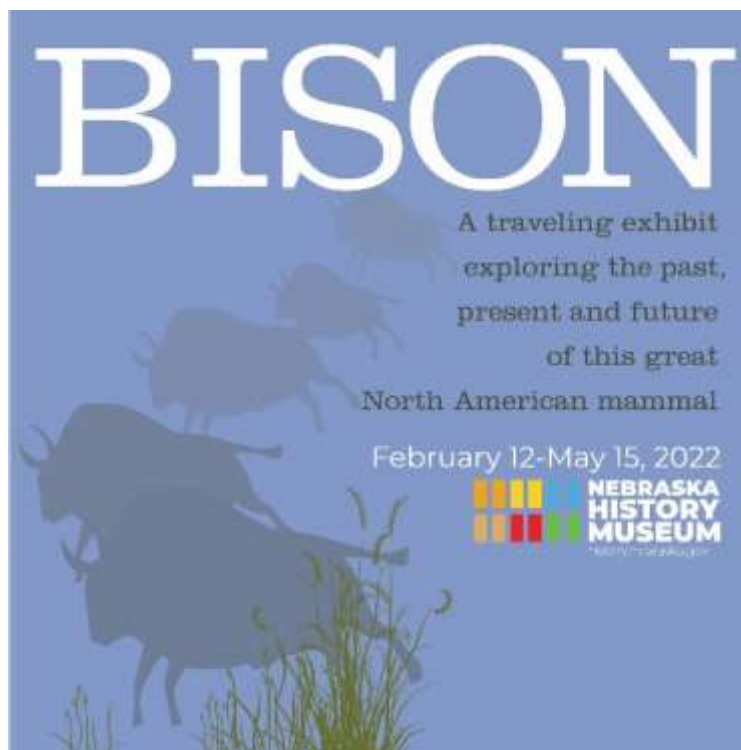




It's Tuesday, February 1, 2022. In today's issue: BISON exhibit; Malcolm X visits Omaha; Blizzard of '49; Pershing mosaic; Cheyenne Breakout bullet; Pender's popcorn windmill; Fort Kearny.

***BISON* exhibit opens Feb. 12**



Join us for an Opening Day celebration of the traveling exhibition *BISON* at the [Nebraska History Museum](#) on Saturday, February 12, 9 am to 2 pm.

From 9 to 11, History Nebraska members are invited for a first look of the new exhibit with morning refreshments. The History Nebraska education team will hold special programs, including traditional Lakota and Omaha games, and have special touchable artifacts on display.

The public is welcome to see the exhibit starting at 10 am. The Many Moccasins Dance Troupe will hold three special performances at 10:15, 11:00, and 11:45. These performances will include Indigenous dances and songs as well as the history and meaning behind them. Visitors can enjoy the special programs from History Nebraska educators, including a special story corner with books about bison, traditional Lakota and Omaha games, and more.

The exhibit will be at the museum through May 15. [Learn more about *BISON*](#).

Malcolm X visits his hometown in 1964

Malcolm X Declares:

JUL 2 1964

'Negro Must Prepare To Defend Himself Or Continue At The Mercy Of Racist Mob'

Controversial, colorful Malcolm X declared here Tuesday night that the history of unpunished violence against Afro-Americans "clearly indicates" they must be prepared to defend themselves or "continue to be a defenseless people at the mercy of a ruthless and violent racist mob."

"A man with a rifle or club can only be stopped by a person who defends himself with a rifle or club," the former Black Mus-

lim spokesman exclaimed during an open forum at the Assembly Hall sponsored by the Citizens' Co-ordinating Committee for Civil Liberties.

Since self-preservation is the first law of nature, the native born Omahan explained "we assert the Afro-American's right of self-defense.

Are Within Rights

"We assert that in those areas where the government is either unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of our people, that our people are within their rights to protect themselves by whatever means necessary," Malcolm said.

Noting that the federal Constitution affirms the right of every American citizen to bear arms, Malcolm asserted:

"And as Americans, we will not give up a single right guaranteed under the Constitution."

He was quick to emphasize that violent attacks upon whites shouldn't be made just for the sake of attacking and that he was not advocating "self-initiated" acts of violence.

Page From Johnson's Book

But, he added, it is the "duty of every Afro-American and every Afro-American community throughout this country to pro-

tect its people against mass murderers, bombers, lynchers, flaggers, brutalizers and exploiters."



