

NEBRASKA history news

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How NSHS Conservators Saved a Damaged Work of Art

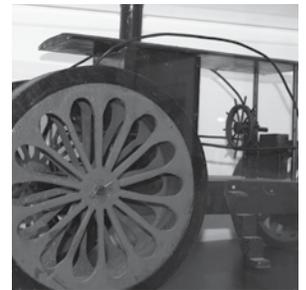
Ruined. What else could you say about a decorated buffalo hide that emerged from its cardboard storage container deeply creased, torn, and stained with a thick residue of mouse urine? Though the hide was in fair condition overall, it was no longer fit for display.

Titled, *Hunting is Now Always for Hides*, the object is the work of Native American artist Randy Lee White (b. 1951), whose work is displayed in major museums including the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Art Institute of Chicago. This piece is owned by the Sheldon Museum of Art (the damage occurred elsewhere); Sheldon staff contacted the NSHS's Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center in Omaha to see if it could be conserved. So successful were conservators Deborah Long and Rebecca Cashman that the project was the subject of a presentation at the recent Mountain Plains Museum Association conference in Lincoln.

How did Long and Cashman undo the damage while maintaining the integrity of the artwork? Conservators don't just charge ahead with their work. They first test a procedure to determine if it's safe to use. For example, they had initially wanted to humidify some of the deep creases out of the hide, but after some initial tests they determined that the hide, though tanned overall, was more sensitive to moisture in some areas than others. It was clear that humidification might run the risk of shrinkage or discoloration. The creases would remain.

After documenting the hide with photographs, they placed it in a freezer to kill any pests that might be living in it, and then carefully vacuumed both sides to remove debris.

After much testing they discovered an aqueous solution that could safely be applied to cotton linter poultices on the stained areas to soften



Deborah Long works on reducing the stains.

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

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What Gettysburg Can Teach Us About Anniversaries

In October we spent two beautiful fall days exploring the Gettysburg National Military Park and Visitor Center as well as the related Seminary Ridge Museum. Gettysburg has been especially busy this year, the 150th anniversary (sesquicentennial) of the conflict that took place there in 1863. On November 19 the 150th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was commemorated at the Soldiers' National Cemetery on that battlefield.

What is so attractive about anniversaries of historical events? Why did Americans relate so well to their heritage at the time of the American Revolution Bicentennial in 1976? Many of our readers will remember Nebraska's own celebrations of its centennial in 1967 and its 125th anniversary in 1992.

We do the same, of course, in our personal lives. Centenarians are honored, often with a personal letter from the President of the United States and a story in the local paper. Families gather to honor parents on their golden wedding anniversaries. School classmates gather on the fiftieth anniversary of graduation.

There is nothing intrinsically special about the numbers 200, 150, 100, or 50. They are not among the numbers thought to be lucky or unlucky. They are just reasonably large units of time, large enough so that the years reviewed lend themselves to the tools of history: comparison, seeking cause and effect, searching to understand change or the lack thereof. Furthermore, they have proven to be effective units of time for engaging people who normally do not participate in history. For organizations like the NSHS it is important to take advantage of these major anniversaries. They offer an opportunity to speak with our communities and our society at large, helping them draw back to the past and to the collective experience that has made us who we are today. Furthermore, in honoring our past—personal, community, or national—we express our dreams for the future.

As Lincoln explained at Gettysburg, the past has given us the present and also the future task of ensuring that all that has been done up to now has not been in vain. Rather, the efforts of those who have gone before us must charge us with the mission and the resolve to continue the efforts—whether those are building a strong marriage, contributing the wisdom we have acquired with age, or creating a nation of opportunity for all.

In just four years, the State of Nebraska will mark its 150th anniversary. That can, should, and must be an occasion to develop the resolution and the pathways that will lead to the future we want for this geographic place on earth.

Michael J. Smith
Director/CEO

What is so attractive about anniversaries of historical events?

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Conservators Deborah Long and Rebecca Cashman of the NSHS's Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center, Omaha.

the urine residue to a gel, making it possible to remove most of it with tweezers and fine dental tools. Because the paint and ink on the hide is also water-soluble, the work had to be done with great care. Next, they stabilized the torn and weak areas of the hide with a very fine woven silk gauze, applied using a stable, reversible adhesive, then toned the repaired areas with pastels. Before and after photos show the dramatic difference.

