

NEBRASKA TRAILBLAZER

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No. 32

Nebraska's State Quarter



United States Mint image

Nebraska has a state quarter!

Nebraska is the 37th state to get its own quarter dollar. In 2004, thousands of students and adults drew pictures of what they thought should be on Nebraska's quarter. Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman picked the design of Chimney Rock to represent Nebraska on the new coin in 2005. The United States Mint began making the Nebraska quarter in March of 2006.

Why do you think our 25-cent coin is called a "quarter"?

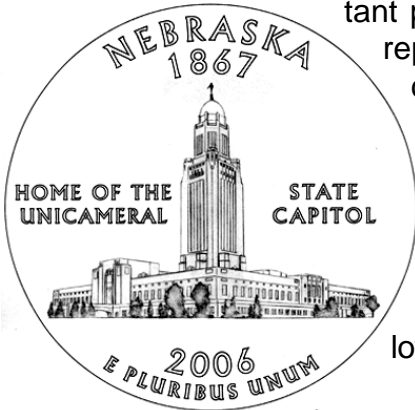
THE OTHER QUARTER DESIGN FINALISTS

The Nebraska State Capitol

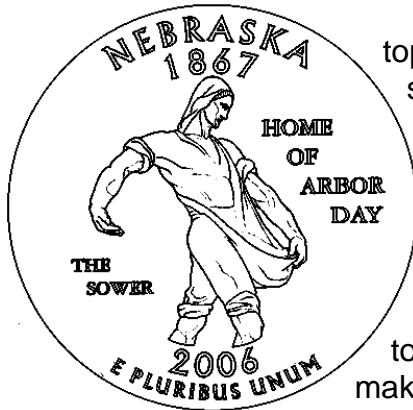
The Nebraska State Capitol is considered one of America's most important pieces of architecture. Sometimes called "the tower on the plains," it represents the state's history and its hope for the future. It is the first state capitol designed differently from the U.S. Capitol. It was built from 1922 to 1932 and is the third capitol constructed at the same location.

By 1919 Nebraska's second capitol was too small and needed repair. The Nebraska legislature passed a bill to create a capitol commission. This group was given power to create a new home for Nebraska's government. A national competition was held to select an architect. Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue of New York won the contest. His unusual design included a broad low base and a tall tower.

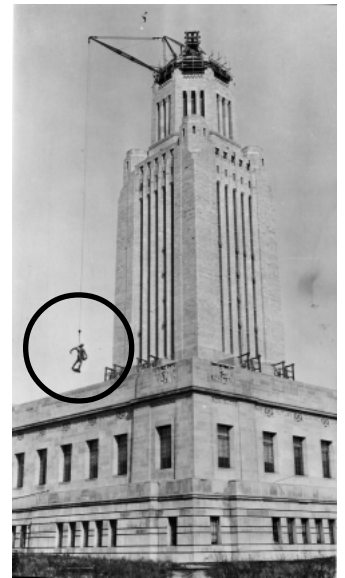
Construction of the building began around the old capitol. When enough of the new building was completed, state workers began to move into it. Even though the 1920s were hard times for Nebraskans, the state paid for the capitol as it was being built. Ten years and 9.8 million dollars later, Nebraska had a new and unique capitol!



The Sower



A symbol of Nebraska agriculture, *The Sower* tops the State Capitol. Artist Lee Lawrie was selected by Bertram Goodhue to design the sculpture work for the building. His pieces show pioneer life in Nebraska and the development of law. They appear on all sides of the building, though his most impressive sculpture is *The Sower* on the capitol dome. It was lifted to the top by a crane (see photograph). Many people came to watch the 15,000-pound, 32-foot-high sculpture make its journey up through the air. Once in place, *The Sower* also served as a lightning rod, grounded through the steel framework of the building.



