

NEBRASKA history news

Volume 68 / Number 2 / April/May/June 2015



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

The Value of History

What makes history relevant today? The NSHS has formally endorsed this recent statement about the value of history in contemporary life. We encourage our members to share and use it in discussions you have about why history matters. More information about this national conversation on history is available at www.linkedin.com/groups/History-Relevance-Campaign-5172547/about.

Seven Ways History is Essential To Ourselves

Identify. History nurtures personal identity in an intercultural world. History enables people to discover their own place in the stories of their families, communities, and nation. They learn the stories of the many individuals and groups that have come before them and shaped the world in which they live. There are stories of freedom and equality, injustice and struggle, loss and achievement, and courage and triumph.



War veteran who sells pencils, Omaha, November 1938. Photo by John Vachon, U.S. Farm Security Administration. Library of Congress

Through these varied stories, they create systems of personal values that guide their approach to life and relationships with others.

Critical Skills. History teaches critical twenty-first century skills and independent thinking. The practice of history teaches research, judgment of the accuracy and reliability of sources, validation of facts, awareness of multiple perspectives and biases, analysis of conflicting evidence, sequencing to discern causes, synthesis to present a coherent interpretation, clear and persuasive written and oral communication, and other skills that have been identified as critical to a successful and productive life in the twenty-first century.

To Our Communities

Vital Places to Live and Work. History lays the groundwork for strong, resilient communities. No place really becomes a community until it is wrapped in human memory: family stories, tribal traditions, civic commemorations. No place is a community until it has awareness of its history. Our connections and commitment to one another are strengthened when we share stories and experiences.

Economic Development. History is a catalyst for economic growth. People are drawn to communities that have preserved a strong sense of historical identity and character. Cultural heritage is a demonstrated economic asset and an essential component of any vibrant local economy, providing an infrastructure that attracts talent and enhances business development.

Continued on p. 2



Organizations tend to level off and decline if they do not experience revival and sometimes redirection.

Adjusting Course

Organizations are curious entities. They are formed, grow successfully if well-established and managed, but tend to level off and decline if they do not experience revival and sometimes redirection. Historical organizations reflect that pattern, as do businesses, social and religious entities, even sports teams. Now in its 137th year, the Nebraska State Historical Society is well aware of that organizational lifespan model.

The NSHS experienced major new inputs in the 1960s and 1970s with the addition of the historic preservation program authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This led to our statewide preservation efforts, which were enhanced this year through the introduction of the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit Program. In 1983 the NSHS experienced another increase in activity with the opening of the Nebraska History Museum in downtown Lincoln. These two initiatives added to the collecting, preserving, publishing, marking, historic sites/branch museums, and other programs that had been the NSHS's mainstays.

Today the NSHS is once again adjusting its focus, readdressing its audiences, and planning for changes, always in pursuit of its core mission. With the Nebraska History Museum undergoing a legislatively-funded overhaul, we are looking forward to an expanded exhibits and museum education program designed for a twenty-first century audience. Meanwhile, the archeology program is being enhanced by a new artifact storage and laboratory building. In the archives, we are addressing the growing number of electronic records being produced by both governmental and private entities, as well as providing expanded technology for researchers in the reference room in our headquarters at 1500 R Street in Lincoln. Finally, at our historic sites across Nebraska we are beginning the process of updating the experiences that we provide for visitors through exhibits and programming.

These latest adjustments in our services may not seem as dramatic as adding a major new program or opening a new museum, but they will guarantee that the NSHS remains focused on our mission of "collecting, preserving, and opening to all the histories that Nebraskans share," thereby remaining an active organizational participant in the lives of the people of our state.

I am always interested in hearing from NSHS members, friends, or others who have comments, suggestions, and questions. Please contact me at michael.smith@nebraska.gov.

Michael J. Smith, Director / CEO

Continued from p. 1

To Our Future

Engaged Citizens. History helps people craft better solutions. At the heart of democracy is the practice of individuals coming together to express views and take action. By bringing history into discussions about contemporary issues, we can better understand the origins of and multiple perspectives on the challenges facing our communities and nation. This can clarify misperceptions, reveal complexities, temper volatile viewpoints, open people to new possibilities, and lead to more effective solutions for today's challenges.

