be used to provide a Society facility in Omaha without duplicating existing

programs. Following extensive staff study and discussions with the donor, the board approved a proposal that the money be used to build and support a laboratory to treat and preserve the Society's collections, as well as those from other institutions and the private sector throughout the Midwest and Great Plains. The board hired an architect in June 1989 to design the center, which would be constructed adjacent to the Gerald R. Ford birth site and gardens.

Two other projects that would rely heavily on private fundraising were also on the agenda. The first was the long-recognized need for a visitor center at the Chimney Rock National Historic Site, which the Society had administered since 1940. This significant Oregon-California Trail landmark attracted the attention of modern travelers as it had that of the overland emigrants, yet the interpretive facilities, a trailer house museum, had always been woefully inadequate. In September 1989 the board approved Hanson's proposal to

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Lawrence J. Sommer, presiding at the 1993 ground-breaking of the Ethel and Christopher J. Abbott Visitor Center at Chimney Rock, became director in July 1992.

begin planning and fundraising for the construction of a permanent visitor center at Chimney Rock.

Beginning in 1987 Society archeologists and volunteers conducted three seasons of excavations at the site of Fort Robinson's 1874 log cavalry barracks, which had been destroyed by fire in 1898. The barracks had imprisoned the Northern Cheyennes who fled their Oklahoma reservation in 1878 and were captured near the fort. It was from the barracks that the tragic January 1879 Cheyenne outbreak began, and the site had long been recognized as one of Fort Robinson's most historic. The archeological project was considered a precursor to the barracks' eventual reconstruction.

Projects were also underway to extend the Society's reach. The Creigh grant for youth educational materials was manifested in *Nebraska Trailblazer*, a new publication distributed free to every fourth-grade student in the state. Produced in newspaper format and addressing a range of Nebraska history

themes, *Nebraska Trailblazer* continues as a key component of the Society's educational effort, with twenty-nine separate numbers issued to date. A related development was the decision in 1989 to support "History Day: Nebraska" with judges, ideas for research that could be conducted in Society collections, and funding to aid students.

The *Nebraskans in Film* series was initiated in 1988, featuring motion pictures starring Nebraskans; produced, directed, or written by Nebraskans; or addressing themes relating to the history of Nebraska and the West, and the series continues as one of the Society's most popular public programs. The monthly "Brown Bag" lectures at the Lincoln museum continued, and the series was extended to an Omaha venue in 1989. Similar "Sunday Afternoon at the Museum" programs later began at several of the branch museums and continue today.

To build upon the Society's rich collections, a research department was created to produce exhibitions and

publications. Its first project was a book using historic photographs to reinterpret the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890. The department also coordinated research for a new museum exhibit, *Our Imperial Army: Nebraska in the Philippine War*, which opened in February 1989. In fall 1989 the Society collaborated with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to establish a master's degree program in museum studies, and the first classes were offered in 1990. Society staff served as adjunct faculty and directed student internships in various Society departments, an arrangement that continued until university budget cuts eliminated the program in 2003.

Another extension of the Society's expertise was the field services program, initially funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum Services. Two half-time field representatives were hired in fall 1989, and began a regular cycle of site visits and workshops, paying particular attention to the state's numerous county and local historical organizations.

The State Historic Preservation Office, supported largely with federal funds, had languished to some extent in the early 1980s, and federal program audits cited several deficiencies. Administrative changes and the addition of new staff helped revitalize the program. In spring 1989 "Historic Places: The National Register for Nebraska," outlining the nearly five hundred Nebraska properties then listed in the National Register of Historic Places, was published as a joint issue of *Nebraska History* and *Nebraskaland*, the magazine of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Historic preservation office staff wrote the text, and game commission staff provided photography and editorial services. At the same time the preservation office undertook its first thematic buildings survey, a study of Nebraska opera houses. At the end of fiscal year 1989, the State Historic Preservation Office was certified as meeting all requirements by the federal preservation program audit. Subsequently the initial survey of all ninety-three Nebraska

counties was completed, and National Register properties currently number more than eight hundred.

The library and state archives, combined as one administrative unit, expanded into new areas in the headquarters building in the fall of 1987. Following the weeding and subsequent sale of surplus or out-of-scope library books, which netted some \$30,000 for future library acquisitions, the storage areas were reorganized for more efficient use, and all public reference functions were located on the first floor of the headquarters building. The library/archives continued to acquire significant collections, including the earliest known Nebraska-produced motion picture, *In the Days of '75 and '76* (1915), which was restored and shown around the state. The film was a dramatic example of the division's increasing attention to the acquisition and preservation of Nebraska-related moving images. Other significant accessions included a unique ledger containing an 1877 census of Indians at the Red Cloud Agency, including Crazy Horse's band.

As the 1980s drew to a close, these encouraging developments were often overshadowed by what Hanson in late 1987 had termed "a potentially explosive issue." Known to the public as the "battle over the bones," the controversy centered on a demand by Native American Rights Fund attorneys, representing the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, that the Society return, for reburial, human remains and cultural materials excavated from archeological sites beginning in the early twentieth century. Hanson and most of the board, along with many in the scientific community, resisted the reburial of these remains and goods on the grounds that they were important resources for scientific and historical study, particularly of prehistoric cultures that left no documentary record. The tribe countered that the bones and artifacts had been secured without their knowledge or consent, that the graves of their ancestors



In 1995 President Gerald R. Ford (right) and "Pat" Paxson Gould, cut the ribbon formally opening the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha. Assisting (right to left) are NSHS President Charles Trimble, NSHS Foundation President James Nissen, and Omaha Mayor Hal Daub.

should not have been disturbed, and that their culture required that the remains and associated grave materials be reburied.

Despite months of discussion producing reams of copy in the media, no compromise could be reached. Public opinion generally favored the claims of the tribe. The issue was settled with passage of LB340 during the 1989 session of the Nebraska Legislature, which required the Society to prepare an inventory of the remains and grave objects for review by the tribe, and then to turn over the materials for reburial by a specified date. Subsequently, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), passed by Congress in November 1990, required museums and other cultural institutions across the country to follow suit.

