NEBRASKA INTERSTATE 80 BICENTENNIAL
SCULPTURE PROJECT

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
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By

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In 1973, the citizens of Nebraska embarked upon the Nebraska I-80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project, which provided large roadside sculptures along Interstate 80. A controversial project, referred to as an outdoor sculpture garden, it was completed in 1976 as a lasting commemoration of America's Bicentennial. The sculptures are interspersed for approximately five hundred miles throughout the state and located on alternate sides of the expressway at roadside rest areas.

This report relates the history of the project from its inception in 1973 to the dedication ceremonies in 1976 and the significance of the series of eight sculptures which were created under the supervision of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation. The Sculptures are free-standing works of art, non-objective in style, and were created by eight American sculptors as a result of a nation-wide competition. Artists were asked to relate their works to the theme "Horizons," one of the Bicentennial themes which indicated looking ahead to the future of America. Funds for the Project came from the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, National Endowment for the Arts, Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska business firms (the largest contributor), and local communities.
One hundred twenty-one artists submitted proposals including materials, scale, cost, commission, and statements of willingness to fulfill the artists-in-residence requirements. After elimination by two separate panels of art experts, ten artists and several alternates were selected. State-wide controversy about the Project culminated in final approval by the Nebraska State Unicameral Legislature in January, 1976. Aspects considered the most antagonistic were (1) the non-objective nature of the works; (2) monetary concerns of the project; and (3) none of the participants were Nebraska Sculptors.
PREFACE

A unique and controversial outdoor sculpture garden was created during the decade of the 1970's known as the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project. The original idea was conceived in 1971, plans were effected through the Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (NARBC) and the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation (NIBSC), and the sculptures were completed in 1976 as a lasting commemoration of the American Bicentennial. The plan facilitated the creation and placement of outdoor sculptures at eight roadside rest areas on I-80 Interstate Highway, a thoroughfare which passes completely through the state of Nebraska in an east-west direction. The sculptures were interspersed throughout the state and located on alternate sides of the expressway. They literally create a sculpture garden approximately 500 miles long.

The non-objective works were made by eight contemporary American sculptors who focused on the category "Horizons," one of the themes established by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA)--a theme which related to the future of America. There was widespread controversy in the state about the expenditure of money for the purpose of a sculpture garden, particularly sculptures having non-representational style. Discussion and controversy still
abound, even though the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature voted to accept the works in 1975; they were installed at specific rest stops in 1976. Dedication ceremonies were held on July 4, 1976 for all except "Nebraska Wind Sculpture" at Kearney, which was dedicated on September 10, 1976.

In order to narrate an historical account of the NIBS Project, it was necessary to research pertinent information by consulting with officials of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation (particularly Art Thompson, Executive Director of the Project), personal interviews and letters, taped interviews, telephone conversations, minutes of various meetings and legislative hearings, government documents, newspaper and magazine accounts, and the official files of the Corporation housed at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery in Lincoln.

The subject of the study was the history and significance of the series of eight works of sculpture known as the Nebraska Bicentennial Sculpture Project, located along I-80 Interstate Highway in Nebraska. The subject of the study is a valid one, because the NIBS Project was a significant contribution to the Bicentennial celebration of the United States in 1976, particularly in view of the fact that many individuals were involved--involvement was an aspect which the ARBA stressed.

The following was written by members of the Corporation:

The most important aspect of the Project, other than the sculpture itself, has been the involvement of people. In developing the concept, gaining acceptance
and completing the sculptures and artist-in-residence programs, many organizations, agencies of government, businesses and individuals have been involved.

The Project itself has national importance because of its location; Nebraska is equi-distant from east to west, and north to south, in the United States. The sculptures are accessible to numerous motorists, Nebraskans and others, since I-80 is a major highway.

It was an unusual, major project of the fine arts, and, hopefully, a permanent one, which has not been comprehensively researched at this time. Also, the study may pave the way for other research concerning similar, contemporary sculpture projects.

Additional information of historical significance was studied concerning United States government support of the arts, appropriate as background material for the NIBSC Project; in some cases, comparisons (either similarities or differences), could be made. A chronology of government and the arts was compiled as well as a chronology of the NIBSC Project. Of a more contemporary nature, research was conducted in order to discover comparable projects of highway sculpture.
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CHAPTER I

CONCEPT, THEME, AND FUNDING OF THE NEBRASKA INTERSTATE 80 BICENTENNIAL SCULPTURE PROJECT

"Take an original idea, add enthusiasm and the yeast of imagination. What do you get? A project that almost boggles the mind in its scope and magnitude--a 480-mile-long Nebraska Sculpture Garden" (5).

Concept of a Sculpture Garden

The original idea to place sculpture along Interstate 80 was conceived in 1971 by Thomas A. Yates, an executive of Bankers Life Nebraska and head of tourism for the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce convention committee. As chairman of the Tourism Committee, Yates had been urged by Governor Exon to develop a number of possible ideas in order to attract visitors to the state of Nebraska. The purpose of such a program, which was developed through the Nebraska Office of Economic Development was

... to encourage out-of-state travelers to take two days going through the state by automobile on I-80, rather than the one day that it takes if you drive straight through. In this regard the state had already established an exemplary park-rest stop system along the Interstate (17, p. 1).

Maps and tourist information were fundamental items being given to tourists, but Yates believed something more
spectacular and innovative could be employed. He thought perhaps a giant sculpture of a mastodon placed along I-80 would be a "show stopper" (13). This would be in keeping with the fact that the largest mastodon known to have walked on earth is on display at Morrill Hall on the University of Nebraska campus in Lincoln. His idea was cited as follows:

Tom Yates had a pachyderm of an idea: Why not put a replica of a huge mastodon (an extinct elephant-like mammal) near an interchange on Interstate 80 to attract tourists into Lincoln? After all, what tourist after moving through the wide expanse of Nebraska wouldn't ask himself: "What the heck is a mastodon doing standing outside Lincoln?" Yates made the suggestion six years ago [1971] . . . Little did Yates know that his idea would blossom into one of the most controversial issues in the Cornhusker State's history. . . . "I felt that Elephant (Morrill) Hall on the University of Nebraska campus is one of Lincoln's outstanding attractions. So I suggested the mastodon to attract tourists" (3).

Thomas Yates discussed his idea of large sculpture along I-80 with Norman Geske, Director of Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery (also located at the University of Nebraska Lincoln), who sanctioned the notion. In fact, Geske had already been researching highway sculpture in New England with the thought that a similar endeavor would be feasible on Interstate 80 (3). Since cooperation with the University of Nebraska was desirable for the success of such a plan, Durward Varner, President of the University, was consulted, and he also approved the idea.

During the exchange of ideas among the three men, they proposed that perhaps the sculpture concept could be synthesized with the celebration of America's Bicentennial in 1976.
Various groups and individuals had been discussing possibilities for a spectacular event with which Nebraskans would celebrate the nation's two-hundredth birthday. What would be more noteworthy than a monumental sculpture project? Thus evolved a plan to coordinate highway sculpture with America's Bicentennial, and Yates appeared before the University of Nebraska Bicentennial Committee in May 1973 to discuss a sculpture project much larger in scope than a single mastodon. Yates related the following comments about changes in the concept:

Now that this was developing into a Bicentennial plan, rather than just a plan for one piece of sculpture, the suggestion was made that we place sculpture at several rest stops along the Interstate. At that time there were about twenty rest stops in existence. Norman Geske suggested that if we were going to embark on such a project, that we involve the sculptors in creating their work at the rest stops and in communities near the rest stops all across the state, and that these artists would serve as artists-in-residence in these communities. And so, the idea began to expand and to move in an entirely new direction (18, p. 1).

Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation

Between May and August of 1973, Thomas Yates and Norman Geske presented the idea of rest stop sculptures to the following organizations and individuals, all of whom endorsed the plan: Nebraska Arts Council Executive Committee, Nebraska Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, Nebraska Bicentennial Commission, Nebraska Department of Roads, Governor Exon, and
Nebraska business executives, particularly those from Bankers Life Nebraska and Northern Natural Gas Company (now known as InterNorth). A press conference was held on August 24, 1973, at which time the Project was first announced to the public.

Once the idea of the sculptures as a Bicentennial event became definite, the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation (NIBSC) was formed in the fall of 1973 as a non-profit corporation with headquarters at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery. Members of the Board of Directors for the Corporation were the following: President--Durward B. Varner, President of University of Nebraska; Vice-President--Willis A. Strauss, Chairman of the Board, Northern Natural Gas Company, Omaha; Vice-President--George B. Cook, Chairman of the Board, Bankers Life Nebraska, Lincoln; Secretary-Treasurer--Art Thompson, Executive Director, Bicentennial Sculpture Project; and Board Members--Norman A. Geske, Director of Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska Lincoln, Goldwin A. McLellan, President of Business Committee for the Arts, New York City, Ronald W. Roskens, Chancellor of University of Nebraska Omaha, and Thomas A. Yates, Vice-President, Bankers Life Nebraska, Lincoln (7, p. 1). Although they did not hold the main positions in the Corporation, Yates and Geske formed the nucleus of this group.

Overall purposes of the Project were enumerated by the Corporation as follows:
1. Providing Nebraskans and visitors to the state access to some of the best sculpture of our time outside of museum walls;

2. Providing Nebraskans, through the artist-in-residence program, the unique opportunity of meeting the sculptors, sharing in the creative process and learning more about sculpture; and

3. Contributing to Nebraska's cultural heritage through the installation of ten original contemporary sculptures (11, p. 16).

Organizations for Administering Bicentennial Events

In order for the Nebraska Interstate Sculpture Project to receive approval as an official Bicentennial event, it had to function effectively on both the national and state levels. As early as 1966, the first federal administrative organization for the celebration of the Bicentennial was formed. The 89th Congress constituted the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (ARBC) and charged it to "plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the American Revolution bicentennial" (15). It was intended, in addition, that the Commission would be useful in insuring "a balanced National Bicentennial Program that fosters maximum involvement and assures a geographic distribution of quality activities" (1, p. 1). Thirty-seven members comprised the Commission which
included appointed members of the Senate, House of Representatives, President's Cabinet, and individuals from private life (15).

The Commission, as such, was abolished by the 93rd Congress, which established a new entity on July 11, 1973 known as the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA) (14). The Administration was formed following hearings before the Sub-committee on Federal Charters, Holidays, and Celebrations of the Committee on the Judiciary of which Roman L. Hruska, Senator from Nebraska, was Chairman. Senator Hruska addressed Congress on October 8, 1973, a speech which was printed in the Congressional Record on that date. A portion of that speech referred specifically to the Nebraska Sculpture Project.

A most imaginative step . . . is the proposal to create outdoor sculpture projects at the rest stops along Interstate 80 with the artists involved sharing in the life of nearby communities. This proposal should be called to the attention of all fifty states. It responds to the recognized need to balance the openness of natural beauty in the Interstate system with exposure to artistic expression. For the surrounding communities it means coming to accept art and the artist as integral with daily living and not as luxuries to be experienced in brief escapes from the demands of physical and economic survival.

Our forebears had to exercise a great deal of imagination to fuel their hopes that someday the plains would be rich with signs of civilization. The sculpture and artist-in-residence proposal reflects and reinforces that imaginative spirit. I commend those who conceived it (2, p. 3).

In addition to criteria on the national level, there were requirements for Bicentennial commemorations which were
established by the State of Nebraska, one major controlling entity being the Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (NARBC) organized in 1972. This was the agency which endorsed grants for all official projects, such as that of the I-80 Sculpture Project. Recommendations approved by the Nebraska Commission were forwarded to the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration in Washington, D. C., for final approval.

"Horizons"—Theme of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project

One of the primary considerations before the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation was selection of a central theme for the Project. The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission had established that all commemorations of the Bicentennial which would be nationally recognized as official events must focus around one of three major categories: Heritage—emphasizes the two-hundred years of history which have formed this country; Festival—emphasizes the celebration surrounding July 4, 1976; or Horizons—focuses on the third century of the United States (7, p. 1). The Corporation unanimously agreed to choose the latter classification.

The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission wrote the following philosophical criteria concerning the theme "Horizons":

All our tomorrows begin with horizons. We now live in a "Tomorrow" of which our Founding Fathers may have dreamed but could not foresee. Nor can we today foresee clearly all the tomorrows, but we can dream and work as they did for a future which will benefit "all mankind." The Commission hopes that all communities will devote attention to making travel a pleasurable and widely available experience for the Bicentennial.

Current books, articles and statements reveal widespread interest in and concern about the quality of life in the United States today. There is concern about pollution, about illiteracy, about less than full citizenship for many of our people and about the failure of so many voters to vote. The Commission shares these concerns. It recognizes the difficulties which must be overcome if our air and water are to be cleaned, if the blight of illiteracy is to be removed and if an inclusive electorate exercises the precious privilege of the franchise. It recognizes the competition for financial and other resources which could be applied; there may be confusion about priorities and a lack of will as well as a lack of money. But it is eager to remedy these conditions. It recognizes also that to lend its help and endorsement to all efforts to improve the quality of life in this country, and it hopes that each and every community which seeks new horizons for 1976 will give high priority to such improvement. The future--the new horizon will be ever more challenging but with a rededication to the principles that made this country great, the next one-hundred years can be even greater (8).

It seemed extremely suitable that "Horizons" was selected, since the motto adopted by the Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission was, "A Past to Remember--A Future to Mold" (6). Thomas Yates enlarged upon this idea and its rationale when he wrote,

"Horizons" has to do with the future. . . . These ten works of art are going to be created in the present and viewed in the future. It is worth noting that the sculptors who will be doing the work are living and working in the twentieth century. It is now! FIGURATIVE SCULPTURE (General Grant on his horse) was at its peak in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, but is not what American sculptors are up to today. And so we are not celebrating the past, but the present and the future through the medium of sculpture (19, p. 1).
The philosophy of the "Horizons" theme allowed leeway for abstract designs since the theme itself alluded to an unknown, intangible future which does not require the representation of objects. Even though there were no specific rules that sculptures with realistic subject matter would be excluded, all of the participating sculptors submitted non-objective designs—a point which became very controversial.

Funding

Because this was such an extensive undertaking, it is understandable that a major aspect of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project was a financial one. A portion of the controversy, as well, had its roots in monetary concerns. The largest part of federal support was $100,000 which originated from the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration. (Each of the fifty states received a bequest from this national Administration in order to provide Bicentennial activities.) However, the money was granted from the ARBA to the Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission which, in turn, relayed it to the Nebraska Interstate Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation. A communiqué from official files disclosed,

the [ARB] Administration is the [national] agency that receives all the tax monies and also monies generated by the sale of souvenirs. This money is distributed to projects through the various State commissions (9).

In addition to the original $100,000 grant from the ARBA, a separate one in the amount of $12,500 was made specifically
to the NIBS Project. Guidelines for that portion of the funding were as follows: "Support for any one project may not exceed $25,000; American Revolution Bicentennial Commission funds must be matched at least dollar for dollar from non-federal sources" (16, p. 1).

Also important on the national level was sanction by the National Endowment for the Arts, which awarded $20,000 to the Corporation for use in the Project. The Endowment, with the recommendation of the National Council on the Arts, authorized "the encouragement and coordination of scholarly works and presentations in furtherance of the Bicentennial commemoration" (16, p. 1). Guidelines were as follows:

The American Revolution Bicentennial grants will be made by the National Endowment for the Arts for projects in furtherance of the Bicentennial commemoration which:
-- have national or regional significance;
-- fall within one or more of the three basic American Revolution Bicentennial Commission themes: Heritage '76, Festival USA, and Horizons '76;
-- can be operational during or before 1976;
-- are responsive to the fields served by the National Endowment for the Arts; and
-- are responsive to American Revolution Bicentennial Commission art programs guidelines (16, p. 1).

The Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project qualified for approval and funding by both the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration and the National Endowment for the Arts. The grant from the Endowment was awarded to the University of Nebraska as the qualifying agency to be used by the Corporation.
The Nebraska Arts Council donated $2,500 in state funds, a grant which was made to Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, for use in its art education extension program. Official format of all state Arts Councils prohibits giving grants to projects such as the NIBS Project since a non-profit organization had not been formed at this time, but money was allowable in order to promote quality art education. Consequently, Sheldon Gallery provided educational experiences which paved the way for better understanding of the sculptures created for the NIBS Project, as explained by the following:

Norman Geske, Director of Sheldon Gallery, and Rinehold Marxhausen, Professor of Art at Concordia College in Seward, will hold public sessions on sculpture in each of the host communities. The sculptor-in-residence in each community will be the third panel member at each meeting. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss sculpture--its history, and development; how to look at it, what to look for, and the sculpture being completed in the community. It will provide an opportunity for Nebraskans to learn more about sculpture in general as well as the pieces being done in Nebraska (7, p. 1).

In addition, Sheldon Gallery played an integral part in the total event, since it provided space and personnel for administration of the Project.

The biggest financial disappointment of the Project occurred at the state level. An item of $150,000 had appeared in the original proposed budget for the Project as a contribution from the Nebraska Arts Council. Legislative Bill 610, passed in the 1975 session, specified this amount be granted to the Corporation and used in whatever capacity the Corporation deemed feasible. The Unicameral passed this bill by a
wide margin. However, in view of adverse criticism of the sculptures which was communicated to Governor Exon, he vetoed the appropriation, and the Legislature sustained the Governor's veto (9). Original plans for the Project were to construct twelve sculptures in separate rest stops. When this anticipated $150,000 was not available, scope of the plan was immediately diminished to ten pieces.

The most sizeable contributions came from Nebraska businesses and individuals. A total of $340,000 was raised in this category. Three business men were in charge of fund-raising in this classification. They were, Willis Strauss, Omaha, President and Chairman of the Board of Northern Natural Gas Company (now known as InterNorth); George Cook, Lincoln, Chairman of the Board of Bankers Life Nebraska; and Leo Daly, Omaha, President of Leo Daly and Sons architectural firm (12). These people recruited funds from firms throughout Nebraska.

In addition, there was in-kind funding from Nebraska communities which totalled an undetermined amount, but was in excess of $50,000. This was an important facet of the Project since it was grassroots funding. Room and board, transportation, materials used in construction and placement, and numerous incidental expenses were supplied by individuals in host-cities. Cited entries of this type were such items as "Concrete work for Von Ringelheim by Beatrice Construction Company; use of pick-up truck for Padovano by Joe Dye Company; cor-ten steel for Raimondi by Hansen Building Specialties; and storage space
for limestone for Graves by Miller Seed Company" (10). Such entries relate the diversity of the in-kind funding that was prevalent. One of the Chamber of Commerce executives wrote, "A significant part of this program will be the stimulation of an effective partnership between private business, city and state government and the University community" (4).

Major funding was as follows: Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (from ARBA through NARBC), $100,000; National Endowment for the Arts, $20,000; American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, $12,500; Nebraska Arts Council, $2,500; Nebraska business firms, $340,000; and Local communities, $50,000, for a total of $525,000 (7, p. 1). Of the total, $105,000 was from federal tax money--$85,000 from Nebraska ARBC (additional $15,000 from royalties from sale of Bicentennial items) and $20,000 from National Endowment for the Arts. Thus, four-fifths of the total budget was from individual sources and Nebraska corporate donations, whereas, one-fifth was from federal tax dollars and royalties.

Thus, after communication with the ARBA and approval and funding by numerous organizations and entities which have been indicated, the Project was given official sanction. On March 6, 1975, John W. Warner, Administrator of the ARBA from Washington, D. C., came to Lincoln and bestowed Official Recognition as being a National Bicentennial Project at a ceremony held at the University Club (10). In 1976, the ARBA announced that the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial
Sculpture Project was considered one of the four most outstanding commemorative events in the United States (10).
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CHAPTER II

SELECTION AND REVIEW OF ARTISTS
AND THEIR SCULPTURES

A major aspect of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project was the selection of the artists and their specific works of art. In response to a nationwide announcement to the art community, 121 artists indicated interest in the competition by submitting tentative proposals. The number of artists was reduced to forty-six after a jury of three art experts reviewed their entries. These forty-six were asked for final proposals which were judged by another panel of three jurors noted for their expertise in the field of art. Next, the proposals were scrutinized by representatives from the State Department of Roads, Federal Highway Administration, host communities, and members of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation. Ultimately, ten artists were selected, and they proceeded with their individual works of sculpture.

Announcement of the Project and Procedure

"Response to this [Project] by the artistic community has been resounding and enthusiastic" (27). This was a comment following an announcement in February, 1974, to artists nationwide concerning the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial
Sculpture Project. The Corporation sent letters to sculptors and galleries throughout the United States announcing competition for commissions. A notice was published by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, as well as in the 1974 Bulletin from the National Sculpture Center at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas (17, p. 3). One hundred twenty-one artists in all, eleven of them from Nebraska, responded to the announcement.

The NIBS Corporation established the following criteria for artists who submitted proposals:

The sculpture must be conceived to enhance the site upon which it is erected.
The sculptors must have demonstrated competence in the creation of large scale, durable sculpture suitable to outdoor installation.
The sculptors must be willing to live and work in Nebraska in a chosen community near the sculpture site as an artist-in-residence, and to participate in programs related to the residency concept during the time the sculpture is created.
Because the sculpture is conceived of as permanent, it must contribute to the public's education and enjoyment when traveling through Nebraska.
The materials and processes must be those which can be obtained in Nebraska (24).

In addition, the Nebraska State Highway Department established the following criteria:

Because the sculpture will be located on land owned by the State in relation to the Interstate Highway System, both the State and Federal guidelines must be considered in the selection.
All sculpture will be placed in rest stops and will receive only such surveillance and maintenance as is customarily provided for these areas. Therefore, consideration of immunity to vandalism, safety and maintenance are the State's main concerns.
1. Size and location of sculptures must be approved by the State and Federal Highway people.
2. All construction of the sculpture and modifications or additions to the existing facilities shall be by the artist.
3. Water and electricity for sculpture is limited or unavailable.
4. Earth sculpture will be limited, since most sites are not adaptable.
5. Sculpture design must be maintenance free and safe. No breakable materials, sharp areas or moving parts which could cut or pierce. Safe for general public of all ages especially children and the physically handicapped. Free of maintenance requirements, landscaping, heavy use and graffiti.
6. Construction must not interrupt or force temporary closing of any rest areas.
7. Living sculptures utilizing flowers and plant material are not recommended due to maintenance and unpredictable life of plant materials.
8. Multiple use of sculpture as play pieces for children and sitting area is acceptable.

