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**Photographs as Primary Sources for Historical Research and Teaching  
in Education: The Albert W. Achterberg Photographic Collection**

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**Photographs as Primary Sources for Historical Research and Teaching  
in Education: The Albert W. Achterberg Photographic Collection**

**by**

**Robert Alan Achterberg, B.S. Ed.; M.C.M.**

**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**December 2007**

## **Dedication**

This Dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Albert W. and Faithe M. Achterberg through the continuance of their ideals of centering life on God, in Christ, of exhibiting the joy of seeking to understand and utilize for good the world which surrounded them, and for their work to nurture succeeding generations in the development and use of their potentials.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to express his thanks and appreciation to:

God, who makes all of this possible, by providing all of the resources and the motivation to work through each task, and who, by intricate workings that exceed the probabilities of chance, has provided a complex network of events, experiences, people, situations and occasions spanning nearly 100 years of college careers, military service, business, educational careers, and family life that resulted in the convergence of the necessary elements to synthesize this project.

The fine members of my dissertation committee: Dr. O.L. Davis, Jr., Committee Chair and Catherine Mae Parker Centennial Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Texas; Dr. Don Carleton, Director of the Center for American History, Austin, and holder of the J. R. Parten Chair in the Archives of American History; Dr. Sherry Field, Professor and Program Area Advisor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Mary Lee Webeck; and Dr. Cynthia Salinas for careful guidance through the process, for providing excellent models of professionalism and scholarship, and for structuring interesting coursework in my program at the University of Texas.

My father and mother, Al and Faithe Achterberg, for bringing me to know Jesus Christ and to know of his wonders, for inspiring in me a love of learning and an interest in many things, including photography, history, language, music, theology, science, math, and education; for developing a rich archive of photographs and photographic equipment with which to work, and for providing an excellent model of how to co-exist in a dwelling with a large photographic collection.

My wife, Kathleen Achterberg, for returning the favor of working full time to support spousal work on an advanced degree, for surviving the lengthy process with a minimum of observable rancor, particularly considering the duration of the program; for assisting here and there with unexpected things that needed attention, for making adjustments in expectations and desired schedules in order to accommodate work needs and space for the project, and for beginning to breathe again reasonably soon after I proposed the need to bring the photographic collection into our house.

Daughter, Krista, for urging me on to the goal through the identification of a continuing series of markers through time which were used for competitive, motivational purposes: her high school graduation, college graduation, Law School graduation, and passage of the Nebraska State Bar Exam...“Dad, who’s going to finish first, you or I?” ...always with a smile, and through each step, the winner.

Son, Mark, for inquiring periodically about the status of my Ph.D. program, for helping to organize and move the photographic collection, and for wishing me well in my work.

My sisters, Linda Achterberg Hoover and Nancy Hoffschneider, brother-in-law Larry Hoffschneider; and Linda Davey, Librarian at the Holdrege Public Library, for sleuthing out copious amounts of desired information. Linda Hoover’s efforts were ongoing (far beyond what she anticipated), accurate, insightful, and at times bordered on the heroic.

The packers and movers of photographic materials: family members and good friends, Larry Hoffschneider, Steve Hoffschneider, Rik Hoover, Mark Achterberg, Kathleen Achterberg, Margie Pacey, Linda Achterberg Hoover, Matt Balboa, Kathi Inglis Johnson, and Carol Winter. The large-scale moving of the photographic collection from Nebraska to Dallas, from Dallas to Austin, from public storage in Austin to other public

storage in Austin, and then to the house, where I worked with it, went much more quickly and was a much more enjoyable process because of your help. Your excellent work in maintaining the categorization and sequence of the collection saved much time when I began to work with the photographs and negatives.

Bob King, Publisher of the *Holdrege Daily Citizen*, and, in the mid-1960s, fellow member of the Holdrege High School Band, for informative conversations early on in the process, which helped focus the search for information on several topics.

Dr. Jack Gilsdorf, Associate State Director, Nebraska Department of Education, Accreditation Office, for an informative hour of conversation on schooling in Nebraska.

Linda Peterson, Photographic Archivist at the Center for American History, Austin, for valuable information on the digitization of images.

Dr. Mark Joyce, long-time friend and colleague, whose encouragement and modeling of excellence in educational thought helped to renew my focus on the project, and who suggested several valuable sources in visual ethnography.

Lois Peterson, long time faithful employee of the Al Achterberg Studio, who instructed the author in a number of photographic procedures 45 years ago and provided insightful explanations for the past three years regarding processes and envelope notations related to the photographic artifacts in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection.

Eldon Orthmann, owner and operator of Orthmann's Photography Studio, Hastings, Nebraska, and previously, fellow part-time photographer for Al Achterberg Studio, for historic photographic information and many recollections of equipment and procedures employed at Al Achterberg Studio.

Mark Matson, freelance photographer and friend, Austin, Texas, for information about current photographic practice.

Sandy Dunaway, Assistant to the Superintendent, Holdrege Public Schools and the helpful people at Holdrege High School- Dick Meyer, Principal, Shirley Sandfort, Administrative Assistant, Dan Atchison, Guidance Counselor, for information and for helping to discover the potential limits of artifact availability.

Harley Lofton, and Russell Harris, good friends and colleagues of Al Achterberg, who were the primary contemporary sources of information on the early days of Al's journalistic and photographic work.

Mack Lundstrom, a writer with the *San Jose Mercury* and instructor in journalism at San Jose State University, and his mother, Roberta, for their confirmation of, and for adding detail to my childhood recollections through the sharing of their recollections of the same time period.

John Lillis, Archivist at the University of Nebraska- Kearney, and Penny Jeffrey, Librarian, Oconto, Nebraska, for valuable research assistance.

Dan Steinkruger, Program Specialist with the Farm Service Agency in Lincoln, Nebraska, for helpful discussions about infrared aerial photography.

Brother-in-law Rik Hoover for first-hand information on corn crop developmental stages and timing, and nephew Steve Hoffschneider for clarification of dates.

Friends, Carol Winter and Steve Johnson, Tim Walz, husband of my niece, Mindy; brother-in-law Larry Hoffschneider, colleague Jon Croston, Ryan Goodenberger, Bob Penman at UT ITS, and the folks at UMAX for assistance with computers, digital storage, and scanning equipment.

Kathy Smith Anderson, Laurie Reiner, Harry Dahlstrom, Dick Dyas, and many other people from Holdrege and surrounding areas, who provided information, and for suggestions of other places to search for desired information.



Larry and Nancy Hoffschneider, for sharing intermediate storage space for several years beyond the duration they had anticipated for artifacts pertinent to the dissertation, and for being forgiving of my infrequent appearances as they performed committed, loving service for Mom's care.

The helpful people at the Nebraska Prairie Museum in Holdrege, for assistance in locating both information and people who could provide further information.

Present and former University of Texas Music Professors Dr. John Geringer, Dr. Hunter March, and Dr. Carroll Gonzo, for assisting with my transition in program from Music Education to Curriculum and Instruction, and for giving me hope that the transition had potential for success.

Additional University of Texas, at Austin, faculty who provided interesting and informative coursework as a part of my graduate study.

Jim Maxwell, Shawna Matteson, and other members of their office for helpful, timely and accurate assistance with procedures.

To all those who supported me by showing their interest in the project, praying frequently for my success, and by cheering me on: my students at Concordia Academy and Concordia University, C&I colleagues at UT, and colleagues, other friends, and acquaintances at St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, and at Concordia Academy. Your encouragement is appreciated!

# **Photographs as Primary Sources for Historical Research and Teaching in Education: The Albert W. Achterberg Photographic Collection**

Publication No. \_\_\_\_\_

Robert Alan Achterberg, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2007

Supervisor: O.L. Davis, Jr.

Photographs contain a wealth of information which may be used effectively in historical research. Visual images may be used as evidence, for illustration, for comparison and contrast, and for analytical purposes. Somewhat perplexing is the relatively minimal use of photographs as primary sources in historical inquiry concerning schooling. Many visual clues exist which can help to explain the activities, methods, resources and quality of schooling, and the people involved in schooling, in selected locations. Visual clues may be coordinated with text and with other artifacts to present a more complete picture of schooling in a specific time and place than text alone can provide. Photographs provide opportunities to compare systems of schooling and to engage in longitudinal analysis of a single school system. They can be useful in helping to investigate elements of schooling that may have elevated selected school systems to exemplary levels. The presence of a large collection of educationally related photographs reveals opportunities for utilization which are not present with individual photographs or small groups of photographs. The potential uses of photographs as primary sources for

inquiry are not limited to professional historians, but may be taught to, and used by students, as well. This study shows benefits and possibilities of utilizing photographic images as primary sources in historical research in education, and in teaching historical research methods, through the use of examples contained in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection of photographs. The collection was developed during the period of 1940-1999 over an 8,000 square mile area in south-central Nebraska and features a school system in the town of Holdrege, Nebraska.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Within the two-dimensional limits of a photographic image reside information and potential meaning waiting to be apprehended, analyzed and interpreted. “Representational traces” that reveal a condition, a state, or an activity that occurred at a moment in time are preserved in the image (Kyvig & Marty, 2000, 46). Relationships among elements of the subject matter may be captured in the image, and the absence of anticipated inclusions of subject matter in the image may also be noted. The positioning of people in relation to other people and with their surroundings, as well as hints at fulfilled or unfulfilled expectations of the subjects or of the viewer may be revealed in the image as well.

The information and meaning contained in a photographic image are transmitted through shapes and shading, through positioning of the subject elements, through implied depth of field, through edges, planes and boundaries revealed by contrasting reflection and absorption of light, and by the nuances of grayscale or color change across elements of the subject matter due to concentration and diffusion of light. A viewer of the photographic image will engage the mind in activity to compare and contrast the image with past visual experiences in an attempt to derive meaning from the information in the image. Eisner addresses this process: “...we generalize images when we use them to search for and find features of the world that match or approximate the images we have acquired. Images can function...as categories that enable us to seek and sort the world we encounter...” (Eisner, 1998, 201).

The “who”, “what”, “when” and “where” questions about what we observe (and similar dimensions of observation through a photographic image) may be the more easily derived; the “how” provides a few more challenges for discernment. Clues to the more complex dimension of “why” may be questioned and revealed in the image as well.

The two dimensional photographic image may be expanded in the mind to the three dimensions of normal visual perception by the viewer imagining his or her vantage point to be at the position of the camera in the scene as it was originally photographed, and by comparing the scene with information from previous personal experience in order to make the scene more realistic. Two dimensional shapes from the image become visualized as three dimensional forms. The attempt by the viewer to reposition himself or herself into the original context of the photograph is for the purpose of better understanding what the image represents as it is compared with past experiences of the viewer.

The century and a half period during which photography has been a somewhat common or very common activity in the more developed parts of the world has yielded an enormous body of extant photographic images, even as many images have been lost or discarded. The available images hold large amounts of information which may be accessed through careful means of analysis, comparison with other sources, and interpretation. Photographic images can be powerful primary sources in historical inquiry, due to the large amount of information stored in them and due to their ability to quickly transport the researcher back to contexts which existed in earlier times and in a variety of places, and by showing subjects of the photographic images as they existed at a specific time and in a specific place.

Photographic images offer value to historical research about schooling because of their utility for quickly comparing and contrasting educational situations that appear in

the images with situations in other images or in current practice. Photographs can be used effectively to show change in educational situations across time and to compare educational situations in varying geographical locations. The improving quality and affordability of cameras from the 1950s to the present has increased the number of photographs of schools being made for yearbooks, for print and broadcast media, and for websites. It would seem that photographs would be considered to be major, vital primary sources for historical inquiry about schooling, based on their availability, utility for comparison and contrast, and the large amount of evidential information they contain.

The reality, however, is quite different: very few studies of the history of schooling make use of significant numbers of photographs, and few of those photographs show students in classroom settings. Even fewer of the minimal photographs of those classroom settings appear to be un-posed; hence they reveal less of the unaltered natural context existing prior to the exposure than would a photograph that hadn't been purposefully "arranged". More significantly, the use of individual photographs and sequences of photographs as primary sources in their more complex functions, such as their use for detailed analysis and comparison and contrast, is rarely seen.



## **II. PHOTOGRAPHY AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH:**

### **A REVIEW**

This dissertation focuses attention to photographic images as resources for the study of schooling in an American community. The research and organization of the photographic images includes several related, but somewhat independent activities: development of a cataloguing system for the estimated 250,000 images in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection of Photographs:1940-1999; an illustration of that system through the preparation of a catalogue of an educationally-significantly important portion (approximately 5,000 negatives and photographs) of that collection; the preparation of a digital database composed of nearly 500 images and descriptions of those images; and the writing of an interpretive biography of the photographer and of his photographic career in the town of Holdrege, Nebraska. At least two additional matters are treated: 1) an essay about the usefulness of such a collection of photographs in the research and writing of histories that focus on education (e.g., music education, provision of facilities, social life in schools, curriculum), and, 2) short essays that portray examples of research studies directly relevant to the use of the Albert W. Achterberg Collection of Photographs.

The essay concerning the usefulness of such a collection of photographs in the research and writing of histories of educational matters addresses issues such as the acceptance of the use of photographs as sources of evidence, potentials and perils of using photographs as sources of evidence, and comparative and analytical uses versus illustrative uses of photographs in research.

## **Visual Evidence and Inquiry**

The process of inquiry is dependent upon our ability to input information via the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Historical research in education deals extensively with sight-oriented print documents, occasionally with auditory and video recordings (e.g., interviews, recordings of bands, choirs, plays, athletic games, and speeches and other spoken presentations), photographs, and physical artifacts (e.g., old books and equipment, school buildings and furnishings, ephemera), and rarely with materials that focus on smells and taste.

Within the category of sight-transmitted information, text has held primacy over other visual forms in sheer volume, and in acceptance as being “trustworthy” as a medium of representation. In light of the popular phrases, “a picture is worth a thousand words”, and, “the camera doesn’t lie”, the under-use of photographic images as primary source documents in historic research in education may seem to be perplexing. Still, the phrase “the camera doesn’t lie” is afflicted with inadequacy, and a need yet exists to develop some of the rich promise indicated in the phrase, “a picture is worth a thousand words”.

A minimum of work has been done with photographs as primary sources for researching historic topics in education. In fact, they are, “widely either neglected or underused” in researching history in general (Gasparini, 2006). That neglect has been blamed in part on the difficulty of combining text and images in older printing techniques (Walker & Wiedel, 1985, 192). The current ease of electronic manipulation of text and images should have removed that difficulty as an impediment.

In fact, the use of photographic images in specifically educational research has been far from exemplary: “The traditional role of photography in educational research is not a particularly inspiring one and offers no role model” (Prosser, 1992, 3). Between the years of 1973 and 2006, in the even larger arena of historical methodology in general, only 25 books directly addressed the use of photography as an aspect of historical methodology (Doel & Soderqvist, 2006, 201).

Because of the minimum of available material with which to form a theoretical base, we must look to related areas of inquiry to provide support and direction. The areas of visual ethnography and visual anthropology would seem to be closely enough related to the use of photographic images in historical educational research to be of value in researching the topic, since education, like ethnography and anthropology, also involves people acting in cultural settings.

Photography has been used in anthropology since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, largely to provide visual records for purposes of classification and text illustration. However, only a few studies since that time have expanded the role of photographs in visual ethnography (Harper, 1998, 27), and in the mid-1990s ethnographic photography was still, “a practice without a well-articulated theory or method” (Ruby, 1996, 1346). Clearly, thin strands from a variety of sources will need to be combined with case studies using actual photographs to help construct a suitable foundation to support the idea that photographs have been underrepresented as primary sources in historical research in education.

Many studies in education use no photographs at all (e.g., Knight, 1952; Butts & Cremin, 1953; Hillway, 1964; Church & Sedlak, 1976), or minimally, for example, as a cover photograph on a book. Warren (1989) made use of one photograph that shows

children sweeping the floor of a kindergarten room. Very few studies show many images of children in classroom settings. A small sampling of more moderate usage follows.

Tyack (1974) used several photographs for illustrative purposes. Weiler (1998) included nearly a dozen photographs, mostly for illustration. Kliebard (1995) included 24 images, more than half of which are formal portraits of major figures in American education. Tyack, Lowe, & Hansot (1984) and Anderson (1988) each used more than 20 photographs, mostly for illustrative purposes, but comparative analysis is possible because of the number of images included. Nearly half of Grundy's (2001) approximately 50 photographs are posed athletic team photos. The nearly 20 photographic images in Zilversmit's (1993) and Grosvenor, Lawn, & Rousmaniere's (1999) books are of particular interest because a majority of them were taken inside classrooms. Most of those, however, are posed, so they show what the classrooms and the people looked like, but reveal only a little about the activities which took place in the classrooms. Butchart's (1986) fine study in the "Nearby History Series", *Local Schools; Exploring Their History*, contains 39 photographs. Ten of those photographs show printed documents related to schooling, four show buildings other than schools, and seventeen are of school building exteriors with no students visible. Only four additional images are of school exteriors including children, and just four images show class settings in which students are included.

Cox and Hughes' (2000) book that is designed for children to use in the pursuit of historical investigation of schools contains 27 photographs, of which 26 are paired in an old/new juxtaposition on facing pages. They all are directly related to aspects of schooling and all but one photograph show students in classroom settings or in curricular activities outdoors. The photographs are accompanied by helpful questions to assist students in thinking about the pictures. An overwhelming majority of the images in a

book on African American education (Skelcher, 1999) show only exterior views of schoolhouses, which is a powerful testament to the resources of the buildings themselves that were made available for education in those communities. However, only a few of the images show children, and most of those appear to be posed, either outside of the school or just inside the doorway of the school.

Davis (1976) provides a relatively early example of the usage of many information-rich photographs; the total of 34 images features 33 views which include students. Six are exterior shots that show students very much involved in participation in activities, and 27 interior photographs of nicely diverse contexts show students engaged in a wide variety of curricular activities.

Historical photographs often are limited in their value as evidence because they usually are not accompanied by enough information to establish context (Prosser, 1992, 3). The author's familiarity with the schools, people, and events represented in the photographic images from the Albert W. Achterberg Collection has made the development of context both easier and more fruitful, particularly in situations in which he was involved as the photographer, photographer's assistant, or as a subject of a photograph. Through the inclusion in this dissertation of a number of case studies utilizing photographs from the collection, the value of such a collection of photographs for educational research can be demonstrated as the photographs help to reveal "the relationships between the parts that provides understanding of the whole" (Adelman, 1998, 158).

## **Some Uses of Photographs in Research**

Pink (2001, 30, 57) lists “classic” uses of photographs as a research method: as a visual recording method, in photographic interviewing, and in collaborative photography, and refers to Banks’ (n.d.) addition: examining pre-existing visual representations, which would correspond to the main use of photographs in the current dissertation. Collier and Collier (1986, 47) add the use of photo inventory, which represents material content, arrangement, and the ways in which people use the space; survey and orientation (photographic mapping), the study of technology, and the recording of behavior and relationships (Collier & Collier, 1986, 2, 3). Butchart (1986, 81) highlights the importance of photographs as evidence in historical research in schooling, and Kyvig and Marty (2000, 17) mention the ability of photographs to assist in the analysis of cause and consequence.

A beyond-the-basics use of photographs as illustrations or evidence is the comparison of linked images for historical insights (Collier & Collier, 1986, 185). Pink (2001, 11) and Banks (1998, 11) also advocate going beyond the “recording data or illustrating text” functions of photographs by using them to create new knowledge, insights, and critiques.

## **Some Advantages of Using Photographs as Primary Sources in Research**

Surpassing the use of a text-only approach by the inclusion of visual representations in evidence collection and analysis opens up additional possibilities for

gaining perspective on an issue. The visual representation of a photographic image has dimensions of meaning which may be understood throughout a culture and between cultures in a manner unlike text which is language-specific (Collier & Collier, 1986, 9).

The camera may gather information which the photographer may not realize is useful until later (Collier & Collier, 1986,16), thereby turning a characteristic of photographs, that of being limited to a specific instant in time, into an important advantage by stretching the opportunity for observation beyond the moment in which the event occurred. The camera may help to “keep alive the cultural moment” (Collier & Collier, 1986, 238). In their capture of images which may be reviewed later, cameras uniquely are capable of preserving very detailed visual accounts of, “a specific moment in time and space”; (e.g., Prosser & Schwartz, 1998, 119; Grosvenor, 1999, 88) and a “nonrepeatable event” (Trachtenberg, 1989, 5). These visual accounts provide viewers a measure of identity with photographs which depict objects and events that people experience in their day-to-day existence: “the image...offers restricted but powerful records of real-world, real-time actions and events” (Loizos, 2000, 93).

This ability of a visual image to provide information about day-to-day events is a particular strength of photography in comparison to text because every-day events are so common that they are considered common knowledge, and therefore are often little-represented in written textual accounts, whereas photographs are frequently taken during life’s daily events (McLaird, 1989, 1). This has been a great advantage of photography for the last 100 years: it is much easier and quicker to take a picture to capture, transmit, and preserve information than it is to write a roughly equivalent description of the same event and its context. A picture may be worth more than a thousand words, and it may be more likely to be kept beyond a generation or two than is a letter from one member of a

family to another, or than is a school newspaper article that describes the same event as does a photograph.

Patton emphasizes the value of photographs in providing “a sense of the physical environment”:

“The physical environment of a setting can be important to what happens in that environment. The way the walls look in rooms, the amount of space available, how the space is used, the nature of the lighting, how people are organized in the space, and the interpretive reactions of program participants to the physical setting can be important information about both program implementation and the effects of the program on participants” (Patton 2002, 281).

Because they have the ability to quickly bring to mind characteristics, behaviors, and interactions of people, photographs of educational settings may be able to contribute to the solution of the problem posed by O.L. Davis, Jr.: “Surely needed, also, is attention to the nature of community within which curriculum decisions are deliberated, made, and engaged in practice” (Davis, 2000, *xi*). Photographs of schools often contain contextual clues about the community in which the educational setting exists. Even the photographs in the present collection which have no apparent link to schooling may reveal much about the larger community of the school district, state, or nation, in which educational decisions were made and put into practice. These visual revelations may help us to better understand the beliefs and values which influenced the shaping of schooling, and the effects, in practice, of such perspectives.

Although photographs are not free from bias because of the photographer’s choosing of what, when, and where to photograph and how to frame the image, for a photographer to skew the view entirely in all of its dimensions of meaning would be nearly impossible. That is, a photo still reveals something about the world: a “mild realist position” (Winston, 1998, 66). It is wise to remember that, in a comparison of



sources, textual representations are, likewise, not bias-free because of the ways in which the subject is chosen to be revealed by the writer.

Although some would assert that images are “equally meaningful” as text in ethnographic work (Pink, 2001, 4, 5), others would elevate the usefulness of images beyond that in some instances:

“...photographs...can show characteristic attributes of people, objects, and events that often elude even the most skilled wordsmiths. Through our use of photographs we can discover and demonstrate relationships that may be subtle or easily overlooked. We can communicate the feeling or suggest the emotion imparted by activities, environments, and interactions. And we can provide a degree of tangible detail, a sense of being there and a way of knowing that may not readily translate into other symbolic modes of communication” (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998, 116).

In fact, in the identification of people and in areas of inquiry such as archaeology, geology, physics, botany, chemistry and biology, photographs are often recognized and respected as being even less ambiguous than are words (Wagner, 1979, 13).

A photograph provides a measure of contextualization of relationships within the image (e.g.: Collier & Collier, 1986, 10; Prosser, 1998, 102). A sequence of photographs increases the amount of context provided. “Taken cumulatively images are signifiers of a culture; taken individually they are artifacts that provide us with very particular information about our existence” (Prosser 1998, 1). Both individual photographs and sequences of photographs with educational themes are present in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection.

The presence of a photograph as a primary source of information enables multiple viewings of the visual dimensions of the event which are preserved in that photograph (Collier & Collier, 1986, 8). Another advantage that photographs offer is demonstrated by repeat photography (re-photography) which provides the ability to measure and describe change by comparison of photographs taken at different times (e.g., Collier &

Collier, 1986, 197; Harper, 1998, 34; Loizos, 2000, 96). The more-than 50 year span which the photographs in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection represent offers re-photography which already has been done in addition to providing images that could be used to compare with new images yet to be made.

A hidden advantage to the use of photographs as primary sources in historical research exists. More information may be contained in photographic images than initially meets the eye. By enhancing negatives in an analog or digital manner, information that was hidden in the original photograph may be discovered on subsequent examination (Nebraska State Historical Society- Solomon D. Butcher Photographic Collection) [**Photos eae 36, 37**].

Photographs also may be utilized in the interviewing process as discussion starters and to assist in communication with the subjects of the study (Collier & Collier, 1986, 99), a technique which has been utilized in this study, or to serve to elicit responses by assisting the recall of memories of people, places, and events in oral history interviews (Loizos, 2000, 98). When used together, words and images help to contextualize each other (e.g., Pink, 2001, 96; Rundell, 1978, 374) and to extend the perceptions of the researcher (Collier & Collier, 1986, 5). Hence, widening the range of sources of evidence assists in the process of historical analysis (Boyce 2000, 334).

Sherry Field (personal conversations, 2007) suggests that a major value of the use of photographs as primary sources of information is that they can help to raise more questions in order to expand the context of inquiry. This expectation is contrasted with the common view of photographs being used only to provide answers.

In the case of this dissertation based on the Albert W. Achterberg Collection of photographs, the unique and significant advantages of combining these photographs with other sources of information are that the photographs are present and available, and that

they represent contexts which cannot be re-created because of their historical nature. The collection is a unique archive of images that reveal much information about education in a number of American small towns in south central Nebraska from 1940 to 1999.

Given the many advantages of using photographs as primary sources of information in research, why has it taken so long for this method to be utilized in more than a marginal way (e.g., Prosser, 1992, 3; Collier & Collier, 1986, 13; Harper, 1998, 27; Prosser, 1998, 97)? Why has more than a century and a half passed between the invention of photography and its more fully developed manifestation as a research method or a sound source of evidence (Pink, 2001, 17)?

### **Impediments to the Use of Photography as a Research Method**

In Western culture, the written word is perceived as “reality”, whereas visual imagery is viewed as “impression” (Collier & Collier, 1986, xv). A history of perceived trustworthiness of the medium of photography is, in fact, still to be revealed (Prosser, 1998, 104).

Some researchers hold a concern that records of visual information in photographs introduce too much bias and personal projection through the photographer to be valid research evidence (Collier & Collier, 1986, 10). That is, the photographer may choose what of a scene the camera will include, what will be omitted from the photograph, how elements that are included are arranged and treated. Furthermore, the photographer employs technologies which are not socially neutral (e.g., Banks, 1998, 15-18; Harper, 1998, 29; Loizos, 2000, 95). Selection of framing, lenses, lighting, angles, shutter speed and aperture all affect what appears and how it appears in the resultant

image (Winston, 1998, 63). The Farm Security Administration's photography project in the 1930s gives ample evidence of creativity on the part of the photographer to set the frame and re-pose a picture several times in order to achieve a desired result (e.g., Rundell, 1978, 378; Curtis, 1989). By manipulating the context and introducing a variety of meanings, the assurance of providing a relatively unbiased meaning through the photograph is lessened.

However, one should acknowledge that the choice and structuring of text and the resultant framing of mental images through the use of text are similarly afflicted with a potential for bias. While text can be used to develop meaning, that meaning may be no more trustworthy than the meaning developed through the information contained in a photograph. The additive construction of text is much less likely to include unnoticed or unintended elements of the context it is describing than is a photograph, which includes the desired elements of the context plus many other unnoticed or unintended elements. In that regard, a photograph may be more complete in accurately presenting the subject contextually than is a textual description.

The large amount of information available in one photographic image makes the analysis of that image time-consuming (e.g., Collier & Collier, 1986, 13; Trachtenberg, 1989, *xiv*), a factor which dissuades some researchers from employing photographic sources as evidence in their research. What is not shown in the image may also affect the analysis and must be taken into consideration (Loizos, 2000, 101), thereby increasing the complexity of and time required for analysis. Some researchers, apparently, would prefer to use video sources since still photographs, particularly in isolation and not dealing in the language of motion, do not show well the interaction or behavior of subjects (Collier & Collier, 1986, 140).

Photographs are visual records of a moment in time in a particular context: "...these records...are never more than representations or traces of more complex past actions. Because real-world events are three-dimensional, and the visual media are only two-dimensional, they are inevitably secondary, derived, reduced-scale simplifications of the realities that gave birth to them" (Loizos, 2000, 94). Because meaning depends, in part, upon interpretation of the image by the viewer, potential ambiguity exists in the analysis of photographs (e.g., Pink, 2001, 94; Kracauer, 1960, 265), leading some researchers to wonder if their interpretation of the image will be similar to the interpretations of others who view the image. The more ambiguous the evidence, the more difficult is the investment of trust in that evidence.

Don Carleton (class notes and personal conversations) suggests that the tendency for the viewer to make unfounded assumptions about an image, to read into the image meaning that is not there, and to look uncritically at a photograph while trying to interpret it can lead to gross misinterpretations of the image. This described inferior approach to interpretation of an image may result from not correlating available text information and artifacts with the photographic image.

Usefulness of photographic sources may at times be limited because of a lack of accompanying information to help reduce ambiguity of meaning. Text, however, is also quite capable of displaying ambiguity of meaning, and will benefit from accompanying information such as images to clarify the situation under consideration.

Perhaps the most significant impediment to a healthy reliance upon photographs as primary sources in research is their susceptibility to manipulation between the recording of the image and its analysis (Mitchell, 1992, 16-55). This possibility is particularly a concern with the advent of easy, sophisticated digital editing, but was possible, with much greater effort and/or less-convincing results, prior to the digital age

(e.g., Carter, 1985, 14). This dimension should be less of a concern when working with historic photographs which may have detectable clues in the materials (e.g., film and paper types and identifying marks), processing, or exposure and printing techniques and practices (e.g., notched film holders which leave characteristic marks on the negatives or easily discernable retouching attempts on the emulsion side of the negatives), and for which the provenance is known [**Photos awa 14, 15**]. Accompanying notes may also help to validate the information contained in the photographs.

Based on suggested definitions by Don Carleton of “manipulation” and “enhancement” of images (personal conversations, September 2007), the author has proposed a classification scheme that employs a continuum to use in identifying the extent and types of effects that have influenced the appearance of the subject of a photograph, with the intent of helping the viewer to determine how accurately the photograph reflects the original context shown by the photograph. By comparing the photograph with the classification scheme the viewer will have a better idea of the extent, types, and significance of changes (induced by the photographer, darkroom personnel and mechanisms, producer, digital software, or other influences affecting the image) that took place between the likely original context as it appeared and the final image that is studied by the viewer.

The proposed classification scheme ranges from “manipulation” at one end of the continuum to “enhancement” at the other. Manipulation at the extreme limit of the continuum includes intentional fraudulent alteration of an image to make it show information that was never connected with the original context in which the photograph was made, and which falsifies the image; an attempt to add to, hide, obscure, or alter a portion or all of the original subject and context (e.g., work to manually cut, paste, and airbrush an image or the use of a digital photographic editing program to recombine

heads and bodies in a photograph such that the head on a body is from a different person than the body to which it is attached in the photograph, or retouching, airbrushing, or digitally manipulating a negative or photograph so that it appears to show a UFO) in an effort to radically change the meaning of an image without providing accompanying information that reveals the changes that were made in the image, and how and why the changes were made.