Malcolm X . . . Negro turning to roaring lion.

page from what President Johnson exposed the day previous in warning that "America would strike back if her peace and security were jeopardized."

Malcolm loudly wended: "How do they expect to put a uniform on us and expect that we will strike back for peace and security in Korea, Laos, Vietnam and not strike back for peace and security in Mississippi?"

"How do they expect us to be violent in Laos and non-violent in St. Augustine, Fla.?"

Organize Self-Defense Units

He announced that earlier Tuesday he had sent telegrams to Dr. Martin Luther King in St. Augustine, and James Foreman, head of the Student Non-violent Committee, in Philadelphia, Mass., offering to "immediately dispatch some of our brothers to organize our people into self-defense units capable of retaliating against the Ku Klux Klan if the only language it understands."

The wires, sent over Malcolm's name as chairman of the newly formed Organization of Afro-American Unity, added:

"The day for turning the other cheek to those inhuman brute beasts is long over."

'AR

or Evil Shall Not Go Unpunished

FRIDAY, JULY 3, 1964 — 10c

Maurice Copeland Dies In Lincoln

Mr. Maurice L. Copeland, age 72 years, 4502 "W" Street, Lincoln, Nebraska died Thursday, June 25th.

Mr. Copeland was a veteran of World War I, and a member of the American Legion.

For a number of years, Mr. Copeland was a former head-

What did Malcolm X have to say in 1964 when he visited Omaha, his hometown? His Omaha speeches came at a time of transition in his life. He had recently left the Black-nationalist Nation of Islam, where he had been second-in-command.

"I used to believe in Elijah Muhammad," Malcolm X said of the Nation of Islam's leader. "I believed... in his philosophy that the white man is the embodiment of evil."

Malcolm had become a Sunni Muslim earlier that year. As he wrote later, during a pilgrimage to Mecca he saw Muslims of "all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans... displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white."

Meanwhile, in St. Augustine, Florida, civil rights workers were facing growing

violence from the Ku Klux Klan and local police. Some, concluding that Dr. Martin Luther King's commitment to nonviolent resistance was unrealistic, embraced armed self-defense and began shooting back at the Klan. Malcolm approved.

"We feel the Negro should be prepared to defend his life and his property," he said. "A man with a rifle or club can only be stopped by a person who defends himself with a rifle or club," he said, noting that the US Constitution affirms the right to bear arms. [Keep reading.](#)

Scenes of the Blizzard of 1949



[See photos](#) from the most notorious Nebraska winter in living memory.

Also, read how Maj. Frank North and his men [survived the 1871 blizzard](#).

Placing 800,000 tiles on Pershing Auditorium mosaic



As people discuss ways to possibly save the mosaic on the front of the soon-to-be-demolished Pershing Auditorium, here's a 1956 video from 1011 News showing how the 800,000-tile artwork was created. [Watch it on Twitter](#) or [on Facebook](#).

The bullet that killed Corporal Orr during the Cheyenne Breakout



Not all the objects treated at History Nebraska's Gerald R. Ford Center are beautiful works of art. Some tell darker and more tragic tales of our nation's past. The bullet shown here killed a man. It tells a story of the Cheyenne Breakout at Fort Robinson in January 1879.

But what is this white corrosion on the bullet's surface, and what—if anything—could be done about it? [Keep reading.](#)

Pender's Popcorn Windmill



Lou and H.C.'s popcorn windmill at 320 Main Street in Pender, Nebraska.

What do popcorn, Athens, Pender, and a windmill all have in common? This 1977 video with Don Jacks from [Nebraska Public Power District](#) has the answer.

Fort Kearny as 'a Sort of One-Horse Affair'



Fort Kearny was an important stop along the Platte River Road, the route shared by the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails. The army established the post in 1848 south of present-day Kearney. Originally known as Fort Childs, it was soon renamed in honor of Stephen Watts Kearny, a US general in the Mexican-American War.

During the 1849 gold rush the fort was still an unfinished collection of sod buildings. This sketch is among the earliest images.

Travelers differed in their opinions of the place. Some did not think it looked like a fort at all. "It is on low land some half mile from the river," wrote John Edwin Banks in 1849. "It consists of about twenty houses made of sod, some roofed with the same material, walls two feet thick. They must be very warm. There is

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Complete articles:

Malcolm X in Omaha, 1964

Malcolm X Declares: JULY 3, 1964

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"But, he added, it is the "duty of every Afro-American and every Afro-American community throughout this country to protect its people against mass murderers, bombers, lynchers, floggers, brutalizers and exploiters."

