

# NEBRASKA history news

Volume 65 / Number 1 / January/February/March 2012

## Mystery Grave in Boyd County

Like something out of detective fiction, a crew digging a trench found an unmarked grave in a rural field where no graves were known to exist. This 2009 discovery near Lynch, Nebraska, resulted in an excavation led by NSHS archeologist Gayle Carlson. The uncovered skeleton had what appeared to be a bullet hole in the forehead. Who was this person? And what were the circumstances of death? Carlson now has a tentative answer.

The upper fourth of the burial was inadvertently disturbed by the trenchers, but based on bones, teeth, and other evidence, Carlson and others concluded the skeleton belonged to a man in his twenties or thirties. The burial likely took place between the 1890s and 1910, based on coffin hardware evidence. Carlson and Nebraska History Museum curator Laura Mooney found a match for some decorative escutcheon plates and thumbscrews in an 1892 funeral supply catalog.

Meanwhile, retired Lynch police chief Albert Lee volunteered to do local research. He told Carlson that his great-grandfather used to own the property where the grave was found, and said there had never been a farmyard or known family grave plot in that part of the section.

Then NSHS senior research historian Jim Potter suggested a book titled *Vigilante Days: Frontier Justice along the Niobrara*, by Harold Hutton. In its pages Carlson learned of a man named Jack Richards.

Richards was said to be the accomplice of a Holt County father and son Ralph and Charlie Hills, who were accused of stealing livestock, among other crimes. Vigilantes apprehended the Hills on June 29, 1894, and apparently later hanged them. Richards was told to leave the country.

Richards went only as far as nearby Knox County. A young man with a three-year-old motherless child to support, he maintained his ties with the Hills family. On September 20, 1895, he was returning from Holt County with a wagonload of supplies, accompanied by two of the Hills' teenage girls. While passing through Boyd County, the group stopped to rest and feed the horses. Richards went

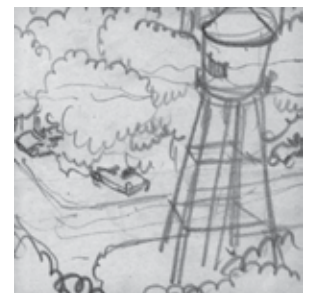


The Boyd County skull, showing what appears to be a bullet hole in the forehead.

into a cornfield beside the road to pick some ears for his team.

The field's owner, Jacob Bruza, saw him. Bruza was furious about the way travelers often helped themselves to his corn. He told his wife to get his gun—apparently a shotgun loaded with homemade lead slugs. Richards took a rifle from the wagon and waited to see what Bruza would do. Presently, one or more shots were fired and Richards fell, mortally wounded. The girls left the scene immediately with the team and wagon.

Bruza and a neighbor took Richards to the Lynch hospital, where he died two days later, having never regained consciousness. Richards was said to have a wound in his forehead, another in the side of his face, and a third in his left side. Some thought Bruza would be convicted of



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

*Continued on page 3*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



*"Nebraskans cherish the fundamental resource that is our land."*

### Our Respect for the Land

Sitting down to compose this column, I am reflecting on the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline project. On this Sunday, there are thousands assembled in Washington, D.C., demonstrating in opposition to the pipeline. Here at home the Unicameral is sitting in a special session to address the ability of the State of Nebraska to play a role in the permitting of such projects. The media and e-communications are filled with conflicting claims and opinions.

Such projects clearly involve many issues of national public policy. That, in fact, was the take on it presented on National Public Radio this morning when a commentator explained the issue on the basis of the nation's need for oil, the advantage of importing oil from friendly Canada, the arguments against using tar sands oil, and the creation of jobs in building the pipeline. As I listened I waited for him to get to the essential Nebraska issue. He didn't and I was disappointed.

While Nebraskans hold various points of view on this undertaking, out-of-state pundits are not picking up what has motivated many in the Cornhusker State, namely our respect for the land and its resources. We are the Cornhuskers after all, named for an activity that is centered in a crop that requires fertile soil, sun, and a great deal of water. In Nebraska that means irrigation. Like drinking water, irrigation needs to be protected from contaminants. For many Cornhuskers, the risk of mixing tar sands oil and the water of the Ogallala Aquifer is unacceptable.

