CHANGE IS TYPICALLY unsetTLING. As author James Baldwin observed, “Most of us are about as eager to be changed as we were to be born, and go through our changes in a similar state of shock.” We have come to the end of an era in the history of the Nebraska State Historical Society: In April, Director Lawrence J. Sommer announced his retirement, effective July 21, 2005. That date marked the thirteenth anniversary of Mr. Sommer’s leadership of the Society and it is fitting for us individually and collectively to reflect upon the legacy of Lawrence Sommer from those thirteen eventful years. Personally, I would like to focus on two aspects of the Sommer legacy: a vision that was inclusive of all of Nebraska’s peoples and a vision that was statewide.

Eleven years ago a remarkable photograph appeared in the newspapers. That image depicted Larry warmly shaking hands with the chairman of the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, and that handshake symbolized the end of a contentious and sometimes bitter legal dispute between the Pawnee Tribe and the NSHS. Years later, the Omaha Tribe would entrust the curation of its Sacred Pole to the NSHS, exemplifying the relationship of trust established with native peoples during Larry’s tenure.

In 1998, the publication of Nuestros Tesoros: Una celebracion de la herencia mexicana de Nebraska in partnership with the Nebraska Mexican American Commission marked a first step in the recognition of the role of Mexican Americans in the life of the state.

In 2003, a program at the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center, a special issue of Nebraska History magazine, and a traveling exhibit entitled Recovered Views: African American Portraits, 1912–1925 celebrated the African American presence in Nebraska.

Lawrence Sommer’s vision was also statewide. A reading of the NSHS division summaries contained in this report clearly demonstrates that the work of the Society is focused on service to all Nebraskans, wherever they may live and work. Please do take the time to read about our accomplishments during the past year.

Yes, change is typically unsettling, but we have every reason to believe that the transition will be smooth. A new director will bring new ways of performing our services for the people of Nebraska, and there will always be economic challenges to overcome. However, I am confident that the superb staff of NSHS will meet those changes and challenges with the same creativity and professionalism that they have always exhibited. As comedian Gilda Radner commented, “Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment, and making the best of it without knowing what’s going to come next.” I am confident that NSHS will do precisely that.

Patrick W. Kennedy
President
Nebraska State Historical Society
Board of Trustees
FROM THE DIRECTOR

This is my last report to members of the Nebraska State Historical Society. By the time you read this report I will have retired as society director after thirteen years of service to the state and people of Nebraska.

My time as director has been busy, exciting, and rewarding. It has been a special pleasure to work with the superb NSHS staff, among the best in the country. My sincere thanks to all for your excellent work and help.

The Society is well positioned to move forward, building on its recent accomplishments. New facilities include the Ethel & Christopher J. Abbott Visitor Center at the Chimney Rock National Historic Site near Bayard and the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha. A state-of-the-art digital imaging lab at the Ford Center placed NSHS in the forefront of digital imaging of photographs and historical collections. We also oversaw reconstruction of the Cheyenne Outbreak Barracks at Fort Robinson. Renovations of existing facilities and expansion to new quarters include the public records archives facility at the K Street Records Center in Lincoln and the offices, laboratories, and collections storage for the Archeology and Historic Preservation divisions in the Lincoln Children’s Museum building.

Throughout my tenure we emphasized statewide public service and responsiveness to constituents. We improved stewardship of the Society’s historic sites, encouraged creation of innovative partnerships with other agencies, and worked for legislation, passed in 1994, making NSHS an independent state agency.

The Society celebrated its 125th anniversary and sponsored numerous public programs, such as the biennial Fort Robinson History Conference, “The Way West” symposium with Ric Burns, and “Baseball” with Ken Burns. Special issues of Nebraska History focused on Czech history and William Jennings Bryan, supplemented by exhibits at the Museum of Nebraska History. Several new books, ranging from The Nebraska Indian Wars Reader to a two-volume history of Fort Robinson, have also marked a revitalized publications program.

While working to minimize the impact of state budget cuts on staff and programs in recent years, we reduced the Society’s dependence on state tax funding and increased earned income tenfold.

Along with developing a great staff I regard my most important accomplishments to be the settlement of years of litigation over the repatriation of human skeletal remains with the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and the Society’s involvement in the passage of a constitutional amendment and subsequent legislation encouraging historic preservation in Nebraska.

Along the way we also greatly increased the statewide and national visibility of the Society and received several awards including the 2004 Governor’s Arts Award and a regional Emmy award for a documentary film about Solomon Butcher that the Society co-produced with Nebraska Educational Television.

I have truly enjoyed my years as Society director and state historic preservation officer. Thank you for letting me help preserve our rich heritage. And thank you for your continued support of Nebraska’s oldest and largest historical organization.

Director
Nebraska State Historical Society
The Nebraska State Historical Society annually recognizes individuals or organizations for their contributions to the preservation and interpretation of Nebraska history. The 2004 awards were presented October 9 at the Society’s annual meeting and history conference in Omaha.

The Robert W. Furnas Award for significant contributions to the Nebraska State Historical Society went to Ruby Cumming Behlen and family of Columbus for their donation to the Society of the 1958 Walter and Ruby Behlen House in Columbus. The unique structure, made of Behlen corrugated metal panels, reflects the ingenuity and innovation of one of Nebraska’s leading twentieth-century entrepreneurs. The house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The James L. Sellers Memorial Award goes to the author of the best article in the previous year’s volume of Nebraska History. Prof. Randolph W. Baxter of California State University, Fullerton, received the award for his article “‘Homo-Hunting’ in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and the Homophobic Side of McCarthyism.” Judges from the History Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln selected the winning article, and the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation provided a cash prize and plaque to the author.