Leadership. History inspires local and global leaders. History provides leaders with inspiration and role models for meeting the complex challenges that face our communities, nation, and the world. It may be a parent, grandparent or distant ancestor, a local or national hero, or someone famous or someone little known. Their stories reveal how they met the challenges of their day, which can give new leaders the courage and wisdom to confront the challenges of our time.

Legacy. History, saved and preserved, is the foundation for future generations. History is crucial to preserving democracy for the future by explaining our shared past. Through the preservation of authentic, meaningful places, documents, artifacts, images, and stories, we leave a foundation upon which future Americans can build. Without the preservation of our histories, future citizens will have no grounding in what it means to be an American. 🌐

Homefront & Battlefield Exhibit Closes June 27

If you haven't yet toured *Homefront & Battlefield: Quilts and Context in the Civil War* at the Great Plains Art Museum, make plans to do so by June 27. Sponsored by the NSHS as part of our Museum on the Move programming, the national touring exhibit was organized by the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts, and uses quilts and textile-related artifacts to tell deeply personal stories of the Civil War. Lincoln is the only exhibition venue outside the East Coast.

The museum is at 1155 Q Street in downtown Lincoln, open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. Docents are available to provide informal tours at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesdays. To schedule a group docent-led tour, contact Judy Keetle at 402-471-4757, judy.keetle@nebraska.gov, preferably two weeks in advance. 🌐

Ogallala's Front Street Listed on National Register

Front Street Ogallala was listed on the National Register of Historic Places this January. The building, constructed in 1964 by a partnership of local Ogallala businessmen, tapped into the national fascination with the Wild West popularized by film and television.

The business's success relied upon its location on the transcontinental Lincoln Highway and on its association with Ogallala's history. Visitors enjoyed western-themed shows, viewed its collections of memorabilia, and purchased distinctive souvenirs.

Front Street was inspired by similar attractions in other states, most notably Front Street in Dodge City, Kansas, and was part of a national trend in the 1950s and 1960s that saw the construction of western-themed tourist attractions across the country, from California to New York and Maryland. Front Street is one of the last surviving attractions from the time period that still operates in its original location and provides a mix of entertainment and education. Other similar Nebraska attractions closed by the late 1960s or were relocated to new sites along I-80 once the highway was completed in 1974.



Also newly listed on the National Register:

Ogallala's Front Street

- **Amel Koop House, Lincoln.** A significant example of Academic Eclecticism, a widely-practiced style at the turn of the twentieth century which involved the skillful adaptation of multiple styles in one building.
- **Grand Island Burlington Depot.** The Prairie Style 1911 brick depot has a unique design among Burlington depots in Nebraska. Slated for demolition in 1990, it was purchased by the Hall County Historical Society, which now uses it for event space. 📍

NSHS Welcomes New Trustee

John E. Nelson of Omaha has been appointed to the NSHS Board of Trustees, representing the Second Congressional District. Nelson, then a Nebraska state senator (LD-6), was elected by the NSHS membership in last fall's board election, but became ineligible when he was appointed lieutenant governor by Gov. Dave Heineman. After new state executives took office in January, the NSHS trustees appointed former state senator Nelson to fill the vacant seat on our board.

Nelson grew up on a farm near Geneva, Nebraska, earned a B.A. from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and a J.D. from Creighton

University. He has been an attorney in private practice since 1969, a member of the Nebraska State and Omaha Bar Associations, and a member and past chairman of the Omaha Lawyer Referral Committee. He is a former administrative law judge with the Nebraska Department of Labor. He was on active duty in the U.S. Navy, 1957-60, and retired as a commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1983. He served in the state legislature 2007-14. His numerous committee assignments included vice-chairmanship of the executive board of the Legislative Council; Reference Committee; and Building and Maintenance Committee. 📍

Coming in Nebraska History



Doris Royal with U.S. Sen. Carl Curtis of Nebraska

“Do you realize I haven’t contributed a dime to this farm today according to the IRS?” said Doris Royal to her husband after a grueling twelve-hour day pitching hay and feeding cattle and hogs. Starting in 1975, the Springfield, Nebraska, farm wife launched a prolonged but ultimately successful campaign to reform the “widow’s tax” provision of federal inheritance tax laws. Her story will be told in the Summer 2015 issue of *Nebraska History* by Amy Forss.

