Nebraska History Museum on the Move Exhibit *Homefront & Battlefield: Quilts & Context in the Civil War* opens at Great Plains Art Museum February 3

An army may march on its stomach, but textiles are almost as important as food in military success. And in America’s Civil War, fabric was at the center of political and economic as well as military conflict. With our own museum temporarily closed for renovation, the NSHS is helping bring this story to the Great Plains Art Museum in Lincoln as part of our Museum on the Move programming.

*Homefront & Battlefield: Quilts & Context in the Civil War* takes an intriguing and absorbing look at the most divisive period in American history through a unique lens. Organized by the American Textile History Museum (ATHM), in Lowell, Massachusetts, the exhibit uses quilts and textile-related artifacts to tell deeply personal and powerful stories. From the noose reportedly used to hang abolitionist John Brown to a quilt made by a wounded soldier from hospital blankets, as well as Confederate gray and Union blue uniform fabrics, textiles are combined with images, quotations, and historical data to offer a new perspective on this critical period.

Guest curators Madelyn Shaw and Lynne Zacek Bassett use quilts, clothing, personal and household articles, flags, needlework, and military equipment to “explore why political tensions over import tariffs, the expansion of slave labor, and the control of shipping and commerce finally erupted into secession and war. We will examine how textiles communicated political beliefs and embodied nationalist feelings. We will discover how the struggle to keep the armies clothed, sheltered, and healthy brought the war into the everyday lives of non-combatants. We will learn how the production and consumption of textiles reflected the daily realities of wartime scarcities and hardships, both for the soldier at the front and the workers behind the lines. We will examine why, after the fighting ended, textiles were used to memorialize people and events and symbolize defiance, heroism, mourning, bitterness, and reconciliation. Through textiles we can recognize the deep bonds between soldiers and civilians, see the differences and similarities in how the war was experienced across sections, genders, and

**Quilt, Oak Leaf and Berries Appliqué, 1850s. Made by Mrs. M. E. Poyner, Paducah, Kentucky. Cotton; appliquéd with stuffed-work details, quilted. Collection of Bill Volckening. Photograph by Geoffrey Carr.**

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

Continued on p. 2
Futures!

“Futures” may seem like a misplaced word in a historical newsletter. But is it? Antiquarianism, or delving into the past simply for its own sake, can be an interesting exercise. There are myriad opportunities to enjoy the past—even through TV shows, historical romances, or antique dealers. And that’s all right. It is exciting to reach back and engage the past.

But simply enjoying the past is not what the Nebraska State Historical Society is about. Although the public correctly assumes from our name that we are about Nebraska’s past, we actually work with a larger purpose in mind, one that never rests in the past but leads to our collective futures.

The NSHS is presently engaged in two major projects that are very much forward looking. One is the renovation of the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln. You, the taxpayers, are investing significant resources to ensure that we have a museum building that will serve the future. That work is now underway and we thank you.

Coinciding with these improvements is the planning for the museum’s future exhibits and educational programming starting in 2016. Of course, we will be using our Nebraska past and the objects and records which open that past to us, but the exhibits will be designed to educate, inspire, and engage museum visitors in understanding their individual and collective futures, in which they have the opportunities to pursue careers, create businesses, form relationships and families, build communities, and much more. It is through knowing and understanding the past that people are equipped to build promising futures.

Another futures path will be found in the 150th anniversary of Nebraska’s joining the Union on March 1, 1867, the Sesquicentennial of Statehood. The year 2017 holds opportunities for Nebraskans to look into the past—again not only for its own sake, but also as a source of comprehension and discernment to guide them into the future. I encourage all to see this celebration as an opportunity to become engaged in sesquicentennial events in every part of the Cornhusker State.

In these and other opportunities take the journey from the present to the past and then ahead to the future. Try it. You will find it fulfilling and valuable!

Michael J. Smith
Director / CEO

We work with a larger purpose in mind, one that never rests in the past but leads to our collective futures.