Recommended materials listed for the artists were concrete, stone, brick, steel (cor-ten), treated timber, wrought iron, aluminum, bronze, brass, and copper. The preceding considerations imposed by the Corporation and Nebraska State Highway Department were enumerated, also, for the two panels of jurors, agencies, and individuals who scrutinized the proposals.

By October 1, 1974, the deadline for initial entries, the 121 artists who had contacted the Corporation, submitted proposals which included design, scale, materials and cost, cost of commission, and contemplated length of time for execution of the specific sculpture. In addition, each indicated his interest and availability for the artist-in-residence portion of the Project and his tentative calendar for residency in an assigned Nebraska community. At this point,
information from the artists was somewhat general in nature, but provided a point of departure for planning by both the artists and the Corporation.

The jury, first of the two panels to evaluate the entries, who reviewed the applications at this time included Wilder Green, Director of the American Federation of Arts, New York City; Thomas Maytham, Director of the Denver Art Museum; and Joseph Stuart, Director of the South Dakota Memorial Art Center, Brookings, South Dakota. The jury rated applicants on a scale of one to five; artists who fell in the upper one-half of the rating scale were given a positive rank, making a total of forty-six semi-finalists who were given further consideration. These artists were asked to submit final proposals by January 1, 1975, a date which was later amended to January 15 because of numerous urgent requests for additional time due to holiday activities and mail service delays.

The Corporation specified the following information for the final proposals:

1. Measured drawing (scale 1/2" to 1") of both the sculpture and installation.
   Perspective drawings and/or elevations.
   Materials (for construction and installation).
   Equipment (for construction and installation).
   Expenses (for construction and installation).
   Working space for construction.
   Electrical, water and other special needs for the sculpture.
2. Commission you will require excluding the above expenses.

3. Willingness to participate in the residency program.

4. Dates you plan to live in Nebraska and construct the sculpture.

... The most complete proposals will receive the most thorough consideration from the panel of jurors. The expenses you submit will be of extreme importance as the project progresses. The budget for each sculpture will be based on these amounts and no additional funds will be made available (24).

Enclosures which were mailed to the forty-six semi-finalists included a map of Nebraska showing the locations of the rest stops (Figure 1), slides, and site plans of each rest stop indicating possible sculpture locations. Also included was various information about the state, such as average temperatures, highs and lows, wind velocities, and other environmental and ecological data. Applicants were asked to select the rest stop they preferred when submitting their final proposals.

Special emphasis was focused on the residency requirement as shown by this information quoted from instructions sent each semi-finalist:

The residency is very important to the statewide concept of the I-80 Project. It is through the residency feature that Nebraskans in many towns along the interstate system will have the opportunity to meet you, learn more about sculpture, see the work created and be involved in its creation through their support of the "artist-in-residence" program. You will be asked to discuss your work with school groups, service clubs, funding sponsors and other interested people. Although these commitments will not supersede the primary goal of getting the job done, such direct contact between the artist and the Nebraska public is of extreme importance to the educational scope of the project (24).
Of the forty-six sculptors who were contacted, thirty-eight responded with proposals; some submitted more than one design, making a total of forty-six entries in all. Between January 15 and February 10, 1975, these proposals were exhibited on private display at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery. They were reviewed and discussed, first by representatives from the State Department of Roads and the Federal Highway Administration, and then by representatives from the communities near the selected rest stops. Highway personnel eliminated four proposals because of site problems, safety, or maintenance reasons.

On February 7, the second panel of jurors screened the entries. These jurors included Mary Vercauteren, Associate Director of the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Stephen Prokopoff, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Chicago; and Donald B. Goodall, Director of the University Museum at Austin, Texas (24).

While the Nebraska State Department of Roads and other highway agencies were primarily concerned with structural matters of a practical nature about the proposed sculptures, the two panels of jurors were more interested in the aesthetic aspect. The jurors justified their artistic decisions by statements such as these,

Donald Goodall: The artist in this country is called upon to show us new directions, new ideas. I believe the sculptures selected will stand on their merits (14).
Stephen Prokopoff: . . . [I] looked for works that were beautiful in and of themselves and in relation to the setting in which they will be placed. I looked for what I thought was the most attractive, significant work available. . . . None of the entries [I] judged was "traditional." All the artists worked in the contemporary idiom (14).

The judges recommended ten artists, plus several alternates. The alternates were chosen in the event that some of those selected were unable to fulfill their original commitments.

Later in February, upon completion of reviews by agencies and individuals, the Nebraska Interstate Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation met to survey the proposals and recommendations from the various sources and tabulated a conclusive list of sixteen proposals. The State Department of Roads held its final critique on March 5 and 6, and ultimately twelve pieces of sculpture were selected.

Comment from the Corporation was,

Those sculptors approved by the Corporation and the State Department of Roads are being contacted by phone and telegram to confirm their selection and to schedule a meeting in Nebraska for the purpose of siting the piece, conferring with the Department of Roads and initiating the contractual procedure (24).

Notification to the artists was concluded by authorized letter from Art Thompson on April 24, 1975, on behalf of the Nebraska Interstate Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation, asking for contracts to be negotiated between each artist and the Corporation. Main aspects of the contracts were (1) terms of support (specific time period); (2) terms of payment--1/3 upon acceptance of the contract by both parties, 1/3 midway
through the term of support, 1/3 upon acceptance of the sculpture by the Corporation; (3) terms of the "artist-in-residency" portion of the project (location, room, board, working space, meetings, tentative schedule of the residency and etc.); (4) materials to be used; (5) equipment to be provided by (a) artist, (b) project; (6) engineering and/or landscaping requirements; (7) liability of (a) artist, (b) I-80 project; (8) location of the sculpture; (9) orientation of the sculpture; (10) size of the sculpture; and (11) working space needed (size, type and etc.) (24).

Included in the April letters were individual minor alterations in the designs which the Corporation requested—for example, in notification to John Raimondi, it was asked that his entire sculpture "Emma's Desire," in order to be acceptable by the Nebraska Department of Roads, must be placed on a concrete slab and the corners rounded at the end of the beams (37). The urgency of visits to Nebraska was stressed specifically. Before contracts were signed, the Corporation required the following:

Certificate of Insurance—to cover you, those working with you and for you, the public and the property of the state against injury, accident, death and damage.
Performance Bond.
Drawing of your piece and its installation by a certified structural engineer.
A definite inventory of materials, construction, installation and any other related items with real costs.
Commission amount (original proposals indicated commission costs of the artists ranged from $8000 to $60,000) (38).
By July, 1975, the artists had met all requirements, and agreements were officially signed with ten sculptors. Thus, on July 9, at press conferences in New York City and Sheldon Gallery in Lincoln, the announcement of the following ten sculptors and sculpture sites was revealed: George Baker, Kearney Westbound; Richard Field, Platte River Eastbound; Bradford Graves, York Westbound; Linda Howard, Ogallala Westbound; Anthony Padavano, Brady Westbound; John Raimondi, Grand Island Eastbound; Jerry Rothman, Kimball Eastbound; Steven Urry, Cozad Eastbound; Hans Van de Bovenkamp, Sidney Westbound; and Paul Von Ringelheim, Blue River Eastbound (26). Alternates who were selected were Dimitri Hadzi, Tal Streeter, and David Von Schleggel (26).

It was necessary for several adjustments to be made on the part of the sculptors in order to conform with preferences and criteria established by the Department of Roads pertaining to the assigned sites. For example, George Baker had indicated a preference for the Blue River Eastbound site, but the Department of Roads confirmed it would not be a feasible location because of the Blue River during flood or drought conditions. Thus, his proposed site was changed to Kearney Westbound, a spot where the water level is comparatively constant (27).
Artists and Their Sculptures

"Nebraska Wind Sculpture," Kearney Westbound

George Baker of Altedena, California, was born in Corsicana, Texas, in 1931. He received his education and teaching experience in California where he is on the art faculty at Occidental College, Los Angeles, at the present time. He has had one-man shows in California, Germany, Switzerland, New York, and Missouri. Previous commissions include a sixteen-foot sculpture at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan (now permanently installed at Hokane, Japan), as well as a fifty-foot piece for San Diego State University (15).

"Nebraska Wind Sculpture" (Figure 2) is composed of a series of stainless steel elliptical discs, the total span being fifteen feet high, twenty-four feet long, and ten feet wide; it weighs seventy-two hundred pounds. Of the eight completed I-80 pieces, it is the only kinetic sculpture, sections of which respond to changing wind directions and velocities. It is supported by styrofoam and aluminum barrels; the wind moves the sculpture around on the water and various plates on the piece itself. It "floats on the lake with the Nebraska colors reflected in the stainless steel shapes which are nudged by ever present breezes (19, p. 3).

Of this specific sculpture, George Baker wrote,

"Nebraska Wind Sculpture" continues my concern with form in its most abstract and non-representational sense. Although my shapes or forms remain abstract, I am aware
that the intuitive judgments used are a product of my own evolution, environment, dreams and private recognitions. My continuing subjects is beauty of form. I seek forms which grow and are quiescent and are possessed of sensuous life and spiritual being. These qualities allow the validity of my art. The motion pattern of the sculpture, while derived from wind velocity and its directional changes, is also controlled by careful balance relationships and internal adjustments. The aesthetic content of "Nebraska Wind Sculpture" is to be found in the movement pattern and changing relationships of the forms, the varying surface reflectivity between metal and water and the emotional interplay between the sculpture and the observer. The sculptor is represented by the sculpture--his communication is through a visual statement (21).

There are similarities in shape, media, and movement pattern existing between "Nebraska Wind Sculpture" and other sculptures he created between 1970 and the present. The piece most closely related to the Nebraska sculpture was "Water Forms II," a work designed for the campus of Occidental College in Los Angeles in 1979. Scale and shapes, which he called elongated, elliptical forms," were almost identical to the Nebraska ones (3). In addition to floating on water, as did "Nebraska Wind Sculpture," under-water fountains were employed within the base in order to create movement by a combination of water and wind power. This sculpture was housed in an elevated environment which was at eye level to the viewer as one approached the main entrance of the campus. Baker considered "Water Forms II" a technical advancement from the "Nebraska Wind Sculpture," created three years earlier, in that it "built upon the previous one" by coordinating a fountain of water with the floating sculpture (3).
George Baker stated that "Nebraska Wind Sculpture" fit into his career by continuing the use of the same elliptical forms and movement of those forms which he had employed since 1969 (such as those in "Water Discus," commissioned for Japan), but was also a spring-board for future works in which he added water fountains and mechanization to his forms. ("Water Forms II" in California is an example of this.) (3)

For the "Nebraska Wind Sculpture," as in each of his works, Baker made a small-scale model in order to study the visual relationship between various parts. The model was made of paper and cardboard so it could be easily modified. Then, a full scale model was constructed.

The finished sculpture has components fabricated from sheets of stainless steel ranging in thickness from 1/16 to 1/4 inch. The flat shapes were hand-formed over wood and metal forms to achieve their curvilinear contours. The surface was sanded, lubricated, and polished to achieve the desired mirrored surface. The metal sheets were carefully welded to achieve a nearly invisible joint (4, pp. 273-274). Partial construction of "Nebraska Wind Sculpture," including the basic sheet metal shapes and dismantled interior armature which supported the discs, took place in California. The armature was welded back together in a Kearney machine shop; most of the remaining off-site construction was done in the bus barn of the Kearney Public Schools. After preparation of the site, which included dredging out soil adjacent to the
original lagoon and creating a new embankment, the sculpture was positioned, according to engineering specifications, at the Kearney rest stop.

Insight into the philosophy and inspiration of Baker's works was revealed in a statement prepared for the Director of Deutsche Oper in Berlin in 1978 for whom he created a motorized wall sculpture, "Alunos Discus." In this sculpture, he professed a veritable homogeneity with the art of music.

My sculpture has in the past ten years become almost exclusively kinetic, perhaps in part because it involves not only three dimensions but also time. The precise control of its motion with a beginning and end is not unlike a musical composition. The changing patterns, both real and by shadow are comparable to the rhythmic changes, tonal variations and dynamics of music. . . . While the visual arts offer a challenge similar to that of composition I continue to feel that music is the highest art form—are they really so separated or different? I do not imply that my sculpture seeks to be compared to music or that any particular music is directly influencing a sculpture or that music should be played as the sculpture moves. . . . The elusive content of music which does inspire the shapes I use is the sublime grandeur of abstract aural relationships. These are moments which defy description. For many this experience is never felt. Regretably this is true. Yet the ears, eyes and mind can grow--become more sensitive. I am astonished in 1978 to remember that Richard Strauss was unbearable to my ear in 1964. Perhaps the most difficult is ultimately the most important. Similarly my sculpture requires time to understand its shapes and their relations while static and in motion (2).

Further comment upon his work in general was projected by the late Henry J. Seldis, senior art critic for the Los Angeles Times.

George Baker's finely honed kinetic sculptures are far more than sophisticated amusements. Aiming to achieve harmonious movements and patterns through his forms,
this remarkable California artist ... created sculptures of hypnotic power as their juxtaposition of metal shapes and surface tonalities move slowly and soundlessly in front of the viewer's eye. ... These extraordinary sculptural creations may initially appear to be totally non-objective but, in my view, Baker is actually an abstractionist in the literal sense of that word. He takes his point of departure from a wide variety of organic forms observed in nature and transforms them through his own dreams and fantasies. ... In a category of sculpture--kinetic art--where too many artists have fallen victim to the very technologies they seek to employ--Baker must be regarded as a purist whose use of such technologies never stands in the way of his ultimate search for beauty (34).

Pertaining to the question of what impact, if any, this Project had upon his career, George Baker replied, "The 'Wind Sculpture' has had a profound effect, not only on my career, but on most of the things that I have been doing since 1976" (3). He listed the following five factors.

1. Profound influence on the type of art he creates. He has continued to produce kinetic sculptures with persistent shapes and assemblages reminiscent of the "Wind Sculpture" (3).

It was while working on the "Nebraska Wind Sculpture" that he inaugurated the idea of incorporating fountains of water in addition to wind and mechanical devices to achieve the total impact of movement.

2. Personal concern with "what the artist's responsibility is in public sculpture" (3).

Although this was not his first exposure to public sculpture, part of the effort involved special problems concerning final presentation to the viewing public, such as change of the site from Blue River for which it was originally
designed to the Kearney location. Not only was the site changed, but the Kearney lagoon was altered to enhance the sculpture. (Baker's sculpture was unique in that the environment was modified to accommodate it. Guidelines presented to the artists included solicitation of designs which were compatible with the existing sites, but in this case, an exception was made so that the site was altered to benefit the presentation of the sculpture.)

3. The impact of publicity which surrounded the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project (3).

Both at the time of planning and execution, doors were opened for future commissions. Major commissions since 1976 have been "Alunos Discus" (Berlin, 1978), "Water Forms II" (Los Angeles, 1979), and "Water Forms--West Texas" (Canyon, Texas, 1980) (3).

4. The impact of his own commitment to the artist-in-residence program (3).

He was extremely impressed with the concept and interaction between himself as an artist and townspeople, organizations, and students—individuals of all ages and from multiple walks of life.

5. Impact that no provisions were made for the artist to retain the copyright of his sculpture (3).

Thus, there was no control or assurance that the work would be properly maintained or protected in the manner of a copyrighted work. According to a notarized document, which was a "Transfer of Ownership of Sculpture," the artist
"transferred, by written document all right, title and interest in the sculpture . . . to the Corporation" (21). The importance of such a document as a protective measure for adequate control was emphatically brought to Baker's attention, because he felt maintenance was improperly handled. It was a facet of the Project with which the artist did not feel "comfortable" in his proceedings with the Corporation and the State of Nebraska (3). This fact influenced his career to the point that Baker stated he would be reluctant to design another work without the benefit of a copyright.

One of the regrets about the Project on the part of Baker, as well as some of the other artists, was that there was no communication or camaraderie among the ten artists themselves. He felt it was a distinct disadvantage that the sculptors had no way of inter-mingling and philosophizing with one another, regardless of the fact each shared the common denominator of a commission expressing the identical theme of "Horizons" and maintaining the same format, responsibilities, time table, and proximity of location (3).

"Memorial to the American Bandshell,"
Omaha Eastbound

Richard D. Field was born in Pennsylvania in 1947, and now resides in Kentucky where he is on the faculty at Morehead State University. He received his formal education in Mexico and Minnesota and was graduated with a Masters of Fine Arts Degree in 1972 from the University of Iowa at Iowa City. His
commissions include a sculpture for an urban renewal project in Iowa City (1975).

His "American Bandshell," as the title implies, relates to an important historical and social feature of American cities, the bandshell (Figure 3). The piece was fashioned of cor-ten steel (so-named because of its low corrosive quality and its high tensile strength), and dimensions measure twenty-five feet wide and nine feet high. The total visual impact of the sculpture includes the concrete base upon which it sits, which is ten feet wide by nine feet high. The steel has been fashioned in convex and concave shapes so that they appear as appendages to a coordinated whole. The steel has oxidized and has a dark-colored, matte finish on the surface.

In talking about his work, he stated that he enjoys sculpture—particularly the fabrication of it. He said that sculpture has "no function--is just a visual delight" (18). He is excited about the "environment of technology" and the "painstaking labor" necessary to fabricate flawlessly, about which he commented, "I can do it well" (18). In the early 1970's, he was employed as a metal-worker and machinist which fostered his skill in this area.

Field's sculptures, which he made earlier than the Nebraska piece, fit into what he called his "hemi-cylindrical series" (21). His shapes are literal translations of the term--half-cylinders--and sometimes are brightly painted. His Iowa City piece, called "Triaxial Hemicylindrical," was
part of this series. It resembles a giant jack, as in the
game of jacks, with the uppermost part a pierced elliptical
form. It sits on the ground in the Chauncey Swan Plaza.

His Nebraska sculpture, "American Bandshell," fits into
a later classification which he terms his "conical series"
(21). These works are created of basically the same over-all
curvilinear shapes, but are deeper, cone-shaped forms that
appear to have more interaction within their different parts.

"Crossing the Plains," York Westbound

Bradford Graves is a resident of New York City. He was
born in Dallas, Texas, in 1939, and attended schools in New
York City, as well as Texas A and M. He teaches at Fairleigh
Dickinson University in Madison, New Jersey.

"Crossing the Plains" (Figure 4) was constructed in four
separate pieces which are clustered upon a concrete slab
having a "broomed finish" (32). Dimensions measure nine feet
long by seven feet wide by ten feet high. The work was
described by information from the Corporation as follows:

This sculpture, hewn of stone from the same quarry
which provided the limestone for Nebraska's Capitol
Building [quarry located at Bedford, Indiana], is
located at the York westbound rest area, just east
of the York interchange. The arrangement of the
stones, in accordance with the four points of a
compass, hearkens to the days when travel was deter-
mined by celestial observation rather than the road-
maps and superhighways of today (19, p. 3).

Graves himself revealed the following:

"Crossing the Plains" is geared to pioneer days when
wagons crossed the tall, waving grasses of Nebraska.
The design has both a shiplike quality symbolizing a
wagon's advance through a "sea of grass" and also entails a symbolic reference to a surveyor's instrument since pioneers had to have ways of finding their way between landmarks (8).

Prior to the Nebraska piece, Graves did other outdoor sculpture in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, in 1968 and 1970, respectively. He also created highway sculpture for commissions on the Adirondack Northway in New York state (1971) and the Williston rest area on the Vermont Interstate (1971). The New York piece is titled "First Wheel" and is located on Interstate 87 near Schroon Lake; it is composed of two separate concrete units and shows a wheel interacting with another abstract form. When asked to explain his subject choice, he replied, "The United States is a nation on wheels and I was interested in exploring the sculptural possibilities of the wheel," (22)—a philosophy not unlike his statement about the I-80 sculpture. It reveals something of the nature of "Crossing the Plains," but is more monumental in scope with less negative space in its design. In 1973, he created "Sanjo" which is three pieces of limestone, slightly smaller than "Crossing the Plains," but very similar, for the Chase Manhattan Bank, Lincoln Center Branch (22). The largest section of "Crossing the Plains" compares with "Toki II," a 1975 design, which also was constructed of limestone in four separate parts.

Thus, "Crossing the Plains" relates to his other work by the use of limestone as a medium. Many of his pieces, both
before and after 1975, are either limestone or cement. "Crossing the Plains" is composed of not one single form, but a combination of several separate stone units, a feature of most of his previous sculptures. In comparison with his later work, such as "Sound Sculpture" (1979), a limestone piece which closely resembles a xylophone, his Nebraska sculpture is more non-objective. Also, his works since 1975-1976 have basically been gallery pieces, not outdoor sculptures; consequently, there is considerable difference in size (10).

"Up/Over," Ogallala Westbound

Linda Howard of New York City was born in Evanston, Illinois, in 1934 and received her undergraduate degree in art from the University of Denver and her masters degree from Hunter College, New York City. She taught there in the department of art, as well as other City University of New York colleges, New York University, and Colorado College at Colorado Springs. She has exhibited extensively in New York and New England and created numerous major commissions in that locality, including a work called "Maya," which was part of the Public Art Program for the XIII Olympic Winter Games at Lake Placid in 1980.

"Up/Over" (Figure 5) is constructed of anodized aluminum "I"-beams which rise upward in a geometric progression and tumble back to the ground forming an eighteen foot arch. Howard explained that the arch is constructed of all straight
lines, but because of the placement of the aluminum strips, it gives the illusion to the viewer that there is a visual curve. She calls the structure "a vertical wall that zooms upward with repetitive lines re-affirming the land, space, and sky" (18).

Concerning the construction itself, engineering and fabrication are not her concerns. She contracts everything to be custom-made and assembled according to her specifications.

She believed that the artist-in-residence portion of the Project was especially meritorious. She took students outdoors (including field trips to nearby Lake McConaughy) and asked them to observe art in Nature's formations. They selected items and scrutinized them in preparation for verbalizing to Howard and their peers concerning how Nature utilizes the art elements they had previously studied in the classroom (18).