A non-fraudulent use of manipulation of an image because of the intended use of the image, but a use that clearly will reduce the reliability of the information in a photograph, is demonstrated by some images in the present collection. These images are portraits made from old pictures that the photographer altered intentionally, usually from informal pictures supplied to him. A number of these alterations were requested by grandchildren or great-grandchildren of the people shown in the photographs. The usual situation in these cases was that descendents of the people shown in the photograph wished to have a formal portrait of their ancestors. The only available images of the people were snapshots made outdoors in a grove of trees, or indoors, as a part of a larger group of people, and the customers who requested the alteration did so in order that a portrait-type photograph of only the intended people would be the result.

Albert Achterberg would copy these snapshots or photographs and optically enlarge them, then airbrush or physically cut the undesirable elements out of the image, airbrush in missing parts of coat sleeves and dresses, reposition and glue in or attach with a dry mounting machine the desired parts of the image, re-photograph the resulting “collage”, retouch the intermediate negative and make the final copy of the photograph, which could be gold-toned or colored with oil based pigments. Although the amount of reliable information in such a constructed image has been reduced by its alteration in this manner, the image can still be useful in providing meaning within limited parameters.

Also in the middle of the continuum from manipulation to enhancement appears the act of posing subjects, which can serve to make visible additional important information in the image, or to obscure important information that would otherwise have been evident. The possible intent of the posing must be analyzed by reading the source critically (Don Carleton, personal conversations, September 2007) in order to determine what information in the photograph is adequately reliable for use. Context clues from the image and information from other pertinent sources may be utilized for this task.

The use of an optical enlarger or digital photo editing software often involves operation in the middle of the continuum, as the photographic technician uses “dodging” techniques to withhold light from portions of a print that are sufficiently exposed, in the judgment of the technician, in order to increase the exposure time on other parts of the print that are underexposed (on the negative, the conditions are the reverse of those in the print: the underexposed portions of a negative are very light and let more light through from the enlarger light source to the photographic paper on the printing easel, which then shows up as a dark area on the print, whereas the overexposed portions of a negative are very dense and dark, and permit very little passage of light from the enlarger to the photographic paper, which then shows up as a light area on the print). “Dodging” is often a restorative procedure that is made necessary because photographic film and cameras primarily capture information and cannot make the fine adjustments that the human eye and mind are capable of making in capturing and interpreting information from a scene (e.g.: to counteract the overpowering effects of a camera flash on light-colored nearby objects, to reduce the contrast between areas in sunlight or shadow, or to reduce glare from the sun or from artificial lights in nighttime scenes). As a restorative procedure, it is valued for its ability to increase the reliability of the information provided by the image.



“Dodging” can also be used in a manipulative way to alter the scene mildly (e.g.: to make a sky darker so that it contrasts more with the clouds, making a more interesting, dramatic scene), which is generally accepted as reasonable enhancement that may reduce the reliability of the information in the image by a small amount. In the extreme, “dodging” can be employed in ways in which parts of multiple negatives are used sequentially to expose one sheet of photographic paper, thereby constructing an image that falsifies the original scene(s) contained on the negative(s), which vastly reduces the reliability of the information in the resultant image.

An alteration process common to portrait photographers is the art of retouching a negative. This is done to remove shadows from glasses frames caused by strong lights used in the making of the initial exposure, to remove errant strands of hair from the image, and to eliminate glare on glasses. These alterations normally are deemed to be not fraudulent, because they are attempts to restore to an original state, or enhance, a condition that was induced by the use of artificially bright lights, the use of which mildly altered the original scene, initially, or that resulted from moving the subject into a variety of poses (personal conversations with Al Achterberg). This practice may be carried to greater extremes in order to remove temporary facial blemishes, or in some cases, to alter permanent physical characteristics; such an extension of this practice makes the information in the image less accurate and less reliable. However, the marks made by retouching on conventional negatives are easy to detect on the emulsion side of the negative, and by comparing a retouched negative with non-retouched negatives of the same subject in the collection (exposures often made within seconds of each other), the significance of changes made by the retouching can be easily determined [Photos awa 14, 15].

Similar techniques can be used on the final print by “spotting” the prints with dyes to eliminate spots made by dust on the negatives or glare spots on glasses. This is also a restorative use, which is, therefore, normally not suspect for being a fraudulent practice but rather as an enhancing practice, which may, in fact, increase the value of the image by limiting or reversing the effects of intrusions into the photographic context (Lois Peterson, personal conversations).

Enhancement of photographs in the extreme is a category on the continuum that includes tools and techniques used to recover “lost” information, which can only add to the authentic meaning contained in a photograph. This is an area in which digital alteration with specially designed software (e.g., Adobe Photoshop) can be of great value in restoring meaning with a high level of reliability. We have earlier seen examples in which digital techniques are employed to recover information that wasn’t visible in the original negative. The images from the Solomon Butcher Collection mentioned previously and photos eae 36 and eae 37, and **[Photo nhs 49]** from the Albert W. Achterberg Collection illustrate this very reliable application of enhancement.

The process of scanning images for this study included this type of enhancement, through the adjustment of brightness, contrast, and color so that the results would approximate those initially achieved by the photographer. In cases of enhancement that radically change the appearance of the image, it is important that a clear description of the type and extent of the enhancement be made available so that the viewer may be able to better determine what information contained in the photographs is reliable and useful.

How can disadvantages in the use of photographic images as primary sources be reduced, circumvented, and counteracted, in order that researchers may benefit in their quest to add photographs to the repertoire of multiple sources of information in their investigations? The quantitative research terms “validity” and “reliability” may be

modified to be utilized more meaningfully in qualitative approaches to inquiry. Also, these two notions may serve as starting points from which to describe efforts to increase appropriateness and trustworthiness of photographic images as primary sources of information.

Careful structuring of the study, consistent analytical procedures including the establishment of the provenance of a photograph and reading the source critically, the use of corroborative text and attention to good practices in working with the photographic images will help to counteract many of the impediments to using photographs as primary sources in research. Refraining from being too free with making assumptions about what the images mean and not requiring of the images more than they can reasonably provide will increase the reliability and validity of the information and meaning derived through the interpretive process.

### **Increasing the Quality and Usefulness of Visual Information**

A photograph captures information about objects in a particular place at a specific moment in time. Timing and context are vital to producing a photograph dense with meaning. To answer the question about what makes a good ethnographic photograph, Collier and Collier (1986, 210, 211) offer three examples: a good photograph is one which establishes context, which is taken at a meaningful moment, and in which the technical skill of the photographer is equal to the photographic task.

Harper (1998, 29) reveals that the more that is known about how the photograph came into existence, the better one can evaluate its validity and value for the research. In most instances which feature work with historical photographs, as with any artifact, an

available and complete provenance would increase the value of the item for research (“Provenance Conscience” instilled by Dr. Don Carleton, 2003 class lecture notes).

The presence of multiple images in conjunction with words helps to increase the trustworthiness and value of photographic resources (e.g., Prosser, 1998, 106; Loizos, 2000, 94). Adelman (1998, 150ff.) suggests that attention to context, reflexivity, photographic selectivity, and decisive spatial positioning can also make the information in photographs more valid and reliable. Mitchell (1992, 43) suggests that a picture that is “internally coherent”, that exhibits logical agreement within its components, can be trusted as a source of information more so than can be a picture that exhibits internal inconsistencies.

The provenance of the majority of the photographs in the Achterberg Collection is generally well established by the agreement among recollections of the author, members of the extended Achterberg family, former employees, friends, and co-workers of Al Achterberg regarding the collection and by the notations on storage boxes and individual envelopes in which the negatives are kept. Much of the historical context is familiar to the author, who was directly involved in making, processing, and working in close proximity with some of the images, and who heard much discussion about the images and of the collection by Al Achterberg. The author lived in or took pictures in the towns represented in a majority of the images, and is familiar with many of the people and settings represented in the images. Through personal recall, and by knowing significant people to contact for additional information, he has been able to provide supporting information which helps to increase the value of the meanings contained in the images.

## Analytical Considerations

Collier and Collier (1986) propose a number of activities which may be undertaken when analyzing images. They include counting, measuring, and comparing information (p. 175), decoding of visual components into written forms (p. 169), searching for clues that would define the larger order (p. 180), and looking for patterns and definitions of their significance. They also suggest a model for analysis. The model consists of four steps to insure analysis in detail and with a wholistic perspective in order that the research deals adequately with, but does not get sidetracked in the details:

1. a wholistic overview of the evidence
2. an inventory of the evidence
3. structured analysis of the evidence with quantitative/qualitative analysis
4. a return to the full context of the data to discover overarching meanings
5. (p. 178, 179).

Two points presented by Cronin (1998, 80) appear to be especially helpful. The first, "...*whose* story is being told?" must always be borne in mind" [italics original], and, second, "The purposes for which photographs are both taken and used will have an effect on their meaning", are essential. Pink (2001, 19, 24) and Banks (2001, 10) again offer reminders of the importance of context to the meaning of the image, and that by placing the image in a new context, new meaning likely will result. Keeping in mind two differing dimensions of the "internal narrative", "...the story that the image communicates", and the "external narrative", "...the social context that produced the image, and the social relations within which the image is embedded at the moment of

viewing” (Banks, 2001, 11), can guide in the analysis of photographic images. The key question guiding the analysis may be, “...what does this photograph mean to whom and in which situations?” (Wagner, 1979,18). “Clearly, it is not merely a question of looking closely but a question of bringing knowledges to bear upon the image” (Banks, 2001, 3).

In an essay on the semiotic analysis of still images, Penn (2000, 229) states that, “the meaning of a visual image is anchored by accompanying text...”, and proposes that text “disambiguates the image”, which is important because of the variety of meanings images may have, given that meaning is generated in the interaction of the reader with the material (e.g., Penn, 2000, 229 ff.; Pink, 2001, 95). Pink’s (2001, 58) exhortation that “...photographs should be treated as representations of *aspects* of a culture...” [original italics], not as presenting a complete “reality” of a culture, parallels Harper’s description of the basis of the new ethnography as “...’partial truth’ rather than ‘complete document’...” (Harper, 1998, 30). Additionally, photographic images reasonably may help to disambiguate text in situations in which a visual image powerfully represents meaning.

The task of the photographer is pivotal: on one hand, information about a specific subject in a specific temporal and spatial context is being gathered and saved; on the other hand, the information in the images may well be used for generalization and transfer to other contexts. Photojournalists must operate in this tension between the specific and the universal as they attempt to capture and transmit the essence of a particular situation in a manner that will transfer meaning to the receivers of this information who are embedded in a variety of differing experiential contexts spanning a wide continuum. Those who interpret the images would do well to consider the multidimensionality of the role of the photographer through whom the images were made.

Addressing the enhancement of educational practice through qualitative inquiry, Elliot Eisner writes,

“The ability to generalize skills, images, and ideas across situations appropriately represents one form of human intelligence. Some situations look alike but are not, and some that do not look alike, are. All of this, of course, depends upon the perspective one brings to the scene. Knowing which perspective to adopt for what purposes is part of the generalizing process...” (Eisner, 1998, 198).

This principle is vital to both the role of the photographer and to that of the interpreter of photographic sources.

### **The Task/Process/Good Practice**

This dissertation features the inclusion of a large number of photographs that appear suitable as original sources for use as evidence, as illustrations, for in-depth analysis, and for comparative purposes in case studies. To maximize the meaning of these photographs, procedures based on demonstrated “good practice” have been established. Some considerations of this requirement follow.

The task in utilizing photographs as primary sources is “how to get information *on* film and how to get information *off* film” [italics original] (Collier & Collier, 1986, *xiii*). Getting information on film such that it will be useful requires technical skill by the photographer in order that the negative and the resultant print constitute a representational recording of key points in an activity (e.g., Collier & Collier, 1986, 163; Curtis, 1989). It also requires of the photographer the ability to “*observe with significance*” [italics original] (Collier & Collier, 1986, 208) and the development of good human relations skills (Collier & Collier, 1986, 214). The photographs to be catalogued and analyzed for the present dissertation already exist. Therefore, the skill

and judgment of the photographer initially invested in the production of the photographs already has been demonstrated. The photographs in the collection which are pertinent to the study have been scanned and digitized. Processes have been developed to insure quality technical results. With respect to getting information off of the film, analytical procedures have been addressed in the previous section “Analytical Considerations”.

The care and preservation of the images in the collection have been concerns of the photographer and the author. Procedures for the care of photographic images, including temperature and humidity control, are vital for the preservation of valuable images. Norris (1998) provides specific, helpful guidelines on the Library of Congress website, [www.loc.gov/preserv/care/photo.html](http://www.loc.gov/preserv/care/photo.html). Additional information is found at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts website at [www.ccaha.org/photobul.html](http://www.ccaha.org/photobul.html). During most of their existence, the negatives and prints in the Albert W. Achterberg collection have been kept in climate controlled conditions and should, therefore, be capable of fully revealing information held in the images.

Whenever photographs are used in research, procedures of organization and preservation are necessary to help the images reach their potential. Loizos (2000, 104, 105) recommends logging every photo with maximal detail of the date and place taken, and the names of the people depicted. To avoid legal complications, release/permission forms may need to be signed by people in the photographs to protect both the subject and the photographer, depending on the use of the photograph. To make the resources readily available and convenient to use, a system of storage and retrieval must be devised. If the collection is large, a system of classification must be arranged that enables the original sequence of photographs to be reconstructed as needed. These considerations have guided important aspects of this study.



In a visually-oriented culture with the highly-developed medium of photography providing millions of images annually, it would seem that visual sources of information should play an integral part in historical research. The availability of a large array of historic photographs in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection provides a ready basis for a model of beneficial uses of photographic images in historical educational inquiry.

### **III. A CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION: AN EDUCATIONALLY- NOTABLE SMALL TOWN**

In the region of the central U.S.A. known as the Great Plains the post-World War II era was a time when many changes were taking place in schools. After years of financial constraints caused by the impact upon agriculture of the “Dust Bowl” weather conditions, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and shortages of many resources as a result of World War II, a recovering post-war economy helped to support an enriched version of schooling in many rural areas, towns and cities. The levels of training and credentialing of teachers intensified (e.g., Knight, 1952, 189, 275, 318, 330; Warren, 1989, 37, 38, 41, 211, 282; Stinnett, 1964, 278; Lucas, 1997/1999, 51, 55, 58, 60; Butts & Cremin, 1953, 567, 604, 605), the number of years of schooling for children was on the increase (e.g., Lucas, 1997/1999, 81; Graham, 1995, 6; Butts & Cremin, 1953, 568, 569), and the curriculum was being broadened to include more math, science, music, athletics, and modern foreign languages (e.g., Warren, 1989, 371; Church & Sedlak, 1976, 420; Angus & Mirel, 1995, 298, 306; Kowall, 1966, 205; Butts & Cremin, 1953, 578, 592). Many new schools of modern style and function were being built to accommodate the rapidly growing number of students which resulted from the “baby boom” in the years following the war (e.g., Knight, 1952, 318; Church & Sedlak, 1976, 417). Consolidation of smaller school districts into larger ones was being done (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, 19; Mitchell, S., 2000, 1) at an astounding rate, partly to give students the imagined advantages of attending a larger school.

A large majority of the schools in the Great Plains region are located in small towns and rural areas, and therefore, they have not been subject to some of the social

concerns experienced by schools that attempt to provide schooling for the children under their jurisdiction in the large urban centers of the eastern and far western U.S. Small town and rural schools, however, must deal with their own concerns of extremely small student populations and other minimal available resources that are a result of the largely agrarian character and the sparse population density of the Great Plains region. Despite the challenges presented to small town and rural schools, many of them have succeeded in providing good educational opportunities for their students (e.g., Funk & Bailey, 1999). A few small towns have managed to build exemplary systems of schooling. A study of how these small towns have accomplished this challenging task would be in order.

One small town located near the center of the Great Plains that has established a system of schools recognized for excellence has gained a reputation for having provided a high quality education for its students in the second half of the Twentieth Century. In the south-central part of Nebraska in Phelps County is located the town of Holdrege, settled in 1883 and populated largely by Swedish immigrants. The town was named after George W. Holdrege, an official of the Burlington and Missouri railroad (Phelps County Historical Society, 1981, 50) **[Photo aer 1]**.

Although Holdrege is considered in the local context to be a moderately sized town, and is larger than any other town in the county by a factor of seven, it qualifies as a small town by most external standards. In the post-World War II years through the present time the population of Holdrege has ranged between 4,000 and 6,000, which is approximately half to two-thirds of the population of the county (8,452 in the 1940 U.S. Census, 9,553 in the 1970 U.S. Census).

Holdrege is surrounded by many miles of farm and ranch land in all directions and is quite far removed from urban areas **(Photo aer 2)**. The nearest cities with a

population exceeding 50,000, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, are Lincoln, Nebraska (170 miles to the east), Wichita, Kansas (290 miles to the southeast), Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Denver, Colorado (320 miles to the west), and Rapid City, South Dakota (430 miles to the northwest). The nearest town larger than Holdrege is Kearney, Nebraska, (population 9,643 [1940 census], 19,181 [1970 census], 27,431 [2000 census]), which is 30 miles distant. Agriculture has been and remains the major economic base and activity of the people in Phelps County.

### **Excellence in Academics**

The town of Holdrege has gained a reputation for excellence in its schools in spite of its small size and relative remoteness. The school system, District #44, has been dramatically well-represented by its students in traditional academic areas. Perhaps one of the best state-wide examples of this is the performance of Holdrege High School (HHS) students in the Inter-High Scholastic Contest held in Kearney, Nebraska.

From 1928 through 1970, Nebraska State Teachers College (later Kearney State College, and now the University of Nebraska at Kearney) sponsored an Inter-High Scholastic Contest that grew to include nearly 4,000 students from approximately 180 high schools across the state of Nebraska (The Antelope, 1970, 10-1 p.5). For this contest schools could enter students in 40 or more different areas of academic subject testing and other adjudicated performances. Students would travel to the college at Kearney early in the morning on the day of the contest to take tests and perform, and at the end of the day scores were computed and winning students and schools were announced.

In 1948, 1951, and 1953 Holdrege High School won the Inter-High Scholastic Contest Grand Championship, and in 1956 won first place in “Class I” (The Antelope, 1963, 3-15, p.3). Holdrege High School students then proceeded to win the Grand Championship and top Division I Trophy fourteen years in succession from 1957 through 1970, when the competition was discontinued due to the demands upon the college faculty and the college facilities necessitated by the increasing size of the competition (The Antelope, 1970, 10-1, p.5). These victories by Holdrege High School students often came at the expense of several larger schools.

In the final year of competition, 1970, HHS had first place winners in Trigonometry, Chemistry, World History, Plastics, and Economics. Ten second-to-fifth place winners also contributed to the final point total that year (Citizen, v.86, n.137, p.1). From his student days in District #44, the author recalls that an intensive academic focus and a strong desire to excel appeared to motivate much of the student population in the Holdrege schools.

This unusually high success rate in academic endeavors was not the result of being compared to a generally low level of academic achievement in the state. A perusal of the 1994 ACT Average Composite Scores by State (<http://www.act.org/news/data/94-96/94states.html>) shows that Nebraska tied for first place nationally in the highest percentage of graduates tested, a condition which often results in lower average scores. Contrary to that expectation, Nebraska was tied for first place in average composite scores of the ten states with the highest percentage of graduates taking the ACT test.

The academic focus of the Holdrege schools even made its way into the selection and captioning of informal pictures in its school annuals. As an example, the 1964 annual, the “*Duster*”, has a picture of the trigonometry teacher and principal, Jim Speece, with a student. The picture (p. 82) bears a caption which reads, “Sin (A+B) does *not*

equal  $\sin A + \sin B$ .” A picture of physics teacher John Teter and two students in a study hall (p. 86) is captioned in the form of a question, “Another discussion on the difference between heat capacity and specific heat?” Student members of the annual staff apparently were sufficiently informed in disciplines of advanced mathematics and science to recognize both nuance of meaning and an opportunity to transfer learning to a practical application in the captioning of annual photographs.

Excellence in the schools was noted in other areas as well. Students in the industrial arts program produced fine work in wood, plastics, and electronics, and were recognized at the annual state-wide industrial arts show at Kearney State College. Still in use in the great room of the author’s house is a walnut table that won an honorable mention for design and construction excellence at the competition.

### **Excellence in Music**

Another measure of excellence in the Holdrege schools is a music program that for much of its history has involved a significant proportion of the student population in choral and instrumental activities. The high school choir and band have produced a large number of individual and group contest winners in their class in concert, marching, and solo and ensemble competition [**Photos eahs 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30**].

The band, under the direction of Verle Straatmann from 1959 to 1976, won international band competitions at the Red River Exhibition in Winnipeg, Canada, in competition with much larger schools in 1966 and again in 1971 [**Photos b 57-75**]. In 1974 the band took first place overall and best out-of-state band in the Portland Rose Festival Grand Parade, even though it was one of the two smallest bands in the

competition. In 1976, Straatmann's last year as director, the HHS Band won the "Best American Marching Band, "700 or less" class in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. In 1985 the band won a bronze medal in a band festival in Los Angeles (the author's personal recollections and artifacts, conversations with Linda Hoover and Robert King, and Citizen, June 17, 1974).

The choir program has regularly produced full-scale major musical stage productions with full chorus, costumes, and sets, and performances of Handel's "Messiah". In 1968 the choirs, under the direction of Ron Nelson, presented music contest performances that prompted adjudicator Professor William Lynn of Kearney State College to remark, "[T]he boys glee and the mixed chorus are the finest high school groups that I have heard for many years" (Citizen, 19 April, 1968).

Students also had opportunities to perform vocally and instrumentally as soloists and in small, select groups in which they could further increase their technical and aesthetic performance skills. Photographs show that a relatively large percentage of the student population was involved in musical activities at Holdrege High School. General music programs in the elementary schools, strong band programs in the elementary and junior high schools, and an active choir program at the junior high level likely contributed to the skill and interest levels of the students.

## **Excellence in Athletics**

In athletics the football, basketball, track, wrestling, cross country, golf, volleyball, tennis, softball, and soccer teams have been competitive and have produced frequent conference, district, or state championships. Holdrege High School has not been

a one-sport school which put all its energies and resources into developing a dynasty in only one area of athletics, but has instead emphasized a balanced approach. In addition, many of the students who played sports were also performers in the choir and band, and participated in academic competitions, as is common in smaller schools. The years following World War II have seen high achievement in a variety of areas of athletics at Holdrege High School. A search of the high school yearbooks during that period of time reveals, even with some gaps in the information, a high level of accomplishment in athletic development. A summary of this information follows.

In football, the team won the conference title nine times and won first place in their class at the state level three times. In basketball, the boys' teams won the conference title eleven times, accompanied by three district and state wins. The girls' basketball teams, which were initiated in 1975, have produced four conference championships. In track, the girls' teams, which were begun in 1968, won the conference championship six times, and the boys' teams won it ten times. Each team has also won at the district level. The boys' golf teams won the district and state titles four times each and the girls' golf teams won at district twice and at state four times.

Wrestling was added as a sport in 1960 and by 1964 the wrestling team had a record of eleven wins and one loss, was ranked in second place in the Southwest Conference, achieved first place at the district meet at which they qualified students for the state competition in nine of the twelve weight divisions. The next year they repeated their second place showing in the conference, made a first place ranking in district, and captured a third place at the state meet. Cross country was initiated in 1964 and got off to a very successful start that year with a tie for first place at the district meet, eighth place at state, and fifth place at the large Midwest AAU meet.



In addition to the large number of first place finishes by many of the girls' and boys' teams, many hard-fought second and third place standings were also achieved in conference, district, and state competition. These were accompanied by numerous high place finishes by individual students at the conference, district, and state level in various athletic competitions.

## **High Community Expectations and Providing for Excellence:**

### **Accreditation**

What attitudes, values, and resources were present in the educational setting in District #44 that helped the students of the Holdrege schools to achieve excellence in so many areas? One response is easy: a generally high regard for formal education and its positive consequences appears to have permeated the collective thinking of a majority of the community, as indicated by the several school construction bond issues that were passed by the voters of the school district.

The securing of accreditation for the schools has been an important part of excellence in education in the district. In 1981 the Superintendent of schools, Hudson Lasher, wrote that, "the Holdrege School System has, for many years, been accredited as an AA class school", and indicated that the Holdrege District #44 was the first class B size school system in the state to receive that high rank of accreditation (Phelps County Historical Society, 1981, 84).

## **Providing for Excellence: Faculty**

In the 22 January 1968 edition of the Holdrege Daily Citizen an editorial proudly proclaimed that the average teacher pay in Holdrege schools ranked among the top nine of all school districts in the state, and exceeded the national average for teacher salary levels. In a town with less regard for excellence in education an editorial including such statistics might have been a warning shot that the tax rate was excessively high in support of such lavish spending. In Holdrege, such statistics served to validate the high prioritization of educating the children of the community.

The securing of the services of well-educated teachers has been a priority for the Holdrege schools. An analysis of the high school annuals from 1946 to 1963 reveals interesting information regarding the educational backgrounds of the junior high and high school teachers. In the 1947 annual, a listing of the faculty of the Holdrege Junior/Senior High School showed only one teacher having some college, but no degree, as the highest level of professional education, eleven teachers with baccalaureate degrees, and five with master's degrees. The Superintendent of Schools possessed a doctorate. The town of 4,000 residents, 160 miles from the nearest sizable city, apparently had citizens who were willing to support through their taxes a faculty with solid academic credentials in the interest of providing excellent education for the children of the community. That, however, was only the beginning.

By 1953 twelve baccalaureate degrees and nine master's degrees represented the highest level of education attained by the Junior/Senior High faculty members, and by 1956, the number of master's degrees outnumbered the baccalaureate degrees thirteen to nine. In the 1961/62 academic year, the high school students moved to the new high

school, and thereafter, the annuals included information for only the faculty members of grades 10-12. With the exception of the 1959-1962 annuals, which did not list degree information for the faculty, the degree totals listed from 1946 through 1965 add up to listings of five teachers with some college but no degree, 168 with baccalaureate degrees, and a respectable 124 master's degree listings.

Only two teachers colleges existed within 150 miles of Holdrege in 1944: Nebraska State Teachers College at Kearney, and Concordia Teachers College at Seward (Irvine, 1945, 594-596) but the students in Holdrege High School were not subject to being led by a faculty with a narrow range of academic training. Both students and faculty likely benefited from the remarkable geographical and philosophical variety in the institutions that had granted the degrees to the Holdrege teachers. Colleges and universities within the state which appear beside names of the faculty in the Holdrege High School yearbook listings of 1946 through 1965 include the Nebraska State Teachers Colleges at Kearney, Wayne, and Peru; York College, Hastings College, Luther College at Wahoo, Grand Island College, Nebraska Wesleyan, and the University of Nebraska. Institutions represented from outside the state of Nebraska included Colorado State Teachers College at Greeley, Colorado State at Alamosa, Augustana College; Iowa State, Indiana, and Northwestern Universities; the Universities of Colorado, Denver, Wyoming, Utah, California, Kansas, Oklahoma, and South Carolina; Vander Cook School of Music in Chicago, and Ithaca Conservatory in New York.

Although many of the teachers originally were from Nebraska, as indicated by personal information printed in the annuals, the faculty was quite a cosmopolitan group in their educational experience, particularly as they pursued graduate degrees at major universities in several states. This fact must have had an effect in broadening the

perspectives of the students in the school and, indirectly, the perspectives of the people in the larger community beyond the school.

### **Providing for Excellence: Teaching and Learning Spaces**

In the post-World War II era, Holdrege residents approved several bond issues for constructing new school buildings. These structures were quite modern in their function and appearance and were very much unlike the school buildings they replaced. To meet the demands on schools of the “baby boom”, two new elementary schools of a very modern design were built in as many years. The construction of Washington School, completed in the fall of 1951 [**Photos w 1, 9**] and Franklin School, completed in July, 1952 [**Photos f 1, 2, 3, 8, 9**], doubled the number of elementary schools in town and allowed the oldest school, Roosevelt School, of 1906 vintage (Citizen, v.67, n.210, p.1) [**Photos r 2, 3, 11, 12**], to be taken out of service for a time until it was again needed due to the continued increasing number of grade school age children in town.

Text descriptions of the new school buildings are far less revealing than are the photographic depictions of the structures in projecting a feeling of cutting-edge modernity. Phrases such as, “...modernistic beauty”, “a large kindergarten room”, “an attractive canopy covers the curved driveway”, “directional glass blocks which form the upper portion of all exterior classroom windows”, “the uni-vent steam heating system”, “in-the-wall folding tables and benches...in the activities room” (Citizen, v.66, n.138, p.1, 8) reveal a fine attempt to describe the new building seen by the author of the story. However, the job of the photographer must have been much easier and equally or more productive in representing the radically modernistic feel of the new Washington School

building to the tax-paying readership of the local newspaper. The four photographs included in the story speak volumes and transport the viewer quickly into the context being depicted.

The continuing story with its descriptions of the kindergarten room “scaled to fit five year olds”, the “alphabet” and “numerals from 1 to 0 set in the linoleum”, the “light panel wardrobe” in each classroom, the student desks with “three position tops”, the “cable-equipped” classrooms in anticipation of public address, television and video systems, the “very wide and modernistic” hallways with their “light wells” in the roof, and the “sky line fluorescent lights” that “light the corridors at night” still captures only sketchy elements of this new architectural wonder that was about to bedazzle the forward-thinking citizens of this small town out in the middle of Nebraska in June of 1951 (Citizen, v.66, n.138, p.8) [**Photos w 2, 9, 10**]. The textual description of the new Benjamin Franklin School, thereafter known simply as “Franklin School”, the next summer is even more spare, noting that, although the exteriors of the Franklin and Washington buildings differ somewhat in appearance, the interior characteristics of both are quite similar. The article does mention that the cloakrooms were designed to dry damp coats by being constructed so that “air comes in under the doors, and out through the cold air returns in the ceiling” (Citizen, v.67, n.198, p.5A) [**Photos f 2, 3, 7**].

Less than ten years later, an even more strikingly modern high school was built, complete with separate dedicated choir and band rehearsal rooms that were equipped with state-of-the-art sound recording technology and music posture chairs. The choir room had built-in choir robe storage and the band room had specially designed uniform and instrument storage areas [**Photos nhs 37, 50, 52, 30**].

The new high school’s modern language lab was furnished with connected “desks” that could be converted easily in a few seconds to soundproofed individual

student workstations. Each workstation in the language lab had a microphone, headphones, and a reel to reel tape recorder. A master console enabled the Spanish teacher to listen in anonymously and give immediate feedback to the student regarding the student's performance. Students could listen to pre-recorded tapes for modeling of language use stylistically different than that of their teacher and could record their own responses for later analysis and evaluation [**Photos ci 12-17**].

A sound system/public address system that permitted two way communications with fifty separate stations in the school, including each classroom in the building, had a control console in the main office and could be integrated with the sound systems in the band and choir rooms or could be used to play AM/FM broadcasts in the entire building or in selected rooms (Citizen, 11-4-61) [**Photos nhs 2, 24**]. Concrete solar screens, an abundance of skylights, and light scoops were other somewhat forward-thinking architectural features of the new building [**Photos nhs 34, 43**]. A gymnasium with a floor large enough for two basketball courts also contained a separate, spacious deck where the entire wrestling team could practice [**Photos nhs 35, 55, eahs 25**]. Fully retractable bleacher seating for 2,500 spectators was included in the gymnasium of the new high school building to serve this community of 5,000 people (Citizen, 11-4-61) [**Photos nhs 58**].