Conservation isn't just about making things look nice. Its main goal is the preservation of cultural property. Abiding by a professional code of ethics, conservators use only materials known to be stable over time, and make only repairs that can be reversed. Once the work was complete, Long and Cashman advised how the hide should be displayed (lying flat; it is too weak for hanging) and how it should be stored (in an archival tube with acid-free tissue paper). In this way, the work of an important American artist has been preserved for future generations. *Contact the Ford Center at 402-595-1180, nebraskahistory.org/conserve.*



Showing a damaged section of the hide before and after conservation.

New Historical Markers in Auburn and Cherry County

Two new Nebraska Historical Markers have been unveiled, one inside the city of Auburn, and another in a remote Sandhills location in Cherry County.

The marker at the Auburn Post Office commemorates the building's mural, *Threshing*, completed in 1938 by artist Ethel Magafan. The mural is featured in *Nebraska's Post Office Murals: Born of the Depression, Fostered by the New Deal*, by L. Robert Puschendorf and published by the NSHS (see nebraskahistory.org/books). Funding for the marker was provided by the local convention and visitors' bureau and erected with donated labor, which was coordinated by Postmaster Stephanie Hackett.

In southwestern Cherry County, a natural valley extending east and west across the Sandhills became known as Survey Valley after the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad surveyed a prospective line from O'Neill to Alliance in 1887. No rails were ever laid, but the area was settled by homesteaders and Kinkaiders, and Survey had a post office (in the homes of its postmasters) from 1909 to 1934. The Grant County Historical Society and the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution, Sandhills Chapter, sponsored the marker, which is located forty-two miles south of Merriman along Highway 61. 📍



Marker dedication in Auburn, August 27, 2013.
L to R: Ryan Jones, Auburn Chamber of Commerce president; Bob Puschendorf, NSHS; Mary Kruger, chair, Nemaha County Lodging Tax Committee; Auburn Mayor Scott Kudrnc; Stephanie Hackett, Auburn postmaster; Scott Case, manager of post office operations for 683 and 684 ZIP code areas. David Swanson photo, courtesy of *Nemaha County Herald*

The 2013 Nebraska Book Awards

The NSHS won in three categories at the 2013 Nebraska Book Awards. Left to right: Jim Potter, NSHS senior research historian and author of *Standing Firmly by the Flag: Nebraska Territory and the Civil War, 1861-1867*, winner for Nonfiction: History; Bob Puschendorf, NSHS associate director for historic preservation and author of *Nebraska's Post Office Murals: Born of the Great Depression, Fostered by the New Deal*, published by the NSHS, winner for Nonfiction: Nebraska as Place; David Bristow, NSHS associate director for publications; and Nathan Putens, graphic designer for *Nebraska's Post Office Murals* and winner for Cover/Design/Illustration. 📍



Kearney Corn Project Seeks to Preserve Pawnee Heritage

By mid-September the corn harvest in Nebraska was underway. In Kearney, one small but special cornfield saw a very special harvest.

On September 14-15 members of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma came north to Nebraska, the motherland, to harvest their traditional corn grown in a field at the Great Platte River Road Archway. This corn project is part of the Archway educational programming by Ronnie O'Brien, working closely with Deb Echo-Hawk, the Pawnee Nation's Keeper of the Seeds, and with the permission and blessing of the Pawnee Nation. Starting a decade ago this partnership has grown the Pawnee corn from a small cache of seed to yields that will soon actually feed the Pawnee people.

Corn has been grown in Nebraska for at least a thousand years. Long before Euroamerican settlement, the Pawnee developed nine historic varieties of corn for different purposes. When the Pawnees were forced to move to Oklahoma in the 1870s, their corn did not grow well on their new reservation. By 2003, when the Kearney project began, their seed bank was nearly empty.



Deb Echo-Hawk with red flour corn at the Great Platte River Road Archway.

