It’s Thursday, July 1, 2021. In today’s issue: New book; World-Herald partnership; Disaster planning; Jell-O!; Nebraska National Guard at the border; Before-and-after photos of historic buildings; Native American artist Angel DeCora; Chimney Rock.

“Nebraska History Moments” book offers bite-sized stories and photos
History Nebraska has published a new book designed to provoke wonder and curiosity even among readers with little time or short attention spans. Each page of *Nebraska History Moments* uses a photo or artifact to tell a true story about the past. The $14.95 paperback features 120 individual stories written by History Nebraska’s publications editor David Bristow.

You can read it straight through, but it’s written to be browsed. Here are the turning points, scenes of daily life, disasters, amusements, causes and controversies, changing technologies, and the lives of people who lived in a Nebraska that sometimes seems familiar to us, and sometimes seems a world away.

The featured photos and artifacts are drawn mostly from History Nebraska’s extensive collections.

The book is sold online via University of Nebraska Press (and other online retailers) and at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln, Chimney Rock, and Fort Robinson.

You can also sign up for a free, weekly “Nebraska History Moment” email. (These will be different from the ones in the book. Emails begin the second full week of July.)

Help us spread the word:

- Tell your friends about the book and the weekly emails. Share a link to history.nebraska.gov/books. People don’t have to be History Nebraska members to receive the emails, and it’s a great way to introduce them to our work.
• **Post a review on Amazon**, even if you bought the book elsewhere.

The book and weekly emails are a small part of our outreach to Nebraskans who love history—including those who don't yet know that they love history. And just like your [membership](#), book sales support our work.

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**History Nebraska, Omaha-World Herald partner on a series of articles**

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**Could warehouse conversion have worked for Omaha’s Jobbers Canyon?**

Before demolition of Jobbers Canyon was even a thought, a piece of the historic warehouse district had been turned into a big place to live.

RJ Neary remembers because he not only helped renovate the century-old New Idea building, he lived there after it became cozy apartments in 1986.

With its rooftop deck, public and street-level commercial space, the former farm equipment center at Ninth and Jackson Streets was the first downtown Omaha housing created east of 10th Street in modern times. People were fascinated, Neary said, and the...
The Omaha World-Herald, in partnership with History Nebraska, is examining key issues in Omaha’s downtown redevelopment over the past 50 years.

“The World-Herald is digging deeply into the redevelopment efforts of the past 50 years,” writes reporter Cindy Gonzalez. “Today and in future articles, the newspaper hopes to illuminate why certain efforts worked or not, who pulled the strings, and what lies ahead.

“The World-Herald is partnering with History Nebraska, which conducted interviews with 20 major players in business, philanthropy and government who influenced or watched some of the most significant redevelopment efforts of the past five decades.”

The series is ongoing:

- Could warehouse conversion have worked for Omaha’s Jobbers Canyon?
- Redefining downtown: Omaha’s Gene Leahy Mall changed the city once. What will happen this time?
- Redefining downtown: Rescuing historic facades can be hit or miss venture

**Are you ready for a disaster?**
Don’t worry – we’re not predicting one. (These days we feel like we need to say that up front.) We know that many of our readers are involved in local museums and other educational and cultural institutions. If that’s you, read this article.

The staff at History Nebraska’s Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center deal with damaged artifacts every day (when they aren’t hamming it up for the photographer). This “May Day” post offers good year-round advice for cultural institutions. Keep reading.

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When Jell-O salad was a status symbol
Are you planning the food you'll bring to a family gathering over the Fourth? We don’t have to explain that traditional Midwestern salads usually don’t include lettuce. For many Nebraskans, “salad” means some sort of fruit suspended in gelatin with whipped topping.

The editors of the *Nebraska Centennial First Ladies’ Cookbook* (1966) agreed, opening that section of the cookbook with the paired photos of a pineapple-cucumber molded salad (shown here) and Snake River Falls near Valentine. Keep reading.
The Nebraska National Guard at the Mexican border

The medal shown here has long been known to collectors, but few others have seen it or know the story behind it. The medal commemorates the service of the Nebraska National Guard on the Mexican border in 1917 after Mexican revolutionary leader Pancho Villa attacked a town in New Mexico.

The Nebraska Guard didn't see combat, though their deployment helped prepare the men for eventual World War I service. But their story also involves shabby treatment by their own government, and these inexpensive medals didn't make up for that. Keep reading.
Who commanded US troops during the Mexican Expedition of 1916-17?