The Nebraska Preservation Award for outstanding accomplishments in historic preservation went to the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation of Red Cloud for its work in the preservation and restoration of properties relating to the life and work of Nebraska author Willa Cather. Most recently the foundation restored and reopened the Red Cloud Opera House that figured prominently in Cather’s writing.

The Addison E. Sheldon Memorial Award for significant contributions to the preservation of Nebraska history, presented to Dr. Gary E. Moulton of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, recognized his outstanding record of scholarship on the American West, notably his editing of the acclaimed, thirteen-volume University of Nebraska Press edition of The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

The Asa T. Hill Memorial Award recognizing significant contributions to Nebraska archaeology was presented to Herb and Gloria Gibreal of Omaha. The Gibreals have announced their intention to donate the site of the Stephen Long Expedition’s 1819–20 Engineer Cantonment to the Nebraska State Historical Society. Following its discovery by Society archeologists in 2003, the site has yielded important historical and archeological information related to early nineteenth-century exploration, architecture, subsistence, and material culture. The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation supports the award with a cash prize.

History Day: Nebraska awards recognize outstanding student projects in the annual contest. Students from Omaha’s Morton Middle School were recognized for their Junior Division exhibit, The Stephen H. Long Expedition of 1819–1820: Exploration, Encounter, and Exchange in the Trans-Missouri West. The exhibit, produced by Niveditha Rajagopalan, Julia Li, Ope Omojola, and Mark Trost, with the assistance of teacher Judy Kennedy, won tenth place in Junior Division Exhibits and Best of State, Junior Division, at the National History Day contest.
ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

Administration Division Staff
Andrew Amiotte, security guard
Shawn Bachman, maintenance technician
Annie Bolender, custodian
Jerry Cain, security guard
Joan Clare, human resource services coordinator
Marcia Friesen, administrative secretary
Katherine Garland, custodian
Pamela Garland, security chief
Roman Griser, security guard
Lana Hatcher, staff assistant
Ed Heiden, maintenance supervisor
Lynne Ireland, assistant director for program development
Teresa Jacobs, information services manager
Patty Langer, accountant
Colleen Maser, maintenance technician
Deb McWilliams, executive assistant/volunteer services coordinator
Annette Parde, museum store assistant
Troy Park, custodian
Kris Rigs, museum store manager
Jim Salber, custodian
Tony Schmitz, deputy director for operations
Linda Wagaman, accounting clerk
Dick Yost, staff assistant

Standing at the south end of the Fifteenth Street Mall, and built of the same Indiana limestone, the Nebraska State Capitol is framed by the front doors of the Historical Society headquarters building. (Digital composite photo)

The director, as chief executive officer of the Society, implements board policy, administers the budget, and represents the institution to the public and to a variety of funding sources. The director and administrative staff work to provide the personnel and financial resources the Society needs to fulfill its mission. In addition to administration, the Nebraska State Historical Society operates with six major divisions: Museum/Historic Sites, Historic Preservation, Library/Archives, Research and Publications, Archeology, and Conservation. Each division is managed by an associate director who reports to the Society director.

“The Nebraska State Historical Society collects, preserves, and opens to all, the histories we share.”
• Completed and adopted a new strategic plan for NSHS, the result of a year of staff and board involvement. Communication is the overall plan theme; strategies are outlined for communicating resources, communicating needs, increasing public and institutional dialogue, and further developing communications technology.

• Received, with co-producer Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, a regional Emmy award for the documentary “Solomon Butcher: Frontier Photographer,” with subsequent distribution to seventy PBS stations across the country.

• Expanded the Nebraska Institute for Teaching American History to include teachers in the Omaha and Millard Public School districts (underwritten by the districts’ U.S. Department of Education Teaching American History grants).

• Implemented two sessions of a National Endowment for the Humanities-funded teacher training workshop “Shifting Power on the Great Plains: Fort Robinson and the American West.” The project was one of seventeen funded that served teachers nationwide as part of the Landmarks of American History NEH initiative.

• Developed “Hit the Trail to History” brochure and ad series to encourage visitation in the 2005 travel season, and partnered in the Lincoln Convention & Visitors Bureau “Be A Tourist in Your Hometown” summer-long promotion.

• Increased Nebraska resources (photographs, maps, marker text/locations, exhibits, Oral History Primer, county surveys, historic building reports, finding aids, school tour booking, downloadable order forms) on website. Site added to state and local government network.

• Expanded Board of Trustees development through facilitated sessions in April and June, and assisted ad hoc governance committee in drafting revised governance policies.

• Reached agreement on Downtown Master Planning process that requires acquisition and development of an alternate site on Centennial Mall for the Museum of Nebraska History if master plan identification of MNH site for retail development is carried out.

• Coordinated work with Nebraska Legislature leading to passage of four important initiatives: revisions to the Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission; creation of a state archeology office located at NSHS; development of a state cemetery registry; and economic incentives for owners engaged in rehabilitating historic buildings.