In assuming this position of "protective violence", Malcolm said he was just borrowing a page from what President Johnson exposed the day previous in warning that "America would strike back if her peace and security were jeopardized."

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"The day for turning the other cheek to those inhuman brute beasts is long over."



Malcolm X . . . Negro turning to roaring lion.

By David L. Bristow, Editor

The *Omaha World-Herald* reporter seemed surprised that Malcolm X smiled so much. The famous activist was not "the surly, white-baiting orator he was pictured to be in his Black Muslim days," wrote Al Frisbee.

Invited by a local civil rights group, Malcolm X returned to his hometown on June 30, 1964, to deliver speeches at the Elks Club on Lake Street and at the lecture hall at the old Omaha Civic Auditorium. It was a time of transition for the outspoken leader. No longer affiliated with the Nation of Islam (whose members were known as the "Black Muslims"), Malcolm X was striking out on his own. He told the Elks Club audience that his new organization was called Afro-American Unity.

“I used to believe in Elijah Muhammad,” Malcolm said of the Nation of Islam’s leader. “I believed in him as a person and I believed in his philosophy that the white man is the embodiment of evil.”

Malcolm had become a Sunni Muslim earlier that year.* In April he made a pilgrimage to Mecca. In his autobiography, published after his death, he said that it affected him deeply to see Muslims of “all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white.”

He was passionate about Islam. Later that day another reporter asked, “You grew up in a Christian atmosphere in a Christian city. Why did you change?” Malcolm replied, “My father, a Christian minister, was run out of this city by the Ku Klux Klan, who are also Christian. He was lynched in Michigan by Christians. I didn't have to change—there was no Christianity for me to change from.”

Malcolm told the Elks Club audience that he was no longer pursuing Black Muslim goal of complete separation. He even welcomed the help of White people, but unlike Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. he wasn't eager to work closely with White allies. “They don't need to join us. They should join each other to change the attitudes of the white community toward the black community.”

“Our goal now is the complete recognition and acceptance of the Negro as a human being by any means necessary.”

By *any means necessary*. It was a phrase Malcolm was known to use.

“Does that mean violence?” the reporter asked.

“I do not advocate initiating violence, but only a few days ago President Johnson warned others that America would strike back if our interests were jeopardized. We feel the Negro should be prepared to defend his life and his property.”

Malcolm had more to say on that subject that night at the Civic Auditorium. Citing the history of unpunished violence against African Americans, he argued that

people must either defend themselves or “continue to be a defenseless people at the mercy of a ruthless and violent racist mob,” the *Omaha Star* reported.

“A man with a rifle or club can only be stopped by a person who defends himself with a rifle or club,” he said, noting that the US Constitution affirms the right to bear arms. Again, he cited President Johnson’s recent statement that America would strike back against foreign enemies.

“How do they expect to put a uniform on us and expect that we will strike back for peace and security in Korea, Laos, Vietnam and not strike back for peace and security in Mississippi? How do they expect us to be violent in Laos and non-violent in St. Augustine, Florida?”

St. Augustine was in the news because of ongoing civil rights protests. Nonviolent protesters had been arrested at segregated lunch counters and restaurants. In the following months the Ku Klux Klan beat protesters, shot into Black homes, and made death threats. Police and the courts ignored the Klan and arrested nonviolent protesters instead. (“Today,” said Malcolm, “the Ku Klux Klan has taken off its sheets and donned a uniform—a police uniform.”) Dr. King was arrested on June 11 simply for trying to enter a restaurant. By then the situation had grown so violent that some local activists began practicing armed self-defense.

“I and the others have armed,” said St. Augustine civil rights leader Dr. Robert Hayling. “We will shoot first and answer questions later. We are not going to die like Medgar Evers.”

Malcolm X, in other words, was not alone in calling for armed resistance. His Omaha remarks illustrate the difference of opinion between Dr. King, who embraced Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolent resistance, and those who doubted that such an approach would ever succeed.

Despite their differences in tactics, Malcolm supported Dr. King’s work. He said his organization had telegraphed King and offered to send help to St. Augustine.