It was former Lincoln resident John J. Pershing, soon to command the American Expeditionary Force in World War I. In 1920 Pershing’s allies promoted him as a presidential candidate—and their strategy for securing the GOP nomination centered on Nebraska.

Read more in the Summer 2021 issue of *Nebraska History Magazine*, a benefit of History Nebraska membership. (History Nebraska members have already read the full story about the Nebraska National Guard in the Spring issue.)

**Become a member today!**
Before-and-after photos of buildings that used the Historic Tax Credit

Look at five buildings from Chadron, Hastings, Kearney, Omaha, Pender – a sample of properties that benefitted from Nebraska’s Historic Tax Credit, a program administered by History Nebraska. Keep reading.
Why is this 1903 painting by Native American artist Angel DeCora so dark?

One of the most important Native American artists of the early 20th century was born in Nebraska. Angel DeCora was born on the Winnebago Reservation in 1871, and grew up in a time of significant transition in indigenous life.

Paintings conservator Kenneth Bé recently treated a 1903 DeCora painting at
the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center. The painting’s stretcher was brittle and fractured in places. The canvas has a one-inch tear and several old punctures that had been mended in the past.

And why was the painting so dark? Bé could tell that it had darkened considerably over the past century. How did he know? And was there a way to restore it to DeCora’s vision? Keep reading.

The silent story behind the photo
William G. Marshall (standing) opened one of Lincoln’s earliest shoemaking shops in 1879. Like both of his parents, he was born deaf, but this didn’t stop him from becoming an “artist in the profession” according to the *Nebraska State Journal*. Keep reading.

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**Free admission at Chimney Rock July 17**

We’re offering free admission to the [Chimney Rock Museum](#) all day on Saturday, July 17, to celebrate the museum's grand re-opening. The expanded museum, with new exhibits, re-opened last year, but we didn’t plan a 2020 event (for
reasons we don't need to explain). If you're in the Panhandle that day, stop in and see us!

History Nebraska Newsletter, David Bristow, Editor, history.nebraska.gov
Want to change how you receive these emails? You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

Complete articles:

May Day

May 1st, or May Day, is the day set aside by cultural institutions to make sure they are prepared in case of emergencies. It is important for institutions with collections to have a disaster preparedness plan and update it on a regular basis. Individuals and families with collections and heirlooms that they want to protect will benefit from planning as well.
The first step in preparing a disaster plan is to anticipate what disasters are most likely to happen in your area and research what state and local resources might be available.

Sometimes, you are given enough warning to mitigate the effects of a disaster. However, emergencies, by their nature, are unplanned and unpredictable. They can pose a threat to life, health, or property. They can be on a major scale, like a tornado, or a minor scale, like a leaking pipe. They can be generalized such as an earthquake, or localized to a single room in a building. The most common sources of emergencies are weather, flooding and leaks, power failure, accidents, malfunctions, and crime.
Covering items in plastic overnight or while in storage can prevent damage from water or swings in temperature and relative humidity.

The fear and anxiety caused by an emergency can prevent people from acting as they should during that emergency. An emergency plan can help people respond with rational and calm actions, in cooperation with others, and following established protocols. The best response can only happen when there is an effective plan, well-trained staff, adequate supplies and equipment, and the opportunity to practice.
Having a supply kit ready for emergencies and making sure staff are aware of its location and how to use the supplies is an essential part of an emergency plan.

The size and scope of the plan depends on the size of the institution and collection it houses. Plans can be tailored to reflect the scale of the collection in addition to the size of the staff and resources available in the event of an emergency. Creating a thorough and effective plan is a complex process and should be done over time with careful thought. The American Institute of Conservation recommends the following preparation activities on their website HERE.

- If you have a disaster plan, dust it off and make sure it’s up to date.
- If you don’t have a plan, commit to creating one by making a timeline for developing it.
- Conduct a building evacuation drill, evaluate the results, and discuss ways to improve your staff’s performance.
- Update your staff contact information and create a wallet-size version of your emergency contact roster using the Pocket Response Plan™ (PReP™)
- Identify the three biggest risks to your collection or building (such as a dust storm, leaking water pipe, heavy snow, or power failure) and outline steps to mitigate them. You can use FAIC’s tools for risk evaluation to guide your assessment.
- Identify and prioritize important collection materials.
• Eliminate hazards such as storage in hallways, blocked fire exits, or improper storage of paints, solvents, etc.
• Make a plan to install any needed safety systems.
• Plan to train and drill an in-house disaster team.
• Provide staff with easily accessible disaster response information, such as the Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel.
• Get to know your local firefighters and police--invite them to come tour your institution and give you pointers on safety and preparedness.
• Plan to take a course on risk assessment or disaster planning.