With the 2013 harvest of red flour corn, eight of these varieties are once again grown in Nebraska—and it appears that the ninth, red- and blue-speckled corn—is finally beginning to sprout from seeds once thought too old to germinate. 🌱

MPMA Comes to Lincoln

The Mountain-Plains Museum Association, a ten-state regional museum association, held its annual conference in Lincoln September 30 – October 3, 2013. NSHS staff were involved in planning the conference and leading some of the sessions. On the opening night, conference attendees toured the state capitol (right) after attending a speech by Governor Dave Heineman, and then came to a reception at the Nebraska History Museum (below). 🌱



National Park Service Features Kennard House in Online Curriculum

The National Park Service is featuring the NSHS-owned Thomas P. Kennard house in a new online lesson plan, *Thomas P. Kennard House: Building a Prairie Capital*. It is part of the NPS's "Teaching with Historic Places" (TwHP) program.

Shortly after Nebraska gained statehood in 1867, commissioners Governor David Butler, Auditor John Gillespie, and Secretary of State Thomas Kennard chose the tiny town of Lancaster as the site for the new state capital. The Nebraska Legislature approved the decision, and changed the town's name to Lincoln in honor of the late president.

The choice received considerable criticism due to its size and its distance from rivers or railroads. To bolster confidence in the new capital the three commissioners invested in it themselves, risking personal fortunes. When land was sold to raise money for the new capital building, the men bid lots up to at least their appraised value to encourage other buyers. The plan worked, and between 1867 and 1869, Lincoln went from 10 buildings to 110 homes and businesses.

The commissioners also invested their private lives in the city, each building elaborate personal homes. The (Lincoln) *Nebraska Statesman* reported that the three houses cost between \$8,000 and \$15,000 each (about \$940,000 to \$1,760,000 today), and raved that the homes "exceed in tastefulness of design any private dwellings in the State."



Of the three, only the Kennard house remains. The National Park Service's lesson plan uses the house to teach history, architecture, and design. It's a good example of how to go beyond simply *telling* students about history by *showing* them place-based history as well.

The Kennard House is available for tours; to make an appointment go to nebraskahistory.org/sites/kennard or call 402-471-4764. To see the NPS lesson plan, go to nps.gov/history/nr/twhp and enter "Kennard" in the search window. 🌐

The Kennard (center) and Gillespie houses in early Lincoln. NSHS RG2158-11

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 2014 include seats in all three 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 seek a gubernatorial appointment.

Application materials and contact information will be posted at nebraskahistory.org/admin/board starting January 22. In order to be considered for the nominating committee's slate of candidates for 2014, please submit your application by June 19. Petition candidates may submit applications up to 5 p.m., August 18, 2014. 🌐

Nebraska Cowboys Opens at Nebraska History Museum

The NSHS formally opened *Nebraska Cowboys: Lives, Legends, & Legacies* on October 10 with a reception hosted by the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation. The exhibit is open through January 5, 2015. 📍



Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale addresses the audience.



NSHS Foundation Executive Director Leslie Fattig with trick roper Joan Wells, whose ropes and costumes are on display.



Many attendees came in their cowboy best, including exhibit consultant Dwaine Fosler of Milford, Nebraska.

Coming in *Nebraska History*—Special Issue

The Spring 2014 issue of *Nebraska History* will be a special and expanded issue, “After the Indian Wars: People, Places, and Episodes,” featuring papers from the Ninth Fort Robinson History Conference, held April 25-27, 2013. Articles will include: “Custer, Crazy Horse, and the Legacy of an Indian War” by Paul Hedren; “‘Pretty Well Fixed for Defense’: Enclosed Army Posts of the Northern Plains,” by Thomas R. Buecker; “Charles Young and the Buffalo Soldiers after the Indian Wars,” by Brian Shellum; “The Changing Image of George Armstrong Custer,” by Brian Dippie; and “The Crazy Horse Medicine Bundle,” by Thomas R. Powers.

Look for the magazine in your mailbox the second week of February. 📍

Research Grants for 2014

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, 2014. We’ll announce the winner(s) in May. Grant recipients will then have until April 1, 2015, to complete their manuscripts. See nebraskahistory.org/publish/grants for details. 📍

