Nebraska is a special place. Its residents have recognized this for centuries, going all the way back to the first peoples who hunted across its hills and planted corn and beans along the rivers. It is a place of timelessness where grasslands and rich agricultural soils persist through the wet and the dry years.

But Nebraska can also change quickly, sometimes within a few moments. Think of tornadoes and other disasters, or the changes brought about by business and the daily life of human society. Both brands of change—the long and the slow, and the short and the quick—impact the presents and the futures of the people who live here.

The role of the Nebraska State Historical Society is to gather and document those changes, and to offer that historical record to today’s people and to those who will come after us. Without that history, Nebraska would be adrift in an ever-changing present, a world with little-known precedents or context.

In 2009-2010, the Nebraska State Historical Society has worked hard to provide essential historical services for our fellow Nebraskans and others from around the world who seek information on our place and its people. We have continued the updating of our headquarters building in Lincoln, creating a modern place for the record of Nebraska. We have served our audiences with exhibits, historic sites, educational programming, teacher training, historical markers, publications, archeological and historic preservation services, and professional conservation of cultural objects belonging to public entities and private individuals. We have fought to save important historical and architectural structures, broadened our reach with Facebook and new social network tools, responded to thousands of inquiries in areas ranging from genealogy to where those first peoples of Nebraska made camps and built villages.

The NSHS appreciates the support of the people of Nebraska through tax dollars, memberships, and contributions. We applaud our partners including the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation, local historical organizations, and a wide variety of public and private organizations which have complementary missions. As always, we strive to ensure that no Nebraskan, today or in the future, will be without the context of the past as they seek to live in this place of continuity and change. Thank you.

Cheryl L. Clark
President

Michael J. Smith
Director/CEO
Headquarters Renovation Nears Completion

The 2009-2010 fiscal year saw the NSHS Headquarters project advance to near completion. The reference room reopened in March 2010, and the project will be complete by September 2010.

In the building’s most extensive renovation since its opening, contractors removed all the asbestos, added a sprinkler system, built emergency exits and new stair towers, improved handicapped accessibility, cleaned and tuck-pointed the building’s limestone exterior, and replaced the 1953 heating and air conditioning system.

The renovation will be completed at a cost of $5 million, 20 percent less than anticipated.

The building’s improvements are important, but mostly not very visible. But a new art installation in the headquarters rotunda will have an exciting visual impact. Under a state statute known as One Percent for Art, 1 percent of the renovation cost for public art will fund Chicago-based artists Adam Brooks and Mathew Wilson in creating a work titled “The Idea of History,” which will use the curved glass surfaces of the rotunda display windows to prompt inquiry about how we come to understand the past. The new work will be unveiled at noon on September 18 as part of the headquarters rededication.

NSHS on the Web

To connect more people with more Nebraska history resources, the NSHS continues to expand our Internet presence. Fascinating facts, intriguing stories, and remarkable images mined by NSHS staff from our rich collections are just a click away on our blog (blog.nebraskahistory.org). Links can help you drill deeper into our extensive online collections. Hundreds of NSHS Facebook fans can now get instant notification of the latest posts and upcoming events. Readers can comment and ask questions, and have even helped us identify an unlabeled historic photograph.

Videos of our popular Brown Bag History Forum lecture series are now online on YouTube. We’ve provided digital access to several Nebraska newspapers through the Chronicling America website (http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov) in partnership with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

New resources at nebraskahistory.org include many Nebraska History articles, some complete issues, and museum objects and photographs which can be searched with our new PastPerfect database. More than 500 finding aids for manuscript collections have been created this fiscal year alone.

“Landmark Store” Opens in Capitol

The NSHS has established a presence in Nebraska’s seat of government and best-known architectural landmark. Working with the Office of the Capitol Commission, the NSHS opened the Landmark Store inside the Nebraska State Capitol on December 15, 2009.

