

NEBRASKA history news

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History and Art at Our “New” Building



This digitally altered photo provides a rough idea of what the new rotunda art will look like. The artists will solicit the public for ideas for the actual content.

Many months and several million dollars have gone into renovation of the Nebraska State Historical Society's headquarters building. The improvements for safety, environment, and handicapped accessibility are important, but mostly not very visible.

But a new art installation in the headquarters rotunda will definitely have a visual impact. A state statute known as One Percent for Art requires that we set aside 1 percent of the renovation cost for public art. The new work will be unveiled September 18 as part of the headquarters rededication.

The selection committee included NSHS staff, NSHS trustee Bob Peters, and Sharon Kennedy, Curator of Cultural and Community Engagement at the Sheldon Art Museum. Winnowing the field from forty-five artists, the committee selected the proposal of Chicago-based artists Adam Brooks and Mathew Wilson, whose partnership is called Industry of the Ordinary.

It was important to maintain the historic fabric of the National Register-listed headquarters

building. Brooks and Wilson's work, "The Idea of History," will use etchings on the curved glass surfaces of the rotunda display windows to raise questions and prompt inquiry about the nature of history and how we come to understand the past.

"Our view of history is that it is not reducible down to a series of 'facts'. It is not objective. It is never comprehensive," the artists wrote in their proposal. "Many voices are necessarily left out in the retelling of any historical narrative. It is a rich maelstrom of competing views in much the same way that art is. The role of art is not to make a series of statements, but to engage dialogue.

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NSHS Headquarters Rededication

Saturday, September 18, 2010, 11:00 a.m.

1500 R Street, Lincoln

The Board of Trustees of the NSHS and Director/CEO Mike Smith invite you to celebrate with elected officials, staff, architects, contractors, and others involved in the headquarters renovation project. Guest speaker for the event will be former Congressman Doug Bereuter, whose papers are among the valuable resources held by the NSHS in trust for current and future researchers. Most recently President/CEO of the Asia Foundation, the native-born Bereuter is returning to his Nebraska roots. A short program and tours of the building will mark completion of this major effort supported by Nebraska taxpayers. Please join us! ☒



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

Time and Memory

It is the first week of May 2010, and I am remembering two events of this week forty years ago. The first took place on the campus of Kent State University in Ohio where in thirteen seconds of gunfire, Ohio National Guardsmen killed four students and wounded nine others, some of them involved in a demonstration against the American invasion of Cambodia. The tragic shooting constituted a defining moment in the American people's rejection of the war in Vietnam. At the time, I was serving as an infantry officer in the Army's Second Armored Division and was preparing to be married on May 9, 1970.

As the nation was conflicted that week, so were Mary Ann and I. We experienced personal sorrow over the loss of life in Ohio and the continuing casualties among our forces in Asia, yet we held a strong and firm commitment to America and its ideals. As Americans we were dedicated to our nation, which had welcomed our ancestors from Ireland, Germany and Norway, and afforded them many freedoms and opportunities. In 1970 we were all living in a dangerous world facing the power of Communism centered in the Soviet Union and China. In ninety days I would leave my bride behind and report to the Eighth Army on the volatile border between North and South Korea. Mary Ann and I had, however, no doubt of our responsibilities to our nation.

Today Kent State is a footnote to a war hardly known to the majority of Americans. After a long struggle with a rare disease, Mary Ann died in 2009. I am left to remember vividly the tension and the anguish of America during that week forty years ago.

If America is to know its history, it is essential that each of us record and share our stories. Whatever those involve, if the event was important to you, please take the time to record not only the who and the what, but what thoughts and feelings, commitments, and principles were in play. Share those with family, with friends, and with local historical organizations. History depends on people. Please preserve your memories so the important stories withstand the inevitable passing of the participants and the blurring of memory.



Michael J. Smith
Director/CEO



"If America is to know its history, it is essential that each of us record and share our stories."

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Industry of the Ordinary (IOTO) intends this work to engage a dialogue about history in general terms and Nebraska history more specifically."

The artists want your suggestions for the dates, names, places, people, and ideas from the state's past that should be represented in the work. They will solicit ideas online and by print media. They've used this participatory process successfully in a number of public art projects in Chicago, including works for the Chicago Public Libraries and that city's transit authority.

Words, dates, names, faces, and places may all figure in this work designed to prompt inquiry and curiosity. It will also attempt to represent symbolically "those voices that came before recorded history or that were never heard, whether they be those of prehistoric inhabitants, other indigenous peoples, or the voices of the ordinary citizenry."