In the same issue, Kent Morgan traces the brief history of the Lincoln Giants, an all-black baseball

team that played in an otherwise white league during the 1890 season. Thomas Spencer examines the history of the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben, founded in 1895 to promote Omaha and based on similar organizations in St. Louis and Kansas City. Finally, John Bauer uncovers the truth behind Kearney’s longstanding boast that it is located halfway between the coasts—1,733 miles from both Boston and San Francisco, a mileage that appeared to match no known route.

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

Cather and Neihardt Spring Conferences

“Correspondence on the Great Plains: Historic Letters from the 19th and 20th Century” will be the focus of the Spring Conference at the John G. Neihardt State Historic Site in Bancroft April 25. Presentations will focus on letters between John Neihardt and Willa Cather, and those of lesser-known individuals whose writing bears witness to the struggles of frontier settlement or of displacement, including letters written by Dakota men imprisoned in Iowa after the Dakota Wars of 1862. Dr. Pamela Gossin of the University of Texas at Dallas is the keynote speaker; other presenters include Rev. Dr. Clifford Canku, Sisseton Wahpeton tribe and North Dakota State University; Dr. Andrew Jewell, University of Nebraska at Lincoln and co-editor of *The Selected Letters of Willa Cather*; Steven Kinsella, author of *900 Miles from Nowhere: Voices of the Homestead Frontier*; and calligrapher Cheryl Dyer. www.neihardtcenter.org

“Fragments of Desire: Cather and the Arts” is theme for the 60th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference, hosted by the Cather Foundation June 5-7 in Red Cloud. Highlights will include papers and panel discussions; town and country tours; an evening picnic on the prairie; a screening of the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications documentary, *Yours, Willa Cather*; ceremonial groundbreaking for the National Willa Cather Center; and the premiere of *Larksong*, a theatrical retelling of *The Song of the Lark*. Richard Norton Smith, a nationally recognized author and historian, is the keynote speaker. This year’s conference is held in conjunction with the 15th International Willa Cather Seminar. www.willacather.org

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



Willa Cather at George Siebel home in Philadelphia, circa 1900. NSHS RG1951-85



John G. Neihardt. NSHS RG1042-1-5

Brownville Responds to Lincoln's Assassination, 1865

By JAMES E. POTTER, SENIOR RESEARCH HISTORIAN

April 14 is the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's assassination at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C., by the actor John Wilkes Booth. Despite Nebraska Territory's distance from the nation's capital, the telegraph brought the shocking news to its residents the very next day (the day of Lincoln's death). The April 20 edition of the *Nebraska Advertiser* revealed how the people of Brownville responded:

"The startling report of the assassination of President Lincoln, which reached this city last Saturday [April 15, 1865] about noon, caused terrible excitement. Few would believe until they saw the dispatch signed by Secretary [of War] Stanton. Soon there came another stating that the President had died that morning. On receipt of this dispatch a gloom settled over everything. The 'hum' of business ceased, all the stores were closed, and instead of gathering in crowds in the streets to discuss this horrible tragedy, all seemed desirous of privacy, all seemed to feel the loss as one of their own. The church-bells were tolled, and the community seemed hushed as in a stupor.

"The City Council met in the evening, made an appropriation for firing half-hour guns throughout Monday, and requested the Mayor to issue the following proclamation:

Official information having been received of the Murder of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, it is fitting that the citizens of Brownville in common with the people everywhere in our bereaved country, should unite in expressing their sorrow for this woeful and irreparable misfortune.

I therefore recommend and request our citizens of all classes to abstain from all business on Monday, the 17th day of April 1865, and to assemble themselves at the Presbyterian Church and join in exercises suitable to the occasion;

In testimony whereof, witness my hand and the seal of the City of Brownville, this fifteenth day of April A. D. 1865, Charles E. Dorsey, Mayor.

