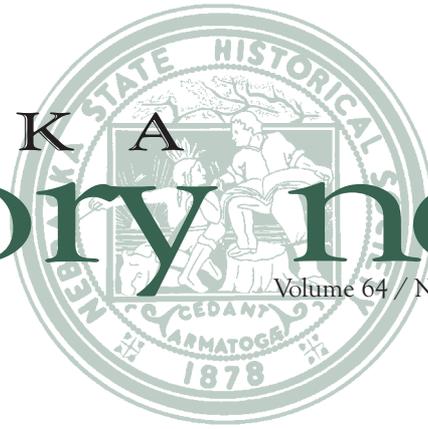


NEBRASKA history news

Volume 64 / Number 2 / April/May/June 2011



Chief, the Last U.S. Cavalry Horse



Chief and Sgt. Ben Parker, Fort Riley, Kansas, 1964.
NSHS RG4261-1-1

His name was Chief, and he was a Nebraskan. For nearly two decades he served his country in the United States Army. Chief was the last U.S. Cavalry horse.

Foaled in 1932, Chief was raised as a cow pony. The U.S. Army purchased him in 1940 at Fort Robinson from L. A. Parker of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, for the sum of \$163. Chief arrived at Fort Riley, Kansas, on April 3, 1941, where he was first assigned to the 10th Cavalry and later the 9th Cavalry. Chief was then transferred to the Cavalry School in June of 1942 where he would eventually attain the rank of Advanced Cavalry Charger.

Chief remained at the Fort Riley Cavalry School in semi-retirement from 1949 to 1958, and spent the remainder of his life at the Fort Riley Riding Club. Chief, the last of the U.S. Cavalry horses, died on May 24, 1968, at the age of 34.

CHIEF



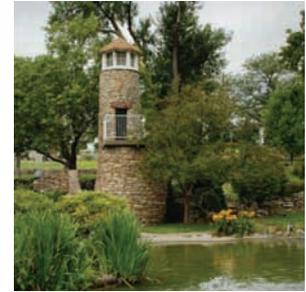
1932 - 1968

Memorial program for Chief RG4261.AM

He was accorded a military funeral with full honors, an event attended by the Commanding General of the U.S. Army. The band played "Garry Owen," the unofficial anthem of the mounted cavalry. Chief was entombed in a marble vault. He was buried standing, as if awaiting his rider.

With Chief passed an era. 🗿

Want more articles like this? Visit blog.nebraskahistory.org, which is updated several times a week with new material from NSHS staff. Or follow the blog via Facebook. Thanks to Manuscripts Curator Tom Mooney for this item.



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



A panel from the *We the People* exhibit. Pictured clockwise from top left are William Jennings Bryan, Vice President Charles Dawes, Judge Elmer Dundy, and U.S. Sen. George Norris.

We the People and the Real Story of the Constitution

Remarks by NSHS Director/CEO Mike Smith, January 6, 2011, at the NSHS legislative reception and opening of We the People: The Nebraska Viewpoint:

This week, as legislative institutions established under the 1787 federal constitution go into new sessions after holiday breaks, it is a most appropriate time to open an exhibition concerning the Constitution of the United States. Historian and writer Catherine Drinker Bowen correctly referred to the Constitutional Convention as *The Miracle at Philadelphia*, the title of her 1966 book. It was in many ways a miracle that a small number of white, wealthy, and politically connected men—known today as “The Founders”—drafted a document to serve as the basis for a federal government grounded in the people.

Of course, they might not have accomplished this had they not been forced into action by the failure of the existing post-Revolutionary War government working under the Articles of Confederation. A financially broke and faltering confederated government could not provide for the nation’s security, its ability to act as a single unit, or its success in fostering peace and prosperity. After a fierce public debate, qualified male voters in each of the thirteen original states approved the new Constitution. As some would say, “and the rest is history.”

Actually the rest is the real story. That Constitution—expanded by amendment and tweaked by federal statute, litigated in the courts, attacked and defended by soldiers and sailors, and taught to American schoolchildren—has for more than two centuries maintained its position as the basis for our government, a government of law and not of individuals or interest groups.

In my opinion, keys to the Constitution’s success have been, first, the persistent will of the American people to affirm its main premise that government is based in the people who live under its stipulations and protections, and second, in the people’s ability to redefine and expand the scope of who makes up “the people.”