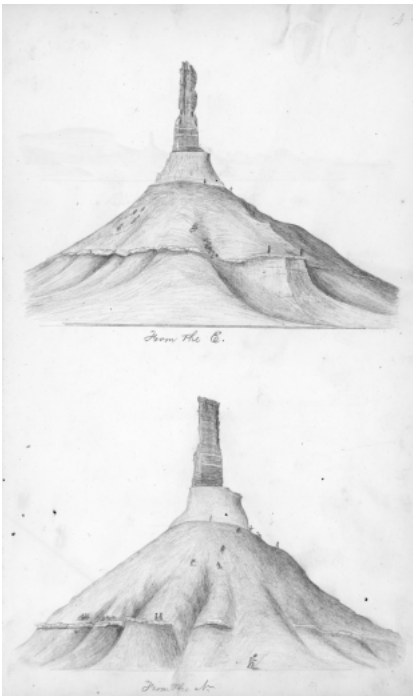
Standing Bear (Ponca)

(about 1830-1908)



The quarter design for Standing Bear includes the Nebraska state motto, "Equality Before the Law." Both the motto and Standing Bear symbolize that all people have equal rights and the law should not favor one person over another. Standing Bear, a Ponca chief, was the first American Indian ruled to have legal rights protected by the U.S. Constitution. In his 1879 court case, Standing Bear spoke these words to Judge Elmer Dundy:

"That hand is not the color of yours, but if I pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hand, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be the same color as yours. I am a man. God made us both."



In 1851 William Quesenbury traveled back to Arkansas from California. He kept a sketchbook of the sights that he saw. This is his drawing of Chimney Rock seen from the east.



This engraving is based on a drawing done in 1853 by Frederick Piercy. He shows wagons camped on the west side of Chimney Rock.

Chimney Rock

Chimney Rock has been a landmark on the vast rolling lands of the North Platte Valley for centuries. The name of this clay and sandstone spire has changed over time. One legend says that some Native Americans called the rock, “The Tepee.” In 1830, fur trader Warren A. Ferris noted two different names, “ ‘Nose Mountain’, or as it is more commonly called, the ‘Chimney’ .”

Here are some of the ways others described Chimney Rock in writing:

- “The appearance of it at a distance is similar to that of a chimney where the house has been burnt.”—Jason Lee, 1834.
- “A grand and imposing spectacle, truly—a wonderful display of the eccentricity of Nature!”—R. Sage, 1841.
- “It is a much more beautiful structure, and of far greater magnitude, than one would imagine it to be....”—Lt. J. Henry Carleton, 1845.
- “...this is the most remarkable object that I ever saw and if situated in the states would be visited by persons from all parts of the world.”—Joseph Hackney, 1849.



Nebraska photographer Solomon Butcher took this 1908 photograph of Chimney Rock showing a sod house nearby.



This 1929 photograph by Emil Kopac shows an automobile in front of Chimney Rock.

Thousands of people traveling on the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails passed Chimney Rock on their way to new homes in the West. It marked a good camping spot with a dependable spring for water for weary travelers and their animals. Chimney Rock was such an important marker on the trail that many travelers carved their names on it to show they had been there. Hundreds of people also described it or drew pictures of it in their diaries and letters.

Chimney Rock is an important symbol for Nebraskans today. It has appeared on automobile license plates, truck mud flaps, welcome signs, and it is now the image on the state quarter!



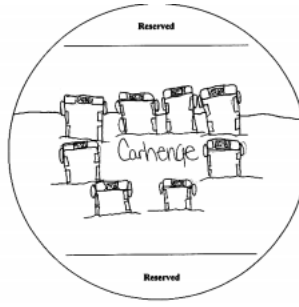
This modern drawing of an Oglala Lakota camp is based on an image made in 1859 by Albert Bierstadt, a famous painter of western landscapes.



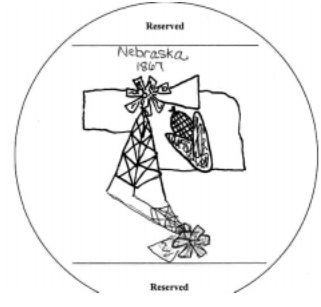
Stephanie - 4th Grade



Katie - 4th Grade



Petra - 10th Grade



Kendra - 5th Grade

NEBRASKA'S IDENTITY

How do we think of ourselves? How do we want others to think of us? Do we want to be remembered for some unique landmark, such as Chimney Rock? Or do we want to be known for some historical event, such as the first homestead in the United States? Should we be represented by our college football team?

How have other Nebraskans answered these questions? What symbols have stood for Nebraska in the past?

In the early 1800s, explorers called this place "The Great American Desert." Later, as Nebraska was becoming a state, "squatters" moved on to land they didn't own. So the earliest nickname for Nebraskans was "Squatters."