At the director’s retirement coffee Larry and Barb Sommer greet the Society’s newest professional staff member, Dr. Sheila Stegler (left), of the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha.
THE LIBRARY/ARCHIVES DIVISION is charged with the collection, management, and preservation of a wide spectrum of published and unpublished documentary materials and provides access to them for the public.

The Society’s library contains approximately 80,000 volumes and includes books, periodicals, newspapers, state publications, and more than 3,000 maps and atlases. In its manuscript collections are the papers of families and individuals and the records of Nebraska businesses, organizations, religious groups, and private educational institutions. The archival collections also include some 350,000 photographs, 6.5 million feet of moving images on film and videotape, and state, county, and local government records of permanent value as mandated by legislative acts of 1905 and 1969. Together, these documents provide vital testimony to the history and culture of Nebraska.

Library/Archives Division Staff

Karlyn Anderson, registrar
Dale Bacon, assistant curator of imaging services
Patricia Churray, assistant curator of public records
Dell Darling, imaging services technician
Cindy Drake, curator of library collections
Paul Elsleffel, curator of visual and audio collections
Andrea Faling, associate director, library/archives
Mary-Jo Miller, assistant curator of reference services
Tom Mooney, curator of manuscripts
Matt Piersol, assistant curator of reference services
Terri Raburn, assistant curator of reference services
Marlene Roesler, assistant curator of library collections
Mary Woltemath, head of microfilming

Tom Mooney (left), Andrea Faling, and Dale Bacon of the Library/Archives division contemplate a workroom overflowing with just a few of 625 boxes of papers relating to the career of Congressman Doug Bereuter delivered to the Society this year.
HIGHLIGHTS

• Assisted more than 5,600 people in the Reference Room; responded to 3,230 research requests by mail; loaned 486 reels of microfilm; filled 635 customer orders for microfilm purchases; produced 3,101 scans in the Digital Imaging Lab.

• Received more than 625 boxes of papers relating to the congressional career of Congressman Doug Bereuter. Other manuscript acquisitions included records of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association (Nebraska Chapter) and the Sokol South Omaha Local History Project.

• Presented the Society’s annual film series. This year’s theme was “Curator’s Choice.”

• Purchased several rare items for the collections including postcards of Chimney Rock and Scotts Bluff Monument from the 1880s and 1890s; Sanborn Insurance maps of Alliance, 1945; “Campbell’s Soil Culture Almanac, 1907”; and “History of the Hall County Whisker Club, May 6–July 5, 1932.”

• Hired a new manuscripts curator.

• Produced new inventories for government records collections of the Department of Administrative Services, Social Services, the Attorney General, several early governors, and the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

• Cataloged 448 new titles and outsourced 2,730 manual records for conversion to automated form, bringing the total number of titles in the online catalog to 36,700 of an estimated 50,000 titles in the library collection.

• Assisted in producing “Capturing the Living Past: An Oral History Primer,” for the NSHS website. This introduction to conducting oral history interviews and projects was funded by a grant from the Nebraska Humanities Council.

• In partnership with the Plains Humanities Alliance and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, provided documents and photographs for a planned website “The Gilded Age Plains City: The Great Sheedy Murder Trial and the Booster Ethos of Lincoln, Nebraska.”

• Gave workshops in Gering and Lexington on archival collection surveys, processing, arrangement, description, and preservation. The workshops were held under the auspices of the Nebraska State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB), and funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). Follow-up site visits were made to eight repositories.

• Relocated the Digital Imaging and Audiovisual Labs to new office space for better workflow and improved use of technology.

• Created an inventory and database of City of Lincoln building permits and drawings, 1904–1985.

• Began projects to add photograph and sound recording holdings to the NSHS website. Funded by grants from the Nebraska Library Commission and the Collaborative Digitization Program (Denver).

• Acquired 117 microfilm reels of Nebraska Public Documents, 1882–1956 in collaboration with the Nebraska Library Commission, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, and the University of Nebraska-Omaha Library. The collection will be digitized for Internet access.

“The Library/Archives Division safeguards the documentary heritage of Nebraska for the use of all.”
MUSEUM/HISTORIC SITES DIVISION

The Museum and Historic Sites Division educates people about Nebraska’s past through historic artifacts and historic places.

The Historical Society’s museums and historic sites are Nebraska’s official and preeminent artifact repositories, holding collections that represent Nebraska’s rich and diverse human experience. The collections are the foundation of the Society’s exhibitions, programs, publications, and educational outreach. The division actively gathers, preserves, researches, and interprets artifacts and sites and provides the broadest possible public access to these resources held in the public trust. Through a variety of media, the division gives people firsthand experience with the physical remnants of past life and the places where Nebraska history was made.

On June 6, 2005, with Chimney Rock as a backdrop, Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman (at podium) formally announces that the Chimney Rock design was selected for the Nebraska state quarter.

Ann Billesbach, associate director for the Museums and Historic Sites Division, talks with Tara Steiner about Willa Cather’s My Antonia for the “Pages in History” program series. Organized by Volunteer Coordinator Deb McWilliams, the series focuses on literary works relating to NSHS collections, sites, and resources.