 Located on the south side across from the café on the ground level, the store features items on a variety of Nebraska themes, including the state’s history and government, and the Capitol’s remarkable architecture.
Lieutenant Governor Rick Sheehy cuts the ribbon at the Landmark Store at the State Capitol. Left to right: NSHS Director/CEO Mike Smith, Patty Hill, Deb McWilliams, Lieutenant Governor Sheehy, Leah Hruska, and Capitol Administrator Robert Ripley.

NSHS Annual Awards

People who have made history by helping preserve the past are recognized annually by the NSHS. The 2009 awards were presented September 18, 2009, at the NSHS annual meeting in Lincoln.

Allison Petersen, Walton, won the Robert W. Furnas Memorial Award, which recognizes “outstanding contributions or assistance” to the NSHS. The judges cited her “dedication, quiet commitment, hard work, and continued support of the NSHS Foundation.”

The Asa T. Hill Memorial Award recognizes “an individual or organization for an outstanding research project or interpretation of an archeological site or sites in the field of Great Plains archeology.” The award, which includes a $300 cash prize, went to Duda Farms, LLC, of Omaha, in recognition of their preservation of the Cabanne trading post site, as well as other archeological resources in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Preservation Award recognizes significant achievements in historic preservation and this year went to the Nebraska Transportation Program of the Nebraska Department of Roads. Since 1994, the program has become the largest single grant funding source for historic preservation in the state, accounting for nearly $24 million in more than 100 historic preservation and historic or scenic byways projects.

The James C. Olson Memorial Award is given to a Nebraska teacher for excellence in guiding students to discover the histories we share. The winner was Suzanne Ratzlaff of Hampton. Her fourth-graders at Heartland Community Schools in Henderson explored a local cemetery and published their research on the people buried there in Memories of Farmers’ Valley.

The James L. Sellers Award is given to the author of the best article in the previous year’s issue of Nebraska History. Judges from the University of Nebraska at Omaha selected Todd Guenther of Lander, Wyoming, for his essay, “The Empire Builders: An African American Odyssey in Nebraska and Wyoming” (Winter 2008). The award includes a $1,000 cash prize from the NSHS Foundation, through support of Catherine Sellers Angle.

The Addison E. Sheldon Memorial Award honors “outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation in the field of Nebraska history.” The winner was Dr. Sara Crook of Peru State College, codirector of Peru State College’s Trails and Tales Tour and Institute, an interdisciplinary history and literature project for in-service teachers. She has directed the college’s History Day for the past twenty-four years, serves on the Nebraska Humanities Council and the Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission, and has a long record of work with the NSHS, where she served as president 1999-2001.


Cornhusker Council Scout Executive Rene Monarez and his family with Senator Ben Nelson at the opening of The Boy Scouts of America, 1910-2010: Celebrating the Adventure—Continuing the Journey, an exhibit at the Nebraska History Museum. In addition to special events like this one, 9,000 students participated in docent-led tours of the museum during the past year.
NSHS Fiscal Year 2010 Operations

Revenues

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Appropriations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earned Income &amp; Membership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Grants &amp; Contracts</td>
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<td>NSHS Foundation Support</td>
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<td>Donations, Grants &amp; Special Events</td>
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<td>Nebraska Capital Construction Fund</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
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Expenditures

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<td>Museum and Historic Sites</td>
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<td>Archeology</td>
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<td>Research and Publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headquarters Renovation Project</td>
<td>33.37%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$9,797,192.59</strong></td>
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Michelle Furby, Chief Financial Officer

Hands-On Learning for Teachers at Fort Robinson

Educators from across the nation gathered at the Fort Robinson National Historic Landmark this past summer for an innovative teaching workshop called “Shifting Power on the Plains: Fort Robinson and the American West.” The NSHS facilitated the workshop in partnership with Nebraska Wesleyan University. Funding was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency, via a grant to Nebraska Wesleyan University.

The workshop demonstrated how the use of historic places, artifacts, photographs, manuscripts, documents, and the wisdom of elders enriches our understanding of the past. Educators learned from master teachers, scholars, authors, and archeologists. They visited historic places such as the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre and the Red Cloud Indian School (both in South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Reservation), and immersed themselves in the history of Fort Robinson itself.