"In accordance with the above, all business was suspended and religious services were held at the Presbyterian Church by Rev. Messrs. Baird and Hart. All the houses were dressed in mourning and a few patriotic women worked nearly all Saturday night



on a flag, which was suspended across Main Street, dressed in mourning, besides numerous similar ones from the bank and other buildings. The cannon was fired every half hour through the day, and several long processions came in from the country.

"At 2 o'clock, the hour for services, the Presbyterian Church was densely crowded, many could not even get room to stand. The Paddock flag* was suspended back of the pulpit. The services were appropriate and conducted with a fervor and devotion creditable to the loyal hearts engaged in it. The following hymn—composed for the occasion by Mrs. M. E. Hart—was sung by the choir.

What solemn sounds our ears invade!
What wraps the land in sorrow's shade
Through Earth the awful Mandate flies.
The Father of his Country dies.

Let every heart be filled with woe,
Let every eye, with tears o'erflow,
While we his cruel fate deplore;
Our Friend, Our Lincoln, is no more.

O! God in Heaven! Hear our prayer,
Our Country take beneath thy care;
While dangers press, and foes draw near,
May future Lincolns still appear.

"After the services all returned to their homes—doubtless strengthened in their hate toward rebels and sympathizers—their desire to do all in their power to assist the new President in crushing out the rebellion, strengthened and renewed [in] hope that the Almighty ruler who upheld and strengthened the Republic under Abraham Lincoln would bless our new President with wisdom to carry us safely through." 🇺🇸

This Mexican War-era cannon, shown here during a ceremonial firing, was secured for the protection of Brownville during the Civil War. It was fired every half hour during the official mourning period following President Lincoln's death, 150 years ago this April. It continued to be used for ceremonial purposes for many years and remains in the possession of the Brownville Historical Society. NSHS RG3190-23

**A U.S. flag purchased for a local "home guard" company in 1862 with a donation from Territorial Secretary Algernon S. Paddock.*

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 16 in Lincoln. Winners are selected by the NSHS awards committee.

See 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 Lana Hatcher (lane.hatcher@nebraska.gov, 402-471-3272, 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 who encourages and supports their students in endeavors such as History Day, who use documents, oral history, or historic places in classroom projects, or who employ other imaginative or innovative methods to make Nebraska history come alive for their students. 

Nebraska Museums Association Annual Conference April 14-15

“Dream It and Do It!” at the Nebraska Museums Association’s Annual Conference April 14-15 hosted by the Cass County Historical Society in Plattsmouth. Highlights include:


- Half-day workshop April 14 on *Caring for Paper Materials in Your Collections* with paper conservator Sheila Fairbrass Siegler (small travel stipends available funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services)
- Museum tours including Cass County Historical Society, Rock Bluffs School, Heritage House Museum (Weeping Water), Murdock Museum, Elmwood G.A.R. Hall Veterans Museum, Bess Streeter Aldrich House (Elmwood)

April 15 Sessions:

- How to run a heritage or family history room
- Promoting and including museums in local byways programs


- The future/needs of small museum collections and building and maintaining collections
- Distance learning
- How to improve your museum step by step with AASLH’s Standards in Excellence Program (StEPs)
- Roundtable discussion for current StEPs participants
- Trial and error in an education department (state standards, social media, field trips, interaction with formal educators)

And much, much more! For more information and to register: nebraskamuseums.org/events or kelli.bacon@nebraska.gov

The NMA will also sponsor a series of Emergency Preparedness workshops for museums, libraries and archives at locations around the state in May. Visit the NMA website for specifics unavailable at press time. 

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. 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 2015, one in each congressional district. To be considered for the board nominating committee’s slate of candidates, submit your application by June 19. Additional candidates may submit applications up to 5 p.m., August 18, 2015. 

Otto Cole's Not-so-Great Escape

By JOY CAREY, EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

The photo at right shows no ordinary woman. In fact, it's not a woman at all.

On September 5, 1923, Otto Cole attempted to escape from the Nebraska State Penitentiary by dressing up as a woman. A September 7 article in the *Lincoln Journal* appeared with this photo, noting that: "The above picture is not one of Cole, but it is a picture of his costume and shows how he approached the turnkey in the center of a bevy of visitors."

Cole's escape was unsuccessful. But as we began to investigate the photo, we uncovered more than an amusing escape attempt. We found a paper trail of news articles from around the country, following this ambitious inter-state criminal.