During the preparation of the inventory, an additional dispute arose between the Society and the Pawnee

Tribe's attorneys over whether Society records being used to compile the inventory must be provided to the tribe before the inventory deadline. The Society held that the records did not need to be disclosed under an exemption in the open records law covering scientific work in progress. Furthermore, the Society maintained that its records were not public records. Although the Society had received funding from the state since 1883, it had been incorporated as a private eleemosynary organization in 1878 and was recognized in statute as a "state institution," rather than as a state agency. Its board was elected by the membership, and not subject to gubernatorial appointment.

To resolve these questions, the Society filed suit in Lancaster County District Court in 1990, seeking a declaratory judgment as to whether or not it was a state agency subject to the open records law. In the meantime, the specific

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dispute over access to records being used to compile the LB340 inventory became moot when the inventory was delivered to the Pawnee Tribe according to schedule on June 10, 1990. On September 10, 1990, the Society repatriated the remains of some 398 individuals and more than 37,000 associated burial goods to the tribe.

In May 1991 the district court ruled that the Society was subject to the open records act. Although the Society had been founded as a private organization and maintained its non-profit corporation status until the 1960s, it had then let its incorporation lapse and had functioned as a state agency for many years, relying heavily upon state appropriations for its support.

While the legal issues played out, other Society initiatives showed progress.

Fundraising for the Chimney Rock visitor center received a boost with a \$100,000 challenge grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation. By November 1990 \$186,000 of a required \$470,000 had been raised and site selection was underway. Architects were preparing the final plans for the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha. New museum exhibits on Nebraska in World War II and on the history of Nebraska from 1803 to 1867 were in production, and research was ongoing for a major museum exhibit and a publication on Czechs and Nebraska. The board approved a contract with the John G. Neihardt Foundation for operation and management of the society's John G. Neihardt Center, effective July 1, 1990.

A federal grant provided for cataloging and archival reproduction of some

ten thousand images from the Macdonald Studio of Lincoln. New publications included a Neligh Mill tour guide and cookbook to accompany new exhibits at the mill, along with a video to be used at the Fort Robinson Museum in conjunction with completion of the last phase of new exhibits there. The University of Nebraska Press published *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* in 1991, the first book produced by the Society's newly formed research department. The staff completed evaluating the museum collections and identified some 41,000 objects for possible deaccessioning. Budget cuts of more than \$100,000 ended the Society's administration of the Ferguson house in Lincoln, and the Brown Bag lectures in Omaha, effective June 30, 1991.

On June 21, 1991, Director James



Quick to adopt innovative technology, the Society has become a national leader in digital imaging, an initiative underwritten by private funds channeled through the Historical Society Foundation.

Hanson announced his resignation. A search committee was appointed to seek his successor. Notable events during Hanson's final months as director included the new exhibit, *What Did You Do in the War?: Nebraska in World War II*, which opened on December 7, 1991, accompanied by a special issue of *Nebraska History*. The board authorized proceeding with site development for the Chimney Rock visitor center, authorized an appeal to the Nebraska Supreme Court of the district court ruling on the Society's state agency status, and approved seeking legislation to exempt archeological site locations and donor records from disclosure under the state's open records law.

Following Hanson's departure on January 31, 1992, Society President Dennis Mihelich served as interim director. During this period, the second new permanent exhibit, *Nebraska Joins the Union*, opened at the Museum of Nebraska History on March 1, 1992. The board also approved preliminary plans for the Chimney Rock visitor center and voted to proceed with the final design.

Lawrence J. Sommer became director of the Society on July 20, 1992. He had formerly led the St. Louis County Historical Society and Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth, Minnesota, and the Montana Historical Society in Helena. He, too, assumed the directorship as the state was facing a budget crisis. In announcing his vision for the Society, Sommer noted, "We will have to be more efficient and innovative in everything we do." Among his first accomplishments was the resolution of a dispute over the final site for the Chimney Rock visitor center. In November he implemented a reorganization, the first phase of which combined the former research and editorial departments into a new research and publications division.

With the announcement in February 1993 of a \$250,000 gift from the Ethel S. Abbott Charitable Foundation, the fundraising goal for the Chimney Rock visitor center had been achieved. Simultaneously, the Society board approved

proceeding with construction of the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha. In October *The Heart of Two Continents: Czechs and Nebraska* exhibit opened in conjunction with the Society's annual meeting and history conference, accompanied by a special issue of *Nebraska History*. Another special issue, "The Cellars of Time," focusing on Nebraska archeology and paleontology, appeared in spring 1994 jointly published by *Nebraska History* and *Nebraskaland* magazine. Society archeologists wrote the text dealing with Nebraska's prehistoric and historic archeology, and many of the illustrations were of objects in the Society's collections. Also in spring 1994 remodeling in the headquarters building enabled the library/archives to move into a renovated reference room.

From his 1985 retirement as Society director until his death in 1992, Marvin Kivett had continued to direct the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation. Subsequently the Foundation hired a full-time director and became more active as a fundraising adjunct to the Society, while the two organizations' boards and officers began to work together more closely. This new relationship became essential as the Society moved toward completion of the Chimney Rock and Gerald R. Ford centers, both of which were being constructed with donations through the Foundation.