“Shifting Power on the Great Plains: Fort Robinson and the American West” workshop participants drill under the watchful eye of Bill Gwaltney, an Indian-Wars-era first-person interpreter. The workshop was one of seventeen nationwide funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2004.
Museum of Nebraska History, Lincoln

• Welcomed more than 82,000 visitors to exhibit galleries and historic properties. The division’s web pages were accessed more than 370,000 times.
• Accessioned 263 objects from 59 donors.
• Instituted a project to microfilm donor records.
• Implemented a project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services to photograph, update catalog information, and upgrade storage for the firearms collection.
• Entered into an agreement with the Omaha Tribe to store the tribal collection.
• Acquired loans for NSHS exhibits from the American Philosophical Society, State Historical Society of Iowa, University of Kansas, Union Station Kansas City, University of Nebraska State Museum, and International Quilt Study Center.
• Worked with other agency collection departments to update the Society’s collection policies and improve the NSHS collections data management computer system.
• Senior Museum Curator Deb Arenz chaired a nationwide committee to update The Revised Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging.
• Developed several temporary exhibits including Beadwork Masterpieces: Native American Bandolier Bags of the Prairies and Lakes, Engineer’s Cantonment (for the 2004 NSHS Annual Meeting), two new rotations of quilts in Patchwork Lives, and an upcoming exhibit featuring unique and unusual items from the NSHS collections.
• Provided design and publication services for many publications including the Historical Newsletter, the Volunteer Newsletter, Nebraska Trailblazer, brochures, flyers, invitations, signs, maps, cards, posters, and other material supporting Society programs.
• Maintained and updated the Society’s website.
• Installed a variety of exhibits.
• Made repairs to structures and fabricated furnishings at historic sites.
• Worked with the state 309 Task Force to replace the HVAC system at the Neihardt Center.
• Coordinated presentation and videotaping of twelve “History Forum” brown bag lectures.
• Participated in the planning and implementation of the 8th annual Nebraska Institute, a two-week teacher training program, in partnership with Nebraska Wesleyan University and the Lincoln Public Schools.
• Museum docents volunteered 1,086 hours and gave 314 tours to 12,000 visitors.
• Mailed 51 student educational packets and 73 educational leaflets, responded to 56 requests for educational material, and filled orders for 63,013 Nebraska Trailblazers.
• Loaned traveling educational trunks to Educational Service Units, individual schools, home schools, and community groups.

“The Museum/ Historic Sites Division educates people about Nebraska’s past through historic artifacts and historic places.”
• Managed the installation of historical markers in Lancaster, Hamilton, Howard, Valley, and York counties.

**Chimney Rock National Historic Site, Bayard**
• Welcomed 280 visitors for the “Sunday Afternoon at the Rock” lecture series.
• Celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Ethel & Christopher J. Abbott Visitor Center.
• Hosted 100 people on June 6 to hear the Governor name Chimney Rock as the design for the new state quarter.

**John G. Neihardt State Historic Site, Bancroft**
• Was the site for Neihardt Day and the Neihardt Spring Conference.
• Held nine successful “Sunday Afternoon at the Museum” events.
• Installed a new memorial garden bench at the Prayer Garden.

**Thomas P. Kennard House, Nebraska Statehood Memorial, Lincoln**
• Welcomed forty-five tour groups.
• Gave tours of the house decorated in a “Victorian Holidays Past” theme to 194 visitors.

**Fort Robinson Museum, Crawford**
• Conducted twenty-five tours of the post grounds.
• Gave five presentations to special groups.

• Furnished the reconstructed 1874 Cavalry Barracks.
• Acquired a collection of nineteenth century photos of the Eighth Infantry including views of the post.
• Curator Tom Buecker was featured on the History Channel’s documentary, “The Death of Crazy Horse.”

**Senator George Norris State Historic Site, McCook**
• Provided tours of the house to school groups, ESU administrators, and Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy.

**Neligh Mills State Historic Site, Neligh**
• Provided tours to 459 students.
• Was featured in KTIC Television’s 2005 calendar.

**Willa Cather State Historic Site, Red Cloud**
• Received the Nebraska State Historical Society’s Nebraska Preservation Award for its restoration of the Red Cloud Opera House.
• Was the site of the premier showing of the Nebraska Educational Television film biography, “Willa Cather: The Road is All.”
• Hosted participants for the Willa Cather Foundation’s Spring Festival and 50th Anniversary Celebration.
• Was the site for portions of the 10th International Cather Seminar.
• Welcomed numerous visitors as part of “One Book/One State: Nebraska Reads My Antonia.”

