

Aug. 15, 1958

Mr. E.K. Murray,
Chairman, membership committee,
Washington State Historical Society

1012 Rust Building, Tacoma

Dear E.K.:

In my opinion the membership committee is one of the toughest of the society. I am not sure I am acquainted with all the various "cross-currents" but no doubt Reno has some background by now. And the others will come to light.

I agree with you that the membership roll is not representative of the potential.

Two years ago Chapin asked all of us to provide "selected" names from our areas for personal circularization. "Choice" names were provided, but only a smattering responded.

Attempts to carry it down to local or county levels have been disappointing. Each society operates differently. In my various speaking engagements, helping organize societies, and here in Yakima, I have made membership appeals, trying to build ground work. Generally each society is so wrapped up with "local" projects they are reluctant to canvass energetically for members. But there must be some key. I think with concerted effort and cooperation all the way around, it may be found.

It seems the first move would be to review material in Chapin's

files from other state societies he has contacted. I am sure he has contacted some in this matter, but perhaps not enough.

Then I would compile a state by state work sheet, showing membership total of the various selected states; 2-method of obtaining members; 3-what kind of package deal they are offered; 4-whether or not they have local societies throughout the state and generally, membership dues etc. of those societies.

If societies like Montana, Idaho, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Oregon, Minnesota, Oklahoma, California etc. could provide a "kit" showing magazine (if it is included) membership forms etc. it would be helpful.

Then a thorough study might provide a key as to where we are falling short.

I do not exactly know the value of a committee meeting for some time, but if possible, I would attend, of course. It seems to me that Tacoma or Seattle would be the proper location.

We bogged down before over a division of society opinion as to the "extent" of membership, inclusion of the quarterly and whether or not and to what extent a news letter should be perpetuated. I believe you heard some of the discussions when a suggested plan of operation was presented by Judge Hill as chairman.

I do not anticipate getting into California, Montana etc. this summer on vacation, but should I, I will certainly explore all angles of State Society membership. It may be Chapin has contacted enough of the state societies to see how they work their membership tie-ins, but if he has not, I think that should be done, not for pattern, but for ideas. You can count on me for any help within my limited and humble ability.

Sincerely

Click Relander

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