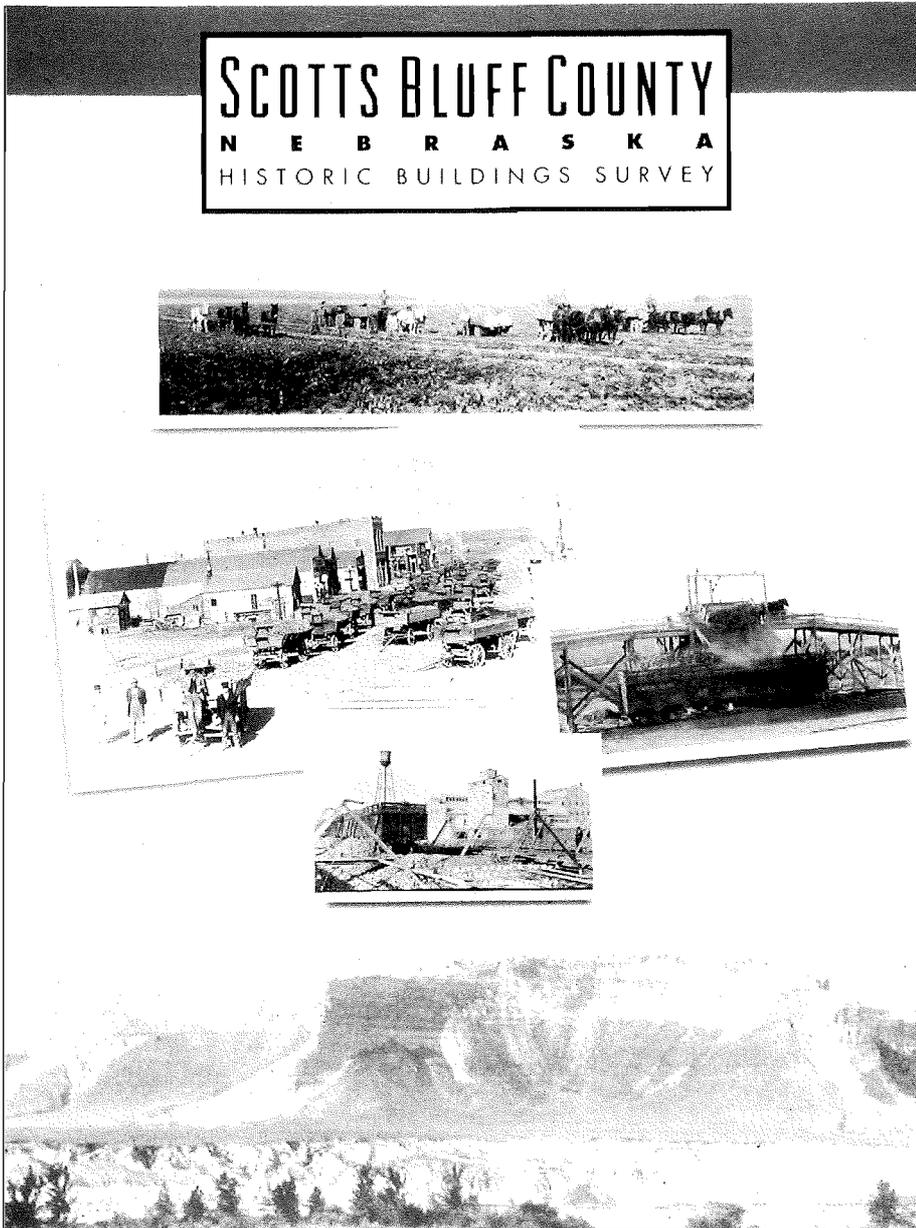
The Foundation also focused on fundraising for exhibits and publications and for the purchase of collection materials identified by the Society staff for which no state appropriations were available. A rare Patriot truck constructed in Lincoln, the William Quesenbury 1851 Sketchbook of Oregon-California Trail landmarks, and a collection of Nebraska Civil War letters were all acquired with donated funds solicited by the Foundation. Most recently the Foundation coordinated fundraising that enabled the reconstruction of the Cheyenne Outbreak barracks at Fort Robinson by matching a \$150,000

legislative appropriation. The close collaboration between the Society and Foundation was also demonstrated when the latter's board negotiated a new agreement with the Lageschulte-Weese farm donors after it became apparent that the Society's long range strategic plan did not include provisions for a "living history farm."

A period of negotiations between the Society board and the Pawnee Tribe led in March 1994 to the announcement that the parties had settled their ongoing dispute. The Society would withdraw its lawsuit appeal before the Nebraska Supreme Court and agree to legislation confirming its status as a state agency. The Pawnee Tribe would support the state agency legislation and other legislation to protect the Society's archeological site files and donor records from disclosure under the open records law. The resulting state agency bill, LB1236, became law on March 10, 1994. It maintained the Society's governance and membership structure, confirmed the Society's traditional responsibility to acquire and preserve historical material according to professional standards, and created a collections trust fund under Society control. By clearly defining the Society's status, the legislation also served to minimize the prospect of future bills to "reorganize" the Society and place it within the executive branch. Four such bills had been introduced and later withdrawn or killed during the 1980s.

Several other milestones were attained in 1994–95. The board approved a contract authorizing the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation to reassume management of the Cather properties in Red Cloud. It was 1978 legislation that transferred title to these properties from the Cather Foundation to the state and the Society. On September 9, 1994, the Ethel and Christopher J. Abbott Visitor Center at the Chimney Rock National Historic Site was dedicated. New exhibits were also installed at the Neihardt Center in Bancroft.

Twenty-five More Years



The Historic Preservation Office has surveyed all ninety-three counties, certified more than 800 properties for the National Register of Historic Places, and is a partner in the Lied Main Street Program.

On May 17, 1995, following a two-year study authorized by the legislature and coordinated by the State Historic Preservation Office, the Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation released its final report, *Strategies for Preserving the Historic and Cultural Foundations of Nebraska*. The report provided the first

comprehensive review of Nebraska's historic and cultural sites, with recommendations on how to integrate historic preservation into public policy and build coalitions among public and private organizations. A related development had been the fall 1994 announcement by Governor E. Benjamin Nelson of the

Lied Main Street Program to revitalize Nebraska's communities, with a \$350,000 startup grant from the Lied Foundation Trust. The State Historic Preservation Office has also been a major collaborator in the Main Street program, which continues today.

Director Sommer's creation of the Research and Publications Division brought more emphasis to Society publishing, in addition to its quarterly magazine and monthly newsletters. The first book resulting from the new administrative structure was *The Crazy Horse Surrender Ledger* in 1994, which reproduced a census of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians at Fort Robinson in 1877. Other books followed, including *A Frontier Army Christmas*, *Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874-1899*, and most recently, *Fort Robinson and the American Century, 1900-1948*. Publication of each was underwritten by funds established by donations to the Society Foundation.

Collaboration with the University of Nebraska Press also led to publication of works edited by the Research and Publications Division staff and based on Society collections. They included Charles Allen's reminiscences, *From Fort Laramie to Wounded Knee: In the West that Was*, and *The Nebraska Indian Wars Reader, 1865-1877*. In 2001 the Society and the Montana Historical Society Press co-published *Wheelboats on the Missouri: The Journals and Documents of the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition, 1824-26*. The board approved Sommer's proposal in 1999 to create a research grant program, which annually began offering \$1,000 stipends provided by the Society Foundation to support research in Society collections leading to articles for publication in *Nebraska History*.

