

Lincoln as the Home of State Institutions

Nebraska State Capitol Building from the South



Being the capital of the state, Lincoln naturally is the home of many of the state institutions. The most important, of course, is the state house, because it is the seat of government and which bears the distinction of having more inmates who desire long terms than any other state institution.

The executive head of the government of the state is Governor John M. Morehead, now serving his second term. Under him and serving in the different departments of state are: Charles W. Pool, secretary of state; George E. Hall, state treasurer; William H. Smith, state auditor; A. O. Thomas, state superintendent of public instruction; Willis E. Reed, attorney general; Fred Beckmann, commissioner of public lands; Henry T. Clark, chairman, and H. G. Taylor and T. L. Hall of the State Railway commission. Each has charge of the different departments of the state as his designation indicates.

The judicial department is composed of the supreme court judges, seven in all, with three supreme court commissioners and a clerk of the court. Chief Justice Andrew J. Morrissey of Lincoln is at the head of the court, with John B. Barn of Norfolk, Charles B. Letton of Fairbury, William B. Rose of Lincoln, Jacob Fawcett of Omaha, Samuel H. Redgwick of York and Francis G. Hamer of Kearney as associate justices. The judges are all required to live in Lincoln during their terms, which are for six years each. Each judge receives \$4,500 a year.

In addition to these, there are three supreme court commissioners, which have been recently appointed by the governor for a term of two years, under a special act of the last legislature. These are Grant G. Martin of Lincoln, F. O. McGirr of Beatrice and W. C. Parriott of Auburn. These commissioners will also be required to live in Lincoln and will draw a salary of \$3,000 each per annum.

The clerk of the supreme court is Harry C. Lindsay, who is also state librarian, and has charge not only of the records of the court, but of the state library.

The legislative department consists of thirty-three members, who compose the senate, representing twenty-eight districts, while the house is composed of 100 members, representing seventy-seven districts. A session of the legislature is held every two years and through these bodies all appropriations for the maintenance of the state and its institutions have to pass.

The coming year and the one to follow will be important ones for the state historical society, because the state is looking to it for a proper observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the statehood of Nebraska. Already plans have been started, largely through the efforts of its president, John Lee Webster, of Omaha, and its secretary, Clarence B. Paine, of Lincoln, and with these two gentlemen taking the lead the right kind of a celebration is assured.

The society has been doing a grand work toward the perpetuation of the history of Nebraska. It has been done under conditions that have at times been most discouraging. Somehow the people of the state cannot be educated into the belief that the safety of records and the keeping up of those things which have been connected with its early history are of much importance and year after year these records and relics have been allowed to lie almost unprotected, a negligence on the part of the past legislatures which is almost criminal.

Other states have gone to large expense to prepare these old historical things which had so much to do with their early history. Other states have recognized the efforts of their historical societies and have come forward with funds to carry on the work and protect the valuable records from destruction from fire and the other elements of nature, but Nebraska legislatures so far have turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the officers and friends of the historical society and every day valuable relics and priceless documents are liable to destruction.

The Nebraska Historical society is located at the state university in one of the buildings and the basement has been given over to it for its use. Here, under the supervision of Secretary Paine and the assistance of his helpers, the work of the society is carried on. Under circumstances which would try the patience of a saint, Secretary Paine has gone ahead doing the best he can and overcoming difficulties which have loomed up at times like mountains. When assistance was needed it was only necessary to appeal to the president, Mr. Webster, and some way was always found to get around the mountain. Sometimes, it was General Webster's pocket book which rendered the assistance, but more generally it was his good sound judgment and advice which enabled the secretary with his own will and energy to surmount the difficulties.

And so the officers and friends of the society are living on in hopes that some day, before the last old historic relic has fallen to decay because of no protection from the elements, and the valuable books and papers have turned to dust, that some good friendly legislature will make an appropriation large enough to house the remains and make up for the mistaken economy of the past.