"History cannot be fully understood by memorizing rote, but by engagement, discussion, disagreement and imagination," the artists suggest. In that sense, the work is a most fitting addition to a building where people come to research and investigate Nebraska's rich history.

Check the progress of this project at nebraskahistory.org, and mark your calendars for the September 18 rededication and unveiling!

—Lynne Ireland, Deputy Director

"A Blood Curdling Ride with Death" and Other NSHS Blog Posts

We've been telling you about the NSHS blog. By now we've built up a large backlog of interesting articles, photos, and objects from our collections. Some are lighthearted; some are serious. Read it at blog.nebraskahistory.org, and click "subscribe" if you want email notifications of new postings, or read it on Facebook and click "Like" at the top of the page to receive notifications. (Both of these are free.) There's something new several times a week. And yes, one of them is really titled "A Blood Curdling Ride with Death"—see the April 9 entry for detective magazine covers that Nebraska artist John Falter painted in the 1930s.



Harve Andrews and family by the grave of "Willie," Victoria Creek Canyon, Custer County, 1887. NSHS RG2608-2360

In Search of Lost Tombstones and Cemeteries

Tombstones are not usual garage sale fare. But when locating stolen headstones and forgotten gravesites, Nebraska State Historical Society employees and volunteers often encounter strange circumstances.

Volunteer Cynthia Monroe reunites stolen tombstones with their owners. Tombstones have been thrown in road ditches, used as stepping stones in backyards, and have even adorned dorm rooms. One stolen stone was five feet high and about eight feet square. It required a front loader to return it to its original location.

"We don't understand that one," Monroe said.

Monroe has returned approximately twenty-five stones over the past fifteen years. Some are returned right away, but other searches take as long as ten years. It takes persistence and a zealous search of cemetery records.

Currently, Monroe has only one stone that she has been unable to return. It is for a boy named Leroy Britton, son of a J. and A. P. Britton, who died on September 2, 1890 (or close to it—the final digit is worn off). She's had it for about five years now.

"It's a fun hobby," she said. "I just wish it was a hobby we didn't have to do." Most of the tombstones are from nineteenth-century children's graves. Monroe believes they are objects of scavenger hunts. Children's stones, usually small, are easiest to steal, but fortunately are rarely damaged.

"They have been in pretty good shape for as old as they are," she said.

After Monroe has located the home of a stolen

stone, she tries to contact family members and invite them to the reinstallation. Some families aren't even aware the stones were missing. Other times, the stones have already been replaced.

Once, when the family members couldn't be found, Monroe met with the cemetery caretaker instead.

"He was as excited as if he were family," Monroe said.

Not all cemeteries have such loyal caretakers. Some are full of overgrown plots and broken tombstones.

"You just hate to take them [the stolen stones] back because you know it will happen to them," Monroe said. "Some cemeteries are taken immaculate care of and some are not taken care of at all."

Assistant Curator Pat Churray specializes in those forgotten cemeteries as part of her work on the Nebraska Statewide Cemetery Registry. She checks homestead records and census reports to find cemeteries and their occupants. Some records are inaccurate, with frequent misspellings, so she also visits gravesites to make sure the records—or, more often, rumors—are correct.

"It's an in-depth research process," Churray said. "But it is possible to find someone if you look hard enough."

Churray has visited cemeteries in cornfields and pastures. North of Lincoln, Teachman Cemetery is the final resting place for a Civil War soldier and his wife. It is in a cornfield.

At other cemeteries not even the stones are left intact. Such is the case with Calavan Cemetery southwest of Lincoln. Sometime after the land was sold in the 1890s, a new landowner removed the tombstones from their original plot and piled them under a tree.

"I guess he just wanted a pasture," Churray said.

But not all isolated cemeteries are so abused.

"Most isolated cemeteries are protected by the neighborhood, the people that care," Churray said. Volunteers and private donations maintain these sites. Even if the cemetery is abandoned, the county is supposed to mow the plots at least once a year.

Neglected stones sometime sink four to six inches below the surface. Then Churray has to poke in the ground with a metal rod to find



Brown family cemetery, on private property in western Lancaster County, near Pleasant Dale.



Edmund Perry Brown died as an infant in 1870. "Most isolated cemeteries are protected by the neighborhood, the people that care," says Pat Churray of the NSHS.

them. Other times, no graves appear to exist at all. Evergreen Cemetery, supposedly northwest of Lincoln, is marked on every index she can find, in one case even with GPS coordinates. But hours of traipsing around a weedy plot revealed no evidence that a cemetery ever existed.