Nebraskans cherish the fundamental resource that is our land. The first Nebraskans, who were here for millennia prior to the arrival of European-based culture, lived off the land as they hunted and planted. The pioneers came here to farm and ranch, seeking prosperity in feeding eastern American cities. Their descendants now supply food and fuel to exploding populations around the world. There is no more basic Nebraska value than caring for the land. Our history is the history of using the land for the greater good. Would that more of the out-of-staters who rely on our agricultural products realize the necessary value underlying their production. I would encourage them to start with the history of the Cornhusker state, for it will teach them that and more. The Nebraska State Historical Society is working on that.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Michael J. Smith".

Michael J. Smith  
Director/CEO



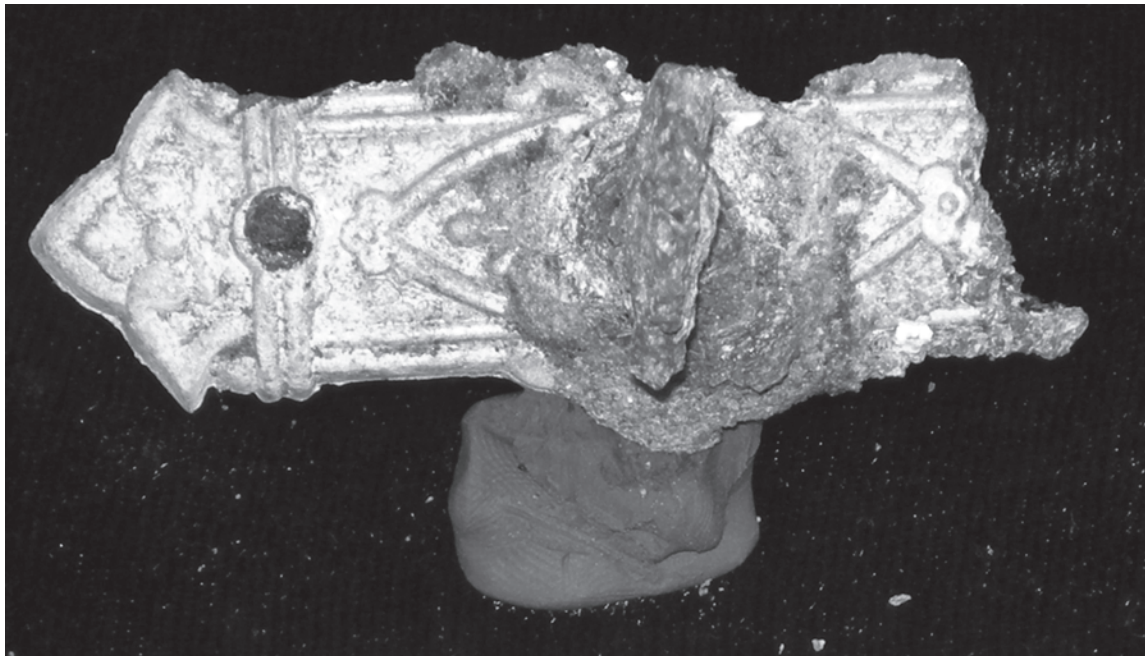
### NSHS Associate Director Appears on C-SPAN

Winston Churchill once said that "History is written by the victors." If this is true, it means we know little of history from the perspective of the defeated. In *The Contenders*, C-SPAN investigates what we can learn from "the losers." This video series presents the lesser-known halves of presidential contests, exploring the life and campaigns of major candidates who were not elected.

William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) was one such candidate—three times. Elected to Congress in 1890 and 1892, Bryan was the unsuccessful Democratic presidential nominee in 1896, 1900, and 1908. NSHS Associate Director for Historic Preservation Bob Puschendorf was one of the historians interviewed about Bryan during C-SPAN's September 23 live broadcast. Puschendorf presents Fairview, Bryan's elegant home in Lincoln, and discusses the historical value of the building.

Puschendorf takes the cameras into Bryan's study, and discusses the important role that room played in Bryan's career. A large partners' desk that Bryan and his wife Mary shared symbolizes their partnership. Such teamwork was particularly rare at a time when women were not even allowed to vote. The cluttered desk features an open Bible, and the first edition of *The Commoner*, a Lincoln newspaper Bryan established. Restoration of the room and other parts of Fairview was based on historic photographs in NSHS collections.