As with our other annual workshops, the Fort Robinson sessions enabled teachers to return to their classrooms and ignite their students’ curiosity about history, creating a more knowledgeable generation of young people, with the capability of accepting future roles as civic and community leaders.

Conservation Division

Murals painted by Grant Wood, metal objects retrieved from a sunken steamboat, and Native American bead and leatherwork are just a few of the significant historic and artistic works treated by conservators at our Ford Conservation Center in Omaha. Objects and paintings conservators consulted with individuals and institutions from across the region on ways to improve collections care. Funding from the Peter Kiewit Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities to the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation provided continuing support to the Paintings Conservation lab.
NSHS Volunteers

Sharing their passion for history, volunteers with a wide range of skills are vital to our continued work.

“Volunteers at the Nebraska History Museum have a unique opportunity to tell the exceptional stories of our state to the thousands of visitors that come through our doors,” writes Nebraska History Museum docent Mary Lienemann. “Many of these visitors are schoolchildren, but there are also senior citizens coming to relive the World War II years, immigrants on a quest to learn about their adopted state, and the public at large wanting to expand their knowledge of our state.” Lienemann enjoys telling “the important stories that help us to understand what is significant to Nebraska and how we have become a vital and thriving state.”

Students, retirees, and working adults contributed a total of 5,060 hours of service, an estimated value of $105,501.

* Dee Adams
  Anna Allison, Landmark Store, Museum
  Scott Arganbright, Library/Archives
  Eric Bachenberger, Kennard House
  Jason Bassett, Archeology
  Clark Bates, Norris House
  Lynn Beranek, Museum Brown Bag Camera Operator
  Tiffany Branum, Landmark Store, Museum
  George Bray, Museum Docent
  Brittany Brooks, Archeology
* Walter Brooks
  Leonard Buchholz, Administration
  Letha Buchholz, Administration
* Ken Burger
  Patricia Callies, Landmark Store, Museum
  Kathleen Cannon, Archeology
* Nancy Carlson
  Walter Case, Museum Docent
  Jack Chaffin, Museum Docent/ Kennard House
* Cheryl Clark
  Pat Cole, Museum Collections
  Floyd Counts, Fort Robinson Museum
  Alexander Carver, Museum Docent/Investigation Station
  John Dietrich, Archeology
* Paul Demers
  Fae Dunn, Neligh Mill
  Dorene Ezentraeger, Landmark Store, Museum
* Nancy Gillis
  Anthony Epp, Library/Archives
  Jack Farrall, Museum Docent
* Phyllis Fischer, Museum Docent
  Nicholas Fogerty, Archeology
  Judy Frederick, Landmark Store, Museum
  Carol Gale, Landmark Store/Capitol
  Suzy Giannobile, Library/Archives, Research & Publications
* Nancy Gillet
  Vince Goeres, Library/Archives
  Lori Gottula, Landmark Store, Museum
  Sheila Green, Museum Education Workshops
  William Gustafson, Museum Brown Bag Camera Operator
  Marilyn Hadley, Landmark Store, Capitol
  Janine Hall, Norris House
  Veldron Hall, Norris House