Continued from p. 1
Reference Room patrons can now capture higher quality images and save them electronically, using two new microfilm readers. Digital versions of information on microfilm will allow users to manipulate the brightness and contrast of the images or clip multiple articles and paste them together on one page. Users can also save a newspaper page directly to a flash drive.

“It’s going to make history projects a lot easier and save a lot of time,” said Assistant Curator Matt Piersol. Written instructions and an NSHS YouTube video show how to use the new equipment.

Saving images electronically or printing them out will cost fifty cents per page. The new readers will require special charge cards that can be purchased for $1.50 (plus tax) and loaded at the reference desk. The machines became available to the public on November 18. By January 6 they will be set up for users to send images to their personal email accounts directly from the machine.

“We wanted to keep up with the times technologically,” said Deb Arenz, NSHS Associate Director for Collections. “The quality of the images for our patrons and researchers will be far superior to that on our other microfilm machines.”

Piersol agreed. “Before, most newspaper photos were just a blotch. You couldn’t recognize anything. Now, you can take someone from the back row of a small picture and be able to see them.”

All of the old microfilm readers and reader/printers will still be available for patrons who prefer to use them.

NSHS Reference Room Introduces Advanced Microfilm Readers

Every year funds from the NSHS Foundation support one or more $1,000 grants to researchers working in areas of Nebraska history. Proposals should involve research resources in the NSHS library and archives, and generate results that may be suitable for publication in Nebraska History magazine. Send your proposal to David Bristow, Editor, at the return address on this newsletter (or by email to david.bristow@nebraska.gov) by April 1, 2015. We’ll announce the winner(s) in May. Grant recipients will then have until April 1, 2016, to complete their manuscripts. See nebraskahistory.org/publish/grants for details.

Research Grants for 2015
The fiftieth anniversary celebration of the admission of Nebraska into the Union in 1867 took place in 1916 and 1917. John L. Webster of Omaha, then president of the Nebraska State Historical Society, was the instigator of the event. As 1917 approached, he proposed a celebration intended to symbolize not only the development of Nebraska but the relationship of the state to the opening and settlement of the West. A committee of one hundred members was appointed to take charge, with Omaha businessman Gurdon W. Wattles as chairman.

The plans for the celebration included a “Historical Pageant” (or parade) at Omaha on October 5, 1916, in connection with the Ak-Sar-Ben events for that year. President and Mrs. Woodrow Wilson attended and reviewed the parade, and President Wilson made an address to an immense crowd. The celebration in Lincoln took place June 12-14, 1917, at the time of the University of Nebraska’s commencement. Significant features included an address by ex-President Theodore Roosevelt and a “semi-centennial masque,” written by Hartley Burr Alexander.

Semicentennial observances were staged in many locations outside Lincoln and Omaha. March 1, 1917, Statehood Day, saw celebrations by individual counties, as well as by commercial clubs, historical societies, men’s and women’s clubs, Daughters of the American Revolution chapters, and other civic and patriotic societies. February 12, 1917, Lincoln’s birthday, was the date set for observances in Nebraska’s rural and village schools. Appropriate exercises were held in Nebraska churches and Sunday schools on February 25, the Sunday nearest Washington’s birthday. The citizens of Nebraska

To stimulate interest in the events John D. Haskell of Wakefield, Nebraska, offered a prize of $100 in 1916 for the best poem adapted as a state song for Nebraska. One condition was that the 1917 poem to Nebraska be written by a state resident. The prize winner was the Rev. William H. Buss of Fremont for his “The Ode to Nebraska.” Haskell also gave a prize of $100 for the best musical arrangement for the poem, won by John Prindle Scott of New York City. (“Beautiful Nebraska,” composed by Jim Fras, has been the state’s official song since 1967.)

Nebraska’s 150th anniversary as a state will be celebrated in 2017, 100 years after the 1917 events. Commemorative events and educational activities are being planned. More information is available online at Nebraska150.org.

Neligh Mill’s Harv Ofe Honored as “Outstanding Frontline Employee”

The Nebraska Tourism Commission recently honored Don “Harv” Ofe with its “Outstanding Frontline Employee” award. Ofe has served since 1987 as site manager at the NSHS’s Neligh Mill State Historic Site.