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Crazy quilt by Clarissa Palmer Griswold, 1886. From the Museum of Nebraska History's *Patchwork Lives* exhibit. Clarissa Palmer moved onto her Sioux County claim in 1886. Wildflowers growing around her cabin inspired the quilt. Palmer was the mother of Nebraska Governor and US Senator Dwight Griswold.
THE RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS DIVISION publishes the Society’s quarterly, Nebraska History, and conducts research leading to publication of books, archeological reports, and interpretive booklets about the history of Nebraska and the Great Plains. The division provides editorial services to other Society divisions, compiles the “Nebraska Timeline” column provided weekly to Nebraska newspapers through the Nebraska Press Association, and helps organize special programs and conferences. The division also administers the Society’s research grant program.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Published four issues of Nebraska History quarterly; introduced major redesign elements through 2004 and in the spring 2005 issue.
- Published six issues of Historical Newsletter.
- Distributed “Nebraska Timeline” columns to newspapers throughout the state.
- Collaborated with the Archeology Division to produce The Search of Engineer Cantonment, a booklet tracing the discovery of the site of the 1819–1820 winter camp of Major Stephen Long’s Scientific expedition.
- Contributed research assistance and on-camera commentary for Solomon Butcher: Frontier Photographer, a television documentary co-produced with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications. The program won a regional Emmy.
- Helped organize and conduct “An Evening with Ken Burns, America’s Greatest Story Teller” in conjunction with the NSHS Foundation and other NSHS divisions.
- Assisted with grant writing, planning and execution of two sessions of “Shifting Power on the Great Plains: Fort Robinson and the American West,” a national teacher-training workshop funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- Collaborated with the Library/Archives division and the Museum of Nebraska History to mount and interpret a headquarters building rotunda exhibition.
- Collaborated with the NSHS Foundation in fundraiser/friendraiser activities across the state.
- Participated in Nebraska Institute teacher training workshops.
- Participated in Nebraska History Day activities.
- Completed final editing and indexing of the Eli Ricker tablets soon to be published in two volumes as Voices of the American West (Vol. 1: Eli S. Ricker’s interviews with Native Americans, 1903–1919; Vol. 2: Eli S. Ricker’s interviews with Euro-Americans, 1903–1919) by the University of Nebraska Press.
- Continued work on the essays, illustration, and design for publication of a major book based on the Omaha World-Herald William Quesenbury Sketchbook.
- Collaborated with other NSHS divisions, Nebraska Libraries (UN-L) and the UN-L History Department to develop and mount an interactive web site on Gilded Age urban issues, based on “The Great Sheedy Murder Case,” an article first published in Nebraska History.
- Awarded two $1,000 research grants, one to Prof. Mark Ellis of the University of Nebraska at Kearney for research on the Nebraska State Penitentiary 1870–1890, the other to Tom White of Lincoln for research on western author Frank H. Spearman (1859–1937), a McCook resident.

Research & Publications Division Staff
Debra Brownson, publications designer
John Carter, senior research historian
Donald B. Cunningham, associate director; editor
Patricia Gaster, assistant editor
Richard E. Jensen, senior research anthropologist
David Murphy, senior research architect
James E. Potter, senior research historian; associate editor
“The Research and Publications Division promotes research leading to a better understanding of the history and culture of Nebraska and its people, and disseminates the results.”

- Participated in the NSHS Marketing Workgroup.
- Participated in the NSHS Public Programs Workgroup.
- Participated in “Weird Nebraska” Workgroup (exhibit scheduled for 2006).
- Contracted with the University of Nebraska Press to publish Pawnee Mission Letters, edited correspondence of the first mission to the Pawnee Tribe of Nebraska.
- This is My Story, edited pioneer reminiscences first published in early issues of Nebraska History, was accepted for publication by University of Nebraska Press.
- Completed initial research for a book on Indian agent Albert L. Green’s stories and illustrations for children.
- Completed editing a translation of the Civil War letters of August Scherneckau of the First Nebraska Volunteer Regiment. Scherneckau, of Hall County, was with the First Nebraska Volunteers 1862–1865.
- Completed the basic research for a book on Nebraska and the Civil War.
- Presented an illustrated intuitional history of NSHS to the NSHS board of trustees and began development of a Power Point program for use by board members.
- Participated in grant writing for a Nebraska Humanities Council Scholar-in-residence grant in association with NHC’s touring exhibition Key Ingredients. Research & Publications staff will serve as traveling scholars.
- Participated in planning and as faculty for the Omaha Public Schools “Teaching American History” workshop.
- Participated in Nebraska National History Day competition.
- Participated in the NSHS Foundation-sponsored “History Mystery” fundraiser.
- Presented History Forum brown bag lectures at the Museum of Nebraska History; made numerous other presentations at locations around the state.

In April 2005 retiring senior research anthropologist Richard Jensen was honored for his thirty-five years of service to the Society. A prolific scholar, Jensen is editor of the two-volume *Voices of the American West*, the interviews of Eli S. Ricker, to be published in 2005.
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The State Historic Preservation Office promotes the preservation and enhancement of the cultural resources of the state of Nebraska.

On June 1, 2005, Gov. Dave Heineman (center) signed LB66 into law. Among those present were Historic Preservation Division members Bill Callahan (left) and Bob Puschendorf (right), NSHS Director and State Historic Preservation Officer Lawrence Sommer (third from left), and Senator Don Pederson (fourth from right), the sponsor of LB66.

The State Historic Preservation Office administers Nebraska’s historic preservation program under the National Historic Preservation Act. The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Board is advisor to the program, which includes the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, archaeological surveys, the National Register of Historic Places for Nebraska, review of federal undertakings, and assistance to developers of historic rehabilitation projects qualifying for federal tax incentives. The National Park Service certifies participation in federally sponsored historic preservation programs and provides grant funding for office operations, local government preservation programs, and survey projects. Beginning January 1, 2006, the office will administer a statewide program to encourage the preservation of historic buildings through a property tax assessment freeze. The State Historic Preservation Office also participates in legislative studies, statewide planning, and interagency cooperation.