Howard explained her work in this way,

The "Up/Over" piece is meant to move a person to the vast sky of the western part of the country and then back to earth. People out here are organizing nature to fulfill a human need through agriculture. I, too, am organizing nature to fulfill another human need through art. My sources are from nature. My work is involved with the forms of nature. Just as there are opposites in the countryside, there are opposites in my piece. There are straight lines that become curved; an industrial I-beam against an organic form and something heavy but the form is light (23).

Media coverage was given the Sculpture Project and Howard, in particular, when she and Ann Svoboda, Chairperson of the Ogallala support group for the Project, were featured
on the "Today Show" on October 31, 1975. Since 1976, when
the Nebraska sculpture was completed, she has received awards
and commissions throughout the United States, especially on
the east coast. Her works are included in the sculpture
garden of Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Art Center; the University of
Houston, Houston, Texas; Atlanta Richfield Company Center, Los
Angeles, California; and the Taubman Corporation, Fairoaks,
Virginia. These works are all similar in design to "Up/Over,"
and many of them correspond in size; for example, "Maya,"
which she did at Lake Placid, has almost identical dimensions.
Her earlier pieces possess geometric names such as "Spiral
Arch," "Ten Triangles," "Square Spiral," and others, while
her later works focus on words derived from Eastern philoso-
phies (12). Included in the latter category are "Maya" and
"Samsara," done in 1979 for the Fine Art Museum in Hempstead,
New York. Both of these later works utilize the same medium,
aluminum I-beams, but many more of them than she used in "Up/
Over," making the sculpture more complex; also, due to the
numerous elements, the total appearance is much more rigid
and does not have the simple, curvilinear unity of the (fifteen)
beams in the Ogallala sculpture. Thus, "Up/Over" is very
reminiscent of her early geometric pieces, whereas, her works
after 1975 assume a comparatively complicated form. However,
her sculptures, both earlier and later ones, have similarities
which are typical of her style.
Howard expressed the philosophy of her works in general. I am deeply concerned with the paradox that exists between man's experience of physical reality and his knowledge of conceptual reality. Philosophically, I am directed towards finding connections between apparent opposites rather than finding distinctions. Life seems to have meaning for me when closure exists, i.e., connections are found. I am interested in the similarity of ideas describing reality that exists between contemporary physics and Eastern philosophies.

Light is an important element in my work. Ambient light functions in such a way as to either dematerialize the structure into an almost total ethereal experience, or to reinforce structure, or to sometimes even add illusionary structural elements. Light dematerializes matter into light/energy.

I use physical structures as a means of probing beyond physical reality to investigate various levels of consciousness and/or meditative states and their relationship to physical reality. I am concerned with probing the extremes at each end of the scale, moving through each interim and transitional step to find and experience the unification of it all (12).

"Nebraskan Gateway," Brady Westbound

Anthony Padavano of Putnam Valley, New York, was born in Brooklyn, in 1933. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Columbia University where he became a professor of sculpture in 1964. He has completed several large public commissions, including a piece for the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, a painted yellow ochre work made of steel, which has little in common with "Nebraskan Gateway."

Many of his works, particularly his large ones, appear more biomorphic and curvilinear than the I-80 work. At the present time, Padovano's "Nebraskan Gateway" (Figure 6) appears to be a transitional piece between his earlier painted works of steel, such as his 1969 metal piece, "Study for a Monument:
Yellow," and his later stone ones which have organic shapes intertwined with one another. These latter characteristics are applicable to several smaller sculptures which he displayed in a one-man exhibition at the Graham Gallery in New York City from December, 1981 through January 9, 1982 (33, pp. 1-2).

"Nebraskan Gateway" is an assemblage of 100,000 pounds of Vermont granite which is twenty-five feet long, fifteen feet wide, and fourteen feet high. The Brady rest stop is unique in its position and size, the largest of any of the selected sites, and although visible from I-80, the sculpture is actually "nestled among the giant cottonwoods" on an adjacent drive (19, p. 2). The total sculpture is composed of several separate stones which are either attached or adjoining. Some areas are comparatively smooth, while others bear unpolished indentations from the sculptor's tools. Final grinding was done after positioning was effected, since he wanted to see exactly how the sun and shadows fell upon the pieces. Padovano specifically selected granite over marble because of the manner in which granite "catches light, whereas marble reflects it" (18).

Part of his philosophy concerning "Nebraskan Gateway" was captured when he expressed the following:

"... The title for my sculpture will be called "Nebraskan Gateway." This title came about during an interview with a local reporter who was asking me to describe what I was trying to express with my sculpture. The reporter had suggested that it
looked like a huge entrance or gateway and I said yes— it was an enormous gateway to the spirit. The spirit of the land of Nebraska is what I was trying to capture which is expressed in the hills, rivers, and plains. And so, "Nebraskan Gateway" was born (30).

He wrote the following about the Nebraska commission which gave additional insight into his choice of medium and style:

Every professional sculptor dreams about doing some great ambitious sculpture that would outdo all other sculptures in his time as far as originality and size is concerned. Upon being awarded the I-80 Sculpture commission, I realized that this was one such rare opportunity. I also wanted to use a material that most contemporary sculptors were not using—namely granite. Although I am known to the public as a metal sculptor, my early training was in stone carving. The predominance of welded sculpture on the contemporary art scene made me feel uncomfortable. I felt sculpture needed more breadth and depth, and there was also a certain prejudice amongst sculptors towards stone, and granite in particular, which denoted a sense of "old-fashionedness." The problem for me of course was to make a "contemporary" statement with an old-fashioned material. Then, too, I felt that granite best fulfilled the particular requirements of the situation. Problems of weathering, flooding, vandalism, etc. were best solved by using granite. It also excited me to think that my sculpture would last thousands of years as did Egyptian granite sculpture. Realizing this fact caused in me a desire to create a sculpture that would be considered beautiful and exciting five thousand years from now . . . . The direction of the sculpture was placed in an east-west movement with the major view facing south, thereby picking up strong sunlight during summer months when most travelers would see the work (31).

Padovano expressed regrets concerning certain aspects of the Project.

In my opinion, this entire I-80 Sculpture Project was the most important contribution to contemporary sculpture thus far in the twentieth century. It certainly should have received more attention and recognition from the established art publications and art magazines than it
did. In fact, I believe (to the best of my knowledge) that not one major article was published on this project. . . . It also saddens me when magazines review either the familiar "names," or give critical acclaim to highly questionable work. It is strange that contemporary art historians act as though the I-80 Project never happened, but only works which fit their aesthetic taste. Of course, one of the prices one pays for making a sculpture that goes beyond contemporary aesthetics, is neglect. I am, however, very proud of my sculpture in Nebraska. . . . It is still a strong visual statement (31).

"Erma's Desire," Grand Island Eastbound

John Raimondi resides in Boston, Massachusetts, where his family has lived for three generations. He was born there in 1948 and received his art training in New England schools, being graduated from the Massachusetts College of Art in 1973. His career plan was to become a two-dimensional artist in the area of commercial art. By his own admission, "I was over twenty-one before I even knew what sculpture was" (7). After receiving a scholarship to the Portland (Maine) School of Art, he began three-dimensional work. "I was now making objects instead of creating the illusion of dimension. All these years I had been a sculptor and never knew it" (16). By 1980, he had completed twelve public-scale sculptures, including the piece for the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project.

He was the youngest sculptor who was selected. He has a large United States map on the wall of his bedroom and has placed pins marking the location of each of his public sculptures. "Before I die, I want to have one piece in every state
in the union. I only need forty-two more states. And I have a lot of time" (16). In addition to his sculpture commissions, he also received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in which he prepared a film about the artists-in-residence program of the mid'70's (16).

His works display superb craftsmanship, something in which he takes great pride. Unlike many sculptors, he does all his own work and does not leave the actual fabrication to others. He is a certified welder and displays his official welder's card as if "it were a prestigious art award" (16). He immerses himself in every aspect of his work. "I don't believe fabrication of material should be divorced from design. It's made like a piece of jewelry. You can't see an edge or a weld. Art should be magic. You should never see how it is made. . . . All art should be perfect in execution" (16).

John Raimondi's work has been described as "angular, geometric, powerful," his "Erma's Desire" (Figure 7) being no exception (16). It is the largest of all the I-80 sculptures, a construction of spire-like projections of cor-ten steel. It was also the first of the sculptures to be completed. Included in the base of one of the spires are cage-like structures. It is twenty-six feet tall and fifty-four feet between the outstretched spires; the steel weighs seven tons. That particular material was selected because of its durability and beauty. The surface oxidized and changed color, progressing from a light orange to a deep orange, then flat brown-orange, and
finally a rusty, chestnut brown. From certain vantage points, the sculpture is reflected in the adjacent roadside lagoon. Since this site in Nebraska is relatively pollution-free, the color changed differently from his public sculptures in other locations. He said, "The Grand Island site is intimate in scale and yet the panoramic view is as awesome as the State of Nebraska in terms of size, and I felt the kind of sculpture I am presently doing would be most adaptable to this kind of environment" (18).

Most of Raimondi's sculptures are named for people, especially members of his family or friends. He considers people the most important impetus in his life. The Grand Island sculpture is a tribute to his mother, Erma, who has been a constant source of inspiration to him. He explained, "It's my interpretation of the upbringing I had and the stability and pride my parents gave me, particularly my mother. It's the attitude they gave me to be able to go out on my own and be somebody. Mother taught us to be individuals and spread out" (1).

The imagery of steel cages which was mentioned earlier was explained by Raimondi: As I evolved, my works evolved. I eventually brought myself out of cages, I got my act together, and I was in a castle. "Erma's Desire" has very obvious cages in its construction. One of them is boxed into a three-sided shape, one of them is relatively open. I equate the cages with restrictions people put on themselves, while castles signify forces that allow people to go beyond any limitations and realize their full potential . . . I'm doing environmental sculpture.
Steel is a critical material to this nation, and I think the medium I am using as a contemporary artist reflects my society. Everything is made of steel—that's what our industry is like (1).

The spires represent pride and growth to Raimondi, and the broad horizontal piece serves as a "foundation, like a home" (8). In summarizing his explanation of "Erma's Desire," he states, "Pride and inspiration and universal emotions. As a sculptor, I deal with them in terms of shapes where others might deal with them with words or theories" (8). In conclusion, he warned that viewers "should not take [his] sculpture too seriously" (8). He reiterated, as George Baker and other I-80 Project artists had done, that the artist-in-residence part of the Project was extremely important because of the chance to communicate and explain his work to numerous individuals and organizations.

Raimondi was the only one of the sculptors who constructed a large-scale model in conjunction with the artist-in-residence program. Reasons he gave for this accompanying structure were (1) comprehension of scale and proportion of total sculpture, (2) comprehension of some of the technicalities involved with the completed sculpture, (3) interpretation and understanding of assemblage and what structural elements were essential, and (4) first-hand experience on the part of students who aided in the model construction (25).

"Erma's Desire" is a continuation of the style of art Raimondi designed prior to 1976 and very reminiscent of things he has done since that time. Particularly notable similarities
were seen in a work called "Stephen's Summer," which was named in honor of the sculptor's assistant for that project. It was designed for an Interstate 91 project, and his piece is located twelve miles north of Greenfield, Massachusetts, at the southbound rest area. A New England columnist wrote the following "thoughts and reflections" after he had seen the sculpture--comments, many of which could have applied to "Erma's Desire":

"Stephen's Summer" measures fifty feet long by fifteen feet high. Large enough to make you slow down. It is not, however, monolithic. The five separate modules that comprise the piece are sited so that one section is always hidden by another. Triangle, circle, and caged steeple, as well as the negative spaces penetrating the cor-ten forms, must be seen by exploring the sculpture. Only then can we sense how the sections relate to each other and to the ground and sky (36).

Two other works are similar in style to "Erma's Desire" and "Stephen's Summer" with their spires and cages; one is "Peter John" commissioned by the Blue Cross of Wisconsin in 1978 for its Milwaukee headquarters, a sculpture which is larger than "Erma's Desire." The other piece, although smaller in size, titled "Zephyrus," was designed and constructed as a private commission in Nantucket, Maine, in 1980. Thus, "Erma's Desire" fit into the career of the artist as being a continuation of his earlier work and forerunner of his later sculptures, all of which are comparable in form, medium, and size.

There were two unique features concerning "Erma's Desire," the first being a formal reception in Grand Island staged for the unveiling of the scale model. The second was the fact
that a poem was written in honor of the sculpture by the President of the Ars Poetica, the official Nebraska State Poetry Society, and sent to John Raimondi in 1977. (A copy of this poem appears in the Appendices.) Enclosed was a note saying the author composed the original poem titled "Cynosure of the Way," and she hoped "to throw a new light upon [public] views of the 'Erma's Desire' sculpture. Many change their attitude and more readily accept the beauty of your creation. . . . I believe the poem may be used to further the joy of understanding a poet's view of another's art" (35).

"Roadway Confluence," Sidney Westbound

Hans Van de Bovenkamp, now of Tillson, New York, was born in Holland in 1938. He attended the School of Architecture in Amsterdam before he moved to the United States, where he studied at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Since 1964, he has created numerous large sculpture commissions, many of them fountain-oriented. In this proposals for the Nebraska Project, he originally preferred one of the sites having an adjacent lagoon, so that water could be assimilated in his design.

"Roadway Confluence" (Figure 8) is thirty-five feet in height and utilized over two tons of aluminum. The material is a low strength alloy containing low contents of copper and manganese; therefore, little hardening of the satin finish will take place through the years. There have been considerable
problems with the piece during and after its placement, due to high winds which sheared off structural bolts.

A statement by the artist about "Roadway Confluence" was as follows:

The sculptural image that has emerged symbolizes the confluence of roadways. The roadways are represented by intertwining lines that undulate—widen and narrow as the perspective we perceive travelling through the Nebraska countryside of rolling hills. A conglomeration of cloverleaves, overpasses, viaducts and roadways disappearing into the horizon. In this sculpture these snaking lines reach skyward ... since attractions will be that strong winds may sway these lines back and forth creating kinetic motion. By using polished aluminum ... the era of technology is emphasized. Its highly reflective surfaces will catch the light and make the towering shapes visible from great distances, thus attracting the passerby for a visit to the rest stop. These contemporary materials will show the progress of growth and advancement of technology of Nebraska to its foreign visitors (28).

Each of his sculptures is "handmade, not machine made ... [which] makes it more human" (18). Some of his other large-scale works were commissioned for diverse locations, such as Puerto Rico, New York, Georgia, and Illinois. Most of them are similar in design to "Roadway Confluence," but several are composed of many more filaments than the basic three parts which constitute the Nebraska piece. The Sidney sculpture looks very much like one titled "See-It," fourteen feet tall and made of satin-finish aluminum in 1973 (28).

Other than the use of brushed aluminum as the predominant medium and the strong vertical thrust in each of his sculptures, his works since the Nebraska commission have little in common with it. In fact, his sculptures done in 1978 and 1979 are a
"series of theatrical pieces which gives fantasy full reign" (6, p. 18). They are abstract cut-outs—trees, clouds, fences, and stairs. Thus, his style has changed noticeably since 1976.

In summarizing his thoughts about "Roadway Confluence," Van de Bovenkamp said, "For me this monumental sculpture and its ambiance was a highlight in my career. I am pleased with the sculpture as a monumental piece of public art or monument, if you wish" (28).

"Arrival," Blue River Eastbound

Paul Von Ringelheim, of New York City, was born in Austria in 1934 and spent his early life in New Jersey. He attended college at Brooklyn College, Fairleigh Dickinson University, and the Academy for Fine Arts in Munich, Germany.

"Arrival" is a thirty-five foot high assemblage of three, elongated, intertwined, open triangles (Figure 9). It is located at the Blue River rest area and accessible by strolling across a stone bridge to a beautiful tree-lined part, making the setting different from the other rest areas. It is constructed of anodized aluminum.

Von Ringelheim wrote of this work,

"Arrival" portrays the heroic stand taken by pioneers as they settled in Nebraska. The sculptor hopes this piece will truly become a citizen of Nebraska to all Nebraskans. It is intended to reflect the scale and grandeur of the work of the early settlers.

"Arrival" is avant garde, or ahead of its time, just as the pioneer spirit that settled Nebraska was before its time. In every respect this piece celebrates the Bicentennialist Spirit—Heritage, Festival and Horizons.
It will grow in value and be a pleasure to your children, and it will really sparkle in your Nebraska sunlight! I wanted my sculpture to be of heroic size. I know Nebraska was once a great sea of grass and along the Oregon Trail pioneers could only see landmarks that stood tall. I wanted to create a twentieth-century sentinel for the young people of today to hang their hopes and dreams on (29).

In the early 1970's, Von Ringelheim was favorably recognized in accounts of gallery exhibitions of his jewelry, designs which he called "spatial sculpture" (5). His jewelry was "worked in polished, open forms with a see-through rather than solid effect. The geometrics, therefore, were very airy, related more to the art of sculpture than to conventional jewelry designing" (5). This description might well pertain to his sculpture designs as well. He created "Said" and "A Step Beyond" in the same year, 1976, as the Nebraska works--sculptures very similar in concept, size, and negative space that are noted in "Arrival." Both works were made of anodized aluminum, as well.

Because this type of sculpture with its simplicity and open space, he has been called a "monumental minimalist" which implies that he was able to "combine the tricky principles of tensile strength and balance with the grace and economy of simple linear design" (11). Minimal art originated in the 1960's when artists like Donald Judd, who was an exponent of the movement, aimed at a "form of neutrality ... removed from its subjective origin and seen as existing entirely in its own right" (9, pp. 37-38). Artists strived
for anonymity of the artist's craftsmanship and a clear projection of sculpture which they described as massive, simple, formal, sterile, and non-sentimental (13, p. 109).

In 1978, he made "Endless Force," which is much more monolithic in design; it is the focal point of the Palm Springs home of former President Gerald Ford and his wife. At present, he has received a commission for a sculpture titled "Atlantis I," a sixty-five foot piece covering an area of 800 square feet in a Florida lagoon, to be completed by 1983 (39). It will be constructed of stainless steel but is similar in design to "Arrival" with the exception that some of the shapes are to be more rectangular. Thus, "Arrival" fit in his career by being an extension of the style he began in the early 1970's and has continued to pursue into the 1980's.

In response to an inquiry about his own thoughts and reactions to the Nebraska commission, he wrote,

The Interstate 80 Project turned out to be much more than a commission--it was a true opportunity to meet and understand the members of the community. Usually an artist is in touch with the architects and builders, executes a scale sized model known as a maquette, and when he is awarded the commission, executes it, installs it and moves on.

With Interstate 80, the community wanted to experience the artists as much as it wanted to receive the work. . . . [Talking with the townspeople] not only helped them understand what I was trying to do, but they helped me understand what they were all about. It sort of makes you an instant citizen. It was this process of meeting and being made part of the community that reflects itself in the title of the work which is ARRIVAL. ARRIVAL came at their invitation and stayed to be part of their landscape and possible folklore (39).
Von Ringelheim created another Bicentennial sculpture; it was the focus for New York City's first cultural event for the Bicentennial year. He attached red, blue, and gold polyethylene cables in tension to the New York Cultural Center building, the first one across the front of the building and Columbus Circle and the others cantilevered from 58th Street and 8th Avenue to Broadway. It was a lighted sculpture called "Celebration" and very different in total concept from "Arrival" (40).
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CHAPTER III

CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE NEBRASKA INTERSTATE 80 BICENTENNIAL SCULPTURE PROJECT

There was considerable contemplation and debate throughout the state about the sculptures and their placement. In view of such controversy, reactions varied from indifference to outright hostility. Prime objections were that some people disapproved of the sculptures being placed on public land, particularly works of a non-representational nature, since many preferred works of an historical nature; some thought Bicentennial money should be spent for more worthwhile things; others were opposed because of the fact that no Nebraska artists had received any of the commissions. Ultimately, legislative hearings were held at the grassroots level in December, 1975, with five senators from the Nebraska State Unicameral holding evening sessions in several cities to hear arguments for and against the issue. The outcome was eventually an affirmative vote by the Legislature, and the Project was continued.

Members of the Sculpture Corporation were not particularly surprised that controversy arose. In fact, Norman Geske considered it advantageous, because it increased awareness of the entire Project. He stated, "A number of people have responded to the idea by saying, 'Why does it have to be modern art?"
We have had to discourage lots of high hopes that there would be cowboys on horseback" (15). In view of such controversy, the Corporation was secure in its decision, because the original philosophy was that the sculptures be created with the future of our country in mind, namely, the "Horizons" category.

Early in the proceedings, public informational meetings had been held by members of the Department of Roads of the State of Nebraska in order to familiarize the populace with facts and explain the involvement of that agency in the scope of the Project. Plans were formalized early in 1975 for meetings to be held between May 15 and May 29 of that year in five separate and diverse locations—Gretna, York, Kearney, Sidney, and North Platte. News releases for newspapers, television, and radio were prepared and sent out prior to the sessions, notifying the public of the open meetings. No paid advertising was used. Each of the meetings was held with an identical agenda which provided a two-fold purpose: (1) An explanation of the I-80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project by the Director, Art Thompson, and board members of the Department of Roads; and (2) The opportunity for those in attendance to present statements and ask questions concerning the Project (48). As a matter for public record, a tape recording was made at each of the five hearings to facilitate accurate accounts of the meetings.
The following presentation was made by Jack Rosecrans, Public Hearing Officer for the Department of Roads, at the North Platte meeting on May 29, 1975:

The Department of Roads was approached by representatives of the I-80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project Committee with a proposal to erect sculptures in selected rest areas across the State of Nebraska. The Department cooperated by supplying the Committee with a list of twelve rest areas that could accommodate sculptures and explained the problems that would have to be solved and the requirements that would have to be met before the concept could be implemented. . . . The Department did not make any recommendations to the Committee as to the type of sculptures. However, the Department did reserve the right of final approval for each piece of sculpture which was selected by the Committee. This final approval will be based on engineering requirements, compatibility with the individual rest area, and citizen acceptance. . . . Representatives of the Department did not evaluate the artistry of the proposed sculptures. . . . [It was] necessary to meet the Department's criteria of public safety, liability, maintenance and compatibility with the individual rest area. . . . The artists must submit engineering drawings, site designs and plans for placement within the individual rest areas to the Department for review. This work must be paid [for] by the artist. . . . Performance bonds will be required. . . . After the sculptures are completed, their ownership will be transferred in perpetuity to the Department of Roads and the State of Nebraska (48).