Churray also identifies Oregon Trail graves, which are often wrapped in as much legend as fact. One example is Brady Island in Lincoln County, named for a man supposedly buried there. Churray read accounts from numerous travelers who wrote that Brady's body had been exposed to the elements and eaten by wolves. As a result, "there is no one named Brady buried on that island," she said.

Because of the frequent inaccuracy of existing records, Churray is conducting a county-by-county investigation of isolated cemeteries. Unfortunately, the funding for this project is about to run out, and she will only be able to investigate a gravesite upon patron request. She completed the registry for 53 of Nebraska's 93 counties before the funding expired in June. Without more funding, even the information she has now will not be available for the public to search on the Internet.

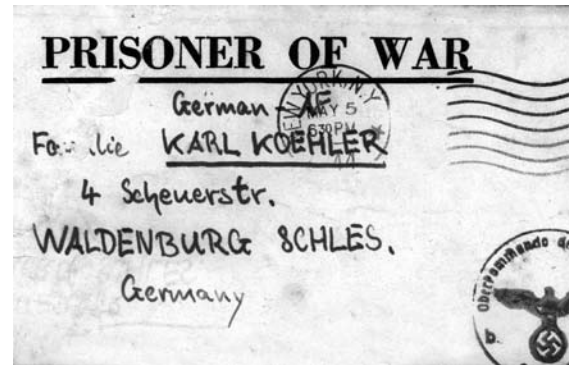
Churray also stressed the importance of landowners registering isolated graves on their property with their local cemetery board.

"It's very important for people to register if they have a grave on their farm or property so people can find their family members," she said. "And now we have the registry they can report to." (Contact her at pat.churray@nebraska.gov)

With landowners' help, Churray's detective work gets a little easier. But she also enjoys the thrill of the hunt.

"It's a mystery to discover where a cemetery actually is," she said. "But by researching the property as well as the people you can find out who is buried there."

—Kylie Kinley



Detail of a letter sent from Fort Robinson by a prisoner of war, April 13, 1944. NSHS RG1517AM

Coming in *Nebraska History*

Karl Deyle, a German prisoner of war being held at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, admonished his mother not to send him packages from home. Realizing the strain this caused on his family back home, he said he "had it all right here." Later he found out that portion of his letter had been stricken out by German censors.

In the Summer 2010 issue of *Nebraska History*, Fort Robinson Museum Curator Tom Buecker uses a World War II envelope to show how the fort's German prisoners of war sent and received mail. In other articles, NSHS Assistant Editor Pat Gaster writes of the Red Ribbon Club of Lincoln, which by 1886 had "surpassed in point of numbers, influence, and power any temperance club in this country," according to temperance advocate John B. Finch. And historian Paul Hedren writes of Camp Sheridan, "the uncommonly quiet post on Beaver Creek," explaining how the influence of Lakota leader Spotted Tail helped the post avoid the turmoil of nearby Camp Robinson.

Look for the issue in your mailbox the week of August 9.

In Memoriam: Gary Iske

Sarpy County Historical Society Director Gary Iske, 68, died March 3, 2010, due to a sudden heart attack. Gary was known for his knowledge of and passion for Sarpy County history and genealogy, and will be greatly missed by the historical community.

Sandhills Life at Alliance's Knight Museum

Wow. Wow. More wow. That's what I felt like," said Becci Thomas of opening day at the rebuilt Knight Museum and Sandhills Center in Alliance. Thomas, the museum director, promises that visitors will have similar sentiments.

The Knight Museum opened its new 19,120-square-foot building on March 1. It includes exhibits featuring Native American artifacts, pioneer and ranching artifacts, and even the geology of the Sandhills. It's like a "mini trip to the Smithsonian," said Thomas.

The museum is inherently connected to the land around it. Visitors watch a fifteen-minute video on the history of Alliance and the surrounding area and then enter the museum to see that history brought to life.

Exhibits include a replica sod house that visitors can walk inside, a covered wagon stocked with supplies pioneers used to cross the prairie, and an interactive geology exhibit with fossils from the area.

"We have a lot of interactive activities throughout the museum," Thomas said. "Things kids can do and touch and feel."

Thomas also praised the Native American collection, which includes moccasins and shirts with exquisite beadwork and quillwork, arrowheads, and many different tools.

"The Native American exhibit is the most outstanding," she said. "It sends shivers up my spine it is so unique."