In 1994 the director and staff began an intensive cycle of planning that produced a new strategic plan, which was adopted by the board in March 1996. The plan has been updated several times. In 1995-96 a facilities master plan was completed to form the basis for

requests for state appropriations to renovate the headquarters building and the Museum of Nebraska History.

Based on the long-range exhibit plan, the staff produced a steady stream of changing exhibits, both for the museum and the headquarters building, while continuing to conduct research for the next phase of the permanent exhibits covering the period from Nebraska statehood to World War I. *The Atomic Age* was the title of an exhibit, a publication, and the theme for the Society's fall 1995 history conference. *Keeping the Faith: William Jennings Bryan's Campaigns for the Presidency, 1896–1908* opened March 1, 1996. That exhibit drew upon the Society's rich collections of objects, printed materials, and photographs to mark the centennial of the "Great Commoner's" remarkable 1896 race for the White House, and his subsequent presidential campaigns in 1900 and 1908, all of which were unsuccessful. A special Bryan issue of *Nebraska History* accompanied the exhibit.

In July 1995 Sommer implemented the next phase of his plan for the Society's reorganization. It included creation of an archeology division independent of the museum, transformation of the branch museum program into a historic sites department, and the consolidation of the museum education and Society field services programs as a statewide services department. The coordinator of volunteer services was made a full-time position and moved to the Administration Division. At the same time, the Conservation Division became operational as staff was hired at the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha.

The Society's outreach to the public, and partnerships with other state agencies, was also expanded beginning in April 1995 with the presentation of the first Fort Robinson History Conference in cooperation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Its success sparked subsequent biennial conferences at Fort Robinson, the latest in 2002. Collaboration with the Nebraska

Mexican American Commission, supported by a grant from the Lila Wallace/Reader's Digest Fund, produced a 1997 exhibit and 1998 publication highlighting the contributions of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans to the history and culture of Nebraska.

The Archeology Division had long worked with the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) to conduct highway salvage investigations, and the many partnerships of the State Historic Preservation Office and the NDOR included the 1995 Nebraska Byways Program, which enrolled nine historic or scenic highways to enhance economic development, heritage tourism, and community development. The earlier survey of Nebraska's historic bridges led to publication in 1999 of *Spans in Time: A History of Nebraska Bridges*, funded in part with federal transportation enhancement funds from the NDOR. Enhancement funds also enabled Society archeologists to establish a Geographic Information System "layer" to track Nebraska archeological site locations. In 2001, also with enhancement funds provided through the NDOR, the Society began inventorying and assessing the condition of all state historical markers. A second phase of the project has received a transportation enhancement grant to repair and refurbish markers that have suffered from vandalism or long exposure to the elements.

Since 1995 the popular monthly Brown Bag museum lectures have been videotaped for broadcast on the public access cable network in Lincoln. Since 1997 the Society has sponsored a "History Day: Nebraska" celebration at the State Capitol to recognize and encourage the winning students in the state history day contest prior to their participation in the national History Day competition. The Society also provides special awards in the junior and senior divisions.

Another Society initiative in education was the late 1997 opening of the History Adventure Center (HAC) in the Museum of Nebraska History. The HAC

offers "hands-on" activities designed to teach elementary students about significant themes in Nebraska history. The HAC complemented an ongoing series of annual summer workshops for children initiated in 1996. In 2000 the museum, in collaboration with the Lincoln Public Schools, mounted its first student-curated exhibit, *Lincoln: A Kid's Eye View*.

With the support of a major grant from the Woods Foundation of Lincoln, the Society and Nebraska Wesleyan University hosted the first annual "Nebraska Institute" in summer 1998. This two-week residential seminar, drawing faculty from each Society division, is designed to help Nebraska educators from across the state learn effective ways to use artifacts, documents, historic sites, and other primary historical resources in classroom teaching.

The opening of the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in 1995 marked a new era in the treatment, restoration, and preservation of Society collections, as well as those belonging to other institutions and the public, under the direction of the center's professional paper, metals, and textile conservators. A recent project was the repair of the nearly century-old silver service from the battleship USS *Nebraska*, which the U.S. Navy returned to the state in 1922. The Ford Center's staff also presents workshops and provides consultation to enhance the preservation capabilities of historical agencies or museums in Nebraska and across the nation. An active internship program attracts top students from cultural institutions throughout the world to study conservation at the Ford Center. Recently the center hosted national seminars on the conservation and preservation of stained glass and silver, and collaborated in presenting a summit to lay groundwork for assisting Native American tribal repositories in preserving their significant collections of cultural patrimony.

With private support channeled through the Society Foundation, a state-

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The Ford Conservation Center (left) and the Ethel and Christopher J. Abbott Visitors Center—embody key elements of the Society's mission: safeguarding, interpreting, and providing access to Nebraska's past.

of-the-art digital imaging laboratory was inaugurated at the Ford Center in 1998, making the Society a national leader in the field. The laboratory's capabilities attracted grants that enabled significant library/archives photographic and documentary collections to be digitized for incorporation into national databases, such as the American Memory website of the Library of Congress. A multi-year, grant-funded project, "American Bounty: The Story of Food," has digitized major resources from the Society's museum, library/archives, and photographic collections for online access. The scanning capabilities of the digital imaging laboratory has led to recovery of photographic images in Society collections impossible to reproduce with conventional darkroom techniques. The digital imaging program also provides high quality reproductions of Society photographs and other collections for publications, exhibits, and public access and allows the original materials to be retired from use.

Although the headquarters building space vacated by the museum in 1983 provided some breathing room for the ever-growing library/archives collections, many of the holdings were stored in leased, off-site warehouses poorly suited for preservation or access. In 1996–97 several state agencies, including the Society, received legislative appropriations to lease space in a former down-

town Lincoln power plant that had been renovated as a records center. In March 1998 the state archives' public records holdings began the move to the center, known as the K-Street Complex, which provides a climate-controlled environment in an accessible location.