The aspect of transfer proved to be the specific point of contention which ultimately brought action by Governor Exon and the Legislature. Whereas the Department of Roads has statute authority to receive gifts, the State of Nebraska cannot. This is because of the fact that the Governor of the State must approve any gift of personal property which exceeds $10,000 in value and, furthermore, both the Governor and the Legislature must approve all gifts of real property which
exceed $10,000 (39). [Section 27 of LB 1054, an appropriation bill passed in 1974, stipulated acceptance by the Governor of such gifts; an updated bill in 1975, LB 605, Section 21, required approval by the Legislature as well as the Governor of gifts in excess of $10,000 (34).]

Did this statute concerning gifts to the State over $10,000 apply to the NIBSC sculptures? Were the sculptures "real property" according to law? Would transfer of ownership of the sculptures to the Department of Roads and the State of Nebraska necessitate Legislative approval? When these questions were raised, it was a traumatic period of time for the Corporation. On August 22, 1975, Governor Exon officially informed the Corporation that there were indeed legal entanglements at hand and that both he and the Legislature would officially have to permit the sculptures to be accepted by the State and installed on public land.

Art Thompson, Project Director, wrote this statement following the Governor's notification:

... Our timetable will be changed drastically as they [the legislators] do not go into session until January. And, of course, we have no guarantee that they would or would not accept the sculptures. If they would accept them, then we would proceed with haste and finish as many pieces as possible by July 4, 1976. If they would choose to not accept the sculpture we would not be able to place the pieces on the Interstate. This would create a very real problem by changing our philosophy of public sculpture on the Interstate and, in turn, could endanger some of the funding donated on that premise (54).

During the time between August 22, 1975, and January 14, 1976, when the matter was favorably resolved, the entire
Project was practically at a standstill. The artists were alerted that problems were present, and the most drastic outcome could be that the Project might have to be significantly altered or abandoned. Turmoil and uncertainty during this time from August to January had an irrevocable impact upon the Project. Valuable time and psychological momentum were lost at a crucial stage. Members of the Corporation expressed the opinion that the legal complications not only temporarily hindered the artists from continuing their commissions, but also permanently affected monetary support—in fact, to the degree that contributions lagged so drastically only eight of the ten sculptures were able to be completed.

Governor Exon had personally approved the Project, even though on May 22, 1975, he vetoed $150,000 in state funds for the Nebraska Arts Council to use in the Project. In the early stages of the Project, the Governor assured the Sculpture Corporation that they could "plan on complete cooperation from our administration on this very worthwhile program" (34). Further legal deterrents arose when it became necessary to have an official interpretation of LB 605, Section 21, in order to determine absolutely whether legislative action was needed or if Governor Exon could grant sole approval.

At the request of the Governor, the Executive Council of the Legislature met on August 26, 1975, at which time Senators Ralph Kelly (District 35), Wally Barnett (District 26), and John Savage (District 10) were appointed to a special
sub-committee in order to study and prepare suggested procedures for the Executive Council. All of these Senators were members of the Appropriations Committee. The primary guideline for the sub-committee was an official opinion rendered by the Nebraska Department of Justice (Paul L. Douglas, Attorney General) which, in essence, dealt with the interpretation of "personal property" and "real property."

The following is quoted from Official Document Number 144, Department of Justice, State of Nebraska:

Real property has been defined as consisting of such things as are permanent, fixed and immovable as lands, tenements and hereditaments of all kinds. The word land includes not only the soil but everything attached to it, including buildings, fixtures and fences. Personal property is all property other than real property such as money, goods and movable chattels. The sculptures here involved at the time of their acceptance and approval, which we assume will be done prior to their being moved to their permanent site, will still be movable property. At this time they are nothing more than items of personal property. When they are finally moved to their location and permanently affixed and attached to the land on which they are to stand, they will then become a part of the real property along the Interstate route (13).

An additional assignment given by the Executive Council of the Legislature to the sub-committee, was that a series of public hearings be conducted in order that a consensus be established as to the approval or disapproval of the sculptures themselves. A tenor of controversy had been apparent since the release of sketches and other information about the proposed works. An article in the Christian Science Monitor reported the following:
The only conversation in Nebraska is football and the sorghum crop. Now there's a third . . . the Nebraska Interstate-80 Bicentennial Project, which is rapidly proving not only the state bicentennial's most unusual but its most controversial effort, and symbolizes the kind of clash that can occur when contemporary art meets the local public it was created for. . . . Since the winners were announced in July and the drawings published, the anticipated "geysers of controversy" have indeed gushed forth. Irate letters to local newspapers variously describe the sculptures as monstrosities, junk, and onions in a petunia patch. And seven mayors of the host towns have pronounced that the sculptures are "too far out" (30, p. 30).

The legislative hearings provided the public its second opportunity to ask questions and voice opinions concerning the Project, the first occurring at the informational meetings sponsored by the Department of Roads in May. The sub-committee hearings were conducted at the following times and places:

December 1, 1975--Omaha, Civic Center at 7:30 p.m.; December 2, 1975--Lincoln, Department of Roads Central Office at 7:30 p.m.; December 3, 1975--Grand Island, First National Bank at 7:30 p.m.; December 4, 1975--North Platte, County Courthouse at 7:30 p.m.; and December 5, 1975--Scottsbluff, City Hall at 7:30 p.m. (55). The sites were based on accessibility to the public, and there was minimal cost involved in the hearings, both on the part of the Sculpture Corporation and the Legislature (26). Travel, lodging, and meals were the only remuneration received by Corporation members and Legislators.

In addition to attending the Hearings, individuals were encouraged to write their Congressmen, Governor Exon, Senator Kelly (Chairman of the sub-committee), and newspaper editors
in order to voice their opinions. Response to the hearings proved to be significant, both in attendance and testimony, with the Grand Island gathering being the largest with approximately 175 in attendance. Senator Kelly established the following format:

1. The Committee will receive testimony from those people favoring accepting of this gift of sculptures first.
2. Those opposing this gift of sculptures will then be heard.
3. There must not be any demonstrations, hand clapping or other distractions during this hearing.
4. The Chairman will recognize the testifier. The person testifying will state before the microphone his or her name, their place of residence, and sign the record provided. If a testifier is representing an organization, they [sic] must state that organization's name, address, and by what authority do they speak for that organization.

This Committee is a fact-finding committee. It will not deliberate nor conclude this subject. The information shall be made available to the Legislature. This record will be resource information should the Legislature receive the question, "Shall the Legislature approve gift of sculptures from the I-80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation" (24)?

The proceedings of each session were recorded, studied, and compiled by the Committee.

In preparation for the hearings, the importance of the Project was reiterated by Leo Daly, Chairman of the Corporation:

Part of the concept behind "art in public places" is to generate enthusiasm, controversy, debate, discussion and creative thinking. The greatest contributions to mankind have been artistic in nature, and they have withstood greater conflict than that which currently surrounds the I-80 Project (11).

Evidence of his statement is substantiated by such achievements as Mount Rushmore, the St. Louis Arch, the "Chicago
Picasso," and the "Blizzard of '88" mural which graces the rotunda of the Nebraska State Capitol, all of which were strongly opposed at the time of their creation. Further testimony of this sort was made by Senator John DeCamp when he said, "Art which is criticized today has sometimes become the standard for tomorrow. Perhaps this will be the case in this instance" (12).

Appropriate comments in the same vein were made by Art Thompson to urge proponents to make their convictions known:

Controversy over the sculpture itself is certainly expected and valid, as we all differ in our likes and dislikes. The important point is that those who like the project because of its concept, the sculpture, or on the basis of artistic freedom must speak out now. . . . Because our detractors have been highly visible and our supporters have not, many people, including some senators, are of the opinion that most people are opposed to the project. I do not believe this to be the case. It is time for those who support the arts, freedom of expression, and the rights of people to enjoy art of their choice to speak out (57).

Since the State Highway Commission played an important role in the Project, it was important to review comments from Bernard Logan, Executive Secretary of that Commission:

. . . [The Nebraska State Highway Commission] acknowledged that the absence of Nebraska artists and a similar absence of traditional sculptures representing Nebraska's history, heritage and traditions are a significant consideration which affects the apparent over-all public attitude toward the I-80 sculpture project (31).

In spite of this concern, the Commission, on August 22, 1975, issued an official proclamation reaffirming endorsement of the Nebraska I-80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project (31).
Many members of the populace were scrutinizing the Project, not only in regard to aesthetic qualities of the sculptures, but also from the standpoint of the legal controversy concerning bequests to the State of Nebraska, since a precedent would be established for future procedures. Both aspects were pertinent, as shown by remarks written by Senator Kelly to Eugene Mahoney who was Chairman of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council:

It is obvious that Nebraska citizens are disappointed in the reality of the Sculpture Garden. In all instances, the project was promoted on the concept of a Sculpture Garden. Now that the concept is actual many people are having second thoughts regarding this project. This is a highly emotional issue . . . I do believe this project could be a study regarding procedures followed by State Government in receiving gifts. It is extremely difficult to understand how these sculptures become the property of the people of Nebraska when they are so violently disliked. It appears that any department or agency can receive any kind of a gift and no one in authority has to approve the gift (25).

The following compilation, which exemplified public opinion, was extracted from the hearings, newspaper articles, editorials, lettes (written to the Bicentennial Corporation, Legislative Committee, and Senators), statements by selected commentators, and "Letters to the Editor."

Proponents

Mary Vercauteren, Associate Director of the Fine Arts Center at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, who was one of the jurors of the submitted works, wrote in defense of
the sculptures, "Controversy and complaint go hand-in-hand with the public display of sculpture" (22).

Another juror, Donald Goodall, who was at that time the Director of Texas Art Museum in Austin, commented, "The artist in this country is called upon to show us new directions, new ideas. I believe the sculptures selected will stand on their merits" (22).

The Nebraska-Iowa Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers went on record as supporting the sculptures, as shown in this comment by the Society President, David Rice, "We are concerned with the political football which it (the Project) has become, including insults directed to the artists themselves, as well as the jurors and all who assist their undertaking. It is sad that our elected officials in their elevated position have, and admit to, such low intellect and reject any elevation of same" (47).

The Director of the Grand Island Arts Council, Dorothy Creigh, voiced a favorable statement about art being brought to outstate Nebraska, ". . . [The] Arts Council has concentrated its efforts to see that art is taken out in the state to the people and not concentrated in the Omaha and Lincoln areas" (37).

A spokesman representing the Nebraska Arts Council expressed the following:

The Council wishes to endorse and support this project, not only because of the aesthetic contribution that it will make by providing major pieces of art in public
places outside of museum walls for all to enjoy, but also because the project will allow for an unusual and exciting experience for citizens of the state who will share in the production of the sculptures and have an opportunity to interact with the artist who will create them. The Council also commends the project for its involvement of business and community leaders who will provide financial and technical assistance in assuring its successful completion. Through such a project your organization reemphasizes those elements so essential to the philosophy that Art is for All People (11).

The President of the Nebraska Art Teachers Association, Jerry Gronewald, submitted this statement:

These sculptures will enable the school age population of Nebraska to experience a different and unique art form. Two weeks ago, while conducting a second grade paper sculpture class, one student remarked, "Say, you know, my sculpture looks like an interstate sculpture." It was refreshing to me to already see the impact of the sculptures on some of my students (17).

Hal Holoun, Director of Visual Arts Education at the State Museum, Grand Island, Nebraska, said, "... [There is a] lack of cultural resources and facilities in Nebraska at this time. The project will greatly enhance the appreciation of art through exposure throughout the state" (25).

The North Platte Telegraph ran an editorial stating:

Art is decoration. Art is expression of the spirit. Art says there is something to life besides eating and drinking and sleep. Art may be other things, too. ... The notion of decorating the endless, monotonous and eminently practical Interstate Highway with art that is spontaneous, startling and eminently impractical is bold and imaginative. Let us cheer for it, not jeer at it. ... We have not abandoned history and tradition in Nebraska. Heavens, no! We have it in abundance, and it is good. But all life is not history, and neither is all art. Let us decorate in this instance to celebrate the third century of our country (42).
Individual comments were expressed as follows:

Our state needs all the culture it can get and I'd like to think our children will think their fathers had some taste and good judgement when they chose modern sculpture from the best in the country (53).

We try to teach our children to get as much out of living as they possibly can, and seeing the sculptures will enrich their lives (8).

[The sculptures are] a step forward for the Nebraska art world . . . the project would put Nebraska on the map (14).

I feel that whether or not you actually approve of the precise works of sculpture, the project is furthering the visual arts in our own state by making the observer aware of what is happening in the art world (45).

As a board member of the Nebraska Art Association, as a University of Nebraska art major graduate, as a private citizen, I implore you to vote for the proposed I-80 sculptures. This project, in its present form, is giving Nebraska a wonderful chance to be recognized as a state interested in culture, as well as a state noted for its "Big Red" enthusiasm. The whole United States is looking at us—with envy—for having thought of the idea in the first place and for seeking out those sculptors who are in tune with the times. There is no way to please everyone—but at least, please listen to those of us who have had an extensive background in art—and who keep up with the changing world (6).

The following "Letter to the Editor" appeared in the Omaha World Herald:

The sculptures at the rest stops are magnificent. I especially like "Roadway Confluence" east of Sidney. It shows Nebraska's role in developing transcontinental transportation. I see the arms of the statue reaching to the heavens for help and guidance. Another striking sculpture is . . . an arch to show the importance of earth and sky to Nebraska. On this one also, arms reach out to a Greater Power. The sculptures all show the type of people who developed and still live in Nebraska (62).
The following six statements were extracted from the official hearings conducted by the Legislative Committee:

I not only see the theme as "Horizons" but also "A Link with the Past." I think the abstract designs are indicative of the computerized world in which we live. The designs are symbolic of the strength and spirit of Nebraska people and the durable materials also reflect this feeling of strength. The younger people especially will find much meaning in these sculptures as they grow with them (50).

The proposed sculptures are visually strong, aggressive and proud and in time the people of Nebraska will be as proud of this art as we are proud of our State Capitol (44).

One of the most exciting things that has ever happened in this state artistically! It seems to me the problem with the project is, to a large extent, one of representation. People seem to think they need to understand the sculptures, when in reality, this is not necessary any more than they understand the song of a bird. They should just accept and enjoy it (23).

George Baker's "Wind Sculpture" definitely relates to Nebraska in that Mr. Baker is fascinated with the changing winds, the color and the sunsets which Nebraska has, and this is reflected in his sculpture. Not only does the sculpture move in the water within itself, but is constructed of reflective materials that capture the changing seasons, the time of day, and will really become a part of the environment (46).

The sculpture project will create an exposure to the arts which will help citizens understand and appreciate them (49).

The sculptures will be an added complement and a beautiful extension of an already successful concept, our Interstate rest stops (58).

The ensuing comments were from a summary of correspondence received by the Legislative Committee:

These monuments will increase tourism in Nebraska (35).

Placing monuments along I-80 will expose contemporary art to rural Nebraska as well as cross country travelers (35).
Artists in residence will promote cultural activities in Nebraska communities (35).

Art is not definable in an absolute manner and as such is outside the realm of politics (35).

The rejection of these monuments would be a tragedy and a national humiliation. Other states will envy the Nebraska Bicentennial memorial. This is probably the most innovative Bicentennial project across the nation (35).

Nebraska will lead the way with public works of art which stimulate the imagination, delight the eye and excite the intellect (35).

This project will motivate additional public and private works of sculpture to fill in the garden (i.e. sculpture garden). Fear should not jeopardize expanded horizons for our citizens (35).

Censorship by the State and mandating artistic design by government is not right (35).

The broadening of knowledge and appreciation can only be truly obtained through exposure and familiarity, and there, sire, is the key word—EXPOSURE! Therefore, let's welcome, accept, and joyfully erect these sculptures along I-80. What better way to show the rest of the country and beyond that the hinterland area known as Nebraska is not ignorant or afraid of the more recent artistic expressions of man (35).

It is again time for Nebraskans to push forward with vigor to a new frontier. The scope of this Sculpture Project has, and will continue to emphasize Nebraskans' forward thrust, started by the first pioneer with a vision of a better life. They did not look back nor would they want us to look back but rather forward to the future we cannot yet visualize. Therefore, I feel these sculptures do embody our heritage and our future (35).

Shades of the 1920's and the Tennessee "Monkey Trials!" I feel it unbelievable that otherwise rational people can, in Nebraska in 1975, become so confused between personal taste and what is good for the overall image of Nebraska (60).

The state is in the business of providing opportunities for people to enjoy themselves in the form of state camp grounds, state lakes, bicycle trails, etc. I feel this
is entirely appropriate . . . and I think it's also entirely appropriate for the state at no expense to itself to accept a gift which allows that percentage of people who enjoy contemporary abstract sculpture to enjoy themselves (35).

The sculptures are relatively maintenance-free and economically, it would be a wise step for the state to accept them (35).

Such noted persons as Bertram Goodhue, the architect who designed the State Capitol; noted painter Robert Henri; Mari Sandoz; and Willa Cather were among Nebraskans who dared to be different. These people drew much criticism in their time, yet now are accepted and admired nationwide. Perhaps, in the future, these sculptors will be like this (35).

**Opponents**

The Hall County Board of Supervisors, meeting at Grand Island, went on record as opposing the Project. Their rationale was that the voters in their respective districts were "predominantly opposed to all the sculptures" for these reasons.

1. The cost of these sculptures could be used on parks and landmarks we already have.
2. Rest stops were not designed and are not the place to exhibit sculptures or monuments of any kind.
3. Transients and non-desirables would loiter around these particular rest stops, littering them and causing excessive parking and commotion. They may even invite stealing and crime, as well as accidents.
4. They in no way relate to the history or the heritage of Nebraska and are not accepted by the people of Central Nebraska (19).

Highway Commissioner David Brewlow of Lincoln asked,

Why do these monstrosities have to built all at once? Why isn't a Nebraska artist included? . . . [I] would prefer subjects closer to Nebraska history instead of the proposed large-scale shapes of steel and stone with titles like "Erma's Desire," a modernistic work planned for the Grand Island rest area. What's wrong with a
statue of a cowboy, a covered wagon or Senator George Norris of McCook (7)?

The following were excerpts from newspaper articles, editorials, and "Letters to the Editor":

Tom Palmerton, an artist from Brownville (Nebraska), the first Nebraska artist to publicly criticize the designs, said he disapproves of the selection of all out-of-state sculptors because "we have lots of good modern artists in Nebraska" (21).

It's too bad they can't relate more to our culture. The artists obviously had no knowledge of this area of the country (18).

At a time when the President is admonishing against unnecessary expenditures, when we have suffered a total loss of our dry land corn crop, when livestock producers are caught in a crushing feed to sale price ratio, when housewives are desperately searching supermarket shelves for food to fit the family budget, when the cost of farm machinery and land exceed the capitalized return, when unemployment is increasing, and the gross national product is declining, when we are trying to save energy by turning off lights and driving small cars, when many of our secondary highways are less than adequate, just how can the Bicentennial Committee justify the expenditure of a quarter of a million dollars for sculpture at highway rest stops? As a matter of fact, there are only a couple of reasons why people stop at rest stops, and looking at sculpture is not one of them (3).

On our way back from Cheyenne, we especially noted the so-called sculpture at the Interstate 80 rest stop near Sidney. That monstrosity is an insult to the good minds of the people of Nebraska. What does the sculpture portray? If this is art, I don't mind what I have been missing (33).

I believe the sculptures to be placed on Interstate 80 have something going for them. They should be immune to vandalism. Vandals would look at them and figure that all possible damage had already been done (5).

I should like to thank whoever is responsible for Nebraska's ten pieces of I-80 highway art. It will enable more Nebraskans to see examples of Americana which are otherwise barely discernible every week on
the TV show, "Sanford and Son." We should make a law that future junk yards be at least five miles from our artistic rest stops, so that tourists will not stop in the wrong places (4).

... I have added a head to Erma. We decided that it is "Erma's Desire" that she doesn't give birth to another pointed-head child who will grow up to be another legislator who would appropriate money for such utter foolishness (16).

"Erma's Desire" and others are ad nauseam (1).

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever." John Keats said it some time back. Well, starting in 1976, Interstate 80 will probably be known as the Trail of Joy, or something like that. There will be Things of Beauty strung out along its length, such as

- Gretna--Bat on a Hat
- Seward-Milford--Crutch Clutch
- York--Stonehenge Vandalized or Dentures, Unlimited
- Kearney--Who Dropped the Dishes?
- North Platte--Kiddie Play Corner
- Ogallala--The I-Beamino Theory
- Sidney--Scared Noodles

Grand Island probably gets the prize package of all. The sculptor has labeled it "Erma's Desire," which is perhaps as good a moniker as any. So what Erma wants, Erma gets. I have no desire to stub my toe on all those pointy things. And what is the point, if any?

... Since outdoor sculpture, as it has been pointed out, needs to be on a grand scale, why not a giant urinal--in the abstract, of course. As unglamorous as it may sound, that is foremost in the mind of someone in the car when a rest stop looms. Such a sculpture would no doubt become a famous landmark, to be called by an endearing term such as Big John (52).

Testimony at the Legislative Committee hearings included these remarks:

The proposed sculptures represent what the sculptor alone feels, and do not represent Nebraska's heritage, or what Nebraskans feel or stand for. I also mention the lack of publicity when the artists were chosen ... Nebraska artists were shunned when this project was being instituted. The design selected was very narrow--there could have been more variety in the selections (61).
Should the public subsidize only one style of art for this project? The monies which are to finance the sculptures are tax monies regardless of where they originated. It would be hard to reject a sculpture once it is constructed and the project should be given a little more consideration before construction is started (43).

I see them [the sculptures] as complimenting the undesirable happenings of the past twenty years. I feel the sculptures portray none of the intrinsic qualities of the provident nature of Nebraskans who have faithfully served America throughout its second one-hundred years. They should be rejected particularly because there are artists who possess the artistic genius to create beautiful and meaningful works of art which do not need an interpreter to be appreciated. There is a place for abstract art, but that place is not on Nebraska's Interstate (27).

... [I] question whether any art object has a place on the Interstate rest areas. If placed there, it will draw people who will litter the area, and deface the sculptures. There will be the problem of maintaining them over a long period of time. If accepted, they should be placed in state parks. There will also be special lighting costs that are required if they are constructed (29).