The commission recognizes “frontline” employees—those who work directly with the public in communities, businesses, attractions, and events—as part of its annual Nebraska Travel Industry Awards program. Ofe interprets Neligh Mill to visitors ranging from schoolchildren to adults. He teaches them about the historic role of local flour mills and the fascinating technology of water-powered milling, and makes sure their visits are memorable.

Ofe is also involved in the community, serving on local and regional committees and working to ensure that special events such as the local “Bread ‘n’ Jam” festival are well organized and draw visitors to Neligh. Congratulations, Harv!
Governor Heineman names Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission Members

Governor Dave Heineman has announced seventeen appointments to the Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission.

The commission will develop programs and plans for the official observance of the 150th anniversary of Nebraska statehood on March 1, 2017. It will work closely with various state agencies, boards, commissions, and political subdivisions to plan commemorative events and to implement educational activities throughout 2017.

Planning partners include the State Department of Education, the Department of Roads, the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Nebraska State Fair Board, the Game and Parks Commission, and the Nebraska Tourism Commission. The Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission may also seek the guidance and support of any other groups or organizations the commission deems necessary or helpful in fulfilling its purpose.

Commission membership is made up of leaders representing all regions of Nebraska from a diverse array of backgrounds. Members were to select a chairperson and a vice-chairperson at their November 2014 meeting.

Appointees:

**Barbara Batie, Lexington**
Farmer and freelance journalist specializing in agriculture

**Ann Olsen Bird, Omaha**
Speech and language pathologist, and special education consultant for Nebraska Department of Education

**Denise Christensen, Kearney**
Executive Director, Merryman Performing Arts Center

**Dr. Sara Crook, Peru**
History/political science professor, Peru State College

**Nancy Faber, Elkhorn**
Former principal, Omaha South Magnet School

**Deanna Frankforter, Grand Island**
Community leader and volunteer

**John Gale, Lincoln**
Nebraska Secretary of State

**Becky Herian, Alliance**
Former teacher at Alliance Public Schools

**Christi Janssen, Omaha**
Executive Director at the Durham Museum

**Donna Kush, Omaha**
Vice President of Public Affairs-Northern Region at Union Pacific Railroad

**Frank LaMere, South Sioux City**
Native American community leader

**Jamesena Grimes Moore, Bellevue**
Former vice-president of United Way

**Dora Olivares, Gering**
Gering Junior High School principal

**Marty Ramirez, Lincoln**
Retired psychologist and Latino community leader

**Dr. John L. Strope Jr., Lincoln**
Retired college professor in education administration and law

**Leann Widhalm, Norfolk**
Special education teacher, Norfolk Junior High School

**John F. Zimmer V, Lincoln**
University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Law student

**Neligh Mill Bridge Renovation**

Ever since the bridge by the Neligh Mill State Historic Site was damaged by flood waters four years ago, we’ve been updating our readers from time to time on the progress of repairs. Here is the final photo in this occasional series, courtesy of the Antelope County News, showing the bridge’s rededication on November 2, 2014. The City of Neligh project was funded by a $650,000 grant from an anonymous foundation, plus donations from private citizens.
With the temporary closing of the Nebraska History Museum for renovation, museum staff worked hard last fall moving their offices to temporary quarters. No complaints. If you think moving files and furniture is tough, try moving an entire town. Twice.

Niobrara is simultaneously one of Nebraska's oldest and newest towns. It was established in 1857, a scant three years after Nebraska Territory opened. It has the Mighty Missouri to thank for its inability to stay put.

Niobrara is situated at the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri rivers. The original town site had easy access for steamboat traffic. The community thrived and by 1880 had a population of 850. A year later, however, the Missouri became clogged with an early spring ice jam, and water inundated the town. Residents faced a hard choice after the flood waters subsided: they could leave, they could stay put and take their chances with the fickle Missouri, or they could move the town.

After much wrangling, they chose the latter. They jacked up buildings, put them on rollers, and with draft animals and winches (and no doubt a lot of back liniment) one by one moved structures to a new site uphill toward the south.