“The day for turning the other cheek to those inhuman brute beasts is long over,” Malcolm said, and added later, “If you do not think that the Afro-American, especially in the upcoming, young generation, is capable of adopting the guerilla tactics now being used by oppressed people everywhere else on this earth, you are making a drastic mistake.”

By then, [Malcolm X was under FBI surveillance](#) and also receiving death threats from his former Nation of Islam associates. On June 8 a caller told his wife, Betty Shabazz, that her husband was “as good as dead.” Malcolm was shot to death while giving a speech in New York on February 21, 1965. Three members of the Nation of Islam were convicted, two of whom were exonerated in 2021. Who may have ordered the murder remains a matter of controversy.

Shortly after Malcolm’s death, Dr. King telegrammed Betty Shabazz to express his condolences. Regarding their differences, King wrote:

“While we did not always see eye to eye on methods to solve the race problem, I always had a deep affection for Malcolm and felt that he had a great ability to put his finger on the existence and root of the problem. He was an eloquent spokesman for his point of view and no one can honestly doubt that Malcolm had a great concern for the problems that we face as a race.”

*At that time he also adopted a Muslim name, Malik el-Shabazz, and after his pilgrimage was entitled to use the honorific el-Hajj. I refer to him as Malcolm X throughout since that is how he was known to the public.

(Photo: Omaha World-Herald, June 30, 1964, p. 2)

Posted February 2, 2022

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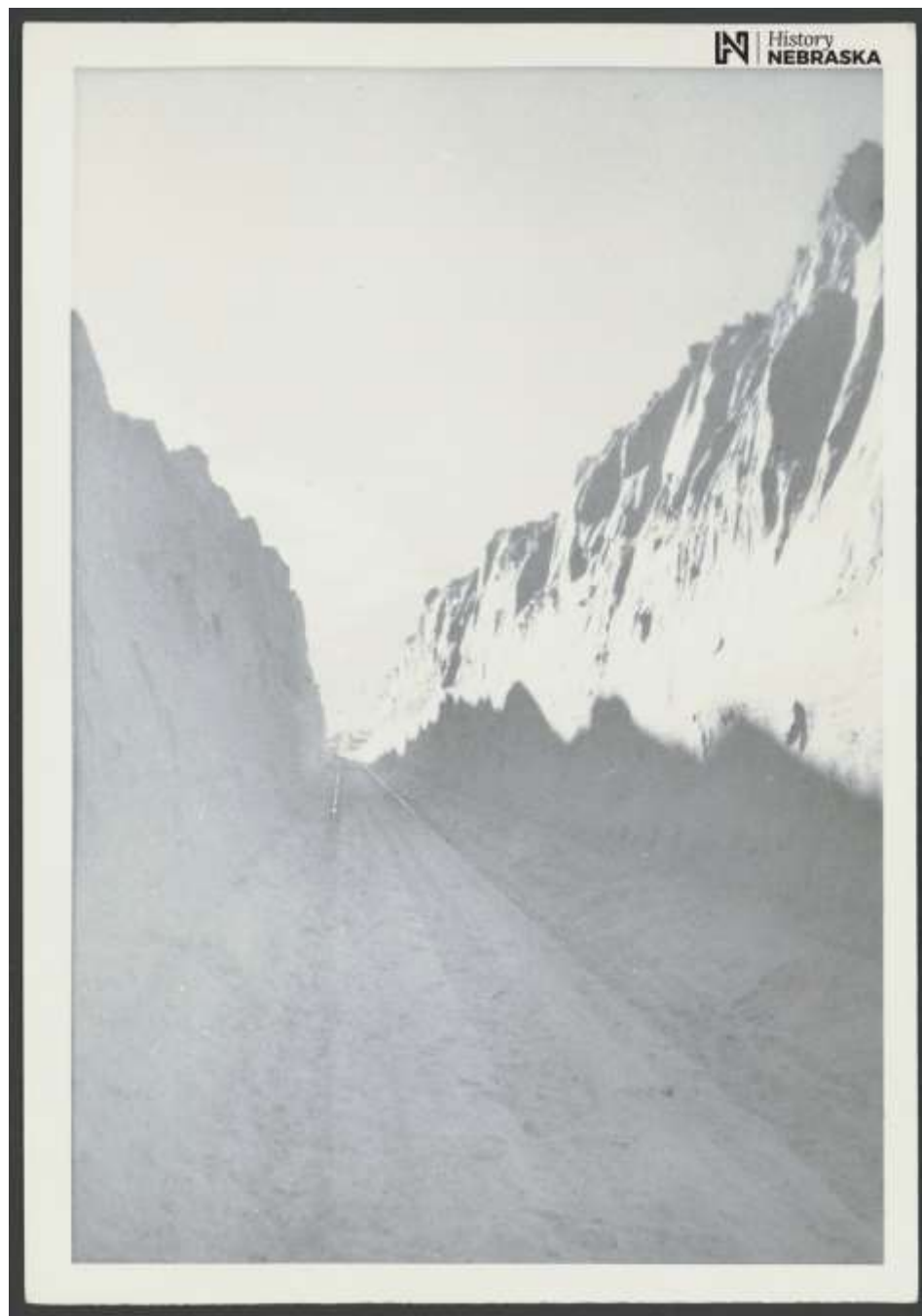
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Categories:

[African Americans](#), [civil rights](#)

Blizzard of 1949



Blizzard, 1949. Francis Bateman, Box 142, Gordon, NE. Railroad tracks with snowdrifts towering above it to either side.



Custer County. Blizzard, 1949. A dog by a buried truck with the door having been freed from the snow.



Gov. Val Peterson (center) and Roberts W. Laing, City Manager (left) with official after the Blizzard of 1949. They are in front of building with an Alliance sign and two large snowdrifts in front.



Helicopter, Custer County Chief. 1949 Blizzard. Broken Bow, Nebraska



Huge snowdrifts are visible on either side of a plow being used to clear railroad tracks during the Blizzard of 1949. Handwritten on the reverse side: "Snow!! Chadron, Neb 1949."



Mrs. Ben J. Fuelberth, Osmond, Nebraska. Blizzard, 1949. Road 3 1/2 miles, south of Osmond. The car is on a road between two large snowdrifts.



Mrs. Emma Winne Bertrand after the Blizzard of 1949 with a shovel in front of a building.



Photo of a railroad locomotive pushing a snow plow through snow. Several people are visible near the train. Snow covers the entire area.

Hand written on the back of the photo is: "1949 Jan. 1949 Snow plow coming into Kilgore from east after the Big Blizzard of 1949. Taken by Stanley Rothleutner"



Blizzard, 1949. A Nebraska plane in flight over a herd of cattle below.



Photo of a railroad locomotive and caboose pushing a snow plow through snow.
Hand written on the back of the photo is: "Big blizzard, 1949, Jan. Kilgore, Nebr.,
Taken by Stanley M. Rothleutner"

Major North's Buffalo Hunt Ended by a Blizzard

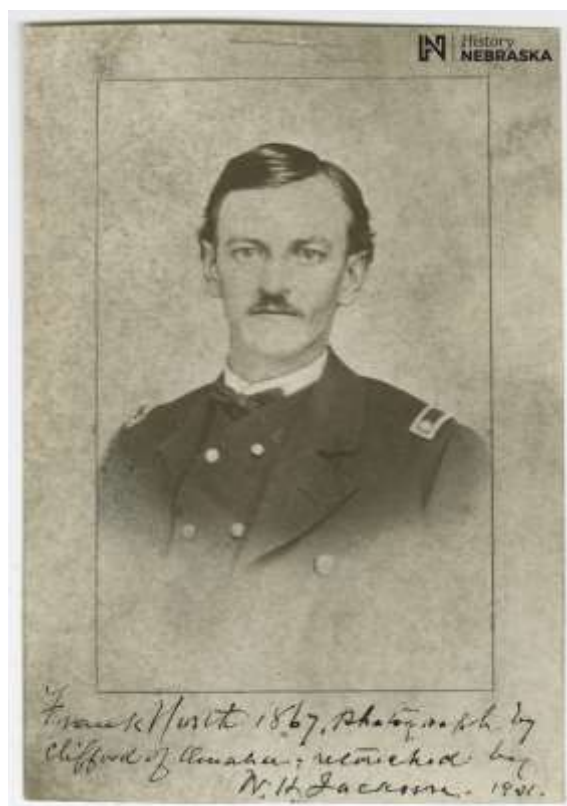


Minnie Freeman, heroine of the blizzard of 1888. RG2411-1692

Minnie Freeman Penney was a young schoolteacher who during the blizzard of 1888 led her pupils from their Valley County school to the shelter of a neighboring farmhouse. A collection of Nebraska pioneer reminiscences published in 1916 by the Nebraska chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, includes both her memory of this storm, and an account of an earlier one in 1871 taken from the diary of her father, William E. Freeman.