The area in which shop classes were taught had a well-appointed wood shop with an overhead sawdust collection system, an additional lumber selection room, a filtered-air finishing room and an acoustically-isolated mechanical drawing classroom [**Photos nhs 21, 31**]. The vocational agriculture shop occupied a separate area with welding facilities and an overhead door to accommodate large projects, such as trailers, which were built by some of the students [**Photos nhs 10, 12, 14, 16**]. The home economics area featured

five kitchens, project storage space and film projection equipment (Citizen, 11-4-61) **[Photos nhs 23, 27, 28, 32]**.

A biology lab with a “growing room” (Citizen, 11-4-61) for plant propagation and experimentation was included in the facility. Between the library **[Photo nhs 29]** and the study hall/cafeateria was an acoustically-treated conference room which could be reserved by students and used for group work. Wide, spacious hallways, a sharp contrast with the hallways in the old Junior/Senior High building, enabled students to access their lockers easily and served to reduce the stress level of students and faculty by freeing them from having to shove past each other on the way to class **[Photo nhs 39]**. A spacious interior commons area between the two story classroom wing and the gymnasium featured a large indoor concession stand/ticket booth **[Photos nhs 42, 1]**.

The feel of modern design and construction is communicated quickly and in great breadth and depth by the photographs as the viewer is supplied with a plethora of details about the subject and also about the context in which the subject appears. Photographs of blueprints and the finished product in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection show that, between initial plans and final construction, significant changes were made to increase the functionality and aesthetic appeal of the building. A large increase in the size of the commons area was one of the notable changes **Photos nhs 44, 45]**.

On a trip back to the high school to gather information in June, 2005, the author was reminded of the appreciation the students had for, and the way they took care of these facilities. After forty-four years of constant use the building looked nearly as good as it did when it was new. The decision-makers who approved the design of the high school had resisted the temptation to build a high school that looked like the ones that they had attended when they were students, and instead, designed a building to meet as many of the needs of the students of that time and of succeeding years as they could

project and imagine. The building apparently has met the needs of the students and has helped to positively shape the learning community in that place, and the students have apparently felt good about the building and about their use of it. The school building still has a modern, aesthetically pleasing, comfortably functional feel to it. In the intervening years, library space and other expansions have been added to make the building serve the needs of the learning community even more fully.

The old Junior/Senior High School building [**Photo jrsrhi 1, eahs 31**] served as a Junior High School until a new Middle School building [**Photo aer 4**] was built in 1991. The system of rural schools in Phelps County has diminished as a result of a decrease in the rural population and the continued efforts at consolidation. Most of the rural students from farms in the county now attend town schools.

An interested community, capable school boards and professional administration, skilled and credentialed teachers, and interested students combined to shape a learning community that worked. As a result of the exemplary record of this school system an analysis of the context of schooling in Holdrege might be instructive as we seek examples of wise educational practice and attempt to “connect the local with the universal” (Dr. Don Carleton, class notes, 2003).

## **Sources of Contemporary Information**

Due to the proximity of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century to the present time (2007) many people who have recollections of life in the schools during that span of time still exist, and are able to share those memories from a variety of perspectives: those of student, teacher, parent, administrator, taxpayer and observer of the schools, and support



personnel. Although many accurate recollections concerning extra-curricular activities, social activities and relationships between the people who interacted in the context of schooling are available, recollections about actual curricular specifics of the educational context often are not as clear and may be fewer in number.

Beyond the sketchy information available in the Holdrege High School annuals, what methods and resources are available by which we might become informed about how the various aspects of schooling converged to create an unusually favorable context for learning in the Holdrege school system? Were materials archived for later study? Have enough artifacts been preserved to give a clear image of the elements which helped to contribute to excellence in schooling in this small town? What primary sources of information are available to help reconstruct a picture of life in the classroom in the Holdrege schools from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

### **Reconstructing a Picture of Schooling**

Attempts by very helpful school officials (e.g., Dick Meyer, interim high school principal during the 2005/6 academic year, Shirley Sandfort, administrative assistant, Dan Atchinson, guidance counselor, and Sandy Dunaway, Assistant to the Superintendent) to locate significant archives other than yearbooks and individual student and faculty files have produced few resources. As teachers, administrators, and staff have come and gone, many of the records and artifacts that once existed have been discarded. Long-time faculty members and administrative assistants shared recollections with the author that necessary “house cleaning” had occurred periodically, which resulted in the significant reduction of available artifacts.

Attempts to find archived information from the schools at the state level have produced virtually no records or artifacts, either. A lengthy conversation with Dr. Jack Gilsdorf, Associate State Director of the Nebraska Department of Education Accreditation Office, in Lincoln, in June 2005 revealed that, until a decade or two prior to that, schools were asked to report very little information to the State Department of Education.

Some sources of information do exist. The aforementioned annuals (yearbooks) published by the high school reveal some information about the life of the learning community in District #44 largely through photographs with minimal text. Individual student and faculty records which add more specific academic information are kept on file at the schools and in the Central Office, and hold some information which may be helpful; however, legal restrictions on individual files limit their utility as sources of information. An active historical society in the county has helped to preserve some evidence of schooling experiences in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century at the Nebraska Prairie Museum, the fine local museum. Several informal educational collections in scrapbook form are available there, but many of the articles do not have complete reference information.

Holdrege is one of the smallest towns in Nebraska with a daily newspaper. Newspapers are often rich sources of information about community events. The Holdrege Daily Citizen is available in nearly its entirety (2 December 1887 through 31 August 2006) on microfilm in the local public library. News articles concerning school-related stories appear regularly in the Citizen. Much less information is available pertaining to the elementary schools than to the junior high school and high school, largely due to the plethora of information about the junior high and high school athletic

teams. Unfortunately for the purposes of researching non-athletic events, non-athletic school news exists as a small fraction of school-related news printed in the newspaper.

Access to a variety of sources of information is helpful for reconstructing images of schooling. However, the information available from the aforementioned sources is still somewhat limited and does not reveal enough about the day to day events which shaped schooling in south central Nebraska in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to give a clear picture of what schooling might have looked like in daily practice.

Text documents help to provide information about the curricular aspects of schooling where current personal recollections are not adequately revealing or reliable. Text documents, however, present information which may be interpreted in a variety of ways and often need other comparative sources to help clarify or uncover the meaning contained in them. Text documents are often quite brief and spare in the information that they offer.

In addition to personal recollections and text documents as primary sources of information, another rich source of information about schooling in the post-World War II era does exist. Photographic images hold a wealth of content which can inform our study of schooling from the 1940s through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Among the advantages held by photographs as primary sources of information is the presence of a large number of details of the educational context which were included either intentionally or unintentionally in the framing of the image, and which have value in attempts to reconstruct the meaning of schooling in years past. Photographs also seem to help to elicit immediate emotional response and assist in adding an emotional dimension of meaning to the event which is represented in the image. This seems to occur most notably when people are included in the photographs or when the

photographs contain context clues that connect with the viewer and interpreter of the photographs.

Many good quality photographic images of school-related subjects were made in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because of the reduction in size and cost of cameras able to produce professional quality photographs. Most of these photographs were used for an immediate objective (yearbook, newspaper reports, personal picture packages and class photographs for students) and then filed away or discarded. A remarkably small number of such images have been brought out again for research purposes to serve as primary sources of information and to contribute to an understanding of schooling in the era which they represent.

The strongest context for the use of primary sources is that in which a number of sources, such as text, photographs, and other types of information are available and can be contrasted and compared as they relate to a subject (Rundell, 1978, 374). This interrelationship among sources can help increase the validity, reliability and depth of meanings which can be derived from the sources.

In this regard, a photojournalistic approach can be exceptionally fruitful, because it essentially combines descriptive text and images which were intentionally related at the time that the sources (photographs and text) were initially constructed. A photojournalistic approach in which the journalist is also the photographer can be maximally meaningful, because the photojournalist can set up the photograph in a highly nuanced way to capture just the desired image that will best illustrate the subject that is being presented.

## **A Beneficial Juxtaposition of People**

### **and Context**

Fortunately for the study of post-World War II education in the town of Holdrege, Nebraska, a wealth of visual primary sources is available. In December, 1945 Albert W. Achterberg, a Master Sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Corps, having just completed a four year and three month extended tour of duty, arrived in Kearney, Nebraska to reunite with his wife, Faithe M. Achterberg, who had been a school teacher at Roosevelt Elementary School in Holdrege from 1941-1943. While teaching in Holdrege, Mrs. Achterberg (then, Miss Adee) had rented a room from the Lundstrom family, that lived on Seventh Avenue in Holdrege, across the street north of the Junior/Senior High School (Roberta Lundstrom via Mack Lundstrom, personal conversations, 2007).

LaMonte Lundstrom [**Photo cit 1**], publisher of the Holdrege Daily Citizen, was looking to hire, for his expanding newspaper business, capable GIs who were returning to civilian life at the end of World War II and who were in need of jobs. After some conversation which revealed that Albert Achterberg had developed reporting, writing, advertising sales, layout, and photography skills while on the annual staff at Nebraska State Teachers College in Kearney prior to the war, the publisher concluded that the ex-GI showed sufficient promise, and hired him to become a photojournalist at the Holdrege Daily Citizen, for which he worked for the following seven years, and for which he provided photographs for the next fifty-four years.

Faithe Achterberg resumed her profession as an educator in Holdrege, Funk, and Wilcox, Nebraska [**Photo ci 20**] after fulfilling primary responsibility for raising three children. Thus, Albert and Faithe Achterberg began a more than half-century span as

residents of Holdrege, Nebraska, and, as photojournalist and teacher, respectively, contributed to the shaping of, and recording of information about the school systems of south central Nebraska.

The present study is based on, and benefits from the availability of a collection of photographs from photographer and photojournalist Albert W. Achterberg, who worked in and around Holdrege, Nebraska, from 1946 through 1999. The collection was estimated by the photographer in 1999 to be in excess of a quarter of a million images (personal conversations with the photographer). A significant portion of this collection, numbering in the thousands of images, presents a view of school-related subjects covering a period of more than 50 years in rural and small town schools in south-central Nebraska. Approximately 500 of these photographs will be seen in the subsequent case studies which are a part of this study.

## **IV. PROCEDURES**

In the spring of 2002 the author requested of his graduate advisor, Dr. O.L. Davis, Jr., a reduction in the number of classes for which he was to register that summer at the University of Texas. The cause of such a reduction was given as being due to the need to move the belongings of the author's mother to Texas from Nebraska, two years following her husband's death, in order for her to be closer to family members.

Mention was made by the author of an unusual portion of the goods to be moved: a photographic collection large enough to fill a room. Further questioning by Dr. Davis concerning the subject matter included in the photographs revealed that many educationally related photographs were included in the collection. Conversations about preserving the collection, the value of the collection for historical research in education, and dissertation possibilities in relation to the collection ensued, and the author's original thoughts of focusing on a subject of music in education for the dissertation were eventually displaced by the new idea.

As the discussion continued, on the advice of Dr. Davis, the author was privileged also to meet on 17 June 2002 with Dr. Don Carleton, the Director of the Center for American History in Austin, to be advised on the care and organization of the collection for its move, and to explore some possibilities for its use in historical research. A class with Dr. Davis which included discussion on the use of photographs in historical research in education and a class in historical research methods with Dr. Carleton convinced the author that to preserve and to work with a collection of photographs which held large historical value could be a meaningful and productive experience.

Research to reveal the extent of a theoretical base for a study of photographs as primary sources in historical research in education turned up a minimum of applicable material from the field, so it became necessary explore the related areas of visual ethnography, visual anthropology and visual history to see what those areas had to contribute to the solution of the problem. At the suggestion of Dr. Davis it was also determined that a series of photographic case studies might effectively be used to help develop a rationale and procedures for utilizing photographs as primary sources of historical information about schooling.

The author's task was then to survey the contents of the collection by going through several hundred surviving photographic prints to see if there were any that were pertinent to the subject of the study, and to check each of the collection's approximately 50,000 envelopes and boxes containing negatives to ascertain their applicability to the study. Many of the envelopes of negatives required less than 10 seconds for a judgment about the usefulness of the contents to the present study to be made. Others required significantly more time, particularly if the negatives appeared to have educational value and if the envelope held ten or fifteen negatives to be examined.

If an envelope title indicated any possibility for the negatives contained inside to have potential value in the study, all of the negatives in the envelope were reviewed to identify appropriate images. At that point analysis was done to determine whether the negatives or the envelopes contained written clues to the subject matter or sequencing of the images. Each envelope had written upon it some information about the enclosed negatives [**Photo eae 53, misc 7, 8, 10, 13**]. Most of the envelopes displayed a name or a title that represented the subject or subjects of the enclosed negatives. A few envelopes contained external or internal lists, notes, or other information which validated, clarified,



or supplemented the information contained in the images [**Photos bmb 63, 64, 68, 69, 70, 71**].

In addition to the envelopes of negatives, several hundred 35mm plastic film cans containing rolls of negatives were found in the collection. These images are primarily those exposed by student photographers at Holdrege High School in the 1970s. A cursory sample of the contents of a fraction of the rolls reveals that many of the images were informal shots taken inside the classrooms, in the hallways, and in other rooms of the school.

In order to include both positive and negative images from the collection in this study it was necessary to scan the images to archival standards. Through a check of several Internet representations of photographic collections and conversation with Linda Peterson, the photographic archivist at the Center For American History in Austin, Texas, it was determined that archival standards for scanning photographs and negatives would range from a minimum of 600 dots per inch for 5x7 inch and larger prints up to 2400 dpi for extremely small prints and negatives. Such graphic files are relatively large, and require large storage capacity.

An unusual concern which had to be circumvented was the necessity of being able to scan large format negatives (5x7 inch, and possibly a few 8x10 inch negatives). Only costly semi-professional and professional scanners are equipped with a full-bed transparency adapter. Fortunately, Albert Achterberg had owned such a scanner.

Albert Achterberg's computer and scanner, which were in the author's possession, were initially tried for the task, but processing speed and storage were somewhat limited due to the age of the equipment. Attempts were made to link four different borrowed computers with the scanner, but software and hardware compatibility were issues. After working off and on for nearly a year with varying low levels of success with those

pieces of hardware and software, and enlisting the assistance of the technical support department of the manufacturer of the scanner and other computer-knowledgeable people, the author became convinced of the time-consuming futility of that approach.

Ultimately, a new computer and a semi-professional scanner were acquired and put to use. The computer is a Dell Dimension 4700 Series Pentium 4 with a 3 GHz processor, 512 MB of RAM and XP operating system software. The scanner is an Epson Perfection 4990 Photo with Adobe Photoshop Elements and Silverfast 6 Imaging software. In the intervening months while the negative scanning hardware and software concerns were being addressed, a number of photographs of Albert Achterberg and members of his family were scanned on a Hewlett Packard Scanjet 4570c.

The retention of original information about the photographic images throughout the scanning process was vital to being able at a later time to derive meaning from the images, so great care was taken to ensure that sequencing, identification, and explanatory clues were preserved. Scanning to uncompressed “tiff” files was desirable from an archival perspective, even though that process results in very large files to be manipulated and stored. A twenty step process was set up for each negative scan to provide a consistent scanning procedure.

In addition, the author was able to decode the meaning of notches made by the photographer in the edges of some negatives (a modified decimal system) to link individual negatives in several envelopes with information written on the exterior of the envelopes. This provided information on specific locations and identification of the subjects of those photographs [**Photo bmb 63, 64**].

## Description of the Collection

The Albert W. Achterberg Collection of Photographs is a group of negatives and prints representative of the work of a small town photojournalist and commercial, wedding and portrait photographer. A majority of the collection consists of individual and family group portrait negatives and prints, with the remainder being commercial negatives and prints. The latter portion of the collection is where most of the images related to schooling are found.

The commercial portion of the collection includes images which were taken expressly for use in the local newspaper, the Holdrege Daily Citizen, as well as a number of images taken for the Omaha World Herald, the Associated Press, United Press International, Time, and U.S. News and World Report, and for the local television station, KHOL-TV (later known as KHGI-TV and NTV). This list is compiled from by-lines from published photographs and letters from organizations for which the photographer freelanced. Many of the photographs were taken for organizations and individuals for marketing and documentary historical purposes.

Images of businesses, civic groups, government agencies and churches are abundant in this commercial portion of the collection. Many agricultural subjects are represented, as are other newsworthy happenings in the community, such as cultural events, natural disasters, and parades. Several hundred aerial photographs of towns, farmsteads, schools, and the Platte River are included in this part of the collection, as are several thousand copies of old photographs of people, towns, farmsteads, schools, houses, and businesses (some with clear identification).

A few images of nationally recognized political figures are found in the collection (e.g., Nebraska Governor Frank Morrison, U.S. Senator Carl Curtis, internationally-noted singer Marian Anderson, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, and then-Presidential candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower) [**Photo op 4**].

Photographs of school-related subjects show school building exteriors, interiors and construction, posed class and individual photos, bands and choirs, musicals, music festivals, athletic teams and games, student organizations, faculty and administration, grade school Christmas and spring pageants, and a large number of informal classroom photographs. The Bookmobile, a library project for rural schools and small towns which was initiated as a WPA project, is well-documented in a series of images taken during its visits to rural schools in south central Nebraska counties.

The overwhelming majority of the images in the collection were made by Albert W. Achterberg. Others employees of Al Achterberg Studio/Nelson Studio who are known to have contributed to the collection include (with years of service listed, where known) Robert A. Achterberg (the author of this study), 1962-1970; Linda Achterberg Hoover, 1970-1976 [**Photo op 3**]; Eldon Orthmann, 1962-1969 [**Photo ci 18**]; Lois Peterson, (1962-1990s); Harley Lofton [**Photo misc 6**], and a number of student photographers from the Holdrege High School Annual Staff. Neil Holen, an employee of the Holdrege Daily Citizen, is recorded as the photographer on at least one envelope of negatives. It is possible that Harry Pollock and Duane Mosbarger, and Lowell Johnson, former owners of the photographic studio purchased later by Mr. Achterberg, had work which was sold as a part of the business and may be included in the collection.

The photographic collection was stored successively in two different locations of the Holdrege Daily Citizen newspaper offices and later in the Al Achterberg Studio. When Mr. Achterberg sold the building housing the studio in December 1995, he, his

grandson, Steven Hoffschneider, a teacher in Columbus, Nebraska, and a friend of Steve's moved the collection of negatives, prints, shelving, and photographic equipment to the Achterberg home at 301 West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Holdrege [**Photos misc 14, 15, 23**], where it was placed downstairs in the family room [**Photo misc 14, 15**]. During the next four years Mr. Achterberg continued his photographic business on a reduced scale. He also organized the plywood and Masonite boxes of negatives and shredded hundreds of prints which were portrait duplicates that had been used as samples, wedding proofs, or prints which were never picked up or paid for. Negatives and prints of a number of relatives and friends were given to them, and a small number of boxes of negatives of businesses and organizations were doled out to the then-current owners or officers of the businesses and organizations.

In 1999 Al was becoming very interested in digitizing images with his new scanner and computer, and when the author, his son, returned to Nebraska in December 1999 to be with him while he had knee joint replacement surgery, Al excitedly showed the results of a high-resolution scan which he had successfully made of an 8x10 inch glass plate negative of the Ragan, Nebraska, School in the 1920s. While recovering from the successful knee joint replacement surgery in December 1999, Mr. Achterberg took his last photograph (of his wife, eldest daughter, and son-in-law in his living room on Christmas Day) before re-entering the hospital because of medical complications. After his death on 11 January 2000, his wife, Faithe, moved to Texas to be with her daughter and son-in-law, and the photographic collection remained in the house in Holdrege for the next two and one half years, still under climate controlled conditions.

In the summer of 2002 when the contents of the house were about to be shared with friends and relatives, sold, or moved to storage in Dallas, the author of the present study made the decision to save the photographic collection and to keep it in as close to

its original organization as possible through the moving process. The collection was kept in its sequence of numbered manila envelopes and put into more than 100 shipping boxes which were labeled with the range of numbers on the envelopes included inside, or in the case of the envelopes which were housed in categorized old film boxes, labeled with the categorizations included inside the boxes. The collection was driven in a rented truck and put in marginally climate controlled storage in Dallas for about a year until it was moved to more climate-regulated storage in Austin, where it remained for nearly a year.

The collection is housed presently in a former bedroom in the author's house due to the need for accessibility in a convenient work space. The collection consists of more than 99% negatives and less than 1% prints and transparencies. Therefore, the collection is much less space-intensive than would be a collection with a larger percentage of prints. The inclusion of prints allows comparison between negatives and the resulting prints, which reveals some information about the level of skill exhibited by the photographer in the use of an enlarger to overcome problems caused by difficult light conditions and the inflexibility of light sources.

Future plans for the collection still are to be determined. The author has been in contact with the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Center for American History, Austin, Texas, for advice on care and housing of the collection.

## **V. CATALOGUING SYSTEM AND IDENTIFICATION OF SELECTED EDUCATIONALLY-RELATED PHOTOGRAPHS**

The organization of such a large collection of images for research purposes is both necessary and a challenge. Classifying and categorizing the images are important functions critical to being able to identify, file, locate and recall images of value to the research being done.

The inherited system of cataloguing negatives was developed in the 1950s on two separate tracks. In his work as a photojournalist with the local newspaper, and later as an independent photographer, Al Achterberg needed a system of organization for the pictures he was taking. He developed a method in which he would write the subject of the photograph, which sometimes included a date and other information (e.g., “Minden Train Ride Washington 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade 5/3/56” [**Photo misc 11**], “Tri-County Steam Plant Boiler Interior”, “HHS Band 1966”) on a manila envelope, place the negatives into the envelope, and place the envelopes in empty film boxes which he had taped together [**Photos misc 45, 46**]. As the number of negative storage envelopes increased, he designated and labeled boxes for generic or specific recurring subjects (e.g., “School”, “Fires”, “Weather”, “Oil Wells”, “Andy’s Maytag”). Arrangement of envelopes in the boxes was initially chronological, so that for retrieval of negatives for subsequent use, he could estimate the date the photographs were taken, examine 5 or 6 envelopes, and locate the desired negatives. Early envelopes were written on with thick black pencil, which looks almost like a grease pencil, often in capital letters [**Photos misc 9, 12**]. Later envelopes were written on with Al’s trademark mechanical pencil, which produced a thinner line and encouraged the photographer to write in a highly stylistic cursive. The

use of cursive writing resulted in quicker writing and abbreviations which often can be difficult to decipher. Other employees of the studio would usually write on the envelopes with pen [**Photos bmb 70**]. These notations sometimes reveal interesting information. Photo “misc9” includes a notation indicating that 8x10 photographs were less than a dollar each, and an 11x14 was two dollars.

In 1961, when Al Achterberg took over operation of the Nelson Studio, the second track of cataloguing negatives was appropriated for use. That system consisted of negatives placed in manila envelopes which in turn were placed in open-top cardboard boxes. Later, he replaced these boxes with plywood and Masonite boxes approximately 18 inches long. The envelopes were numbered sequentially. In January 1979, the envelope numbers were approaching 20,000, so the numbering system was changed. In the new system, “79-1” indicated the first envelope of negatives in 1979, and was followed by “79-2”, “79-3”, and so on. Overlap between the film box classification and numbering systems may have occurred with some frequency, as the familiar old system was capable of functioning reasonably well for subjects which coincided with the old box designations.

Most of the unsold prints made from the negatives were shredded by the photographer between 1996 and 1999. The prints which remain in the collection were found in several boxes and in some negative envelopes. Some boxes were labeled, but others were not. The unlabeled boxes usually contained photographs representing a variety of subjects. Happily for those interested in photographs of educational subjects, a box containing a large number of prints was labeled “Schools”. It contains 58 black and white 8”X10” prints and 97 smaller prints of school-related subjects.

Random envelopes of negatives and selected prints which had escaped being confined in a box also are present in the collection, and also needed to be examined.



These included a small group of negatives from the photographer's student days at Nebraska State Teachers College at Kearney.

Al Achterberg had a substantial collection of informal family and personal photographs (e.g., visiting relatives, remodeling projects, vacation travel), and often would finish a commercial roll of film with personal photographs or photographs of something interesting around town or at the studio that caught his eye. The commercial photographs from such rolls primarily were filed in the aforementioned ways, but some of the "extra" interesting images remain with the personal collection, which is not organized, except for dates on photofinishing envelopes (with two exceptions, color film was not developed in the Achterberg Studio, and was sent out to a photofinisher, due to the added challenges of color processing). Due to the size of the task, not all of the tens of thousands of random negatives and prints have been identified, classified and catalogued, even though a few of them may have educational subjects.

The sequential number cataloguing system for negatives, with its later adaptation (e.g., "79-1") appears to serve adequately for the purposes of this dissertation, but Mr. Achterberg's original negative cataloguing system has needed slight revision, and the prints with educational subjects have been catalogued with numerical identification.

The images that have been made a part of the current study are identified functionally according to this scheme: a series of subject-derived letters followed by the number of the image in that particular subject category. They are as follows:

aer- aerials [aer 1, aer 2, aer 3], etc.

af- Air Force (U.S. Army Air Corps)

ath- athletics

awa- Albert Wilhelm Achterberg

awafma- Al and Faithe Marie Adee/Achterberg

b- band

bmb- bookmobile

cit- Holdrege Daily Citizen

ci- curriculum and instruction

ene- enrichment activities, elementary

eahs- enrichment activities, high school

ema- Ernst and Marie Achterberg

fma- Faithe Marie Adee/Achterberg

misc- miscellaneous

nstc- Nebraska State Teachers College at Kearney

op- other people

ra- Robert Achterberg

rn- retouching negatives

School buildings:     f- Franklin

                              l- Lincoln

                              m- Middle School

                              nhs- new high school

                              jrsrhi- old junior/senior high school

                              o- others

                              r- Roosevelt

                              w- Washington

sn- special needs

st- studio

Brief descriptive titles for the images have been supplied by the author in some cases and the number of dots per inch (dpi) resolution of the scan was included for all but the initial group of images scanned.

### **Selection of a corpus of educationally related photos and possible criteria for choice:**

For the purposes of this dissertation not all of the photographic images in the collection which relate to schooling are of equal value. The type of subject and its apparent degree of posed or candid character represented contribute in an interrelated manner to the value of the image. For this reason, a simple two dimensional matrix was devised to assist in the selection of images for the proposed study.

Fig. 1					
	Academic class activity in/out of classroom	Co-curricular events	Buildings without people	Class/grade not involved in academic activity	Individuals in yearly package pictures
Candid: informal/natural activity/state					
Informally semi-arranged					
Formally posed					

Intersections of degrees of posed or candid character and types of subjects result in fifteen potential choices, with locations nearer the top and farther to the left holding the

most potential. The nine intersections with darker shading represent areas of greatest interest for the present dissertation.

### **Rationale for scanning photos into a digital archive:**

A major assumption of this dissertation is that photographic images can be powerful sources of information to coordinate with textual information for descriptive, comparative, and analytical purposes, and that the majority of published studies do not utilize that great potential. This dissertation can be a model to motivate other researchers to realize the potential of photographic images for their work.

Several advantages of digitization of images exist:

- When digitized, the images may easily be shared electronically with other researchers and interested parties.
- The cost of digitizing images is much less than printing negatives conventionally.
- Once procedures have been determined, the speed of duplication is far greater by electronic means than by conventional printing, perhaps by a factor of 10 or 20.
- Page thickness of a printed form of the dissertation will be more consistent when using digitized photographs than with conventional photographs.
- A number of photographic collections in major archives have been digitized in part so that the images are accessible through the Internet. This appears to be a new expectation for archived photographic collections.

An additional practical consideration for digitizing the photographs is that the University of Texas at Austin requires dissertations to be filed electronically, and digitizing the images at the beginning of the process appears to be the most efficient way to address this requirement.

## **VI. CASE STUDIES UTILIZING PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE ALBERT W. ACHTERBERG COLLECTION**

In the time period covered by the Albert W. Achterberg Collection of photographs, students in the schools of Holdrege, Nebraska, were known for their high levels of academic achievement. What did education in Phelps County, Nebraska, District #44 schools look like in practice? What changes in the educational context may have occurred over time? Did variability in student achievement exist between elementary schools within a town or between school systems in different towns, or between town and rural schools, and might the variability have been influenced by facilities at some schools which might have limited or enhanced the schools' ability to develop their students' potentials? Might the photographs in the collection reveal clues about facilities, curricular programs, administration, or faculty and staff which may have contributed to giving the students the foundational, technical, attitudinal or motivational edge they needed for high achievement? Photographic images used together with test scores and academic, athletic, and music contest data, or with long term comparison of student achievement into adulthood might provide interesting insights. Much research that exceeds the constraints of this study could yet be done.

By comparing images in the collection or by doing repeat photography and comparing new images with those in the collection, trends may be identified in building design, activities, curricular resources and procedures, and prioritizations in educational matters. Photographic images can help us to describe what schooling was like in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in south central Nebraska, and to assist in the interpretation of the methods of that schooling.

The following five case studies will help to show the potential of photographs as primary sources of information for research and teaching as they are used for illustration, as evidence, for comparison and contrast, for analytical purposes, and for teaching history and historical methods. In addition, these case studies provide opportunity to connect the local/particular with the global/universal:

### **Case Study #1: The Bookmobile** (Descriptive).

During the Great Depression of the 1930s in the United States, various government programs were established to provide work for people who were unemployed, and to produce physical items or services which would benefit the citizens of the country. Major programs included the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), and the Civil Works Service (CWS). One of the projects sponsored by the Work Projects Administration, initially known as Works Progress Administration (*Handbook of Texas Online*, Works Projects Administration, 1), was the Public Library Service Program under the Library Service Section, established in February 1938 (Gorman, 1997, 431). Various elements of this program were known as the Rural Library Extension Program, the WPA Rural Demonstration Program (*Nebraska Library Commission History*, WPA Rural Demonstration Program, 1), WPA “Travelling Libraries” (WPA Travelling Libraries, 1) or as its most common and visible feature, the Bookmobile (e.g., Gorman, 1997,1; *Nebraska Library Commission History*, 3).

In addition to providing work for unemployed Americans, the benefit to the citizens served by this program was that of solving the problem of, “making library service to rural Americans more nearly equal to that now available to most people in American cities” (Chapman, 1940, 1). The program was developed to serve the needs of

both children and adults and included a variety of attempts to increase the number and variety of books and other material available to potential readers.

One method of increasing the availability of reading materials was to carry books from the WPA-designated library in a vehicle, on horseback, by boat, or on foot to small town schools and rural schools with small libraries or to small town libraries with limited book resources (e.g., WPA Travelling Libraries, 1937, 2, 4; New Deal Document Library, 2003, 1). Additionally, in the absence of a village library, stops were frequently scheduled downtown at a set location, or at a country crossroads or community center building (Citizen, 1945, v.61, n.294, 4). This was done on a regularly appointed schedule at the interval of a week or two. In some cases teachers would order books and have them delivered to their schools.

The vehicle most commonly used to carry the books was known as the bookmobile. The reading materials carried by the bookmobile were usually a combination of WPA funded books, locally funded book purchases, existing library stocks, and donated books and periodicals (e.g., Chapman, 1940, 2; WPA Travelling Libraries, 1937, 4; Chapman, 1938, 2, 6). In a few cases, such as in Adams County, Nebraska, the bookmobile was simply a delivery vehicle to take books from the WPA-designated library to small town libraries nearby (Hastings Daily Tribune, v.XXXVI, n.205, 10). A more common use of the bookmobile, however, was for students and family members to step into the bookmobile itself to examine and check out books.