Beginning in 1995 the Library/Archives Division also coordinated the development of a strategic plan for Nebraska's historical records funded by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission through the State Historical Records Advisory Board. Informed by a series of meetings and workshops held across the state, *Insuring Nebraska's Documentary Heritage* was published in 1996 to set an agenda for statewide historical records preservation programs. The library/archives also participated actively in the Nebraska Newspaper Project, which led to the discovery and microfilming of state newspapers not previously included in the Society's collection, aided by a \$12,000 grant from the Nebraska Press Association.

Completion of the Society's facilities master plan signaled that the time had come to seek fulfillment of the goal to renovate both the Museum of Nebraska History and the headquarters building. The museum, adapted from its former use as an Elks club, has struggled to maintain aging and inadequate climate control systems since it was dedicated

in 1983. The headquarters building, opened in 1953, does not meet current codes for life safety, handicapped access, and environmental controls critical to the preservation of archival and library collections. Renovation of the headquarters building, to be followed by the Museum of Nebraska History, was identified as the Society's highest priority in the revised strategic plan, and the Society requested a major capital construction appropriation in the 1997–98 budget to begin the project. In response, the legislature funded a design study for the headquarters renovation and also provided an appropriation to lease space in the Lincoln Children's Museum building for the Archeology Division and the State Historic Preservation Office.

The design study's completion in 1997, however, coincided with the beginning of a downturn in the national and state economies that forestalled any appropriation to begin renovation. Moreover, the complete failure of the Museum of Nebraska History's air conditioning system forced the museum to close to the public for several months in summer 2002. Fortunately the state's Task Force on Deferred Building Maintenance (the 309 Task Force) provided funds to begin installation of a new air conditioning system. With the coming of cooler weather, the museum reopened in October 2002.

Not only did economic issues in 2001–02 stall the capital construction request, they also forced budget cuts throughout state government, requiring the Society to leave unfilled several full-time positions made vacant by resignation or retirement, and to impose limited staff layoffs that effectively ended the formal field services program.

Despite these setbacks the Society marked significant accomplishments in the year leading up to its 125th anniversary in 2003. *Building the State: Nebraska, 1867–1916*, the third in the series of permanent exhibits at the Museum of Nebraska History, opened to the public on Statehood Day, March 1, 2002. At Fort Robinson, the fourth in the series of biennial history conferences was a resounding success, and the reconstruction of the 1874 Cavalry Barracks (the Cheyenne Outbreak Barracks) was completed and dedicated in June 2003. The State Historic Preservation Office embarked on a survey of five historic highways in the state as its latest thematic survey. With participation from each division, the staff began a self-study to evaluate public perceptions of the Society and its programs, and to devise new ways to increase public awareness of history's value and importance, and the enjoyment it can bring to people's lives.

The Nebraska State Historical Society of 2003 is both similar to and different from the Historical Society of 1978. The core programs of twenty-five years ago remain, although sometimes operating with different priorities and methodologies. Although the Society's permanent staff in 2003 is similar in size to that of 1978, by and large today's staff is more experienced and better trained than its 1978 counterpart and possesses new tools to help it cope with an ever-increasing workload.³

Gradually at first, and more rapidly in recent years, the administration and staff have embraced new technology that has enabled them to serve the public more fully, to manage and preserve the collections more effectively, to

expand publishing, and to extend the Society's resources, services, and programs to a wider audience via a website, digital imaging, and e-mail.

Crucial to the success of every Society activity and initiative is the volunteer program, which counted only a handful of volunteers in 1978. Although the program began to gain momentum in 1984 under a part-time coordinator funded by a federal grant, and benefited briefly from a full-time coordinator following the Society's reorganization in 1995, no funding was available to sustain the full-time position. Nevertheless, Director Sommer and the staff have found ways to ensure that the Society continues to enjoy the irreplaceable contributions of its loyal corps of volunteers. The program continues to be coordinated through the Administration Division, signaling its importance to the Society's mission.

Volunteers work alongside the paid staff in each division, processing collections, assisting researchers, staffing museum stores, and giving tours to school groups. Bimonthly programs, a newsletter, museum store discounts, and annual appreciation events are among the benefits Society volunteers receive. The Museum Store, first opened at the Museum of Nebraska History in 1985 and always staffed primarily by volunteers, has expanded in size, scope, and the revenues it generates for the Society. There is a store at each state historic site, as well as at the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center, and in 1997 the first in a series of catalogs was published to offer off-site store shopping.

Since its founding in 1878, the Nebraska State Historical Society has operated as a public-private partnership, blending attributes of a government agency with those of a voluntary membership organization. Then and now, its governance has been largely insulated from politics because Society members elect a majority of its trustees. The trustees come from all walks of life, united by a common interest in Nebraska history and a desire to advance the Society's

mission. In the mid-1980s the membership took the initiative to make the Society's governance more responsive by adopting mail balloting, term limits, and gubernatorial appointment of a portion of the board. The new election process enabled the board to become more broadly representative with respect to gender, ethnicity, and age. In 1991 Charles E. Trimble of Omaha became the first American Indian to serve on the board and was president of the Nebraska State Historical Society from 1995 to 1997. When the Society's status as a state agency was confirmed by legislation in 1994, the bill protected the Society's non-political system of governance.

Another characteristic that has served the Society well, particularly in times of economic stress, is its broad base of financial support. The most significant revenue source remains the state general fund appropriation, which is also the most sensitive to the state's economic health. A second major component is federal funds, in the form of annual allocations for the State Historic Preservation Office and the Highway Salvage Archeology Program, supplemented by periodic grants to every division from agencies such as the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. A third important source of funding for programming, publications, and acquisitions comes from individual donations and private foundation grants to the Society or the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation. Finally, there is earned income, largely from fees and from sales at the museum stores. Since 1978 that portion of the Society budget derived from non-state sources has steadily increased, particularly in the areas of private support, and since 1985, from museum store income.

Over the last quarter century, the Society has accomplished long-sought goals, such as opening a permanent visitor center at Chimney Rock, and has

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responded to new opportunities, such as the Paxson bequest that enabled the Society to become a leader in the fields of conservation and digital imaging by supporting construction of the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center. The search for space that dominated the Society's affairs for much of its first century was in some measure resolved with the opening of the Museum of Nebraska History in 1983, the reuse of space in the R Street building, the transfer of public records to the K-Street records center in 1998, and the move of some offices and collections to the Lincoln Children's Museum building in 2001. Although this expansion has dispersed staff and collections to a greater degree than before, the administration and staff, with guidance from the strategic plan, maintain an institutional approach to accomplishing the Society's mission. As in 1984, the need remains to renovate the now fifty-year-old R Street

building to meet modern standards for life safety, security, and collections preservation. And notwithstanding the emergency resolution of the Museum of Nebraska History's air conditioning problems, that thirty-seven-year-old building also requires major upgrading.