Although he never became president, Bryan's ideas helped shape twentieth century American public policy in support of common people. Puschendorf's presentation and the rest of *The Contenders* series can be seen online in the C-SPAN Video Library at <http://thecontenders.c-span.org>.



A coffin thumbscrew recovered from the grave matches one from an 1892 funeral supply catalog.




#### *Mystery Grave article, continued from page 1*

murder, but he was acquitted. Vigilante influence was thought to be the reason.

Cemetery records show no evidence of Richards's burial in Holt, Knox, or Boyd counties, though it's possible that he's buried in an unmarked grave in one of those cemeteries. But retired chief Albert Lee believes it's possible that his great-grandfather, a Presbyterian minister, may have permitted the burial on his property.


The remains will soon be reburied in a Boyd County cemetery near the discovery site. Identity is still speculative. DNA testing could resolve the issue, but only if known relatives could be located for comparative purposes. All evidence thus far is consistent with

the grave being that of Jack Richards, but it's possible that the burial represents another (unknown) local individual who met a violent death. This would mean that two people in the same small community died of a gunshot wound in the middle of the forehead during the same general time period, one of whom is still unaccounted for. Even for early-day Boyd County, that seems unlikely. 


*Gayle Carlson recently retired from the NSHS after forty-four years of service. Carlson and Rob Bozell of the NSHS, along with several others, are co-authoring a book about the archeological excavation of the 1819-1820 Engineer Cantonment site near Omaha.*

### Research Grants for 2011

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](mailto:david.bristow@nebraska.gov)) by April 2, 2012. We'll announce the winner(s) in May. Grant recipients will then have until April 2, 2013, to complete their manuscripts. See [nebraskahistory.org/publish/grants](http://nebraskahistory.org/publish/grants) for details. 

### Tell Us What You Think!

To help our planning process, the NSHS is surveying our members about the programs and services we offer. This is an opportunity for you to be part of the discussion as we review our plans and priorities. Go to [nebraskahistory.org/survey](http://nebraskahistory.org/survey) and tell us what you think! 





## Historic Preservation Team Documents Valuable Hay Offices

When early Euro-American settlers arrived in what is now Rock County, they discovered a vast expanse of grass. They took up land claims along rivers, making little use of the wide open plains that had been labeled “the Great American Desert.” Because of its high water table, the Elkhorn Valley was ill-suited for the kinds of crops that the early settlers had in mind. But they soon recognized hay as a valuable crop. The native hay was extremely marketable in a time when horses were the main source of power. Stockyards along the Missouri River also required large amounts of hay, making hay marketing into a big business.

At one time the town of Newport, in Rock County, claimed to be the world’s largest shipping point of wild hay. According to historian Verna Lee Tubbs, Newport was exporting 25,000 tons of hay annually during its peak years. At the time hay was valued at around \$12 a ton (about \$275 a ton today). The average freight car could carry 16 tons, meaning that at the height of the haying industry, more than 1,550 freight cars went through Newport in a single year.

The demand for hay declined with the advent of trucks and tractors. With fewer outside sources requiring hay to feed horses, Newport and surrounding communities now use the hay themselves to raise prime cattle. But because modern machinery made it possible for fewer people to ranch larger sections of land, Newport has a much smaller population than it did a hundred years ago. Many of the old hay buildings have fallen into disrepair. Former Newport resident Rudeena Thayer was working with Newport

historian Audrey Olson to preserve this history, and decided the story of the local haying industry should be more widely known. The NSHS sent preservation experts Patrick Haynes and Jessie Nunn to Newport to document this important part of Rock County history before it is lost.

Not every historic building can be saved. But Haynes and Nunn documented four of the old hay offices that were still intact, all situated along the railroad lines. They recorded the buildings’ locations, took photographs and notes, and made measurements used to draft architectural sketches. They investigated the buildings’ appearances and functions, relying partly on information from local residents.

Haynes believes that recording the uses of all the desks, scales, and spaces is important. “Photos can’t tell you how things function, how people use space.” He enjoys the investigation and discovery aspects of his work that allow him to learn things about the buildings that a person just driving by would never know. “You’re getting the story behind it, so now it actually has meaning.”