During the grasshopper storms of the 1860s and 1870s, there was a joke about a man who visited Nebraska. When he returned home, people asked him what Nebraska was like. He told them, "Oh, everything is gone up there. The grasshoppers have eaten the grain up, the potato bugs ate the 'taters all up, and now the inhabitants are eating the bugs to keep alive." So "Bug Eaters" replaced "Squatters" as the nickname.

Because Nebraska was the state where Arbor Day began, some people thought that "Tree Planters" should be our nickname. The Legislature named Nebraska "The Tree Planter State" in 1895 and this was our official state name until 1945.

Since then, we have been called "The Cornhusker State." We are not the Cornhusker State because of the football team. Corn is Nebraska's most important crop and in the early days, farmers husked corn by hand. So the real cornhuskers were in the cornfield, not on the football field!

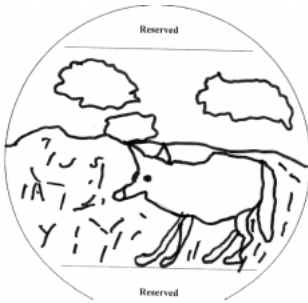
From 1956 to 1965 our car license plates said, "The Beef State," but this was never an official nickname.

How do you think people in the future will think of us? If you could give the state a nickname, what would it be?

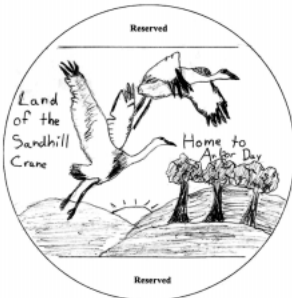
Our new quarter identifies us in a new way. This page shows some suggestions for the quarter design from Nebraska students. What symbol can you draw to represent the state?