Continued on Page 4



The “lighthouse” observation tower at Kearney’s Harmon Park.

Harmon Park: Nebraska’s New Deal Showcase

Kearney’s Harmon Park has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Established in 1876, the park was expanded in 1924 with a Harmon Foundation grant, and further beautified through New Deal projects. The listing recognizes the park’s unique landscape architecture and its role in providing recreational opportunities.

Harmon Park was already well loved by the 1930s. Harmon Field was popular for baseball, while a fountain and formal gardens provided places to sit and stroll. Still, Kearney citizens were willing to pay for more. Expecting matching funds from the Public Works Administration (PWA), the city floated a \$35,000 bond in April 1936 to build a swimming pool, rock garden, and band shelter. After initially rejecting Kearney’s application because it didn’t create enough jobs, in September the PWA finally approved a \$21,600 grant.

The Kearney Parks Commission had been working on plans for the park since at least 1935, and was ready to proceed immediately. Completed in 1937, the first phase was the concrete swimming pool and bathhouse designed in the “modernistic” style. With terraces that gently curve around the pool sides, horizontal banding and stylized details, the structure perfectly blends the verticality and applied decoration of Art Deco with the clean streamlining of Art Moderne. In 1938, the PWA turned to the construction of an open-air theater or “Sonatorium.”

The concrete structure has a stage flanked by stylized towers and lower shelters. Like the pool, the Sonorium is a wonderful example of the “modernistic” styles commonly used for PWA projects.

While the PWA worked on the major buildings, the Works Project Administration (WPA) and the National Youth Administration (NYA) became involved in landscaping projects. The most ambitious was the WPA rock garden and artificial stream built at the park’s northern end. In contrast with the clean modern lines of the PWA buildings, this area is rustic and romanticized. The stream begins at the top of a hill and travels down, interrupted by several small waterfalls, before reaching a series of ponds. A winding stone path with many footbridges follows the stream to a “lighthouse” observation tower. Today, various plantings create a lush environment during summer months.

Despite occasional friction, the local-federal partnership was successful, and not just aesthetically. An estimated 100 previously unemployed men worked at Harmon Park each day during the 1937 building season. The park also created recreational opportunities and became a regional attraction. On one fall Sunday in 1938, over 2,000 individuals from twenty-seven Nebraska counties and seven other states gathered at the park. Over 500 children showed up for the pool’s first “free” day.

Harmon Park was praised by the public and by experts alike. “I have not found anywhere a finer park than here in Kearney,” said J. M. Jenkins, University of Nebraska Director of Forestry, at the Sonorium’s dedication. It is a credit to the City of Kearney Parks Commission that Jenkins would still recognize and admire the park today. 🌳



Also New to the National Register

The North Seventh Street and North Eleventh Street Historic Districts, situated between Garfield and Washington streets in Beatrice, are intact collections of late-nineteenth and twentieth century Revival and American styles constructed between 1884 and 1950.

Wohlner’s Neighborhood Grocery, 5203 Leavenworth, Omaha. This 1920 one-story brick commercial building was home to one of Omaha’s best known independent neighborhood markets for decades.

Scribner Town Hall, west terminus of Howard at Third Street in Scribner. With its iconic bell tower and Romanesque Revival architecture, this 1906 multi-purpose building symbolizes community utility, pride and permanence.

Spade Ranch Store, Ellsworth. In 1898, Bartlett Richards, owner of the nearby Spade Ranch, hired local carpenters to construct a building for a store and the headquarters of the Nebraska Land and Feeding Company.

District #119 North School, Sandy Avenue, Ellsworth. In 1951, this building was fixed on two metal skids so it could easily be moved to serve shifting school-age populations. 🌳

Harmon Park’s “Sonorium” is an example of the 1930s modernistic style.

—Jessie Nunn, National Register Coordinator

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Continued from page 2



"America's promise remains that the 'people' and the 'population' are the same."

Back in 1787, the American population included men and women, youth, people of color (most of whom were enslaved and designated as property rather than persons), Native Americans, rich and poor, debtors and creditors, educated and uneducated. Within this population, the people were the white male property holders—for only they were qualified voters.

