

# NEBRASKA history news

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## A Time Capsule Made of Sod

The NSHS recently assembled a team of scientists, historians, and local volunteers to salvage a sod house wall for study. The remnant of a 1903 Custer County sod house has been transported to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where biologists hope it will reveal details of prairie life more than a century ago.

The story begins two years ago when Custer County residents Larry and Karla Estes contacted NSHS archeologists about the ruins of a sod house on their farm. The dilapidated soddie was beyond saving and eroding rapidly, and it lay in the main view from their new home. They wanted to tidy up the site, but wondered if anything could be learned by studying the sod house before it was gone.

NSHS archeologists dispatched Nancy Carlson of Genoa to survey the site. Her survey raised substantial interest. Like all sod houses, this 110-year-old structure was not just built *on* the landscape, but was built *from* it as well. We know that the grasslands of Nebraska have evolved over the past century, but exactly how are they different now? Those sod bricks are time capsules full of

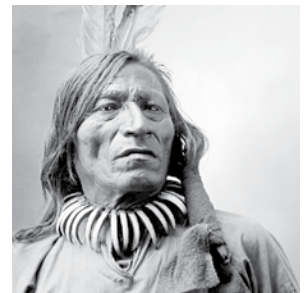
seeds and other organic material that biologists could use to profile the plants and other life forms that were flourishing a century ago.

We next called on Chuck Butterfield, a range management specialist and botanist at Chadron State College. He suggested we sandwich a four-by-eight-foot chunk of the wall between two sheets of heavy plywood and haul it back to Lincoln for study.

Easier said than done, we thought. It would involve delicately cutting and moving a massive wall of earth while holding it together in one piece. If it fell apart, the sample would be contaminated. But Larry Estes had already worked out a solution. He had a stout forklift and some plywood. He would buy some threaded stock to serve as through bolts, and make a special bit to drill a hole through both sod and plywood. After bolting them together, he could then lift this 2,200 lb. sandwich with his forklift and load it onto a trailer. He made it sound so easy.

We soon realized that we had underestimated the enthusiasm of local residents for preserving this piece of their heritage. The circle of volunteers expanded quickly. Dee Adams of Merna, president of the NSHS board, also serves with the Custer County Historical Society. Adams contacted Mike Evans, a seed dealer with a passion for history. Evans suggested that we stretch-wrap the sod wall. He donated the stretch wrap and volunteered to help with the work. Meanwhile, Dee's husband, Kevin "Kooch" Dauel, offered to bring the wall to Lincoln. Dauel works with Vermeer High Plains, an equipment dealer with its main office in Lincoln, so he regularly makes runs between Broken Bow and the Capital City.

On a very pleasant November day a crowd converged on the Estes place, including NSHS staff and a video crew from UNL's Platte Basin Timelapse project. But most important was a cadre of eight Custer County volunteers who



Larry Estes hands out sod bricks to onlookers while a UNL video crew looks on. Photos by Jackie Sojico

*The Nebraska State Historical Society collects, preserves, and opens to all, the histories we share.*

*Continued on p. 3*



*This op-ed piece by Michael J. Smith appeared in the Omaha World-Herald on December 3, 2013.*

### **Heritage Tourism is Invaluable to the State**

Are Nebraska historical sites failing to draw tourists? Recent news coverage has highlighted financial challenges at the Great Platte River Road Archway in Kearney and at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's historic state parks.

But don't worry. There is proven economic value in heritage tourism, and Nebraska communities are working hard to draw visitors as a means of boosting economic growth. History is and must remain core to this effort.

"Heritage tourism" is simply the experience of visiting museums and historic sites including downtowns, neighborhoods, and rural landscapes that offer preserved architecture and visual connections to the past.

A 2011 study strongly affirms the value of heritage tourism in the Cornhusker State. According to the study commissioned by the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and prepared by the UNL Bureau of Business Research and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, heritage tourism in Nebraska:

- Attracts almost 3 million visitors per year to historic and heritage sites. More than a million of these (38.5 percent) come from out of state.
- Generates more than \$196 million in annual economic activity.
- Provides state and local government with \$16 million in tax revenue each year.
- Supports more than 3,100 Nebraska jobs.

These numbers represent a strong, growable, and sustainable market to be supported in every county and community. Why? Because of the quality of the experience and the contribution of the heritage traveler.