... [I] object to the names given the sculptures; if they are going to be accepted, they should remain nameless (41).

Most of the proponents who testified were artists, art students, art instructors or affiliated with the arts. Persons opposed to the I-80 Sculpture Project should also have the right of self-expression. If a vote of all Nebraska people were taken, the majority would be opposed to the acceptance of the sculptures (59).

Statements from correspondence received by the Legislative Committee and the Sculpture Corporation included the following:

People simply do not like abstract art. These monuments should not be honored as Bicentennial Sculptures. The minority favoring the abstract monuments are a well organized lobby machine. Cultural snobs are forcing these upon us. The Sculpture Concept was very acceptable--the reality is not (36)!
Modernist [sic] art is being forced on the people by a few of the "art community." The art community should not be the judge for the entire population. Proponents ridicule the opponents who are Nebraska's ordinary people. These monuments fail to communicate from the artist to the viewer. They are designed by artists for artists (36).

Federal money being used comes from our pockets. State money will be used to maintain the monuments. Our school arts programs are very good now and do not need these monuments for "art laboratories" (36).

It is believed that these designs are a "put-on." Surely, no one believes that this is Nebraska art (36).

To bypass our Nebraska artists continues the myth that Nebraska is a cultural wasteland (36).

The money, $550,000, would be much better spent on cancer and leukemia. Maybe this money could help save lives (36).

The monuments have no practical purpose. They just sit there and rust away (36).

This art, and I use the term loosely, does not fit in our landscape, industry or history. It has no bearing whatsoever to anything; it is one person's nightmare and one person only. Why must the public put up with it? The Committee claims that the whole project was well publicized, but it must have been done in a loud whisper, since the public was not much aware of what was going on until the artists had been selected and work was underway. This smacks of a public-be-damned attitude and some intellectual snobbery on their part (36).

It was good news to read recently that the Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project now is in serious jeopardy. Why place such massive monstrosities to detract the attention of drivers, adding another obstruction to safe driving? To say nothing of the waste of funds collected by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (2)!

Even though the ten piles of junk at the I-80 rest stops is a $500,000 Bicentennial Rip-off, you sure put it right where it belongs--out behind the Out-house (28).
The one particular sculpture which sparked the largest explosion was "Erma's Desire," designed by John Raimondi for the Grand Island Eastbound rest area. The plight of "Erma" was recounted in the Christian Science Monitor in August, 1975.

... "Erma's Desire" [is] an arrangement of long, slender steel spires. Apparently Nebraskans are more upset by the name than the sculpture itself, though Mr. Raimondi conceived it in homage to his mother. The Hall County Board of Commissioners in Grand Island, the site, recorded its opposition with a unanimous vote to deny a building or sign permit for the sculpture. The vote does not block the installation, but one board member explained that it at least forestalls the accusation that "the Hall County Board ain't got no class." Nevertheless, Mr. Raimondi, who spent July in Nebraska, insisted in a telephone interview that his welcome in Grand Island was "warm and genuine," and in turn welcomes the opportunity for a "sharing experience." The twenty-seven year old artist from Portland, Maine, is philosophical about the commotion. "People out here don't understand contemporary art so they're afraid of it. My piece is visually extremely aggressive, proud, and defiant, even to an artist. Anyone would have to react... All the controversy is simply proof that this is a remarkable project and that the state needs it. If everyone loved the sculptures they wouldn't be art" (30, p. 30).

Efforts to Resolve the Controversy

A major result of the controversy was a committee formed in Gibbon named the "Give Erma a Home" Committee. Gibbon is a community of 1600 people which is located thirty miles west of Grand Island on Interstate 80. In view of the adamant opposition which aroused fervent publicity concerning Raimondi's "Erma's Desire," citizens of Gibbon formed a booster committee to encourage placement of the piece at the Gibbon rest area rather than Grand Island.
At the core of the committee were Greg Burger, at that time an officer of the Gibbon Exchange Bank; Miller Godberson, mortician and furniture store operator; Sue Reiber, Gibbon homemaker and parttime student at Kearney State College; and Jim Novotne, officer of the Nebraska Beef Industries. Burger served as chairman of the committee, and Novotne as public relations advisor. Members of the group expressed to news media that they thought something of a positive nature should be done about the I-80 Sculpture Project. They also wished to counteract political factions, such as the Hall County Commissioners; Novotne expressed, "The irony of the situation was that people were getting involved when they really didn't belong there" (32).

Philosophical objectives were stated by the "Give Erma a Home" Committee.

1. We think "Erma," if we can be that familiar, will be very attractive to tourists and provide Gibbon with an added attraction.
2. We would have a permanent work of art that no community our size could ever hope to privately finance.
3. Gibbon would have an internationally recognized artist in residence.
4. Gibbon would be recognized by the nation as a progressive community that would not deny a work of art from the rest of the public simply because not everyone likes it or understands it (9).

Upon receipt of a petition displaying 280 signatures, Art Thompson wrote the following to Greg Burger:

Your committee is incredible. Without apparent red tape, large budgets, etc., you have mobilized and succeeded. It has been said that the committee was started as a joke and that your purpose is publicity. I don't know how you got started or how much of your
purpose is publicity, but am of the opinion that both are irrelevant. Your actions and support have been most gratifying and helpful to the Bicentennial Sculpture Project—that, I think, is what is important (56).

Art Thompson and John Raimondi met with the "Give Erma a Home" Committee and visited the Gibbon Eastbound rest area. Their assessment was that there would be problems concerning placement, as the Gibbon area was small in comparison to the Grand Island location. Thompson wrote, "... There is little room for a sculpture the size of 'Erma.' This might not be an insolvable problem, but it is a real one" (56). After the Gibbon committee was formulated, there were countless reactions, and publicity was widespread. Numerous local artists submitted various ideas and maquettes to the committee, some presented in zest. One outspoken opponent of the I-80 Project offered Miller Godberson a construction of scrap metal which he christened "Miller's Folly." Other sculptures decorated the offices of several committee members, mostly created out of old farm implement pieces and junk metal welded together. Novotne stated, "If we accomplish nothing else, we've at least stimulated interest in art in this community" (32).

When it became apparent in January, 1976, that the Project would proceed as planned, and "Erma's Desire" would be located at Grand Island, attempts were made to launch a drive for a separate eleventh highway sculpture to be placed at Gibbon. In view of finances which would be involved and the monumentality of the plan in general, the committee was
eventually disbanded, local support was thrust toward the Grand Island location, and the issue was concluded.

Resolution

At the close of the legislative hearings, the following tabulations were made by the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Corporation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance (approximate)</th>
<th>Speaking Pro</th>
<th>Speaking Con</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Island</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Platte</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottsbluff</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Primary reasons given at the hearings for support of the Project were (1) artist-in-residence programs, (2) promotion of the visual arts in Nebraska, (3) appreciation of the sculptures themselves, (4) national publicity creating a cultural image for Nebraska, and (5) promotion of tourism in the state (38).

Primary reasons given at the hearings for opposition to the Project were (1) dislike of sculpture designs, particularly those of a non-historical, abstract nature; (2) expenditure of public money; (3) maintenance, both present and future; (4) rest areas were inappropriate sites; and (5) lack of Nebraska artists among the selected sculptors (38).
The legislative hearings ultimately drew commendation from Senator Ralph Kelly of Grand Island, who was Chairman of the sub-committee and presided at the grassroots meetings throughout the state. As Chairman, he professed non-partisanship. A prepared statement by Kelly appeared in the *Omaha World Herald* on December 23, 1975.

Our report will summarize--without recommendations--the thrust of the letters and the testimony that came from the hearings. Regardless of what happens to the sculptures, this entire episode involved two key things. The first thing was the credibility of government. I think that was the main reason for the hearings. They gave people a chance to talk to their government, and the people talked plenty. If government had turned a deaf ear to the original controversy over this sculpture business, government would have won a black eye, and it would have been well-deserved. The second thing centers on state government accepting gifts. There are a couple of dozen agencies that can accept gifts and none of them have the same procedures. I'm glad this issue has been brought to the Legislature's attention (51).

The interim period between the hearings, which ended on December 5, 1975, and the legislative vote on January 14, 1976, was an anxious time for members of the Corporation. Art Thompson stated numerous problems would be presented if the Unicameral decided to reject the sculptures. He made the following comment concerning three alternative plans if this should occur: "(1) Move the sculptures to other locations off the Interstate; (2) Find some other way to keep them; or (3) Cancel the project" (20).

The culmination of the controversy was the adoption of Legislative Resolution 108, introduced by Senator Kelly, 35th
District, on January 12, and passed on January 14, 1976:

(Note: Included in the Resolution was a poignant suggestion for future sculpture projects.)

WHEREAS, the encouragement and public display of art is in the public interest, and
WHEREAS, the State of Nebraska, through its government, University, state college system and public schools has long encouraged the public display of art, and
WHEREAS, a refusal of the Interstate-80 Sculpture Corporation's gift of ten sculptures to the State of Nebraska would be a reversal of this policy, and
WHEREAS, such a reversal would make future art acquisitions more difficult, and would thward the public's desire to view public art, and
WHEREAS, many Nebraskans wish to support sculpture of a more traditional style, created by Nebraska artists and depicting Nebraska heritage,
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE IN EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION ASSEMBLED:
That the Legislature accepts on behalf of the citizens of this state, the gift of the I-80 Sculpture Corporation.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in order to provide public monuments of a more traditional nature, the Legislature recommends to the Nebraska Arts Council that an "All Nebraska Project" be organized to fulfill the desire of many Nebraskans to have traditional sculptures depicting Nebraska's heritage created by Nebraska artists on public display.
The Legislature directs its Clerk, Vincent D. Brown, to send a copy of this resolution to the two respective organizations (refers to the Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation) and the Governor, to inform them of the will of the Legislature (40).

Tabulation of the vote showed twenty-five Senators voted "Aye," fourteen voted "Nay," and ten did not vote (38). Thus, the controversy subsided somewhat, and plans for completion of the Project were begun again.
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CHAPTER IV

GOVERNMENT AND THE ARTS

The government of the United States has participated in the arts at various times during our nation's history, but that encouragement, participation, and funding has been described as "fitful and vacillating, with neither plan nor continuity" (12, p. 38). John Harris, from the University of Massachusetts, stated: "America has not always been kind to its artists and scholars. Somehow the scientists always seem to get the penthouse while the arts and humanities get the basement" (13, p. 387). Clare Booth Luce said that our government has done less for the support of art and culture than any other civilized country (30, p. 34).

In viewing a concise, general survey of government in the arts since the beginning of our nation, there appear to be four main factors.

1. Commissions for art work in the form of architecture, sculpture, and painting in the newly-founded nation's capital;

2. The Roosevelt years in the 1930's and early 1940's when an economic mainstay for artists was provided by a succession of government projects;
3. The creation of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 under which came the Artists-in-Residence program; and

4. President Reagan's proposed changes in government patronage of the arts with the Task Force acting as an advisory board and Congress enacting new legislative cut-backs.

In the following discussion of government and the arts, much of the attention was concentrated on sculpture in order that some comparisons could be drawn between former projects and the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation Project (NIBSC).

For the most part, large sculpture has been an art sponsored by many, because few individuals could pay the expense of privately owning this type of work. Moreover, many times it was associated with architecture or as a complement to a building. Even when large scale sculpture is not situated outside a building, it is still possible to conceive of it in architectural terms. Sculptor David Smith said, "Sculpture not dependent on architecture proper, but relegated to a setting as a park or for a memorial, still serves an architectural function. A secondary use of sculpture may be designated as free-creative. Here the sculpture is conceived independently, for purely aesthetic reasons" (25, p. 90). The NIBSC sculptures fall into the second category, as they were "free-creative ... conceived independently, for purely aesthetic reasons" (25, p. 90).
Early History of Government Support

In 1791, George Washington and Pierre Charles L'Enfant chose the site on the Potomac River to become the nation's capital. Its architectural progress began with announcement of a nationwide competition to submit a design for the new "Congress House," first prize being $500 and a city lot in Washington, D. C. (6, p. 146). The plan of William Thornton was selected, and in 1800, when Thomas Jefferson began his Presidency, the first section of the Capital was complete. In succeeding years, expansion occurred. In view of this expansion,

... Jefferson and his successors in the White House stood guard over the integrity of the original design. As a result, the architects of the Capital channeled their creative powers into magnificent architectural and sculptural details which became some of the building's most enduring legacies. Legislation passed in 1803 gave Jefferson absolute control over all government structures in Washington, plus a $50,000 appropriation for their construction. He appointed Benjamin Henry Latrobe, an English-born architect, as Surveyor of Public Buildings (6, p. 149).

In contrast to the authority invested in President Jefferson by the law of 1803, the NIBSC Project was not ultimately controlled by the Governor of Nebraska or any other one individual. Instead, it was the Nebraska state legislature that had final power, because of the legal technicality concerning installation on public property.

Even in an early day, funding was an important matter, as shown by the following statement: "Latrobe's expenditures for
the House chamber exceeded appropriations by seventy percent, compelling Jefferson to apologize to Congress and reprimand his architecture" (6, p. 151).

Additions to the Capitol were constructed and sculptures and paintings installed within. During the Civil War, President Lincoln continued to build, explaining, "If people see the Capitol going on, it is a sign we intend the Union shall go on" (6, p. 157). By 1865, when Lincoln was inaugurated for the second time, the dome was finished and decorated, Randolph Rugers' bronze sculptured House doors were installed, and Thomas Crawford's statue of "freedom" was put in place atop the dome (6, p. 157). In due time, the Capitol became not only an important meeting place, but a gallery for works of art commissioned by Congress, many of which were lost in 1814 when fire gutted the Capitol. The only architectural sculpture which survived were six columns with corn-stalk capitals designed by Latrobe (6, p. 147). In 1864, Congress decided the old House chamber (the House having been moved to a new section of the Capitol) be converted into "Statuary Hall" where each state contributed statues of deceased citizens who had made outstanding contributions (29, pp. 5-6). The gallery now accommodates one statue from each of the fifty states, including Nebraska's statue of William Jennings Bryan.

In 1857, there was a group of artists, 127 in all, who petitioned President Buchanan to bestow recognition upon art and artists, and he obliged by directing the establishment of
the first United States Commission of Fine Arts. However, the Commission was short-lived, and after one year, fell into obscurity. It was not until 1909, under the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, that a group known as the American Architects appealed to the President about the low professional caliber of government buildings. In 1910, under the Taft administration, a new Commission of Fine Arts was founded. It was strictly an advisory body with very little real power, serving as counsel on the design and decoration of federal buildings and monuments. Members did not have the authority to initiate projects or commission architects and artists. Those who belonged to the Fine Arts Commission were chosen by the President from the professional fields of painting, sculpture, architecture, and landscape architecture (22, p. 27).

As the years progressed, industrial growth and the nation's expansion crowded out extensive cultural plans, but several Presidents rekindled a sense of relationship between government and the arts: Theodore Roosevelt brought artists and musicians to the White House; Harry Truman asked for an extensive survey on "Art and Government" by the Commission of Fine Arts; President Eisenhower established a Commission on National Goals, which dealt with the cultural life of the United States; John Kennedy laid ground-work for the Endowments which were legislated by Lyndon Johnson; and Nixon and Carter bestowed honorable recognition by means of "special dinners, individual invitations to the White House, and occasional
performances by leading professional artists" (2, p. 107). Ronald Reagan, regardless of his proposed cuts in budgeting for the arts, is appreciative and supportive.

Changes occurred in the art scene, as expressed by Lloyd Goodrich, Chairman of the Commission on Government and Art,

... Our government's attitude toward art and the artist [was] traced back to a deep distrust of art, a survival of Puritan proscription of the painted or graven image that still persists in backward areas. Then came the tremendous growth of private capital in the nineteenth century, creating private art patronage on a financial scale such as the world has seldom seen. Our great museums and a large part of our art educational systems were results of this vast accumulation of private capital (11, p. 38).

The NIBSC Project was the result of the collective endeavor of the United States Government (through the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration and the National Endowment for the Arts), art patrons, and private and corporate capital.

Projects of the Depression Years

When President Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated in 1933, the Depression was a major factor in all walks of American life. It was because of the Depression that a series of projects was instituted which produced extensive examples of contemporary art of that time. It produced a renaissance of the arts, of a sort; however, the initial purpose was to prevent starvation, and when the Depression ended, government interest ended (14, p. 8).
The first of the federally sponsored art programs was the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) which was funded by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1933 under the Treasury Department. Within a span of a few days, regional committees were established (sixteen in all), and the first artists were put on the payroll. Haste and enthusiasm were essential ingredients for the success of the Project, since a trial period of only two months had been granted by the government; also, the artists' need for such a program was immediate and great (23, p. 2). Enthusiasm was prevalent primarily because of the spirit of Edward Bruce, an expert lobbyist who was also a painter.

Immediate aims of the PWAP were basically two-fold: 1. To supply work for unemployed American artists; and 2. To obtain sculpture and mural decorations for Federal buildings which were of the highest aesthetic quality available. Broad aims of the PWAP were as follows:

1. To establish democratic methods of government art patronage;
2. To de-centralize artistic activity throughout the entire nation;
3. To encourage the emergence of young, unknown talent;
4. To increase the general public appreciation of the arts; and
5. To promote a closer interrelation of the artist with his social environment (23, p. 3).

However, administrators of the PWAP found that its two primary aims were not necessarily compatible; consequently, it was abandoned in June, 1934. When the program ended, it
was the consensus of opinion that patronage of the arts was an important and feasible function of government. In fact, there was a movement underway in the same year by a group of art-minded patrons, calling themselves the Fine Arts Foundation, who tried to establish a Secretary of Art in the President's Cabinet. As late as 1939, bills were still being introduced to establish a Bureau of Fine Arts under jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, but the bills were never returned from committee (23, p. 5).

The PWAP was succeeded by two independent art programs known as the Section of Painting and Sculpture (later called the Section of Fine Arts) and the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP). The WPA itself had been created upon executive order by President Roosevelt on May 6, 1935. In 1939, the WPA was renamed the Works Projects Administration and remained in existence until 1943. The section was not established as a relief project per se, but commissioned artists to decorate Federal buildings on the basis of open competitions on both regional and national levels. The WPA/FAP was a relief project in that each artist received a weekly remuneration for work done according to prevailing wages he would have received in private industry (23, p. 3).

The Section of Fine Arts promoted public interest by installation of high quality art in public places by professional artists, whereas, the WPA/FAP was aimed at a more general, popular art audience. The artists who were employed
under this agency needed to meet no specific standards of
ability or professional training.

Public opinion had a profound impact upon art under the
Section. For example,

A painter of a mural commission for the Section of
Fine Arts was paid in three installments, after the
approval by the Washington staff of the design, the
cartoon and the final installation. For the last,
local approval also was prerequisite. . . . To an
artist this meant to produce a capable, pleasant and
safe mural, dealing with local industry or historical
episode, which would antagonize nobody and would get
quick approval from everyone. Experimental and
vigorous work or anything controversial in style or
theme was repressed. . . . While standards for
granting a government public commission need to be
high, in the execution, the artist should not be
hampered by excessive bureaucratic supervision (23,
pp. 7-8).

This aspect of administrative methods may be compared with
the NIBSC Project, in that two panels of judges, representa-
tives from the host communities, the NIBSC and Nebraska
legislators rendered decisions on the I-80 sculptures.

Controversy occurred between the Commission of Fine Arts
and The Section when the latter approved a commission for
George Bibble to paint a mural for one of the staircases in
the Department of Justice building; criticism arose because
of the abstract style. Other criticisms arose about subversive-
ness which was suspected when a coded message (thought to be a
message written in Icelandic, suggesting a Puerto Rican revolt)
was painted in an inconspicuous part of a post office mural
done by Rockwell Kent. It was later painted out. Also, one
of Maurice Sterne's works labeled "offusive untrue" in a mural with religious overtones (10, pp. 74-79).

The American scene before the advent of the WPA/FAP was disheartening to most sculptors in general, because most of their opportunities came from an occasional prize in a museum show (7, p. 88). Under the auspices of the WPA/FAP, works of sculpture included friezes, pediments, plaques, and figures installed in schools, colleges, libraries, government housing units and additional public buildings, as well as in public parks, gardens, and courtyards of buildings. Many casts of works of sculpture were placed in schools and libraries throughout the country (21, p. 84).

The FAP encouraged production in the fine arts, crafts, industrial and folk arts and organized Community Art Centers open to the public where people could actually participate in creative endeavors. These Centers proved advantageous, as they provided a direct stimulus for hundreds of people who participated in art activities in any of the 107 locations across the country. There were free demonstrations, classes in the arts and crafts, and numerous exhibitions. Certain aspects of this part of the Project were extremely far reaching, since some of these Centers were continued with local funding as regular, on-going community projects; an example is the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, a major institution still in existence (23, pp. 5-6).
An accounting of works of art that were produced under the WPA/FAP during the years of its existence (1935-1943) was as follows:

- 1,400 murals installed in buildings throughout the country;
- 50,000 oil and watercolor paintings;
- 90,000 prints on permanent loan to schools, libraries, and public agencies;
- 1,700 sculptures in public buildings;
- 975 large dioramas and models to be used in schools;
- 39,125 map drawings and diagrams;
- 15,300 lantern slides;
- 52,100 arts and crafts objects;
- 495,620 documentary photographs; and
- 850,000 reproductions of posters from 28,000 designs.

In 1935, another program was initiated known as the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP), employing artists to decorate post offices, government buildings, and buildings in the Federal Housing Projects. Most of the paintings and sculptures that were commissioned were comparatively small, and many were for Federal buildings which were already constructed or for those having no budget allowance for artistic decoration (19, p. 25). In contrast to the Federal Art Project, TRAP established prerequisites for performance or training on the part of the participants.

A financial report showed approximately $83,500,000 as the grand total used in public funds for art in the decade from 1933 through 1942. In return for this amount, the following things occurred: 1. Hundreds of American artists were not only spared economic disaster, but were given opportunities to create and develop their talents so they eventually achieved
national and international recognition. Artists such as Ben Shahn, Philip Guston, and Jack Levine owe part of their success to "the fact that the government made it possible for them to continue as artists when the Depression might well have forced them into other professions" (23, pp. 4-5);

2. Millions of adults and children attended numerous art and crafts classes in Community Art Centers and galleries throughout the country; 3. Many people who resided in remote areas of the nation were able to enjoy original works of art for the first time; and 4. Numerous works of art in various locations were provided for the benefit of the public.