From the formation and ratification of the Constitution, America's promise was, and remains, that the people and the population are the same, and that the people have a voting voice and thus the ability to make decisions.

The story of that promise and its ongoing fulfillment is told in our exhibit, *We the People*, and in our year-long project. It is a story of conflict in Congress, in our courts, on the streets, and on the battlefields of our Civil War. While Americans rightly honor our military heroes, many of the most courageous Americans heroes did their work not on battlefields but on the streets, in editorial offices and court rooms, working to include more and more of the population in "We the People." It is their work that we honor and recognize.

Their story is even more compelling because it is a struggle against human nature itself. It is part of our nature to fear the exotic and the unknown—especially people who are unlike ourselves. When new people arrive who are willing to work for lower wages, or who seem strange in their dress, habits, foods, and religion, that result can be fear which leads to intolerance. That, too, is reflected in the *We the People* exhibition.

Has this always been a pretty picture? No!

Has it been one that "causes all Nebraskans to be proud"? No!

Is it one of total success? No!

Is it only a historical picture with little to do with today? No!

Rather, the story is one of bumps, bruises, and scars, both physical and psychological. The exhibition tells a realistic story, one in which Nebraskans have played a very important part.

America's gift to the world is the promise that governments can be, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, "of the people, by the people, for the people." In the past and today, Americans have made it their mission to ensure that the population and the people are one and the same. *We the People* relates this history, and we hope that experiencing it will help all Nebraskans commit to the fulfillment of the promise.

Take a Look at Nebraska's Treasures!

Simply go to our home page, nebraskahistory.org, and click on "Search Collections." You'll have easy access to our library catalog and to the NSHS museum and photographic collections database, including color images of museum artifacts, historic photographs, and lots of fascinating information! 📷



Boy Scouts Take over the Museum

The previous issue of *Nebraska History News* had just gone to press when we received word that the Nebraska History Museum had been overrun by a horde of Cub Scouts. It sounds like a risky combination: hundreds of small boys in a building full of valuable, breakable things.

But everything turned out fine. On the evening of Friday, December 3, more than 550 people, including scouts, their families, and leaders attended the three-hour event, organized by the Boy Scouts with typical preparedness. The NSHS had only two custodians on duty. Older Boy Scouts shepherded the Cub Scouts from exhibit to exhibit and across the street to the Lincoln Children's Museum, and organized the award ceremony that concluded the evening.

This was the third year the Boy Scouts have held such an event. The first year they visited the Strategic Air and Space Museum in Ashland; the following year, Morrill Hall on the UN-L campus. The second event was dubbed "Night at the

Museum,” after the movie of the same name. Last December, keeping with the movie theme, it was “National Treasure.”

At the two museums, the scouts went on something of a scavenger hunt. A booklet of clues lead scouts to certain displays where they found information to answer a question. After completing each task they had their booklets checked and were given a sticker for correct answers. At the end of the night all of the scouts that completed the booklet were honored at an award ceremony. They were presented with a fleur de lis, the official symbol of the Boy Scouts.

Boy Scouts also made pinch pots and par-fleches. A parfleche is sort of a Native American suitcase, a bag usually made of rawhide; the scouts made theirs of card stock. Their evening also included pizza and a movie (*National Treasure*, of course).

The event is an example of how the Nebraska History Museum seeks to partner with other organizations. The partnership with the Boy Scouts started a year ago when the museum created an exhibit for the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts.

“It was a wonderful evening of new visitors to the museum,” said Ann Billesbach, associate director for museums and historic sites. “Most people had never been here or it had been quite a few years.” Such events help fulfill the museum’s educational mission. The scouts discovered new things about Nebraska history as they explored the exhibits, and most of all, that history can be fun! 📍

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. Twelve trustees are elected by NSHS members. To be considered for the nominating committee’s slate of candidates, submit your application by June 1. After that day, petition candidates may still submit applications up to 5 p.m., August 15, 2011. 📍



Coming in *Nebraska History*

“**H**idden Paradise.” The name alone was worth a long trip by train or on bumpy dirt roads to the pine-forested canyon at Long Pine. A transformation began in 1910 that created a resort that drew travelers for decades. Rebecca Buller’s look at “Nebraska’s Hidden Paradise” in the forthcoming Summer 2011 issue of *Nebraska History* magazine gives insight into rural Nebraska tourism in the early-to-mid twentieth century and the activities and amenities that made the trip worth the trouble.