The study revealed that heritage tourists spend nearly 250 percent more than non-heritage travelers in overnight stays. They tend to travel in larger groups, and they cross generational boundaries. Their trips are 50 percent longer than those of visitors who do not partake of our history and heritage.

All of this adds up to new money coming into Nebraska and into the pocketbooks of both businesses and government. This should not be surprising. Nebraskans themselves regularly visit historic sites and museums when they travel east or west, north or south. Think of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the museums of Washington, D.C., or Deadwood, South Dakota, or the historic movie lots in Hollywood.

Unfortunately, Nebraskans sometimes devalue what we have to offer. That is poor thinking, refuted

by the many heritage visitors who stop in our communities to visit family and friends, and wander off the high-speed path of I-80 to enjoy a place that is truly like no other.

Nebraskans participate in heritage tourism when they join with those from out of state to visit our State Capitol, a national historic landmark. They participate when they attend events at Fort Atkinson in Washington County, visit the many museums in Nebraska City, appreciate Willa Cather in Red Cloud, learn about Nebraska's progressive U.S. Sen. George Norris in McCook, or comprehend the resilience of the Northern Cheyenne people and the Oglala military genius of Red Cloud and Crazy Horse at Fort Robinson State Park in the Panhandle.

Heritage tourists also respond well to more than 200 other museums and more than 1,000 Nebraska buildings and sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Some travelers arrive thinking mostly of recreation, but as a Nebraska Game and Parks Commission study affirmed, 65 percent of them also visited historic sites and places.

Keeping these historic places viable is never easy, but without them Nebraska stands to lose not only the richness of the Nebraska story but also a key piece of the tourism mix that produces economic activity. Our 2011 heritage tourism study laid out several actions to improve our ability to attract tourists.

We must:

- Increase grant and other private funding for heritage tourism sites.
- Use a larger percentage of county lodging taxes to fund museums and heritage sites.
- Brand and market heritage sites aggressively.
- Strengthen the Nebraska Museums Association to improve and support our history museums.
- Emphasize collaboration among heritage tourism sites, especially in structuring visits for their audiences and in area marketing.
- Improve signage at every level, because no one likes to be searching.

And perhaps most of all, make every Nebraskan aware of our history and where to access it, thus becoming strong ambassadors to travelers. By working together, we can build our future by using our past.

*Michael J. Smith*  
Director/CEO

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did the work of cutting, drilling, wrapping, and sandwiching the wall. Larry Estes then nudged his forklift up against the bundled section, and volunteers looped a rope over the top, wrapping the rope's other end around a stout tree. This allowed them to lay the section onto a pallet while controlling its fall. It went over slow and easy. From there Estes hauled the section to Dauel's waiting trailer for the ride to Lincoln.

The sod wall now resides at UNL's East Campus, where Dave Wedin and his colleagues are studying it. Wedin is a professor of plant and ecosystems ecology at UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The wall will also help those of us who study the human activities. We'll learn about sod house architecture by seeing just how the sod bricks are laid up and how, or if, they are bonded with some sort of mortar. Dr. LuAnn Wandsnider, chair of UNL's Department of Anthropology, is leading this effort. Along with colleagues and students, Wandsnider has done archeological sampling and mapping of the house's original site. Her team is planning an oral history program in Custer County, and will help survey other extant sod houses. Likewise, the State Historic Preservation Office (part of the NSHS) is considering a project to carefully record standing sod houses, adding to the extensive sod house research the NSHS has conducted over the years.

How will all of these efforts tie together? The partners are just now formulating solid research questions, but the overarching question is how do human beings relate to the environment in which they live? Let's look at but one example.

Consider the question, "Where did sod houses go?" They were common a century ago, but then people stopped building them, even though they were cheap, energy efficient, and could be modernized like a frame house. NSHS architectural historian David Murphy thinks that we simply exhausted the sod resource.

That sounds impossible at first—how could you exhaust the grass in *Nebraska*, of all places? But Murphy points out that grassroots only weave themselves together into sod in certain locations. Usually grass grows in clumps that are useless for making good sod bricks. He believes settlers used most of the sod-producing spots and then planted them with crops.

The work of soil scientists and biologists should produce a very clear idea of just what it took to create the historic sod, which we can then compare with a wide array of resources that examine what soil and grasses look like today.