**State Historic Preservation Office Staff**
- Bill Callahan, historian
- Jill M. Ebers, preservation historian
- Teresa Fatemi, staff assistant
- Linda Hein, staff assistant
- John Hitt, program assistant
- Jennifer Little, staff assistant
- Greg Miller, preservation historian
- L. Robert Puschendorf, associate director, deputy state historic preservation officer
- Lawrence J. Sommer, state historic preservation officer
- Terry Steinacher, preservation archeologist
- Stacy Stupka-Burda, preservation archeologist

“...promotes the preservation and enhancement of the cultural resources of the state of Nebraska.”
**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Provided non-political information and technical assistance to “Friends of Amendment One,” a steering committee promoting a constitutional amendment clearing the way for passage of LB66 in the State Legislature. Property owners now may apply for a temporary “hold” on the increased value of assessed property taxes from improvements made to historic properties.

- Funded Certified Local Government (CLG) historic preservation programs in Lincoln, Red Cloud, and Omaha.

- Assisted in development of preservation ordinances in Sidney and Plattsmouth.

- Conducted or participated in more than fifty public outreach information and education meetings statewide.

- Co-sponsored the Nebraska Lied Main Street Program in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Nebraska Department of Roads, Nebraska Community Foundation, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Architecture.

- Participated in interagency efforts with the Technical Assistance Review Process (TARP) housing partnership, Nebraska Department of Roads, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Division of Travel and Tourism, and USDA—Rural Development and Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.

- Commented on 1,396 federal undertakings for potential effects on historic and culturally significant properties in collaboration with federal agencies and grant recipients.

- Completed survey projects in Cass and Nemaha counties.

- Initiated survey projects in Dawes and Sioux counties, including an historic context on the history of ranching, an evaluation of the Warbonnet/Montrose site in partnership with the National Forest Service, and a study of the Spotted Tail Trail.

- Processed the entry of twenty properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

- Completed archeological surveys for more than 3,500 acres in the Bow Valley area of Cedar County.

- Initiated a survey of sites associated with the Ponca Tribe in Knox and Boyd counties and an archeological district in Cheyenne County.

- Processed five applications for historic preservation tax incentives projects.

- Participated in the 2004 “Nebraska Institute: Teaching Nebraska History and Culture through Social Studies and the Humanities” in partnership with Nebraska Wesleyan University and Lincoln Public Schools.

- Participated in the National Endowment for the Humanities “Landmarks in American History” teacher training program in partnership with Lincoln Public Schools and Nebraska Wesleyan University.

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**State Historic Preservation Board**

Fredric Alley, chair, North Platte
Melissa Connor, vice chair, Lincoln
Lawrence J. Sommer, secretary, Lincoln
Patrick Kennedy, president, NSHS Board of Trustees, Omaha
Janet Jeffries Beauvais, Crete
Bill Chada, Grand Island
Walter Duda, Omaha
George Haecker, Omaha
Nancy Haney, Lyman
Jim McKee, Lincoln
Catherine Renschler, Hastings
Marianne Simmons, Fremont
The Archeology Division is in the unusual position of providing services to government agencies (primarily the Nebraska Department of Roads and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation) under various historic preservation laws. Projects financed by these outside agencies provide a significant portion of the division’s budget.

This year’s two major projects began in previous fiscal years: Excavations at Engineer Cantonment north of Omaha (with NDOR), and the rehousing and recataloging of archeological collections for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The division also conducted excavations at a Native American village affected by a housing development and identified and evaluated several archeological sites and architectural resources that could be disturbed by transportation projects.

Increasing use of cutting-edge technology—such as ground-penetrating radar, electronic mapping, and Geographic Information Systems—has kept the division abreast of the latest new methods for exploring the past.

A bill authorizing creation of a State Archeology Office passed by the state legislature will give the division and the Society greater oversight of state-funded construction projects.

Archeology Division Staff
René Botts, curator of anthropology/collections manager
Rob Bozell, associate director/highway archeologist
Gayle Carlson, curator of anthropology
Melissa Dirr, highway architectural historian
Michelle Furby, administrative assistant
Amy Koch, curator of anthropology/highway archeologist
John Ludwickson, curator of anthropology/highway archeologist
Trish Nelson, curator of anthropology/highway archeologist
John Swigart, curator of anthropology/highway archeologist
Kelli Bacon, archeological technician
Ben Koziol, archeological technician
Andy Moore, archeological technician
Tony Schommer, archeological technician
Karen Steinauer, archeological technician
HIGHLIGHTS

• Accessioned material from sixteen Bureau of Reclamation collections; cataloged over 164,000 objects.
• Completed processing material from Engineer Cantonment and began cataloging.
• Processed twelve loans for student and professional researchers from Nebraska and elsewhere.
• Presented lectures to thirteen public or school groups.
• Fielded more than 150 inquiries from the public regarding various aspects of Nebraska archaeology.
• Guest lectured at seven University of Nebraska classes in Omaha and Lincoln.
• Provided archeological fieldwork experience to several groups of students from the Omaha.
• Edited the journal Central Plains Archeology.
• Eight volunteers put in about seven hundred hours of fieldwork, data entry, and laboratory work.
• Made presentations to the Nebraska Teachers Institute.
• Presented papers at the Plains Anthropological Conference in Billings, MT.
• Prepared reports on investigations at the McIntosh site in Brown County and the Sidney-Black Hills Trail in Dawes County.
• Participated in a multi-tribal consultation sponsored by the American Association for State and Local History and the National Museum of the American Indian.
• Prepared a pamphlet on the Engineer Cantonment project for the Explore Nebraska Archeology series.
• Participated in the taping of an episode about Engineer Cantonment for the PBS show “History Detectives.”
• Evaluated more than 250 NDOR projects for potential effects on National Register-eligible sites. More than fifty sites and architectural properties were recorded and evaluated.
• Recorded 190 previously unknown Euro-American and Native American archeological sites.
• Participated in seventeen investigations at the State Patrol crime lab or with various other law enforcement agencies.
• Welcomed twenty-three visiting archeology scholars.
• Conducted more than seventy site file and literature searches for outside researchers.
• Continued excavations at Engineer Cantonment, the 1819–1820 winter camp of the Stephen Long Expedition.
• Conducted salvage excavations of a late prehistoric village at a housing development in Saunders County.
• Made test excavations at four central Nebraska Native American sites potentially affected by transportation projects.
• Repatriated tribally unaffiliated Native American human remains inadvertently discovered in 2003–2004 to the Nebraska Indian Commission for reburial.
• Received $186,000 from the Bureau of Reclamation for cataloging Bureau archeology collections.
• Renewed Nebraska Department of Roads Cooperative Agreement for the Nebraska Highway Archeology and Historic Architecture Program.
• Increased our staff by 30 percent through contract funding awarded by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Nebraska Department of Roads.

