

CHAPTER 44.

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES.

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44.01 State historical societies; powers. The state historical society of Wisconsin, organized under an act of the legislature approved on the fourth of March, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-three, shall continue to possess the powers and privileges thereby conferred, subject to the limitations of this chapter and such laws as shall hereafter be enacted, and its acceptance of the benefits herein granted and renewed shall be conclusively deemed its complete acquiescence therein. Said society shall be the trustee of the state, and as such shall faithfully expend and apply all money received from the state to the uses and purposes directed by law, and shall hold all its present and future collections and property for the state; and shall not sell, mortgage, transfer or dispose of in any manner, or remove, except for temporary purposes, from the historical library building any article therein without authority of law; provided, this shall not prevent the sale or exchange of any duplicates that the society may have or obtain. There shall continue to be an executive committee of said society, constituted with substantially the same powers as at present, of which the governor, secretary of state and state treasurer shall be ex officio members and take care that the interests of the state are protected. The society may sell for such price and upon such conditions as its finance committee may deem best for its interests, and convey real estate acquired by it by gift or bequest or through the foreclosure of any mortgage.

Note: State historical society may not destroy or otherwise dispose of documents in its collection deemed to be of no historical importance. Authority to do so can be granted only by act of legislature, in view of this section. 31 Atty. Gen. 131.

44.02 Historical society; duties. It shall be the duty of said society:

(1) To collect books, maps, charts and other papers and materials illustrative of the history of this state in particular and of the west generally.

(2) To procure from the early pioneers narratives of their exploits, perils and adventures.

(3) To procure facts and statements relative to the history, progress and decay of our Indian tribes so as to exhibit faithfully the antiquities and the past and present resources and conditions of this state.

(4) To purchase books to supply deficiencies in the various departments of its collections, and especially reports on the legislation of other states, on railroads and geological surveys, and of educational and humane institutions, for legislative reference, and such other books, maps, charts and materials as will facilitate the investigation of historical, scientific and literary subjects.

(5) To bind the unbound books, documents, manuscripts, pamphlets, and especially newspaper files containing legal notices, in its possession.

(6) To thoroughly catalogue the entire collections of said society for the more convenient reference of all persons who have occasion to consult the same.

(7) To keep its rooms open at all reasonable hours on business days for the reception of the citizens of this state who may wish to visit the same, without fee.

(8) To loan, in its discretion, for such periods and under such rules and restrictions as it may adopt, to libraries, educational institutions and other organizations or to private individuals in good standing, such books, pamphlets or other materials that if lost or destroyed could easily and without much expense be replaced; but no work on genealogy, newspaper file, or book, map, chart, document, manuscript, pamphlet or other material whatsoever of a rare nature shall be permitted to be sent out from the library under any circumstances.

44.03 Local societies. Local societies without capital stock may be incorporated for any purposes mentioned in section 44.02, and as auxiliaries to the state historical society, to gather and preserve incidents, experiences or biographies of the soldiers, sailors or citizens of this state in any way relating to the war of the rebellion. No fees shall

be charged by any register of deeds for recording nor by the secretary of state for filing the articles of organization or any amendments thereto, nor for a certificate of incorporation of any such society.

44.04 Acceptance of provisions of law. The organizations in this state of the military order of the Loyal Legion, the Grand Army of the Republic, the Woman's Relief Corps, the Sons of Veterans, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the Daughters of the American Revolution, and any local society heretofore organized for any of the purposes mentioned in section 44.03, by a resolution passed and a verified copy thereof filed in the office of the secretary of the state historical society may accept the provisions and be entitled to all the benefits of sections 44.03 to 44.07, inclusive. Any such auxiliary society shall be a member and entitled to one vote in any general meeting of the state historical society.

44.05 Report of state society. Any such auxiliary society may make a report of its work annually to said state historical society, which, or portions or a synopsis thereof, may be included in the publications of said state society, and upon application of any auxiliary society the state society may become, in behalf of the state, the custodian of the records of such auxiliary society.

44.06 Articles of organization. The state historical society, for the purpose of establishing uniformity in organization and methods of work, may prepare and furnish uniform articles of organization and by-laws to any such auxiliary society, but such auxiliary may adopt, from time to time, such additional by-laws as it may desire.

44.07 Meetings. The state historical society may provide for annual or other meetings of officers or representatives of such auxiliary societies at times and places to be fixed by its secretary, or by such officers or representatives, and the proceedings of such meetings, or such portions thereof as its secretary may select, may be included in its published reports. Each auxiliary society shall receive a copy of each of the publications of said state society.

44.08 Records of state offices to be transferred to historical society; certified copies. For the purpose of the permanent preservation and expert indexing of state records, any state official is hereby authorized and empowered to transfer to the custody of the state historical society of Wisconsin, in its capacity as trustee for the state, any records, documents, original papers, manuscripts, newspaper files, or printed books not specifically required by law to be retained in the office of such official as a part of the public records, five years after the current use of the same, or sooner in the discretion of the head of the department. After such transference of said records or other material, copies therefrom shall on application of any citizen of Wisconsin interested therein, be made and certified by the secretary and superintendent of said state historical society, or his authorized representative in charge, which certification shall have all the force and effect as if made by the official originally in custody of them.

44.09 Accessioning state records. Said state historical society is hereby required, as soon as practicable, adequately and conveniently to classify and arrange such state records or other official material as may be transferred to its care, under the provisions of section 44.08 of the statutes, and to keep the same accessible to all persons interested, under such proper and reasonable regulations as may be found advisable.