It is important to regularly review your plan and make changes as necessary, for example due to staff changes or updating contact information.


Additional resources can be found here: www.aam-us.org/programs/resource-library/disaster-preparedness-response-resources/
As always, if you have questions about your collections, please contact the Ford Conservation Center staff at HN.FordCenter@nebraska.gov or 402-595-1180.
When Jell-O salad was a status symbol

By David L. Bristow, Editor

We don’t have to explain that traditional Midwestern salads usually don’t include lettuce. “Salad” traditionally means some sort of fruit suspended in gelatin with whipped topping.

The editors of the Nebraska Centennial First Ladies’ Cookbook (1966) agreed, opening that section of the cookbook with the paired photos of a pineapple-cucumber molded salad and Snake River Falls near Valentine. The cookbook was compiled by Nebraska First Lady Maxine Morrison and edited by Cliffs’ Notes co-founder Catherine Hillegass.
This copy belonged to Maxine Kessinger of Bancroft, Nebraska.
Jell-O salads had a special significance at mid-twentieth century gatherings, as South Dakota poet and essayist Kathleen Norris explained in her 1993 book, Dakota: A Spiritual Geography.

“One has to think in terms of status,” she writes.

“Status and electricity. It wasn’t until the advent of electric refrigeration that Jell-O became a staple of the potluck supper or the women’s club luncheon, and that meant town women could serve Jell-O long before country women. Jell-O remained elusive for the most remote rural women until well into the 1950s.”

Long after everyone had electricity, the Jell-O salad remains a staple of many family, church, and community gatherings.

Here are a few “salad” recipes from the centennial cookbook, starting with the pineapple-cucumber molded salad shown in the photo. You can almost hear your aunt’s laughter and feel the metallic creak of folding chairs in the church basement.
Pineapple-Cucumber Molded Salad

PINEAPPLE LAYER

1 cup crushed Hawaiian pineapple (not drained)
1 package lemon-flavored gelatin

1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup finely grated carrots

Drain pineapple. Add enough water to syrup to make 1 ¾ cups liquid. Heat to boiling and dissolve gelatin in it. Chill until consistency of unbeaten egg whites. Add salt, carrots, and crushed pineapple. Turn into a 1 ½ quart ring or fancy mold. Chill until firm.

CUCUMBER LAYER

1 envelope unflavored gelatin
1/4 cup cold water
1 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup light cream

1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon grated onion
1/2 cup finely chopped celery
1/2 grated cucumber, drained


Salad recipe and photograph courtesy Libby, McNeill & Libby
Frosted Salad

2 packages lemon-flavored gelatin
2 cups hot water
1 can (2-1/2 cups) crushed pineapple

1 cup miniature marshmallows
2 large bananas, sliced
1 (12-ounce) bottle lemon-lime carbonated beverage

Dissolve gelatin in hot water and cool. Drain pineapple, reserving juice. Add pineapple, marshmallows, and bananas to gelatin. Add beverage and chill until firm.

TOPPING

1 cup pineapple juice
2 tablespoons flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 envelope whipped topping mix

1/4 cup shredded American cheese
3 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

Mix first four ingredients and cook until thick. Cool. Whip topping mix and combine. Spread on congealed salad and sprinkle cheeses over this. Serves 12 to 15.

Mrs. Harold Kenfield, wife of mayor, Holdrege, Nebraska
Holiday Party Salad

1 package raspberry-flavored gelatin
1 cup boiling water
1/2 cup cold water

1 can (1-3/4 cups) whole cranberry sauce
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water, add cold water, and chill until slightly thickened. Stir in cranberries and nuts. Pour into 9 1/2 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan. Chill until firm.