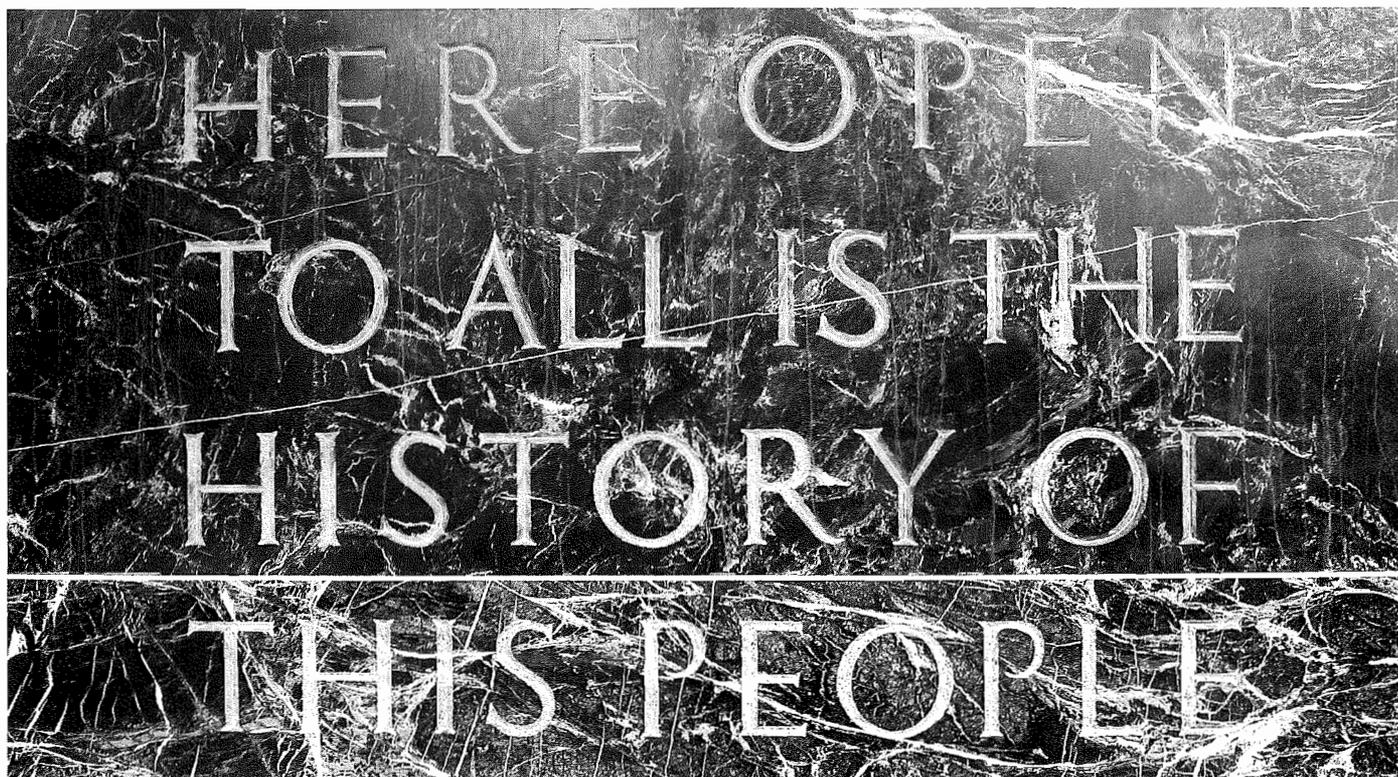
As the Nebraska State Historical Society reviews the past twenty-five years, it can mark numerous accomplishments and some disappointments, although it is clear that significant progress has been made in pursuit of a mission whose complete fulfillment must always remain elusive. While it is impossible to predict what the future holds for Nebraska and her people, their past is in good hands. The Society's leadership, staff, volunteers, and members will never cease striving to safeguard and interpret that past and make it accessible in ways that enrich present and future generations.

Notes

¹ Anne Polk Diffendal, "A Centennial History of the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1878-1978," *Nebraska History* 59 (Fall 1979): 428. As with Diffendal's history, the information in this essay was drawn from the Society board minutes, annual reports, "Historical Newsletter," and "Cornerstone," the historic preservation newsletter published from 1977 to 1991.

² The board engaged Lawrence Towner, former director of the Newberry Library, to evaluate the library weeding. In his report, Towner found the weeding was necessary to the future of the library and was being professionally done. In his view, the controversy resulted from "a blizzard of widely publicized but uninformed criticism" and had more to do with who was to control the Society than about the books.

³ The 1978 annual report credited the Society with eighty permanent staff. The president's message in the 2002 annual report noted that the permanent staff numbered eighty-two full- and part-time employees.



Carved in stone at the headquarters entrance, this motto suggests the Historical Society's fundamental purpose.

NSHS Milestones, 1979-2003

Historic Properties

- Campbell Family Graves**, near Doniphan
Willa Cather State Historic Site, Red Cloud. Administered by the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation.
Chimney Rock National Historic Site, Bayard (Ethel and Christopher J. Abbott Visitor Center)
Courthouse and Jail Rocks, Bridgeport
Fairview (William Jennings Bryan's home), Lincoln. Owned by Bryan Memorial Hospital, administered by NSHS until 1992.
William H. Ferguson House, Lincoln. Owned by the state, administered by NSHS until 1991
Thomas P. Kennard House/Nebraska Statehood Memorial, Lincoln
Capt. Meriwether Lewis Dredge, Brownville, 1980-87
Mud Springs Pony Express Station Site, Dalton
John G. Neihardt State Historic Site, Bancroft. Administered by the John G. Neihardt Foundation.
Neligh Mill State Historic Site, Neligh
Senator George W. Norris State Historic Site, McCook
Patterson Archeological Site, Gretna
Fort Robinson Museum (and related sites and structures), Crawford
State Fair Heritage Village, Lincoln. Owned by the State Board of Agriculture, administered by NSHS until 2001.