Nunn’s and Haynes’s research, along with photos provided by Newport residents Bob and Elaine Gilg, are stored in the State Historic Preservation office at the NSHS. Some 250,000 photos and 30 filing cabinets of historical building research ensure that even if the buildings themselves cannot be rescued, their historical significance will not be lost. The Historic Preservation office makes its records available to the public, including some online at [nebraskahistory.org/histpres](http://nebraskahistory.org/histpres). Or call 402-471-4787.

—Joy Carey, Editorial Assistant



A building in Newport, Nebraska, as photographed recently by NSHS Historic Preservation staff.



The building with the implements sign served as the lumberyard office, and also held the scales that weighed the hay bales in Newport, Nebraska. Photo courtesy of Bob and Elaine Gilg



A floor plan created by NSHS staff helps further document the building.



Detail of a surviving copy of the First Nebraska's short-lived newspaper, which is displayed at the Nebraska History Museum.

## Nebraska Civil War Survivor Turns 150

While the last of Nebraska's Civil War soldiers is long gone, they left behind some fascinating reminders of their service and sacrifice. *The First Nebraska Volunteer* was published at Georgetown, Missouri, while the First Nebraska Volunteer Infantry was stationed there during the fall and winter of 1861-62. The original Vol. 1, No.1 of the newspaper, printed on Friday, January 31, 1862, is displayed in the *Nebraska Joins the Union* exhibit at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln.

The Nebraska soldiers had found the local newspaper office abandoned, in this case because the editor had joined the Union army as a private "at the handsome salary of \$13 per month, believing more money could be made by doing so than editing a paper in Georgetown, Missouri." Lt. Charles E. Provost, a former printer with the *Omaha Nebraskan*, decided to fire up the press to publish a news sheet for his comrades. He was following a custom that continued during the war, particularly when Union armies began to occupy Confederate territory. Soldiers produced camp newspapers on the equipment left behind in the local newspaper office after the editor had fled.

Although *The First Nebraska Volunteer* was smaller than a regular newspaper, it conformed to the journalistic standards of the day. Much of the content was reprinted from prominent newspapers or magazines and not surprisingly emphasized war news. In the inaugural issue, the editor felt compelled to offer the customary "salutatory" outlining the paper's goals. One of them was "to show the enemy . . . that 'The hiring hoards [sic] of the North' have with them all the elements of Civilization, and the material to unchain the mighty engines of the mind and spread profusely the light of refinement upon the darkness of barbarism, revolution, and terror." Another was to show loyal Missourians that the soldiers had not come to wage war upon them or their institutions but "to punish the rebellious and bring them once

more to the acknowledgment of the protecting powers of the federal government."

The second page was "local" news, in this case a review of the regiment's travels since leaving Nebraska, a list of the officers, a record of soldiers "died and discharged from the First Nebraska," and a poem by Chaplain Thomas W. Tipton entitled "Song of the Goddess of Nebraska." An editorial praised the people of Nebraska Territory for "responding to their country's call," and urged other "Friends of the Union" there to enlist in the regiment, which was already under strength only six months into its service. The editor no doubt expected that the soldiers would send issues of the paper to their family and friends back home.

The paper also included a "letters" column in which "A Slandered Husband" in the First Nebraska justified "flirting" with Missouri ladies to demonstrate how the soldiers' wives at home "have trained us up to civility and gallantry." Another correspondent wondered whether "Slandered Husband" had written that "very silly apology for flirting" only after his wife arrived in Georgetown and "dictated it to you." At this stage of the war, it was not uncommon for wives to join their soldier husbands in camp between battles.

Alas, the first issue of *The First Nebraska Volunteer* was also the last. By the next scheduled publication date of Friday, February 7, the regiment was well on its way to join Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Union army in Tennessee. The regiment left Georgetown on February 3, 1862, boarded a train at Jefferson City, and then sailed down the Mississippi from St. Louis by steamboat. On the afternoon of February 14, the First Nebraska Volunteer Infantry joined Grant's army then besieging Fort Donelson, a Confederate stronghold on the Cumberland River. The next day the Nebraska soldiers would fight in their first major battle and help Grant win the first significant Union victory of the Civil War. 🗺️

—James E. Potter, Senior Research Historian






# Treasures from Nebraska Museums

The NSHS works hard to collect and preserve Nebraska history, but we don't do it alone. Historical organizations and museums dot our ninety-three counties and contain many treasures. To support their work in preserving our collective history, we've started a program called "Treasures from Nebraska Museums." We'll showcase items from the collections of various Nebraska historical organizations on exhibit at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln, through *Nebraska History News*, and online at [blog.nebraskahistory.org](http://blog.nebraskahistory.org). (Become a fan of the NSHS on Facebook and you'll receive blog posts

automatically.) The exhibit will change every three months, allowing us to share the good work of four organizations each year.