Otto Cole was not the man's real name. He went by the name Richard Proctor when he was first arrested as a teenager in 1895. He spent three years in an Ohio prison for burglary, and was released on June 28, 1898. Only eight days passed before he was in trouble again. On July 6, he was arrested in Baltimore for burglary but escaped before he could be tried.

The next decade was full of arrests for a variety of burglaries, scams, and plots. Richard Proctor started going by the name Edward "Immune Eddie" English. He had a history of escapes, pardons, paroles, and releases for good behavior.

In 1914, one Chicago paper referred to Eddie English as a "well-known burglar and gunman." English may have even been the inspiration for the burglar character "English Eddie Griggs" in the popular 1912 play *Within the Law*.

One of English's most infamous deeds was his escape from a new, "escape-proof" prison in Joliet, Illinois, in 1920. English had been serving a sentence there for an "attempted confidence game"—meaning he had tried to run a scam. He escaped along with another prisoner by sawing through the bars and jumping more than twenty feet to the ground.

The Rock Island Argus in Illinois wrote about the escapees: "No trace has as yet been found of Eddie English, Anthony Amido, or the four men who left the farm Sunday night. . . . Authorities throughout the country have been asked to be on the lookout for the fugitives."

It was nearly two years before English surfaced again: this time in Nebraska under the new alias "Otto Cole." In early 1922, Cole shot and killed Henry Hahn, an Omaha pawnbroker. Cole admitted to shooting the man, but chose to represent himself in court.



Cole's oratorical skills impressed lawyers and reporters alike. Newspapers across the country reported on his trial, calling him a "man of mystery" and commenting on his past crimes. Cole was able to argue himself out of the death penalty, receiving a life sentence instead. He had only been locked up in Nebraska for a year when he attempted the escape documented by the picture: blending in with visitors in a woman's outfit.

Two articles from the *Lincoln Journal* recorded the details of Cole's costume. Cole had made a corset out of the steel ribs for chairs, hose out of a discarded jersey, a hat and gown out of materials taken from the upholstery shop, and a wig made with hair from furniture padding. He had even crafted earrings, a handbag, and glasses.

Cole made his bid for freedom during the week of the state fair, while the warden was attending the races. As visitors were being led out of the prison, the five-foot-one-inch Cole joined the line, dressed in his finery.

Unfortunately for Cole, the deputy warden was suspicious enough to tell a guard, "Send that lady to my office." Once the door was closed Cole gave up, saying: "I'm caught."

At the time of the articles, Cole's punishment had not yet been decided. The prison warden insisted that Cole was being watched carefully.

"Given a chance he will kill to get away," said the warden. "He has already made a record as a wanton slayer. It is not at all unlikely that he will make a desperate attempt to escape again."

Cole was released from the Nebraska State Penitentiary on parole in 1941, when he was more than sixty years old. He had experienced only about four years of freedom over a span of forty-six years, with arrests in at least five states.

Upon his release from Nebraska, Cole still owed prison time in Illinois. Presumably he was transferred there. 📍



Photo courtesy of Marty Miller

Treasures from the Nebraska History Museum

“ . . . a hundred incubators are the weapons of Nebraska as she grimly goes to war, not to kill but to save the lives of premature babies struggling against heavy odds for life.” —*Lincoln Star*, August 7, 1938

Between 1928 and 1937 over 1,100 infants under the age of one died each year in Nebraska. Premature births caused one-third of these deaths. To help lower this number, the State Medical Association and Nebraska Department of Health developed and constructed infant incubators to help save the lives of Nebraska preemies and distributed one to each of Nebraska's 93 counties in 1938. This is incubator no. 79.

Simply constructed of pine, these incubators featured a sliding glass inspection window on top for care of the baby, a thermometer, aeration vents, a heating system that consisted of a simple 40 or 60 watt light bulb, and a pan for water that would provide humidity. When used for transport, or away from a source of electricity, the incubator could be heated with hot water bottles or even fruit jars filled with hot water. The incubators were distributed as models of a simple construction that could be easily replicated by hospitals as needed.