The Knight Museum was established in 1965 upon the behest of Dr. Frank M. Knight, an area doctor and banker. The old building was a third as large as the new one, and had no storage available.

"It was very nice, but it didn't enable us to tell a story because it didn't have the room," Thomas said. The exhibits in the new facility are permanent, but the displays will change.

Construction began four years ago after a generous donation by the late Victor and Martha Eldred. The Eldreds were prominent ranchers in the area and were always involved in community-building activities.

"They never thought they owned the land," Thomas said. "They were just stewards."

Martha, who was an essential part of the planning process, lived to see the completion of the building, but passed away before the exhibits were installed.

"She loved it," Thomas said. "She wanted to tell a story and build something they [visitors] could wander in for hours, and they can."

Thomas said the museum has been averaging sixty visitors a day, with some days averaging over two hundred people.

"The world might be moving pretty fast now," Thomas said. "But if you don't understand pioneer life you don't understand how it ended up that way."

—Kylie Kinley



Opening day at the Knight Museum and Sandhills Center in Alliance.

Discover Nebraska at the Landmark Stores

Take a road trip and explore Nebraska! Books available at the Landmark Stores will help you plan your trip and find offbeat points of interest along the way.

We recommend:

- *Nebraska Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities & Other Offbeat Stuff.*
- *Off the Beaten Path, Nebraska: A Guide to Unique Places.*
- *The Sutton House, McCook, Nebraska. (Frank Lloyd Wright's "Prairie Style" architecture in McCook.)*
- *Traveler's Guide to the Great Sioux War: The Battlefields, Forts, and Related Sites of America's Greatest Indian War.*
- *Wildflowers of the Western Plains: A Field Guide.*

The staff will be happy to help you with your next purchase. Call 1-800-833-6747 or 402-471-3447, or visit nebraskahistory.org.

Visit Nebraska's historic sites this summer, too. Click the "Visit" link on our website to learn more about our historic sites around the state.

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NSHS Works with the Great Plains Black History Museum

The NSHS is working with the Great Plains Black History Museum in Omaha to catalog and preserve the museum's archives, which are on a one-year loan to the NSHS. During her long career, museum founder Bertha Calloway (see sidebar) gathered thousands of papers, photos, and artifacts. Now, Dr. Tekla Johnson, the project's head researcher, is ensuring that Mrs. Calloway's legacy is preserved.

"My job right now is to find out what's in the collection and make a container list," Johnson said. "The goal is first preservation and then accessibility within that."

Items include a Black Panther of Omaha roster, materials about the life of Lincoln community activist Leola Bullock, detailed descriptions of funeral proceedings for African American children, information about the African American Masons in Nebraska, photos from the Omaha Bus Boycott, and thousands of newspaper clippings, photographs, and papers.

"Mrs. Calloway did very, very intricate research," Johnson said. "She put it together on scores and scores of material. I'm definitely enthralled."

Once the materials are catalogued they can more easily be presented to the Black community.

"The other part of this whole mission is outreach," said Jim Calloway, Bertha Calloway's son. "It wasn't a matter of people coming to the museum; it was the museum coming to people. It's about taking Black history to people who might not be exposed to it."

Dr. John W. McClain, chairman-elect of the board of officials for the Great Plains Black Museum, said that the museum's outreach will focus on sharing the information with young people.

"It's a way of being able to restore the past in order to better understand the present and future,"

McClain said. "In many ways it's an approach to inform, particularly community youth, on where African Americans have been as a people and perhaps where we're going."

When the museum reopens, the information re-discovered through the cataloguing process will create a richer learning environment.

"We hope to have interactive exhibits where youngsters can come in and physically touch history," Jim Calloway said. "She [Mrs. Calloway] was really involved with young adults. That was always at the top of her list."

"She's one of those rare people who could put together love, devotion, and scholarship," McClain said. "The whole goal is to restore the physical structure and bring the materials back and have them available."

—Kylie Kinley

Bertha Calloway

Born in 1925, Bertha (Walker) Calloway worked in Washington, D.C., in her youth and attended classes at Howard University. She came to Omaha with her husband, James T. Calloway, in 1952 and seven years later founded the Negro Historical Society of Nebraska. She advised Nebraska universities on curriculum for their African American studies programs, organized the Miss Black Nebraska pageant, was a secretary for the *Omaha Star* newspaper, and hosted a television segment on WOW-TV in Omaha—becoming the first African American to have her own television broadcast segment.