Nebraska State Penitentiary.
Many changes have taken place at the Nebraska state penitentiary since the advent of Warden W. T. Fenton, in charge of that institution. Warden Fenton has been a strong advocate of the parole and trusty plan, and when a prisoner has shown by his acts that he was entitled to parole, he had a chance to go before the pardon board and state his case. When a prisoner shows he can be trusted, the warden has given him the right to go out without being under the care of a guard, and thus putting men upon their honor has done much to help conditions at the penitentiary, and, as a result, the men have gained much by it. In the more than two years that the trusty system, as laid down by the warden, has been in practice, only one convict has escaped.

Warden Fenton believes in the proposition of lots of exercise for the men, and with that end in view has organized a base ball league from the material within the walls, and has constructed a diamond on which the games are played. This has given the prisoners plenty of exercise and plenty of excitement, and all has tended to help things at the big stone building.

Many changes have taken place in the prison in other ways. The legislature appropriated money enough so that the prison has been reconstructed to a large degree. Those who have not visited the institution for a year would hardly know

it upon reaching the inside. The old chapel room is now used as a place to display the samples of furniture and other goods manufactured by the state. One of the neatest and cosiest "opera houses" in the west has been constructed on top of the cells of the old cell house. Heretofore this space was simply used as a sort of storage place, but now a bridge has been built from the old chapel across to the top of the cage, the room painted, the windows curtained and a fine stage, 28 by 20 feet, built in the east end of the room, with dressing rooms, just like a real theater. The seating capacity of the room is about 600. A fine up-to-date motion picture machine has been installed, and on days when there is nothing doing, the curtains are pulled down and the room is lark enough for the pictures.

The old bake shop and dining room is now fixed up and used for a school room, where several classes receive instruction at a night school. The new dining room building is one of the most up-to-date in the country. The building is a two-story affair, 132 feet long and 70 feet wide, and will seat 600, though but 338 are being fed there now, the other 232 feet being taken up for the kitchen and bake shop. The second floor is fitted up as a hospital, while in one end is an open porch for tubercular patients, where they can get the full benefit of fresh air and at the same time be away from the other patients.

A new green house has been constructed, 23 by 30 feet, the work all being done by the prisoners themselves, and the planting done by them. Newest ideas in ventilation have been placed in the building and, take it all around, the green house is a work of art and a beautiful affair.

Take it all around, the Nebraska penitentiary would appear to be the very last word in efficiency, and to Warden Fenton is due the very fine conditions which exist in the "house of the shut-ins."

State Insane Asylum.
Nebraska has three of these institutions, one at Norfolk, one at Hastings and the other situated in the capital city.

The institution situated in Lincoln about two miles southwest of the city, has a capacity of something over 700 patients, the June report showing that 713 were being treated under the supervision of Dr. B. F. Williams, the superintendent, and his assistants, Dr. Pillsbury, Dr. Griffith and Dr. Halle Ewing.

During the last year to accommodate the increasing demand for room a sleeping porch was built in connection with



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the main building which accommodates about thirty patients.

The last legislature appropriated \$30,000 for the erection of an addition to the hospital to accommodate the increasing number of patients and work will be begun upon it immediately.

The institution is well equipped to take care of the patients and the ample grounds connected with the institution give plenty of room for exercise.

Orthopedic Hospital.
This is an institution of the state in which every man and woman should be interested in for it is here that the little crippled children are cared for and treated so that those who go there incapable of walking, with crooked limbs and deformed bodies, are made to walk and run and the poor twisted bones made straight.

Many a child which came into this world seemingly a hopeless cripple is now walking about enjoying the privilege of other people, because they have been inmates of this hospital and have come under the master touch of Dr. H. Winnett Orr and his corps of able assistants and nurses.

During the last year the state has completed a fine addition or rather main building to the old hospital costing about \$45,000.