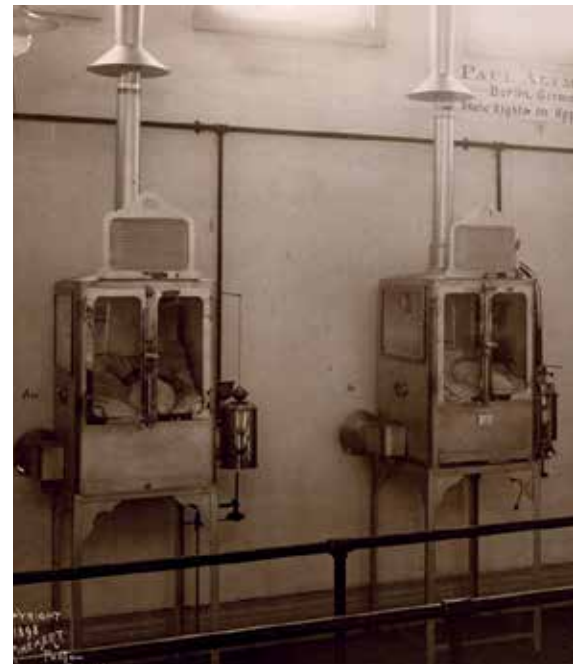
The first “Incubator Baby Exhibit” in the U.S. was held at the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in Omaha in 1898, only ten years after the very first incubator had been used to save a premature baby in Paris. These incubator exhibits originated in Europe and continued for many years at world's

Combining sideshow appeal with cutting edge medical science, the Infant Incubator building was a popular attraction at the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in Omaha in 1898. A similar exhibit was “Visited by 207,000 people at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Exhibition, London 1897,” according to words painted on the building. Omaha Public Library



One of the Nebraska Department of Health's 1938 incubators. NSHS 60373

fairs in America. Although relegated to the sideshow, the exhibits exposed many to this emerging tool of premature infant care. 🌱



Inside the Infant Incubator building. Omaha Public Library

Nebraska Hall of Fame Seeks Nominations

The Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission is seeking nominations. Located in the State Capitol, the Hall of Fame brings public attention and official recognition to outstanding Nebraskans—those who were born in Nebraska, who gained prominence while living in Nebraska, or whose time living in Nebraska influenced them and contributed to their greatness. Nominees must have been deceased for at least thirty-five years, and inductions are limited to one person every five years.

An inductee's contributions will usually have been made in public affairs, the arts, the sciences, or the professions. Secondary consideration is given to entertainment, athletics, or fields of endeavor where publicity and recognition may for a time be intense, but where a contribution to society is secondary. Activities that have added to the welfare of society and to the reputation of Nebraska are weighed more heavily than activities primarily benefiting the nominee.

Nominations will be accepted through December 31, 2016. The commission may select finalists to be considered at public hearings in each congressional district. After the hearings, the commission may select one finalist for induction in 2019. Michael Smith,



Sculptor Wesley Wofford with the bust of Alvin Saunders Johnson, inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame in 2014.

Director/CEO of the NSHS, serves as secretary of the commission.

A nomination form, plus other information about the Hall and its inductees, is at nebraskahistory.org (search "Hall of Fame"). Or request a form by emailing deb.mcwilliams@nebraska.gov, or by writing to the address on the back of this newsletter. 📧

Summer Activities for Kids from the NSHS

The NSHS will host classes for students in grades K-12 again this summer on a variety of topics. Each class has a fee, but NSHS members receive a discounted price. May and June classes are:

Native American Arts, Crafts, and Games

Wed., May 27 • 9:30-12:00 • Grades K-12
Fee \$10/\$8 for NSHS members
NSHS headquarters, 1500 R Street

Civil War Textiles

Fri., May 29 • 9:30-12:00 • K-12 • \$10/\$8
Great Plains Art Museum, 1155 Q Street

Make a Husswif: Civil War-Era Sewing Kit

Thu. & Fri., June 4-5 • 9:30-12:00 • K-12 • \$10/\$8
Great Plains Art Museum, 1155 Q Street

Nebraska "Granscapes," Watercolor Painting

Wed., June 10 • 9:30-12:00 • K-12 • \$10/\$8
NSHS headquarters, 1500 R Street

Make a Haversack: Civil War Soldier's Bag

Tue., June 16 • 1:30-4:00 • K-12 • \$10/\$8
Great Plains Art Museum, 1155 Q Street



Covered Wagons, Bumpy Trails: Puppet Show

Thu. & Fri., June 18-19 • 9:30-12:00 • K-3 • \$20/\$16
NSHS headquarters, 1500 R Street

Kids learn about Native American cache pits in an NSHS summer class.

