



Entering Howard County

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Fall Issue 2001



My FAVORITE Places IN HOWARD County

By
Ron W. Sack

Part three in a series of four.

It was on those warm summer afternoons that my grandmother would give my cousins and I a quarter a piece and send us skipping down Seventh Street to the brick streets of Howard Avenue. Most of the time we ended up at Leth's IGA. I liked going there for two reasons. Reason #1: They had a great wooden floor which made creaking sounds as you walked across it. Reason #2: They had one of the best candy selections in Howard County. Needless to say, the place ignited my senses for years to come.

Photo above: Interior of Model Grocery in St. Paul. The Model Grocery later became the site of Leth's IGA. Clarence and Mayme Leth would move their store down the block to this location in 1969 and would operate Leth's IGA at this location until 1984. H.C.H.S. photo donated by Barb Wroblewski.

Entering Howard County

Mayme Leth recalled purchasing McIntyre's IGA store in 1953. That store was located in the west half of what is now the Brick Street Mall. Leths operated a store there until 1969, when Model Grocery went out of business. Leths moved to that site (which is now Wroblewski Law Office).

While the Leths were at their first location, they had one fulltime clerk besides Clarence and Mayme. They also hired a high school boy who would come every day after school and all day Saturday. When Leths started business, the other stores in St. Paul were Havlik's, Bartle's, Model Grocery and the locker (which also sold grocery). All were located on main street.

The main reason for moving to the Model Grocery site was space. The Model Grocery building ran from Howard Avenue all the way to the alley. Things were really moving at this time. Leths employed two full-time clerks, one parttime clerk, and a high school boy.

Back in 1953, five to six salesmen would come in each week and take the orders the Leths had. Times would change and Leths would have to change with them. Orders were then placed through a book. They would have to mark what they wanted and send it into the warehouse located in Lincoln. During their last years in business, Mayme would order into a machine which was hooked up to the telephone. The order went directly to the warehouse. Deliveries were received from the warehouse twice a week.

To add to the flavor of the store, Mayme also made apple pies and banana bread with the fresh fruit from the store and sold them.

The Leths shared with me many interesting stories. One of which took a

little detective work. Mayme recalls... "We were finding pickle juice on the floor in the pickle counter and couldn't find where it was coming from. So, one day I decided to watch a guy who was living at the Howard Hotel. He would always come in the afternoon, but very seldom bought anything. Sure enough, I caught him as he was about to open a jar of sweet pickles. He would drink the juice and spill some on the floor."

After Leth's IGA closed in 1984, Clarence and Mayme would miss the customers—but not the work.

Leths gave service which is sometimes missing in today's stores—they delivered grocery three times a week. Mayme said they had some women who never came into the store. They did all of their ordering over the phone.

To make things even more convenient



Leth's IGA moved into the location which was known as Model Grocery in 1910, the location housed Hoover's Store. Today the building houses Wroblewski Law Office. Courtesy of Ron Sack.

for customers, Leths would also go over to Johnson's Variety and pick up orders from them that their customers ordered and send it along with the groceries.

Indeed, some things should never change.



The Uleman clan in 1922. From left to right: Forrest, Jacob, Maxine, Dorothy, Cathryn, Minnie, and Robert. The child in Minnie's arms is Wayne, also known as Bill. Children of Jacob and Minnie provided the funding for an authentic passenger bench which will be displayed in the depot. Photo courtesy of the family.

Uleman family to be remembered at the Historical Village.

Children of Jacob and Minnie Uleman are honoring their parents at the soon-to-be-restored Union Pacific depot at the Historical Village.

In memory of their parents, the

children provided the funding to purchase a beautiful passenger bench.

"This donation is beyond our wildest dreams," exclaimed Marion Bahensky, depot chairperson. "These benches are extremely hard to find and quite pricey. We are lucky to have the Ulemans looking out for us."

The bench will be the focal point in the main waiting room of the depot.

Documenting Howard County's country schools.

By Bernadine "Buzz" Welch

While Marion Bahensky, Donna Dobish, Ron Sack and I were working on restoring the interior of the St. Libory country school, we had the idea to expand the exhibits as well as preserve the interior. Sack designed a beautiful exhibit located in the cloak room of the school. His exhibit documents the dates of all of the country schools in Howard County.

The interior is fast raking shape. All walls, ceiling and trim were painted. The floor is being cleaned as are the windows and artifacts. Jerry Hruza then brought over a piano which was previously in storage. Restoration work is still to be done to the east wall and black board is to be installed by volunteers.

Wanting to expand on this preservation work, we decided to collect photos of all of the country schools (of which we have only a handful) as well as record your stories of attending or teaching in a country school.

Our hope is to record the stories now and someday publish them. We also hope to display copies of all of the country schools photos as well. Please take the time to preserve our history by sending stories and photos (which can be returned if needed) to the Howard County Historical Society, 1021 Sixth Street, St. Paul, NE 68873.

Some of the items on our artifact "Wish List" for the school include the following: school desks circa 1900, a teacher's desk, a George Washington picture, a watercooler crock, syrup



pails/lunch containers, an American flag circa 1900, and a regulator clock.