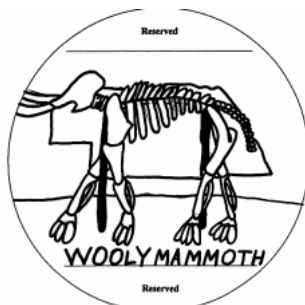
Jaylor - 4th Grade



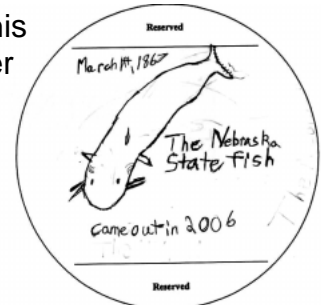
Kolby - 3rd Grade



Kyle - 8th Grade



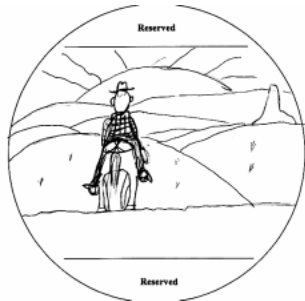
Samuel - 6th Grade



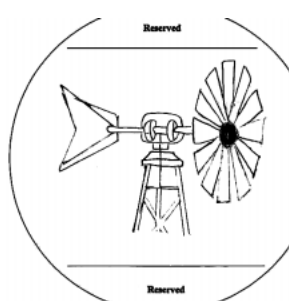
Cody - 4th Grade



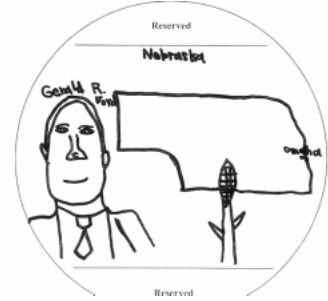
Alexandria - 4th Grade



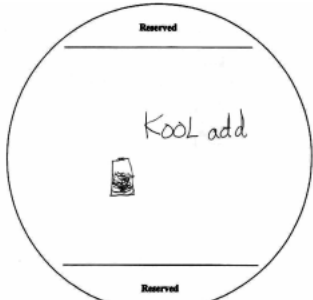
Riley - 4th Grade



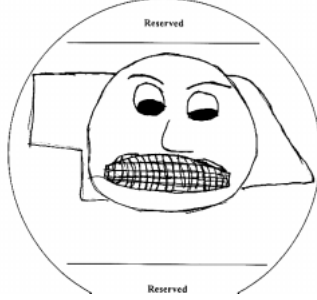
Jared - 4th Grade



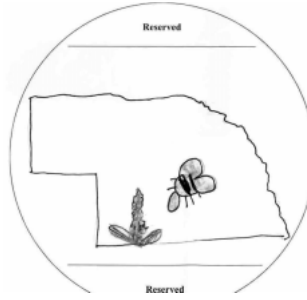
Tanner - Elementary School



Ethan - 4th Grade



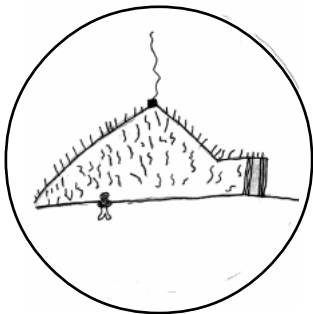
Cody - 7th Grade



Rachel - Kindergarten



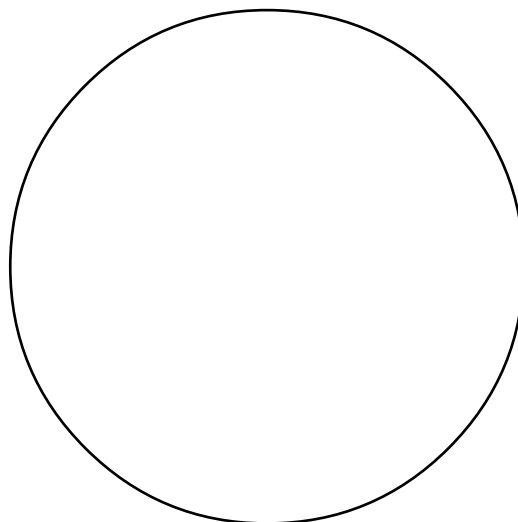
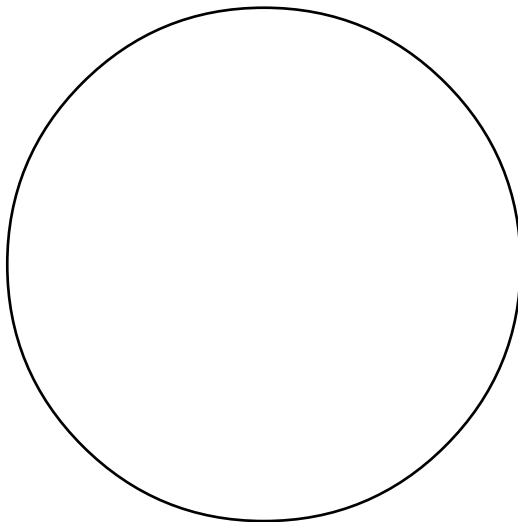
Margaret - 2nd Grade



Tanor - 4th Grade



Nik - 4th Grade



Design your own quarter. Then check out the rest of the ideas for the Nebraska Quarter on the Nebraska Secretary of State's website: <http://www.sos.state.ne.us>. Type "quarter design" in the search box.

WORD SEARCH



Locate and circle the words listed below. Some may be spelled forward, some may be backward, some may be up or down, and some may be diagonal. The word "quarter" has been highlighted to get you started.

- | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| AGRICULTURE | DESIGN | MOTTO | SOWER | BONUS WORDS: |
| ARTIST | EQUALITY | NICKNAMES | SPIRE | CAPITOL |
| BRONZE | GOODHUE | PIONEER | STANDINGBEAR | DIARIES |
| BUGEATERS | IDENTITY | PONCA | SYMBOLS | LAWRIE |
| CHIMNEYROCK | LANDMARK | QUARTER | UNIQUE | SCULPTURE |
| CORNHUSKERS | LAW | SANDSTONE | | |

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1500 R Street, Box 82554, Lincoln, NE 68501
www.nebraskahistory.org

Published by the Nebraska State Historical Society for
 Free Distribution to Nebraska Fourth Grade Children

Partial support for this publication
 courtesy of

The Law Firm of
**CLINE, WILLIAMS, WRIGHT,
 JOHNSON & OLDFATHER, L.L.P.**
 Established 1857
 Lincoln Omaha Aurora Scottsbluff
www.clinewilliams.com



NEBRASKA PRESS ASSOCIATION
 Lincoln, NE
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