Major Exhibitions

- 1979 Annual holiday exhibits begin (Museum and Kennard House)
1979 A Sampler of Traditional Arts and Crafts (Ferguson House)
1982 The Doll Show (Ferguson House)
1983 John P. Falter Studio and Retrospective
1984 When the World Broke in Two: World War I
1984 The Art of Thomas B. Johnson
1985 Depression Era Art
1985 Pieces from the Past: Nebraska State Historical Society Quilts
1986 Treasures from the Nebraska State Historical Society (Capitol Rotunda)
1986 Photographers and the Plains Indians
1986 For Your Musical Enjoyment
1987 Treasures from the Nebraska State Historical Society (Capitol Rotunda)
1987 The First Nebraskans (permanent exhibit)
1987 Women at Work: Nebraska 1880-1940
1987 Back Porch
1988 New exhibits at the Fort Robinson Museum
1989 Our Imperial Army: Nebraska in the Philippine War
1990 New exhibits at Neligh Mill State Historic Site
1990 Eyewitness at Wounded Knee (Headquarters Rotunda)
1990 Our Town Remembered: Photographs from the Macdonald Studio Collection
1991 What Did You Do in the War? Nebraska and World War II
1992 Campaigning Against FDR: The Political Cartoons of Herbert Johnson
1992 Nebraska Joins the Union (permanent exhibit)
1993 Not Just a Bedcover: Quilts from the Nebraska State Historical Society Collections
1993 The Heart of Two Continents: Czechs and Nebraska
1994 New exhibits at the Ethel and Christopher J. Abbott Visitor Center, Chimney Rock
1995 Yikes! Bikes!
1995 The Atomic Age in Nebraska, 1945-1963

- 1995 New exhibits at John G. Neihardt State Historic Site
1995 Cushman Motor Scooters
1995 Gerald R. Ford at the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center
1995 "Wish You Were Here" (photos and travel diaries of Edward and Margaret Gerhke)
1996 Keeping the Faith: William Jennings Bryan's Campaigns for the Presidency
1996 Playtime: A Children's World of Toys and Games
1996 Believe it or Not: The Lives and Times of Vada and Col. Barney Oldfield
1996 Buffalo Soldiers West
1997 Plains Power: Nebraska-made Vehicles
1997 Un Tesoro de Nebraska (A Nebraska Treasure)
1998 The Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition (Headquarters Rotunda)
1998 Nebraska Quilts: A Patchwork History
1998 Buffalo Bill's Wild West
1999 Drawing on the Beat: John Falter's Jazz Portraits
1999 Dear! Beloved: Gifts and Gowns from Nebraska Weddings
1999 Road Trip! Life on Vacation with the Gerhkes of Lincoln (Headquarters Rotunda)
2000 Lincoln: A Kid's Eye View
2000 Patchwork and Progress: Quilts from the Nebraska State Historical Society Collections
2001 Nebraska Toy Stories
2001 A New Deal for Nebraska Artists
2001 Typical-looking Nebraska Farmer Day: Portraits from the 1943 State Fair (Headquarters Rotunda)
2001 Cushman Centennial
2002 Building the State: Nebraska, 1867-1916 (permanent exhibit)
2003 Made in Nebraska
2003 Here Open to All is the History of This People: 125 Years of the Nebraska State Historical Society (Headquarters Rotunda)
2003 Nebraska Treasures (All Society venues)
2003 The 1874 Cavalry Barracks (Fort Robinson)

Major Awards

- 1981 Western Heritage Non-fiction Award, National Cowboy Hall of Fame, *Bartlett Richards, Nebraska Sandhills Cattleman*
1982 Certificate of Commendation, American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), conservation slide-tape programs
1983 Certificate of Merit, Printing Industries of American Graphic Arts Competition, *The Doll Show* catalog
1989 Ray Allen Billington Award, Western History Association, best article in a history journal: "Time, Place, and Culture in Nebraska History," by Frederick C. Luebke, *Nebraska History* 69 (Winter 1988)
1992 Certificate of Commendation, AASLH, "The Indian of the Imagination" film series
1994 Award of Merit, AASLH, *The Heart of Two Continents: Czechs and Nebraska*, exhibit and programming
1995 Certificate of Commendation, AASLH, *The Atomic Age*, exhibit and programming
1998 Certificate of Commendation, AASLH, The Second Fort Robinson History Conference
1998 Schwartz Prize for Outstanding Public Humanities Project, *Un Tesoro de Nebraska (A Nebraska Treasure)*, exhibit and publication
2000 Honor Award, Nebraska Center for the Book, *Spans in Time: A History of Nebraska Bridges*

Books

- 1979 *Archeological Investigations at Fort Atkinson (25WN9)*, Gayle Carlson, Publications in Anthropology 8
- 1979 *The Great Platte River Road*, Merrill J. Mattes, reprinted from NSHS Publications 25, 1969
- 1980 *Archeological Investigations in the Red Willow Reservoir*, Roger T. Grange, Publications in Anthropology 9
- 1980 *Bartlett Richards, Nebraska Sandhills Cattleman*, Bartlett Richards, Jr. with Ruth Van Ackeren
- 1982 *Perkey's Nebraska Placenames*, Elton A. Perkey, NSHS Publications 28
- 1983 *Index-Guide to Nebraska History, 1959-1975*, comp. Betty L. Loudon, NSHS Publications 29
- 1984 *Nebraska Highway Archeology and Historical Salvage Investigations, 1969-1979*, Gale Carlson and Terry Steinacher, Publications in Anthropology 10
- 1994 *The Crazy Horse Surrender Ledger*, ed. R. Eli Paul and Thomas R. Buecker
- 1996 *A Frontier Army Christmas*, comp. Lori Cox-Paul and Dr. James W. Wengert
- 1997 *Nebraska Hall of Fame*, comp. R. Eli Paul
- 1998 *Nuestros Tesoros (Our Treasures): A Collection of Nebraska's Mexican Heritage*
- 1998 *The Fontenelle and Cabanné Trading Posts: The History and Archeology of Two Missouri River Sites*, Richard E. Jensen, Publications in Anthropology 11
- 1999 *Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874-1899*, Thomas R. Buecker
- 1999 *Spans in Time: A History of Nebraska Bridges*, (co-published with the Nebraska Department of Roads)
- 2002 *Fort Robinson and the American Century, 1900-1948*, Thomas R. Buecker