In other articles, David Delbert Kruger shows how the J. C. Penney Company entered Nebraska not as a shopping mall anchor, but as a chain of small-town stores that served a primarily rural customer base. By the late 1920s, the company had stores in more than fifty Nebraska communities—more than any retailer before or since.

And Martha Fitzgerald examines the 1930s letters of medical students Joe Holoubek and Alice Baker. The couple, who later married, studied in different cities, he in Omaha and she in New Orleans. Their correspondence reveals the risks, triumphs, and challenges of that era’s medicine, and starkly different philosophies of medical training in Nebraska and Louisiana.

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

The “Plunge Bath” at Hidden Paradise, circa 1910. Courtesy Heritage House, Long Pine, Nebraska.

Collections Town Hall Meetings and Workshops Statewide

Nebraska's 150th birthday is just six years away, so it's not a moment too soon to pose the question, "How can we best preserve the collections that document our past?" Millions of artifacts, photographs, records, and manuscripts are housed in hundreds of Nebraska museums, libraries, and archives. How do we assure their future?

Join us in a unique opportunity to wrestle with these challenging questions at meetings around the state this April. One-day events in Chadron, Kearney, Norfolk, and Omaha will give you an opportunity to review a draft statewide collections preservation plan and contribute your ideas to improve our heritage health. As a bonus, a free two-hour collections preservation workshop will provide you with practical suggestions for improving collections care. Limited funding is available to assist with travel costs.

Workshops will focus on preservation and digitization of historic documents in Chadron on April 18 and Kearney April 19. Disaster preparedness planning is featured in Norfolk April 20. "Ask the Conservator" on April 20 in Omaha will let you pose specific collections concerns to NSHS Ford Conservation Center staff.

Review the draft preservation plan and see the responses of 156 Nebraskans to the collections needs survey that informed it online at the "What's New" page at nebraskahistory.org. And then register to make your contribution to a better future for the past at 402-471-3270 or visit www.nebraskahistory.org. Staff and volunteers from museums, historical societies, libraries and archives are welcome to participate.

The meetings and planning process are funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. NSHS partners include the Nebraska Library Association, Nebraska Museum Association, Nebraska Arts Council, and Nebraska Humanities Council. 

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 14 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 22. If you have questions, contact Martha Kimball (martha.kimball@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4746, or 800-833-6747). Here are the awards for which we are seeking nominations:

The **Addison E. Sheldon Memorial Award** recognizes "outstanding contributions to the 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 one-time accomplishment.

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 one-time contribution by an individual or organization.

The **James C. Olson Memorial Award** goes to a Nebraska K-12 teacher for outstanding success in engaging, inspiring, and guiding their students to discover, enjoy, and learn from the fascinating and important histories of Nebraska's people. 