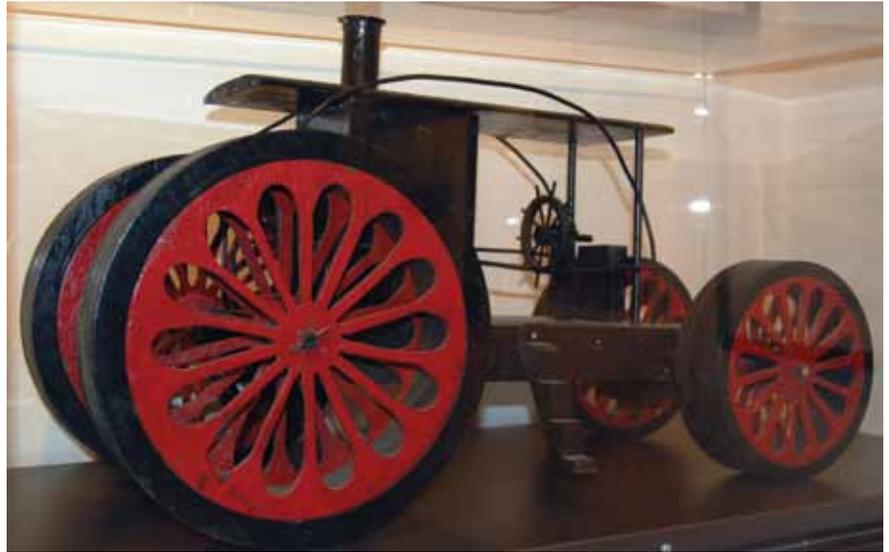


Treasures from Nebraska Museums

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Selectd items from the Old Freighters Museum in Nebraska City will be displayed at the Nebraska History Museum from January through March 2014. Located in a historic building, the Old Freighters Museum uses exhibits, artifacts, photographs, and video to interpret the history of freighting and western migration on the trails passing through or near Nebraska City from 1846 to 1870. Exhibits include listings of freighters who worked in Nebraska City in the 1850s, a scale model of the original Russell, Majors & Waddell compound, plus company artifacts and information, a period bedroom, and an art exhibit of William Henry Jackson prints showing life along the western trails.

The museum is located at 407 North 14th Street in Nebraska City, and is open by appointment only. Admission is \$3 for adults and \$1 for students. For an appointment, call: 402-873-9360 or 402-873-6188. www.nebraskacitymuseums.org



Above: In 1862 entrepreneur Joseph R. Brown came to Nebraska City with a plan to improve freighting by replacing oxen with a stronger, faster “steam wagon” or “prairie motor.” This is a model of the machine he commissioned. Hopes were dampened when the prototype malfunctioned four miles west of town on a demonstration run. After repair, it was used in a parade and then stored at Arbor Lodge. After plans for regular “steam wagon” runs were finally abandoned, the machine was dismantled in 1889 and its boiler sold to an Iowa company.



Above: Exhibit room featuring a scale model of the Russell, Majors & Waddell compound in Nebraska City.



Above: The Old Freighters Museum in Nebraska City. This three-story wood-frame structure was built by the U.S. Government in 1858 to house Quartermaster Maj. James G. Martin. It was then sold to the Russell, Majors & Waddell freighting company.



Art of the Trails exhibit.



Left: Not your average sleeping bag, a freighter's bedroll may have contained ground cover, blankets, shelter, clothing, and other small personal items that would have been rolled together in the morning, thrown in a wagon, and unrolled in the evening.



Farmhand Nick Foley, lynched near Elgin in 1889 for the alleged murder of Mrs. Pomeroy Clark.
NSHS RG2986-8-7

James E. Potter Wins Writing Awards

NSHS Senior Research Historian Jim Potter is the winner of the 2012 Coke Wood Award from Westerners International for “Wearing the Hempen Neck-Tie: Lynching in Nebraska, 1858-1919,” which appeared in the Fall 2012 issue of *Nebraska History*. The award honors the “best published monograph or article dealing with Western American history.” Potter was also a third-place winner in the 2012 Best Book Award category for *Standing Firmly by the Flag: Nebraska Territory and the Civil War, 1861-1867*, published by the University of Nebraska Press in 2013. The book also won the 2013 Nebraska Book Award for Nonfiction: History.

“Wearing the Hempen Neck-Tie” was also named a Spur Award finalist by the Western Writers of America, and was selected for this year’s James L. Sellers Memorial Award, given for the best article in a volume of *Nebraska History*. The Sellers Award was presented to Jim at the NSHS annual meeting and awards banquet, held on October 11, 2013, in Lincoln.