We begin with treasures from the **Louis E. May Museum/Dodge County Historical Society**, located in Fremont, Nebraska's "Nye House." Built around 1874 by Theron Nye, the house was an Italianate structure until Theron's son, Ray, renovated it in a Georgian revival style. In 1921 it was sold to the Lutheran church for use as a seminary; in 1968 the Louis E. May Trust bought it to house a historical museum for the citizens of Dodge County. The house is fully furnished and features period rooms and exhibits about Dodge county citizens, businesses, and events. The photos highlight a few of its "treasures" on exhibit in Lincoln January 6 – March 26. 

*The museum is located at 1643 North Nye Ave. in Fremont. It is open April–December, Wednesday–Saturday, 1:30–4:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$1 for students, ages five and under free. 402-721-4515, [maymuseum.com](http://maymuseum.com).*



Bread bowl, four feet in diameter, used at the Breittling Bakery in Fremont (which closed in 1903). The Breittling family emigrated from Germany and owned a bakery in Genoa, Nebraska, prior to opening their Fremont shop. Bread ingredients would be mixed in this bowl and then left to rise. Such a large bowl would produce many loaves—appropriate for commercial use.

Automatic Harp, with a music box inside, used by the Fremont Independent Order of the Odd Fellows around 1900. It is unknown if it was actually played as an instrument.





Built around 1874, the Nye House is home to the Louis E. May Museum. Photo by Rader Photography



Windows from the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Fremont. These windows, from about 1910, are backed with decorative paper to give the appearance of stained glass. The church was torn down around 1955.

## NSHS Welcomes New Trustees


**F**our new members have joined the Nebraska State Historical Society Board of Trustees. Our governing board includes twelve members elected by NSHS members, and three appointed by the governor. Three-year terms began January 1.

**Brian Croft, Scottsbluff.** Croft teaches composition and literature at Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff and Alliance. He has served on the boards of the North Platte Valley Museum and the Rebecca Winters Genealogical Society, and has given numerous presentations on Nebraska history. He collects historic maps of Nebraska and Nebraska Territory, using them in classroom discussions.

**José Garcia, Omaha.** A Vietnam veteran, Garcia is retired from the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. He is a former executive director of the Chicano Awareness Center in Omaha. More recently, he and his wife organized the Mexican American Historical Society. His background includes “thirty-five years of research and study of the progression of Mexican American history traversing the state from the Wildcat Hills to the western shores of the Missouri River.”

**Jim McKee, Lincoln.** McKee owns a coin and stamp retail store and a publishing business (and formerly, Lee Booksellers). He writes a weekly history column for the *Lincoln Journal Star*, teaches two courses on Nebraska history at Southeast Community College, and is a frequent speaker on history as a Nebraska Humanities Fellow. He is a member of the Lincoln Lancaster County Historic Preservation Commission and a previous member of the NSHS Board of Trustees and the NSHS Preservation Review Board.


**Bryan Zimmer, Omaha.** Zimmer, an architect, currently serves as the president of the Douglas County Historical Society, as a commissioner for the City of Omaha’s Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, and as the president of the American Institute of Architects, Omaha Component. He is a past president of the Friends of the Joslyn Castle, and a yearly contributor to Restore Omaha.

Garcia, McKee, and Zimmer were elected by NSHS members; Croft was appointed by Governor Heineman. Additionally, three current board members were re-elected to new terms: Sheryl Schmeckpeper in the First District, and Dee Adams and Steffan Baker in the Third District. 

## NSHS Board of Trustees Seeks Candidates


**D**o 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? These are 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 2012 include seats in districts one and two. 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 seek a gubernatorial appointment.

Application materials and contact information will be posted at [nebraskahistory.org/admin/board](http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/board) starting January 20. In order to be considered for the nominating committee’s slate of candidates, please submit your application by June 28. Petition candidates may submit applications up to 5 p.m., August 27, 2012. 