* Nancy Haney
  John Hansen, Jr., Investigation Station/Docent
  Marclee Hengenrader, Museum Docent
* James Howitt
  Donna Hinkley, Museum Docent
  Tracy Hoffman, Museum Collections
* Dan Holtz
  Don Humphrey, Museum Docent
  Jean Johnson, Library/Archives
  Chuck Jones, Library/Archives
  Samantha Karas, Museum Education Workshops
  Roger Keetle, Museum Education Workshops
  Jim Kendrick, Museum Docent
* Kay Kimberly
  Jennifer Klein, Museum Investigation Station
  Dean Knight, Museum Education Workshops
  Billie Lefholtz, Kennard House
  Laura Lembes, Historic Preservation
  Mary Lienemann, Museum Docent, Kennard House
  Nina Little, Ford Center
  Brendan McCauley, Library/Archives
  Darla McClanahan, Museum Education Workshops
  Robert Meininger, Library/Archives, Museum Collections
  Linda Meyers, Landmark Store, Museum
  Marty Miller, Library/Archives
  Cynthia Monroe, Library/Archives
  Kaci Nash, Library/Archives
  Irene Nedved, Museum Store
  Kari Nelson, Museum Education Workshops
  Loreelee Novak, Museum Docent
  Linda Oehlerking, Museum Docent
  Rich Oehlerking, Museum Docent
  Nancy Ofe, Neligh Mill
  Julie Olson, Kennard House
  Elaine Peters, Museum Docent
* Robert Peters
  Bob Peterson, Museum Docent & Investigation Station
  Bob Pettit, Museum Collections
* Pat Phillips
  Larry Pierce, Museum Docent
  Rachel Plessing, Research & Publications
  Kathy Plessman, Museum Docent
* William Pratt
  Sean Putnam, Kennard House
  Richard Quinn, Library/Archives
  Mary Raberberg, Library/Archives
  Carole Riese, Landmark Store, Museum
  Mac Sawyer, Museum Docent
* John Schleicher
  James Schurr, Research & Publications
  Jenna Schutz, Museum Investigation Station
  Gladys Shafer, Kennard House
* Sheryl Schneckpeper
  Rogene Silletto, Landmark Store, Museum
* Elizabeth Spilinek
  Clark Springman, Museum Brown Bag Camera Operator
  Heather Stauffer, Museum Collections
  Terri Steadman, Library/Archives
  Marcia Stewart, Library/Archives
  Paula Stone, Museum Education
  Penny Stovall, Museum Docent
  John Strope, Museum Brown Bag Camera Operator
  Donald Swing, Museum Docent
  Duane Tappe, Norris House
  Lynn Thom, Museum Investigation Station
  Jerry Tharp, Museum Docent
* Roger Wehrbein
  Lisa Westerholt, Library/Archives
* James Whitaker
  Karen Windhusen, Museum Docent
  Mickey Winter, Library/Archives
* David Wishart
  Dan Worth
* Audrey York
  Lowell Zetterman, Museum Docent
* NSHS Board of Trustees
* State Historic Preservation Board
State Historic Preservation Office

Surveying historic resources across 77,000 square miles is no easy task. Neither is storing information about thousands of historic places and making it accessible. But the Nebraska Historic Resource Survey and Inventory identifies sites, districts, cultural places, and landscapes worthy of preservation. These form the basis of the office’s programs. More than 72,000 properties, representing all Nebraska counties, are to be included in a major geographic information system. Digitizing research files and some 150,000 photographs is also underway to ensure long-term electronic preservation.

Technical assistance and grants to local government historic preservation programs allow communities to preserve and promote historic places at the community level, where preservation efforts are most effective. The SHPO awarded five grants to local governments this fiscal year.

A major survey of archeological properties for the Maple Creek watershed in Dodge, Cuming and Platte counties included over 7,000 acres of onsite fieldwork. Such broad-scale surveys locate sites and inform planning for their preservation.

Sixteen properties were entered in the National Register of Historic Places. They include downtown Omaha office buildings, a historic farm in Merrick County, a National Guard armory in Kearney, and the Walthill home of Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte of the Omaha Nation.

More than 3,300 federal projects were reviewed to identify historic and archeological impacts—twice as many as last year, due to the federal economic stimulus package.
Archeology Division

Research, reporting, cataloging, and preserving archeological resources filled this fiscal year. A final report on a Nemaha County archeological site, believed to be a seasonally occupied late prehistoric camp or hamlet, was sent to the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Recovered materials indicate hunting-related activities by the site’s occupants, who were also processing wild plant resources and corn.

Construction of a temporary fabric structure at the site of Engineer Cantonment, north of Omaha, protects an open excavation of the recently discovered well-preserved remains of the 1819-20 winter quarters of Maj. Stephen Long’s scientific expedition to the Rocky Mountains. This nationally significant site is owned by the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation. Report preparation continues.