Registration is required, and all registrations are on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact judy.keetle@nebraska.gov or 402-471-4757. Watch for more details at nebraskahistory.org and on our Facebook page. 📧

UPCOMING EVENTS

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



Unidentified man holding Lady AMCO of Norfolk, "The world's champion consecutive egg laying hen, fed exclusively on AMCO egg mash and AMCO scratch grains," April 10, 1927. NSHS RG 3882-3-927

April 1 • 3:30 p.m.

Jonathan Gregory
"Practical Patriotism in a Civil War Quilt"
Lecture in conjunction with *Homefront & Battlefield* exhibit
Great Plains Art Museum
1155 Q Street, Lincoln
402-472-6220

April 15 • 3:30 p.m.

Ken Winkle
"The Civil War in the Great Plains"
Lecture in conjunction with *Homefront & Battlefield* exhibit
Great Plains Art Museum
1155 Q Street, Lincoln
402-472-6220

April 16 • 12 noon

Jeff Barnes
"Sand Hills & Sand Lots: The Story of Rushville's Modisett Ball Park"
Brown Bag Lecture Series
5 City-TV studio, City/County Building
555 S. 10th St., Lincoln
402-471-3272 • lana.hatcher@nebraska.gov

April 18 • 2-4 p.m.

Nebraska Bridges
Free Family Fun Day
NSHS HQ, 1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

May 21 • 12 noon

Melissa Marsh
"History of Prisoner of War Camps in Nebraska"
Brown Bag Lecture Series
5 City-TV studio, City/County Building
555 S. 10th St., Lincoln
402-471-3272 • lana.hatcher@nebraska.gov

May 26 • 10-11 a.m.

***Greet the Dawn the Lakota Way* by S. D. Nelson**
Hour at the Museum
NSHS HQ, 1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

May 30 • 2-4 p.m.

Nebraska Wildflowers
Free Family Fun Day
NSHS HQ, 1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

June 2 • 10-11 a.m.

***Seaman's Adventures with Lewis and Clark* by Duncan Brown**
Hour at the Museum
NSHS HQ, 1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

June 9 • 10-11 a.m.

***The Pioneers* by Marie and Douglas Gorsline**
Hour at the Museum
NSHS HQ, 1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

June 16 • 10-11 a.m.

***Covered Wagons, Bumpy Trails* by Verla Kay**
Hour at the Museum
NSHS HQ, 1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

June 18 • 12 noon

Oliver Pollak
"Adventures in Nebraska (Jewish) History"
Brown Bag Lecture Series
5 City-TV studio, City/County Building
555 S. 10th St., Lincoln
402-471-3272 • lana.hatcher@nebraska.gov

June 23 • 10-11 a.m.

***Her Seven Brothers* by Paul Goble**
Hour at the Museum
NSHS HQ
1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

June 27

Last day of exhibit
Homefront & Battlefield: Quilts and Context in the Civil War
Great Plains Art Museum
1155 Q Street, Lincoln
To schedule a docent-led tour before this date, contact:
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

June 30 • 10-11 a.m.

***Moonstick: The Seasons of the Sioux* by Eve Bunting**
Hour at the Museum
NSHS HQ
1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

For updated events, see the NSHS Facebook page, linked from www.nebraskahistory.org

“Preservation: Plain and Simple” Conference FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2015, AT THE HOLIDAY INN LINCOLN-DOWNTOWN




Drafty windows. Soggy basements. Crumbling foundations. Tough challenges. Join with others who believe that to repair or restore is better than to replace. Get practical, “plain and simple” information you can use, and share experiences with others who are passionate about preservation. Hands-on preservation problems to be featured include masonry cleaning and patching, and wood window repair. Learn how structures assessments can help property owners maintain their building’s historic integrity, which is so important to their community’s sense of place.