Best yet, this work is not going to be locked up in laboratories and placed on those legendary dusty shelves in museums. The information that comes out of all of this work will be quickly shared with the public. Our partners, including the UNL Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Platte Basin Timelapse Project, NET, Homestead National Monument, and the Custer County Historical Society, will help bring this research to the public in the form of exhibits and programming. And of course the NSHS will be sharing the story in print, in exhibits, and online. The NSHS's Second Story Radio has already produced an audio program; listen to the podcast at [secondstoryradio.tumblr.com](http://secondstoryradio.tumblr.com) (scroll down to Episode 5). 📻



Using rope, pallets, and a forklift, volunteers carefully lay the sod wall down.



Wrapped up and ready for the ride to Lincoln, the sod wall has been thoughtfully labeled by one of the younger volunteers.

## Museum Renovation Planned; *Nebraska Cowboys* Closes August 3

If you haven't seen *Nebraska Cowboys: Lives, Legends, & Legacies* at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln, now is the time. The exhibit closes August 3. That's earlier than our previously announced date; we had to move up the closing due

to the schedule of the upcoming museum renovation, which begins in late summer. In the next issue we'll have more details about the renovation schedule and our plans for offsite programming during the months when the museum is closed to the public.

Admission is free, as always. See the back page for museum hours and details. 📻



**Undated photo of Cowles Mill.** Courtesy of Brian Volkmer, Nebraska City Museums Association

## Highway Archeology Program Investigates one of Nebraska's Earliest Water-Powered Mills

The site of one of Nebraska's earliest water-powered mills was largely lost to history, but a recent excavation by the NSHS Highway Archeology Program will help document and preserve the site.

Built in the mid-1850s by Henry Cowles of upstate New York, the operation was located along Walnut Creek about 2.5 miles northwest of Nebraska City. Ownership changed and technology improved through the years, but the mill remained in operation until 1926.

In 2012 when Otoe County and the Nebraska Department of Roads began planning to replace two aging bridges over Walnut Creek, they asked the NSHS to evaluate the potential impact on any nearby historic or archeological sites. Local landowners and historians showed NSHS archeologists where they thought the ruins of the mill might be located.

Last fall the archeologists began preliminary test excavations, mapping, and archival research. They located the mill and identified the primary building as well as other ruins associated with the mill pond and a tunnel probably used to transport water from the pond to the mill. The most interesting feature is a large complex of limestone-walled rooms eroding from the banks of Walnut Creek.

These initial investigations suggest that the mill ruins and associated features hold great promise to



**Volunteer Russ Mayer in front of mill ruins eroding from creek bank.**

retain important data that will sharpen our understanding of how mills were built and used during Nebraska's territorial and early statehood periods.

Society archeologists and transportation planners will be working together to minimize harm to this important site. Additional, more intensive investigations may be required in 2014 as a mitigation measure. ☒

**Fool Bull (Tatanka Witko), 1900, by John A. Anderson.** A Sicangu Lakota medicine man, Fool Bull lived on the Rosebud Reservation and posed with the bison hide shield he had carried at the Little Bighorn.



## Photographers and the Plains Indians at KANEKO February 7 - April 19

Curated by the NSHS, *Photographers and the Plains Indians* is on display at KANEKO, 1111 Jones Street, in downtown Omaha's Old Market. This exhibition is drawn from an archive of historical photographs and looks at the dynamic relationship between photographer, subject, and consumer, while raising issues about what it means to "capture" a people through a visual medium such as photography. The exhibit brings to light the commercial demands of Euro-American consumers of the time—and how these expectations led to stereotypes of indigenous North Americans, particularly in what is now Nebraska. ☒

## Muddy Nebraska

BY PATRICIA C. GASTER, ASSISTANT EDITOR/PUBLICATIONS

It's small consolation if you ever get stuck in the mud, but the fact is Nebraska has come a long way since pioneer times in the development of its public roads and highways. A glance through pioneer reminiscences and the spring issues of early newspapers provides plenty of evidence that good old-fashioned Nebraska mud was one of the principal obstacles in the way of spring travel here.

Covered wagon emigrants, beating their way to Oregon, California, or Utah, frequently had trouble with the muddy Nebraska leg of the long journey, almost always undertaken in early spring. The trails became so badly rutted that wagons could not pass, and new roads had to be marked out. This accounts in part for the fact that the Oregon Trail may be several miles wide in certain parts of the state, notably southeastern Nebraska.

In territorial times, roads were little better than trails and when the ground thawed out in the spring they usually were impassable. Rural roads were not the only ones afflicted by the spring thaw. Villages and city streets suffered in equal or greater proportion.