This earlier blizzard befell a party of buffalo hunters led by Major Frank North, famed leader of the Pawnee Scouts. After leaving Grand Island, the party, including six wagons and four buffalo horses, crossed the Platte River and went into camp. About midnight the wind changed to the north, bringing rain and sleet, and within an hour a blizzard was raging on the open prairie. The horses were covered with snow and ice and there was no fuel for the campfires. It was decided to try to

follow an Indian trail south. Little progress could be made and they soon camped near some willows that afforded a small amount of protection to their horses.



Frank North in uniform about 1867. RG2320-39

For two days the storm continued, accompanied by intense cold. The men finally determined to find shelter and in groups of two and three left camp, following a creek along which they hoped someone had settled. A sod house occupied by two English families was found, where the group was received hospitably. During the night the storm abated and next morning, finding all the ravines choked with heavy snowdrifts, the hunters decided by vote to abandon the hunt. They dug out their belongings from under many feet of snow and started their return trip. The journey home was full of accidents, bad roads, and drifted ravines.

North later admitted that of all his experiences on the prairie, including those with the Pawnee Scouts, "this 'beat them all' as hazardous and perplexing."

Read the historical markers commemorating two of Nebraska's worst blizzards: the Blizzard of 1888 and the Easter Blizzard of 1873 on the History Nebraska website.

“I’m Never Going to be Snowbound Again, the Winter of 1948-1949 in Nebraska,” from the Winter 2002 issue of Nebraska History, is also online at the History Nebraska website. – Patricia C. Gaster, Assistant Editor / Publications

Categories:

[Blizzard of 1888](#), [blizzards](#), [Frank North](#), [Minnie Freeman Penney](#)

Fort Robinson Bullet

Not all the objects we treat at the Ford Center are beautiful works of art. Some tell darker and more tragic tales of our nation’s past. The object described here is a carbine bullet that killed Corporal Henry P. Orr at Fort Robinson on January 11, 1879, during the [Cheyenne Breakout](#) near Fort Robinson, Nebraska.

The Northern Cheyenne had been forcibly removed from their homeland to a reservation in Oklahoma. Suffering from lack of food and disease and denied permission to return home, 350 Cheyennes left the reservation to return north. Making their way through Nebraska, they were eventually captured and taken into custody at Fort Robinson in western Nebraska. A total of 149 men, women and children arrived at the Fort on October 24, 1878. Initially allowed to leave the barracks during the day, by the end of December, the Cheyenne were prisoners and were denied food and fuel. On the night of January 9, 1879, the Cheyennes broke out and obtained the weapons they had hidden before their imprisonment. By the end of the fighting, sixty-four Native Americans and eleven soldiers lost their lives and eighty women and children were recaptured.

Orr, a member of Company A, 3rd Cavalry, stationed at Fort Robinson, was one of the eleven soldiers who died. Records indicate that the bullet passed through Orr’s heart and lungs, and was removed from the body and donated to the U.S. Armed Forces Institute of Pathology Medical Museum by Dr. E. B. Mosely, Assistant Surgeon. The front of the bullet is misshapen and distorted due to impact. The bullet was transferred to NSHS in 1957.



Photo of Bullet in Case with White Lead Corrosion Product Residue

While visiting Fort Robinson, History Nebraska director, Trevor Jones, noticed white corrosion products in the bullet's display case. He took photos and sent them to the Ford Center staff to see what could be done.

Corrosion products present on the bullet appeared to have been the result of off-gassing exhibit case materials while the bullet was on display.



Before treatment photo of the bullet

Once at the Ford Center, the condition of the bullet was documented using digital images. The bullet was then lightly brushed overall to remove particulate matter and loose corrosion products, vacuum and a screen so the bullet would not get sucked into the vacuum.

Active corrosion products were reduced from the surface of the bullet under a microscope with a combination of a soft brush and a fine tipped pin.

The bullet was chemically dried and degreased before a thin coating of clear paste wax was applied to the surface to provide improved handling qualities and reduce corrosion formation.