There was a decided change in the attitude of government in the arts after Pearl Harbor when the United States entered World War II. Patronage of art rapidly waned. There remained a few areas of support such as,

The Section of Fine Arts sponsored competitions for the design of war bond posters etc. and employed a group of artists to make a visual record of the civilian war effort. The Army and Navy subsequently undertook similar programs, commissioning a limited number of artists to make a pictorial record of the fighting fronts. The Section managed to extend over the war period a few contracts for murals still in the design stage, in order to permit the artist to conclude his commission at a later date. . . . When America declared war, the Art Project shifted its last decorative projects to Officers' Clubs and other military establishments. Later, with various Visual Aids programs under military sponsorship, it tried to adapt itself to war needs (23, p. 4).

During World War II, the State Department purchased approximately 100 works of art created by living American artists which were to be used for exhibitions in other countries
as cultural propaganda. Underlying political currents forced the sale of most of the art as war surplus, because pressure was brought to bear by art reactionaries who thought the work subversive. The following was an account of events:

... It is doubtful whether the United States Department of State could stick its neck into a worse hornet's nest than it did when it purchased [the works] ... Running true to form, American artists and organizations could not agree on "what is art," and those who felt that the State Department knew even less talked the loudest and won the day. Government Departments are sensitive to loud speakers and pressure tactics. Perhaps, also, the State Department wasn't too sure of its own judgment in art. At all events, in June, 1948, the entire collection to the value of $80,000.00 was sold as war surplus to nineteen successful bidders as the result of 149 bids entered by museums, galleries, college and university groups, libraries, and a few veterans as individuals (12, p. 55).

Similar remarks were leveled at the administrators of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project and the Nebraska state legislators when their judgment was attacked after their support and acceptance of the sculptures. Some public factions hastily questioned if they knew what constituted acceptable art.

National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) supplied $20,000 for the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Project. Thus, it was important to understand the background of that agency. As an independent agency of the Federal Government, the National Endowment for the Arts was founded in 1965 (at the same time as the National Endowment for the Humanities, NEH). Both were
components of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities which emerged the same year (1964) upon advice from the National Council on the Arts. The Council established by Congress, was composed of the Chairman of the NEA and twenty-six private citizens who had distinguished themselves by their knowledge, expertise, or interest in the arts. Membership was by Presidential appointment. Another agency included in the structure of the National Foundation was the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities made up of two Congressmen and the heads of twelve federal agencies (such as the Office of Education). Thus, the NEA is an integral part of several government operations.

Congress appropriates money to the NEA which in turn is granted to (1) individuals with exceptional talent or (2) non-profit tax-exempt organizations representing excellence in the Arts. Grants to individuals require no matching funds, but those to organizations (with some exceptions) must have the same amount of matching money (17, p. 5).

The NEA sponsors numerous fellowships and funds for various specialized areas, such as art for the handicapped, art research, environmental arts, museum programs, plus others, including "Works of Art in Public Places." The latter is a major category for NEA grants, and it is the classification into which the Nebraska Project fell. Under that classification, monetary grants from $120,000 to $50,000 were made available for sculpture (17, p. 81). According to national
guidelines, goals for this type of art were the following:

To give the public access to the best contemporary art in public situations outside museum walls, while providing opportunities, challenges, and employment for the nation's artists of exceptional talent. It is the Endowment's intention that the work of art will contribute to the public's enjoyment, education, and enlightenment; that it will create a favorable climate for the reception of all the arts; and that a distinguished heritage of public art will be passed on to future generations. . . . A significant part of the program is the stimulation of an effective partnership among cities, states, private institutions, the private sector, and the Federal Government (17, p. 81).

A continuing problem for the NEA, as well as government in the arts in general, is censorship—or the lack of it. Problems arose when numerous complaints occurred about government-funded productions (including the visual arts, literature, dance and theatre) in which the public objected for reasons of offensiveness or frivolity. An example of such offensiveness is found in Erica Jong's novel titled Fear of Flying (1973). On the first page was an expression of thanks to the National Endowment for the Arts for its funding, and on the next page, Chapter One was titled "En Route to the Congress of Dreams, or the Zipless Fuck" (26, p. 135). An example of frivolousness related to NEA projects came when one artist requested a grant for a "loop tour of Western U.S. . . . dripping ink from Haley, Idaho, to Cody, Wyoming—an event commemorating the birthplaces of Ezra Pound and Jackson Pollock" (26, p. 131). This artist, whose name was not revealed, was denied the grant request.
In order to arrive at some form of censorship, there were groups of professional advisors for the visual, literary, and performing arts. However, the guidelines were loosely woven and a matter of personal aesthetics on the part of the advisors. In defense of some of the criticisms, Congressman Sidney Yates from Illinois, Chairman of the appropriations subcommittee which handled the Endowment, made the following comment: "My mind goes back to the time of the Armory Show in 1914, when the critics ... said that all the paintings were trash ... Perhaps time has a habit of changing values, customs and attitudes" (26, p. 138).

Recurring complaints about avant-garde art and its non-representationalism was echoed in Congressional subcommittee hearings. In 1967, Roger Stevens, who was Chairman of the National Council on the Arts, testified,

... Seventy-five percent of the [Endowment] funds went to "non-representational" artists.... The biggest art news of the week was the unveiling of the "Chicago Picasso" sculpture, a work so "non-representational" that it has been called a "Communist plot," a "baboon," and a "dodo bird." An estimated 50,000 spectators--some carrying protest signs--witnessed the unveiling of the sculpture in Chicago's Civic Center on August 15, 1967 (1, p. 11).

In comparison, the non-representational subject matter of the Nebraska I-80 Project was one of its most controversial aspects, also. Perhaps time, as in the case of the Armory Show, will be a soothing factor.
Artists-in-Residence Program

It was pertinent to review the National Endowment for the Arts Artists-in-Residence program, since all individuals involved in the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project, from the administrators down through the ranks to the artists themselves, considered it the model for one of the most positive and important phases of the entire Project. Students, residents of the host cities, and passers-by were free to observe the sculptors at work on location, so to speak, and meet them on a one-to-one basis, if they so desired. It became an integral part of the plan, because the usual role of the artist was reversed when the patron came to him. In some cases, the patron came as a hostile viewer, but after this type of direct personal interaction, many times an understanding began to prevail.

It is necessary to note that the Nebraska Project was not under the auspices of the NEA Artists-in-Residence program, but it was specifically patterned after the government program. There was no government money used in that facet of the Project; all funding for artists-in-residence was from individual and private sources. Since it was used as a model, background information concerning the national Artists-in-Residence program is investigated in the following.

Stimulus for a change in the climate of basic education was provided by enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Act by Congress in 1965 and funding for the National Endowment
for the Arts in the same year. Avenues were opened "which engendered the beginnings of a partnership between the arts and education" (24, p. 21). In 1969, in cooperation with the United States Office of Education, which transferred $100,000 to the Endowment to be used in a pilot program for artists-in-residence in the schools, six professional visual artists were funded in high schools in each of six states. The plan was so successful that $900,000 was bequested in 1970; and in the 1971-1972 school year, forty-nine states were involved with 1,000 participating schools and 650 artists—working in all disciplines, including the visual arts (24, p. 22).

The program was as literal as its title—artists moved into communities and school districts and worked with students on an intimate basis. The artists lectured, explained, created, aided, exhibited, and interacted with individuals on the grassroots level in the area of their expertise. Funding was through the Artists-in-Residence program of the National Endowment for the Arts. Thus, the program was launched.

The philosophy of Artists-in-Residence embodied the fact that "nurturing aesthetic awareness and participative experience in the creative arts processes as integral parts of education" was important (24, p. 13). Therefore, a goal of the program involved providing art-oriented experiences for all, regardless of economic, emotional, and physical differences. The Endowment viewed its program
... as a humanizing force in education; as a method of offering opportunities to children to experience the arts at a time when they are forming life-patterns and making career and long-lasting audiences for the arts; and, as a way of providing support for artists in all areas of the arts as they relate to schools and young people (24, p. 41).

Pragmatic aspects of the Artists-in-Residence program were stated by the NEA.

The program is administered largely through state arts councils which, after grant review by the National Council on the Arts, consult with state boards of education and district school officials in the selection of schools involved. The artists are generally chosen by panels made up of artists, arts council members, educators, and consultants (24, p. 23).

As an appropriate comparison to the NEA's Artists-in-Residence program, an artists-in-residence project was instituted and funded by Bankers Life Nebraska in 1973. This company was a major contributor to the NIBSC Project and knowingly paved the way for the Project by engaging Reinhold P. Marxhausen, Professor of Art at Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska, as an artist-in-residence. Beginning in May, 1973, Marxhausen was given a private grant to work with students and residents in eastern and central Nebraska, particularly in the area of sculpture. His presentations were enlightening to his audiences as to philosophy, media, and construction processes used in various works of art. In a sense, he helped lay a foundation of understanding and acceptance for the NIBSC Project which was forthcoming. He made a slide presentation entitled "How to See" which was transformed into a film version called "A Time to See"; the
film was also sponsored and funded by Bankers Life Nebraska. The company won a national Business Committee for the Arts award in 1973 for the Marxhausen artist-in-residence program and a second award in 1977 from the BCA and Forbes Magazine for support of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project (5, p. 7).

**Government and the Arts in the Reagan Administration**

In May, 1979, a comprehensive long-range budget was presented to the National Council on the Arts in which a total of $300 million for cultural projects was presented as a budget projection for the five-year period of 1980 through 1984 (8, p. 4). The budget was prepared at the request of the NEA and the Endowment's Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman, Sidney Yates (Democrat from Illinois). In the summer of 1979, the following appeared in the *Cultural Post*:

The five-year plan, which assumes that recent phenomenal expansion of the arts in this country is not leveling off, is organized around the statement of five basic policies the Council adopted last year. The five are,

1. Individual creativity and excellence (support for individual artists),
2. Institutional creativity and excellence (support for art institutions),
3. The living heritage (videotape and other visuals which record and preserve work of living artists),
4. Making the arts available (media programs--television, films, radio), and
5. Leadership in the arts (to encourage other federal agencies to utilize the arts in fulfilling their goals (8, p. 4).

However, the long-range plan found itself in jeopardy when the Reagan administration (election in 1980 and
inauguration in 1981) proposed funding to be slashed for numerous government agencies. Both the Senate and House of Representatives gave approval to President Reagan's overall budget which would bring numerous changes for the Endowments, as well as other organizations. Originally, Reagan proposed almost a 50 percent reduction for the Endowment programs in 1982. The 1981 NEA allocations were $158,560,000, and revised figures which were proposed for 1982 were $88,000,000. (Fiscal year 1982 is from October 1, 1981 through September 30, 1982). A memorandum from the NEA in May, 1981 stated,

If Congress approves the Reagan budget, the Endowment, following the instructions of the National Council, will have to alter its already printed guidelines in some cases. Specifically, some eligibility criteria would become more stringent, and some grant categories would be eliminated (16, p. 16).

In May, 1981, President Reagan appointed a special committee called the White House Task Force on the Arts and Humanities to study the Endowments; actor Charlton Heston, Chairman of the Screen Actors Guild, and Hannah Gray, President of the University of Chicago, were appointed co-chairmen (9). Members of the committee were charged with the assignment to investigate financial aspects of the Endowments and "to make better use of existing federal resources and to increase the support for the arts and humanities by the private sector" (27, p. 2). From the White House on May 6, 1981, came the following press release, a statement by the President in which he said:
I am naming this Task Force because of my deep concern for the arts and humanities in America. Our cultural institutions are an essential natural resource; they must be kept strong. While I believe firmly that the federal government must reduce its spending, I am nevertheless sympathetic to the very real needs of our cultural organizations (20, p. 1).

Charlton Heston's appraisal of President Reagan's actions was,

I think the reason the President appointed the task force is that he wanted to make his determinations with as many facts as possible. . . . It stands to reason that he is concerned about the arts. It is his opinion that the Federal Government has a permanent role to play, with the extent to be determined by Congress. . . . He feels the Endowments have been useful (15).

Reagan has suggested that private sources must make up the monetary deficit, but spokesmen for the American Telephone and Telegraph, International Business Machines, Exxon, and other corporate benefactors of the arts expressed the following:

"We're also going to be hit by the health, welfare and school people. . . . There just isn't enough to take care of everybody." Can private sources make up the difference as Reagan suggests? Some leading lights in the arts say they must. . . . Artists say they are prepared to do their share in revitalizing America; what concerns them more than the exact level of cuts is the suggestion that the Reagan Administration may want to reopen the whole debate over whether government should subsidize the arts at all--a debate they thought was won fifteen years ago when the two Endowments were created by Congress (3, pp. 28, 31).

Studies and proposals were made by the Task Force, but a final decision has not been reached at this time. The following memorandum was sent to the state arts council from the NEA on August 3, 1981:
The news from Washington continues to be more positive as increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts seems to be coming closer to a reality. The NEA will still receive cuts from the previous ceiling, but it appears now that a 50% reduction (to $88 million) is unlikely (28, p. 1).

Supporters of the arts (in 1981) under the Reagan administration, were the American Arts Alliance, which served as the lobbying agency, and a group of senators from both parties who banded together to form a group called "Concerned Senators for the Arts" (3, p. 28). Arguments of these two groups included the following:

Their legislative strategy is to present the arts as an economic boon as well as a spiritual one—an industry employing over a million people, generating $5 in local tax revenues for every dollar of government support. "An unemployed artist," observes lobbyist Anne Murphy, "is just as unemployed as an unemployed steelworker." Democratic Congressman Sidney Yates of Illinois, whose subcommittee will have to pass on the Endowments' budgets, thinks the fifty percent cutback is "too drastic" (3, p. 28).

One of the fears about the cuts was that programs on the grandiose scale, such as those for museums and other large institutions, would experience grants from whatever NEA funds were available much more readily than small, community-based projects—programs which would have less opportunities for private funding, as well. Anticipated changes for 1982 included total reorganization of fellowship programs, probable suspension of grants to newly-emerging arts organizations, and cuts aimed at the challenge grant programs (4, p. 218).

When President Reagan's budget director, David Stockman, recommended cutting the arts budget, he "warned that artists
and cultural institutions were beginning to look to the Federal government as the financial patron of first resort—supplanting individual and corporate donors" (3, p. 31). If the NIBSC Project were in its planning or creative stages under the present administration, financial affairs possibly would be considerably altered.

Comparisons of Earlier Government Projects with the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project

There were both differences and similarities between the NIBSC Project and earlier government sculpture projects. One distinguishable comparison was a philosophical one. The aims of the government programs of the 1930's were to provide employment for destitute artists and to provide works of art for public display, hopefully of high aesthetic quality (23, p. 3). The NIBSC Project was to celebrate America's Bicentennial by the installation of contemporary sculpture which would provide some of the best available outside museum walls and extend an educational opportunity—that of meeting the sculptors and viewing the creative process first hand.

WPA artists, like the NIBSC artists, were aware that their audience would be a "people's audience" (18, p. 18). In the 1930's, WPA artists often worked on location, such as in school libraries, prisons, or on facades of public buildings. Frequently these projects provided people their first experience in seeing a professional artist at work. Edgar
Britton, a Chicago muralist, stated that "by executing his work in public, the artist is doing a great deal toward dissipating the halo of mystery surrounding works of art" (18, p. 19). The same conclusion was voiced by several of the Nebraska I-80 artists after their participation in the artists-in-residence part of the Project as a result of participating at the actual sculpture sites or of working in arenas furnished by the host cities.

A grassroots educational experience was on hand for many people who came in contact with some of the artists who worked on the WPA projects as teachers. "It is not realized that most of our urban school systems and settlement houses did not have extensive art programs until the WPA/FAP sent in professional artists ... from the relief rolls to develop them" (18, pp. 19-20).

The WPA/FAP helped to promote art experiences for as many people as possible by not confining art "to the large cities, to any one section of the country, or to any special group in the community" (18, p. 43). Somewhat the same point of view was true in the NIBSC Project, even though its scope was state-wide rather than nation-wide; the sculptures, both in the construction stage and final presentation, were accessible to everyone and located primarily in rural areas throughout the state.

Controversial factors were subject matter, style, and selection of the artists. In the 1930's, subject matter
encompassed mainly historical narratives and portraits which "reflect[ed] the very important retrospective tendencies inherent in the culture of the 1930's" (18, p. 20). In addition, there were some examples of the contemporary American scene and social protest, some of which were executed in abstract forms. Non-objective works of art were not created whereas they were in the NIBSC Project. Because of his non-representational style, Isamu Noguchi was unable to get his designs approved by either the New York Committee or the Washington Administration. The administrator of the Public Works of Art Project cited Noguchi's work as lacking "a pure sculptural character" (19, p. 33). This took place in 1934, when he appealed to the PWAP for employment. Several artists of the Depression era commented about subject matter being dictated to them with no allowance for non-representationalism. Byron Browne wrote, in 1934,

> As my work contains little or no emphasis on subject matter, I was ignored for a long time after the PWAP began to function and then was cut off after a period of four weeks. This has also happened in many other cases. So here we have a great art movement in the country with no idea of aiding the artist (19, p. 33).

Thus, some artists felt they were being discriminated against. In the NIBSC Project, some Nebraska citizens and certain artists, as well, felt a certain amount of discrimination when only non-objective works were selected and none of the chosen sculptures were by Nebraska artists. Another parallel may be drawn between the Depression projects and the NIBSC Project in that there was an element of distrust about
the whole idea; people of the 1930's mentioned the fact that they did not consider art as work which qualified for government support. Likewise, concerning the Nebraska Project, some believed the entire idea of celebrating the Bicentennial by creating a work of art was one of folly. This belief was extremely visible at the time of the Nebraska Legislature hearings about the sculptures which took place in 1975.

During the time of The Section (1934-1943), guidelines stipulated that artists were not permitted "artistic and ideological freedom" (19, p. 24). In contrast, the NIBSC Project artists were allowed artistic freedom as long as they related their sculptures to the theme of "horizons," made them structurally sound, and were appropriate to the rest area sites. Part of the opposition to activities centering around the WPA/FAP was because some of the people suspected Communist subversion (19, p. 27). The NIBSC Project encountered criticisms of a different nature. Many of the WPA artists expressed a sense of community among the artists because of their cooperative efforts on the same pieces of art work (e.g. mural paintings) or by sharing common studios. Several of the NIBSC Project sculptors criticized the 1976 Nebraska Project because there was no interaction, feeling of camaraderie, or real opportunity for personal communication with one another.

The Depression artists found disparaging disadvantages in the "low wage scale and the relief stigma attached to employment on the WPA/FAP" (19, p. 98). This was in opposition to
the honor and esteem bestowed upon the eight sculptors chosen to execute the I-80 sculptures. Several responded that they felt the publicity and exposure has had a positive effect upon their careers.
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CHAPTER V

PROJECTS COMPARABLE TO THE NEBRASKA INTERSTATE-80 BICENTENNIAL SCULPTURE PROJECT

Since ancient civilizations, artists have created outdoor sculptures, for example, Egyptian funerary statues and Greek exterior reliefs on their temples. Consequently, the concept of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project was not new. Outdoor sculpture is a means of providing easy access to the visual arts. There is a responsibility assumed by governmental agencies, businesses, communities, and others who play a significant part in the aesthetic quality of our physical surroundings. The United States government was cognizant of this responsibility when it established the Commission on Highway Beautification under the auspices of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970. The purpose of this commission was "to study laws and practices affecting highway beautification and to report to Congress and the President" (9, p. iii).

Outdoor sculpture projects of recent years, such as the I-80 Project, attest to the increased popularity of this type of sculpture. In spite of this rising prestige, there are also problems. "Not all works of outdoor sculpture are
successful, not all programs undertaken have been well received, and not all worthwhile programs have been carried beyond the conceptual stage" (7, p. 9). The latter fact was well-documented by data and illustrations in the book Unbuilt America, which, as the title implies, concerned architecture and sculptures which were never completed, including pieces for the Nebraska Project (8, pp. 253-256). Another of the problems is that dissension often occurs, as on the Nebraska scene where some elements of disapproval still remain concerning the sculptures, both on the part of Nebraskans and travelers through the state.

In order to be successful, outdoor sculpture projects require approval and collaboration among various individuals and groups of people--sponsors, financial benefactors, artists, and audience--namely, the public, in this case. Margaret Robinette, author of Outdoor Sculpture, written in 1976, stated,

One thing is certain, while public art cannot and should not be selected according to public taste, people do like to be consulted about their feelings toward art. Sometimes negative response is replaced in time with tolerance and a sort of casual pride (7, p. 10).

As a means to further the understanding and significance of the NIBSC Project, similar sculpture projects were investigated and compared. Research was confined to relatively permanent sculpture designed for display along public roads. (For example, temporary works classified as highway sculpture,
such as "Valley Curtain," north of Rifle, Colorado, on Highway 325, which was created by Christo Javacheff, in 1971, and again in 1972, were omitted from the study.) Six contemporary highway sculpture projects are discussed and comparisons made; they are presented in chronological order, from 1968 through 1974. Some of them are singular works of sculpture, such as the Paxico, Kansas, project, while others are multiple works, like Vermont's "Sculpture on the Highway," which consists of eighteen sculptures.

Vermont Project

This project was the culmination of the Vermont International Sculpture Symposia '68 and '71. The initial international symposium, as such, was introduced in 1959, in Austria, and in subsequent years, similar ones were held in several central European countries, as well as Japan, Mexico, Canada, and the United States (7, p. 76). The Vermont Symposia provided opportunities for each of the participating sculptors to execute a work of outdoor art which would be too large for his individual sculpture studio and personal budget. The following philosophy was expressed in Robinette's Outdoor Sculpture: "The sculptures were created by artists who believe that art should be not only in museums and galleries, visited by the special few; but it should be in public places where its unique qualities can be enjoyed by many" (7, p. 144). This statement is very similar to that expressed by the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation.
The originators of the idea of the Vermont Symposia were Paul Aschenback, who served as Director—a sculptor and member of the art department faculty at the University of Vermont, Burlington—and Art Williams, Director of the Vermont Council on the Arts. The 1968 symposium was hosted by the Proctor Marble Company, and marble was the medium used by the sculptors, whereas, in 1971, Griswold and Company, Incorporated provided concrete for the sculptures (7, p. 76). The first symposium was held in Proctor, Vermont, and the second in Burlington (7, p. 144).