The Nebraska Public Library Commission sponsored a WPA library project beginning in 1940. Initially, a bookmobile would be supplied by the WPA on loan through the Nebraska Public Library Commission for two years, during which time local committees were formed to promote the program with hopes of building support to continue the project with local funding beyond the two year trial period. In most cases,



the bookmobile consisted of a specially designed vehicle body purchased with local funding, mounted on a truck chassis supplied by the WPA (e.g., Citizen, v.56, n.303, 1; Chapman, 1938, 2; Gorman, 1997, 435). By November of 1940 Phelps County, Nebraska was hosting a bookmobile, which made its inaugural trip to the village of Atlanta on Tuesday, 26 November (Citizen, v.56, n.276, 1). Phelps County apparently made use of a Nebraska State Library Commission bookmobile for the first month of operation before the new county bookmobile arrived (Citizen, v.56, n.276, 1).

A small amount of text information is available regarding the interior design and the usage of the various bookmobiles that were put into service. Photographs clearly show that the earliest bookmobiles had shelves full of books on the outside, protected by panels that were opened up when the bookmobile arrived at the school or other appointed stop (Nebraska Library Commission- Bookmobile, 1, 5). During good weather, this arrangement worked well, but opening up the side panels of the early bookmobiles would expose the books to rain and snow. The Holdrege Daily Citizen announced during the third week of the operation of Phelps County's borrowed bookmobile that, "...[the village of] Funk is on the Thursday schedule...in case of bad weather, [the bookmobile] will be stationed in the Martinson blacksmith shop" (Citizen, v.56, n.296, 1. This was apparently necessitated by the need to get the bookmobile indoors in order to make it usable in inclement weather. Photographs also reveal that, within a short period of time, new designs with larger truck chassis and bodies enabled students, teachers, and parents to step into a larger bookmobile in small groups to look for books out of the cold or wet weather (Nebraska Library Commission- Bookmobile, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10) [**Photos bmb 22, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56**]. Phelps County's new bookmobile was a large version and held three times the number of books as the Nebraska State Library Commission demonstration

bookmobile that had been on loan to the county for the first month of the project (Citizen v.56, n.303, 1).

By September 1941, still only Lancaster and Phelps counties had WPA bookmobiles in the state (Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, September 7, 1941, D1 ), and by the end of 1945 Phelps County's bookmobile was the sole county library of that type in the state of Nebraska (e.g., Citizen, v.61, n.294, 4; Hastings Tribune, v.XLI, n.47, 7). To keep a large vehicle such as a bookmobile running in those years was a major task, due to the lingering financial shortages of the Depression Era and the shortage of tires and other commodities during the war years, and may have influenced the lack of expansion of the bookmobile program at that time. Twelve years later the Phelps County bookmobile was Nebraska's only WPA sponsored bookmobile to have served from its initiation in that program to the next bookmobile program which was made possible by the Library Services Act of 1956, federal Public Law 597 (e.g., Overton Observer, 4/20/61; Nebraska Library Commission- Centennial: Libraries for the Centuries, 2). As a result of its successful track record, the Phelps County program was selected to be the model program for the state of Nebraska under the new legislation.

Aside from a Regional Library funding setback in Franklin County (Hastings Tribune, v.57, n.173, 6) the bookmobile idea appeared to be well-received by people in the areas served. A correlation between honor roll students and "good readers" of bookmobile books was noted, and teachers reported the integrating of bookmobile books with classroom studies (Citizen, v.61, n. 294, 4). Lou Raasch, the 1961 Nebraska Boys State winner from the small town of Republican City gave "...much of the credit for his achievement to his extensive reading in the 'library on wheels'..." (Hastings Tribune, vol.56, n.234, 3A), and during National Children's Book Week in 1960 the Holdrege

Daily Citizen ran a story with the headline, “Bookmobile Starts Youths on Promising Science Careers” (Citizen, v.77, n.60, 1).

Due to the ongoing success of, and community support for its bookmobile, in 1957 Holdrege became the headquarters for the Nebraska Public Library Commission’s pilot two year demonstration project, “Project A” (Harlan County Journal, 11 July 1957, v.51, 1). This was Nebraska’s first regional library, a “portable education project” (Kearney Daily Hub, 10/8/59) which ultimately served six counties, beginning service in March 1958 to Phelps, Harlan, and Franklin Counties (e.g., Kearney Daily Hub, 10/8/59; Hastings Tribune, v.56, n.132, 3E; Arapahoe Public Mirror, v.84, n.7, 5). By 1961 the library at Holdrege had 28,000 books to circulate (Hastings Tribune, v.56, n.234, 3A) through two bookmobiles (Nebraska Farmer, 4/15/61) [**Photo bmb 51**]. Later that year the South Central Regional Library in Holdrege was “cited as a pattern for other counties of Nebraska” (Citizen, v.76, n.8, 1). In April 1963 operations of the South Central Regional Library were merged with the Holdrege City Library and the Phelps County Library to form the Public Library System, and the regional library bookmobile and books were relocated to the greatly-expanded former Holdrege City Library building, which was dedicated on 2 June 1963 (Citizen, v.78, n.216, 1) [**Photo bmb 57**].

In 1983 the then-current bookmobile was destroyed by fire from an electrical short while it was in for service, and was replaced by a new model (Citizen, v.99, n.232, 14). That last South Central Regional Library bookmobile served until June 2003, and in March 2004 it was donated to the Nebraska Prairie Museum in Holdrege (e.g., *Public Library Strategic Plan 2002-2005*, 2004, 6; Citizen, v.120, n.56, 1). Although the availability of Internet service and the willingness of people to travel to satisfy their reading and research needs recently resulted in the eventual ending of the bookmobile program in Phelps County, the bookmobile program is an excellent model of innovative

thinking, collaboration and careful planning which, for over sixty years, successfully made reading materials accessible to students in schools and to their families.

Reading skills are a key to academic achievement. Are significant text sources available to give a clear idea of what the Bookmobile program looked like in practice? Are there existing photographs which contain information that can help to clarify the program's operation? Might the expressions of the people in the photographs indicate that the students and teachers imagined the Bookmobile visit to be an experience which was to be anticipated and enjoyed? Does evidence exist showing the level of interest and intensity of focus of students who made use of the bookmobile's services? Do photographs add to our understanding about the organizational features of bookmobile service? Do they help us to understand schedule adaptations that teachers in the rural schools might have to have made to accommodate the bookmobile visits? Do the available sources show what types of books were available and how many books each child might have checked out? Was the Bookmobile program of Phelps County, Nebraska, a significant force in boosting the reading interest and skills of students in the rural schools? Were children able to check out enough books to make a difference in their reading habits? Did the bookmobile provide enough resources so that rural and small town school students could achieve parity with students in the town schools, according to the intent of the WPA program? Many rural schools still exist, even after massive consolidation of such schools. Could photographs in the collection help to show possibilities that a Bookmobile program might offer to benefit students in small town and rural schools in the Internet Age of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

At the request of the author, Holdrege librarian Linda Davey did considerable and productive research to determine what sources of information about Nebraska's model bookmobile program were available at the library that served as the base of operations for

more than forty years for the bookmobiles in Phelps County. An original mimeographed brief one-page description of the bookmobile service was found [**Photo bmb 72**], along with 98 articles from area newspapers and other publications which were significantly to marginally related to the bookmobile project. An unidentified copy of a hand-drawn map of the bookmobile and its route, including depictions of where it stopped, provided precise detail about which geographic areas in the county the bookmobile served.

In addition to the Phelps County bookmobile and the South Central Regional Library bookmobile, both based at the Holdrege Library, these articles also mention later bookmobile projects in other parts of the state. Some overlap in subject matter occurs within an article, so the totals add up to more than 98 articles. As might be expected, the majority (72) of these articles related to political and funding issues and the original provision and organization of the bookmobile project; 22 articles contained announcements of schedules and routes of the bookmobile, 11 articles contained minor details of actual use, and only seven articles contained substantive text information on the detailed day to day use in practice, or commentary by students and teachers about the bookmobile service. 17 of the articles include photographs that show the program in operation.

The article that appears to be the most informative presents this information about the operation of the bookmobile program:

“The bookmobile carries a good supply of books for all ages selected from the Holdrege Carnegie Phelps County Library. It makes regular scheduled bookstops every two weeks at country schools in Phelps County that are located on, or very near gravel roads.

The school children are well acquainted with the order of procedure. They bring their books to the school the day the bookmobile is scheduled for their school. And five children have washed their hands, have their books ready and are at the door of the bookmobile by the time the folks on the bookmobile are ready for them. They place their books on the desk and the business of checking-in is cared for immediately. The children enjoy commenting upon the books they have read,

saying, "That was a good book," or, "Are there any more books like that?" or "I liked that book so well that I read it twice." The children go straightway to the shelves where they know books for their age and grade are to be found. Only the beginners need guidance, and soon they exhibit independence in making their own selections. These first grade children are proud indeed when they can really read the little primers. And it is not long before they will say, "Oh, that is too easy for me..."

To the teachers go the newest children's books for the reading table....

The bookmobile visits Funk, Atlanta, Loomis, and Bertrand. Time is allotted to each grade of the schools. When the high school children arrive, we find them searching through the adult shelves where both fiction and classified books are found. After the schools have been served, the bookmobile makes a stop down town, where adults get their books. Adults are permitted to make a choice from a "new books" section, and other copies of these same new books are found on the "Seven day" shelves in the Holdrege library. Many children in the country take books home for their parents. Some adults make a regular practise [sic] of visiting the bookmobile at the country schoolhouse stops. This is a practice much desired by the staff and more and more adult readers would be most welcome" (*Citizen*, v.61, n.294, p.4, 5).

As informative as it is, this most detailed article leaves the reader wishing for more information about how the bookmobile service looked in practice.

Other sources of information about this unique library services program that enhanced the reading of students in rural schools, and other members of their families, are limited. The Nebraska Library Commission has several articles on bookmobiles available on their website. One article has minor statistics and sketchy organizational information about the Phelps County bookmobile project, two articles mention bookmobiles in other areas of the state, one consists largely of exterior photographs of bookmobiles from several other counties, one is a detailed article on the Gage County bookmobile, and just one has a brief summary of Phelps County bookmobile service in 1945. The latter, entitled, "The Underserved Library Patron", outlines how Phelps County solved the problem of minimal rural library privileges for its citizens, and

includes in the problem the boosting of educational advantages for children and the providing of continuing education opportunities for returning soldiers and war workers:

“Farm people in Phelps County solved it by voting a tax for county-wide library service with headquarters in Holdrege, the county seat.

Every resident of the county may have access to the book collection. The books are taken to the people in a bookmobile, a ‘library on wheels.’ It visits each place at a specified hour once every two weeks. The librarian routes the stops to bring book service within easy reach of all. Stops are made in every village, at rural community centers, county schools and convenient crossroads.

Books of fiction and non-fiction on many subjects for both adults and children are available....The Phelps County Library has given rural people of Nebraska one pattern of rural library service which might well be adopted in a great many counties” (Nebraska Library Commission- Underserved Library Patron, 3).

Nebraska’s sole successful survivor of the WPA rural library program which also served later in 1957 as the exemplary model for “Project A” of the Nebraska Public Library Commission’s first regional library project apparently has been chronicled with only a thin vestige of historical mention by the Nebraska Library Commission. An image of the program in practice would be quite impoverished if we were to depend on this information to understand how this unique bookmobile program worked.

By combining the information contained in the quoted articles noted above with that contained in the Gage County article, and assuming that the programs were run similarly, the picture of the program in service may be clarified to a degree, but that assumption may not be completely accurate. The Holdrege Daily Citizen, the Hastings Tribune, the Lincoln Journal and Star, the Nebraska Farmer, the Kearney Hub, the Elm Creek Beacon, the Bertrand Herald, the Wilson Library Bulletin, the Hildreth High School Bark, the Auburn Press-Tribune, and the Arapahoe Public Mirror published several stories that provide varying levels of detail about how the bookmobile program

looked in its daily function, but the text-induced visualization remains sketchy. More information is needed if we are to understand how this program really looked in practice.

Twenty-three articles in these publications included photographs of the exterior or interior of the bookmobiles. Thirteen articles also included photographs of the interior of the bookmobiles as they were in use (e.g., Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star 9/7/41, 10/12/58; Hastings Daily Tribune 3/7/61, 7/5/61, 4/23/62; Nebraska Farmer 4/13/61, 7/7/62, 8/21/64; Kearney Hub n.d., 10/8/59; Auburn Press-Tribune 5/7/63; Arapahoe Public Mirror 2/14/63; Wilson Library Bulletin April 1961). These photographs greatly assist the process of constructing an image of how it might have felt to be a part of the bookmobile program: as a student with sudden access to a wealth of books, as a teacher whose students' research and reading boundaries were expanded by this service, or as the bookmobile librarian and driver, who likely perceived that they were providing a useful service to people in outlying rural areas of a six county region through their efforts of loading and unloading books, driving through mud and snow, spending day after day in the small confines of their usually too-hot or too-cold mobile library, and attempting to manage daily a 2,000 to 3,000 book inventory that would meet the needs of a diverse constituency ranging from pre-school age children to adults [**Photos bmb 15, 16, 28**].

Included in the Albert W. Achterberg collection are a number of photographs that clearly show the interior of two of the bookmobiles as they are being used by students from rural schools and by other rural residents, both adults and pre-kindergarten age children. These photographs show students of different ages at a variety of rural schools as they perused the offerings of the bookmobile.

Of the 37 photographs included in the articles mentioned previously, 30 are of the Holdrege-based bookmobiles. 15 are exterior photographs of the bookmobile, of which only six include students. 15 are interior photographs, of which 12 include students.



Several of these 12 are duplicated between articles. Six of the 30 Holdrege-based bookmobile photographs in the articles are by Al Achterberg.

A survey of the Albert W. Achterberg Collection reveals at least 50 photographs of the Holdrege-based bookmobiles. The collection contains 18 exterior photographs of the bookmobiles, of which 8 images include students, and 32 interior images, of which 24 images include students. The visual documentation of the model Holdrege-based bookmobile program that is contained in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection is a significant majority of that which apparently is available. Several of the exterior photographs and most of the interior photographs that do not include students do show younger children and adults making use of the bookmobile **[Photos bmb 32, 37, 38, 39, 43, 45, 46, 48]**.

Included in the envelopes housing bookmobile negatives in the collection are several printed pages whose blank backs were used by the photographer for making notations concerning the photographs. Apparently, he needed something on which to write and asked the bookmobile librarian or driver for some paper. Fortunately, for a study of the bookmobile program, one of these pages is a blue paper with the 1959/60 bookmobile schedule printed on it **[Photos bmb 59, 60]** and another is a white paper containing the 1960/61 bookmobile schedule **[Photos bmb 58, 61, 62]**. These pages show the school days the bookmobile was in operation during that school year and name the schools and towns visited on each day and the times of the day the bookmobile was at each location.

The envelopes containing the bookmobile negatives also display some of the most extensive descriptive notations in the photographer's handwriting on any of the envelopes in the collection, thereby increasing the level of detailed information about the images contained within **[Photos bmb 63, 64, 68, 69, 70, 71]**. These notations, coupled with the

author's discovery and solution of the notched negative coding system devised by the photographer led to the identification of the schools featured in each photograph. Central to that problem which needed to be solved is the fact that, although roll film contains numbers in the border of the film, which can be matched up with the frames exposed, 4x5 sheet film is exposed one sheet at a time, and there is no internal indication of sequence of exposures. Hence, a coding system had to be devised by the photographer to match up with notations on the envelope for future reference once his immediate memory diminished concerning which students and teachers in the images were from which school.

The photographic challenges of these bookmobile picture assignments were daunting, given the limited interior dimensions of the bookmobiles, the inclusion of up to ten students accompanied by a teacher, a librarian, and a driver of the bookmobile [Photos bmb 18, 36]; the problem of lighting, the limited access, the attempt to record informal action true to its normal occurrence, and depth of field concerns. The fact that the quality of photography exhibited by the Al Achterberg bookmobile photographs is quite high makes possible the mining of the photographs for much meaning. The value of these photographs is great in helping to tell the story of the bookmobile use and in helping to contextualize the minimal text resources available on that subject.

The bookmobile's potential use as a motivational tool should be acknowledged. For students who attended the small rural schools in south central Nebraska, the arrival of the large bookmobile must have been a major event, particularly in later years when the new bright yellow Regional Library bookmobile arrived. [Photos bmb 1, 27] A contrast of the 1960 photograph of the old, low-technology, mud-surrounded white frame rural Carter schoolhouse [Photo bmb 41] with the photograph of the students from that same school inside the new bookmobile [Photo bmb 37] or a similar comparison of the image

of the small District 73 rural school building with that of its students checking out books [Photo bmb 3, 14] may generate the feeling of the bookmobile as a modern, high technology tool that could motivate a love for reading. For the students of such schools, stepping onto the bookmobile might have had the effect of transporting them into a new world, one to which they looked forward with anticipation for its two or three week cycle of visits; “All mine for three whole weeks,” was student Eddie Bantam’s response to his temporary treasure of books from the bookmobile’s stop at District 60 in Harlan County (Nebraska Farmer, 4/15/61) [Photo bmb 29].

What other types of reinforcement might the bookmobile have provided for the teachers and the students of the small schools in the interest of increasing reading time and broadening the boundaries of their research and thinking? The bookmobile librarians worked to reinforce good reading habits that were encouraged by classroom teachers by posting honor rolls of those students who met certain reading standards [Photos bmb 12, 14]. The making available of bookmobile books to adults and pre-school age children at stops in downtown areas of small towns as well as at schools was reinforcement for good reading habits for the students, too. The students could see their parents and neighbors checking out books and showing interest in the arrival of the bookmobile [Photo bmb 23, 31, 32, 38, 39, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50].

Photographs show us that the bookmobile also reinforced the idea of community by displaying pennants of high schools that the rural students would be attending [Photo bmb 2]. For all of the space limitations associated with a mobile library, the bookmobile still presented an impressive array of books to the students who were privileged to use its services [Photo bmb 4]. That the bookmobile was an attractive addition to the normal curricular offerings of the rural schools is shown by the intensity and focus of the students during their moments perusing its treasures [Photos bmb 4, 7, 20, 21, 25, 30, 33,

35], by the evident enthusiasm of the students as they hurried outdoors to the bookmobile [Photos bmb 27, 40, 49], and by the care with which the students carried the books back into the school building [Photo bmb 8].

The photographs are clear enough that several taken from advantageous angles reveal the names of the periodicals that were taken in the bookmobiles to its patrons. Many titles can be clearly read [Photos bmb 5]. In several of the photographs the titles of the books are able to be discerned, giving an idea of the literature available to the students. The photographs in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection provide valuable contextual detail about bookmobile service to the students of south central Nebraska, and help to fill in the picture beyond what the sketchy text resources are able to do.

## **Case Study #2: Bands** (Descriptive/Analytical).

High school bands are often the most public face of a high school music program because they perform in places where large numbers of the citizens of a community gather on a regular basis (e.g., at football games, in parades, at concerts, and at commencement exercises). Community pride may be reflected in the appearance of the band in a public event, as parents of the students and other taxpayers have a chance to hear and see at work the resources which they have provided through the schools. Town pride is reflected in a comparative manner particularly in band performance situations where members of other communities are present as observers, or where bands from other communities are also present as performers.

On one hand, a public appearance by a band has the potential for making a positive impression on those who hear and see the band. On the other hand, a band's performance may represent a community in a less favorable light, if resources, leadership, or student attitudes and effort are lacking. In order to represent its supporting

community well, a band may require more funding for resources than do other areas of the school curriculum because of the cost of large instruments that the school must provide, uniforms that will contribute to a positive image presented by the band, specialized rooms for rehearsal, technology for recording and analyzing instrumental performance, transportation needs, and space and specialized storage for instruments, music, and uniforms.

A marching band represents prioritization of time and space for rehearsal and extra funding to the extreme, due to its additional specialized needs of instruments, rehearsal time and practice areas. The performance of a band can reveal much about the resources that a community has and is willing to prioritize in order to present itself publicly in a favorable light through the music programs of its schools. It can also reveal information about the attitudinal state of the students in a school, in that a band performance is such a highly disciplined cognitive, social, and physical activity that, if an attitudinal malaise or antipathy exists in a school, a high level of precision in musical performance is nearly impossible to achieve.

What might the photographs of bands present in the collection tell us about the function and the importance of music programs in the schools of south central Nebraska? Can they reveal information about what types of resources the bands had available and how the band directors in these small town schools utilized their resources for maximal effect? Do the images help to show that the high school bands were an integral part of community activities? Might comparisons among band programs in a variety of schools be made by analyzing photographs of the bands? Might a longitudinal description of a selected band program be made through the analysis of photographs made of the band over a period of years or decades?

Through a photographic analysis of successive years of a band program, changes in participation, facilities and instrumentation may be noted. The number of students in the band as a percentage of the student population in a school helps to show the importance of music in the school system. What clues might be present in photographs of the Holdrege High School Band that would give evidence of the standards of excellence that were a hallmark of the school system and of the band program in the decades following World War II?

Precision of motion in a marching band is keyed to the sound of the drum section. How did band directors in schools represented in the photographic collection place drum lines in street marching formations in order to gain the greatest advantage of precision? What types of percussion equipment did they employ to enhance the sound produced by the percussion section? Does information exist that shows how the directors put their theories into practice?

Precision of tuning is keyed to the low pitched instruments such as sousaphones, tubas, and recording basses. Where did band directors place the low-pitch instruments to enhance the tuning of the band? Placement of trombones and other instruments in a marching band can also have visual and auditory implications concerning how a band performs and how it is perceived by observers. How did band directors in schools represented in this photographic collection arrange other instruments in the band for maximal visual and auditory effect? Are there observable trends over the years in how selected instruments were placed in the formation of the band's ranks and files? How were similar auditory and visual principles applied to the band's concert formations?

Types and number of instruments and types of uniforms give clues to the prioritization of the music program in a school district. Were full uniforms provided for the bands, or did students perform in generic clothing that matched to a degree? Do the

uniforms look reasonably up to date? Were large instruments and marching percussion that are typically provided by the schools for student use present in the bands? How many of each instrument is present in the band's photographs? Do the instruments appear to be newer or very old and heavily used? Do the photographs show changes in instrumentation and uniforms over time? Do the changes indicate a positive development of the instrumental music program in the schools or a weakening of the program?

A portion of the Albert W. Achterberg Collection is an unusual and perhaps unique archive of photographs of marching bands in southern Nebraska and northern Kansas. In late October of 1952 the United States Navy Band, under the direction of assistant conductor Lieut. Commander Charles Brendler, visited Holdrege, Nebraska and put on two concert performances which were attended by nearly 3,500 people from the surrounding counties in Nebraska and Kansas. Associated with the appearance of the Navy Band was a parade in downtown Holdrege at which 2,000 area high school, junior high, and college band members from thirty-five bands participated in the street marching parade (Citizen, v.67, n.256, 1; v.67, n.255, 1). Al Achterberg photographed each of the bands approaching his vantage point on the roof of the First National Bank building at the corner of Fourth and East Avenues as they marched south on East Avenue **[Photo b 39]**. This positioning of the photographer ensured that the late October sun, which was somewhat low in the sky, would be shining brightly on the faces of the band members, thereby making a more interesting set of photographs than if the faces of the band members had been in shadow. The position of the shadows almost straight behind the marchers is an indication that the parade was at mid-day.

Although rich in information about the parade, such a collection of photographs is largely limited to a formalized view of a small section of what the bands did that day. With the exception of a couple of informal photographs of band members walking around

downtown when they weren't on parade the collection apparently does not show bands in the process of getting off the bus, tuning, or lining up prior to the parade.

That said, this mid-twentieth century collection of professional quality photographs of thirty-five bands at one event offers a rare opportunity to analyze many small and medium-sized town bands that were marching in almost identical conditions, and that were presented to the camera in a very consistent manner. The photographs contain descriptive information about all of the bands individually that would take dozens of pages of text to describe to an equal level of detail. A comparison of the photographs reveals even more information about similarities and differences between the bands.

A rapid scan of the photographs reveals that from the largest band, representing Hastings High School [**Photo b 17**], with ninety-one instrumentalists, two majorettes, and a drum major marching; to the smallest, representing Stamford High School [**Photo b 36**], with twenty-two instrumentalists, three majorettes, and a drum majorette marching; similarities in the presentation of the bands exist. Also evident is the disparity in available resources among the bands. The number of student instrumentalists available to make music in the smaller bands is not large enough to cover all of the parts in conventional band literature, or to produce enough volume of sound on parade to sound complete, even if all the students are playing just the right combination of instruments. Large bass brass instruments are very expensive. The photograph of the Hastings High School Band shows six sousaphones marching. Most of the other bands had only one or two sousaphones, tubas, or bell-front recording basses, and several of the bands had none at all. Bass drums are expensive instruments, too. Several schools marched with two bass drums, most had one, and one school appeared to have no bass drum.

For the people in the crowds lining the streets, many from surrounding towns with bands in the parade, there must have been a sense of pride in watching the approach of



the sign in front of the majorettes that announced their town's high school band. For the people who came from towns with the small bands that had few resources, the feeling of pride was also likely accompanied by a sense of longing that their children could be a part of the big, flashy bands with a massive sound, making excellent music that could be heard from much farther down the street than could the music from the little band from their small town. It may have also shaped their attitudes when an "opportunity" for consolidation of schools arose; as a student in larger high school their child might have greater resources with which to work.

Placement of the drum line is a consideration in a marching band. The *tactus* or recurring pulse provided by the rhythms played on the drums guides the marching and the performance of the musical selections as the band marches. Most of the bands in the photographs located drum lines near the center ranks of the band, with all or most of an individual rank being comprised of drummers playing marching snare drums, tenor drums, and a bass drum or two. Differences in percussion placement did exist between the bands, however. The band from Almena, Kansas **[Photo b 2]** located the drums in the second rank from the front of the band, the band from Minden, Nebraska **[Photo b 28]** located the drums in the third rank from the front, while the bands from Bladen **[Photo b 7]** and Gibbon, Nebraska **[Photo b 15]** and the band from Stockton, Kansas **[Photo b 37]** located the drums in the last or next to the last rank in the back of the band. The Kensington, Kansas band **[Photo b 25]** did not arrange the percussion laterally across a rank, but in a unique front-to-back configuration in a center file of the band.

Placement of the sousaphones, tubas, and recording basses showed variability, too. Eighteen of the bands placed those instruments in the front two ranks of the band, usually in the outside files of the bands. Three bands placed them in the back of the band and nine bands placed them toward the middle ranks of the band. When a back

placement was selected, the center of the rank was the preferred position, whereas front ranks placement of the sousaphones, tubas, and recording basses was most frequently in the corners of the bands.

What is the best arrangement of ranks and files in a small to medium sized band? What are the advantages and disadvantages in having a longer, narrower arrangement, or one that is wider and shallow? The largest band, with ninety-one members, had an eight person rank across the band and was 12 ranks deep. One band featured a seven person rank with a band of only about fifty members, which resulted in an almost square arrangement of the band on the street. Ten bands utilized six person ranks, with band sizes ranging from the mid-thirties to the mid-sixties. Eighteen bands with sizes ranging from approximately thirty to fifty-five were arranged in five person ranks.

Five bands with membership in the upper twenties and low to mid-thirties marched with only four people across the front leading their files. A slightly larger, but emptier look resulted. The Bladen, Curtis, and Gothenburg bands marched with five or six person ranks, but crowded them laterally close together, which made a very narrow marching formation, with a wide swath of street showing on each side. Curtis, as one of the larger bands, also had the files compacted front to back to make a very tight formation in all dimensions. A small band could try to look larger by marching longer files and narrower ranks, but stretching out the band would be risking cohesiveness of sound when the band played, particularly if the band was short of key instruments or if they had too many members who were not musically proficient.

Variability is apparent in the presence and number of majorettes and others marching in front of each band. In the recollection of the author, the majorettes in the Holdrege High School Band usually were fine instrumentalists who were chosen to be majorettes in the marching band in spite of the fact that they would be removed from

playing their instruments by doing so. Small schools' band directors may have tried to make their small bands appear larger by adding majorettes who could march accurately, but who had no instrumental experience, to avoid depleting the instrumentation of the band by having some of the instrumentalists be the majorettes.

Questions of authority, responsibility, and appearance are also opened for analysis by the presence of the photographs of marching bands in the collection. Directors of some bands in the photographs are shown marching in uniform with their bands in formation and to the right of the front rank. Other directors are shown marching in that position, but not in uniform. Still other bands march independently of the director's immediate presence, with the responsibility for decision-making residing with the drum major or majorette, and the reminders for alignment coming from the "right guides" or "rank sergeants".

So much information is included in the photographs that a host of other observations about each band and comparisons between bands could be made. It is difficult to imagine that any of the information which is provided by the photographs would be readily available in text form, with the possible exception of total band membership. The relative value of the photographs as sources of information is increased commensurately with the lack of information from other sources.

### **Case Study #3: Outside-of-classroom and unconventional inside-of-classroom curricular and student enrichment activities**

(Descriptive/Evidential).

As John Dewey (Dewey, 1938/1997, 25) and others have emphasized, designing curricula to include students' direct interactive experience with their contextual

surroundings is vital in order to maximize their learning. What were some types of classroom and outside-of-classroom activities that were provided for students in the Holdrege, Nebraska, public schools in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Do photographs in the collection reveal meaningful outside-of-classroom activities or unconventional inside-of-classroom activities that supported wise practice and excellence in the local educational context? Were any of these activities innovative or unique? Were hands-on experiences provided for students so that theory from the classroom could be matched with practical application for fuller meaning from the activities that were being provided for the students? Were activities that had support in popular culture utilized for motivational purposes in the curriculum? Were accommodations made for special needs students? Was the impact of these activities on the students relatively more significant at that time because television was relatively new, with much of the programming locally produced, which limited the non-local knowledge of the students at that time?

A series of photographs of Franklin School sixth grade students participating in “Air Age” activities at the Holdrege airport shows the professional educators making use of an activity which had support in the popular culture; airplanes represented high technology and exoticism in a small town in the early 1950s (Citizen, v.67, n.208, p.1) **[Photos eae 1, 2]**. Providing for students the experience of seeing an airplane up close, touching it, and sitting inside of it must have tapped into a high level of natural motivation to spark their interest in that area of study. Utilizing people from the community outside of the school such as the pilot of the airplane in the demonstration helped the students to see ordinary people in realistic situations doing interesting and exciting things.

The back-to-school photograph **[Photo eae 3]** shows students returning to Roosevelt School after Christmas break with presents they had received. Students were

encouraged to bring to school items that were normally left at home, possibly for a show and tell session, which would have allowed the students to speak in front of their classmates about something that was meaningful to them. Quite an array of gifts is evident. Fifty years later, sensitivity to bringing even toy guns onto school property would likely preclude the inclusion of such gifts in a classroom show-and-tell time.

Somewhat striking, also, is the use in a senior class play of 1958 of pointed swords which the photographs show are in close proximity to the faces of the students **[Photo eahs 21]**. Would such props and their use pass review of the legal advisors to the school district today?

Several photographs in the collection show people from outside of the United States who came to visit in the schools. Notations on the envelopes such as “Filipino School Man (Bernardo)” **[Photo misc 10]**, “Foreign Exchange Students”, and “German Teacher” only hint at the unique opportunities for cultural understanding offered by such visits to these small town schools whose students rarely had an opportunity to meet anyone from another country **[Photos eae 5, eahs 14, 18]**.