www.nebraskahistory.org

Join the Nebraska State Historical Society's First Ever Home Movie Day

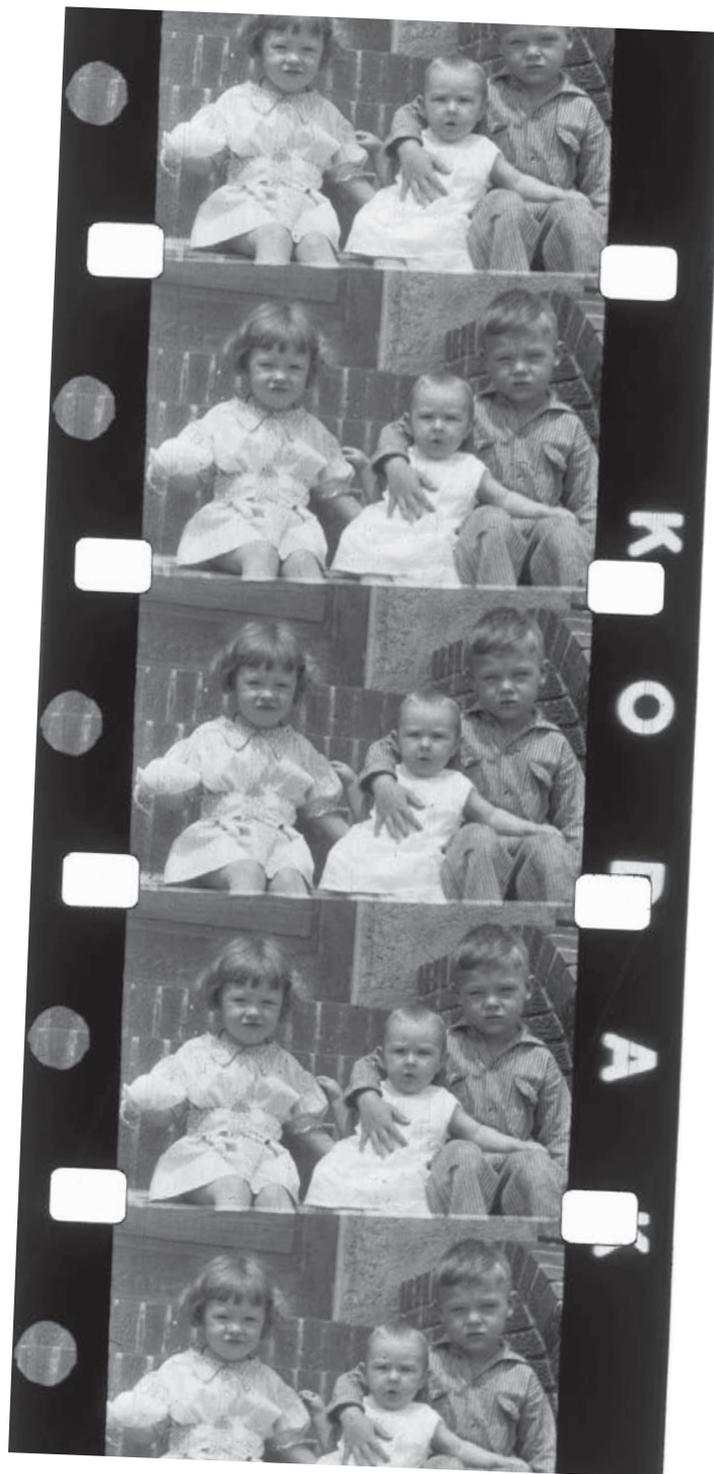
Save the date: Saturday, October 15, 2011

We're all familiar with home movies. In fact, more home movie footage has been shot than any other film genre, including Hollywood studio features. Now you may have the chance to share your home movies with your community for the first time! Home Movie Day, now in its tenth year, is a celebration of amateur films and filmmaking held annually at many venues worldwide. This fall the NSHS will present Nebraska's first foray into the celebration of this special craft as our annual Archives Week event.

The all-day experience at the Nebraska History Museum, Fifteenth and P streets, Lincoln, will feature an illustrated talk on the home movie phenomenon, including their history, why home movies are special, and how to care for your films. In the afternoon comes a screening of home movies, including choice picks from the NSHS's collections and from your own caches of films!

To do this up right, we'll need to borrow some of your home movies. We'll examine them and choose the best for the screening. For information on contributing home movies, contact Paul Eisloeffel at 402-471-7837 or paul.eisloeffel@nebraska.gov.

Home Movie Day events provide the opportunity for individuals and families to see and share their own home movies with a community audience, and to see their neighbors' movies in turn. It's a chance to discover why you should care about these films and learn how best to preserve them. 📽





Nicky Haverland of Omaha stopped at Chimney Rock this past winter shortly after being named Miss Nebraska. Haverland was named to fill the remainder of the Miss Nebraska reign of Teresa Scanlan, who was named Miss America 2011. Haverland is a graduate student in pharmacology and experimental neuroscience at University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Why Are You a Member?

Recently we asked some of our members why they joined the NSHS. Here are a few of their responses:

“I love history and anything connected with it,” says Marilyn Calver of Ainsworth. “Also, I am a nut about genealogy—I think history and genealogy go hand in hand.” Marilyn is also involved in the Brown County Historical Society and assists with genealogy research whenever she can.

Mitzi Fox of Albion is “interested in history—it is as simple as that. I enjoy the periodical and the book reviews.”

“We love the Nebraska history and genealogy combination, and the Nebraska State Historical Society has great resources for both,” write Donald and Shirley Chavanu of Pleasanton. They’re working on a project regarding a relative’s articles for the *Ravenna News*, which were written over a period of forty years. “The membership is allowing us to copy the articles with less cost and more convenience.” (Members get free copies in the Reference Room.)

