

## **Historical Society of Iowa, State**

*David E. Crosson, administrator; 600 E. Locust St., Des Moines 50319; 515/281-8837*

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The 71st General Assembly created the State Historical Society of Iowa in 1986 as the historical division of the Department of Cultural Affairs. The State Historical Society had formerly operated as the Iowa State Historical Department, created in 1974 by consolidating the State Department of History and Archives, the State Historical Society, and the State Historic Preservation Program. The 1974 act assigned each agency divisional status within the department, and each retained a separate director. Centralized departmental administration was established in 1982, with the position of executive director appointed by the governor. Under the 1986 Act, the administrator of the State Historical Society is appointed by and reports to the director of the Department of Cultural Affairs, who in turn is appointed by the governor upon confirmation of the Senate.

The State Historical Society of Iowa was founded in Iowa City in 1857. In 1892 Charles Aldrich organized the State Historical, Memorial and Art Department in Des Moines as a state agency. This agency was renamed the Iowa State Department of History and Archives in 1939. From their inception, these two historical organizations operated independently, each financed by a separate state appropriation. A third state historical agency, the Historic Preservation Program, came into existence following the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Iowa became a full participant in the national historic preservation effort in 1972, and two years later the state's Historic Preservation Program was given divisional status with the Historical Department's organization.

Under the 1986 act, the State Historical Society has reorganized all of its functions, formerly comprising nine divisions, into four bureaus: Historic Preservation, Library and Archives, Museum, and Membership Development. The State Historical Society now functions as the sole statewide historical organization for Iowa. A new State Historical Building was opened in 1987. The new building is located between Grand Avenue and Locust Street, one block west of the State Capitol.

As stated in Chapter 303, *Code of Iowa*, the department's mission is to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, inventory, and promote to the public an awareness of local, state, and regional history. The State Historical Board of Trustees advises the society's administrator on divisional programs and procedures. The State Historical Board of Trustees consists of seven members, three elected by the membership for three-year terms, one elected per year, and four appointed by the governor. Of the gubernatorial appointees, two must be either professional historians or archaeologists, and two are selected at large to represent the general public.

### **Library and Archives, Bureau of**

*Nancy Kraft, bureau chief; 402 Iowa Ave., Iowa City 52240; 319/385-3916*

Combined libraries of the State Historical Society contain more than 200,000 cataloged items including county histories, genealogical reference books and journals, government documents, cemetery records, and maps. Approximately 20,000 bound volumes of newspapers and well over 20,000 reels of microfilmed newspapers and census materials are available. The society's historic photograph collections contain more than 250,000 images documenting the visual history of the state. In addition, a rich manuscript collection provides original historical research material — personal papers, letters, diaries, and records of organizations, businesses, and individuals — which chronicle the development of the state. The State Archives collects, arranges, describes, conserves, and makes available to the general public and state agencies all official state records open by law that possess sufficient historical value to warrant permanent preservation. It consists of 16,500 cubic feet of records, which are available for public use in the archives reading room and will soon be moved to the new historical building. The archives staff provides advice to the public and state agencies on document preservation. It also advises county and municipal governments on all aspects of records management.