The new location served the town nicely for seventy years, then things changed. In 1952 the completion of Fort Randall Dam ended the periodic flooding of the Missouri that scoured the sediment from the mouth of the Niobrara. When Gavins Point Dam was completed in 1956, sediment began building up along the stretch of river between the dams. By 1972 the water table was so high that buildings in Niobrara had from six inches to three feet of water standing in their basements. And the water was not done rising.

Once again local residents faced the same three bad choices their forebears had in 1881. They could abandon the town, stay put, or move. Once again they chose to move. As before, the decision was not unanimous, and conversations could get heated. What the citizens now faced was losing their old family homes and businesses and moving into brand new government-built buildings. It would all be new, but with the standardized look of a military base. When the new town was dedicated on July 4, 1977, it had lost fully one third of its population, falling from 600 to 400 residents. But at least they were finally safe on high ground.
Coming in Nebraska History

On the evening of August 16, 1955, Lincoln residents were startled to see smoke rising from the Nebraska State Penitentiary. With the press uninformed, passersby were left to guess at what might be happening inside the prison walls—where rioting inmates had set fire to their workplaces, and where police and national guardsmen were gathering to take back the prison by force if necessary.

None of this was surprising, however, to those who had been following events of the previous months. As Brian Sarnacki shows in his forthcoming article, “‘In the biting stage’: The 1955 Nebraska State Penitentiary Riots and Violent Prison Activism,” tension had been building for a long time. Prisoners used a series of violent protests to draw attention to what they felt were inhumane conditions and abuse by guards. The article will appear in the Spring 2015 issue of *Nebraska History*.

The same issue looks at the turbulent early years of the Nebraska Mexican American Commission (now known as the Latino American Commission). Roger Davis shows how conflicting expectations and interpersonal issues undermined the agency’s reputation despite a clear record of success in providing direct services to the people.

A third article by Bruce Gerhardt explores the surprisingly early appearance of association football (aka soccer) in Nebraska—the first organized match being played in Omaha in 1880. Even as American collegiate football was gaining popularity in the late nineteenth century, local soccer aficionados (many of whom were immigrants) argued that in contrast with the brutality of collegiate football, the “association” game was “a game of science, skill, and gentlemanliness” destined to become “the national winter game of America.”

Look for the issue in your mailbox the second week of February.

NSHS Welcomes New Trustees

Lance Bristol of Ansley and Kim Elder of Paxton have been elected to the Nebraska State Historical Society Board of Trustees, both representing the Third Congressional District. They will begin their three-year terms January 1, 2015.

A lifelong resident of Custer County, Bristol has been an educator for nearly forty years, including thirty years as a choral educator and nine years as K-12 principal for Ansley Public Schools. He has served for twenty years on the board of directors for the Custer County Historical Society, and has served and held leadership positions in the Broken Bow Community Theatre, Custer County Friends of the Arts, the Sandhills District of the Nebraska State Education Association, and the Ansley Area Community Foundation.

Elder, a lifelong Panhandle resident, was born and raised in Mitchell and has worked the past thirty-four years in Paxton, Sidney, and Scottsbluff. Following a twenty-six-year career as a coach, social studies instructor, and administrator at Paxton Consolidated Schools, Elder worked for ten years as a staff development specialist at Educational Service Units 14 and 13 until his retirement in 2012. He continues work as a consultant and substitute teacher.

Our governing board includes twelve members elected by NSHS members, and three appointed by the governor. Two members were elected to a second three-year term: Jim McKee of Lincoln in (congressional) District 1, and José Garcia of Omaha in District 2. Brian Croft of Scottsbluff (District 3) was appointed to a second term by Governor Heineman.

One recent trustee has returned to the board. When District 1 trustee Bryan Zimmer moved out of the district from which he was elected, NSHS bylaws required that he resign. Zimmer has now been elected to represent District 2, where he now resides.
Renovation of our NHM building will create a better home for the NSHS firearms collection that includes more than 1,100 pieces significant to the history of Nebraska, the United States, and the world. The main portion of the collection was assembled by Omaha Walter J. Charnley, a world-class collector who bequeathed his collection of more than 900 guns to the NSHS in 1961.