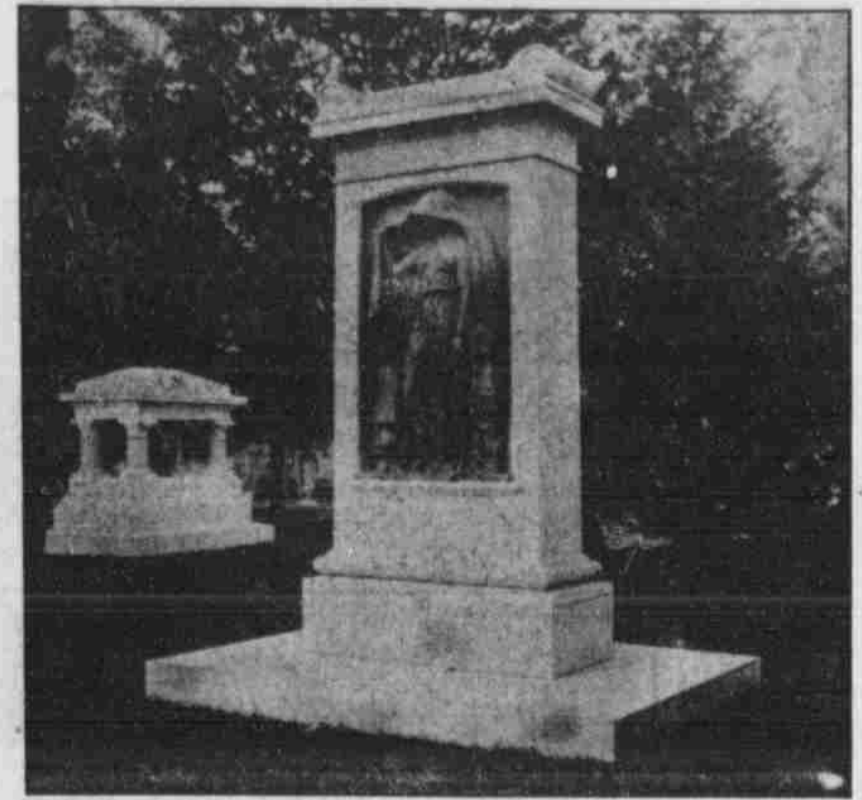
It is equipped with all the modern facilities needed for the work of straightening limbs and at the present time 126 little children are being treated while

about fifty officers, nurses and other attendants are employed to look after their comfort and see that the best is given them. This may not be the day of miracles but Dr. Orr and his family of assistants at the orthopedic are performing deeds in the way of making the lame walk and the poor cripples leap for joy which come very nearly under the miracle head.

Home for Dependent Children.

This is an institution which has recently "risen from the ashes," its former home having been burned to the ground during the last year and the legislature saw fit to appropriate funds with which to purchase ground near the Orthopedic hospital on which a new building is being erected, costing about \$25,000, to which the poor unfortunate children of the state who have no homes will be taken, cared for and new and comfortable homes provided for them.

The home is under the supervision of Miss Etta Eaton, its superintendent, who has the assistance of five other ladies in taking care of the boys and girls. At the present time the home has 226 children under its care. Of these 146 are out in homes on trial where, if they prove satisfactory, they will be adopted. About seventy are boarded out in homes where they receive good treatment and the state pays for their board. In the temporary home which has been provided since the fire, five or ten children are kept at the present time.



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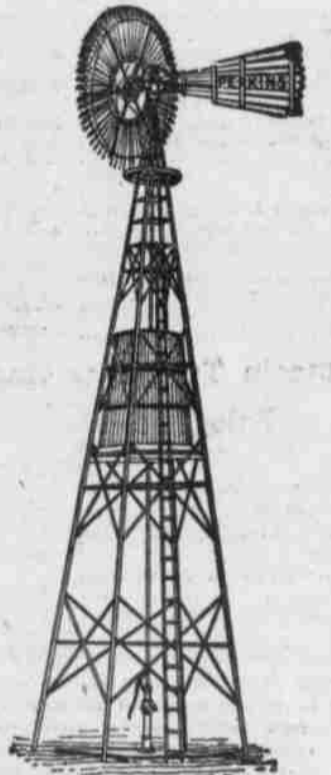
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