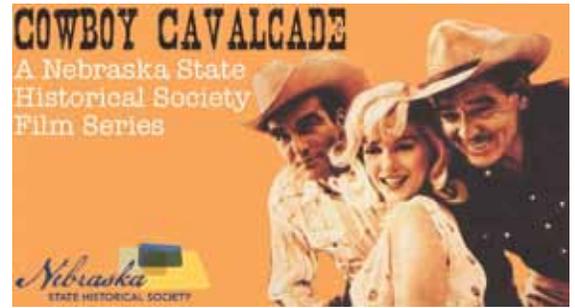
Both the book and Fall 2012 issue of *Nebraska History* are available from the NSHS Landmark Stores, 402-471-3447 or www.nebraskahistory.org. 

NSHS Welcomes New Trustee

Cherri Beam-Clarke of Fremont has been elected to the Nebraska State Historical Society Board of Trustees, representing the First Congressional District. For thirty-five years she has told the stories of Nebraska settlers for Humanities Nebraska as one of their most requested speakers. Among many other history-related activities, she is a co-founder of Fremont’s annual “John C. Fremont Days,” and created the annual “A Day in the Past” held at May Museum in Fremont for fourth graders learning Nebraska history. She served as educator at Pahaku (Pahuk), a Pawnee historical site and worked with NSHS staff and others on tours of Pawnee elders to three states.

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, which began January 1: **Taylor Keen** of Omaha in District 2, and **Cloyd Clark** of McCook in District 3. 

NSHS Film Series: Cowboy Cavalcade



Montgomery Clift (left), Marilyn Monroe, and Clark Gable from *The Misfits*.

All films will be shown, free of charge, at the Nebraska History Museum, Fifteenth & P Streets, Lincoln, at 1:30 p.m. Limited seating available. 402-471-4782 or www.nebraskahistory.org.

January 19 - *Red River* (1948)

John Wayne and Omaha native Montgomery Clift star in Howard Hawks’s classic film about the first cattle drive from Texas to Kansas along the Chisholm Trail.

January 26 - *The Misfits* (1961)

Clark Gable, Marilyn Monroe, and Montgomery Clift star in John Huston’s production of Arthur Miller’s elegy for the death of the Old West.

February 2 - *The Rare Breed* (1966)

Loosely based on the life of rancher Col. John William Burgess, the film follows the quest by his widow, played by Maureen O’Hara, to introduce Hereford cattle to the American West. James Stewart co-stars.

February 9 - *The Cowboys* (1972)

John Wayne plays a rancher forced to use schoolboy replacements on a 400-mile cattle drive.

February 16 - *Blazing Saddles* (1974)

A satirical Western comedy film classic directed and co-written by Mel Brooks.

February 23 - *Wild Horse* (1931)

Tekamah native Edmund “Hoot” Gibson stars in what is purported to be his favorite role. 

French Marshal Joffre and U.S. Veterans at Capitol Groundbreaking in 1922

The groundbreaking ceremony for the third and present Nebraska State Capitol, held on April 15, 1922, gave Nebraskans an opportunity to display pride not only in their state but in the recent Allied victory in World War I as well. Nebraska Governor Samuel R. McKelvie had signed a bill in 1919 for the construction of a new capitol that could house state government and also serve as a memorial to Nebraskans killed in the war.

The groundbreaking coincided with the visit to Lincoln of Marshal Joseph J. Joffre, commander of the French Army during the early years of World War I, as part of a larger world tour to promote peace. The *Lincoln Star* on April 15 and 16, 1922, reported details of the groundbreaking, attended by Joffre, and his whirlwind visit to the city, which included stops at the University of Nebraska campus and the home of another famous soldier of World War I, Gen. John J. Pershing.

Military veterans were an important part of the ceremony. The *Star* said: "Men in khaki who fought side by side with Joffre's countrymen in the great struggle marched behind 'le grand marschal' in the parade from the Burlington Station to the Capitol. Veterans of the Spanish-American and Philippine wars and the Civil War were also in line. . . . Almost a hundred of the G.A.R. veterans had turned out and stood bravely at attention while the great marshal went past."

The visiting World War I hero was received at the old capitol by Governor McKelvie, who then gripped plow handles behind a team of horses to cut a thirty-foot furrow to signal the start of construction of the new capitol. The cornerstone was laid on Armistice Day, November 11, 1922, with General Pershing among the speakers at the event. The building was completed in 1932.