Charnley had an eclectic interest in firearms. He collected guns that he found artistic or unusual; he didn’t focus on collecting particular types or makers. As a result, the Charnley Collection is diverse, including prototypes that document the development of firearms technology, examples of high art pieces by British, French, and Italian gunsmiths, and guns famous in Western American history, including Sharps, Spencer, and Henry rifles, and Colt and Remington pistols.

Here we present two pieces from the collection, both associated with Napoleon Bonaparte. Nicholas Noël Boutet (1761–1833) was the directeur-artiste of the Versailles Arms Manufactory during Napoleon’s reign as consul and then Emperor of France. According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Boutet was “charged with creating richly decorated arms for presentation to military heroes and foreign heads of state.” This .60 caliber flintlock rifle and .61 caliber smoothbore flintlock pistol are part of a set commissioned by Napoleon and presented in 1802 to Prussian officer (and ambassador to France) Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig Von Kruemermarck.

The Charnley Collection represents only part of the firearms found in NSHS holdings. Many additional pieces tell the stories of Nebraska’s past: its long military history (including weapons collected from every war in which Nebraskans have fought from the Civil War to World War II), the settlement of the West, hunting as a means of subsistence and recreation, and firearms as collectible works of art.

Images and information about NSHS firearms can be viewed through our online database at nebraska-history.pastperfect-online.com.
Companion to the rifle, the Boutet pistol (one of a pair) is equally ornate, with its stock and barrel inlaid heavily with gold alloy in floral and geometric elements. NSHS 8421-272a

The pistol’s trigger guard. NSHS 8421-272d

Left: Gold alloy mounting on the pistol butt. NSHS 8421-272b

Right: The pistol’s lock mechanism is of blued iron alloy, with gold alloy metal work in shapes of urns and cornucopias. NSHS 8421-272c

For the second year in a row, NSHS Senior Research Historian James Potter has won first place in the prestigious Coke Wood Award competition from Westerners International. The award honors the best published monograph or article dealing with Western American history. Potter’s article, “A Peculiar Set of Men: Nebraska Cowboys of the Open Range,” appeared in the Fall 2013 issue of Nebraska History. The article was part of his research for the Nebraska History Museum exhibition Nebraska Cowboys: Lives, Legends, and Legacies (September 2013-August 2014).

Potter won last year for “Wearing the Hempen Neck-Tie’: Lynching in Nebraska, 1858-1919” (Nebraska History, Fall 2012). Congratulations, Jim! 💡
UPCOMING EVENTS

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

January 3 • 2-4 p.m.
Celebrate National Bird Day
Free Family Fun Day
NSHS HQ, 1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757, judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

January 11 • 2 p.m.
Rim Standing Bear’s Footsteps and presentation by associate producer Princella Parker
Sunday at the Museum
John G. Neihardt State Historic Site
306 W. Elm St., Bancroft
402-648-3388 • neihardt@gpcom.net

January 15 • 12 noon
Kelli Bacon
“Nebraska’s Poor Farms”
Brown Bag Lecture Series
5 City-TV studio, City/County Building
555 S. 10th St., Lincoln
402-471-4764 • tom.buecker@nebraska.gov

February 3-June 27
Homefront and Battlefield: Quilts and Context in the Civil War
Exhibition
Great Plains Art Museum, 1155 Q St., Lincoln
402-471-0321 • tina.koeppe@nebraska.gov

February 6 • 2-4 p.m.
Make-and-Take Valentines in the Style of the 1800s
Free Family Fun Day
NSHS HQ, 1500 R St., Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

February 14 • 2-4 p.m.
“C. A. Sorensen and the Henry Ford Peace Expedition”
Brown Bag Lecture Series
5 City-TV studio, City/County Building,
555 S. 10th St., Lincoln
402-471-4764 • tom.buecker@nebraska.gov