In 1974 Calloway founded the Great Plains Black History Museum in the historic Webster Telephone Exchange Building at 2213 Lake Street in Omaha. She maintained the museum into the late 1990s; it closed in 2001 due to financial difficulties. With A. N. Smith, Calloway co-authored *Visions of Freedom on the Great Plains: An Illustrated History of African Americans in Nebraska*. She currently resides in Omaha.

Conference to Focus on Agriculture and the Missouri River

Come to Ponca State Park Wednesday, September 29 through Friday, October 1, for the third biennial Missouri River History Conference. This year's theme is *The Agricultural Frontier and the Missouri River Valley, 1820-2010*. The conference is co-sponsored by the NSHS and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Jon Lauck, author of *Prairie Republic*, will deliver the keynote address on Wednesday evening at the park's Education Center. Thursday's presenters are: Tim Cowman, "Changes on the Landscape"; Dr. Ron Naugle, "Agricultural History of the Middle Missouri Valley"; Bob Puschendorf, NSHS, "The Development of Farm to Market Roads in the Early Twentieth Century"; Jessie Nunn, NSHS, "Yesterday's Pioneering Homesteads, Today"; Dr. William Pratt, "Farmers and Rural Protest in the Upper Midwest."

Friday's presenters are: Mark Awakuni-Swetland, "Native American Agriculture in the Missouri River Valley"; Marcia Poole, "The Story of the Sioux City Stockyards"; John Carter, NSHS, "The Several Stories of Ethanol"; Mac Harris, "Mechanical Power on the Farm"; Ron Hull, "Nebraska Writers and the Agricultural Life"; Brian DePew, "Agriculture's Future in the Missouri River Valley."

The event also features afternoon tours of the O'Connor House near Homer; the Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve near North Sioux City, South Dakota; the Cook Blacksmith Shop in Ponca; and the Windmill Collection at the L. P. Gill Landfill in Jackson. The Game and Parks Commission will hold a living history program at the park late Friday afternoon and on Saturday, October 2.

Registration is open to all, but you'll need a state park permit. For information on fees and lodging, call the park at 402-755-2284 or email jeff.fields@nebraska.gov.

WAC Returns to Fort Robinson

Jessie Mercer Southern remembers the long train ride to Fort Robinson in 1944. To the young woman from Alabama, Nebraska seemed like a desert.

"There were a few cactus plants, no water ponds, wouldn't see life of any kind for many miles," she recalls. "I wondered how did people live?"

Working at an auto parts store back home, she had seen business decline due to wartime disruptions. She wondered how she was going to make a living. She enlisted in the Women's Army Corps. At Fort Robinson she worked as a truck driver, navigating a two-and-a-half ton army cargo truck through the winding roads of Pine Ridge country.

Sometimes the cargo was German prisoners of war going to and from work sites. Sometimes it was soldiers. "Some trips were treacherous," she writes, "especially when I had to go over and around 'Smiley Canyon,' a narrow steep incline, snake-like narrow sharp turns . . . The passengers would holler when meeting another vehicle."

Later she got a job as a parts clerk in the post maintenance shop. Her new boss was a young man named Ralph Southern. "He was strict and very precise in his duties . . . but after our acquaintance he mellowed." Soon Jessie and Ralph "took a liking for one another—he had a flirting way."

They were married by the Catholic priest in Crawford, and celebrated their wedding reception with a multi-layer wedding cake made by a German prisoner at the post bakery.

The couple stayed in Crawford for a few years after the war before moving to Alabama in 1949. They came back to visit last summer, posing for a photo in the Fort Robinson Museum, where Jessie's WAC uniform is on display. Her reminiscence (quoted here) and wartime photos are part of the museum's collections.

—David L. Bristow, with information and photo from Fort Robinson Museum Curator Tom Buecker



Jessie and Ralph Southern pose with Jessie's WWII Women's Army Corps uniform at the Fort Robinson Museum. The couple met at the fort during the war.