And it’s not just about buildings. Community issues are also on the agenda: preserving brick streets, mid-century modern architectural materials, integrating preservation in our neighborhoods and in community planning. Gather with others from across the state to learn from dynamic, engaging, and results-oriented speakers who will provide tools people can use at home.

Who should attend?

- Owners of historic properties
- Citizens interested in quality of life in their communities
- Community leaders
- Civic organizations
- Preservation advocates
- Planners
- Local government officials
- Realtors
- Developers
- Architects
- Community development officials

Network with “preservation people” during a pre-conference reception Thursday evening, April 30, and all day at the conference on May 1. Online registration is open at nebraskahistory.org/histpres, or contact jill.dolberg@nebraska.gov or conference planner Paula Steenson at presents@aol.com 

David Bristow
John Carter
Lynne Ireland
James Potter
editorial staff

Ruben Acosta
Deb Arenz
Joy Carey
Jill Dolberg
contributors

Ebbeka Design
design & production


Nebraska History News is published quarterly for members of the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1500 R Street, P.O. Box 82554, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68501-2554. Telephone: (402) 471-3270, email: nshs.publish@nebraska.gov. Annual membership in the society is \$40; subscription-only membership is \$29. www.nebraskahistory.org Opinions expressed by writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSHS.

In Memoriam: Tom Buecker

The NSHS lost a longtime friend and colleague with the death of Tom Buecker on February 2. Buecker came to work for the NSHS in 1977, serving as curator at Neligh Mill State Historic Site (1977-1985), Fort Robinson Museum (1985-2011), and the Thomas P. Kennard House in Lincoln (2011-2015). He authored three books: *Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874-1899*; *Fort Robinson and the American Century, 1900-1948*; and, *A Brave Soldier & Honest Gentleman: Lt. James E. H. Foster in the West, 1873-1881*, which received an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History. He also wrote more than seventy published articles on the history of the West. A fourth book, *Last Days of*

Red Cloud Agency, will be published by the NSHS in 2016.

Tom is survived by his wife, Kay; son, Michael (Jessica) Buecker, Lincoln; daughter, Anne (Jason) Henderson, Weeping Water; grandchildren, Jaxson and Brock Buecker, Blake, Jett, and Rylee Henderson. He is also survived by his father, Robert (Myrna) Buecker; brothers, John, Robert and Dan (Tracy) Buecker; and sister, Cindy (Bob) Lauridsen.

We at the NSHS have heard from historians, readers, visitors, and others from around the world, telling us of Tom’s generosity with his time and expertise. As he said in a 1985 interview with the *Lincoln Journal Star*, “When a historian uncovers facts about a subject . . . I feel he should share it. Why keep it to yourself?” 



Legislative Reception 2015

The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation hosted its annual Legislative Reception on January 8 at Windsor Stables in Lincoln. With eighteen new senators joining the Unicameral this year, it was especially important to share with our legislators the important work of the NSHS. 

Senators Galen Hadley (LD-37) and Matt Hansen (LD-26) with Martin Massengale of the NSHSF Board of Directors.



hours

Nebraska History Museum
15th & P Streets, Lincoln
Closed for renovation.

Landmark Store
State Capitol
Room 1417 (ground floor)
402-471-2062

Monday-Friday, 9:30-4:30
Saturday, 1:00-4:00

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

Tuesday-Friday, 10-4
Saturday, 8-5

See Facebook link at
facebook
nebraskahistory.org

State Historic Site hours:
www.nebraskahistory.org

NEBRASKA history news



Nebraska State Historical Society

From the Collection. . . President Lincoln's Last Signature

The NSHS has in its collections what may well be the final document signed by President Abraham Lincoln before his assassination. Details are shown here of a certificate dated April 13, 1865, reappointing Alvin Saunders as territorial governor of Nebraska. Beneath the signatures of Lincoln and of Secretary of State William H. Seward, Saunders wrote and signed the following:

"The signature of President Lincoln attached to this commission, was evidently the last official signature made by him—He signed it just before leaving for the Theatre, where he was assassinated, and left the commission on his desk without stopping to fold it, and where it was found when the room was opened after his death—These facts were communicated to me by one of the clerks." 