“The Archeology Division preserves, enhances, explores, and interprets Nebraska’s archeological resources for the benefit of the public and the advancement of science.”
SERVICES PROVIDED by the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha include consultation, assessment of collection condition, assessment of conservation needs, educational and training opportunities, and the specialized conservation treatment of collection materials.

HIGHLIGHTS

• Accepted more than 155 new projects for conservation treatment, including an Augustus St. Gaudens sculpture, a samurai sword, and a document signed by Abraham Lincoln.

• Completed conservation treatment of more than 375 objects including Lewis and Clark related documents; Art Nouveau chandeliers; a gilt cartel clock; works by artists Miro, Dalí, and Caitlin; artifacts from the Midwest Archeological Center; the N. P. Dodge family scrapbook; a first edition of Gulliver’s Travels; Indian ledger drawings; and objects from the steamboat Bertrand shipwreck.

• Completed conservation work for the Beadwork Masterpieces and the Patchwork Lives exhibits. Continued to treat artifacts from the Engineer Cantonment site.


• Completed collection surveys for the George Washington Carver National Monument and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore National Park.

• Wrote a successful grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a $550,000 grant to establish a paintings conservation laboratory at the Ford Center.

• Continued work on the Institute of Museum and Library Services grant-financed project to document and rehouse the Museum of Nebraska History’s gun collection; hired a technician for the project.

• Consulted with the Omaha School for the Deaf, the Durham Western Heritage Museum, the Joslyn Art Museum, and the Trinity Cathedral Museum.

• Consulted with the International Quilt Study Center design and building project at UNL.

• Worked with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications on a grant application to the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to fund the production of a one-hour television special on conservation.

• Worked with a film crew for the PBS program “The History Detectives” to film, photograph, and document conservation and archeological activities at the Ford Center.

• Completed a one-year project to document space and housing needs at the Museum of Nebraska History.

• Consulted with the Archeology Division on safe excavation and conservation of Engineer Cantonment artifacts; treated many of the objects.

• Taught a textile care workshop for the Nebraska Museums Association and a cemetery monument conservation workshop with the National Park Service and NCPTT. Hosted the American Institute for Conservation “Adhesives for Conservators” instructors workshop.

CONSERVATION DIVISION

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• Completed a one-year project to document space and housing needs at the Museum of Nebraska History.

• Consulted with the Archeology Division on safe excavation and conservation of Engineer Cantonment artifacts; treated many of the objects.

• Taught a textile care workshop for the Nebraska Museums Association and a cemetery monument conservation workshop with the National Park Service and NCPTT. Hosted the American Institute for Conservation “Adhesives for Conservators” instructors workshop.
“The Conservation Division conserves and preserves the cultural, historical, and educational collections of Nebraska and the region.”

**Conservation Division Staff**

- Peterson Brink, conservation technician
- William Duly, conservation technician
- Farideh Fekrsanati, objects conservator
- Megan Hewett, summer intern
- Tara Kennedy, paper conservator
- Deborah L. Long, objects conservator
- Lisa Metzer Grobian, administrative coordinator
- Kristin Pluhacek, administrative coordinator
- Julie A. Reilly, associate director/chief conservator
- Vonnda Shaw, conservation technician
- Sheila Fairbrass Siegler, head of paper conservation laboratory
- Mark Smith, facility maintenance technician

- **Vonnda Shaw, conservation technician at the Historical Society’s Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha, wraps an object on a high shelf. The Ford Center is working with the museum staff in Lincoln to improve storage conditions at the Museum of Nebraska History.**

- Hired new paper conservator, Dr. Sheila Fairbrass Siegler, to head the Paper Conservation Laboratory.
- Continued cataloging the Ford Center library’s collection of conservation and preservation related titles.
- Continued work on a book on Preventive Conservation for Historic House Museums funded in part by a Kress Publication Fellowship from the American Institute for Conservation.
- Coordinated the writing and design of a Nebraska Trailblazer on conservation and preservation.
- Served on the Heritage Preservation Board, the Association of Regional Conservation Center Directors, the Regional Alliance for Preservation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities/George Washington University Distance Learning Advisory Committee.
- Gave more than twenty special tours of the Conservation Center, the Ford Exhibit, and the Digital Imaging Lab.
- Hosted seventeen events in Paxson Hall.
- Participated in more than forty private consultations and answered hundreds of public inquiries and letters on the care and preservation of collections.
- Rehabilitated the Ford Center garden and landscape plan.
- Scanned more than fifty historic documents and photographs for institutions in Nebraska and the surrounding states.

