

PRAIRIES AND PLAINS

<http://www.prairiesandplains.com>



Robert Banks
Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library
1515 S.W. 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66604

Dear Mr. Banks:

Longer ago than it is entirely decent to contemplate (2002, I believe it was), long before you were President of the Mountain Plains Library Association, I wrote the Executive Board of MPLA to say that I hoped to release, at a time I was then unable to specify, an Internet database to be called *Prairies and Plains*. My intention was to list as many publications and Internet sites as I could identify that had some bearing on the Prairies-Plains region as a way of assisting faculty and students who were engaged in Plains studies.

I asked whether MPLA might be willing to stand as a sponsor for that embryonic project. I did not at the time specify what I hoped sponsorship might entail, but assured the Board that I did not expect any funding from MPLA. The Board kindly agreed to act as sponsor, and the editor of MPLA's newsletter ran without charge two advertisements of the project, appealing for contributors and explaining the project's aims.

At last, I am able to show a concrete result for both MPLA's good will and for the hard and effective work of a group of seven contributors. It is not the Internet database itself, but a publication derived from it. Called *Prairies and Plains : The Reference Literature of a Region*, is a printed work derived from entries in the parent database that attempts to list and annotate reference titles that will help students of Plains studies, their teachers, and librarians building collections that support those studies. The book was published January 5, 2009, and I was finally permitted last week to examine a copy. MPLA's sponsorship is shown on the title page, the dedication page, and in the Introduction.

The publisher, KWS Publishers, Chicago and London, is a new imprint, although its principals have had considerable experience in reference book publishing. *Prairies and Plains* is their initial publication. The book is listed with Amazon.com, but not yet in the online Library of Congress catalog.

Please permit me to express my profound gratitude to MPLA for agreeing to sponsor *Prairies and Plains* and for your continuing support over the years that have passed since your first agreement. I hope you will be as pleased as I to see at last some concrete result of your support. If opportunity offers, I would be pleased to thank the Board personally at the MPLA-Kansas Library Association conference in Wichita in April, at an occasion of your choosing.