An editorial in the *Dakota City Democrat*, April 13, 1861, may be considered typical: "Last week this city was visited by shower after shower of April rain that reduced the condition of our streets to the consistency of paste. Pedestrians worked them up into a still worse condition . . . until the upper surface for two feet deep, was of the primitive nature of brick. Stilts, and other pedal appendages, adroit jumping, and the aquatic knowledge of sturgeons, were in much requisition."

Even the proud city of Omaha was afflicted with mud. The *Omaha Daily Bee*, on May 28, 1881,



reported that a team of horses pulling a grocery wagon had recently been rescued from a mudhole near Fourteenth and Douglas streets. An unsuccessful attempt to eliminate the hole had been made by city workmen, who filled it with soft mud and then smoothed dirt over the top.

But when a team of horses "touched the reconstructed mudhole, they sunk to their shoulders in soft mire. The efforts which they made to get out only sunk them deeper . . . After struggling in the pit for about an hour a sufficient crowd collected to raise one of the horses bodily and remove it to firm ground. The other horse was taken out after much difficulty. It was badly strained in the process and its harness nearly ruined." The *Bee* noted, "The matter created considerable indignation." 📖

**Stuck in the mud near Bancroft, Nebraska.**  
NSHS RG3334-1-56

## Coming in *Nebraska History*

During his long life, Thomas P. Kennard was celebrated as the "Father of Lincoln." His house, designated the Nebraska Statehood Memorial in 1967, is a historic site operated by the NSHS. Kennard was part of the three-man capital commission that selected the village of Lancaster (soon to be renamed Lincoln) as the new state capital, became a prominent resident and booster of the town, and was deeply involved in local business and state politics for many years. Thomas R. Buecker investigates Kennard's life and career in the forthcoming Summer 2014 issue of *Nebraska History*.

In the same issue, Dan Jibréus of the Karolinska Institute of Stockholm, Sweden, tells the story of the first Native Americans to visit Scandinavia. In summer of 1874 three unusual visitors arrived in Sweden. They were three Pawnee men who had come from Nebraska to perform their native dances and customs for the public. One of the three, White Fox, became ill and died in Sweden, and his body was claimed by a Swedish scientist who had White Fox's head and torso taxidermied and mounted. Jibréus follows the story up to the return of White Fox's remains to the Pawnees in 1996.

Look for the issue in your mailbox the week of May 11. 📖

## Treasures from the Nebraska History Museum

For the past two years we've been featuring "Treasures from Nebraska Museums" in *Nebraska History News* and in small exhibits at the Nebraska History Museum. This project was a lot of fun, and we thank our colleagues at museums around the state for participating. As we prepare to close our museum temporarily for renovation, we begin a new newsletter series featuring objects from our own collection.

To kick off "Treasures from the Nebraska History Museum," we share a few items from a new collection donated in 2013 by George Churley of Lincoln. Churley, a puppeteer and founder of the George Churley Puppet Company (1973-80), donated twenty-eight puppets as well as photographs and audiovisual materials.

The company was best known for the puppets created for *Kalamity Kate's Cartoon Corral*, a

children's television program shown on KOLN/KGIN. Churley served as a writer, producer, and puppeteer for the show from 1975 to 1980. With the cooperation of more than forty Nebraska schools, he also developed and produced a game show segment featuring fourth, fifth and sixth grade students titled *Little Reggie's Quiz Kids*. This segment was chosen by the National Television Information Office as one of five nationwide examples of "excellence in local children's programming"; three program clips appeared in a national special, *Television in America: Children, Television and Change*. The George Churley Puppet Company also traveled, performing live shows and workshops for kids. They presented more than 700 live performances in 16 states.

Although the collection is not currently on display, the puppets and photographs are cataloged and included in our online database. To view the collection, visit [nebraskahistory.org](http://nebraskahistory.org) and click on "Photograph and Artifact Collections Search" under the "Search Collections" menu. 📷



George Churley with Stumpy and Deputy Duke, two of the original *Cartoon Corral* puppets.



Kalamity Kate (Leta Powell Drake) poses with two young fans, and puppets Flash T. Horse and Little Reggie.



Leta Powell Drake, who played Kalamity Kate, on set with the puppets on *Kalamity Kate's Cartoon Corral*.



Dr. Doonothin was a major character in "Bits & Puppets," a one-puppeteer touring show. The puppet, inspired by Dr. Frankenstein, built his own puppet-making machine, only to learn the heart of every puppet is a human hand.