Tell your friends and relatives about NSHS membership (which also makes a great gift). They’ll thank you for it. Visit nebraskahistory.org, or call 800-833-6747 or 402-471-3272 to become a member. ☒

Nebraska History Museum Hosts Book Festival

By “Cultivating Creativity,” the Nebraska Book Festival will honor Nebraska writers with author readings, writers’ workshops and other activities. Prominent and award-winning Nebraska writers will lead the free writing workshops. Several Nebraska authors will read from their latest work, including former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser.

On May 21, this free festival will run from 1:00 to 6:30 p.m. at the Nebraska History Museum at Fifteenth and P streets in Lincoln. The event is supported by the Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Humanities Council, Nebraska Library Commission, and the Nebraska State Historical Society. Keep up with new events and authors as they are scheduled for the festival at bookfestival.nebraska.gov and www.facebook.com/NebraskaBookFestival. ☒

Coming This Summer for Kids

The NSHS will host classes for students this summer on a variety of topics. Watch for details at nebraskahistory.org and on our Facebook page.

Grades K-3: “Beauty and the Beast” (two sessions) – Make puppets and perform the play.

Grades K-8: “Native American Arts, Crafts, and Games” (one session) – Learn and make Plains tribes’ arts, crafts, and games.

Grades K-12: “Etiquette for a Proper Victorian Lady” (one session) – Learn about the Victorian Era, including dress and rules ladies were to follow.

Grades 4-8: “Why Do We Have a Constitution?” (three sessions) – Find out when and how the Constitution was written and what is in it.

Grades 4-12: “Homemade Toys” (two sessions) – Make toys from things around the house; “Writing in the Style of Willa Cather” (two sessions) – Examine Cather’s writing and write as she did.

Grades 9-12: “Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and the Constitution” (three sessions) – Discover why the Constitution is as relevant now as it was in 1787; “Beauty and the Beast” (six sessions) – Prepare costumes and scenery and perform the play that Willa Cather and her friends did in 1888.

Sessions will be 9:30 a.m.-12 noon or 1:30-4 p.m. Class fees are \$10 for each session (\$8 for NSHS members), and preregistration is required. All classes will tour the related exhibit in the Nebraska History Museum. ☒



Three Conferences, One Weekend

“The Civil War in the American West,” the Eighth **Fort Robinson History Conference**, will be held April 28-30, at Fort Robinson State Park. Co-sponsored by the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the conference explores some of the ways the war affected the history of Nebraska and the American West. A schedule of events and form for registration (required by April 13) is posted at www.nebraskahistory.org under “What’s New.”

“Willa Cather and Her Popular Culture” is the Cather Foundation’s Fifty-sixth Annual **Willa Cather Spring Conference**, April 29-30, at the Cather State Historic Site in Red Cloud. The program will include discussions about Cather’s relationship with the mass culture of her day, performances, and a film on the popular entertainment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. www.willacather.org

The John G. Neihardt State Historic Site in Bancroft will host the Twenty-ninth Annual **Neihardt Spring Conference** on April 30. “Biography: A Life as Written” will include discussions of Tim Anderson’s work on a Neihardt biography; Roger Welsch’s *Confessions of a Wannabe*; Native American biographer Dr. R. David Edmunds of the University of Texas; and Marla Matkin, with a Chautauqua-style, first-person biography. www.neihardtcenter.org ☒

Nebraska Poet Laureate John G. Neihardt makes a radio broadcast in the 1920s. NSHS RG1042-1-4

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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



John Nelson's photograph, dating from 1907-1917, depicts a young woman surrounded by leaves in a garden. NSHS RG3542-15-1

April 19 • 5:30 p.m.

"You Are the Speaker"
**Civil Rights, Civil Liberties
Community Conversation**
Nebraska History Museum,
15th & P streets, Lincoln
402-471-4754

April 21 • 12 noon

Dr. Thomas Sanchez
"Hispanics in Nebraska"
Brown Bag Lecture Series
Nebraska History Museum

April 28 - 30

"The Civil War in the American West"
Eighth Fort Robinson History Conference
Fort Robinson State Park, Crawford
(registration required)
402-471-3272
www.nebraskahistory.org

April 29 - 30

"Willa Cather and Her Popular Culture"
56th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference
Red Cloud (registration required)
866-731-7304
www.willacather.org

April 30 • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

"Biography: A Life as Written"
29th Annual Neihardt Spring Conference
John G. Neihardt State Historic Site
306 W. Elm Street, Bancroft
(registration required)
888-777-4667
www.neihardtcenter.org

May 1 • 2 - 4 p.m.