1 package peach-flavored gelatin
1-1/2 teaspoons salt
1 cup boiling water
1/2 cup cold water
1/4 cup salad dressing

1/4 cup diced celery
2 tablespoons chopped green pepper
1 tablespoon grated onion
1-1/2 cups diced, cooked turkey or chicken


Mrs. Everett A. Knoell, wife of chairman of the board, Nickerson, Nebraska

Sources:


Nebraska National Guard Mexican Border Service Medals

By Breanna Fanta, Editorial Assistant

For over 30 years, Mark D. Hunt has collected and studied military insignia. An obscure bronze medal led him to research Nebraska’s involvement in the United States’ Mexican Expedition of 1916. In Hunt’s full story, “Nebraska Mexican Border Service Medal” in the Nebraska History Magazine’s Spring 2021 issue, he explains the service of Nebraska’s National Guard and the events leading to the creation of the medal.

March 9, 1916, the small town of Columbus, New Mexico, which was guarded by a garrison of troops, fell under attack. For unknown reasons, Mexican Revolutionary General “Pancho” Villa and his men targeted Columbus in the night.

(Nebraska Mexican Border Service Medal. Author’s collection)

For 90 minutes, buildings were set ablaze and the community was caught in a rain of bullets.
Following this attack, President Woodrow Wilson called for the mobilization of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico’s National Guard units, along with an additional 110,000 other National Guardsmen.

The Nebraska National Guard was called into service that June. It was comprised of the 4th and 5th Regiment, with 2,000 servicemen combined. By July, Governor John H. Morehead ordered them to assemble at the State Fairgrounds in Lincoln. Those who met the physical requirements were loaded onto trains for Camp Llano Grande in Mercedes, Texas.

While stationed there, the guardsmen completed daily inspections, marching, drills, instructions, and target practices in hot and sandy conditions.

By 1917, the United States no longer saw Villa as a threat and prepared to enter World War I. On New Year's Eve, Nebraska’s 4th Regiment arrived at Omaha’s Fort Crook. Upon their return, the army ordered that all equipment and uniforms be collected, but this created an uproar. Many of the men had purchased parts of their uniforms and personal equipment with their own money. The men gathered a load of uniforms and equipment to shred and burn. The governor then negotiated a compromise that allowed each soldier to keep one good uniform to wear home, but all other items had to be returned.

Once Nebraska’s 4th Regiment was discharged, the 5th followed suit in February. That spring, the governor asked the legislature to pass a bill to awarding medals in recognition of the guardsmen’s border service. The bill was amended to reimburse each soldier $75 for damaged clothing kept in Ft. Crook’s “musty lockers.”

In total, 1,700 Mexican Border Service Medals were produced. As a large percentage of the National Guardsmen were by then stationed in New Mexico awaiting overseas deployment, some of the medals were delivered there. However, recipients weren’t allowed to wear them as “federal regulations forbid the wearing of any state medal while in the federal service.”

Today, the Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward has over 200 of these service medals. Why are there so many unissued medals? Many wonder if they simply weren’t claimed, or if some recipients died between the time of their service and the time when the medals became available.

Regardless, the medal commemorates an important moment on the eve of US entry into World War I. They deployment was meant to protect the border, but it also provided the Nebraska
National Guard with valuable experience prior to their overseas deployment. Hunt concludes that the medals remain a treasured part of Nebraska's history.

(Presentation of colors, 4th Infantry, Nebraska National Guard, at Llano Grande, Texas, October 23, 1916. RG1596-0-34)

The entire article can be found in the Spring 2021 edition of the Nebraska History Magazine. Members receive four issues per year.

Learn More
Historic Tax Credit Programs

May was Historic Preservation Month and we celebrated by looking at some before and after pictures of properties that took advantage of Historic Tax Credit Programs. Historic Tax Credit Programs are some of the most impactful tools Nebraskans have in promoting the economic revitalization of their communities. These programs provide tax credits for property owners who rehabilitate a historic building while retaining its historic character. Past projects have provided much-needed low-income housing, fixed-up public buildings like courthouses, and made downtown areas more attractive to small business owners. Tax credit programs also stimulate local economies by generating skilled jobs and local tax revenue.

Here are some recent success stories of the Historic Tax Credit Programs!