During his hurried visit to Lincoln in 1922, Joffre spoke chiefly through an interpreter, offering only one remark in English: "It is hot." Nevertheless, said the *Star*, "Several times he became very much alive, very much French. Once was when an exuberant doughboy, stirred by the sight of the familiar war-time uniforms, shouted, 'Vive la France.' He received a smart salute from the marshal." 🇫🇷



Marshal Joffre (with cane) attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the present Nebraska State Capitol on April 15, 1922, during a brief visit to Lincoln. Beside him at right is Governor McKelvie. NSHS RG1234-7-42



Groundbreaking ceremony for Third State Capitol, NSHS RG1234-7-70



UPCOMING EVENTS

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

January 4 • 2-4 p.m.

Celebrate Trivia Day and the Nebraska Unicameral Free Family Workshop

Nebraska History Museum (NHM),
Fifteenth & P Streets, Lincoln
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

January 16 • 12 noon

Loren Pospisil, Chimney Rock National Historic Site

“Follow the Stones: Marking the Oregon Trail Across Nebraska”

Brown Bag Lecture Series

NHM

January 19 • 2 p.m.

Pete King

“The Deadliest Mile: Steamboat Wrecks on the Missouri”

Sunday Afternoon at the Museum

John G. Neihardt State Historic Site, Bancroft
888-777-4667 • www.neihardtcenter.org

February 9 • 2-4 p.m.

“Be My Valentine,” Make valentines in the style of the mid-1800s

Free Family Workshop

NHM
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

February 20 • 12 noon

Mark Harris, University of Nebraska State Museum

“History of the University of Nebraska State Museum”

Brown Bag Lecture Series

NHM

March 1 • 2-4 p.m.

Celebrate Nebraska’s 147th birthday

Free Family Workshop

NHM
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

March 9 • 2 p.m.

Jeff Barnes

“Custer in Nebraska: The Royal Buffalo Hunt of 1872”

Sunday Afternoon at the Museum

John G. Neihardt State Historic Site

March 11 • 10-11 a.m.

Reading *Cowboys and Cowgirls: Yippee-Yay!* by Gail Gibbons

Hour at the Museum

NHM
402-471-4757 • judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

March 20 • 12 noon

For speaker and topic, see www.nebraskahistory.org

Brown Bag Lecture Series

NHM

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

Three women on a frozen lake with workers harvesting blocks of ice in the background. The woman nearest the ice blocks is holding a long, hooked pole.

NSHS RG3542-95-12



Stars of David in the Sandhills

BY OLIVER B. POLLAK

Among Solomon D. Butcher's many iconic photographs of central Nebraska is this circa 1905 street scene in Seneca, in which a Star of David is displayed prominently on a drugstore. Pictured are three males, and a mother and two children. They are probably the family of Moses Pass, a Jewish immigrant who owned the store.

Ella Fleishman Auerbach's 1927 typescript, *Jewish Settlement in Nebraska*, identified Jews from Omaha to "towns in which there are only one or two Jewish residents." Ella and her father, Rabbi Esau Fleishman (who arrived in Omaha in 1887), assisted Jewish immigrants and were well placed to know the details of Nebraska Jewish settlement, but did not record Jewish residents in Seneca or Broadwater.

The Sandhills were lightly settled and almost devoid of Jews, with the temporary exception of forty-six Jews in Cherry County, sponsored by the Jewish Agricultural Society as part of a back-to-the-soil movement, between 1908 and 1910. These families unsuccessfully homesteaded under the Kinkaid Act and left between 1913 and 1916.

Moses D. Pass, bookbinder, was born in 1862 in Kiev, Ukraine (then part of the Russian Empire), and came to America in 1882. His future wife, Hettie (Yetta), born in Kiev in 1872, came to America in 1889.

Pass received training in homeopathic medicine at Cleveland Medical College, graduating in 1896, and from the University of Kentucky in 1899. Pursuant to Nebraska law he registered to practice in at least three counties, Douglas, Lincoln, and Thomas.