Spelling contests were held on a regular basis to help students to see themselves academically in a larger context than that of the local school. The author remembers participating in a Phelps County spelling contest as a fourth grader at Washington School, and he represented his school well by becoming one of the finalists. The author had experienced no real competition from the other very good spellers in his grade at school. This contest was a beneficial method of adjusting his perception of reality in regard to his spelling prowess as he went head to head for many tie-breaker rounds with the eventual winner **[Photo eae 6]**. The photograph shows that, unlike many spelling contests, this one required the students to write the words on paper.

A scientist who had recently returned from a 1957/8 International Geophysical Year mission to the South Pole in Antarctica was a rare commodity in Holdrege, Nebraska. The students of Washington School were privileged to have a visit from the scientist, Herbert Hansen, a Nebraska City native (Citizen, v.74, n.145, p.1) who had responded to a letter written to him by one of the students in the school (Citizen, v.73, n.101, p.1). The author still vividly remembers standing outside of Washington School in a late February blizzard, wrapped up tightly in coat, cap, and mittens, and watching the man sweat profusely as he carried materials from his car to the building, even though he wasn't wearing a winter coat, hat, or gloves. What an opportunity that was for the students of District #44 to begin to understand human adaptation to climatic conditions and to learn about scientific experimentation in the most remote part of the earth's surface [**Photos eae7, 8**].

Due to the development of a system of modern rural schools in Phelps County into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the students in the Holdrege schools were "townies" and had little contact with farm life. The kindergarten classes were periodically taken to a farm so that their appreciation for rural and agricultural life might be increased. For many of the children, touching a lamb or a horse was a new and different experience. It also gave some students an opportunity to see their principal, Emmett Gannon, in a new role as he dressed down in informal garb and delighted in holding a lamb for the students to pet and observe [**Photos eae 10, 9**]. Several decades later one can marvel at the potential risks that existed in taking students to a working farm with its barbed wire fences, machinery, animals, and chemical and biological hazards, compared to today's carefully controlled petting zoos at suburban "farms" that specialize in hosting school groups.

In the 1950s many small towns still had the benefit of regular passenger train service. Some teachers saw this as an opportunity to broaden their students' experiences. The train schedule in Holdrege, Nebraska allowed students to travel to Minden, twenty-two miles to the east, to eat a sack lunch in the train depot, to enjoy a tour of the depot to learn how train passenger service worked, and to ride a westbound train back home again the same day. The experience of taking a trip apart from parents and other family members may have helped the students to gain a new perspective on who they were and what they were able to do while apart from their familial support system. The student wearing a winter cap and looking toward the camera in the middle of the group of second graders waiting to board the train is the author of this study **[Photo eae 13]**.

Pre-Kindergarten parties designed to orient the incoming class of kindergartners to school life were held in the spring. At a time when Midwest small town preschool programs were almost nonexistent and kindergarten was a child's first exposure to formal group schooling, many children's experience in a social setting with other children consisted of having a friend or two over to play, or to be together with eight or ten children of similar age at Sunday School, Cub Scouts, Bluebirds, a birthday party or a

4-H Club meeting. The task of the kindergarten teacher was great in the attempt to form a group of twenty or thirty children into an effective learning community. Photographs show that activities at the pre-kindergarten parties were planned so that the "experienced" kindergartners who were approaching first grade status worked alongside the students who were to be coming into kindergarten the next fall. Benefits of such a program may have included making the new students feel welcome and getting them to think ahead to the time they would be in Kindergarten, as well as giving them some idea of the routines of kindergarten life through mentoring by their friends who were a year older. Realizing the total count of students in the room inspires a heightened sense of

respect for the kindergarten teachers responsible for these programs [**Photos eae 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29**].

Student science projects were methods of enriching the curriculum. Photographs show that high priority was given to this aspect of curriculum to the extent that, on at least one occasion, the large City Auditorium was secured for the display of research and experimentation topics accompanied by student demonstrations. At least one of the science fair displays was in conjunction with Education Week, which was a formal way of reminding the community about the important roles of the schools, educators, and students of the community [**Photos eae 30, 31**].

A significant curricular expansion in the 1960s was that of adding modern language to the curriculum in the form of Spanish. In the years immediately prior to that time Latin was the non-English language of choice at Holdrege High School. Eliud Ruybalid was a business teacher in Elwood, Nebraska, who was asked to take on the teaching of Spanish in the Holdrege Junior and Senior High Schools. The program was extended to the grade schools. Although being a Spanish teacher was not in his original professional plans and training, he excelled at it and taught Spanish in the Holdrege schools until retirement [**Photos eae 32, 33, ci 19**]. The author's choice to become an educator was dependent in large part on the suggestion by Mr. Ruybalid that he consider becoming a teacher of Spanish.

Along the west boundary of the Washington School grounds is situated U.S. Highway 183, also known as Burlington Street, which carries significant car and truck traffic. To help insure the safety of students crossing the road on the way home from school for lunch a student safety patrol was initiated. The student patrol member would watch the clock for dismissal time, put on a white diagonal belt made of fabric webbing and a large white metal helmet, stand at the entrance of the school while the students



lined up, and lead them to the street corner where they would wait until traffic cleared. When the student patrol member determined that it was safe to cross the street, she or he would stand in the middle of the highway with outstretched arms until the last student was safely on the opposite curb and would then return to the classroom. In addition to formalizing student attention to vehicular traffic, this activity also developed responsibility and leadership skills in the members of the student safety patrol. The author recalls that the task of getting the new kindergarteners to walk in an orderly line required creative thinking and unswerving exercise of authority. He also recalls that being a student patrol member on cold winter days could be an unpleasant duty. On warm spring days, however, being in such a position of leadership provided an enjoyable feeling of importance and independence. On those days the walks from the corner returning back to the school would become more leisurely so as not to waste the salutary effects of the warm sun, gentle breezes, and the sweet smells of spring flowers. Student patrol member Susan Anderson is shown carrying out her duties in the photographs **[Photo eae 34]**.

Occasionally, the formal organization of the classroom would yield to the space needs of a class project. Photographic evidence exists of a “zoo” set up on the counter across the back of the second grade room at Washington School **[Photo eae 35]**.

An activity that involved real animals was the hatching of baby chicks in the first grade room at Washington School in the early 1960s. That was likely much more of an event at the school in town than it would have been at one of the rural schools in the county where many of the students would have seen chicks hatch at home on the farm **[Photos eae 40, 39]**.

A Christmas mural at Roosevelt school reflected the Christian values of the community and built on a seasonal theme which was supported strongly in the culture

surrounding the students at home, in the churches they attended, and in the larger community. The production of such a mural for the classroom was a way of connecting the local (classroom) to the universal (the town, people in the larger Christian community, and 20<sup>th</sup> century western culture). The author remembers several teachers who would post a daily Bible verses or prayers on the chalk board as a normal part of classroom activities accepted by the community **[Photo eae 4]**. Another class mural that was preserved in photographic images is the third grade mural at Washington School **[Photo eae 41]**. It appears to be student work in a large format, and apparently is connected with study of pioneers moving west. The presence of the Oregon Trail fifteen miles north of Holdrege, and Cheyenne and Oglala attacks on the settlers and wagon trains in the northwest part of Phelps County, most notably in connection with the “Plum Creek Massacre” **[Photo misc 24]** provided this topic of study a large measure of local significance (Phelps County Historical Society, 1981, 8).

Participation by the students from a small town school in an activity on an international level is represented photographically by the Washington School sixth grade project for the Dooley Fund, which involved providing support to medical missions in undeveloped parts of the world. These photographs also demonstrate the utility of digital imaging to reveal information hidden in the negatives. In the initial scan some of the signs were largely unreadable. By manipulating the brightness and contrast, the message of each sign is able to be read **[Photos eae 36, 37]**.

Taking classroom activities to the community in a very direct, noticeable manner occurred when the Washington School sixth grade marched down West Avenue and, then, Fourth Avenue, a portion of U.S. Highway 6, in a political rally that urged people to exercise their rights as voters **[Photo eae 38]**. Might such an activity have had a strong emotional connection with the students, might their family members and neighbors have

commented on the activity either because they saw it happen in person or read about it in the newspaper, and might that activity have been remembered by the students longer than reading about voting in a book and discussing it within the confines of the classroom?

An activity that had strong popular attraction and that likely was an outgrowth of the pervasive publicity of the “space race” with the U.S.S.R. was an experiment with rockets on the playground at Washington School. The photographs appear to show that the activity did not involve the higher risk and greater flight distances that would have accompanied the use of ignitable rocket fuel, but rather may have involved a chemical reaction to produce a small amount of thrust to power the rocket on its short flight. It would be interesting to know if the rocket on the launch pad in the background were only a model or if it had a method of propulsion. Principal Emmett Gannon and teacher RoDonna Harden were known to favor creativity in learning experiences, and, in the photograph, seem to be actively involved as support personnel in the launch **[Photo eae 42]**.

A project in late October of 1978 that involved both Faithe Achterberg as a teacher and Al Achterberg as a photojournalist was one in which John Williams, one of Faithe’s third grade students at Washington School, designed and constructed a “solar cooker” that was used to demonstrate the concentration of the sun’s rays by the use of a large parabolic mirror made from cardboard, Masonite and aluminum foil. According to the story, this construction that was inspired by a science unit produced enough heat to cook hot dogs **[Photos eae 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51]**. The activity was documented by Al Achterberg in photographs, after which he wrote a story for the newspaper about the event (Citizen, v.94, n.205, p.1). Discovered folded up in the envelope of negatives was a carbon copy of a draft of the typewritten story along with several prints made by the photographer from the negatives **[Photo eae 52]**. These

fortunate inclusions demonstrate the power of combining photographic images with textual descriptions of the same event to increase the understanding of a situation. They also enable a comparison of the original negatives with enlarged prints made from the negatives to demonstrate the printmaker's enlarger skills and techniques.

Many of the photographs representing special school activities were likely taken by Al Achterberg because his children were involved in the activities, so he was aware that the activities were happening and could arrange to preserve them in photographic images. Had his children not been students in the Holdrege schools from 1951 to 1972, the educational representations in the photographic collection might have been less numerous than those found preserved in the collection today.

Photographs in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection occasionally show scenes that indicate a departure from typical classroom life as the community attempted to provide meaningful educational opportunities for its children. The subject of "Brummer girl- Intercom School" **[Photo sn 1]** was apparently unable to attend school because of a medical condition, so an intercom link was established between the school and her hospital bed to enable her to keep up with her classmates.

A number of photographic negatives address the subject of special education, an area of schooling that can be a challenge for a small town to adequately accomplish. Holdrege had "Hazel Loar's school", where Mrs. Loar worked with students with disabilities **[Photos sn 2, 3, 5, 6]**.

"Career Day" at Holdrege High School was an opportunity for high school students to get out into the community and interface with a variety of jobs, professions, employers, and employees in order to motivate and inform them to think seriously about life beyond high school. The students visited the First National Bank of Holdrege,

Brewster Clinic, and the Nebraska State Highway Patrol office, and were visited by military recruiters [**Photos eahs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8**].

Future Farmers of America (FFA) was a school organization that provided knowledge and skills to help students who were planning to go into farming to be better prepared for that vocation. It was common in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century for rural students in the U.S. plains states to graduate from high school and immediately begin farming. A few students would attend college in an agricultural program, but for many of the future farmers, what they learned in high school was their only major opportunity to extend their knowledge about agriculture beyond what they had learned at home or in conversations with other members of the farming community. Planting and harvesting techniques, operation and maintenance of machinery, pest eradication, land judging, conservation of natural resources, animal selection, care, and marketing techniques, small building construction, welding, and many other facets of farming were covered in agriculture-oriented classes in high school. The FFA organization also highlighted the importance of organization and communication in carrying out the vocation of a farmer or rancher. An important part of this organization was the training of its members in principles of parliamentary procedure (O.L. Davis, Jr., class notes) [**Photos eahs 10, 11, 12, 13**].

#### **Case Study #4: School facilities** (Descriptive).

What types of school facilities were provided for students in the schools of Phelps County, Nebraska, in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Attitude can be an important motivational factor in schooling. Is there evidence in the photographs that the communities represented in the images provided school facilities that would serve the needs of students, thereby helping the students to feel good about going to school, and

would let the students know that the community valued education? Were facility changes incremental or large-scale when they occurred? Would community enthusiasm over large-scale building projects for the schools communicate to students that their education was important? Would students feel a heightened sense of worth and fulfillment as they made use of the modernistic, comfortable, highly functional new buildings each day **[Photos w 3, 4, 1; f 1, 4, 5; nhs 6, 36, 38, 53, 54, 56, 57, 51]**?

As the author studied the photographs of Roosevelt School and Lincoln School taken in the late 1940s it became easy to imagine that the photographer may have intentionally framed the photographs to highlight as much as possible the already evident inadequacy of the school building into which town's baby boom children (including his own) would be crowded. In the photographs, the ancient boiler that provided steam heat for the Roosevelt School building looked almost as dangerous as it would have if the readers of the newspaper had seen it up close and in person, partly because of the camera angle selected by the photographer **[Photos r 6, 7]**. The room which had an early 1900s iron pipe fire escape ladder that would have carry all the children in the room up to ground level in the event of a fire looked like a disaster waiting to happen **[Photo r 3]**. One look at the huge number of children crowded into the classrooms and on the stairway of the school undoubtedly made parents wonder if their child would even be noticed by the teacher amongst such a crowd **[Photos l 1, 2; r 2]**. The fallen plaster, water leaks, rustic shower conditions, and the antiquated outside fire escapes likely added to the perception that the school building, modern-looking four decades before, had seen its better days and might no longer adequately serve the needs of the community **[Photos r 4, 7, 9, 10, 11]**. Very intriguing is the thought about the potentially large role that the photographs and the photographer may have played in motivating the people of the community to vote for bond issues for two new schools to be built only one year apart.

## **Case Study #5: Using Photographs to Teach History, Historical**

### **Thinking, and Historical Methods.**

The photographic images in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection provide ideal entry points into the study of history and historical inquiry for students in Holdrege, Nebraska, for students from other towns represented in the collection, or for students from small towns across the country or in other parts of the world that demonstrate similarities to situations represented in the images in the collection. In their study *Nearby History* David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2000) illuminate the strong potential of employing local dimensions of history to motivate students to think historically. They illuminate the virtues of using the local and particular as a link to an understanding of the global and universal:

“Doing nearby history research encourages a way of thinking that can help in dealing with a great variety of current situations. Uncovering what has taken place over the years in a family, and organization, or a community reveals the origins of conditions, the causes of change, and the reasons for present circumstances. It becomes evident that not just one influence but a complex of forces affects most developments” (2000, 11).

and,

“In exploring the past of subjects close at hand, a person learns to identify, collect, organize, and exhibit historical materials; to analyze complex factors; to examine the relationship of the inner concentric circles of nearby situations to the outer circles of national and international development; and to focus research to answer specific questions of importance to the historian or the client” (Kyvig & Marty, 2000, 12).

Kyvig and Marty emphasize the use of local artifacts and other primary sources because of their accessibility and the built-in interest that they bring to the task due to their connection to the life contexts of the students.

Barton (2001, 278) asserts that, “In the teaching of history, authentic instruction involves students directly in the analysis and interpretation of historical information. Such instruction includes:

- \* Formulating historical questions or problems,
- \* Gathering information from a variety of sources,
- \* Evaluating the authenticity and reliability of sources,
- \* Comparing conflicting accounts,
- \* Taking the perspective of people in the past, and
- \* Connecting disparate pieces of information into coherent explanations.”

The use of photographs provides methods and materials to involve students with the activities on this list as we attempt to provide for students skills and methods to learn history and to engage in historical inquiry.

Photographs can be excellent primary source artifacts for students to use in the study of the history of their schools and of their communities as they see familiar buildings, places, and people in the images. The Albert W. Achterberg Collection contains thousands of photographs that can be effectively used for such study. Suggested topics with correlated photographs follow:

1. Buildings- familiar surroundings; the place where students spend their time in school-contrast old and present. Notice patterns of development and correlate with population trends and the economic health of the community. Notice also the processes involved in the location and construction of a building [**Photos w 3, 4, 5, 6, 11**]. Analyze where the schools were built in the community and propose possible reasons why such locations might have been selected. Discuss why the buildings were designed to look the way they did. Transfer these considerations to other buildings in the community with which the



students are familiar, and make predictions about buildings in the local area with which they have had not yet had experience.

The school room desks [**Photos f 4,7, 8; l 2; r 3;eahs 14; nhs 5, 23**] may be compared and contrasted in dimensions of functionality, style, adjustability and comfort. Other furnishings and the buildings themselves might be subjected to analysis as well. Students could be asked if their school building has stairs anywhere, in comparison to older schools [**Photo l 2**]. If their building has none, they could be asked to consider why that difference exists.

Students could be asked to look at the photographs of several schools [**Photos nhs 51, r 11, f 1, w 10, o 1**] and discuss which schools they might like to attend, and give reasons for their choices, and to offer speculation as to what features of each school the students in that school would like, and which features they would not be enthused about. They could also discuss whether they thought each school would be conducive to learning and examine reasons for their responses.

2. The manner of dress of students and adults. What functional and stylistic considerations motivate modes of dress? Note differences between town and country schools, older and younger children, people representing various cultures and people in different professions. Discuss temporal considerations such as the decades in which the photographs were made. Are there observable trends communicated by the photographs? Can students use the information to make predictions about future modes and styles of dress [**Photos awa 1; b 66-69; bmb 6, 7, 12, 19, 20, 26, 30, 37, 39, 40, 56; ci 5, 6, 7, 10, 18, 20, 21; eae 1, 2, 13, 26, 30, 35, 45; eahs 2, 6, 9, 15, 16, 23, 24, 32; jrsrh 2; misc 2, 5**]?

An analysis of hair styles could be made utilizing the same photographs. Students could discuss whether the hairstyles or modes of dress were more or less uniform in the pictures compared with their own situation, and whether similarities and differences existed across or within age groups, cultural groups, or professions.

3. Classroom life- (present/past) [**Photos ci 1, 2, 15, 18; eahs 20; r 5; nhs 6, 9, 16**].

Present questions for students to address: does the classroom in the photograph look like your classroom(s)? Have you ever been in the classroom shown in this photograph? Do you see pictures or posters on the walls in the photograph? Is that similar to what you experience in your classroom? In what other ways is the classroom similar to yours? Are there differences between your classroom and the classroom in the photograph? Where do the students shown in the photographs do their class work? What kinds of work are they doing? Do they seem to be focused on the activity? Do they seem to be satisfied or pleased with the activity? What do you think they are learning? Compared to activities in other photographs, do the students appear to enjoying the activity shown? What clues lead you to believe that? Do you think that the activity shown in the photograph is one that the students would do almost every day? Why or why not? Is any adult, in addition to the teacher, present in this activity? If there is, who do you think they might be? Why do you think they might be there? Are the students in the classroom in the photograph all nearly the same age? Are the students of different ages? How old do you think they are? Do you see anyone in the photograph that you recognize? Are there things about the classroom in this photograph that you particularly like? Where might you go to find out if your assumptions and predictions are accurate? What do you think students fifty years from now will be saying about photographs they will be viewing that show you, your

classmates and your school as subjects? Encourage students to develop their own questions.

4. Outside of classroom times- lunchroom [**Photo bmb 8**], playground [**Photos ci 3, 4**], arriving at school [**Photo ci 5**], departing from school [**Photo misc 4, eae 34**]. Who do you see in the photograph(s)? What do you think they are doing? Why do you think they are doing what they are doing? Do the students appear to know each other well? Do the students appear to be friends? Do the students appear to be about the same ages? Is any special equipment shown in the photograph? If so, are the students making use of it? Is the teacher making use of it? Do you think these same students participated in similar activities five years before the photograph was taken? Do you think these same students would participate in the same activities five years after the photograph was taken, or ten years after the picture was taken? What is your reasoning in making those predictions?

5. Special activities [**Photos ci 6, 9, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27; b 67; eae 1, 4, 15, 22, 30, 31, 40, 45, 54; eahs 1, 4, 6, 8; misc 5**]. Who is shown in the photograph? What does it look like they are doing? Where do you think the photograph was taken? Explain what you think might have happened just before the photograph was taken. Predict what possibly happened just after the photograph was taken. Was the photograph just made up or does it represent fairly accurately something that happened as a part of the students' experience? Why do you think that? How long do you think the people in the photograph would remember the activity? Why? Would the event have been sufficiently notable or important to tell their grandchildren about it forty or fifty years later? Have you heard stories from your grandparents or other adults of grandparent age about their experiences in school? Have you seen photographs or movies or videos of these

experiences? Do you have photographs at home that you could bring to school (or scan and print or email) that you could describe and analyze with the class?

6. Teachers [**Photos b 47;ci 1, 7, 8, 19, 20; eae 8; eahs 9**]. Do the teachers in the photographs dress like your teachers? Is anything the same? Are some things different? Why do you think those similarities and differences exist? Can you tell what the teacher in the photograph might be doing? Do the students look as though they like what the teacher is doing? Does the teacher appear to be pleased with what the students are doing? Compare several photographs- are the teachers of different ages? Are they all fairly young or older? Are the ages of the teachers in the photographs comparable to the ages of the teachers at your school? Do you suppose that the teacher's family lived in the local area or somewhere else? What type of car do think was driven by the teacher shown in the photograph? Do you think the teacher drove a car? Do you think cars existed when this photograph was taken? Give evidence of why you think that. If the teacher didn't drive a car to school, how might they have gotten there from where they lived? Do you think the teacher lived closer or farther away from school than your teachers do?

Similar work could be done with photographs of students. [**Photos bmb 7, bmb 10, bmb 12, bmb 20, bmb 37, ci 1, 2, 4, 5, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22; eae 7, 11, 12; eahs 2, 23; o 1**]- What might be a reasonable estimate of their age? How do their shoe types compare with current styles? Are their hair styles like those of people your age? Do you think there were practical reasons for these styles, or were the choices made in consideration of style only? Were these styles influenced by the culture in which the students grew up? What do the students appear to be doing? Have you ever done that? Do the students appear to be enjoying being together? Do the students appear to be

pleased with what the teacher is doing? Are the students all focused on the activity? Do the photographs contain clues about what year and what part of the year the picture might have been taken, or where it was taken?

7. Athletics [**Photos nhs 46, 47, 48**]- latitudinal and longitudinal comparison and contrast of equipment, uniforms, facilities, coaches, types of games and activities, apparent strategies and tactics employed, number and type of attendees at the games and meets. The photographs of football teams from the same high school, taken 71 years apart, in 1911 and 1982, provide fertile ground for discussion [**Photos ath 2, ath 3**]. Another comparison could be made of teams from different schools 26 years apart [**Photos ath 2, ath 4**].

8. Use photos to examine the concept of permanent records and cause/effect: wear on the football field or oil spots in the parking lots as shown in aerial and non-aerial photographs, evidence of water leaks and flows, tree planting patterns versus naturally occurring tree growth. Talk about why the snow drifts may have formed where they did, and why the shadows are where they are and why they are the size and length and in the position that they are. Can shadows be clues to which direction the picture was taken or to what time of day or year it was taken, based on implied sun angles? Have the students do a shadow study and try to guess by what objects several shadows were made [**Photo nhs 35**].

A common sight today in the plains states away from cities is the profusion of jet airplane contrails stretched across the sky because of the high altitude at which the airplanes are traveling when they pass over parts of the country. Have the students examine photographs prior to the 1960s that were made in the locations where they live

and compare and contrast the clarity of the sky on a clear day in the photographs with the clarity of the sky in current times for the students.

9. Development and change of the town- aerial photographs, elevated photographs, surface photographs [**Photos aer 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**]- Where do you think the photographer was with the camera to take this photograph? Could a photograph easily be taken from approximately the same location today (re-photography)? What changes do you notice when comparing the photograph with a photograph taken from the same place today? What might be responsible for the changes that you observe? Did human activity cause the changes? Did weather cause the changes? Did some other natural event cause the changes? Would you classify the changes as progressive or regressive? Why do you think that? Do you think the changes are generally beneficial or specifically beneficial? What do you see in the streets of the town? Are there horses and buggies? Do you see automobiles or trucks? Are there many or few? If you lived 100 years ago and went shopping, you would have to leave your horse and buggy outside. Do you think a horse and buggy would need to be checked on more often than a car while they were waiting for you to do your shopping? What might be some other advantages or disadvantages of relying on a horse and buggy for transportation, compared to using a motor vehicle for transportation? Do there appear to be many or few people in the photograph? Why do you think that is? Do you see things in the photograph that seem out of place? Are there things in the photograph that you have not previously seen or don't understand? Do you think the photograph shows a special occasion or an ordinary day in the life of the community?

10. Cars [**Photos b 57; af 6; eae 10; eahs 9, 15, 22, 32; misc 14; nhs 55**]. Have you ever seen cars like these? Do you know someone who owns or drives one? Of what vintage are the cars? How much do you think the car cost when it was new? Where might you go to find the original cost of the car? How old do you think the driver of this car was? Why? Which of the cars do you think high school age students drove? Which ones might retired people have driven? Why do you think that? Do you think this car was easy to start? How do you think it was cooled on a hot day? Was it able to keep its occupants warm in the winter? What do you think the roads were like where this car was driven? Did the driver need a driver's license? How far do you think this car was driven on its longest trip? How many people could ride in this car? Do you think it had seat belts? Do you think it had a radio? Might it have had a tape player or CD player? How could you find answers to these questions?

11. One-of-a-kind historical events and events related to well-known places or people: the initial year of the administration of Salk polio vaccine [**Photo misc 2, 3**], the construction of a new school building [**Photos f 1, nhs 20, 39, 40, 53, 54, 55, 58**], a Dwight D. Eisenhower campaign appearance on 3 July, 1952 (Citizen, v.67, n.158, p.1) [**Photo op 4**], a trip to the bottom of the Grand Canyon [**Photos misc 17, 18**], the aftermath of a record-setting hail storm [**Photos misc 27, 28**], and others. Employ these as topics for conversation starters to use in oral history personal interviews of long-time residents of the community.

12. Physical Education classes [**Photos ci 10, 11**]. Are the Physical Education classes shown in the photographs similar to yours? How are they similar? How are they different? What do the students appear to be doing? Do you dress for P.E. the same way

the students in the photographs are dressed? Does the area where you have P.E. classes look similar to the area shown in the photograph? Have you done anything in your P.E. classes that resembles what the students in the photograph are doing? What kinds of equipment are the students and teacher using for this activity? Does it seem like your school has more or less equipment to use for Phys Ed classes than the schools shown in the photographs?

13. Book Fairs [**Photos eae 54-56**]. Has your school ever had a book fair? If so, were there similarities to the book fair in these photographs? Are the books shown mostly hard cover books or paperbacks? How does that compare to book fairs today? Why do you think that is? Compare the costs of hard cover and paperback books. If you have been to a book fair, how many books were you able to buy? How many books might the students in the photographs been able to buy? How many hours' work might a book shown in the photograph have cost? Reasonable questions decades hence may be, "Does your school have books available for you to read?", or, "Do you know what a book is, and have you seen and used one?"

14. Plays and operettas [**Photos eae 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21; eahs 17, 19, 21**]. Have you ever worn a costume in a play or musical production? What ages do the students in these photographs appear to be? From the information in the photographs are you able to tell the theme of the performance? Is the staging simple or elaborate compared to performances you have seen in schools? Who do you think made the costumes and staging? Why do you think the plays and operettas are done? Does the photograph show who was in the audience to see the performance? Does the photograph contain clues that show what time of the day or in what part of the year the performance took place? Do



you think that you have been in the room shown in the photograph or a room similar to it? If so, was it for a similar activity to the activity pictured?

15. FFA, FHA conventions [**Photos eahs 11, 31**]. Do large groups of students from your school take trips for learning experiences? How does a trip for specific academic learning experiences differ from a trip primarily for entertainment? What do the students in the photograph appear to be doing? Does what the students are doing appear to have any connection with what they probably do outside of school or what they might do later as adults?

16. Cross-referencing clues in a collection of photographs for sequencing purposes [**Photos eahs 12, 13; b 57, 65**]. By carefully analyzing the FFA photographs in the collection, an alert student might notice that photograph “eahs13” appears in a newspaper clipping on the bulletin board behind the students in photograph “eahs12”. This situation would identify photograph “eahs13” as an earlier photograph than “eahs12”. An analysis of the marching band photographs “b57” and “b65” should enable students to tell which one probably came first in the sequence, based on clues in each photograph.

Automobile license plates can also be incidental and unintended for inclusion in a photograph, but are often a valuable tool for dating photographs [**Photo bmb 55**]. The inclusion of an automobile or some other datable artifact in the image can narrow down the possible range of years that the picture might have been taken. Calendars on walls and bulletin boards in classrooms can often be used to date and sequence photographs, as can signs in windows of stores and other places of business [**Photo eae 32**]. Magazine covers and newspapers visible in a photograph may be valuable in this regard, also.

Cross-referencing the photographs of Albert Achterberg in his Army Air Corps garb, bearing the insignia of rank, with the dates of his change of rank can narrow down the period of time in question when trying to date selected photographs. The FFA student's wearing of striped band pants in the "bugs" photograph may infer that he may have had his band picture also taken that day, or may have had a band contest appearance the same day **[Photo eahs 13]**.

Students should be encouraged to always look for easily accessible information related to a photograph in order to make it a more valuable artifact. Simply turning over a photograph and looking at the back will occasionally provide unexpected information about the photograph and its subject **[Photos fma 2, 3; ci 28, 28b** (information for the engraver)]. Noticing captions in a family photo album may help to clear up uncertainty, although one must be careful not to trust captions too much for accuracy. Pictures in an album will often have information written on the back which will not be discovered until the photographs are completely or partially removed from the album. The potential for damaging the print by removing it from the album must be weighed against the possible benefit of discovering new information by doing so. The method of removing it may lessen the potential for damage to the print. Envelopes containing prints or negatives may include pertinent information, too **[Photos bmb 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 71]**. Even photofinishing envelopes containing photographs or negatives have numbers or dates on them which will help to sequence or date photographs.

A sequence of photographs could be used for the students to arrange chronologically, based on clues in the photographs. Definitive clues could be obscured temporarily and revealed later to enable the students to check how accurate their predictions were.

17. An interesting topic for local in-depth research might be for students to select the people in photographs such as [eahs 16] and [eahs 32] as subjects for case studies. Students could try to determine who the people were, where they went after graduation from high school, and what sorts of things they did in life after high school. Class reunion biographies could be used for comparative purposes with the students' guesses. If the subjects of the photographs are still alive and living nearby, they could be interviewed for purposes of collecting oral histories about their school experiences or their later life experiences. With their permission, they could be photographed so that the earlier and later images could be compared (re-photography).

An increasing number of museums and historical institutions have been adding to, and digitizing parts of, their photographic collections. Access to these images online is becoming more common. This practice increases the number of photographs available for use in schools. The *Russell Lee Photograph Collection*, the *Jimmy Dodd Photograph Collection*, the *Harry Forrest Annas Photograph Collection*, the *R. C. Hickman Photographic Archive*, the *Calvin Littlejohn Photographic Archive* and the *Robert Runyon Photograph Collection* are represented online at the Center for American History at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas (<http://www.cah.utexas.edu>). The *Solomon D. Butcher Glass Plate Collection*, the *John Anderson Collection*, the *Wounded Knee Collection*, and the *John Nelson Collection* are found at the Nebraska State Historical Society website (<http://www.nebraskahistory.org>). The *Jackson Davis Collection* at the University of Virginia Library (<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/speccol/collections/jdavis/index.html>) is another example of a photographic archive of which parts may be accessed via the Internet.