Miscellaneous Publications

- 19— *Historical Newsletter*
- 1977 *Cornerstone* (historic preservation newsletter, to 1991)
- 1982 *The Doll Show*
- 1983 *Water Powered Flour Mills in Nebraska*, Thomas R. Buecker (reprinted 2002)
- 1984 *Thomas Berger Johnson*
- 1989 *Central Plains Archaeology* begins
- 1987 *Nebraska Trailblazer* begins
- 1987 *Historic Buildings Surveys* begins
- 1990 *The Neligh Mills Cook Book*
- 1995 *Volunteer News* begins
- 1997 *Explore Nebraska Archeology* begins
- 1997 *Sharing the Past with the Future: Educator Resource Catalog*
- 2001 *Chimney Rock on the Oregon Trail*, Merrill J. Mattes, (reprinted from 1955 edition)
- 2001 *Courthouse Rock on the Oregon Trail*, Merrill J. Mattes
- 2001 *Lewis and Clark on the Middle Missouri*, Gary E. Moulton

Staff-authored Books by Other Publishers

- 1985 *Solomon D. Butcher: Photographing the American Dream*, John E. Carter (University of Nebraska Press)
- 1991 *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee*, R. Eli Paul, John E. Carter, and Richard E. Jensen (University of Nebraska Press)
- 1995 *The Autobiography of Red Cloud*, ed. R. Eli Paul (Montana Historical Society Press)
- 1997 *From Fort Laramie to Wounded Knee: In the West that Was*, Charles Allen, ed. Richard E. Jensen (University of Nebraska Press)
- 1998 *Are You Prepared? A Guide to Emergency Planning*, Julie A. Reilly (Nebraska Museums Association)

- 1998 *The Nebraska Indian Wars Reader, 1865-1877*, comp. R. Eli Paul (University of Nebraska Press)
- 2000 *Happy as a Big Sunflower: Adventures in the West, 1876-1880*, by Rolf Johnson, ed. Richard E. Jensen (University of Nebraska Press)
- 2001 *Wheelboats on the Missouri: The Journals and Documents of the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition, 1824-1826*, ed. Richard E. Jensen and James S. Hutchins (co-published with the Montana Historical Society Press)
- 2003 *Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874-1899*, Thomas R. Buecker (University of Oklahoma Press, reprint)
- 2003 *Museum Administration: An Introduction*, Hugh H. Genoways and Lynne M. Ireland (AltaMira Press)



Members of the Governing Board, 1979-2003

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Margaret Allington, 2000- | Jerry Mapes, 1989-92 |
| Harold W. Andersen, 1987-90 | Robert D. Marcotte, 1989-92 |
| Mardi Anderson, 1990-96 | Annabelle Brodbeck Marsh, 2002- |
| Charlyne Berens, 1989 | Charles W. Martin, 1979-87 |
| Keith Blackledge, 1997- | Martin Massengale, 1999- |
| James W. Carlson, 1986-92 | James McKee, 1996-2002 |
| Arthur Carmody, 1979-86 | Margaret McKeegan, 1992-95 |
| Sid Charf, 1989-93 | Janet McMullen, 1987-94 |
| Virginia Coffee, 1979-85 | Dennis Mihelich, 1987-94 |
| Burdette Cooley, 1993-99 | Arlen Miles, 1987 |
| Thomas Creigh, Jr., 1990 | Cynthia Monroe, 1986-93 |
| Sara Crook, 1996-2002 | Bill Nuckolls, 1986 |
| James Denney, 1998- | Kay Orr, 1987-89 |
| Walter M. Duda, 1993-99 | Charles C. Osborne, 1979-80 |
| Doug Duncan, 1984 | Allison D. Petersen, 1993-96 |
| Sarah Fairbanks, 1987-89 | George A. Peterson, 1985 |
| Edwin J. Faulkner, 1979-87 | Patricia Phillips, 2000- |
| Jane Graff, 1995-2000 | William C. Pratt, 1993-99 |
| G. H. Grandbois, 1997- | Jack Preston, 2000- |
| Joseph M. Hart, Jr., 1979-90 | James A. Rawley, 1979-86 |
| William C. Hastings, 1987-89 | Susan Rice, 1990-96 |
| Maurice Hevelone, 1979-86 | Arthur Riedesel, 1979 |
| Joyce Hillman-Kortum, 2000- | Maurine Roller, 1992-98 |
| Walter G. Huber, 1980-89 | Ronald W. Roskens, 1979-89 |
| Janyce Falcon Hunt, 1995-2001 | Michael W. Schuyler, 1991-97 |
| Ronald W. Hunter, 1990-93 | Jeffrey Spencer, 1999-2002 |
| Loral Johnson, 1980 | Helen Stauffer, 1998-2001 |
| Ken Kauffold, 1983 | Jack Tarr, 1988 |
| Patrick Kennedy, 1999- | Kent Thomas, 1982 |
| Robert Kerrey, 1983-86 | Charles Thone, 1979-82 |
| Otto Kotouc, Jr., 1979-86 | Charles E. Trimble, 1991-97, 2002- |
| Jason K. Kress, 2002- | Sally Stauffer Vifquain, 2001- |
| Norman Krivosha, 1979-87; 1992-98 | Martha Webb, 1994-2000 |
| Nes Latenser, 1979-87 | Frederick C. Wefso, 1985-91 |
| Wayne C. Lee, 1986 | John Weihing, 1993-99 |
| Dick Lindberg, 1981 | Roger Welsch, 1986-89 |
| Don Lindgren, 1987-92 | James W. Wengert, 1992-98 |
| Richard Loosbrock, 1996-2002 | Judith Wigton, 1989-91 |
| Frederick C. Luebke, 1986-93 | Beverly A. Wilhelm, 2002- |
| Robert Lute II, 1989-92 | S. N. Wolbach, 1979-87 |
| Nellie Snyder Yost Lydic, 1979-87 | |