Stumpy, one of the original puppets from *Kalamity Kate's Cartoon Corral*.



The Villain was featured in several episodes of *Kalamity Kate's Cartoon Corral*.



Willa Cather. NSHS RG 1951-791 SF2578

## Authors Neihardt and Cather Featured in Two Spring Conferences

The John G. Neihardt State Historic Site in Bancroft will host its annual Spring Conference on April 26. This year's theme is "Oral Histories: Stories for the Generations." The conference will focus on using yesterday's and today's skills in new combinations to further the preservation of oral history. Presenters include oral historian Barbara Sommer; Native literature teacher Dr. Delphine Red-shirt, speaking on "Lakota Oral Tradition in *Black Elk Speaks*"; NSHS Trustee Taylor Keen in a Chau-tauqua-style performance on Ponca chief Standing Bear; and author/songwriter Bobby Bridger. The Many Moccasins dance troupe from Winnebago will perform. Moderator for the conference will be Neihardt Foundation Board member Walter M. Duda. [www.neihardtcenter.org](http://www.neihardtcenter.org)

The Cather Foundation will host its 59th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference and the one-day scholarly symposium preceding it at the Cather State Historic Site in Red Cloud June 5 to 7. "Mapping Literary Landscapes: Environments and Ecosystems" will focus on the complex impact of the natural environment on Cather and her contemporaries, and on the writers and artists of the generations that have followed. With the Cather Prairie as backdrop, scholars, artists, and readers will discuss the many literary mappings in her fiction and the informing




Neihardt speaking with Carrie Miner Sherwood, lifelong friend of Willa Cather, in 1962. NSHS RG1951-494

landscapes of her life. Keynote speaker is author Kent Haruf. [www.willacather.org](http://www.willacather.org)

Both the Neihardt and Cather historic sites are administered by the two foundations under contract with the Nebraska State Historical Society. 



## NSHS Hosts Annual Legislative Reception

The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation hosted the annual NSHS Legislative Reception at the Nebraska History Museum on January 9. The event allows our state legislators a chance to tour exhibits, see behind the scenes and interact with the staff and trustees of both the NSHS and the NSHS Foundation. 



## Trains, Plains, and Automobiles

New exhibits opening this summer at the Fort Robinson History Center near Crawford and the Neligh Mill State Historic Site will explore the critical role of transportation in the history of these significant places.

The Wheelwright Shop at Fort Robinson will be open to the public and house new interpretation of the trails, rails, and roads that brought Native Americans, fur traders, gold seekers, soldiers, their animals and provisions, and eventually tourists to the post.

A year-round outdoor exhibit panel at the Neligh Mill will highlight the roads and railroad that made it possible for Neligh's products to be sent literally around the world. Support for the new exhibits comes in part from Transportation Enhancement Act funds administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads.

We're still finalizing summer schedules as this issue goes to press, so check "Visit Places" at [nebraskahistory.org](http://nebraskahistory.org), or call Fort Robinson at 308-665-2919, and Neligh Mill at 402-887-4303. 📍



Inside the wheelwright's shop at Fort Robinson.

## Summer Activities for Kids from the Nebraska State Historical Society

The NSHS will host classes for students in grades K-8 again this summer on a variety of topics. May and June classes are:

### "Pastimes and Playthings"

May 29 • 9:30 - 12 noon • Grades K-12

### "Nebraska Cowboys"

June 4 • 9:30 - 12 noon • Grades 2-6

### "Half-pint Homesteaders"

June 4 • 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. • Grades 2-6

### "Native American Cache Pits"

June 10 • 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. • Grades 2-6

### "History of Nebraska Railroads"

June 11 • 9:30 - 12 noon • Grades 4-8

### "Nebraska Map Symbols"

June 18 • 9:30 - 12 noon • Grades 2-6

### "Teddy's Cattle Drive: Puppets"

June 19 & 20 • 9:30 - 12 noon • Grades K-3

### "Farm Life in Nebraska, 1920s-1940s"

June 26 & 27 • 9:30 - 12 noon • Grades 2-8

All May and June classes meet at the Nebraska History Museum, 15th and P Streets, Lincoln. Registration is required, and all registrations are on a first-come, first-served basis. July and August classes may be held in a different location due to a planned renovation of the NHM, beginning in August. Watch for more details at [nebraskahistory.org](http://nebraskahistory.org) and on our Facebook page. 📍

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and open to the public.