After treatment photo of the bullet

After treatment photos were taken of the bullet and it was returned to Fort Robinson for display with recommendations that MicroChamber matboard be used to line the bottom of the display case in order to absorb acidic byproducts from the exhibit case.

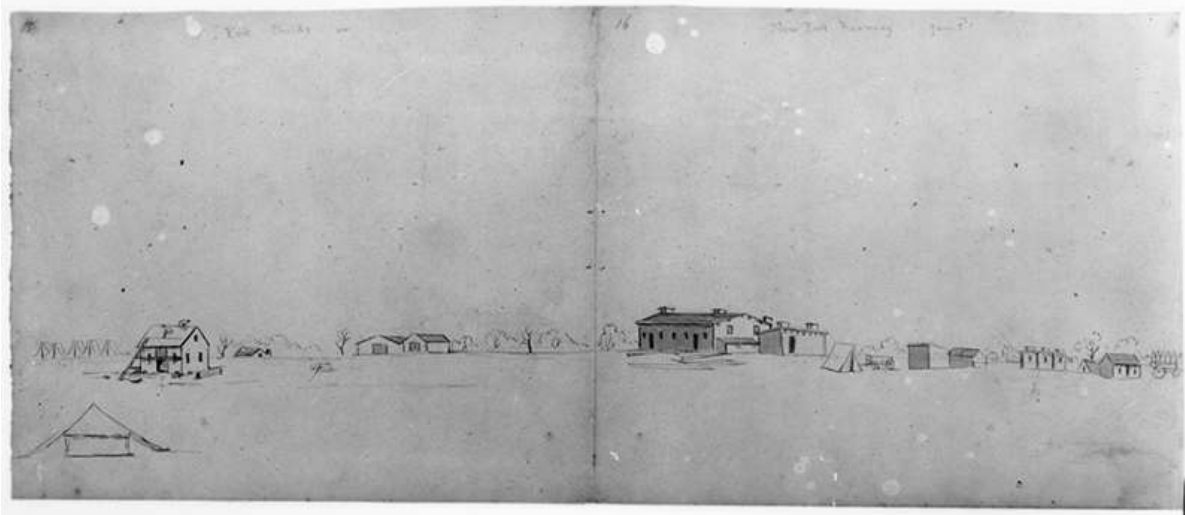


The bullet back on display at Fort Robinson

Categories:

[Gerald Ford Conservation Center](#), [Gerald Ford](#), [conservation](#), [Fort Robinson](#), [Cheyenne](#), [Northern Cheyenne](#), [Cavalry](#)

Fort Kearny as 'a Sort of One-Horse Affair'



By David L. Bristow, Editor

Fort Kearny was an important stop along the Platte River Road, the route shared by the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails. The army established the post in 1848 south of present-day Kearney. Originally known as Fort Childs, it was soon renamed in honor of Stephen Watts Kearny, a US general in the Mexican-American War.

During the 1849 gold rush the fort was still an unfinished collection of sod buildings. This sketch is among the earliest images.

Travelers differed in their opinions of the place. Some did not think it looked like a fort at all. "It is on low land some half mile from the river," wrote John Edwin Banks in 1849. "It consists of about twenty houses made of sod, some roofed with the same material, walls two feet thick. They must be very warm. There is neither

blockhouse or palisade. A few soldiers and two or three cannon are all the evidence one has that it is not some outlandish village.”

Writing in 1852, a traveler identified only as S.M.B. told the *Missouri Republican* that “Fort Kearny is a sort of one-horse affair, stuck down in the mud on the wrong side of the river, and a long distance from wood and every other comfort, the site of which must have been selected by some person who did not know what he was doing.”

The army added new buildings over the years. In 1859, gold miner John T. Gibson described the fort as “quite a respectable little place. Got dinner at 75 cents a head, and enjoyed the good things of mine host amasingly [sic], but felt it somewhat odd sitting at a table, instead of squatting on the ground, as we have been so long accustomed to do.”

Fort Kearny also served as a station for freight wagons and stagecoaches, and as a post office and Pony Express station. Never under attack, it served as an outfitting depot for several military campaigns against Native tribes.

The fort closed in 1871; it has been a state historical park since 1959.



Detail of sketch. History Nebraska RG2102-1-8

This article first appeared in the April 2021 issue of NEBRASKAland Magazine.

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Categories:
[military; trails](#)