Volume 12 of Central Plains Archeology (journal of the Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists) features a detailed report on emergency salvage excavations conducted by NSHS staff and volunteers at the Eagle Ridge housing development and golf course near Papillion. Construction uncovered the remains of what may have been an early eighteenth century seasonal encampment or small Native American village. Little was previously known about this type of site in Nebraska.

Staff finished cataloging and rehousing archeological collections acquired in Nebraska by the Bureau of Reclamation. This five-year project involved nearly 75,000 associated records and more than 308,000 artifacts.

Nebraska History Museum

Nebraska native John Falter, called “America’s most gifted illustrator” by Norman Rockwell, was known for his book and magazine illustrations—including more than 185 covers for the Saturday Evening Post. The contents of his studio were donated to the NSHS; this past year, the NSHS hired a full-time intern to catalog, digitize, and organize this extensive collection. The results are now available to all through our online database. Thanks to the NSHS Foundation for helping the Nebraska History Museum make one of the Society’s best-loved collections more accessible.

A two-year project to improve storage for our Native American collection was funded by a Save America’s Treasures grant, private donations, and the NSHS. Over 2,500 objects from fourteen different tribes were cataloged, cleaned, conserved, digitized, and placed in proper storage mounts. This collection, now better preserved, is also completely searchable through our online collections database.
Research and Publications

The quarterly Nebraska History News grew from eight to twelve pages. NHN now includes feature articles about historical topics in addition to news and events.

Book publishing continues:

Here You Have My Story: Eyewitness Accounts of the Nineteenth-Century Central Plains, edited and with an introduction by Richard E. Jensen (NSHS retired), was published by University of Nebraska Press. The book presents first-person narratives published by the NSHS between 1885 and 1919.

The Pawnee Mission Letters, 1834-1851, edited and with an introduction by Richard E. Jensen, was published by University of Nebraska Press. The book presents the letters of the Rev. John Dunbar and Samuel Allis, missionaries to the Pawnee in Nebraska.

Wings Over Nebraska: Historic Aviation Photographs, by Vince Goeres, with Kylie Kinley and introduction by Roger Welsch, will be published by the NSHS in Fall 2010. Goeres is a longtime volunteer; Kinley is an intern.


Library/Archives

Two Lincoln Flying School photo albums from the 1920s; missionary William Hamilton’s collection of sermons in the Omaha language and English, and a hymnal in the Omaha language; a stereoview by William H. Jackson of a group of Pawnee chiefs and warriors; and Life and Speeches of William J. Bryan, inscribed by Bryan, were added to the collections. Over 585 cemeteries were added to the Nebraska Statewide Cemetery Registry.

More public access results from catalog information on more than 47,000 titles, 80,000 volumes, 63,000 photos and documents becoming available in digital format. Our Digital Imaging Lab produced 7,149 scans this year.

Naturalization records of Colfax, Pawnee, Sioux, and Wayne counties, and—because of interest created by the Ken Burns film The National Parks—the Edward and Margaret Gehrke travel diaries (1909-1939) were microfilmed. A new microfilm reader/printer was purchased for the Reference Room with funding from a donor.

Three new research guides: A Place in History: Researching Your Nebraska Property; Probate Records Research; and Guide to Czech Sources are now available.

And Away We Go! An ‘On the Road’ Film Series, hosting the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International’s Research Day during that organization’s annual symposium, and presenting a Nebraska Archives Week program, “Native American Genealogy Research and Resources,” expanded public exposure to Library/Archives resources.

Over the past year Nebraska History News expanded, while Nebraska History has covered wide-ranging topics such as woman suffrage, the transformation of downtown Omaha, and the Civil War diary of Nebraska cavalaryman Pvt. August Schemneckau.

The Reference Room reopened March 9, 2010, after being closed for more than a year due to construction. More than 1,600 patrons were served onsite in the next three months in addition to more than 2,800 mail requests answered throughout the entire year.