The 1910 census lists Pass as a physician. He and Hettie had four children, Ruth, Miriam, Emanuel, and Raphael, all born in Nebraska between 1902 and 1910. Pass purchased land in Seneca, and the 1911, 1913 and 1915 *Nebraska State Gazetteer and Business Directory* lists him as Seneca's physician. Itinerant dentists and eye doctors advertised in the *Thomas County Tribune*, announcing impending visits to Pass Drugs.

Physicians sometimes had interests in drugstores and hospitals. Pass owned Seneca's drugstore, a valuable adjunct to his practice and a service to the local population. The newspaper published ads for nationally marketed patent medicines and nostrums such as St. Jacob's Oil for rheumatism and neuralgia, Cascarets for dyspepsia, Ely's Cream Balm for catarrh and hay fever, Dodd's Kidney Pills, Castoria for infants and children, Mother Gray's Sweet Powders for children, and many others. When all else failed, Harry Kimball in Broken Bow advertised his skills as an undertaker, embalmer, and taxidermist.

Dr. Pass moved to Omaha in 1915. In April he advertised his services at 425 N. 24th Street in South

Omaha: "general practice, chronic disease and abnormal conditions treated electrically," and in December he was appointed one of the physicians to the South Omaha Patriotic and Protective Order of Stags of the World.

By September 1917 the Pass family moved to Broadwater in Morrill County, perhaps to replace a departing local physician. Broadwater had a population of 500 to 600, electricity since 1916, and two doctors, including Pass. Moses had an office building and his wife sold notions and a few drugs. He remained in Broadwater for the rest of his life.

On September 18, 1937, the *Omaha World-Herald* published Pass's letter to the editor under the headline "Constitution and Swastika":

Broadwater: Carl J. Peter assures us that German-Americans are lovers of the American constitution. As evidence we have the subversive groups conceived and fostered by German immigrants in this country. The semimilitary German-American friends are basically anti-Semitic.

If our democracy is ever destroyed it will be done by the same groups who love our constitution, though marching under the swastika banners.

In 1943 Pass was the Broadwater representative for the "Smokes for Service Men" which raised more than 1,700,000 cigarettes for service personnel overseas.

Moses Pass died in 1948 at the age of eighty-six; his grave is marked with another Star of David in Broadwater's Presbyterian cemetery. ☞



Seneca, Nebraska, 1905. NSHS RG2608-2536

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hours

**Nebraska
History Museum**
15th & P Streets, Lincoln
402-471-4754
Monday-Friday, 9-4:30
Saturday & Sunday, 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

facebook

State Historic Site hours:
www.nebraskahistory.org

NEBRASKA

history news

Nebraska State Historical Society



From the Collection. . .

NSHS 13290-1

Luella's Lightning Shoe

Carol Pearson was browsing an estate sale in California when she found an old shoe containing a yellowed newspaper clipping and a handwritten slip of paper. In the article, an elderly Mrs. Luella Brown of Chico, California, recalled the day in 1902 when she was struck by lightning near Lakeland, Brown County, Nebraska. The slip of paper read, "I was born in 1894. This happened 1904."

Brown said the family had gathered for her grandfather's birthday. She was inside sitting on a cousin's lap when suddenly "the house was in shambles" and she "was on the floor covered with plaster." The lightning apparently followed a clothesline to the house, passing through Brown and her cousin and exiting through her left foot. Her foot was blistered and the shoe damaged. Brown said she was once offered \$100 for the shoe but refused to sell it.

Pearson donated the shoe to the NSHS in August 2013. Thus far we've learned that Brown's paternal grandfather, Frederick Albert Cox, had a June 8 birthday. Hoping he was the correct grandfather, we searched the June 1904 (and 1902) issues of

Nebraska newspapers, finding plenty of lightning strikes but not this one.

June 1904 was a stormy month.

On June 10 the *Red Cloud Chief* claimed that

"Probably more than a score of persons have been killed

or dangerously

injured by lightning the last two weeks in Nebraska

alone." A day earlier the *Valentine Democrat* reported

one dead from lightning in Fullerton and four killed

by lightning or drowning during flooding in Greeley

and Nance counties. Other Nebraska papers reported

horses killed, fires started, and a rancher named

Sam Lane struck dead while riding fence near Hay

Springs; he was still mounted on his dead horse when

neighbors found his body.

Maybe we've been searching the wrong date. Or perhaps the story simply didn't make it into print until many years later. 📄