**Hastings Brewery and Bottle Works, 219 West 2nd Street, Hastings, Nebraska 68901**

Vacant and covered in pigeon-poop, the old Hastings Brewery building did not look like it had much of a future. Fortunately, Cohen-Esrey, a real-estate development company, saw the potential to provide much-needed affordable housing to the people of Hastings. Historic tax credits made the project a feasible investment for the group. Tim Quigley of Cohen-Esrey describes this tax-credit project as a “win-win for the community, revitalizing the east side of downtown Hastings. It provided much needed affordable housing while preserving a historic building that was sentimental.” The building is now called the Brewery Lofts. Its attractive combination of modern features and unique historic features has created a waiting list of interested apartment seekers. The rehabilitation received $1.5 million in Federal Historic Tax Credits and $1 million in Nebraska Historic Tax Credits.

All photos by Brenda Spencer of Spencer Preservation
The two story calico sandstone veneered commercial building in downtown Chadron was constructed in 1888 and originally housed a grocery store. Throughout its life, the sandstone
deteriorated, the pressed metal cornice and cresting rusted and the original storefront was replaced. The owner of the building was allocated $15,000 in Nebraska Historic Tax Credits and $15,000 in Federal Historic Tax Credit to rehabilitate the façade. The project included restoring the sandstone veneer, rebuilding a storefront compatible to the historic character of the building and repairing the pressed metal cornice and cresting.

All photos by Shelley McCafferty
The three story brick Palace Hotel and the adjacent two story modest frame building in Pender, Nebraska were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. Their significance is based upon being the first courthouse in Thurston County. The small frame building and subsequently the larger Palace Hotel functioned as a courthouse between 1889 and 1927. Both buildings appear to hold the state record for “temporary” use as a courthouse.

In 2016, both buildings were allocated a combined $652,000 in Federal Historic Tax Credits and $652,000 in Federal Tax Credits. The exterior of the smaller frame building was rehabilitated based upon historic images while the interior was remodeled to house a single residential unit. The long vacant upper floors of the Palace Hotel were rehabilitated to house 16 residential units. Similar to the smaller frame building, the exterior of the Palace Hotel was rehabilitated based upon historic photographs.

All photos by APMA
The Florentine was part of a trio of apartments, including the Carpathia and Leone, built circa 1910 by Italian immigrant Vincenzo Pietro Chiodo. The buildings were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1910. Largely vacant for over a decade, the apartment was rehabilitated in 2019 to 30 apartments. The owner utilized Federal and Nebraska Historic Tax Credits totalling over $2 million dollars.

All photos by APMA
The Hibberd Block was built by Richard Hibberd, a building contractor and the owner of Hibberd Brick Company, Kearney's largest brickyard. Constructed in 1912, the building serves as a showcase of his quality brick products. As a contributing resource to the Kearney Downtown Historic District, the building owner was able to utilize federal and state historic tax incentives.

The rehabilitation of the commercial bay and the second story on the north side of the Hibberd Block commenced in 2018. The formally voluminous commercial space was severely altered with drop ceilings and split into several rooms. The second story, which contain apartments and business, had been vacant for decades. The owner removed the walls and drop ceilings in the first floor, revealing hardwood floors and an intact press metal ceiling. The second story was rehabilitated to contain three spacious apartments. All of the historic windows, which were still intact but covered with plywood, were retained and repaired. The applicant received over $80,000 separately in both Federal and Nebraska Historic Tax Credits.

All photos by Anne Bauer
One of the most important Native American artists of the early 20th century was born in Nebraska. Angel DeCora was born on May 3, 1871, on the Winnebago Reservation. DeCora grew up in a time of significant transition in indigenous life in the United States. At the time of her birth, the Winnebago Tribe was forced off their land and resettled elsewhere, and indigenous people everywhere were reckoning with the dominant Anglo-American culture while trying to preserve their customs and traditions. DeCora was sent to the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia at the age of 12 and was thus separated from her family and tribal traditions at an impressionable age.
While at Hampton, DeCora developed the artistic skills that would lead to her future profession. She was encouraged in her artistic pursuits, and after graduation she enrolled in the art department at Smith College in 1892. She continued her studies at the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia where she studied under Howard Pyle, a noted illustrator. He directed DeCora to do studies on Native American life, and she spent the summer of 1897 at the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. Inspired by Pyle’s teaching, she wrote and illustrated two works based on her childhood, “The Sick Child” and “Grey Wolf’s Daughter,” which were both published in Harper’s in 1899. She continued her studies in Boston and opened a studio. In her
illustrations, DeCora sought to translate indigenous customs and lifestyles into and through Western and European artistic traditions.