An interesting educational program utilizing photographs is found at: [<http://www.photoantiquities.org/education.html>](http://www.photoantiquities.org/education.html). This program serves western Pennsylvania by bringing “Photo Detective” studies out to schools.

Photographs have unique ways of adding to the information sought by a researcher of education practices. Additionally, the availability of local photographs and their ability to connect with students’ experiences make them particularly suited to use for purposes of historical inquiry in schooling and for teaching historical methods of inquiry. These case studies help to show some of the potential value and usage of this unique group of photographs in the Albert W. Achterberg Photographic Collection.

**VII. CONCLUSION: WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS  
RESEARCH TO THE PRACTICE OF HISTORICAL  
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND THE EDUCATION OF  
STUDENTS IN THE  
TOOLS AND METHODS OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH?**

This study describes and presents photographs as compact forms of storing large amounts of information, which later can be mined for meaning and applied to educational situations. This function of images can be particularly important where text sources and other artifacts are scarce, and in correlation of the images with other sources that may be available to assist in providing context and in deriving meaning from those sources of information. At a time when the rich potential of photographic images as primary sources for inquiry has not yet been realized, the development of a study such as this can benefit those involved in historic inquiry in schooling by proposing many advantages of the use of photographs for these purposes, and to direct the use of these images to avoid major concerns of reliability in their use. A recapitulation and expansion of the aforementioned elements follows.

Photographs have the ability to present information in as concrete and immediate a way as text is able in many situations, particularly in a time when people are becoming more experienced with, and oriented to, graphical input. This advantage is multiplied when the viewer's prior experiences with a context similar to the subject of the

photograph increase the dimensions and depth of meaning in the photograph for the viewer.

Photographs show spatial relationships clearly and quickly. The position and proximity of differing elements of the subject matter can assist to help clarify relationships in the image. Examples of photographs in this collection that clearly depict spatial relationships that may carry meaning include **[ci 1]**- Katherine Sweeney and a group of students, **[ci 3]**- a view of the playground, **[eahs 29, 30]**- music contest, **[ath 1]**- a football team, **[b 1-41, 48-55, 57-61, 63, 73, 74]**- bands, **[ci 10]**- a physical education class, and even an obviously posed group of students at the new Holdrege High School **[nhs 56]**. Widely varying types of emotional content is contained in a number of photos: **[af 6]**- a photograph showing Al Achterberg in the process of saying his goodbyes and leaving for the Army in August of 1941, **[af 5]**- a formal Army Air Corps portrait, **[awa 1, 3]**- informal and formal photos of members of the Ernst Achterberg family, **[ath 3]**- the Holdrege “Dusters” football team, **[cit 1]**- LaMonte Lundstrom, **[eae 42]**- the “rocket launch”, **[bmb 14]**, the silhouetted driver and librarian on a rural bookmobile trip, **[bmb 28]**- the rural schoolhouse at the end of a muddy road, and **[bmb 38]**- the young children at the door of the bookmobile with their prized books. In some of these instances, the framing of the photograph by the photographer may not obscure the reality of the emotion of the moment, but may help to actually transmit its reality to the viewer. Photographs have an advantage in eliciting both strong emotional and affective responses in the viewer because they transcend time and place, position the viewer immediately into the detailed context of the photograph in a personal sort of way, and may cause the viewer to recall similar personal experiences and feelings.

Photographs are a degree less abstract than text; there is one less level of interpretation between the source and the meaning to be derived from the source. When

encountering text, the interpreter is reading about something, and it takes some time spent in reading to establish a context. When encountering a photograph, the interpreter is placed more immediately at the center of the gathering of information about the context represented, because the viewer occupies the perspective of the camera. It is a more immediate personal perspective; it is the viewer, crossing boundaries of time and space, viewing the framed scene which is all immediately there and accessible to the mind for observation and analysis. A greater amount of time may be spent in analysis rather than in building context, as must be done with text sources.

When text is being interpreted, the first task beyond decoding abstract symbols is that of integrating context clues and building an image, through the “form and content” of the words (Eisner, 1998, 199), of what the text might represent (recalling memories previously gathered by the senses and processed in the mind). In the interpretation of photographs, the image is already there, in abundant detail, for the mind to analyze. The extra step in the building of an initial mental image is unnecessary. In addition, the forming of mental images from text is dependent upon the past experiences of the viewer to construct imagery, whereas apprehending a photograph connects with past experiences and also provides new images for the mind to work with.

Photographs give, in a sense, a more complete rendering of the context than does text, because the camera often captures a vast number of details in front of it which would not consciously and intentionally be included if text were being composed to describe the same context. Text is additive in both its composition and its interpretation. It is chosen and recorded in a spare manner over time, compared with the voluminous information quickly captured by a camera. A comparison of photographic sources and text sources reveals a difference in the process of how the information is assembled:

photographs are farther toward the “collecting” end of the continuum, whereas text is farther toward the “constructing” end of the continuum.

Without much effort a photograph captures and presents a lavish amount of information instantaneously. Text begins with a few words, and gradually, over compositional time, adds structure and detail. Here, the phrase, “A picture is worth a thousand words,” comes to mind, although that may even understate the situation quantitatively. That phrase might be made even more accurate if it were changed to say, “A photograph is worth a thousand words,” because some images, such as those produced by painting or drawing, are limited by their spare additive construction similar to that of textual construction of meaning, and therefore are more manipulative and exclusive in their representation of the subject and its context than is photography.

How many hundreds of lines of text would be required to tell the story contained in a single photograph (e.g., **[eae 17]**- the “skeletons” and gravestones, **[l 2]**- the children on the steps inside the Lincoln School, **[eahs 1]**- the scene at the Brewster Hospital, **[eahs 15]**- the HHS art class on the street in downtown Holdrege, Nebraska, **[ci 20]**- Faithe Achterberg and her fourth grade class, **[eae 30]**- the science demonstration on sound, and **[ci 7]**- the teachers’ tour)? How many hundreds of lines of text would it take to supply the same detail shown quickly in each of these photographs: **[eahs 27]**- the large group choir rehearsal, **[eae 31]**- the science fair in the city auditorium, **[eae 40]**- children and chickens, **[aer 9, 10, 11]**- aerial views of the complexity of new high school construction, and **[b 66]**- the Verle Straatmann’s Holdrege High School Band’s triumphant return from Canadian Red River Exhibition in 1966?

Photographs capture a moment in time, and a place in space. Still photography freezes the action so that it can be carefully analyzed over an extended time period. Repeat photography invites comparison over time. Hence, photographs have the ability



to both “freeze” and “stretch” time in the process of analysis. Although one of the stated weaknesses of still photographs for uses in research is that they do not show a continuation of action, it also may be said that images can imply action (e.g., [ci 11]- the physical education class, [eae 34]- the patrol girl at work, [eae 38]- the political rally march, [eae 24]- the headstand, [eae 49]- carrying the solar cooker, [bmb 48]- the excited child running toward the bookmobile, [bmb 46]- the young girl turning pages in the book, [eae 15]- dancers in the musical, [nstc 2]- the pilot cranking the propeller to start the airplane engine.) Furthermore, in the analysis of sequence and continuity of action, photographs may be well-suited to the role of inspiring thinking about what came right before or after the photographic image was captured.

Several of the aerial images demonstrate clearly the promise of re-photography to show the physical development of a community [aer 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]. One historic photograph of the Ernst Achterberg farmstead from the early 1900s [ema 3] could be compared with later photographs from family photo albums so that change could be noted. This could generate discussion as to possible causes for those changes to have occurred.

There exists a difference in how textual and photographic information are interpreted: the apprehension of a photograph provides a multidimensional image which is ready for the mind to work on, whereas the apprehension of text requires the additional step of converting symbolic notation into images on which the mind can then work. The process is similar to musical analysis done (derivation of musical meaning) by directly listening to a musical selection, versus musical analysis done (derivation of musical meaning) by viewing a page of musical notation. The audible sound image is yielding aesthetic meaning as it is perceived. The symbols on a page of notation must first be

converted to virtual sound images that draw on the listener's past experiences with actual sound sources in order for the analyst to derive the meanings of the music.

Additionally, text may reveal much about a single element of a context, but a photograph may provide more inter-elemental information that better reveals the interrelationships among the elements included in the context. Inter-elemental information can be easily observed in a number of the images (e.g., **[b 57]**- the band marching on the street between the automobiles and in front of the onlookers, **[ci 4]**- children interacting with playground equipment and with each other, **[eae 47]**- the solar cooker demonstration, **[eahs 15]**- art on the street.) Images also help to contextualize words, just as words help to contextualize images.

Photographs can help to describe what educational and other situations were like in the past (e.g., **[eahs 9]**- teacher Jess Kiefer introducing high school women students to automotive mechanics, **[ath 2]**- a high school football team in 1911, **[awa 4]**- the photographer's 1938 high school graduation picture in a folder, **[ci 6]**- a high school male quartet, **[ci28]**- Katherine Sweeney and students, **[eae 12, 13]**- the 1956 Washington School second grade train trip to Minden, **[eahs 8]**- the periodic table of the elements, c.1960, **[o 1]**- the Prairie Rose School, **[ema 3]**- the Ernst Achterberg farm house south of Oconto, Nebraska.) Photographs can help with a retrospective analysis of the context of life's historical events by providing evidence of contexts that existed (e.g., **[awa 10]**- Al Achterberg being photographed while photographing the construction of the new water tower, **[eahs 32]**- three students posed in front of the telephone office and Office Supply store on Fourth Avenue in Holdrege, Nebraska, **[af 4]**- the soldier, later, photographer, standing in front of the historic sign in Wichita Falls, Texas, **[misc 24]**- the monument marking the site of the Plum Creek Massacre, **[eahs 22]**- students washing the paint off of the concrete in front of the high school in 1962.)

Photographs can assist with comparative analysis of historical subjects (e.g., [ema 1, 2]- images of Ernst and Marie Achterberg taken five decades apart, [b 47, 57]- Holdrege High School band uniforms, [st 1, 3]- the Al Achterberg studio building, [r 11, 12; jrsrhi 1; nhs 37, 43, 50]- three different buildings that housed secondary education in Holdrege, Nebraska, in the 20th century, [ath 2, 3, 4]- football teams from differing eras, [ci 20, fma 2, eae 47]- Faithe Achterberg and her students.) Photographs can add dimensions of meaning to the study of history and historical curriculum (e.g., [eahs 4]- a Career Day event with the Nebraska State Patrol, [eahs 23]- an inverse zoo, from the chicken's point of view, [eae 8]- the Antarctic Scientist, [ci 24]- the Washington School third grade and their quilt, [awa 3, awa 1]- an informal pose and a formal pose of members of the same Nebraska farm family in the 1920s.) Photographs can help to uncover meaning about innovative approaches to solve educationally related problems (e.g., [ci 12-17]- the language lab, [nhs 43]- solar screens designed to admit light and exclude visual distractions at Holdrege High School, [f 9]- the curved driveway for off-the-street and under-the-overhang delivery of students to Franklin School, [f 5, w 9]- enclosed storage space and long fluorescent lights to reduce glare, [f 3, w 9]- horizontal windows with glass blocks to let light in while reducing glare and reduce ceiling heights, [nhs 12]- metal working booths with exhaust fans, [nhs 21]- the overhead vacuum system for the shop, [nhs 28]- multiple kitchens in the home economics room, [nhs 30]- posture chairs in the choir and band rooms, and [w 2]- folding tables and seats in the cafeteria.

Photographs can be used effectively in the classroom as tools and methods by which students might engage in historical inquiry. Photographs are very common artifacts that teachers, administrators, and students in schools need to save, archive, and use, due to their value for historical inquiry. In addition, the increasing availability of

photographic collections online expands the database of images with which historians and students may work.

In consideration of the long list of positive potential benefits of using photographs as primary sources for historical inquiry about schooling and for teaching students to use photographs as historical methods and tools, wise practice would call for more use to be made of such information-rich sources. The main reason given for not using photographs for these purposes, that of suspecting that the photographer has reduced the reliability of the information in the image by choices made in the framing or production of the photograph, can be dealt with effectively by using the image in a manner that minimizes the effects of the potential altering of the context by the photographer, either in the taking, printing, or display of the photograph. By not requiring of the photograph dimensions of meaning that it is incapable of reliably revealing, one can minimize the chances of unreliable or invalid use and interpretation of the image.

For example, when comparing [**Photo bmb 76** (bmb 22 print)] with the [**bmb 22**] image from the negative, the cropping of the image by the photographer in the enlarging process deletes the adult, possibly the teacher, from the image but doesn't change a majority of the meaningful details contained in the original negative, and in most of the other negatives in the series (*i.e.*, even the altered images show that the bookmobile contained many books when it visited these schools, that periodicals were a part of the resources brought around by the bookmobile to the schools pictured, and that even specific periodicals can be identified; that the bookmobile traveled in cold weather and warm weather, that students of certain ages were involved in the use of the bookmobile, and that there were at least a few places for the students to sit in the bookmobile when it was not too crowded.)

Even if the photographer had totally concocted and posed the picture (which is unlikely, given the position of the adult facing away from the camera but still included in the picture) most of the details captured by the camera still apply. It is more likely to venture a guess that the bookmobile visited on a late fall, winter, or early spring day, and that the garb of the children was normal for the prevailing weather conditions, than it is to assume that children would have brought coats and head gear to school just to wear for a picture on the bookmobile at a warm time of the year. It is very likely that some of the students who normally used the bookmobile were the ones caught by the camera. They may have been selected from the class because they were dressed better that day than the other students in that class, or because one of their parents was a teacher or was a member of the school board, but they likely represent the actual age of students that were served by the bookmobile.

The inclusion of periodicals in the resources available to bookmobile users was likely a common, real feature of the bookmobile's regular visits, given that a special display area unique to effective periodical display was built into the bookmobile. The padding on top of the bench where the children are sitting indicates a possible intention in the design and construction of the bookmobile to have a place for students to sit while they looked at books. Other photographs provide similar validating evidence.

A comparative analysis of images [bmb 77 (bmb12 print)] and [bmb 12] negative images shows that the cropping of the image does not affect most of the details shown: boys in that rural school came to the bookmobile that day wearing jeans and leather shoes, and the girls wore dresses or skirts and blouses. While it is possible that they "dressed up" for the bookmobile visit if they knew that a photographer was coming to take pictures in the bookmobile that day, a study of the students in the other bookmobile

pictures shows similarities of style, even across age groups and among differing schools, hence the strength of using multiple images for validation purposes.

The images show that the students had the privilege of a measure of independence in perusing the books on the shelves, and could touch them and look at them. The photographs also reveal that, unlike the text descriptions of the Adams County bookmobile that was used only for book delivery (Hastings Daily Tribune, v.XXXVI, n.205, 10), the Phelps County Bookmobile was used as a room where children and adults could come to examine and select books.

After cropping, an image [**Photo bmb 78** (bmb 7 print)] still shows that at least six students were in the bookmobile simultaneously, although the image on the negative [**Photo bmb 7**] gives better clues to the space available in the bookmobile. The clothing of the children is apparently in good condition, a situation that is clearly evident in most of the other bookmobile images. This condition may reveal something about normal school dress, “bookmobile day” dress, or “bookmobile-day-with-a-photographer-there” dress, and may even provide clues to the condition of the regional agricultural economy at that time.

Image [**bmb 79** (13 print)] preserves the majority of the key elements of the students’ use of the bookmobile after the image has been cropped. It still shows that students went outside to use the bookmobile, that the bookmobile was at the R-4 rural school that day, and which of a series of bookmobiles it was that made that trip, namely the one acquired in 1950 (see [**Photo bmb 55**]). The image retains enough evidential information to show that, for a student in a wheelchair, the contents of the bookmobile may have been inaccessible, other than through an intermediary. When comparing a series of images over time, recurring elements that appear with consistency may be

evidence that those elements were not just “put in place for the picture”, but were likely part of a common practice.

In this regard, a strength of this collection of many photographs is that parts of the collection can inform other parts of the collection. One example is photograph **[bmb 1]**, taken soon after Al Achterberg began using color negative film for photography. Unlike the other bookmobile images that are in black and white, this one shows the bright yellow and blue/turquoise color of the then “new” bookmobile. This is added knowledge that can contribute emotionally and affectively to the assertion that the arrival of the bookmobile was a highly anticipated motivational event as it pulled up to the small country schools in south central Nebraska.

The time of year a picture is taken and the distance between the camera and the subject can give a different “feel” to the same subject **[Photo r 11, 12]**. Despite the difference of “feel” much of the information about the subject in the images remains relatively stable between the two views.

One image in the collection **[Photo nhs 22]** provides information even though it is an extremely rare “throw away” double exposure by the photographer. It appears to include the only image in the collection that shows the sound equipment in the recording room between the band and choir rooms in the new high school. By filtering out the extraneous information as one is analyzing the image one can harvest valuable detail about the desired subject. The viewer should expect to treat this image in a different manner than single exposure photographs are treated, when interpreting the information contained in it.

As the author has examined the potential of photographs for purposes of historical inquiry, the applicability of photographs to this task appears appropriate and great. Also, in the interest of using these photographic tools and methods in schooling, what is quite

striking is the manner in which this use of photographs nearly coincides with the “Intellectual Abilities and Skills” listing in the cognitive domain in the work of Bloom, et al. (1956, 204-207). This listing includes “Comprehension” and its sub-headings of “Translation”, “Interpretation”, and “Extrapolation”; “Application”; “Analysis”, with its sub-headings of “Analysis of Elements”, “Analyses of Relationships”, and “Analysis of Organizational Principles”; “Synthesis”, with its sub-headings of “Production of a Unique Communication”, “Production of a Plan, Or Proposed Set of Operations”, and “Derivation of a Set of Abstract Relations”; and “Evaluation”, with its sub-headings of “Judgments in Terms of Internal Evidence” and “Judgments in Terms of External Criteria.” Hence, in the teaching of tools and methods in historical research by the use of photographs, development across a good portion of the cognitive domain is addressed.

This study shows that the unique featured collection of photographs by Albert W. Achterberg has particular value for revealing much information about schooling practices in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and about the local context in which they were developed, nurtured and shaped. It also provides a model of usage for such a collection of images as primary sources for historical inquiry and teaching in education. Specific examples from the collection have been used to demonstrate the strengths of the use of photographs in historical inquiry, and to show the possibilities of limiting the weaknesses of photographs in such uses in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the information gained from the photographs.

The present study shows that this under-used “secret” of photographic primary sources needs to be unveiled and developed for use. This “secret” must be revealed to, and used by experienced researchers, teachers, and students so that they may fully realize and utilize the potential of photographs to communicate meanings of the past and apply them to enhance their present understandings.



## **Future Plans for the Albert W. Achterberg Photographic Collection**

The featured collection is so extensive and varied in its contents that it could be developed in a wide variety of ways, including the majority of the collection which consists of non-school subjects. Studies on many aspects of small town life could be pursued.

The thousands of photographs by student photographers at Holdrege High School have not yet been examined in detail. These photographs would likely represent the most candid moments of the school day included in the collection. A variety of studies could be based on those images. Group photographs of classes in many schools in south-central Nebraska are present in the collection, and could be compared and analyzed within a school over time, and among schools. Many images of musical, dramatic, and athletic groups could be compared and contrasted within and between schools in the towns of south-central Nebraska.

The author is particularly intrigued by the large number of aerial photographs in the collection, which could be used to do longitudinal studies tracing the development of a town. Other photographs could be used to describe trends in businesses and general sociological change. Some businesses had pictures taken so frequently that they could be useful in writing histories of individual businesses and their employees and products. The Holdrege Daily Citizen is one business with a rich archive of images in the collection, as is the KHOL-TV station.

Photographs of houses could be used to show the shift in architectural styles across time, and numerous images of the churches in town could be used to show relative strength and the development of the denomination in the local setting. The Tri-County

Project/Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, a large project from the 1930s, is represented in the collection over a long period of time by photographs of officials and employees, equipment, main and lateral canals, irrigation ditches and control mechanisms, and power generating plants. As a part of a flood control project, the construction of Harlan County Dam yields some dramatic historic images from around 1950.

Organizations in Holdrege such as the Rotary Club, Kiwanis, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Jaycees are all included in the collection, and could be analyzed for membership trends and activities. The photographic collection was assembled in a primarily agricultural community, and a plethora of yearly photographs of the Phelps County Fair are present. From these images studies of changes in livestock styles of production could be revealed, and a historic progression of 4-H clubs and their activities could be constructed.

A study of the change over time in the children and youth of the community should be well-supported by the images in the collection. A sociological study of Holdrege, Nebraska as an “island community” (Don Carleton, personal conversations, 2007) would employ photographs from the collection to show how extensively and at what rate the outside world impinged on this community which was relatively isolated from urban America.

When the 35mm transparencies of Al Achterberg’s trip to the Havasupai Canyon are integrated with the 4x5 black and white images from the trip, they will provide a rare glimpse of life in that cultural setting in the late winter of 1951. The author is interested in doing re-photography to document change that has occurred in that context in northern Arizona in the last 50 years.

The vast family genealogical records compiled by Al Achterberg with accompanying photographs could serve as a model for a multidimensional method of preserving and effectively communicating family history. This would be particularly suited to the teaching of genealogical methods and to genealogical-based historical inquiry in schools.

Finally, the author would like to take a more detailed look at the collection to see what other possibilities for study exist, and then arrange for the collection to be kept in a secure place where much of the collection can be digitized and made available online for use. Dr. Don Carleton, the Director of the Center for American History, Austin, Texas, has offered to have the Center archive the nearly 500 images from this study so that they can be accessed easily online by other scholars wishing to make use of the images.

## Appendix A: An Interpretive Biography of the Photographer

A familiarity with the photographer responsible for the photographic collection under consideration might prove instructive in helping the reader to understand what types of personal experiences, skills and beliefs held by the photographer might have shaped the collection as it was developed. In that interest, an interpretive biography of the photographer appears to be in order.

Albert W. “Al” Achterberg was born 30 September, 1918 in Oconto, Custer County, Nebraska and was baptized at First Lutheran Church in Buffalo, just across the county line in Dawson County on 10 November, 1918. He was the third son of Ernst and Marie Achterberg **[Photos ema 2, 1]** and grew up on the family farm **[Photos ema 3, 4, 5]** six miles south-southwest of Oconto **[Photo aer 8]** with two brothers, Paul and Erwin, and two younger sisters, Irene and Adela **[Photo awa 1]**. He attended a one room schoolhouse (District 217) a mile and a half east of the farm through the eighth grade. Because of rapid progress in his studies, he was promoted directly from first to third grade in his elementary school experience, and was graduated from the eighth grade in May of 1931 at the age of twelve (Genealogy charts constructed by Albert W. Achterberg).

His first major opportunity to become connected with photography was in 1930, when the Eastman Kodak Co. produced a special “Anniversary” edition of the “No. 2 Hawkeye Camera Model C” box camera. Over half a million of these cameras, issued to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Eastman Kodak Company, were given away to children who were 12 years old in 1930 (personal conversations with Albert Achterberg; McKeown & McKeown, 1994, 140). By virtue of his birth in 1918, Al Achterberg

qualified for, and eagerly anticipated the possession of this exciting bit of new photographic technology.

Unfortunately, the supply of these commemorative cameras ran out before he received one, leaving a very disappointed young resident of rural Custer County. Not until more than 60 years later did he become the pleased owner of one of these cameras when it became available at a household auction **[Photo misc 27]**. Other photographic opportunities came his way, including the acquisition of a family “Baby Brownie” camera which produced pictures that are still in the family, and which itself may be in the collection of cameras now being preserved by the author of this study.

Al was unable to enter Oconto High School until three years after his eighth grade graduation because economic conditions on the farm during the early years of the Great Depression prevented Al from having a car or gasoline to drive the seven miles to town to attend high school. When his eldest brother, Paul, started a produce business and rented a room in Oconto, Al was able to stay with him in town and resume his formal schooling. In the summers and during his years out of school, Al helped with the attempts to maintain the marginally productive family farm, and hired out on hay crews for farmers and ranchers who had river bottom land that was productive during the severe drought of the 1930s. One summer he worked on a ranch just north of Stapleton, Nebraska, and in succeeding years he went to Homestead, Iowa with his brother Erwin to work on a farm **[Photo awa 2]**. Al was graduated as salutatorian of Oconto High School in May of 1938 in a class of eleven seniors. That summer he helped to pour concrete to build the new Oconto high school building.

In early September 1938, with a two day supply of clothing and \$5 that his mother had saved for him from selling eggs produced by the family’s chickens, Al hitchhiked 60 miles to Kearney, Nebraska, to become a student at Nebraska State Teachers College in

the teacher education program. Al began working in the NSTC cafeteria kitchen to put himself through school. During his freshman year he completed a somewhat ordinary series of two chemistry courses, two English courses, two swimming courses, “Library”, and three courses in “Modern Language: German”.

His college transcript reveals that, at the beginning of his second year at NSTC in the fall semester of 1939, Al took a two hour science elective, Physical Science 332, taught by Mr. C.A. Foster, and in which he earned a grade of “A”. The course title was “Photography” and the course description reads,

“A study of the theory underlying the taking of photographs and the development of films and plates. Arranged particularly to provide Physical Science teachers with the experience necessary to correlate their physical science program with the visual education and extra-curricular programs in their schools” (Quarterly Bulletin and Catalog Number, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, April, 1939, Nebraska State Teachers College, Kearney. Burr Publishing Company, Lincoln, 127).

The activity of doing photography must have seemed an exotic contrast to the struggle with drought, insects, and near-total crop failure the Achterberg family had experienced the previous years on their farm in southern Custer County.

By the fall of 1940 Al was in charge of the Mimeograph center for the college (Antelope, n.d.). He had been introduced to the new Mimeograph duplicating equipment in the class “Commercial Education 220: Typewriting”, as a part of his responsibilities (integration of information from Al’s official college transcript, the catalog description of Commercial Education 220 [p. 72 of the college catalog] and a personal note from *Blue and Gold* editor, George Mitchell, in Al’s copy of the 1941 *Blue and Gold*).

Al became a photographer for, and in December of 1940, business manager of the NSTC annual staff (*Blue and Gold*, 76) [**Photo misc 25, 26**], for which he produced publication-quality photography [**Photo nstc 1**]. It was at that time that Al did his first aerial photography (Antelope, v.31, n.32, 1) [**Photos misc 25, 26**], which appeared as the

two-page goldtone inside cover photograph of the NSTC Kearney campus for the *1941 Blue and Gold*. In the lower left hand corner of the picture is the caption,

“Aerial Photo

By

ALBERT ACHTERBERG

Blue and Gold Photographer

January 26, 1941”

If the learning of the skills and art of photography in a college setting seemed exotic compared with the farm life to which he was accustomed during the Great Depression of the 1930s, flying in an airplane to take pictures must have been an activity wonderfully beyond what Al had ever imagined he would be privileged to experience.

The college had a course in “Civil Aeronautics”, and on page 8 of the *1941 Blue and Gold* a photograph of the airplane in which Al flew to photograph the campus is shown, along with the caption,

“CONTACT!-Civil Aeronautics instructor, Larry Litwiller swings the prop as George Faser, assistant, turns on the ignition in preparing to take the Blue and Gold photographer over the campus for an aerial photograph.”

This image is present also in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection [**Photo nstc 2**]. By the spring of 1941, the end of his junior year of college, Al had already gained many valuable and somewhat unique experiences on his way to becoming a teacher with a specialization in rural schools [**Photo awa 3**].

In late summer of 1941, with global conflict heating up and the prospects of being drafted into military service increasing, Al left college and his hope of becoming a teacher, enlisted in the service, and was processed into the United States Army from Ft. Crook, Nebraska the last week in August. Three days later, when he learned of an opportunity to join the Army Air Corps and fly airplanes, he initiated the change. He was

sent to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, and then to the newly-established Sheppard Field in Wichita Falls, Texas **[Photo af 2, 4]** (official military papers in the author's possession).

Very shortly after his arrival at Sheppard Field he was summoned from training exercises to work in the School Assignments Office of the air base because of his familiarity with the new Mimeograph machine that had just arrived (just like the one Al had used at NSTC), and which was vital to the dissemination of information at the Army Air Corps base. Apparently, no one else in the administration of the newly-established base knew how to operate such equipment when it arrived, and Al was the only recruit to have listed experience in operating that type of office equipment on his personnel forms (personal conversations with Albert W. Achterberg, corroborated by recollections of Nancy and Larry Hoffschneider).

His role was quickly expanded beyond the operation the new machine to include responsibilities for helping the newly established office to become organized and function smoothly as new recruits poured into the air base. In that role Al became an administrative specialist and rose quickly to the rank of Staff Sergeant by 1 February 1942. The high level of responsibilities accorded to him and the excellence of his service was noted in two documents: 1. a report from Capt. H.P. Bonnewitz, of the Headquarters of the Air Corps Technical Training Command General, dated 11 March 1942, which summarized the Annual General Inspection of Sheppard Field in January and February of 1942, and which states,

“The personnel of this activity have, by their diligence, hard work, and attention to duty, developed their section to a point where it is considered the outstanding large unit personnel section in the Air Corps Technical Training Command.”

and, 2. a letter of commendation dated 24 July 1943 from Al's superior, Captain Thomas Kronberg, which states,



“T/Sgt. Achterberg, during the period September 1941-July 1943, has assisted materially in the inception and subsequent operation of the School Assignments Section of this headquarters, having been in charge of the Section for the first days of its existence and having assisted materially in its development and operation since that time. His efforts have assisted materially in the development and perfecting of the punch-code system, which has been considered for adoption by all Basic Training Centers of the Technical Training Command.”

Albert Achterberg was gaining valuable experiences in analyzing, visualizing, and planning systems of organization and in understanding characteristics of people through his work in the Army Air Corps **[Photo af 1]**.

Al never was able to realize his dream to fly airplanes in the Army Air Corps because of a perforated ear drum suffered on the firing range at the time the new batch of pilot recruits was to begin training, and because of his critically important work in the school assignments section (recollections of Nancy Hoffschneider, 2005). Despite this disappointment, Al's niche in helping to administer the air base became well-established.

Al was granted leave to be married to Faithe M. Adee **[Photo fma 1]**, a former classmate at NSTC, in May of 1943 at the Methodist Church in Holdrege, Nebraska. Faithe had been teaching elementary grades at Roosevelt School in Holdrege since her graduation from NSTC in the summer of 1941. She returned with Al to Wichita Falls, Texas, where they lived at 1626 Wilson Street (caption in family photo album). That August they were transferred to Ogden, Utah, where Al served at Hill Field as a classification specialist and Faithe became a nurse's aide in Ogden. Two years later, as various theaters of the war were scaled back and closed down, Al went to Ft. Meade, Maryland in September of 1945 as an occupational counselor to assist returning service people in their transfer back to civilian life. For three months Faithe returned to Nebraska to live with her parents in Kearney.

During his time in the service Al would occasionally borrow cameras to take pictures, a number of which are in the family albums [**Photo af 3**]. Although none of his official Air Force duties required shooting pictures, he was an excellent shot on the firing range, qualifying as an “Expert” marksman with a score of 190/200 in his last recorded qualification (Hill Field Headquarters-Orders, NO. 18, 18 June 1945. Robert E. Jordan 1<sup>st</sup> Lt, AC Adjutant). Good vision and eye-hand coordination, vital to capturing images on film, likewise proved their worth in marksmanship.

After helping to integrate returning service personnel into civilian life at Ft. Meade, Maryland for several months, Al received an honorable discharge from the service on 14 December, 1945 and returned home to Nebraska in time for Christmas.