Jessie Mercer during World War II.

www.nebraskahistory.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

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



This portrait of a child wearing a straw hat and holding a squash in one hand was taken in a studio but seems evocative of summer gardening. NSHS RG3542-83-3

July 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 • 10 & 11 a.m., 1 p.m.
Seven, one-hour classes for students (Grades K-8)
Fabulous Fun Fridays
(registration required)
Nebraska History Museum, 15th & P streets, Lincoln
402-471-4754
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

July 4 • 5-8 p.m.
**"I Hear America Singing:
A Program of the Music of Nebraska"**
Neligh Mill Jamboree
Neligh Mill State Historic Site
402-887-4303
nshs.mill@nebraska.gov

July 6, 13, 20 & 27 • 10-11 a.m.
Picture book readings with related activities for all ages
Hour at the Museum
Nebraska History Museum
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

July 14 & 15 • 9:30 a.m. - 12 noon
"Kennard House" (Grades K-3)
Summer Classes for Kids
Thomas P. Kennard House, 1627 H St., Lincoln
(registration required)
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

July 14 & 15 • 9:30 a.m. - 12 noon
"New Deal Art" (Grades 4-8)
Summer Classes for Kids
Nebraska History Museum
(registration required)
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

July 15 • 12 noon
Jim Potter, NSHS Research and Publications Division
**"Wearing the Hempen Neck-Tie: Lynching in
Nineteenth-Century Nebraska"**
Brown Bag Lecture Series
Nebraska History Museum

August 1 • 1:30 p.m.
Program to honor Nebraska's Poet Laureate in Perpetuity
Forty-fifth Annual Neihardt Day
John G. Neihardt State Historic Site
306 W. Elm Street, Bancroft
888-777-4667
neihardt@gpcom.net

August 3, 10 & 17 • 10 - 11 a.m.
Picture book readings with related activities for all ages
Hour at the Museum
Nebraska History Museum
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

August 11 & 12 • 9:30 a.m. - 12 noon
"Pioneer Arts, Crafts, and Games" (Grades K-3)
Summer Classes for Kids
Nebraska History Museum
(registration required)
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

August 11 & 12 • 9:30 a.m. - 12 noon
"Law Class" (Grades 4-8)
Summer Classes for Kids
Warner Chamber, Nebraska State Capitol
(registration required)
judy.keetle@nebraska.gov

August 19 • 12 noon
Ron Hull, NET senior advisor and Professor Emeritus of Broadcasting, UNL
"My Two Friends - Mari Sandoz and John Neihardt"
Brown Bag Lecture Series
Nebraska History Museum

September 16
Dale Bacon, NSHS Library/Archives Division
**"Presenting Frightmares Since 1958 -
A History of Nebraska's Creature Feature Hosts"**
Brown Bag Lecture Series
Nebraska History Museum

September 17
NSHS Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon
Embassy Suites Hotel
12520 Westport Parkway, LaVista
(registration by September 1 required)
402-471-4746
martha.kimball@nebraska.gov

September 18 • 11 a.m.
Address by former Congressman Doug Bereuter
NSHS Headquarters Building Rededication
Headquarters Building, 1500 R Street, Lincoln
402-471-4955
deb.mcwilliams@nebraska.gov

September 29 - October 1
**"The Agricultural Frontier and the
Missouri River Valley, 1820-2010"**
Missouri River History Conference
Ponca State Park
(registration required)
402-755-2284
jeff.fields@nebraska.gov

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

NSHS foundation news

July/August/September 2010



New Foundation Leaders

The 2010 Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Annual Trustee Meeting was held on Saturday, May 1, at The Country Club of Lincoln where we hosted Foundation Trustees and guests from across the state.

President Guenzel introduced the new Foundation Trustees for 2010: Gretchen Garcia, and Nelle Jamison of Lincoln, Steve Herman of Curtis, Keith Heurmann of Phillips, Jack Klosterman of David City, Robbie Lonewolf of Walthill, Walt Sehnert of McCook, John Steinheider of Omaha, Jean Vincent of York, and Jeff Wightman of Lexington. Syd Kruse introduced us to the 2010 Nebraskans of WWII scholarship winners – whose levels of individual achievement and dedication to Nebraska history never cease to amaze year after year.

The trustees celebrated Steve Guenzel and his accomplishments during his four-year term serving as president of the Foundation. He thanked those who had worked with him during his term, and his wife Judy for her patience and support. Carol Zink was elected as incoming president. She thanked Steve for his work and presented him with a gift of appreciation on behalf of the Foundation.



Construction of the NSHS Headquarters building, July 25, 1952. We selected this photo because you can see the foundation. NSHS RG14-7-3

The afternoon concluded with a presentation by Dr. Doug Scott entitled *Fields of Fire: Archaeological Evidence of Indian and Army Tactics at the Little Bighorn Battle*. Dr. Scott's presentation detailed nearly twenty-five years of forensic archaeological investigation into the Battle of the Little Bighorn; applying sound science to the large number of firearms, related artifacts, and human remains found there—and finally unraveling many of the mysteries and myths of what happened the day of the battle.