DeCora’s work was distinct from other illustrators of her day. Because she was originally trained as an easel painter, her works have the look of fully developed oil paintings rather than sketches. She confronted head-on the transitions happening within indigenous societies brought on by outside economic and educational forces. DeCora also highlighted women as subjects in her work. While her contemporaries focused on dramatic stories of Native Americans as warriors or hunters, DeCora depicted the quiet strength of women in domestic spaces. Finally, DeCora’s work emphasized the facial features of her subjects. She gave her figures individuality that was lacking in the illustrated work of other artists of her day.

In 1906, Angel DeCora was appointed instructor of arts at the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Like Hampton, Carlisle was a boarding school where Native American children were taken from their tribes and taught how to assimilate into white, western culture. She was hired at a pivotal time when Carlisle was transitioning away from removing all traditional culture from the student’s lives. DeCora stated that she would only take the position if, “I shall not be expected to teach in the white man’s ways, but shall be given complete liberty to develop the art of my own race and apply this, as far as possible, to various forms of art, industries and crafts.” Through art, she strove to give her students a sense of pride in their culture and history. Her position at Carlisle and her regular speaking engagements throughout the country mark the first time the government recognized the importance of indigenous artistic traditions in American art.

DeCora left Carlisle in 1915 and continued work as an illustrator. She died of pneumonia and influenza in 1919, leaving behind a generation of Native American students with a greater appreciation and understanding of their artistic heritage.

Kenneth Bé, paintings conservator, treated a painting of Angel DeCora's from 1903. The untitled scene shows an indigenous woman in a traditional interior. Typical of DeCora's work, the piece shows great care toward the design motifs on the painted skins and beadwork on the woman’s garments. The painting is in the collection of the Museum of Nebraska Art in Kearney. The painting is oil on canvas.
Before treatment, the composition of the painting is greatly obscured by the dirt and darkened varnish layer.

When it came to the Ford Center, the stretcher was brittle and fractured in places. There was a 1” tear in the canvas and several old punctures that had been mended in the past. The canvas was slack and cracks in the paint had formed throughout. The paint had distorted and curled -- “cupped” -- in between the cracks. The varnish had oxidized and was deeply discolored to a dark yellow. Dirt and grime had accumulated, contributing to the darkening of the painting.
During treatment, the canvas was removed from the old stretcher and flattened. On the right, part of the varnish has been removed and shows the extent of the discoloration.

After these 'before treatment' photographs were taken, the painting was removed from the original stretcher and set on the heated suction table to reduce the paint cupping and crack ridges. The canvas was lined to a new polyester support canvas.
Angel DeCora (c. 1868 Dakota County (now Thurston County), Nebraska – 1919 Northampton, Massachusetts)

Untitled (interior scene)

oil on linen

1903

20 x 24”

28 1/4 x 32 1/4” framed

Museum Purchase made possible by Cliff Art Endowment
Conservation made possible by Lavern Clark Endowment

After treatment, the dark varnish has been removed and the clarity of DeCora’s composition can be fully appreciated.
The painting was cleaned and the discolored varnish layer was removed. The cleaned, lined painting was attached to a new custom-ordered wooden stretcher. A fresh varnish layer was applied and local paint losses were filled and retouched with pigments.
William G. Marshall - Deaf Shoe Maker

William G. Marshall (standing, third from left) arrived in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1879 to set up one of the city’s earliest shoemaking shops. He was born in New York City on November 1, 1854, to George B. and Olive (Berg) Marshall. Like both his parents, William was born deaf. He attended the Illinois School for the Deaf in Jacksonville, Illinois, from 1863 to 1869. While living in Union, Iowa, he married Julia Ann McCoy on October 26, 1875. Their three daughters, Rebecca, Julia Starr, and Maude Diamond, were also born deaf like their father and grandparents.

William's father, George (possibly the older man seated second from left), joined him in the shoemaking trade in Lincoln by the time of the 1880 US Census. The Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln) called William an “artist in the profession” and said there was “no more honorable gentleman in the land deserving of your patronage.” Sadly, William died of an obstructed bowel at age 29, on August 4, 1884.

This photograph was taken in 1879, shortly after he opened his shoemaking shop, by early Lincoln photographer Ephraim Clements. The photo was likely taken in Clements’ studio on S. 11th Street, where a skylight would have provided proper lighting for the photograph. Marshall
and his worker likely transported the tools of their trade including bundles of leather, a sewing machine, and samples of boots.