## “We the People” Hits the Road

**“We the People”:** *The Nebraska Viewpoint* is about to go on the road. If you missed this NSHS exhibition about civil liberties, it will be at these locations around the state: **Omaha:** W. Dale Clark Library (downtown), February 1–29, 2012; **Alliance:** Knight Museum, July 23 – September 7; **Hastings:** Hastings Museum, September 10 – November 4. An additional location will be added to the roster for spring 2012. Check [www.nebraskahistory.org](http://www.nebraskahistory.org) for updated details. 





## NSHS Film Series: The African American Experience in Film

Free movies at the Nebraska History Museum, Fifteenth & P streets, Lincoln. Showtimes are 1:30 p.m. 402-471-4754.

### January 22 - *Cabin in the Sky* (1943)

In his directorial debut, Vincente Minnelli's use of an all-African American cast, including Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, was groundbreaking.

### January 29 - *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961)

Lorraine Hansberry's play, adapted for the screen, features the original Broadway cast, led by Sidney Poitier and Ruby Dee.

### February 5 - *Nothing But a Man* (1964)

An African American railroad worker, played by Ivan Dixon, faces racism, unemployment, and social barriers as he strives to find his place in American society. This film has been selected for the U.S. National Film Registry as a culturally significant motion picture.


### February 12 - *Souder* (1972)

The son of a family of sharecroppers comes of age in the Depression-era South after his father is imprisoned for stealing food.

## Coming in Nebraska History

Raised in Falls City, Nebraska, John Falter became one of the nation's most successful illustrators of the 1930s through the 1960s. His work is the subject of a forthcoming exhibition, *The Illustrator's Pencil: John Falter from Nebraska to the Saturday Evening Post*, which opens April 6 at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln (see pp. 11-12). In lieu of an exhibit catalog, the text and selected images will appear in the Spring 2012 issue of *Nebraska History*.

A second article in that issue will feature Todd Storz, an Omaha radio station owner who played a key role in pioneering the Top 40 format in the 1950s. Chris Rasmussen shows how Storz was a figure of national significance, who permanently changed radio programming with an approach that was "vibrantly populist, crassly commercial, and undeniably young."

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




A still from *Within Our Gates* (1920), to be shown at the Nebraska History Museum on February 26.

### February 19 - *Do the Right Thing* (1989)

Produced, written, and directed by Spike Lee, this film tells the story of racial tension spiraling out of control on the hottest day of the summer in Brooklyn, New York. The film has also been selected for the U.S. National Film Registry.

### February 26 - *Within Our Gates* (1920)

The earliest surviving film made by an African American director, Oscar Micheaux's movie promotes education as the key for African American advancement. 



Omaha radio station KOWH played a key role in pioneering the Top 40 format. When *Time* magazine transposed its call letters in a 1956 article, the station returned the favor in a playful ad in a trade magazine, a detail of which is shown here.

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

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



A little girl points to a watch in her hand on this postcard featuring a calendar for 1909. NSHS RG3542-247-6

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**January 15 • 2 p.m.**

**Portrayal of Annie Oakley by Charlotte Endorf**  
**Sunday Afternoon at the Museum**  
John G. Neihardt State Historic Site, Bancroft  
888-777-4667 • [www.neihardtcenter.org](http://www.neihardtcenter.org)

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**January 19 • 12 noon**

Dennis N. Mihelich, retired Creighton history professor  
**First Telegraph Line across the Continent: Charles Brown's 1861 Diary**  
**Brown Bag Lecture Series**  
Nebraska History Museum (NHM), 15<sup>th</sup> & P streets, Lincoln

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**January 22 • 2-4 p.m.****"Winter Fun"****Free Family Workshop**

Play pioneer and Indian games and make winter crafts  
NHM • 402-471-4754, [judy.keetle@nebraska.gov](mailto:judy.keetle@nebraska.gov)

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**February 1-29**

**"We the People": The Nebraska Viewpoint**  
**Nebraska State Historical Society Touring Exhibition**  
W. Dale Clark Library, 215 S. 15<sup>th</sup> St., Omaha  
402-444-4800

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**February 11 • 2-4 p.m.****"Be My Valentine"****Free Family Workshop**

Learn the history of Valentine's Day and make Victorian-style Valentines  
NHM • 402-471-4754, [judy.keetle@nebraska.gov](mailto:judy.keetle@nebraska.gov)

