

State Historical Society of Iowa

RUSSELL M. ROSS, President of the Board of Curators.
PETER T. HARSTAD, Director.

Board of Curators

Elected by the Society — A. W. Allen, Cedar Rapids; Mrs. Charlene Conklin, Waterloo; Robert Dykstra, Iowa City; Margaret Keyes, Iowa City; Robert L. Larson, Iowa City; Edward W. Lucas, Iowa City; Marion R. Neely, Iowa City; Dean Oakes, Iowa City; Richard Thomas, Mt. Vernon.

Appointed by the Governor — Herbert V. Hake, Cedar Falls; Mrs. Gaillard Heflin, Harlan; Philip D. Jordan, Burlington; George Mills, Des Moines; Russel M. Ross, Iowa City; Mrs. Dorothy Schwieder, Ames; Mrs. David O. Shaff, Clinton; W. O. Weaver, Wapello; Dean Zenor, Iowa City.

The State Historical Society was established by law at Iowa City in 1857. Its policies are established by the Board of Curators. The institution is supported by its members, by a state appropriation, and by gifts and grants. Many senior citizens are enrolled among the 8,599 members.

According to the Code of Iowa, the State Historical Society exists for the purposes of "collecting and preserving materials relating to the history of Iowa and illustrative of the progress and development of the state; for maintaining a library and collections, and conducting historical studies and researches; for issuing publications, and for providing public lectures of historical character, and otherwise disseminating a knowledge of the history of Iowa among the people of the state." Despite this broad mandate, in recent years the institution has used its available resources primarily to serve library users and to publish a popular magazine of Iowa history.

The library contains over 100,000 cataloged items, 11,000 bound volumes of newspapers, 6,000 rolls of microfilm, plus sizeable manuscript, pamphlet, and picture collections. Current surges of interest in family history, genealogy, state and local history have combined to place heavy demands upon the library.

The **Palimpsest**, designed to interest people from many walks of life, is published six times a year. **News For Members**, an informal newsletter about the Society and its activities, appears quarterly. In past decades many scholarly publications have appeared under the Society's imprint in book and journal form. Efforts are under way to revitalize these functions.

Two sites distant from Iowa City are administered by the Historical Society. These are the Gardner Log Cabin (location of the "Spirit Lake Massacre" of 1857), and the Toolseboro Mound Group (a Hopewell burial site near Wapello). The former is on the National Register of Historic Places; the latter is a National Historic Landmark.

Environmental legislation is creating new concerns for the historical society. The State Highway Commission and other agencies request information and services on a regular basis. An historical specialist on the society staff is concerned with site-oriented historical matters as well as liaison with local, state, and federal organizations.

Sufficient resources are not currently available for the tasks of soliciting items "illustrative of the progress and development of the state...conducting historical studies and researches...providing public lectures of historical character," and developing markers for historical sites — all of which responsibilities are imposed by law.

The full-time staff is comprised of a director, three members of the library staff, an editor, an historical specialist, and two office workers. Several part-time, seasonal, college-work-study, and volunteer workers give valuable assistance.

State Library Commission of Iowa

A 1973 Act created a library department which includes the State Library, formerly the Iowa State Traveling Library, the Law Library, and the Medical Library, under one State Library Commission of Iowa. The executive head is the state librarian, appointed by the commission. The commission consists of the supreme court administrator, one member of the medical profession, and three members selected at large, appointed by the Governor.