Two boys on bicycles going hunting. One has a shotgun and decoys.  
NSHS RG0716-31-40

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## April 6 • 2-4 p.m.

**Louisiana Purchase Documents (signed April 30, 1803)**  
**Free Family Fun Event**  
Nebraska History Museum (NHM),  
Fifteenth & P Streets, Lincoln  
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

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## April 13 • 2 p.m.

Concert by singer/songwriter Tom May, with reception following.  
**Sunday Afternoon at the Museum**  
John G. Neihardt State Historic Site, Bancroft  
1-888-777-4667 • www.neihardtcenter.org

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## April 17 • 12 noon

Jeff Barnes  
“Buffalo Bill’s Nebraska”  
**Brown Bag Lecture Series**  
NHM

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## April 26 • 9 a.m.

“Oral History: Stories for the Generations”  
**33rd Annual Neihardt Spring Conference**  
John G. Neihardt State Historic Site  
(registration required)  
1-888-777-4667 • www.neihardtcenter.org

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## May 3 • 2-4 p.m.

Teacher Appreciation  
**Free Family Fun Event**  
NHM  
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

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## May 15 • 12 noon

Gayla Koerting  
“York County in Progress, 1870-90: The Drama”  
**Brown Bag Lecture Series**  
NHM

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## May 25 • 2-4 p.m.

**Joan Wells, trick roper**  
(performances at 2:30 and 3:30)  
**Free Family Fun Event**  
NHM  
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

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## May 27 • 10-11 a.m.

Reading *Sod Houses on the Great Plains*,  
by Glen Rounds  
**Hour at the Museum**  
NHM  
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

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## May 30 • 2 p.m.

**Induction of Alvin Saunders Johnson into Nebraska Hall of Fame**  
**Warner Chamber, Nebraska State Capitol**  
1445 K Street, Lincoln  
402-471-4955 • deb.mcwilliams@nebraska.gov

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## June 3 • 10-11 a.m.

Reading *Love Flute*, by Paul Goble  
**Hour at the Museum**  
NHM  
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

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## June 5-7

“Mapping Literary Landscapes: Environments and Ecosystems”  
**59th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference and Scholarly Symposium**  
Willa Cather State Historic Site, Red Cloud  
(registration required)  
866-731-7304 • www.willacather.org

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## June 10 • 10-11 a.m.

Reading *Once Upon a Seed*, by Bryan Yaida  
**Hour at the Museum**  
NHM  
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

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## June 17 • 10-11 a.m.

Reading *The Ledgerbook of Thomas Blue Eagle*,  
by Jewel Grutman & Gay Matthaei  
**Hour at the Museum**  
NHM  
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

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## June 19 • 12 noon

Courtney Ziska  
“Remnants of Omaha’s White City: An Examination of What Became of the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition Site”  
**Brown Bag Lecture Series**  
NHM

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## June 24 • 10-11 a.m.

Reading *If You’re Not From The Prairie*,  
by David Bouchard  
**Hour at the Museum**  
NHM  
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

For updated events, see the Society’s Facebook page,  
linked from [www.nebraskahistory.org](http://www.nebraskahistory.org)


## NSHS Seeks Award Nominees

Who is making a difference in Nebraska history? We're seeking nominations for our annual awards, which recognize outstanding achievement in preserving, interpreting, and educating people about the history of the state. Award plaques will be presented at the NSHS annual meeting on October 17 in Lincoln. Winners are selected by the NSHS awards committee.

See [nebraskahistory.org/admin/awards/nominations.htm](http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/awards/nominations.htm) for criteria and the nomination form. The nomination deadline is April 3 at 5 p.m. If you have questions, contact Martha Kimball ([martha.kimball@nebraska.gov](mailto:martha.kimball@nebraska.gov), 402-471-4746, or 800-833-6747). Here are the awards for which we are seeking nominations:


The **Addison E. Sheldon Memorial Award** recognizes "outstanding contributions to preservation and interpretation in the field of Nebraska history." Individuals or organizations may qualify for the award for long-term contributions to history or for an important onetime accomplishment. Former Society employees as well as current and retired board members are eligible.

The **Robert W. Furnas Memorial Award** recognizes outstanding contributions or assistance to the Nebraska State Historical Society in the form of either long-term service or a significant onetime contribution by an individual or organization.


