

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING

315 NORTH STADIUM WAY

TACOMA 3, WASHINGTON

August 20, 1957

Dear Click:

I appreciate very much your letter of the 17th and the clipping. Included in the appreciation is the mention of greetings from Reno and myself. Your letter touches me in a very tender spot. I think you are the only Board member who is much concerned over our relationship with local societies. Minnesota brags of more than 100 local societies and almost one in every county. Wisconsin ditto. Oregon lists them in their Quarterly. The American Association for State and Local History is very much concerned over local societies and regards state societies as the natural leader. That's the way I feel but always there's a damp cloth dropped on the program. I tried to get a combination dues worked out but that was shelved for 'more study'. I think also there was fear that such a plan might interfere with Spokane or Olympia societies, which also have state standing but have done nothing so far as local societies are concerned.

We don't have a field man and probably won't for awhile unless some extra money is raised on the outside and that's dangerous. I have had a hand in the organization of every local society in the state and another one is in the making in Whatcom County. The local members do not have any contact with us save as I can attend occasional meetings. I have a lot of correspondence with officers at the local level but, as you point out, the local members are not very conscious of our existence or interest in them. That's bad. If they got the Pacific Northwest Quarterly they'd still not feel a very strong tie for there is nothing in that relative to the Society.

I have thought a lot about this situation, and want to talk to Matt Hill about it as soon as we can get together in Olympia. How would this idea strike you? To make every paid up member of a local society an Associate Member of the state society, or even a straight-out member save as to receiving the Quarterly. They would then get the News-Letter. Now the N-L goes to our members, local societies (president or secretary) members of the Legislature, Editors. I see nothing wrong in regarding paid-up local members as members of our Society. If they want the Quarterly they pay \$2 just as do the Life Members. Local societies each year would send us their lists of paid-up members and they would go on our N-L list, and would also be entitled to 15 % discount on books purchased through us, or anything else bought here or by mail.

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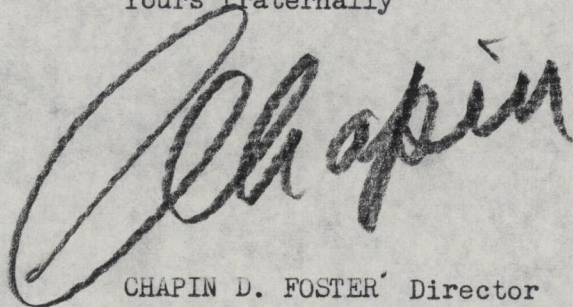
Such a plan would give us a real tie-up with local society members all over the state. We are a state society and we ought to have that sort of a tie. To have the bulk of our members in Tacoma, as Mr. Ferris suggested, is not enough as I see it. That isn't a good answer for the member of the Legislature who asks as to our membership. Under my plan, all we would be out would be additional postage and mimeo paper and the results would certainly be worth that cost. If we get members over the state for a year we're apt to lose them.

Maybe there's a better plan but I'd like to have you think of this seriously as a 'motion before the house'. I am sure that if I suggest it, someone will say that its pretty revolutionary and should be studied. If the idea is sound and is given some real Board support it will go through. If Matt Hill likes the idea it will help a lot as he is chairman of the Membership committee, of which you also are a member. Again, looking to Tacoma for membership in a state society is not good, in my opinion. My suggestion would give local societies something more to offer their members, without any additional cost. As I see it, the thing we should be interested in primarily is membership spread rather than money. There are societies in every part of the state now and if we could tie in with them without cost to them, we would really have some state-wide coverage.

After I get your reaction I'll get in touch with Matt Hill. He is anxious for a meeting with me so I will get down there as soon as my schedule permits. I went to Bellingham last week to see Prof. Kibbe. That's a very delicate situation. His health is very bad, it seems to me. I was only with him about half an hour, which seemed to be about all he could stand.

Believe me, I appreciate your putting in some words for the Society and am sure it helps. If we can connect with the local members, the News-Letter will really be in a position to help a lot more than it can do now. I think local officers appreciate it as they always send in material but that doesn't get to the local members.

Yours fraternally

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Chapin'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large loop at the beginning.

CHAPIN D. FOSTER Director