If you were there, we thank you for sharing your Saturday with us. If you weren't able to make it, we look forward to seeing you next year.

If you would like information on becoming a NSHS Foundation Trustee, please contact us. ☒

Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation

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[www.nebraskahistory.org/
foundatn](http://www.nebraskahistory.org/foundation)



Mike Smith and Walter Echo-Hawk beside a marker commemorating an 1855 council with the Pawnee.

We Love Quilts!

In honor of Nebraska's rich quilting heritage and active quilting communities, a new exhibit called *Beauty in Hard Times: Depression Era Quilts in Nebraska* opened in March at the Nebraska History Museum. The exhibit will run for two years, and the quilts will change every six months. In addition to quilts from the Historical Society's collection, quilts on loan from twelve other Nebraska museums are featured.

"The quilts in this exhibit are colorful, beautiful, sometimes familiar and sometimes surprising, and certainly worth a look," said Senior Museum Curator Deb Arenz. "In addition to the quilts we're also featuring information and examples of the use of feed sacks, patterns, techniques, and more."

To view the exhibit, visit the Nebraska History Museum Monday – Friday, 9:00 – 4:30, or Saturday and Sunday, 1:00 – 4:30. Several images from the exhibit are found in the March 30 entry at blog.nebraskahistory.org.

Donors Help Preserve Quilts

The Nebraska State Historical Society Museum Collections feature almost 400 quilts made by Nebraskans and represents Nebraska's quilting tradition from the territorial period until today. The preservation of these quilts, along with all of the objects in the collections, is an important part of the Society's mission.

To this end, we were recently fortunate enough to receive grant money that allowed us to purchase and install new shelving units in our storage area. To further protect the quilts we needed to buy archival quilt storage boxes and to our great delight, the following donors contributed funds towards the purchase of these boxes. Thanks to all of them for helping us continue to preserve Nebraska's history.

Donors: Wilma Vanderwerf; Sarah Gorin, in memory of Helen Gorin; Lula Red Cloud; Katherine Nelson; Dorothy Heidemann-Nelson; Helen Alderson in memory of Christine Larson; Michael Smith; Cathleen Weber; Agnes Poehler in memory of her mother, Muirl Shimmin; Mrs. Betty R. Zimmer; Mary Teale Dupuis in memory of Mary Pryor Teale; Sandra Scholz; Nancy Nelson in memory of Ada Peterson; Mr. and Mrs. William J. Conklin; The Lincoln Quilters Guild.

A Tour with the Pawnee

In early April, NSHS staff led by Michael Smith and a delegation from the Pawnee Nation led by Head Chief Pat Leading Fox visited numerous historic and archeological sites in Nebraska. Smith is shown at left with Walter Echo-Hawk, a member of the Skidi Band of the Pawnee. Echo-Hawk is an attorney and consultant for the tribe on the impact of the Keystone Oil Pipeline, which is planned to traverse the traditional Pawnee homeland in Nebraska.

Among the sites the group visited is the McClean Farm (shown here), the site of an 1850s village of the Chaui Band of the Pawnee on the Platte River bluffs near Fremont. The granite marker was set by the NSHS and the City of Fremont on May 25, 1905, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of a council held between the Chaui Band and representatives of Nebraska Territory. In 1855 Governor Mark W. Izard sent a delegation led by John M. Thayer and O. D. Richardson to demand that Pawnee leaders restrain their men who had reportedly stolen cattle from white settlers in the area.

As described by General Thayer in 1905 on the occasion of the setting of the marker, when the delegation prevailed upon the Indians to restrain their people, the Pawnee leader Pita-le-sharu indicated that they had no knowledge of any thievery and suggested it might have been perpetrated by their enemies, the Poncas, and made to look like a Pawnee deed. Interestingly, when Thayer and his colleagues returned to their wagon and team which had been left on the east bank of the Platte, they learned that unidentified Indians had overpowered the guard and stripped the wagon of all their provisions, blankets, and equipment. The delegation left for Omaha hungry.

The short granite marker stands today as a reminder of the varying expectations and traditions of the people living in Nebraska in the 1850s.