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**February 12 • 2 p.m.**

**Exhibit by Sioux City artist Ann McTaggart**  
**Sunday Afternoon at the Museum**  
John G. Neihardt State Historic Site

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**February 16 • 12 noon**

Paul Hedren  
**After Custer: Loss and Transformation in Sioux Country**  
**Brown Bag Lecture Series**  
NHM

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**February 16 • 1:30-2:30 p.m.**

**After Custer: Loss and Transformation in Sioux Country**  
by Paul Hedren  
**Book Signing**  
Landmark Store, NHM • 402-471-3447

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**March 15 • 12 noon**

David Murphy, NSHS Historic Preservation Division  
**"Solving the Mysteries of Quesenbury's Sketches: Making the Book Scenery, Curiosities, and Stupendous Rocks"**  
**Brown Bag Lecture Series**  
NHM

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**March 18 • 2-4 p.m.****"Recycling"****Free Family Workshop**

Learn past and present recycling efforts and make crafts using recycled materials  
NHM • 402-471-4754, [judy.keetle@nebraska.gov](mailto:judy.keetle@nebraska.gov)

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**March 31 • 10 a.m.****Nebraska Book Festival**

Author readings, writers' workshops, and other literary activities  
Nebraska History Museum  
[www.bookfestival.nebraska.gov](http://www.bookfestival.nebraska.gov)

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



*[www.nebraskahistory.org](http://www.nebraskahistory.org)*



# Nebraska State Historical Society FOUNDATION

Coming Soon, April 6, 2012  
Nebraska History Museum  
Exhibition Opening

## **T**he Illustrator's Pencil: John Falter from Nebraska to the Saturday Evening Post

Born and raised in Nebraska, John Falter became one of the most successful American illustrators of the 1930s through the 1960s. The sketches, cartoons, and caricatures he drew while growing up as a clothier's son in Falls City reveal the skills and sense of humor that would lead to later success. Advertising clients included such corporate giants as General Motors, Packard, Pall Mall, and Campbell's Soups. His art graced the pages of pulp classics, mainstream magazines like *Good Housekeeping* and *McCall's*, and well over one hundred *Saturday Evening Post* covers.

On his death in 1982, Falter's widow donated his complete studio and many works to the Nebraska State Historical Society. Now the NSHS is planning a new exhibition to share the talents and humor of this noted Nebraskan with museum visitors of all ages. Studio artifacts, select works from other collections, and more than two hundred items from the NSHS will trace one creative artist's journey from Nebraska to the *Saturday Evening Post*.

## **Would YOU like to help sponsor the exhibition?**

For more information please contact:  
Jodi Knight, Development Director,  
402-435-3535 or [Jodik@nshsf.org](mailto:Jodik@nshsf.org)

*Lovers' Lane, Falls City,  
Nebraska, cover of the  
Saturday Evening Post,  
May 24, 1947.*



Preliminary sketch  
for *Lovers' Lane*. NSHS  
RG10645-4916





1500 R Street  
P.O. Box 82554  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-2554

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## hours

### **Nebraska**

#### **History Museum**

15 & P Streets, Lincoln  
402-471-4754

Monday-Friday, 9-4:30  
Sat. & Sun., 1-4:30

### **Museum Store**

402-471-3447

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

### **Library/Archives**

1500 R Street, Lincoln  
402-471-4751

Tuesday-Friday, 10-4  
Saturday 8-5

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

facebook

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

# NEBRASKA history news

Nebraska State Historical Society

## From the Collection. . .

### *Four-Star Hit with a Lone-Star Man*

“**F**our Roses! There’s a whiskey a man can tie to!” says “Bill” in an early 1940s ad for Four Roses Whiskey. “That rich and velvety smoothness . . . mellow as a Texas moon!” Nebraska native John Falter illustrated an ad campaign for the company; this original painting from it will be part of an exhibit at the Nebraska History Museum opening in April 2012 (see p. 11).

Falter was one of the country’s most successful illustrators precisely because he knew how to capture the spirit of the times. His illustrations for ads, articles, and magazine covers provide a window into mid-twentieth century American culture.

This painting is a recent NSHS acquisition. Funding for its purchase was provided in memory of Mary Hannah Hansen Lux

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