Both symposia were held from June through August in the respective years, with the eighteen works being positioned at rest stops in 1971. They were installed along Vermont's Interstate 89 and 91 which lies between the boundaries of Massachusetts and Canada. Eight sculptors participated in the 1968 conference and ten in the later one, representing nine countries in all (7, p. 144). Bradford Graves was included in the list of artists; he also was commissioned for "Crossing the Plains" at York Westbound for the I-80 Project.

There were several distinct differences between the two Vermont Symposia and the I-80 Project, the first being the fact that the artists in Vermont were not paid for their commissions or constructions; their time and abilities were contributions, as such. The artists received transportation to and from Vermont, room and board, and usually an additional stipend or nominal honorarium for their services.
A second perceivable difference was that the artists either donated or loaned their completed works for display along the Interstate. Each artist formally agreed to leave his work for a minimum of one year, but retained all rights to his sculpture (4, p. 21). In other words, the sculptures are not owned by the state, as is the case in Nebraska. New exposures and financial rewards were beneficial for some of the artists. For example, "One Vermont sculptor was commissioned to re-create his highway piece, and another sold one for $25,000" (6, p. 56).

A similarity between the Vermont and Nebraska projects was the comparative size of the works themselves and the fact that the style of both was non-objective. Another factor in common was that each project was partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and by the state arts councils of their respective states. Funding for the Vermont Symposia, in addition to the NEA and Vermont State Council on the Arts, was provided by the Proctor Marble Company, Griswold Company, Incorporated and the University of Vermont (9, p. 220).

Apart from monetary support, approval was necessary from the Federal Highway Administration and the Vermont State Department of Highways. The latter agency was responsible for preparing bases, installation, and maintenance of the sculptures (10, p. 1). The Commission on Highway Beautification published the following comment:
While these projects (the two International Sculpture Symposia) were very large and required a good deal of planning, they both went smoothly. Governor Dean Davis assisted in many ways and supported the projects. The Governor's endorsement and personal interest in the projects, made it easy to work with the stage agencies involved (9, p. 221).

Paxico, Kansas, Project

In 1970, a piece of highway sculpture was installed on the eastbound lane of Interstate 70 near Paxico, Kansas. The site is on a hill approximately thirty feet high with the highway just below. The work is titled "Guard of the Plains" and was constructed of cor-ten steel. It measures approximately twenty-three feet in height.

The concept of the project was totally different from the Interstate 80 Nebraska Project, as it was an individually oriented undertaking on the part of a graduate student, James K. Johnson, for his Master of Fine Arts thesis problem. The plan was approved and supervised by his art professors at the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

The artist stood the expense of one-half the materials, and the Endowment Association of Kansas provided the other half. An explanation of the cost was as follows: "The cost of this piece according to the artist is $10,000. This figure reflects the artist's potential commission rate as well as the cost of fabrication and materials (9, p. 215). The University of Kansas provided fabrication equipment. In addition, the Kansas State Highway Commission provided transportation to the location and site preparation, as well as
landscaping and maintenance (9, p. 215). The Paxico sculpture has little in common with those in the NIBSC Project except the medium (both Richard Field and John Raimondi used cor-ten steel) and the fact that both were non-representational designs.

Schroon Lake, New York, Project

The Schroon Lake Project consisted of one sculpture, just as the Paxico, Kansas, project. Bradford Graves, the sculptor who made the piece at the Williston rest area in the Vermont Symposium '71, as well as "Crossing the Plains" at York Westbound for the NIBSC Project, was selected by the Creative Artists Public Service (CAPS) to create this sculpture. CAPS is an affiliate of the New York State Council on the Arts and sponsors various sculpture projects in the state of New York, sculpture not limited to highway sculpture. However, Graves' commission was installed on the southbound side of Route 87 in Schroon Lake, New York. Funding was provided by CAPS and the New York Cultural Council Foundation. Graves received $4000 as a "Service Award" in order to design and execute his sculpture. Transportation to the site, installation, and maintenance were provided by the New York Department of Transportation (9, p. 214).

The sculpture was named "First Wheel" and measures seven feet high by thirteen feet long by seven feet wide. It was made of white concrete, whereas, the Nebraska sculpture was carved from limestone. Even though this sculpture was made
in 1971, five years previously to the Nebraska one, it is similar in shape, which is an asymmetrical, biological-looking form. It was not created in separate units, as "Crossing the Plains," but has curvilinear parts which interact with one another.

Massachusetts Project

This project was actually a southern extension of the Vermont one, in that it was on Interstate 91, also, located in western Massachusetts. The Vermont and Massachusetts sculptures became a "linear gallery," extending 200 miles and including rest stops from the Canadian border to the Connecticut state line (5). The project took place in 1973 and was composed of three sculptures, one of which was done by John Raimondi, the artist who created "Erma's Desire" at Grand Island Eastbound for the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project; the other two artists were Dale Schleappi and Robert Aiello. Schleappi's work, a seven unit piece of white concrete, was constructed of quadrilaterals, four of which are separate sections. They are positioned so that they ascend the side of a thirty degree slope in the southbound Holyoke rest area. Aiello's sculpture was created from thirty-two tons of white concrete; there are nine separate units in the construction and located at the rest area at the Bernards-ton southbound lane (9, pp. 219-220). Raimondi's sculpture was constructed of cor-ten steel, the same material used in
the fabrication of "Erma." His design for Interstate 91 consisted of five units having "quick lines, appearing and disappearing planes and precise use of negative space. This sculpture becomes a 'participation piece' purely from the fact that from any angle it seems to be a structural illusion--the viewer must walk around it to satisfy his own visual curiosity" (5). This same description was applicable to his Nebraska sculpture, as well.

Sponsor of the plan was Five Colleges Incorporated of Amherst, Massachusetts, one of the agencies which also provided funds. This group was composed of Smith College, Hampshire College, University of Massachusetts, Amherst College, and Mount Holyoke College. Additional money came from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and private industry and foundations in the western part of the state (9, p. 219). Industry and its affiliates provided the major part of the money, as was the case in the Nebraska Project.

Selection of the sculptors was made by a panel of seven artists and highway engineers. The art experts were responsible for aesthetic aspects and the engineers for pragmatic ones--public safety, maintenance, and protection of the state liability. Proposals were based on drawings, blue-prints, cost estimates, and feasibility factors submitted by Massachusetts sculptors. Incidentally, only Massachusetts artists were eligible to participate, a difference in concept
from the Nebraska Project, something which proved to be a major factor in the I-80 controversy when no Nebraska sculptors were selected. Each artist received an equal honorarium for his sculpture in Massachusetts—work which was still owned by the artist, but on indefinite loan to the state. Maintenance of the sculptures was a shared responsibility between the artists and the Department of Public Works (5).

Rochester, Minnesota, Project

Along Highway 52, between Rochester, Minnesota, and Minneapolis, is an example of earthwork sculpture which assimilated six separate units into one project design. The project was executed in 1974 by an English-born sculptor, Andrew Leicester. Each symbol borders on calligraphy and, aided by the topography of the land, movement is implied by the extended lines (1, p. 3).

The works are geometrical markings executed by cutting away the Minnesota hill-side turf by the use of mechanical cranes and lining the shallow trenches with limestone. The artist hoped the viewers' attention would be captured, not only by the series of marks, but by the surrounding landscape. Philosophy of this concept was as follows: "While it is a major part of the objective of the highway project to create conditions in which people will look unself-consciously at a series of art works, redirecting people's attention to
the landscape of Highway 52 is an equally important part of
the project's objective" (1, p. 14).

Andrew Leicester called his sculptures "Early Images,"
which were discussed by Geoffrey Bryce in his brochure,
"Minnesota Highway Project," as follows:

. . . They look as if they have been on their hilly
sites since early man. These linear formations seem
to exist in a timeless landscape, like the neolithic
pictographs on the chalky downs of Leicester's native
England, yet their actual images could only have arisen
out of recent American art. Leicester's earthworks are
best viewed in motion, either from the air or from the
southbound lane of Highway 52. The images have a single-
word quality from the distance, but as one approaches,
they kaleidoscope into epigrams of shifting lines. Open
spaces collapse and open again, linear fragments align,
than fall suddenly into different planes. The point of
locating the six works just off the highway is to put
them into this public-in-transit context, where the
viewer's bodily movement produces movement in the image
(1, p. 1).

A parallel can be drawn between the project in Minnesota
and Nebraska, as to public sentiment. Leicester's sculpture,
according to his critics, was "one more of the numerous,
breathlessly avant-garde or 'far-out' works which receive
approbation from the dominant segment of the art establishment
and irritate the public at large" (1, p. 5). Similar comments
were made concerning the I-80 Project by some dissenters.
Differences in the two projects included the media used and
the fact that the Minnesota sculptures were not located at
rest areas.

Funds for the project were donated by the Minneapolis
Foundation, Carleton College, State Arts Council of Minnesota,
National Endowment for the Arts, and individuals. Land upon which the sculptures were made was leased for a nominal fee from the farmer-landowners. A documentary film titled "Hillside Images" was made following the construction (1, p. 16).

St. Louis, Missouri, Project

The St. Louis project was named the "Boulevard Median Sculpture Project" and was under the auspices of the City of St. Louis--in particular, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry. George Kinsey, the Director of that agency, wrote, in June, 1981,

The program began in the spring of 1974, and at one time, we had approximately twenty sculptures on our boulevard medians. We presently have three remaining and have not installed any new pieces for the last four years. A few of the reasons for our department de-emphasizing this program are: Several years of manpower cutbacks that result from budget reductions, a loss of interest by our main contributing University, and the sale by the artists of a few pieces to private collectors. At present, we have no plans to place any additional sculptures in our parkways, but if conditions change, we might reconsider the program (3).

The St. Louis works were not paid commissions, as were the Nebraska sculptors; they were simply on loan from the sculptors, with the artist maintaining all rights of ownership. Each artist agreed to leave his piece for a minimum of one year in exchange for exposure to public view of his work. Paul Kjorlie, landscape architect with the St. Louis Park Department, initiated the plan and gained approval from Georgia Buckowitz, Director of the Park Department at that time, and personnel from Washington University School of Fine Arts in St. Louis--
particularly James Sterritt, sculpture professor at the University. Professor Sterritt recommended artists he thought qualified to design and construct large-scale, vandal-proof, environmental sculptures for the project. Those invited sculptors submitted photographs for review by Sterritt and Buchowitz. After each selection was made, the artist and Sterritt chose a site on the median strip for each specific work. Incidentally, eight of the pieces were done by Sterritt himself. The project was achieved with a minimum of expense and red tape, since the sculptures were not acquired by the city. The only cost to the taxpayer was installation (2).

The works were not figurative or representational, which made them similar in concept to the Nebraska Project. Another similarity between the St. Louis and Nebraska projects was controversy, as shown by this 1975 newspaper report:

A sturdy crop of monumental steel and timber abstract sculptures has blossomed in recent months along the median strips of St. Louis arterial roadways, to the mixed annoyance, delight, dismay, and perplexity of the area's motoring population. . . . Some of the pieces have acquired irreverent nicknames like "subway ventilators" and "giant coat rack." One person dramatized his contempt for the latter by dumping a load of scrap lumber on top of it one night (2).

Paul Kjorlie, instigator of the plan, expressed the following:

One guy called and said art belongs in the Art Museum. I think that's ridiculous. Another guy said his idea of art was the Sistine Chapel ceiling, and I wasn't alert enough to remind him that the Pope almost stopped that one, too. But we've had some praise, too. I still think the majority of people will get used to the idea. We have learned to install the pieces on Friday
afternoons to give potential tempers two days to cool off. Actually, most of the complaints come from the money angle, people assuming we are spending all this money when we can barely afford to mow the grass. When I explain that it's free and only temporary, that usually neutralizes things (2).

Many viewers commented upon the rusty surface of some of the sculptures created of cor-ten steel. Some viewers disapproved of this appearance and likened it to scrap metal (2). This was the same material as "Erma's Desire" and "Memorial to the American Bandshell," sculptures in the Nebraska I-80 Project, which received similar objections.

The NIBSC Project and the six comparable highway sculpture projects were found to have several shared factors, one being the controversy. In many cases, it was because of the non-objective nature of the works themselves (all were non-representational), and concern about the expenditure of funds—particularly if payment came from public monies. The National Endowment for the Arts and state arts councils gave financial support for most of the projects. City, state, and federal highway commissions were involved with maintenance and usually helped with installations. The number of sculptures included in each of the projects ranged from singular works, like Paxico and Schroon Lake to twenty sculptures, the maximum number in the St. Louis project. Some were private endeavors, such as the Paxico sculpture by a University of Kansas graduate student. Ownership of the sculptures varied—the Nebraska Project belongs to the state, while in others, the works
belong to the artists who retained all rights. Size of the works was comparable; materials were primarily steel, granite, and aluminum in the Nebraska Project and steel, marble, concrete, and limestone the predominant media in the others. Location varied from median strips and land adjacent to highways to rest areas.
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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

The initial concept of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project was instituted by Thomas Yates of Bankers Life Nebraska. His original idea was to commission large-scale sculpture for the purpose of promoting tourism in the State of Nebraska; however, this plan eventually evolved and expanded into a means of celebrating America's Bicentennial. Yates discussed his idea with Norman Geske, Director of Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Durward Varner, President of the University of Nebraska, and several Nebraska business men, all of whom gave their enthusiastic approval. Consequently, the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation (NIBSC) was formed with official headquarters at Sheldon Gallery.

The theme selected by members of the Corporation board for the sculpture project was "Horizons" which dealt with the future of America; they considered it a challenge to propose the creation of sculpture in the present to be viewed by posterity. There were several national and state organizations which sanctioned the Project, including the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Nebraska American Revolution
Bicentennial Commission, State Department of Roads, Federal Highway Commission, and the Nebraska Arts Council. On March 6, 1975, at a ceremony in Lincoln, John W. Warner, in behalf of the ARBA, officially adopted the plan as a nationally celebrated Bicentennial event.

Total funding for the Project was approximately $525,000. Money was raised through six main categories: American Revolution Bicentennial Administration; National Endowment for the Arts; Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (NARBC); Nebraska Arts Council; Nebraska business firms; and local communities. Four-fifths of the total budget was from Nebraska businesses and individuals, whereas, one-fifth of the funding was from federal tax money and royalties on Bicentennial items.

A major aspect of the NIBSC Project was the selection of the artists and their specific works of art. In response to a nationwide announcement to the art community, 121 artists indicated interest in the competition by submitting tentative proposals. The number of artists was reduced to forty-six after a jury of three art experts reviewed their entries. These forty-six were asked for final proposals which were juried by another panel of three people noted for their expertise in the field of art. In addition to critiques by the jurors, the proposals were evaluated by representatives from the State Department of Roads, Federal Highway Administration, host communities, and the NIBS Corporation.
Delegates from the roads and highway boards focused on the practicality of the sculptures, as they were especially concerned with surveillance, maintenance, and safety of the completed works; personnel representing the other groups primarily regarded aesthetic dimensions.

An important facet of the Project was the artist-in-residence program. Its merit was stressed by the Corporation, because it gave townspeople and students the opportunity to meet the sculptors on an individual basis, learn more about sculpture, and in some cases, actually become involved in construction or installation of the pieces.

Ultimately, ten artists were selected, and their names were announced in New York City and Sheldon Gallery on July 1, 1975. The sculptors had diverse backgrounds and came from various parts of the United States, as shown by selected biographical information. However, all had proven competency in the area of large-scale, public sculpture. Sculptures were made of aluminum, stainless steel, cor-ten steel, granite, or limestone. In addition to media and physical aspects, artists indicated their individual philosophies and intentions. Also, I-80 pieces were compared to other works by the same artist--works created both before and after 1976.

Through the course of personal contact with the individual artists, some commented what impact, if any, they felt the I-80 Project had upon their careers, as well as their personal reactions to the total program. For example, Hans Van de
Bovenkamp stated that the NIBS Project was one of the highlights of his career up to this time and that he is very well satisfied with "Roadway Confluence" as a work of public art or as a monument. Paul Von Ringelheim commented, in particular, about the support and interaction with townspeople which added an entirely new dimension to his usual experiences as a sculptor. There were isolated regrets on the part of some artists, such as too little publicity (especially since 1976), no copyright privileges, and little or no communication among the artists themselves. As to positive aspects, highest priority was given to the artists-in-residence program. Most of the sculptors were very complimentary about the interaction, assistance, and camaraderie they shared with Nebraskans. Thus, a review of the selection of artists, their proposals, and completed sculptures disclosed a significant phase of the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project.

There was a great deal of controversy over the Project. Members of the Corporation anticipated a certain amount of discussion and debate. In fact, they believed it added a desirable dimension to the entire concept of the Project. In order to inform the public about various aspects, open meetings were conducted in May, 1975, by the Nebraska Department of Roads in five cities throughout the state, the purpose being to explain the Project and allow questions and input from those present.
In the course of events, legal complications were raised because of Legislative Bill 605, passed in 1975, which mandated official legislative action concerning any gift made to the State of Nebraska in excess of $10,000. The Corporation believed this to be the most damaging aspect of the controversy, because, while this point was being decided, momentum for the Project was halted, both literally and psychologically. Financial support, in particular, suffered the throes of this contention—one from which it never fully recovered. Valuable time was lost in the production of the sculptures, as the artists were notified to suspend their work until the technicalities were resolved; also, it was impossible to solicit funds successfully for a project that might never reach actuality. It was because of this interruption that creation of ten sculptures proved no longer possible, and the final number was eventually reduced to eight. (Initial plans were for twelve sculptures, but this number was altered in May, 1975, when Governor Exon vetoed $150,000 in state funds for the Nebraska Arts Council which was to have been used for the Project.)

The Nebraska Department of Justice handed down a decision that it was indeed necessary for the Unicameral to formally approve or reject the sculptures as gifts to the State; consequently, a special sub-committee, headed by Senator Ralph Kelly of Grand Island, was appointed to evaluate public opinion about the Project and outline procedures for
acceptance or rejection of the sculptures. Presentations, both pro or con, were made in December, 1975, at five locations throughout the state. Testimony was given in an organized manner, all of which was recorded and tabulated for later evaluation.

The sculpture which received the most publicity and was extensively controversial was John Raimondi's "Erma's Desire," designed for the Grand Island Eastbound rest area. Residents of Grand Island became extremely vociferous, and the clamor climaxed when the Hall County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to deny a building or sign permit for the sculpture (a document which was unnecessary, regardless). People from Gibbon, a small town west of Grand Island, initiated a drive to form "Give Erma a Home" Committee, which functioned in a unique manner and proposed that "Erma" be re-located at the Gibbon rest area. Eventually, the "Give Erma a Home" Committee disbanded and pledged support to the original Grand Island site.

Interest and attendance at the December legislative hearings were high. Testimony which was given unveiled these factors as the most positive aspects of the Project: Educational feature because of the artist-in-residence programs; promotion of the visual arts and tourism for the State; national publicity which created a cultural image for Nebraska; and appreciation of the sculptures themselves. The most revealed negative points were, dislike of non-historical,
abstract sculptures; expenditure of public money; required maintenance; sites were inappropriate; and no Nebraska sculptors were represented.

Anxiety was high between the time the hearings ended and the Legislature voted on the issue of whether to approve or reject the sculptures as gifts to the State. Following tabulation of results of the hearings, Senator Kelly proposed Legislative Resolution 108 which favored acceptance of the sculptures by the State of Nebraska. The final outcome was twenty-five voted "Aye," fourteen voted "Nay," and ten abstained. Thus, the Resolution was passed on January 14, 1976, and the Project proceeded.

In view of the fact that the NIBSC Project was sponsored and partially funded by the United States government, it was desirable to investigate discriminative aspects of government and the arts. Four principal categories were included in the research: commissions for works of art when the United States was newly-founded; the Roosevelt years which provided a succession of art projects supported by the government; the National Endowment for the Arts, an organization established in 1965 and provided the Artists-in-Residence program from which a similar program was adapted in the NIBS Project; and President Reagan's changes in program and budgeting and proposed plans which began in 1981.

From the beginning of our nation, someone in authority has considered art works--painting, sculpture, and
architecture—as important. In many cases, control and funding were under the power of United States presidents and their subordinates, such as Latrobe's appointment as Surveyor of Public Buildings under President Jefferson, in 1803. Interest, promotion, and appropriations for the arts have oscillated throughout the decades on the part of the government, with the establishment of numerous arts organizations, most of which later fell into obscurity. Major areas of support were the government agencies established under President Roosevelt in the Depression, the most important of which were the following: Public Works of Art Project (PWAP, 1933); The Section of Fine Arts (The Section, 1934-1943); Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP, 1935-1939); and Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP, 1935-1942).

These projects provided numerous works of art for the public, art which varied in aesthetic quality. Many artists found employment through these projects who, otherwise, possibly would have found it necessary to abandon art as a career.

The National Endowment for the Arts was founded under the Johnson administration. Money is appropriated by Congress to the NEA for distribution to individuals or organizations to be used in deserving art programs. The NEA sponsors Artists-in-Residence programs after which the NIBSC Project counterpart was patterned.
The final consideration concerned status of the arts under the Reagan administration. Large cuts were proposed, and an advisory Task Force was established under the guidance of Charlton Heston and Hannah Gray. Undoubtedly, both approval and funding for the NIBSC Project would experience altered guidelines, if it were a project of the 1980's under President Reagan, rather than one of the 1970's.

In order to further understand the history and significance of the NIBSC Project, comparative sculpture projects were researched, all of which were large, roadside structures of a non-objective nature. All were freestanding, except those of Rochester, Minnesota, which were contoured to the land. The philosophy shared by the people who initiated the plans in the first place, and by the artists who created them, was that art should be extended outside museum walls. Consequently, the sculptures prompted a visual experience to enrich the daily life of all viewers who traveled specific public roads and highways, not just for visitors who frequented art galleries and museums. In the majority of cases, references were found pertaining to controversy about the sculptures and their placement. Most of the objections stemmed from the non-representational nature of the sculptures. Other criticisms were that needless funds (most of which was from sources the critics failed to investigate) were spent on the projects and that they were hazardous to the motorist.
Most of the projects involved State or Federal Highway Commissions because of installation and maintenance, if for no other reason. There was involvement with arts agencies of the respective states, as well (with the exception of the St. Louis project). In the cases of Vermont and Rochester, the National Endowment for the Arts provided part of the money, as was the circumstance of the Nebraska Project. Some of the same artists participated in both the Nebraska and comparative projects—specifically, John Raimondi who worked on the Massachusetts and Nebraska projects, and Bradford Graves who worked on the Vermont, Schroon Lake, and Nebraska Ones. None of the Nebraska Project artists were Nebraskans, whereas one of the stipulations of the Massachusetts project was that the sculptors be residents of that state.