"Celebrating May Day"
Free Family Workshop
Nebraska History Museum
402-471-4754
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

May 19 • 12 noon

Dr. James Hewitt
**"Nebraska's Supreme Court
Impact on 'We the People'"**
Brown Bag Lecture Series
Nebraska History Museum

May 21 • 1 - 6:30 p.m.

"Cultivating Creativity"
19th Annual Nebraska Book Festival
Author readings, writers' workshops,
and other activities
Nebraska History Museum
www.bookfestival.nebraska.gov

May 31 • 10 - 11 a.m.

**Picture-book readings with related
activities for all ages**
Hour at the Museum
Nebraska History Museum
402-471-4754
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

June 7, 14, 21, 28 • 10-11 a.m.

**Picture-book readings with related
activities for all ages**
Hour at the Museum
Nebraska History Museum
402-471-4754
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

June 16 • 12 noon

Jon Hamilton
"Nebraska Baseball"
Brown Bag Lecture Series
Nebraska History Museum

Summer Classes for Kids

For dates, times, and places
visit www.nebraskahistory.org

August 2 - 7

**Remembering Robert Taylor:
100th Birthday Film Festival**
Beatrice
Gage County Museum, 402-228-1679

October 15

"Home Movie Day"
National Archives Week Event
Nebraska History Museum
402-471-7837
paul.eisloeffel@nebraska.gov

*For updated events, see the Society's Facebook
page, linked from www.nebraskahistory.org*



Nebraska State Historical Society FOUNDATION

NSHS Foundation News

“The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation is pleased to welcome Jodi Knight as Development Director and the exciting opportunities that this presents to enhance the Foundation’s support for the Nebraska State Historical Society,” said Carol Zink, president of the Foundation. Jodi brings a wealth of experience in fundraising, project management, grant writing, and corporate relations. She will be responsible for guiding the Foundation’s development program and fundraising efforts on behalf of the Nebraska State Historical Society. If you’re interested in finding out how you can make a gift to support the NSHS, please feel free to contact Jodi at the Foundation.

We have also launched a new website and we invite you to check it out! Visit www.nshsf.org and see what’s going on at the NSHS Foundation.

Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation

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Last June’s Elkhorn River flood, top, damaged the 1910 bridge at Neligh Mill State Historic Site, and dumped eight feet of sand in the mill’s flume. Below, Rutjens Construction of Tilden cleaned the sand out of the flume last December; work to repair the mill island will get underway this spring and will be completed in time for vacation season. From 1874 to 1920, dams diverted water into the flume and penstock to turn the turbine and power the mill. (The turbine is still visible in the lower left corner of top photo.) In 1920 a major flood washed away a concrete dam and ended the use of water power for milling.



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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, 9-12, 1-4
Saturday 8-5



Follow the NSHS on Facebook. See link at nebraskahistory.org

State Historic Site hours:
www.nebraskahistory.org

NEBRASKA history news



Nebraska State Historical Society

From the Collection. . .

These cool cats were the Redtops, a 1960s band out of Norfolk, Nebraska that was one of hundreds of groups that played at Oscar's Palladium, a dance hall in Sargent (Custer County), Nebraska. In addition to being a dance hall, Oscar's included a bar and supper club and even hosted roller skating nights.

Many big name music acts performed at Oscar's, including Lawrence Welk, the Dorsey Brothers, and Guy Lombardo. Polka, oompah, and schottische bands were also popular, as were "territory" bands, which traveled specific regions of the country playing the hits of the day as well as their own music. Nebraska was in the MINK circuit (Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas). It is estimated that there were more than 300 dance bands actively playing in Nebraska from 1948 to 1957.

A collection of more than seventy posters from Oscar's are now in the collections of the Nebraska History Museum, where they'll be preserved to document this vibrant part of Nebraska's past. 📷

