

50th Anniversary of this fine State Capitol Building, and in observance of this very important date, I do have some comments to add to the resolution read. The first Capitol Building of the State of Nebraska was finished one month before the meeting of the Second State Legislature in January, 1869. It was completed at a cost of \$75,000 and had been designed to allow for future expansion and following that wings were added in 1881 and 1882 and by 1888 the entire structure had been rebuilt. After the turn of the century, dissatisfaction with the building began to grow because overcrowding and decay had rendered the structure unsuitable. But it was not until after the end of the great war that a serious effort was started towards construction of a new facility. On February 20th, 1919, Governor Sam McKelvie approved House Roll #3 which allowed for the establishment of a commission which was authorized to construct a new Capitol Building, financing to be provided by a special mill levy and the tax levies during the early years were 22¢ on every \$1,000 of valuation. The last levy in the years 31-32 and 32-33 amounted to only 11¢ per \$1,000. The commission which was chaired by Governor McKelvie was composed of leading citizens from around the state: William H. Thompson, Attorney from Grand Island, Nebraska; Walter H. Head, Banker from Omaha; William E. Hardy, Merchant in Lincoln; and George E. Johnson, the State Engineer at the time from Lincoln. Omaha Architect Thomas E. Kimball, then President of the American Institute of Architects, was appointed as their professional advisor. He set up a series of competitions designed to select an architect who would produce "an inspiring monument worthy of the state for which it stands; a thing of beauty, so conceived and fashioned as to properly record and exploit our civilization, aspirations, and patriotism, past, present, and future." In July of 1920, a panel of three architects awarded the project to Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue of New York City. Goodhue submitted a design which departed from the vogue of U.S. Capitol imitations, such as the style of the Capitol of the State of Missouri, which was authorized and constructed in the same year. So in a ceremony held on April 15, 1922, Governor McKelvie broke the ground for this new Capitol Building. The project proceeded on a "Pay As You Go Basis" so that the state would not go into debt. Most interesting to note is the total cost for the project in 1932 was \$10,021,836.69. The project was originally designed to commemorate soldiers from Nebraska who died in World War I, but it became much more than that. It became the symbol of the people of the vast agricultural empire which once covered almost one-third of our nation. This building was constructed with the best building products that nature had to offer -- marble from North Africa and Europe,