- **Presented lectures, and public programs; trained docents and volunteers; made presentations at the AIC Annual Meeting and for the Nebraska Public Art Commission.**
- Assisted with educational programming concerning Amendment One.
THERE IS NO SIMPLE COMPOSITE PICTURE of the typical Nebraska State Historical Society volunteer. They range from high school students through retirees and include college students, graduate students, and men and women from all walks of life. The only common denominator is a shared desire to lend their skills—and donate their time—to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Nebraska History.

HIGHLIGHTS

• Contributed a total of 8,007 hours to the Nebraska State Historical Society.
• Enjoyed a volunteer appreciation at Nebraska Educational Communications (NET) and a bus trip to sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail.

Dick Young, an NSHS volunteer, works with a now-obsolete projector helping to prepare archival film for transfer to DVD. Volunteers contributed more than eight thousand hours to Society projects.
NSHS volunteer Sherry Melecki assists a customer in the Museum Store. Volunteers are vital to the Society and contribute to the work of every division in Lincoln, Omaha, and historic sites throughout the state.

Joyce Hannawald, Library/Archives
Nancy Haney, Historic Preservation Board
Evelyn Hastings, Museum Docent
Deb Heinrichs, Historic Preservation
Gladi Helm, Museum Docent
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Eleanor Miller, Research and Publications
Laurel Miller, Neligh Mill
Phil Miller, Library/Archives
Polly Mohatt, Archeology
Carole Montgomery, Museum Docent
Cynthia Monroe, Library/Archives
Marge Moore, Museum Store
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Bev Wilhelm, Board of Trustees
Sue Williams, Library/Archives
** Financial Report

Fiscal Year Operations 2004–05

Based on preliminary year-end information. Excludes fiscal year accruals.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Tony A. Schmitz
Deputy Director for Operations

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**Total Revenues**

$6,042,641**

- Earned Income $1,019,639 (16.88%)
- Research & Publications $391,772 (6.70%)
- Federal Grants & Contracts $974,541 (16.13%)
- Donation, Grants, & Special Events $23,191 (.38%)
- NSHS Foundation Support $166,871* (2.76%)
- Conservation $500,450 (8.55%)
- Archeology $798,700 (13.65%)
- Historic Preservation $727,724 (12.44%)
- Library/Archives $827,703 (14.15%)
- Administrative Services $1,307,289 (22.34%)
- Museum/Historic Sites $1,297,341 (22.17%)
- State Appropriations $3,858,399 (63.85%)

**Total Expenditures**

$5,850,981

*In addition to the figure above the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation provided direct support in the amount of $47,790.

** The large variance between revenues and expenditures is a function of federal advances and the difference between state and federal fiscal years.
In 2004 Nebraska celebrated the anniversaries of three events that demonstrate the central role of the state in American history. Two hundred years ago Lewis and Clark journeyed here beginning the process of making America a continental nation. One hundred fifty years ago the Kansas-Nebraska Act created the Nebraska Territory, striking the spark that burst into the flames of the Civil War. One hundred years ago the Kinkaid Act made it possible for homesteaders to claim enough land to begin settling the Nebraska Sandhills.

In celebration of these anniversaries, filmmaker Ken Burns came to Lincoln on November 20 to support the Nebraska State Historical Society’s work in spreading those stories. Burns's films, including The Civil War, The West, and Lewis and Clark, made him singularly appropriate for this event.

In his remarks that night, he told of visiting the New York Library with Vartan Gregorian, the library’s former president. During their tour of the stacks, Gregorian remarked, “This is the DNA of our civilization.” Burns told his Nebraska audience, “I think he was saying that that library and, indeed, all true libraries, archives, historical societies, and educational institutions—the grist, by the way, for our films—are the DNA of our civilization, storing what we value most in our country, leaving a memory of excellence and intention for generations to come. And when we behold the rich history of service of the Nebraska State Historical Society, we must certainly include this great institution in the DNA of our society.”

Burns graciously waived his usual fee that evening as a gift to the Historical Society and the NSHS Foundation in recognition of the value of the two organizations. Burns knows the Nebraska State Historical Society well and has long been a patron, having used more resources from this institution than from any other in the United States.

Often we take for granted things that constantly and often quietly surround us, and the Nebraska State Historical Society may be one of them. Ken Burns’s visit and his praise remind us of the great work being done by the Society and the Foundation.

In this annual report you have read of the many ways the Society searches for and shares our history. Often those goals can be accomplished only with the help of private funding—like yours. On the following pages we honor and thank those who have helped us this year to capture and tell the stories of the artifacts, pictures, documents, and people of our state—the DNA of Nebraska.

Thank you for your help this year to make it possible for the Nebraska State Historical Society to learn more and share more about our great state.

Allison D. Petersen, President
Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation

“The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation works to provide private funding to support the increased understanding and appreciation of Nebraska history.”
Stewards of Nebraska History
Perpetually recognizes individuals and organizations for generous gift leadership totaling $50,000 or more, including contributions of cash and property made during or after lifetime or a commitment for future support at this level.

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