

Discussion Questions for 2121 One Book One Nebraska:  
*Prairie Forge: The Extraordinary Story of the Nebraska Scrap Metal Drive of  
World War II* by James J. Kimble

1. Was the Nebraska scrap metal drive truly extraordinary? Why or why not?
2. Which underlying theme of the Nebraska Plan was most important in its success: *competition and camaraderie; tractors and tricycles; or fact and fancy*?
3. In what ways did Nebraska football play a role in the scrap drive?
4. *Life* magazine's writers contended that the Nebraska Plan "was the U.S. really going to war" (quoted on p. 7). What did they mean?
5. Do you think that the cover photograph is a suitable choice to represent the drive? What other sorts of images would you have chosen, if not?
6. What was the role of the railroad industry in the scrap effort?
7. Why did the federal government's scrap metal efforts generally fail in the spring of 1942?
8. What does *Prairie Forge* reveal about the Nebraskans of 1942? Are these revelations still true?
9. Why did the initial scrap drive success emerge most prominently in Nebraska and not, say, Ohio or Florida?
10. Why do you think the scrap drive is largely forgotten today?
11. If you could ask Henry Doorly or Margaret Hitchcock Doorly one question about the scrap drive, what would it be?

12. What do you think of the role of women in the effort?
13. Would the Nebraskans of 2021 be able to meet Doorly's challenge?
14. Did any of Henry Doorly's qualities make him especially suited to envisioning and leading the scrap drive?
15. What was the role of the media in the scrap drive efforts?
16. How did the national scrap contest in the fall of 1942 compare to Nebraska's earlier effort?
17. Were there any villains in this story?
18. What do you think motivated the scrappers most?
19. Describe the role of children in the scrap drive and contest.
20. What is the legacy of the Nebraska Plan? How should we remember it?
21. The book describes diverse communities working together in a common cause. What would it take for today's citizens to collaborate productively?
22. What do you think accounts for the varying levels of scrap collection rates in each of Nebraska's 93 counties, as recorded in the appendix? Did some counties have advantages over others?