

movement to honor another great Nebraska writer, Marie Sandoz, and now we have in Bancroft Nebraska the Neihardt Foundation which is attempting to build, or is building a Neihardt Center to honor John G. Neihardt. To me this is all very important and good. In addition our historical society is at the county level, the city level and in the writing of the history of our community, all of this I think is a sign of maturity. When you honor the past, when you honor the great leaders of our state you honor yourselves. We honor ourselves as a people. Here again I should like to commend and congratulate the people of Nebraska upon this evidence of the interest of the past. I have a feeling that the greatest people in the world are the creative people of the world. Those who originate something, or come up with original ideas. By the very nature of the work you can not write works, paint paintings, or do sculpturing without doing things that are original unless your a complete fake and copy other things. Neihardt was a great innovator in this area. His poetry, epic poetry has a sweep and a majesty about it that equals that of any other epic poet in the history of the world. That is a big claim but it is a claim that can be substantiated. It has been substantiated by experts in this field. How did this man ever get into the position to do this type of work? He came from a humble home in terms of money, very little money in the home. He was just lucky in one respect. He was lucky that when he landed in a little country town such as Wayne, Nebraska that there happened to be two young men in that community who had just come there from eastern schools, and by eastern schools I'm not talking much more than as far back as Illinois, which doesn't seem very east to you and to me, but these two men settled down and started a private school. That must be some job to start a private school it must have been a job in those days, right out in a corn field. But the interesting thing is that this bring young mind came under the direction of these two men who had been educated in the classical and to my mind the correct way for people who are going to be leaders in the fields that are essential today. They had been educated in the classic. They had been educated in the liberal arts or the arts and science if you prefer to use those words. They in other words, they knew literature, they knew languages, they knew Latin, they knew Greek, they knew German, which at that time were the academic languages of the world. These men taking this young boy and tutoring him and letting him work his way through school because he had no money to pay any tuition of any kind, although in those days thank God tuition was rather low, these men letting him ring bells, letting him work his way through school but the important thing is that they taught him the Greek Language, the Latin Languages they taught him other languages and they taught him literature that flow with those languages. This is the only way in the world in my judgment that this man could have developed the sweep and the majesty that characterizes his work because this came from the great literature of the Greeks and Latin and other greatwriters in the history of the world. John Neihardt's works are filled with all kinds of scholarly references to names and situations and I have been sitting and reading some of them the last few days, rereading them to freshen my mind a little bit and this doesn't happen accidentally. This requires all kinds of preparation and years of work. So I say that the man was very lucky in addition to having the good mind that was his. Lucky that he fell into the hands of these people in a little corn field area in the state of Nebraska. Nebraska was fortunate that there were other dedicated people in those days in our state as well. All civilized society tries to teach its young the glories of the past in all areas of human endeavor. This is the area