In January of 1946 he was hired by LaMonte Lundstrom to work for the Holdrege Daily Citizen, the local newspaper, where he became a news reporter, circulation manager and “ad man” (personal conversations with Albert Achterberg and Harley Lofton; Phelps County Historical Society, 1981). Later, Al also assumed managerial duties of the new office supply store that was associated with the Citizen.

A professional 4x5 Speed Graphic camera was purchased by the Citizen to increase the newspaper’s photojournalistic capabilities and to make use of the abilities of the newest Citizen employee (personal conversations with Harley Lofton, August, 2006). The acquisition of a medium-large format professional camera also allowed Al to develop and extend his skills in photography beyond what he had been able to do with lesser-quality equipment [**Photo awa 4**]. In the late 1940s Al Achterberg began hiring an airplane and a pilot to do aerial photography in and around Holdrege for stories in the Holdrege Daily Citizen.

The Achterberg’s daughter Nancy was born in 1946, their son Robert (the author of this study) was born in 1948, and daughter Linda came along in 1954. In 1952 Al

began to acquire some of his own photographic equipment and became a full-time photographer, specializing in commercial, wedding, and news photography. At about that time he designed and built a darkroom in the basement of their home in Holdrege at 915 Arthur Street [**Photo misc 16**], which they rented from Mr. Lundstrom, and where they lived until late 1954. It is likely that photographs by Al Achterberg between the years 1946-1952 may remain in the archives at the Holdrege Daily Citizen. When LaMonte Lundstrom sold the newspaper to Dwight King in 1957, he sold all the photographic equipment to Al Achterberg (bill of sale in the author's possession).

Al continued to do photographic work, and occasionally, other work for the newspaper and maintained his minuscule L-shaped darkroom, approximately 100 square feet in size, on their premises until 1961. During this decade of development of the business, Al declined offers from the Omaha World Herald to become farm editor and from the Estes Park Trail to market Colorado vacationlands, so that his family could enjoy the benefits of small town community. He continued to do much photographic work for the Citizen for many years. In 1958 Al's son, Robert [**Photo ra 1**], began work for him as a photographer's assistant.

In the fall of 1961 Al began operating (and the next year purchased) the Nelson Studio (previously owned by a Mr. Nelson, followed by Harry Pollock, then by Duane Mossbarger, and briefly by Lowell Johnson and Dee Swanson) at 504 Fourth Avenue (U.S. Highway 6) in Holdrege [**Photo st 1, 2, 3, 5, 6**]. Included in the purchase of the Nelson Studio were many negatives, including a set of glass plates (among which were found Al and Faithe's formal wedding portraits), a 5x7 studio camera [**Photo st 4**] and portrait strobe units, and a Rolleiflex twin lens reflex camera, which remains in the family collection [**Photo awa 8, misc 32**]. Smaller amateur cameras were stocked for sale to customers, and several were given to the author of this study to encourage his

interest in photography, and to increase his photographic understanding and skills. Pertinent, specific instruction in the technical and aesthetic dimensions of photography was always included by the photographer along with the equipment.

The two employees of the studio, Lois Peterson and Carolyn Bredenkamp, were retained as employees under the new management. This enabled Mr. Achterberg to expand the business by doing more camera work and long-range planning, and entrusting others with much of the enlarging, printing, developing, spotting, and other preparation of the photographs. In 1962, at the age of 14, his son, the author of this study, began independent camera work assignments of news photography and weddings, and became chief film processor and billfold photo printer, responsibilities which continued until shortly after his graduation from high school in 1966, and periodically during the summer and during weekend and vacation visits thereafter.

As indicated earlier in the description of the photographic collection, Eldon Orthmann and Linda Achterberg Hoover also were significant in doing much wedding photography and some news photography as a part of their responsibilities during their late teens and early twenties, which enabled Mr. Achterberg to expand the business more than he could have done as the sole photographer. An important side benefit to having photographic assistants was that concerns were lessened about whom would take pictures in case the head photographer needed to be out of town, in the rare occasion that he might be too ill to photograph an assignment, or, as became frequent when the “baby boomers” began to marry, in case two or three weddings needed to be photographed at the same time on a weekend afternoon or evening. Given the six- to seven-day work week to which he was accustomed, this situation offered Al some relief from the stresses of the growing business.

Al had photographs published by the Omaha World Herald, The Associated Press, United Press International, Time magazine, and U.S. News and World Report by contractual arrangement on occasions when those publications needed photographs of southern Nebraska subjects. He particularly enjoyed aerial photography, which was quite different than the “people and events” photography he usually did, and he taught himself to adjust to the unusual demands of space, positioning, perspective, lighting conditions, timing and motion which accompany aerial work. He was also hired to develop the first darkroom and to team with art director Arthur Pierce at the newly-established local television station, KHOL-TV (now KHGI-TV and NTV), which, on 24 December, 1953, became the first rural television station to begin broadcasting in Nebraska as only the fifth television station in the state to go on the air **[Photo awa 5]**.

Al took on some large projects which extended beyond the normal expectations of a small town photographer: for one project he photographed a series of agricultural subjects for the First National Bank of Holdrege and sent them out to be enlarged into photographic murals approximately eight feet long by four feet high. He applied the photographic murals to a rigid backing at home, using the bathtub as a sufficiently large container to re-wet the photographs, to which he then applied special glue and rolled and brushed flat to the backing board, a risky venture due to the fragile surface of the wet photographic mural. He hand-colored the murals, using his oil-based portrait pigments, and then mounted the murals on the north wall of the First National Bank behind the teller line where they could visually emphasize the importance of agriculture to the community. These murals now hang in the Nebraska Prairie Museum in Holdrege, where they were taken following a remodeling of the bank. The author was able to examine these murals again on 1 June 2007, and noted the complexity of the task undertaken in hand coloring the murals, which included coloring individual plant stems against

contrasting backgrounds and avoiding the application of color to spots of snow on the backs of cattle in the pictures. After approximately 50 years of being exposed to light, the colors on the murals continue to be relatively dense and rich.

Another set of two large hand-colored photo murals was made for the new East Avenue location of the Holdrege Daily Citizen in the early 1950s and featured the “Blizzard of 1949” and the large floodgates on the Tri-County Irrigation canal (personal conversations with Harley Lofton). Several years later these two large photographs were ruined by leaks in the roof of the building during a torrential rain storm.

Nearly forty years later, Al took on a project involving the copying of panoramic photographs of the town of Holdrege from 1905 and 1915. He enlarged them into two oversize photographs, one a 19 inch by 30 inch photograph and the other a 15 foot 10 inch long by 19 inch high segmented mural, and mounted them on the wall of the local McDonald’s restaurant. These photographic murals are now displayed in the Nebraska Prairie Museum, following a remodeling of the restaurant.

Black and white photographic reproduction was the medium of Al’s business until the mid-1960s, when a transition to color film gradually occurred. The transition was begun by using 4x5 color sheet film in the Speed Graphic camera [**Photo misc 28**], and 120 size roll film backs on the Speed Graphic camera in place of the 4x5 film holders, and on the studio camera in place of the 5x7 film holders. It continued with the use of color 120 size film in two Rolleiflex cameras, and finally, culminated in the purchase of the first of three Koni Omega medium format 120 roll film cameras [**Photo misc 33**].

An early exception to the virtually exclusive earlier use of black and white film was a set of fine Kodachrome slides taken on a trip for the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona in early 1951 to document a visit to the St. Andrew’s Indian Mission at the bottom of the Havasupai Canyon, a southern tributary of the Grand Canyon’s Colorado River. Al’s

brother-in-law, the Rev. Donald B. Robinson, an Episcopal priest in Phoenix, had arranged with Bishop Kinsolving to bring Al along as the official photographer for the trip. On that expedition he carried a 4x5 Speed Graphic camera, film holders, flash equipment and bulbs, a 35mm Argus C-3 camera and a big Graflex camera case down the trail into the canyon [**Photos misc 17, 18, 19**]. The side trek to Mooney Falls required traversing some distance using iron pegs for hand holds and steps carved in the rock face.

Until the author of this study was trained to develop sheet and roll film in 1962, Mr. Achterberg did most of his own developing of black and white 4x5 and 5x7 sheet film and 35 mm and 120 size roll film. Prior to his having full time assistance in the studio in 1961, he did all of his own printing, enlarging, mounting, and framing of photographs. Having studied some visual art in college, and having developed good ability in that area, Al taught himself to hand-color portraits with oil-based pigments before color photography became common. Selecting colors and color densities to maximize accuracy in the shaping of faces in portraits assisted his transition to the positioning of light sources in relation to subjects when color photography became the medium of choice in photography in the mid-1960s.

Al assisted with a joint pilot project of the Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Tennessee Valley Authority in the summer of 1979 that explored the use of infrared aerial photography for corn crop and soil monitoring and analysis. This involved the development of infrared film, for which some unusual measures had to be devised to bring and keep the photographic process chemicals into a narrow band of tightly controlled temperature conditions (Citizen, v.95, n.56, p.1; v.95, n.58, p.1, personal conversations with Al Achterberg).

Al Achterberg designed and built a home-made retouching machine out of plywood to use in his portrait work. It was later replaced by an Adams commercial

retouching machine. Many times he would disassemble, fix, and reassemble cameras and flash equipment and redesign backs for his studio camera to achieve the results he desired. He designed and built compound miter jigs for his Shop Smith multi-function table saw to build custom frames for photographs which would enhance the subject in the image.

As an active member of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Holdrege **[Photos misc 29, 30]**, which is a congregation of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, Al Achterberg was often the official photographer at local and district church events. His involvement as an officer in the local Rotary club and as a District Governor of Rotary International presented photographic opportunities for him which included the International Rotary Convention in Munich, Germany in 1987.

In addition to the six day work week which was the norm for much of his professional life, Al found time to spend with his family and to pursue his many other interests. He involved his children in many projects that interested them, including bicycle restoration, building crystal and short wave radios and other projects from basic plans or from Heath Kits, woodworking projects, remodeling projects, 4-H projects, gardening, and playing tennis and badminton. He also involved his children in useful and meaningful activities that they weren't particularly interested in, such as yard work and other routine projects around the house. Family travel was typically for the purpose of visiting relatives, except for an annual vacation beginning in 1962, which allowed exploration of the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states and historic sites across the state of Nebraska.

Bible study and worship were top-priority weekly events for the family. Al and Faithe Achterberg became members of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in 1946 and were very active in the lay ministry of the church. Al taught Bible class and Sunday school



and exercised leadership in many offices of the congregation. He was a Circuit representative to Synodical Conventions on several occasions. Spiritual development and service opportunities were realized by Al Achterberg as a member and officer of the Lutheran Layman's League.

Al had no musical training, experience, or technical skill, but agreed with his very musical wife that their children needed to have opportunities in choral, instrumental and keyboard music. Al supported the musical work of Faithe, who was the church organist and, for a number of years, choir director. Two of their children became professional church musicians and music educators. All three children became professional educators.

When a new pipe organ was proposed for the church, Al became one of the strong advocates for it and, during its installation, educated himself about its workings sufficiently to become the chief local diagnostician and repairman when it occasionally needed attention. He became interested in radio broadcasts of church services on KUVR, the local radio station, became the main script writer and announcer for the broadcasts, and helped to design and build a sound system and broadcast booth in the church balcony for such purposes. At the time of his death, he was serving as Vice President of the Nebraska Association of Congregations for Concordia University, Nebraska, a support group for the university.

Al enjoyed woodworking and house and garage remodeling projects, including the design and construction of a large two story deck for the back of the house and a storage barn complete with electrical service. He was an avid gardener who loved to experiment with a variety of techniques to better grow gardens, and he liked to experiment with new varieties of vegetables and to preserve old stock of perennial flowers. His fifty foot long row of mixed varieties of peonies from the family farm in Custer County and newer 1950s stock became legendary in the neighborhood.

Al was an avid reader, particularly about subjects dealing with theology, photography, woodworking, electronics, gardening and frame building construction. He enjoyed the compact forms of poetry with their nuances of meaning and had many classic poems committed to memory, which would be recalled and restated as they applied to some dimension of daily activity, such as carpentry, photography, or gardening, often with a humorous turn. He had great interest in, and was highly skilled in developing thinking and language skills in very young children.

Al participated in football and track in high school. In the Army Air Corps, Al became an accomplished table tennis player and later he enjoyed helping his children to develop those skills. He also bowled regularly on the Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church team, for which he carried a respectable average and for which he bowled at least one 600+ pin series. At the urging of his son, he became a skilled Frisbee thrower in the 1970s.

An interest in genealogy led Al to research genealogical processes, methods, materials and computer applications in genealogy. He became the “family historian” for both the Achterberg and Adee sides of the family and actively sought out, organized, and shared information with several generations of relatives. Included in this information were numerous photographs of people represented in the family ancestral charts. Many of these photographs are included in the collection.

Al joined the Holdrege Rotary club in 1965 and was a faithful member until the time of his death, having served as Secretary, Vice President and President of the local club, and as a District Governor of District #563 of Rotary International in the 1987-1988 term (*Rotary International District 563 District Conference Directory*, 1988). He and his wife, Faithe, were Paul Harris Fellows [**Photos misc 20, 21**] and Al was active with the Rotary Exchange programs and the Travelogue committee. Al served the community as

a member of the Speakers Bureau for the Middle School Bond Issue when he was in his eighth decade of life. He found time to volunteer at the Nebraska Prairie Museum of the Phelps County Historical Society, for which he served as secretary, and participated actively in the publication of the 695 page hardbound *Phelps County, Nebraska History*, covering the years 1873 to 1980, in the areas of book format, publicity, historical advisor, photography, writer, and book composition (Phelps County Historical Society, 1981, 3).

In the 1980s Al Achterberg scaled back advertising for his photographic business and reduced his average studio work week to five days. He became more involved in the copying of old photographs and developed air brush skills to apply to vintage photographic restoration and enhancement. He developed techniques for copying historic family photographs to preserve and recapture the information contained in them and combined this with a study of genealogy to encourage others to seek and record information about people and places in the photographs they owned while people who might have had that knowledge were still alive. These interests were combined and marketed actively to become a significant proportion of his business in the later years, with the result that information contained in hundreds or thousands of fading or damaged photographs from the late 1800s and early 1900s had its life extended for perhaps another century because of his work [**Photos misc 32-** the Christian Orphan's Home, **misc 33-** Holdrege in 1885, **o 2-** a rare photograph showing the relative positions of the West Ward School and the High School, later Roosevelt School, **misc 34-** Teddy Roosevelt's appearance in Holdrege on 1 October 1900, and **misc 35-** the crash of a stratospheric balloon near Loomis, Nebraska.]

The Al Achterberg Studio served as the base of operations for documenting all types of everyday events in an 80 mile by 100 mile swath of south central Nebraska until December 1995 when the building was sold, and the 77 year old photographer continued

photography on a reduced scale from his home. At that time he purchased a computer and later began to cultivate an interest in digitizing historical photographic images. Albert Achterberg died on 11 January 2000 from medical complications following successful knee joint replacement surgery, and is buried at Fort McPherson National Cemetery at Maxwell, Nebraska.

#### METAMORPHOSIS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PROFESSION

The practice of photography metamorphosed sufficiently during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century so that many common practices at the beginning of the period were distant memories at the end of the period. At the time of the sale of the studio building in 1995, Al Achterberg owned a large studio portrait camera with two complete sets of studio strobe lights (one set was portable), a 4x5 Speed Graphic camera, a 4x5 Crown Graphic, a Schneider Super-Angulon lens, several 120 film roll backs, two Grafmatic camera backs, three Koni-Omega Rapid medium format cameras, two twin lens reflex Rolleiflex cameras, a Vivitar 285 HV strobe unit, a Vivitar 283 strobe unit, a Quantum strobe power supply, a Honeywell 772 Strobosnar strobe unit, two professional tripods, three enlargers, an electronic enlarger density control unit, three print dryers, a large print texturizing machine, a Pentax 35mm single lens reflex camera with a variety of lenses and extensive amounts of other miscellaneous equipment. By then the three vintage Graflex electronic strobes and battery packs that he had purchased as the latest technology in the 1950s and 1960s were no longer being used, and the Mamiyaflex twin lens reflex camera that he had owned in the 1970s had been traded for newer equipment.

How different that was from the risky early years from 1946 to 1961, when his main photographic equipment consisted of just one Speed Graphic camera and several

film holders, its original expendable-bulb flash attachment, a tripod, a film changing bag, one 4x5 enlarger, a contact printer, a print washer and a print dryer. The original flash was later replaced by one Heiland strobe unit, then twin Graflex strobe units [**Photo awa 6, 7**]. In those early years there was no margin for error concerning equipment reliability, because there was no back-up equipment in Al Achterberg's camera case or darkroom. A list of his photographic equipment available in 1957 was found by the author in one of his file cabinets [**Photo misc 26**].

Additionally, there was very little assistance for the photographer's manual operation of the original equipment: the expendable bulb flash and even the first two Graflex electronic strobes and power packs had no built-in tilt or bounce flash capability, no power adjustment, and no sensors to assist with proper exposure. The size and weight of the Speed Graphic camera with its two attached electronic strobes, coupled with firm mechanical shutter release on the side of the camera made available light exposures somewhat challenging to accomplish when it was not practical to use a tripod. To avoid a blurred image while doing a hand-held shot under low light conditions required great care, some strength, and skillful muscular control.

During the analysis of the photographs in the collection, the author was reminded of the difficulties that Al Achterberg and other photographers of that era (himself included) faced in attempting to photograph subjects with limited-control light sources. The photographer was required to do a substantial amount of visualizing what the coverage and intensity of the flash would be and calculate exposures based on the context of the photograph in order to control and make use of the light sources and light-reflective surfaces. Accuracy was important, because many of the photographic situations allowed only one chance to capture the desired image. The success of doing so

was not known for a day or two for black and white film, which was developed locally, or for several days, in the case of color film, which was mailed out for processing.

Compounding the problem was the expense of the large expendable flash bulbs, which were good for only one exposure, and the price of 4x5 sheet film, which severely limited the number of exposures that could be made by a small-town photographer with limited financial resources. Many times early in his photographic career Al would photograph an event and make only two or three exposures of the entire event to provide a usable image for a newspaper article. He found it necessary to analyze the assignment, ask questions of those in charge, and predict what parts of the event offered the best opportunity to tell a story through photographs, position himself in anticipation that the event would proceed as planned, and then attempt to capture that moment as it was happening. If unexpected things intervened and the flow of events was altered, he would have to quickly analyze the changing field of events, reposition himself, and improvise on the original plan. Occasionally, this meant getting only one exposure about which he was fairly certain of the utility. A similar assignment today for an hour-long event in an urban setting would customarily involve 100 to 200 exposures being made in order to ensure acceptable results and to reach beyond a base level of need for the occasion (personal conversation with Mark Matson, 7/31/2006).

For occasions that required many exposures using 4x5 equipment, the number of film holders the photographer owned would help to determine how many exposures could be made. Each film holder held two sheets of film. If a photographer owned ten film holders, a total of 20 exposures could be made without necessitating the changing of film in a light-tight bag during the event being photographed, which was a laborious and slightly risky procedure. An alternative method was to use a special Kodak film pack or a Grafmatic camera back that held several sheets of film in metal carriers. The addition

of a roll back for the 4x5 camera and the addition of roll film cameras in the 1960s relieved the restrictions imposed by the sole use of 4x5 film holders. Then, eight and ten exposure photographic assignments became more common, as evidenced in the increased number of negatives in the envelopes.

Al Achterberg's approach to photography was multi-dimensional, from mechanical to technical, historic, and artistic in perspective, and from portrait to commercial to journalistic in practice. What influences and values may have contributed to his treatment of educational subjects, which constitute a significant portion of the photographic collection? What may have caused him to shred thousands of prints during a period of time from 1996 to 1999 and yet leave a box full of prints with educational themes? Might these influences have originated in his beliefs and values about the importance of education that caused him also, in 1989, to agree to head up a speaker's bureau to educate taxpayers and voters in the school district about the need for a new Middle School in town?

Several points of connection with education have already been mentioned: Al's somewhat risky venture to get a college education in a time and place when and where that was not the norm, his enrollment in a college program which emphasized teacher education, and his being married to a teacher. Of great importance, very likely, were his many lengthy conversations about education with his father-in-law, Clayton Adee, for whom he had great respect, and who was a teacher and Superintendent of Schools in a number of towns in eastern, central and south-central Nebraska well through his eighth decade of life **[Photos op 1, 2]**. Another factor may have been his discussions with Rod Smith, a good friend and next-door neighbor, who was the Educational Service Unit #11 Administrator from 1976 to 1998 (Linda Achterberg Hoover's conversations with Kathy Smith Anderson, July 2006). Whatever constituted that complex web of influences and

values, the result was a large body of photographic images in print and negative form that contain a wealth of information about life in the schools and their surrounding communities in south central Nebraska from 1940 through 1999.



## Appendix B: List of Digitized Images Included in This Dissertation

Note: these images are archived and may be viewed online at the Center for American History website at <http://www.cah.utexas.edu>.

### Aerial photographs:

1. aer 1- Holdrege, 1884
2. aer 2- Holdrege, 1954
3. aer 3- Holdrege, color
4. aer 4- Middle School
5. aer 5- football field, pre-1960a
6. aer 6- football field, pre-1960b
7. aer 7- HHS, 11-6-67
8. aer 8- Oconto
9. aer 9- HHS new construction beginning, NW view
10. aer 10- HHS new construction, E view
11. aer 11- HHS nearly complete, NW view

### Air Force Photographs:

12. af 1- Sheppard Field 4 guys in office
13. af 2- AWA on barracks steps
14. af 3- AWA taking picture
15. af 4- AWA by Chisholm Trail sign
16. af 5- AWA formal portrait
17. af 6- 3 images, AWA leaving for the Army from Oconto

Athletics photographs:

- 18. ath 1- HHS football team, color
- 19. ath 2- HHS football team, 1911
- 20. ath 3- HHS football team, 1983
- 21. ath 4- Oconto football team, 1937

Albert W. Achterberg photographs:

- 22. awa 1- AWA and siblings
- 23. awa 2- Erw's confirmation
- 24. awa 3- Ernst Achterberg family at the farm
- 25. awa 4- AWA high school senior portrait
- 26. awa 5- AWA cap and gown, HS graduation
- 27. awa 6- AWA college portrait
- 28. awa 7- AWA, fall of 1947 w/Speed Graphic
- 29. awa 8- AWA and Art Pierce, KHOL-TV
- 30. awa 9- AWA at sod house, 1958
- 31. awa 10- AWA photographing water tower construction
- 32. awa 11- AWA, 1960s?
- 33. awa 12- AWA, 1973
- 34. awa 13- AWA 1970s or 1980s
- 35. awa 14- AWA and Rolleiflex (color)
- 36. awa 15- AWA, 1986 passport photo

Albert W. Achterberg and Faithe M. Achterberg photographs:

- 37. awafma 1- AWA, FMA 1986
- 38. awafma 2- AWA, FMA 1995

- 39. awafma 3- AWA, FMA, Black and White of awafma 1
- 40. awafma 4- AWA, FMA at home c. 1999
- 41. awafma 5- AWA, FMA 1996 (Eldon Orthmann portrait)

Band:

*Band Day, 1952, photographs: (all are Nebraska towns unless noted differently)*

- 42. b 1- Alma
- 43. b 2- Almena, KS 2400dpi
- 44. b 3- Almena, KS 1200dpi
- 45. b 4- Arapahoe
- 46. b 5- Benkelman
- 47. b 6- Bertrand
- 48. b 7- Bladen
- 49. b 8- Blue Hill
- 50. b 9- Cambridge
- 51. b 10- crowd in City Auditorium (a)
- 52. b 11- crowd in City Auditorium (b)
- 53. b 12- Culbertson
- 54. b 13- Curtis
- 55. b 14- Edison
- 56. b 15- Gibbon
- 57. b 16- Gothenburg
- 58. b 17- Hastings
- 59. b 18- Hildreth
- 60. b 19- Holbrook

- 61. b 20- Holdrege (HHS)
- 62. b 21- Holdrege Junior High (HJHS)
- 63. b 22- Imperial
- 64. b 23- Kearney State Teachers College
- 65. b 24- Kenesaw
- 66. b 25- Kensington, KS
- 67. b 26- band members window shopping
- 68. b 27- Lexington
- 69. b 28- Minden
- 70. b 29- North Platte
- 71. b 30- Orleans
- 72. b 31- Overton
- 73. b 32- Oxford
- 74. b 33- Phillipsburg, KS
- 75. b 34- Red Cloud
- 76. b 35- Shelton
- 77. b 36- Stamford
- 78. b 37- Stockton, KS
- 79. b 38- street scenes
- 80. b 39- street scenes, Imperial band
- 81. b 40- Wauneta
- 82. b 41- Wilcox

*HJHS Band:*

- 83. b 42- Junior High/Grades 1961 a
- 84. b 43- Junior High/Grades 1961 b

85. b 44- Junior High 1961/2 a

86. b 45- Junior High 1961/2 b

*HHS Band:*

87. b 46- new band uniform a

88. b 47- new band uniform b

89. b 48- HHS band 1959/60 a

90. b 49- HHS band 1959/60 b

91. b 50- HHS band 1959/60 c

92. b 51- HHS band 1959/60 d

93. b 52- at old Jr/Sr Hi- Verle Straatmann, Director

94. b 53- 1960/61 a

95. b 54- 1960/61 b

96. b 55- 1960/61 c

97. b 56- at Gothenburg football game

98. b 57- 1966 a

99. b 58- 1966 b

100. b 59- 1966 concert

101. b 60- 1966 field

102. b 61- Holdrege majorettes 1965/66

103. b 62- Holdrege majorettes 1965/66 (fading image)

104. b 63- 1966 gymnasium

105. b 64- 1966 street a

106. b 65- 1966 street b

107. b 66- 1966 welcome a

108. b 67- 1966 welcome b

- 109. b 68- copy of 1966 welcome a
- 110. b 69- copy of 1966 welcome b
- 111. b 70- color shots for annual a
- 112. b 71- color shots for annual b
- 113. b 72- color shots for annual c
- 114. b 73- after concert February 1970
- 115. b 74- copy of #114
- 116. b 75- band returns from Canada 7-1-71

Bookmobile:

- 117. bmb 1- Bookmobile (color)

*Envelope D1:*

- 118. bmb 2- approaching R-3 a
- 119. bmb 3- approaching R-3 b
- 120. bmb 4- interior R-3 a
- 121. bmb 5- interior R-3 b
- 122. bmb 6- interior R-3 c
- 123. bmb 7- interior R-3 d
- 124. bmb 8- R-3 lunch
- 125. bmb 9- approaching R-4
- 126. bmb 10- interior at R-4 a
- 127. bmb 11- interior at R-4 b
- 128. bmb 12- interior at R-4 c
- 129. bmb 13- exterior at R-4
- 130. bmb 14- approaching Dist. 45

- 131. bmb 15- interior at Dist. 45 a
- 132. bmb 16- interior at Dist. 45 b
- 133. bmb 17- interior at Dist. 45 c
- 134. bmb 18- exterior at Dist. 73
- 135. bmb 19- interior at Dist. 73 a
- 136. bmb 20- interior at Dist. 73 b
- 137. bmb 21- interior at Dist. 73 c
- 138. bmb 22- interior at Dist. 73 d

*Envelope D2:*

- 139. bmb 23- exterior Hillside Dist. 49 a
- 140. bmb 24- exterior Hillside Dist. 49 b
- 141. bmb 25- interior Hillside Dist. 49 a
- 142. bmb 26- interior Hillside Dist. 49 b

*Envelope D3:*

- 143. bmb 27- exterior Standard School Dist. 22 Hildreth a
- 144. bmb 28- exterior Standard School Dist. 22 Hildreth b

*Envelope D4:*

- 145. bmb 29- Eddie Bantam (26)
- 146. bmb 30- interior HS students, rural (29)
- 147. bmb 31- interior, women, man, Oxford (12)
- 148. bmb 32- interior, women, men, babies, Carter (13)
- 149. bmb 33- interior, students, Oxford a (10)
- 150. bmb 34- interior, students, Oxford b (9)
- 151. bmb 35- interior, students, Oxford c (11)

- 152. bmb 36- interior, students, Mascot (2)
- 153. bmb 37- interior, family, Carter (21)
- 154. bmb 38- students leaving bmb, Carter (19)
- 155. bmb 39- exterior, families, Carter (25)
- 156. bmb 40- exterior, students from school to bmb, Carter (24)
- 157. bmb 41- exterior, frame school building, Carter (18)
- 158. bmb 42- exterior, large brick school building, Mascot
- 159. bmb 43- exterior, frame school building, people arriving, Carter (17)
- 160. bmb 44- interior, Oxford (8)
- 161. bmb 45- interior, checking out books, Carter (14)
- 162. bmb 46- interior, young girl (34)
- 163. bmb 47- interior, all ages, Orleans (30)
- 164. bmb 48- exterior, child approaching, Carter (23)
- 165. bmb 49- exterior, line of students, Oxford (6)
- 166. bmb 50- interior, looking out, Carter (20)
- 167. bmb 51- new inside parking area, 1966
- 168. bmb 52- new 1950 bmb a
- 169. bmb 53- new 1950 bmb b
- 170. bmb 54- new 1950 bmb c
- 171. bmb 55- new 1950 bmb d
- 172. bmb 56- new 1950 bmb e
- 173. bmb 57- new library exterior
- 174. bmb 58- bmb schedule 1960/61, white paper
- 175. bmb 59- bmb schedule 1959/60, blue paper
- 176. bmb 60- AWA notes on bmb schedule 1959/60, blue paper



- 177. bmb 61- AWA notes on bmb schedule 1960/61, white paper a
- 178. bmb 62- AWA notes on bmb schedule 1960/61, white paper b
- 179. bmb 63- AWA notes on envelope "A" front
- 180. bmb 64- AWA notes on envelope "A" back
- 181. bmb 65- AWA notes on back of invoice in envelope "A"
- 182. bmb 66- Bookmobile print A-31, front
- 183. bmb 67- Bookmobile print A-31, back
- 184. bmb 68- envelope front, Hildreth
- 185. bmb 69- envelope back, Hildreth
- 186. bmb 70- envelope B, D-4 back, Carter School, etc.
- 187. bmb 71- envelope B, D-4 front, Carter School, etc.
- 188. bmb 72- mimeographed information
- 189. bmb 73- Bookmobile newspaper article a
- 190. bmb 74- Bookmobile newspaper article b
- 191. bmb 75- Map
- 192. bmb 76- print of #22
- 193. bmb 77- print of #12
- 194. bmb 78- print of #7
- 195. bmb 79- print of #13

Holdrege Daily Citizen:

- 196. cit 1- Daily Citizen Staff 1947- LaMonte Lundstrom

Curriculum and Instruction:

- 197. ci 1- Katherine Sweeney a
- 198. ci 2- Katherine Sweeney b

- 199. ci 3- school opening 1954 Washington a
- 200. ci 4- school opening 1954 Washington b
- 201. ci 5- school opening 1954 Franklin
- 202. ci 6- high school quartet
- 203. ci 7- teacher's tour fall 1956
- 204. ci 8- school starting, Franklin kindergarten 1959 a
- 205. ci 9- school starting, Franklin kindergarten 1959 b
- 206. ci 10- grade school phys-ed Lincoln a
- 207. ci 11- grade school phys-ed Lincoln b
- 208. ci 12- HHS language lab- Ruybalid a
- 209. ci 13- HHS language lab b
- 210. ci 14- HHS language lab c
- 211. ci 15- HHS language lab d
- 212. ci 16- HHS language lab e
- 213. ci 17- HHS language lab f
- 214. ci 18- Duster journalism class 11-3-62
- 215. ci 19- Ruybalid, American Education Week 11-12-62
- 216. ci 20- 4<sup>th</sup> grade Franklin w/Faithe
- 217. ci 21- sewing class, HHS
- 218. ci 22- FMA class quilt a
- 219. ci 23- FMA class quilt b
- 220. ci 24- FMA class quilt c
- 221. ci 25- FMA class quilt d
- 222. ci 26- FMA class quilt e
- 223. ci 27- FMA class quilt f