The **James C. Olson Memorial Award** goes to a Nebraska K-12 teacher for outstanding success in engaging, inspiring, and guiding students to discover, enjoy, and learn from the fascinating and important histories of Nebraska's people. The award is limited to K-12 teachers who encourage and support their students in endeavors such as History Day, who use documents, oral history, or place in classroom projects, or who employ other imaginative or innovative methods to make Nebraska history come alive for their students. 

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## Encourage Your Friends to Become NSHS Members


If you're reading this, you're probably already a member of the NSHS and we thank you. Because you enjoy history, we suspect that you know others who do too. Please help us extend the Society's resources and benefits by telling your friends about us. Membership also makes a great gift for birthdays, graduations or holidays. Call us at 402-471-3272 or visit [nebraskahistory.org](http://nebraskahistory.org) and click the membership icon. Thank you for your continued support! 

## NSHS Welcomes New Trustee

Katharine Endacott of Pleasant Dale has been appointed to the NSHS Board of Trustees by Governor Heineman. She represents the Second Congressional District. A lifelong Nebraskan, Endacott was raised on a farm near Malcolm. An alumna of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Endacott has been a teacher and educational publishing executive involved with the development and creation of educational materials delivered online via computer and handheld digital devices. She and her husband, Richard, have four children, four grandchildren, and operate a small purebred Charolais operation. They wrote the books *Eating Nebraska* and *Second Helpings*. 


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## Become a Trustee

Would you like to help lead the NSHS as a member of the Board of Trustees? Board application materials are available at [nebraskahistory.org/admin/board](http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/board). Or just go to our home page, type "board" in the search box, and click on the first link that appears. Twelve trustees are elected by the NSHS members; three seats are up for election in 2014. To be considered for the nominating committee's slate of candidates, submit your application by June 19. Additional candidates may submit applications up to 5 p.m., August 18, 2014. 


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## Receive Historic Preservation Newsletter by Email

Are you involved in historic preservation in your community? Do you want to receive the latest news about pending legislation, new listings on the National Register, preservation-related programs in the state, and upcoming events? Go to [nebraskahistory.org/histpres](http://nebraskahistory.org/histpres) to sign up for the free email newsletter from the State Historic Preservation Office (part of the NSHS). These brief updates are written to provide timely information for the preservation community statewide. 

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## Position Opening

The director position is open at the John G. Neihardt State Historic Site in Bancroft, Nebraska. For a job description and contact information, see <http://joncerny.blogspot.com/2014/01/john-g-neihardt-state-historical-site.html> 

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# hours

**Nebraska  
History Museum**  
15th & P Streets, Lincoln  
402-471-4754

Monday–Friday, 9–4:30  
Saturday & Sunday, 1–4:30

**Museum Store**  
402-471-3447

Monday–Friday, 10–4:30  
Saturday & Sunday, 1–4

**Library/Archives**  
1500 R Street, Lincoln  
402-471-4751

Tuesday–Friday, 10–4  
Saturday, 8–5

See Facebook link at  
[nebraskahistory.org](http://nebraskahistory.org)

facebook

State Historic Site hours:  
[www.nebraskahistory.org](http://www.nebraskahistory.org)

NEBRASKA

# history news

Nebraska State Historical Society



## From the Collection. . .

### Cowboy Slicker

The tools of the cowboy's trade were suited to the work he did. Life on horseback required a sturdy, utilitarian saddle. Leather chaps and boots protected the cowboy's legs and feet, while spurs and bridles guided his horse. A large hat, a neckerchief, and a slicker shielded him from sun, dust, or rain. A horsehair or rawhide lariat helped him master the uncooperative longhorns. Saddlebags, or a "war bag" made from a flour sack, held a few personal items. Most cowboys carried revolvers or rifles while working the range.

When putting together the Nebraska History Museum's major exhibit, *Nebraska Cowboys: Lives, Legends, and Legacies*, our staff ran into a problem: because authentic cowboy clothing was strictly utilitarian, little survived from the era of the overland cattle drives and the days of the open range in the 1870s and 1880s.

That's why we were so pleased with the loan of this rare slicker from Fort Cody in North Platte. The store is well known as a tourist destination, but owner Chuck Henline has also built a collection of genuine Western historical objects.

The slicker was originally yellow in color. Such a coat was also called a "fish," probably because one type was the "Fish Brand Oil Coat."

The exhibit closes August 3, so don't miss it! 📅