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

Herman Boerger ranch near Rose, Rock County, January 30, 1949. NSHS RG3139-31

A Nebraska National Guard C-45 flying over a herd of cattle during the winter of 1948-49. Operation Haylift dropped hundreds of tons of hay to stranded livestock. NSHS RG3139-109
Starting January 2, 2015, the NSHS is accepting applications for the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit (NHTC), a new tax incentive program for the redevelopment of historic properties and districts across the state. As authorized by the Nebraska Job Creation and Mainstreet Redevelopment Act, the program offers a total of $15 million in state historic preservation tax credits for each calendar year from 2015 to 2018. Qualifying projects can receive a 20 percent state income tax credit for eligible expenditures made for rehabilitating qualified historic buildings (up to a limit of $1 million for a single project). The NSHS and the Nebraska Department of Revenue administer the program. See nebraskahistory.org/histpres/nhtc.htm

State Tax Credits for Historic Buildings

Four young Pawnee women and two girls in front of an earthlodge about 1870. NSHS RG2065-1-11

For updated information on programming for children and families at the NSHS Headquarters in January, February, and March, see “Upcoming Events” in this newsletter or the NSHS Facebook page, linked from www.nebraskahistory.org.

NSHS Board of Trustees Seeks Candidates

Do you want to help shape the future of the Nebraska State Historical Society? Assist in setting policies? Help guide strategic planning and offer overall support to the director, staff, members, and volunteers? Speak up for the importance of teaching history in the schools? Witness to the value of the work of the NSHS? These are some of the principal duties of the NSHS Board of Trustees.

The board consists of fifteen members, and meets quarterly at various locations across the state. Three-year terms expiring in December 2015 include seats in all three congressional districts. The board-appointed nominating committee will put forward a slate of nominations, but anyone may become a candidate by petition with the signatures of twenty-five current members, or may seek a gubernatorial appointment.

Application materials and Nominating Committee contact information will be posted at nebraskahistory.org/admin/board starting April 15, 2015.

Receive Email Updates from the NSHS

New technology—online archives, podcasts, video recordings, and electronic communications—are helping NSHS connect more people with more history.

Join this online network by sharing your email address. We’ll send you up-to-date and timely information and fascinating facts from Nebraska’s past. Please send an email to lana.hatcher@nebraska.gov with the phrase “Membership Emails” in the subject line and we’ll add you to all our future email communications about upcoming NSHS events, membership perks, and Landmark Store sales.

Take a Walk in Their Shoes

Nebraska History Museum on the Move programming continues at various locations during the NHM renovation. Six new exhibit cases on the ground floor of the NSHS Headquarters building at 1500 R Street in Lincoln focus on Nebraska childhood in different eras and feature photos and artifacts from NSHS collections: Pawnee Children, Pioneer Children, Children of the Great Depression, Children of World War II, Children of the Fifties, and Cowboy Kids are available for public viewing 8-5, Monday-Saturday. Exhibit viewers are invited to “take a walk in their shoes” and learn details of the daily lives and activities of children and families during the time periods indicated.

The NSHS Headquarters building also hosts periodic Hour at the Museum programs, when all ages are invited to hear a book read and do activities, and Free Family Fun Days for children and families.
From the Collection. . .

A Short Snorter

This World War II-era “short snorter” is composed of sixty-two pieces of paper money taped together to form a continuous roll. A short snorter is a banknote signed by people traveling together or meeting up at different events. The tradition started among Alaskan bush pilots in the 1920s and peaked in popularity during the war. While out drinking, servicemen would challenge each other to produce their short snorter. Anyone who failed to do so had to buy the round. (“Snort” is a stiff drink; “short” is less than a full measure.)

Loyde H. Adams, born in Doniphan in 1919, owned this elaborate short snorter while serving in the Army Air Force in the southwest Pacific. It includes Japanese military currency and invasion money from the Philippines and the Netherlands, plus Chinese, Australian, Indian, and American bills. Most are signed by at least one person, usually including a place (probably a hometown) and sometimes a date.  

Marilyn and Loyde Adams, Lincoln, Nebraska  
NSHS 13295-1