Honoring History Makers at the NSHS Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Join us on Friday, September 17, to recognize people who've made history by helping to preserve it. The following individuals will be honored at the NSHS Annual Meeting and Luncheon in LaVista:

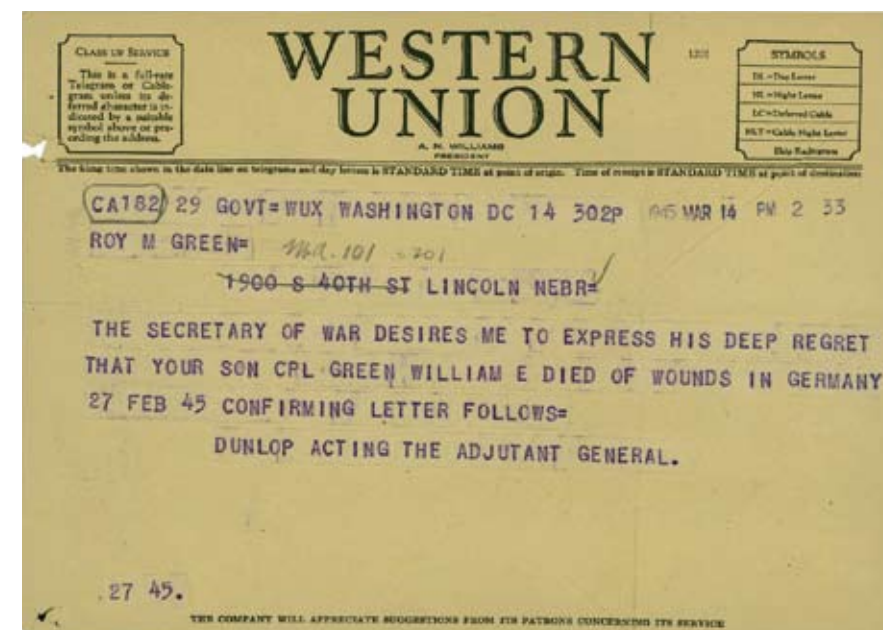
Longtime NSHS volunteer Vince Goeres of Lincoln will receive the **Robert W. Furnas Award**, which recognizes outstanding contributions or assistance to the NSHS through a long-term or significant one-time contribution.

Gary Kastrick, a teacher at Omaha South High School, will receive the **James C. Olson Memorial Award**, which recognizes Nebraska K-12 teachers who epitomize the best that Nebraska educators have to offer by inspiring and guiding their students to discover the histories we share.

Dr. Harl Dalstrom, retired professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, has made numerous contributions to Nebraska history through his publications, teaching, and public involvement. He will receive the **Addison E. Sheldon Memorial Award**, which recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation of Nebraska history.

Other awards will be announced at the event. The NSHS Annual Meeting Awards Luncheon will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 12520 Westport Parkway, LaVista (at I-80 Exit 442). The luncheon will be in The Windsor III-IV rooms. The cost is \$25 per person; register by September 1 by contacting Martha Kimball at martha.kimball@nebraska.gov or (402) 471-4746.

On the day of the event, doors open at 11:30 a.m.; the luncheon begins at noon. The NSHS Members meeting begins at 12:45 p.m. Parking is available at the Embassy Suites.



From Scout to Soldier

"Dear Mom, I guess there's nothing to say because if I said it no doubt it would be censored," wrote William Green on November 15, 1944. "We've been told what we can't write about and it covers nearly everything we do. . . We've been informed that we are at a secret place so I guess we're nowhere. . ." Even so, he wanted his family to have his new address so they could write often.

Green, whose Cub Scout uniform appears on the back cover, was born in Lincoln in 1925. During his short life, he was a scout, a University of Nebraska student (studying vertebrate paleontology), an artist, and finally a soldier. The photo and telegram shown here illustrate the sacrifices of a generation.

Several of Green's wartime letters appear in a World War II online exhibit at nebraskastudies.org, a website co-sponsored by the NSHS. Click the 1925-1949 tab, then select "The War: Nebraska Stories."



William E. Green, 1925-1945. NSHS RG2025.AM.

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

State Historic Site hours:

www.nebraskahistory.org

N E B R A S K A

history news

Nebraska State Historical Society

From the Collection. . .

Part of the Nebraska History Museum's Boy Scout exhibit, this 1930s uniform belonged to William E. Green of Lincoln. Green probably made the "woggle" used to fasten the neckerchief. In 1930 the Boy Scouts of America established a program for boys ages nine to eleven. At first the program was called "Cubbing" and the boys were called "Cubs," as indicated above the right breast pocket of the shirt and on the neckerchief. In 1945 the names were changed to "Cub Scouting" and "Cub Scouts."

Green is also part of the museum's World War II exhibit. On February 27, 1945, the nineteen-year-old died of wounds received while fighting on the Siegfried Line. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart Medals (see more about William Green on p. 10). 