224. ci 28- Katherine Sweeney (print)

225. ci 29- back of print #28- engraver notes

Elementary Enrichment Activities:

226. eae 1- Air Age, Franklin gr.6, 5-19-55 a

227. eae 2- Air Age, Franklin gr.6, 5-19-55 b

228. eae 3- back to school, Roosevelt 1-5-59

229. eae 4- Christmas mural, Roosevelt

230. eae 5- German teacher

231. eae 6- gr.3 spelling contest

232. eae 7- Tommy Hoffman letter to Antarctica

233. eae 8- Herbert Hansen, Antarctic scientist, gr.4, Washington

234. eae 9- kindergarten at Lyon farm 1960

235. eae 10- kindergarten to farm 4-8-59

236. eae 11- kindergarten, traffic safety

237. eae 12- Minden train ride, Washington School 5-3-56

238. eae 13- Minden train trip

239. eae 14- operetta, spring 1953 a

240. eae 15- operetta, spring 1953 b

241. eae 16- operetta, spring 1953 c

242. eae 17- operetta, Washington 1955 a

243. eae 18- operetta, Washington 1955 b

244. eae 19- operetta, Washington 1955 c

245. eae 20- operetta, Washington 1955 d

246. eae 21- operetta, Washington 1955, kdg. and 1<sup>st</sup> grade

247. eae 22- pre-kdg 5-19-55 Franklin

- 248. eae 23- pre-kdg 5-19-55 Washington
- 249. eae 24- pre-kdg 5-19-55 Washington, circus theme
- 250. eae 25- pre-kdg 1953 Franklin (RA class)
- 251. eae 26- pre-kdg 1953 Washington a
- 252. eae 27- pre-kdg 1953 Washington b
- 253. eae 28- pre-school kdg party 5-21-62 a
- 254. eae 29- pre-school kdg party 5-21-62 b
- 255. eae 30- science display, Franklin, Education Week
- 256. eae 31- science fair, City Auditorium
- 257. eae 32- Spanish teacher- Ruybalid a
- 258. eae 33- Spanish teacher- Ruybalid b
- 259. eae 34- student patrol- Susan Anderson
- 260. eae 35- Washington gr.2 zoo
- 261. eae 36- Washington gr.6 Dooley Fund (light)
- 262. eae 37- Washington gr.6 Dooley Fund (dark)
- 263. eae 38- Washington gr.6 political rally
- 264. eae 39- Washington gr.1, baby chicks a
- 265. eae 40- Washington gr.1, baby chicks b
- 266. eae 41- Washington gr.3 mural
- 267. eae 42- Washington rocket
- 268. eae 43- solar cooker 3
- 269. eae 44- solar cooker 4
- 270. eae 45- solar cooker 6
- 271. eae 46- solar cooker 7
- 272. eae 47- solar cooker 8

- 273. eae 48- solar cooker 9
- 274. eae 49- solar cooker 10
- 275. eae 50- solar cooker 1or 2 print
- 276. eae 51- solar cooker 2 or 1 print
- 277. eae 52- solar cooker story for newspaper
- 278. eae 53- envelope- science display, Franklin
- 279. eae 54- book exhibit, Washington a
- 280. eae 55- book exhibit, Washington b
- 281. eae 56- book exhibit, Washington c

Enrichment Activities, High School:

- 282. eahs 1- career day a
- 283. eahs 2- career day b
- 284. eahs 3- career day at HS, patrolman and Tri-County a
- 285. eahs 4- career day at HS, patrolman and Tri-County b
- 286. eahs 5- career day 1955 at First National Bank a
- 287. eahs 6- career day 1955 at First National Bank b
- 288. eahs 7- career day 1955 at First National Bank c
- 289. eahs 8- career day, military recruiters in science room
- 290. eahs 9- driving class, 1956, Jess Kiefer
- 291. eahs 10- FFA banquet 1957
- 292. eahs 11- FFA class Ozark trip departure
- 293. eahs 12- FFA contest winners 1956
- 294. eahs 13- FFA pest eradication
- 295. eahs 14- Filipino school man- Bernardo, 3-19-58
- 296. eahs 15- high school art class 1958, sketching downtown

- 297. eahs 16- high school, skeleton 1962
- 298. eahs 17- junior class play 1952
- 299. eahs 18- Leo Rasmussen, AFS student
- 300. eahs 19- one-act plays spring 1958
- 301. eahs 20- rainfall chart, high school- Buettner
- 302. eahs 21- senior play 1958
- 303. eahs 22 high school May 1962, senior booy washing "62" off of concrete
- 304. eahs 23- trading seniors week FFA and home ec- girls
- 305. eahs 24- trading seniors week FFA and home ec- guys
- 306. eahs 25- Holdrege music contest 3-16-62, band (Southwest Conference?)
- 307. eahs 26- Holdrege music contest 3-16-62 choir a
- 308. eahs 27- Holdrege music contest 3-16-62 choir b
- 309. eahs 28- music contest, City Auditorium 1961
- 310. eahs 29- music contest, junior/senior high school 1961
- 311. eahs 30- music contest 1961, junior/senior high school, piano
- 312. eahs 31- FHA convention, Holdrege
- 313. eahs 32- Duster interviews

Ernst and Marie Achterberg:

- 314. ema 1- wedding anniversary
- 315. ema 2- EMA early
- 316. ema 3- EMA farmhouse, Custer Co., Nebraska, 1923; AWA, Irene
- 317. ema 4- EMA farmhouse 1920s (?)
- 318. ema 5- EMA farmstead; AWA college photo

Faithe Marie Adee Achterberg:

319. fma 1- FMA- 20s (?)

320. fma 2- with class at Roosevelt School, Holdrege

321. fma 3- reverse side of photo fma 2

Miscellaneous:

322. misc 1- copy of handbook 1963

323. misc 2- Salk polio vaccine a

324. misc 3- Salk polio vaccine b

325. misc 4- school bus at Franklin School 1952 license plate

326. misc 5- school starting- issuing locker keys

327. misc 6- "taken by Harley" envelope

328. misc 7- writing on envelope- HHS language lab

329. misc 8- writing on envelope- Ruybalid, American Education Week- Duster

330. misc 9- writing on envelope- Lincoln School; thick pencil (early)

331. misc 10- writing on envelope- Filipino school man 3-19-58

332. misc 11- writing on envelope- Minden train ride 5-3-56

333. misc 12- writing on envelope- Washington School construction

334. misc 13- writing on envelope- Air Age

335. misc 14- 301 West 11<sup>th</sup>, Holdrege- B&W

336. misc 15- 301 West 11<sup>th</sup>, Holdrege- color

337. misc 16- 915 Arthur Street, Holdrege

338. misc 17- Episcopal chapel, Havasupai Indian Reservation

339. misc 18- trail to Supai

340. misc 19- letter from Miss Viele

341. misc 20- Paul Harris Fellow medallion a

342. misc 21- Paul Harris Fellow medallion b
343. misc 22- 301 West 11<sup>th</sup>, Holdrege a
344. misc 23- 301 West 11<sup>th</sup>, Holdrege b
345. misc 24- Plum Creek Massacre monument
346. misc 25- KSTC *Antelope* a
347. misc 26- KSTC *Antelope* b
348. misc 27- bill of sale- equipment
349. misc 28- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kodak Brownie camera
350. misc 29- AWA's Speed Graphic
351. misc 30- film holders for Speed Graphic a
352. misc 31- film holders for Speed Graphic b
353. misc 32- film holders for Speed Graphic c
354. misc 33- AWA Rolleiflex
355. misc 34- AWA Koni-Omega
356. misc 35- Hail stones- Jean McDonald a
357. misc 36- Hail stones- Jean McDonald b
358. misc 37- Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Holdrege, exterior, night
359. misc 38- Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Holdrege, interior, day
360. misc 39- hail storm letter
361. misc 40- Christian Orphan's Home
362. misc 41- Holdrege, 1885
363. misc 42- Theodore Roosevelt 1 October 1900
364. misc 43- stratospheric balloon- Loomis, Nebraska
- Nebraska State Teachers College (Kearney):
365. nstc 1- Blue Bell Dairy, Kearney (print)



366. nstc 2- airplane for annual aerals

Other People:

367. op 1- Clayton H. Adee, 1940

368. op 2- Clayton H. Adee, 1970

369. op 3- Linda Hoover Achterberg

370. op 4- Dwight D. Eisenhower, 7-3-52

371. op 5- Eldon Orthmann

RA:

372. RA 1- Robert Achterberg, 1954

Retouching Negative:

373. rn 1- 001 B&W

374. rn 2- 002 B&W

375. rn 3- color negative in Beloit mask 001

376. rn 4- color negative in Beloit mask 002

School Buildings:

*New high school (Holdrege, Nebraska):*

377. nhs 1- HHS concession stand

378. nhs 2- for dedication (11-4-62) [through #416]; Mrs. Madison at intercom a

379. nhs 3- Mrs. Madison at intercom b

380. nhs 4- science classroom a

381. nhs 5- science classroom b

382. nhs 6- business/typing classroom a

383. nhs 7- business/typing classroom b

384. nhs 8- classroom a

- 385. nhs 9- classroom b
- 386. nhs 10- ag shop (?)
- 387. nhs 11- Howard Schroeder, Supt.
- 388. nhs 12- ag shop
- 389. nhs 13- Howard Schroeder
- 390. nhs 14- ag shop
- 391. nhs 15- Howard Schroeder
- 392. nhs 16- ag shop
- 393. nhs 17- Howard Schroeder
- 394. nhs 18- cooks, oven
- 395. nhs 19- cooks, dishwasher
- 396. nhs 20- gym and bleacher parts
- 397. nhs 21- wood shop
- 398. nhs 22- [double exposure] sound equipment and home ec room
- 399. nhs 23- home economics room
- 400. nhs 24- Jim Speece, Principal, intercom
- 401. nhs 25- kitchen, refrigerators
- 402. nhs 26- home ec room a
- 403. nhs 27- home ec room b
- 404. nhs 28- home ec room c
- 405. nhs 29- library
- 406. nhs 30- choir room
- 407. nhs 31- wood shop, tool rack
- 408. nhs 32- home ec room
- 409. nhs 33- Jim Speece, Principal, intercom

- 410. nhs 34- solar screens
- 411. nhs 35- HHS- super wide angle lens on Speed Graphic a
- 412. nhs 36- HHS- super wide angle lens on Speed Graphic b
- 413. nhs 37- ground level
- 414. nhs 38- roof
- 415. nhs 39- hallway 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- 416. nhs 40- gym and debris
- 417. nhs 41- dedication 11-4-62; band
- 418. nhs 42- dedication, commons area
- 419. nhs 43- dedication, new high school
- 420. nhs 44- floor plans a
- 421. nhs 45- floor plans b
- 422. nhs 46- gym, first basketball game (12-16-62) a
- 423. nhs 47- gym, first basketball game b
- 424. nhs 48- gym, first basketball game c
- 425. nhs 49- 35mm slide- HHS, possibly early 1961
- 426. nhs 50- HHS color shots for annual b
- 427. nhs 51- HHS color shots for annual a
- 428. nhs 52- HHS color shots for annual c
- 429. nhs 53- new high school construction, vintage cars
- 430. nhs 54- steel on gym a
- 431. nhs 55- steel on gym b
- 432. nhs 56- new high school and students for record jacket
- 433. nhs 57- school flag
- 434. nhs 58- bleacher erection in gym

*Old Junior/Senior High School:*

435. jrsrh 1- exterior from southeast

436. jrsrh 2- Norman Hanich

*Lincoln School:*

437. l 1- classroom

438. l 2- entry stairs and students

*Washington School:*

439. w 1- Washington School, color

440. w 2- cafeteria, folding tables (Superintendent Bragg)

441. w 3- construction, southeast porch

442. w 4- construction, interior

443. w 5- construction, west side a

444. w 6- construction west side b

445. w 7- hall looking south a

446. w 8- hall looking south b

447. w 9- kindergarten room

448. w 10- exterior, later a

449. w 11- exterior, later b

*Franklin School:*

450. f 1- entrance, east side a

451. f 2- entrance, east side b

452. f 3- interior a

453. f 4- interior b

454. f 5- interior c

455. f 6- interior d

456. f 7- interior e

457. f 8- interior f

458. f 9- school opening 1954, south side

*Roosevelt School:*

459. r 1- Roosevelt farewell

460. r 2- classroom a

461. r 3- classroom b

462. r 4- water damage

463. r 5- classroom

464. r 6- furnace room

465. r 7- shower room

466. r 8- boiler

467. r9- entrance

468. r 10- entrance, close-up

469. r 11- exterior

470. r 12- snow, 1972/3

*Middle School:*

471. ms 1- exterior a

472. ms 2- exterior b

*Other Schools:*

473. os 1- Prairie Rose School 1911

474. os 2- Holdrege High School (later, Roosevelt) and West Ward School

Special Needs:

- 475. sn 1- Brummer girl, intercom school
- 476. sn 2- Hazel Loar School, Christmas decorations a
- 477. sn 3- Hazel Loar School, Christmas decorations b
- 478. sn 4- Mrs. Loar and pupils to Minden a
- 479. sn 5- Mrs. Loar and pupils to Minden b
- 480. sn 6- Mrs. Loar's School art display, March 1962

Al Achterberg Studio:

- 481. s 1- exterior at night
- 482. s 2- interior 1966 or later
- 483. s 3- exterior 1979
- 484. s 4- studio camera
- 485. s 5- interior 1966 or later
- 486. s 6- sign, late 1960s

Additional images:

- 487. fma 4- FMA B&W
- 488. fma 5- FMA B&W
- 489. fma 6- color of #488
- 490. awa 16- color of #34
- 491. awa 17- passport-Polaroid
- 492. misc 44- taped film boxes a
- 493. misc 45- taped film boxes b
- 494. misc 46- taped film boxes c

## Appendix C: Listing of schooling-related photographs in the Albert W. Achterberg Collection

Many of the images that appear in this study were found in three boxes of negatives that were labeled, “School”. The Bookmobile images were found in a box labeled “Libraries”. Only a small number of the images included in these four boxes were used in this study; for example, the “Libraries” box contained 35 envelopes, of which about one third included Bookmobile images. Negatives from just six of those envelopes were digitized for this study. The listing below is included in order to show the great variety of school-oriented subjects included in the Albert W. Achterberg Photographic Collection.

(*n.b.*: titles given here are as they appear on the envelopes as written by the photographer, with his abbreviations, question marks, and approximate spacing between words indicated, where that seemed to be meaningful. Items inside brackets [ ] are editorial comments by the author made for clarification or to indicate inability to decipher the writing. Numbers preceding the titles indicate the order of the manila envelopes in each box of negatives from front to back in each box.)

### 1. Contents of Three Boxes of Negatives Labeled “School”

#### *Small box- envelope titles:*

1. Axtell School Building 1964
2. Leo Rasmussen at Gabus’
3. Science Display- Franklin School Educ Week
4. Jr. Sr. Prom 1961
5. R-7 School groups 4/26/63

6. Atlanta Groups
7. Bikers Aug 8, 1962
8. Bicycle races? Sept. 14 '62
9. FFA Banquet 62
10. F.F.A. Holdrege Mr. Pollan- teacher 1961-1962
11. Duster- Journalism Class 11/3/62
12. Hi School- Duster-Pep Rally in hall Minden 11/3-62
13. McCook FB. Game 1962
14. Broken Bow (?) Game
15. Ord Game Football 196-
16. Student teachers? 10/20/62
17. Holdrege Duster- group at Concession Stand 10/6/62
18. Hi School Group 10/6
19. Minden Game 11/3/62
20. Pep Rally (Ord game)
21. Holdrege High Sch. Language Lab
22. Holdrege- Curtis football game Sept. 7 '62
23. Foreign Exch Student- 1962-63
24. Holdrege School Registration Aug. 31 '62
25. Homecoming Game- 1962 Queen, Pep Rally (Goal Posts), Girls & Flowers, Class of  
1912
26. Holdrege Football 1962 [?]
27. Engelke & Lunsford [?] American Educ. Week
28. American Education Week- Night School at HS 11/13(?)/62
29. Holdrege H.S. Play practice Nov. 1962



- 30. Hi School Lyceum Program Comedian for Duster Nov
- 31. Ruybalid American Educ. Week 11/12/62
- 32. Dr. Reiner, Miss Peterson, Miss Heidenreich Nov. 1962
- 33. Holdrege High School Chorus

*First large box- envelope titles:*

- 34. Holdrege High School Exterior Wide Angle Omega 5/8/67
- 35. Holdrege High School Class of 1942 Reunion July 23, 1962
- 36. Foreign Students July 23, 1962
- 37. Football uniforms & physicals 1962
- 38. Holdrege football practice Aug. 21 '62
- 39. Leo Rasmussen on Bike
- 40. Foreign Exchange Students arriving & picnic June 27, 1962
- 41. Jr Sr Prom- 1961
- 42. Poster Contest Nancy Trenchard and Vicki Bivens
- 43. Hi School Band 1960-61
- 44. Wash 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Dooley Fund
- 45. U. of N. "Principals Conference"
- 46. Bands- Jr Hi Grades 1961
- 47. Industrial Arts Display 1961
- 48. New Hi School Womens Club Tour
- 49. Hi School Seniors copy
- 50. FFA Banquet 4/3/61
- 51. FFA Banquet 4/60
- 52. FFA Demonstration Teams 2/20/61

53. Hi School Seniors- 1961 [formal class picture]
54. 1951 HS Class Reunion 6/24-6/25-61
55. New Holdrege Teachers Copy
56. School begins- 1961-62 New Hi School
57. Band- Hi School 1959/60
58. Mrs Stebbins Retirement
59. Washington 1<sup>st</sup> grade baby chicks Kae Coppock
60. Teachers Dinner- 1961
61. Lincoln School Square Dancers
62. Music Contest 1961
63. Thor Lundin Retiring School Janitor
64. School Lunch 2/2/61
65. Fire Prevention Week Fire hats at Franklin School
66. New Hi School (Lowell)
67. Twins- Washington School
68. Hi School Christmas Music Prog for Annual
69. Norman Hanich
70. Spanish Teacher- Ruybalid
71. New Hi School Floor Delivery
72. Katherine Sweeney
73. Hi School Play
74. Homecoming Queen & attendants game & pre game shots 10/21/1960
75. Class of 1915
76. Hi School Christmas Music Program
77. Art Class decorating Gabus windows 1960

78. Hi School- Mouse that Roared
79. Hi School Solar Screens
80. 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Franklin with Faithe
81. Jr Sr Banquet 1960
82. Washington 6<sup>th</sup> grade Political Rally
83. High School 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, etc 6/29/60
84. New Hi School 3/31
85. New Hi School First Work
86. Class of 1935
87. Science Fair
88. Washington School 2<sup>nd</sup> grade zoo
89. New High School- Aerial 4-21-60
90. Hi School Holdrege
91. Elementary Teachers- 1958-59
92. School Starting- Issuing locker keys
93. Baccalaureate 1960
94. Kindergarten at Lyon farm 1960
95. High School Brick Work 5/18/60
96. Brummer girl- Intercom School
97. Hodges (?) Copy Comm. Speaker 1960
98. Hi School Steel on gym
99. FFA- Meeting 2/1/60
100. New Teachers- 1960
101. Homecoming- 1959 Jaycees
102. Hi School Mixer after Curtis game 9/11/59

- 103. Science Club Meeting Polaroid
- 104. Music Contest 1959
- 105. Kindergarten to farm 4/8/59
- 106. School Starting Franklin Kindergarten 1959
- 107. Jr Class Play- courtroom scene 11/59
- 108. Mrs Loar & pupils to Minden
- 109. FFA Banquet 1957
- 110. Cheer Leaders- 1959-60
- 111. Hi School Band at Gothenburg FB game
- 112. Herbert Hansen & Washington 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- 113. Howard Schroeder NSEA
- 114. Susan Anderson- Student Patrol
- 115. New High School floor plans
- 116. One Act Plays- Spring 1958
- 117. Hi School Art Class
- 118. Boys & Girls Co govt- Fall 1958
- 119. Salk Vaccine
- 120. Back to School- Jan 5/59 Roosevelt School Kids
- 121. Holdrege Music Contest 3/16/62
- 122. Holdrege Jr. High School Band 1961-1962
- 123. New HS Gym- 1<sup>st</sup> game 12-16
- 124. Hi School- for dedication 11/4

*Second large box of negatives (#107)- envelope titles:*

- 125. New High School & Students for Record Jacket

126. Hi School Super Wide Angle 11/4
127. New Hi School Dec
128. New Hi School
129. Mrs Loar School Christmas Party 1961 12-20
130. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Spelling Contest taken 2/17/62
131. Hi School Sound System & Stereo 11-4
132. Hi School Dedicati- 11/4 Lowell
133. New Hi School Dedication 11/4 (band photo)
134. FHA Convention Holdrege
135. Band Audition 12-4
136. Wilcox French teacher
137. Hi School Music Group 12-9
138. Book – Presentation to Hi School
139. Teachers Convention 10-26-27
140. Hi School- Skeleton 1-62
141. School Flag
142. Education Conference Oct 55
143. Roosevelt School Remodeling
144. New Band Uniforms
145. Jr. Class Play
146. FFA Stamp
147. Boy's and Girl's Co. Govt.
148. FFA Honorary Farmers-Apr. 1954
149. Roosevelt School Trees
150. Franklin School Lunch- Fall 1954

151. School Opening- 1954
152. Kenfield Girls
153. Operetta-Wash. Sch-Spring, 1955
154. Operetta-Wash Sch-1955
155. Boys & Girls Co. Govt.
156. Music Contest Apr 1955
157. FFA Class-Ozark Departure
158. Pre Kindergarten-5/19/55
159. Marine Band Day 10/12/54
160. Zachary graduation
161. Career Day High School 1955
162. FFA Pest Eradication
163. Career Day
164. Roosevelt School
165. "Air Age" Class Franklin 6<sup>th</sup> grade 5/19/55
166. Holdrege Schools- "Air Age"- 1952
167. Franklin School Interior
168. Freshman Initiation 1952
169. Football Field Aerial
170. Junior Class Play- 52-
171. High School Quartet
172. F.F.A. Banquet
173. FFA 3/27-Team
174. Washington School [construction]
175. Duster Interviews

176. German Teacher
177. Greg Harms
178. Senior Class Play-1956
179. Minden Train Ride Washington 2<sup>nd</sup> grade 5/3/56
180. Washington School 4<sup>th</sup> grade Christmas Poster
181. Book Exhibit Washington School
182. Washington School New Merry go Round
183. High School Home Ec. Dept. Exterior
184. Operetta-Spring 1953
185. Pre Kindergarten-1953
186. School- Starting-1952
187. F.F.A. Contest Winners-1956
188. Roosevelt School Mrs Lauquist [?] & pupils
189. Driving Class '56
190. Land Judging Contest
191. Kindergarten Traffic Safety
192. Teachers Tour-Fall 1956
193. FFA Slave Auction
194. Career Day at High School Patrolman & Tri County
195. Tommy Hoffman Letter to Antarctic crewman
196. FFA & Home Sc. Depts.- (trading seniors week)
197. Rainfall Chart High School
198. Guy Reed & Members of 1907 HHS Class
199. Senior Play-1958
200. Washington School 3<sup>rd</sup> grade mural

201. Sewing Class
202. Teachers Conv. [?] Demonstration
203. Hanich & Buettner Jr Hi Coaches
204. Roosevelt School Christmas Mural
205. Lincoln School Christmas Program-1957
206. Hazel Loar School Christmas Decoration
207. Hathaway Play School
208. Book Display
209. Guy Reed
210. Supt. McMichael
211. Grade School Phys Ed (Lincoln)
212. Krissa Rippey Award
213. Darrell Scott FFA Oratory Winner
214. Filipino School Man (Bernardo) 3/19/58
215. Spelling Contest 1958
216. Sweeney, Katherine
217. Franklin School Entrance 6-6-52
218. Roosevelt School
219. Lincoln School
220. Rocket Washington School Kids
221. Grade School Musical Festival April 19, 1962
222. Bleacher Erection Hi School
223. Senior High School washing off "62" on sidewalk senior boys May '62
224. Junior-Senior Prom 1961-62 "Teahouse of the August Moon"
225. Pre-School-Kindergarten Party May 21, 1962



- 226. Holdrege Cheer Leaders & Senior Class Officers
- 227. Mrs Loar's School Art Display March 1962
- 228. Mrs. Chet Conn presenting projector to Mrs Loar's school 4/19/62
- 229. Wind damage at High School Aug 15 '62
- 2. Contents of Box of Negatives Labeled "Rural Schools"

*Envelope titles:*

- 1. Funk- Groups- Color 1961/1962
- 2. Rural Teachers- 1961-62
- 3. Rural 8<sup>th</sup> Graders- 1954
- 4. Buffalo Lutheran School Star Route Lexington
- 5. Axtell Kgt
- 6. Bertrand-Cambridge game 10-25
- 7. R-7 Groups 1961-1962
- 8. Atlanta Groups 1961-1962
- 9. Rural Music Festival- 4/7/1961
- 10. Mascot School- groups 2/20/62 pd
- 11. Axtell School Play and Kgt Teachers Party
- 12. R-4 –Groups pd-2/6/62
- 13. Dwight 35 mm Eustis Elwood Hi Sch Mt Calv
- 14. Elwood ? School Lowell
- 15. Wilcox Jr Class all boys
- 16. Elwood & Loomis Schools
- 17. Bertrand School
- 18. Grade School Music Festival

19. 1960 Spelling Contest
20. Rural School Aerial
21. School Bus
22. Axtell School
23. School Dist R-3 New Bldg
24. Axtell School Remodeling Taken 3/29/55
25. Miss Johnson Bertrand Master Teacher
26. Wilcox High School- addition
27. Funk School Remodeling
28. Funk School- copy
29. Funk School
30. Funk School

### 3. Contents of the Negatives in the Numbered Envelopes

Of the approximately 360 envelopes of negatives in the numbered boxes, a majority of the educationally-oriented images are of class groups of students and their teachers from the Holdrege schools, pictures from the rural schools in Phelps County, very large group photos of Educational Service Unit summer program participants, and high school class reunions. In addition, diverse subjects from school contexts are represented. Some of the more unique are listed below: (envelope numbers are indicated)

1. 1806- Franklin School student projects
2. 1888- Washington School operetta 1954/55
3. 2348- Holdrege grade schools Christmas Pageant at City Auditorium 12/15/55
4. 5870- FHA district convention

[- - - - - first AWA handwriting on envelope #8565 - - - - -]

5. 9063- Sylvia Anderson, majorette
6. 9965A- trumpet trio
7. 9908- the "Count Downs"
8. 10020- Christian Children's Home reunion
9. 10458- Funk grade school and band
10. 11052- HHS "Sound of Music"
11. 11060A- band concert- jr hi
12. 11259- HHS Band tour to Canada 1966
13. 11899- musical 1967
14. 12041- FFA shop project winners
15. 13152- students in band uniforms
16. 13187- Holdrege jr hi band
17. 13341- HHS mixed chorus
18. 13556- grade band Holdrege
19. 13557- jr hi band Holdrege
20. 13804- Holdrege jr hi band
21. 14024- "Kismet" 1969
22. 15029- "Notables"
23. 15083- Kid's Day parade 1970, marching band
24. 15869- Holdrege aerals
25. 16740- Phelps County Centennial parade
26. 17251- HHS prom special
27. 17870- HHS prom- individuals
28. 17891- Oxford school- play?
29. 18446- HHS Band 1976/77?

30. 18889- HHS prom
31. 19258- HHS musical
32. 19530- Historic Sacramento School- classroom, shop, exterior
33. 79-73- HHS musical
34. 79-76- Roosevelt School student body, school, bus
35. 82-54- Holdrege aerials
36. 82-85- aerials of R-7 school
37. 82-91- HHS variety show
38. 82-93- Holdrege aerials
39. 82-188- Holdrege aerials
40. 82-261- Wilcox School- early 1900s? composites, etc.
41. 82-274- Holdrege aerials- old Roosevelt School site

#### 4. Contents of Miscellaneous Envelopes of Negatives

##### *Envelope titles:*

1. Solar Furnace
2. Rural Schools R-6 R-7
3. HHS Band 7-1-71 Return from Canada
4. Holdrege High School Band (taken after concert Febr. 1970)
5. HHS Band 1966
6. HHS- Color Shots for Annual- School ext- game, etc
7. Hildreth Annual 69/70 [and 1965/6 HHS cheerleaders, majorettes, drum major]
8. Holdrege High School Band Tour to Canada 11259
9. Holdrege High School Band "1966" 12018C

10 Copy of handbook 1963 [from “Copy Jobs” box]

5. Several boxes of “Sports” and “Athletics” negatives

These include photographs of high school football, basketball, track and golf teams and games from a variety of schools in south-central Nebraska, as well as American Legion baseball and Holdrege White Sox baseball (a major league farm team).

6. 35mm Plastic Film Cans

These include thousands of images, a majority of which were likely those made by HHS student photographers beginning in the mid-1960s. A small sampling of this part of the collection reveals that a large percentage of these are candid shots in classrooms and hallways. Constraints of time limited the author’s examination of this portion of the collection.

7. Transparency

1. HHS 1961? Spring [mounted 35mm slide]

Note: this slide was badly scratched and faded; software from Adobe Photoshop Elements was used to restore the color of the image.

8. Photographic Prints (Black and White or Color)

1. Farewell to Roosevelt School [students in, on, and around bus]- **C**

2. Bookmobile prints- **B&W**

3. A box containing 155 prints of school-related subjects- **B&W**

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## Vita

Robert Alan Achterberg was born in Kearney, Nebraska, on 20 March 1948 to Albert W. and Faithe M. Achterberg. His early development occurred primarily in the cultural context of Holdrege, Nebraska, where he attended the public schools, became involved in professional photography at the age of fourteen, and was graduated from Holdrege High School in 1966. That fall, he entered Concordia Teachers College in Seward, Nebraska, from which he was graduated in 1970 with a degree of Bachelor of Science in Education. While teaching in Lutheran schools at the elementary and high school levels in Addison and St. Charles, Illinois, and Fraser, Michigan, he worked on a Master of Church Music degree with emphases in church music and music education at Concordia College in River Forest, Illinois. That degree was awarded in 1989. In 1990 he began his work as an Assistant Professor of Music and Education at Concordia Lutheran College of Texas (later, Concordia University at Austin) where he taught classes in the Music and Education departments, directed the University Choir, the University Band, and the Early Music Consort, and supervised student teachers in Dallas and Austin. He began a doctoral program in music education at the University of Texas, at Austin, and in November of 2000 entered a doctoral program in Curriculum Studies in the School of Education at the University of Texas, at Austin. He joined the faculty of Concordia Academy, Austin, Texas, in the fall of 2002, where he teaches World History, World Religions, Old Testament, Music Fundamentals, and directs the Concordia Academy Choir and the Concordia Academy Band.

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