



David Hooper, manuscript curator for the Nebraska Historical Society, describes documents given by Union Pacific Railroad.

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Railroad's gift rich in history

A "significant" collection of historical railroad documents has been donated to the Nebraska State Historical Society by the Union Pacific Railroad, according to Manuscript Curator David Hooper.

"The records will be rich in material for history and railroad researchers," said Hooper. He suggested that when the manuscripts are available for study, they will be valuable for undergraduate students working on papers, graduate students working on theses and writers researching books.

The records consist primarily of correspondence known as the New York-Boston Papers. These concern the construction of the first continental railroad and date from 1863 to 1893, according to a Historical Society release for *The American Archivist* magazine.

The New York-Boston Papers deal with government regulations, natural resource development, land policy, state and national politics, community building, labor history and technological development.

The archives also include correspondence from such historical personalities as Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan, Brigham Young, James Garfield and Jay Gould. The collection also contains correspondence from Charles Francis Adams Jr., president of the Union Pacific Railroad from 1884 to 1890; papers of the contractors for construction of the railroad and

records relating to the railroad and industry, 1894.

The gift is "the most important archival collection received by the state of Nebraska during this century," according to Marvin Kivett, Historical Society director. Kivett said other states were competing for the collection.

The Nebraska Historical Society was chosen by the UP because of "their professionalism and their plans for preservation of the material," said Union Pacific Vice President C. Barry Schaefer at the official presentation in Omaha Jan. 15.

"The volumes ... promise to shed light on practically every aspect of American life in that period," said Schaefer, adding, "there is material for studies of economic, social, and political forces of the time as well as major personalities of the time."

The collection has been kept in Union Pacific vaults in Omaha and has not been open to the public. Robert Athearn's *Union Pacific Country*, 1971, was the first scholarly use of these documents, according to the Historical Society release.

Manuscripts will not be available to the public until they have been prepared and microfilmed, Hooper said. He estimated the processing would take a year, explaining that the collection includes volumes of letterpress material averaging 400 to 500 pages, as well as thousands of individual documents.

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