The Nebraska Project was unparalleled in comparison to others in this study, since it was the only one (1) created as part of the 1976 Bicentennial celebration; (2) in which selection of the sculptors was by two panels (three members each) of art experts who served as jurors; (3) having eight sculptures in all, as compared with as few as one sculpture each in the Paxico, Kansas, and Schroon Lake projects, and as many as twenty in the original St. Louis project; (4) in which no concrete works were created, although most of the sculptures in all projects were made of similar, permanent materials, such as cor-ten steel, stainless steel, aluminum, granite, and limestone; and (5) which had specifically
commissioned artists to create sculptures for certain rest areas, works which became the property of the State of Nebraska with no reserved rights, including copyright privileges.

Thus, an historical account revealed the initial idea of the NIBSC Project, choice of the theme "Horizons," amount and sources for funding, review of the artists and their sculptures (including comparisons with other works by the same artist), and an account of the controversy. Background information about the Project was a look at United States government involvement in the arts and contemporary projects of highway sculpture which were comparable.

In viewing observations concerning the Project, research revealed that it was considered exceptional by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration as a national Bicentennial commemoration. In 1976, an announcement appeared in the official publication, "Festivals Newsletter," that the ARBA recognized the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project as one of the four most outstanding Bicentennial plans in the United States. Such recognition indicated major importance of the Project.

Further national commendation was bestowed by the Business Committee for the Arts (BCA) of New York City. In March, 1977, the BCA awarded its eleventh annual honorarium to corporate business for participation in the Arts. The prize was the coveted Business in the Arts Award, given jointly to
Bankers Life Nebraska and Northern Natural Gas Company (now known as InterNorth) in observance of their part in the NIBSC Project. Officers of these respective companies, George Cook and Willis Strauss, were Vice-Presidents of the Corporation. Not only were the two firms represented by personnel who promoted the Project, but they were important financial supporters.

Observations of a different kind were drawn when it became apparent that there have been few, if any, accounts of the Project in major art publications in recent years. In reviewing art journals, one would think the Project never took place. This statement was reinforced by Anthony Padovano when he wrote that such neglect was the most regrettable part of his Nebraska experience. Padovano is one of the most prestigious and authoritative of the Project sculptors, an artist who has received such notable international honors as the Prix de Rome. Regardless of the fact that the established art community and journalists have chosen to overlook the Project, the sculptures need not be considered lesser works of art; instead, they can be considered major works of contemporary art which stand on their own merits, offering Nebraskans and tourists a people's art which can be viewed any day by anyone without visiting a formal exhibition or gallery. The Project has provided art for the masses in a grassroots environment.
On the other hand, there is evidence that the Project was known and regarded by some people in all parts of the United States, knowledge which they acquired by personal travel across Nebraska and viewing the sculptures first-hand, word-of-mouth information from others, or reading accounts about the Project in the relatively few available sources. Requests were found in the Corporation files at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery from city administrators, arts councils personnel, and others, who asked for information about the Nebraska Project, facets of which they were interested in patterning. Inquiries came from various states, including California, Massachusetts, Texas, and Idaho; some of the requests were made as recently as 1979, at which time the Corporation files were officially closed.

An added observation is that tourism needs to capitalize further upon the Project by supplying attention-getting signs as drivers approach the eight rest areas having displays. At present, there are comparatively small attached placards at the bottom of roadside signs stating, "Sculpture Display." Also, more information needs to be available on a continuous basis within the rest area shelter, such as publicity about the Project, sculptors, and other pertinent data. In 1976, such information was available and offered to tourists by vacation guides. This service was discontinued after that time, a service which seems minimal in expense and effort in order to emphasize the importance of the Project.
In keeping with earlier objectives voiced by Art Thompson, Executive Director, and other members of the NIBS Corporation, the educational, philosophical, and aesthetic aspects of the Project are apparent. There continues to be controversy and adverse criticism about the sculptures, but community feedback along Interstate 80 from public school art teachers, Chambers of Commerce, and the Association of Nebraska Art Clubs expressed they are still very much a part of the community scene. Inquiries in March, 1982, revealed that many art teachers throughout the state still lecture about the Project, give slide presentations (particularly when they are presenting units about sculpture), and conduct field trips to the sites. The film, "Five-hundred Mile Sculpture Garden," available from the Nebraska Educational Television Network, is often requested for viewing by various organizations and colleges, as well as by the public schools.

The Project would have been impossible without the enthusiasm and cooperation of many people—a cooperative effort which brought people together in a common effort throughout the state. The Project promoted people understanding people, as well as people understanding something about art.
APPENDICES
Fig. 1--Map depicting sculpture sites
"Nebraska Wind Scul." at Kearney, George Baker, Scul.

"Memorial to the Amer. Bandshell," R. Field, Scul., Platte River B

"Crossing the Plains" at York, Bradford Graves. Scul.

"Up Over" located at Ogallala, Ne. Linda Howard, Sculptor
"Nebraskan Gateway" at Brady & North Platte Anthony Padovana, Scul.

"Erma's Desire" at Grand Island John Raimondi, Scul.

"Roadway Confluence" at Sidney Hans Vande Bovenkamp

"Arrival" at Seward Detail, Paul Von Ringelheim, Scul.
Cynosure of the Way

The cynosure of the way
As it appears to turn in caracole,
Dew-drenched and sunlit,
    Upon the root bound base,
With no cacaphony of sound,
    Whispers a saga of the past,
Then sings loudly through the reeded bars
    In symphonic tones
As from the syrinx of the prairie bird.
Points into the unknown but knowable
    Which was made by the hand of God,
Invites men to search further,
    Invites men to search further,
Making the explored an open challenge,
Creating in humankind a greater desire
    Creating in humankind a greater desire
To become the custodians of a heritage
    To become the custodians of a heritage
To build upon, with the elements
    God has wrought.

Madeline B. Swain, letter to John Raimondi, July 8, 1977.
Chronology of Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation Project

April 10, 1972  Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (NARBC) established by Legislative Bill 1339, passed and signed into law by Governor James J. Exon.

February 1973  Thomas A. Yates, an executive of Bankers Life Nebraska, and Norman A. Geske, Director of Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, initiated the idea to celebrate the Bicentennial through the medium of highway sculpture.

Summer 1973  Plan received support from representatives of Northern Natural Gas Company (W. A. Strauss, Chairman), Leo A. Daly Company (Leo A. Daly, President), Bankers Life Nebraska (George Cook, Chairman, and H. P. Seward, President), Tourism Committee of Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, Durward B. Varner, and Governor J. J. Exon.

August 1973  Endorsement of project by the Nebraska American Revolution Bicentennial Commission which culminated in the formation of the non-profit corporation
known as the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation (NIBSC) with headquarters at Sheldon Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska. The Board of Directors of Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation was as follows: President, Durward B. Varner, President, University of Nebraska; Vice-President, Willis A. Strauss, Chairman of the Board, Northern Natural Gas Company, Omaha; Vice-President, George B. Cook, retired Chairman of the Board, Bankers Life Nebraska, Lincoln; Secretary-Treasurer, Art Thompson, Executive Director, Bicentennial Sculpture Project; and Board Members, Norman A. Geske, Director of Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Goldwin A. McLelland, President, Business Committee for the Arts, New York City, Ronald W. Roskens, Chancellor, University of Nebraska-Omaha, and Thomas A. Yates, Vice-President, Bankers Life Nebraska, Lincoln.
Grant of $100,000 received by Corporation from NARBC.

August 24, 1973
Press conference held and Project announced to public for first time.

August through October 1973
Project endorsed by numerous Chambers of Commerce throughout state, Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Art Association, Federal Highway Department, Nebraska Highway Department, Department of Roads, University of Nebraska at Lincoln (for use of staff and facilities), and Business Committee for the Arts.

February 1974
Announcement made to nation-wide art community about the Interstate 80 Sculpture Project.

July 1974
Cook and Strauss became finance co-chairmen (eventually to become Vice-Presidents of Corporation) to solicit support from business community.

September 11, 1974
Locations of twelve rest stops were finalized and approved by the Department of Roads as follows: Platte River (EB), Blue River (EB), York (WB), Grand Island (EB), Kearney (WB), Cozad (EB), Brady (WB), Ogallala (WB & EB), Chappell (EB), Sidney (WB), and Kimball
(EB); in addition, the Department of Roads recommended that they own and maintain the sculptures when they are completed.

September 15, 1974
Art Thompson appointed Executive Director of the Project.

October 1, 1974
Deadline for entries from artists; a total of 121 artists submitted ideas for the competition. Entries included artists' proposals as to scale, material, cost, and commission, and a statement of willingness to fulfill artist-in-residence requirements.

Panel of three jurors—Wilder Green, Director of the American Federation of Arts, New York City; Thomas Maytham, Director of the Denver Art Museum; Joseph Stuart, Director of the South Dakota Memorial Art Center, Brookings, South Dakota—reviewed entries and selected top 46 entries.

October 17, 1974
Beginning date of meetings with town residents—people from communities along the Interstate (example—York meeting which was also attended by
representatives from Milford, Utica, and Beaver Crossing).

October 30, 1974
Articles of Incorporation undersigned by eight incorporators as a Board of Directors of the Nebraska I-80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation, a Nebraska Non-Profit Corporation.

November 27, 1974
First meeting of Board of Directors as named in Articles of Incorporation of Nebraska Interstate-80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation.

December 2, 1974
Received notification of American Revolution Bicentennial Administration's Official Recognition (see March 6, 1975, for ceremony thereof).

January 15, 1975
Deadline for entries; 38 of the 46 who were selected submitted final proposals (some sculptors entered more than one proposal, making a total of 46 proposals).

January 15 through February 3, 1975
Representatives from the State Department of Boards and Federal Highway Commission reviewed proposals in view of vandalism, maintenance, laws, and regulations.
January 27, 1975
Received non-profit status from Internal Revenue Service.

February 3 through February 10, 1975
Proposals were privately displayed at Sheldon Gallery for viewing by representatives of participating communities and invited dignitaries including Governor James Exon.

February 7, 1975
Second panel of three jurors--Donald B. Goodall, Director of the University Art Museum, Austin, Texas; Stephen Prokopoff, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Arts, Chicago, Illinois; Mary Vercauterren, Associate Director of the Fine Arts Center, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts--screened proposals and recommended top ten artists and several alternates.

Video tape made of presentation by Norman Geske at Blue River rest area (by CBS affiliate, Channel 10 of Lincoln) for use on closed circuit television at meetings across the country in which the I-80 Sculpture Project was held up as exemplary. (Taping sponsored by John D. Rockefeller.)
February 10, 1975

Engaged services of Ruder and Finn, a publicity agency from New York City to handle major part of publicity about Project; funding under auspices of Bankers Life Nebraska.

February 12, 1975

Don Ladely hired as official photographer of the Project.

April 24, 1975

Artists were notified by mail if they had been accepted or rejected.

March 6, 1975

John W. Warner, Administrator of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration from Washington, D. C., bestowed Official Recognition upon the Project as a National Bicentennial Project at a ceremony held at the University Club in Lincoln.

May 15 through May 29, 1975

Information meetings sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Roads held in five communities: May 15, Gretna; May 19, York; May 20, Kearney; May 28, Sidney; and May 29, North Platte.

May 22, 1975

Governor Exon vetoed $150,000 appropriation made by the Legislature to the Nebraska Arts Council for the Project, a bill which had been passed by the
May 27, 1975

Legislature; the Unicameral moved to override the veto, but did not succeed.

Meeting of Board of Directors at which it was decided that ten sculptures, rather than twelve, would be commissioned with cost not to exceed $400,000; in addition, office expenses, brochures, and salaries would not exceed $75,000.

July 9, 1975

Announcement of the names of the ten selected sculptors made in New York City at a 9:30 press conference. The ten selected sculptors were George Baker, Richard Field, Bradford Graves, Linda Howard, Anthony Padovano, John Raimondi, Jerry Rothman, Steven Urry, Hans Van de Bovenkamp, and Paul Von Ringelheim. Same announcement of names made in Lincoln at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery at 3:00 o'clock. Photographs of renderings of proposed sculptures also released at the two press conferences.

Following July 9, 1975 Selected artists came to Nebraska to visit proposed sites and confer with Board of Directors and others.
Artists began work on sculptures and each established residency in Nebraska sometime within the next twelve months. Controversy ensued because of abstract designs, monetary aspect, and fact that none of the participating artists were Nebraska sculptors.

**August 22, 1975**

Nebraska State Highway Commission re-affirmed endorsement of Project but also raised questions about the absence of Nebraska artists and traditional representational style of sculpture.

**Meeting of Board of Directors with Governor Exon** who informed them there is an existing law which required both the Legislature and the Governor to approve gifts to the State having a value of $10,000 or more (LB 605).

**August 26, 1975**

Executive Council of the Legislature convened and Senators Kelly, Barnett, and Savage were appointed to a committee to investigate if LB 605 pertained to the Project.

**October 1975**

"Give Erma a Home" Committee formed in Gibbon.
October 31, 1975  Project received national television coverage on the "Today Show." Linda Howard, sculptor of "Up/Over," and Ann Svoboda, Chairperson of Ogallala support group, were participants.

November 12-13, 1975  Hearings in sub-committee (headed by Senator Ralph Kelly) on subject of gifts to the State of Nebraska.

December 1 through 5, 1975  Legislative hearings concerning the controversy about the Project: December 1, Douglas County Civic Center, Omaha; December 2, Department of Roads Auditorium, Lincoln; December 3, First National Bank, Grand Island; December 4, County Courthouse, North Platte; and December 5, City Hall, Scottsbluff.

January 14, 1976  Legislative Resolution 108 passed by Eighty-fourth Legislature (Second Session) which accepted the sculptures as a gift to the state from the Nebraska Interstate 80 Bicentennial Sculpture Corporation. Vote was 25-14-10.

June 25, 1976  President Gerald Ford sent congratulatory message about the Project to the Corporation by way of the firm of Ruder
and Finn Fine Arts, New York City, who handled a major part of the publicity for the completed Project including dedication ceremonies).

June 29, 1976

Commendations received from John W. Warner, Administrator of the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration in Washington, D. C.

July 1, 1976

Approval by the Nebraska Arts Council of a $2500 grant to Sheldon Gallery for publication of an educational information sheet and final brochure about the Project.

July 4, 1976

Dedication ceremonies for seven sculptures:

12:00 p.m. Platte River Eastbound (near Omaha) "Memorial to the American Bandshell" by Richard Field (actually not completed until August 17, 1976.

1:00 p.m. Blue River Eastbound (Seward Milford) "Arrival" by Paul Von Ringelheim.

2:00 p.m. York Westbound "Crossing the Plains" by Bradford Graves.
3:00 p.m. Grand Island Eastbound
   "Erma's Desire" by John Raimondi.
5:00 p.m. Brady Westbound "Nebraskan Gateway" by Anthony Padovano.
6:00 p.m. Ogallala Westbound "Up/Over" by Linda Howard.
7:30 p.m. Sidney Westbound "Roadway Confluence" by Hans Van de Bovenkamp.

July 5, 1976
Ceremonial appreciation dinner held in Lincoln for 250 dignitaries, sculptors, and state-wide enthusiasts of Project.

September 10, 1976
Dedication of Kearney Westbound sculpture by George Baker entitled "Nebraska Wind Sculpture."

November 7, 21, 26, 1976
Video presentation "Five-Hundred Mile Sculpture Garden" aired on Nebraska Educational Television network.
Chronology of Government and the Arts

1791

1803
Congress passed legislation which gave President Jefferson absolute control over all government buildings in Washington; Benjamin Henry Latrobe, an English-born architect appointed as Surveyor of Public Buildings.

1814
Most of the works of art housed in the Capitol were lost in a fire which gutted the building.

1857
President Buchanan established the first United States Commission of Fine Arts.

1864
Old House chamber converted into Statuary Hall where each state contributed statues of deceased citizens who had made outstanding contributions to government.

1865
Capitol dome completed with Thomas Crawfold's statue of "Freedom" placed on top; bronze sculptured House of Representatives doors by Randolph Rogers were installed.

1910
President Taft established a new Commission of Fine Arts.
December 1933 to June 1934

Public Works of Art Project (PWAP); administrated under Treasury Department as a crash relief program; Edward Bruce was key figure; employed approximately 3,800 artists who produced 15,600 works of art, including 700 murals, as a cost of $1,312,000.

1934

Founding of the Artists' Union, which lobbied and obtained government assistance through collective effort; by November, sixteen Artists' Unions in major American cities.

October 1934 to 1943

Section of Painting and Sculpture--later called The Section of Fine Arts (The Section); administrated by the Treasury Department; for all practical purposes, The Section ended in 1941 when President Roosevelt eliminated all non-defense projects due to World War II; sponsored anonymous competitions to provide painting and sculpture for new federal buildings (mostly post offices and court houses); awarded approximately 1,400 contracts; cost was $2,571,000.

July 1935 to 1939

Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP); funding from WPA to the Treasury Department; employed 330 artists (75% of them were already on relief); cost was $735,700.

August 1935 to June 1942

Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP); (WPA itself was created in May, 1935); relief
program organized by Holger Cahill which included plastic arts, drama, music, and writing; employed 5,000 at its peak; cost was $69,578,000.

1936

Artists' Union participated in sit-down strikes in WPA offices.

June 1948

Department of State auctioned works of art as war surplus which they had purchased earlier; sale totaled $80,008.00.

1959

Senator Fulbright of Arkansas sponsored bill that 1% of construction costs of Federal buildings in Washington, D.C. be designated for artistic decoration.

1961

Directive issued titled "Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture."

1962

President Kennedy created Federal Advisory Council on the Arts by Executive Order (to be made up of heads of several federal agencies and 30 private citizens), but no appointments were made until after Kennedy's death.

1964

President Johnson created National Council on the Arts and appointed Roger Stevens as Chairman; $50,000 allotted as budget for the remainder of the fiscal year. (Twenty-six citizens served on National Council on the Arts;
appointed by the President and were either experts and/or profoundly interested in the arts; 6 year term with 8 or 9 appointed every other year; Chairman of Endowment presented list of recommended individuals which was reviewed by Personnel Office of the White House.)

1965

Passage of Elementary and Secondary Education Act which engendered an integration of the arts and education; Title I and Title III allowed funding of $347 million between 1965 and 1970 and Title IV under guidance of Office of Education's Arts and Humanities program provided $75 million a year for arts activities in elementary and secondary schools; Title I gave funding to state and local agencies for the disadvantaged; Title III provided funds for innovative programs in the arts.

April 9, 1965

First meeting of Federal Advisory Council in White House.

September 29, 1965

Humanities Act (PL 89-209) passed by Congress; bill based upon formats used by science and health foundations and arts councils already established in Britain, Canada, and New York State Council on the Arts and established Arts Endowment and Humanities Endowment as public foundations.

October 31, 1965

President Johnson signed Supplemental Appropriations Bill giving the Arts Endowment $4.5 million in program funds for remainder of fiscal year.
By 1967

Federal legislation had prompted action to set up arts agencies in every state and jurisdiction of the United States.

August 16, 1967

Hearing before the Senate Special Subcommittee on the Arts and Humanities, headed by Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island; hearing dealt primarily with complaints about avant-garde art which was primarily non-representational.

1968

Funding of the National Endowment for the Arts was $7 million for year (request was for $32 million, but Congress cut back to $7 million.

March 1969

Term of Roger Stevens as Chairman of the Endowment expired and he was not re-appointed.

Spring, 1969

Due to cut-backs in funds, it was decided to hire a part-time Chairman of the NEA, backed up by a full-time Deputy.

June 1969

Leonard Garment named chairman of a research staff to define national goals of the Endowments.

September 1, 1969

President Nixon announced Nancy Hanks, Staff Director of
the Rockefeller Panel on the Performing Arts, was his choice as Chairman of the Arts Endowment.

October 2, 1969

Confirmation of Nancy Hanks appointment; Michael Straight was named Deputy Chairman.

December 1969

President Nixon called upon Congress to double funding of the Arts and Humanities Endowments.

June 30, 1970

Bill for funding of Endowments went to the House floor and was passed by a vote of 262 to 78.

April 1973

First Federal Design Assembly held; brought 1,000 government officials to meet with leading designers.

By 1975

Artists-in-Residence Program has placed 2,000 artists in 7,500 schools.

October 1976

First National Conference on Arts and the Aging held in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

October 21, 1976

Jimmy Carter released his "Statement on the Arts" in which he professed his national policy would treat artists as an integral part of society and his international policy would be that relationships with other
countries would show a rich cultural heritage in order to communicate the greatness that a free people can reach.

1977

Total amount of grants for the year from the NEA to visual artists was $700,000 in fellowships, and $640,000 in matching grants to art museums and purchase of works by contemporary Americans. Resignation of Nancy Hanks formally announced by the White House. Livingston L. Biddle, Jr. appointed Chairman of NEA to replace Hanks.

September 7, 1977

National Endowment for the Arts received the Golden Fleece of the Month Award from Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin for granting $6,025 to Anti-Object artist, LeAnn Wilchusky, who tossed crepe-paper streamers from an airplane (which she termed "sculpting in space") and filmed them as they fell.

May 1979

"The General Plan 1980-1984" was prepared at request of National Council on the Arts: Endowment's Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman, Sidney Yates (Democrat from Illinois) requested $300 million in program funds (each year) for five-year budget.

February 1981

President Reagan announced cuts in NEA budget for approximately half of the proposed budget. Group of
senators from both parties formed a group called "Concerned Senators for the Arts" as a stronghold against President Reagan's cut-backs in the arts.

May 1981

President Reagan appointed the White House Task Force on the Arts and Humanities; co-chairmen were Charlton Heston, Chairman of the American Film Institute and Hannah Gray, President of the University of Chicago; an additional 34 members constituted the committee.
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