Top photo: District #28 donated by Jun and Marilyn Nelson Bottom photo: District #42 courtesy of Doris Forbes.

Our Historical Society.

By President Mena Sprague

We are nearing the end of summer and cooler weather has arrived. We are so grateful for the rain and there may be more coming. The really exciting news is we are moving ahead on the depot, Marvin Webb our architect is preparing to advertise for bids for the

restoration to begin. People working this week on the depot, caulking windows and clearing tar off the floor are Marion Bahensky, Carl Christensen, Peter Lee, Marian Potts, Dave Sprague, Buzz Welch and myself with Marian Potts bringing lunch for all. We are so grateful for all help and are looking for people who are willing to help us. Several are putting in long days. I asked several churches and groups to

Continued on page 6.

“Entering Howard County” book cited as one of the best in the nation.

By Ron W. Sack

Entering Howard County was honored with a national award. The highly acclaimed American Association for State and Local History bestowed an award on the Howard County Historical Society for the creation of the book. Winners of their national awards were announced at a gala event in Indianapolis, Indiana on September 12-15, 2001. The event was sponsored by The History Channel. The American Association for State and Local History is a national organization set up to establish standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. This year's awards chair was Katherine Kane with the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center in Hartford, C.T.

Members of the book committee included Marion Bahensky, Virginia Ieth, Ken Ieth, Doris Ieth, Jay Thompson/Tommy-Rene Printing, Setha Zimbelman, Carl Huebner, and Ron W. Sack. Members of the committee volunteered over 5,600 hours to the project and to Howard County.

The book underwent an extensive critique just to be nominated and make it to the state level. Ron Sack presented the book to a group consisting of doctors, state officials, and writers. Some of their thoughts were as follows: "...an impressive county history," Dr. John Mark Nielsen, Professor of Literature at Dana College; "The Howard County Historical Society should be commended

for producing *Entering Howard County*...I have seen more than a few counties and local historical societies undertake a variety of projects during my tenure of thirty years with the Nebraska State Historical Society as

senior anthropologist and formerly as State Historic Preservation Officer. *Entering Howard County* is one of the most successful..." Senior Research Anthropologist Richard E. Jensen with the Nebraska State Historical Society; and "All in all this is the best county history book of the many I have read. It sets a remarkably high standard for county histories of the future, not just in Nebraska, but the entire nation," Lincoln Historian, *Lincoln Journal-Star* columnist, and bookstore owner James L. McKee.

After the critique, the book was presented to a state review panel and then, after it passed, it moved on to the Missouri Valley Region which consisted of entries from Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Once reviewed and approved by that panel, *Entering Howard County* was off to the nationals where it competed with entries from across the United States.

"This group is to be congratulated for bringing the national attention to Nebraska's unique history and cultural



Members of the book committee—Ron Sack, Setha Zimbelman, Marion Bahensky and Jay Thompson—go back to where the inspiration all started for the history book. This photo was taken near the Greeley-Howard County line by Wolbach. Not pictured are Virginia, Doris and Ken Ieth and Carl Huebner. Photo courtesy of the *St. Paul Phenograph-Herald*.

heritage," stated Virginia Lund, Nebraska Chair.

It's not the first time the Howard County Historical Society has appeared in the state and national spotlight. The Historical Village site plan, which included adding the Cotesfield post office, courtyard, archway, street lamps, benches and a Union Pacific depot was named one of the "Top Initiatives in Rural Development" by Governor Ben Nelson. The Cotesfield post office received national attention when the project was named one of the outstanding preservation projects by *Midwest Living* magazine. And the "Help Stop Cemetery Theft" campaign, created by the Howard County Historical Society, received praise from the National Cemetery Foundation in New Orleans.

"We have an outstanding board which is allowing progress—like this his-

Entering Howard County

story book-to happen," explained Sack. "There are so many great stories to tell through the use of architecture, artifacts, photographs, and the written word. It's time Howard County's story is told to the entire nation."

The group concluded by saying Howard County is definitely on a roll with history and the county needs to keep the momentum going.

The momentum they are referring to is with the current preservation projects going on in St. Paul. They cited the public preservation work with the St. Libory #41 school, general store, and Union Pacific depot at the Historical Village and the work by the Royal Coachmen with the Farmers' Union gas station and the recently restored business "House of Memories."

Nebraska Center For The Book honors Historical Society.

By Ron Sack

The Howard County Historical Society has won yet another award for their history book *Entering Howard County*. On Friday, September 21 the Nebraska Library Commission named it the best non-fiction book in the state for 2000. Marion Bahensky and Ron Sack were on hand to accept the award in Nebraska City. Awards were given out in conjunction with the Nebraska Literature Festival which was being held on the campus of Peru State College. Governor Mike Johanns and First Lady Stephanie Johanns were in attendance for the award ceremonies.

The non-fiction category, which

Entering Howard County was entered in, received the most entries on any of the five categories. Awards were also given for best poetry, best fiction, best cover design and best children/young adult book.

Rod Wagner, one of the coordinators for the competition, said the judges were both impressed by the wealth of information included and the professional character of the publication *Entering Howard County*. He also said the book is a model of what county histories should look like.

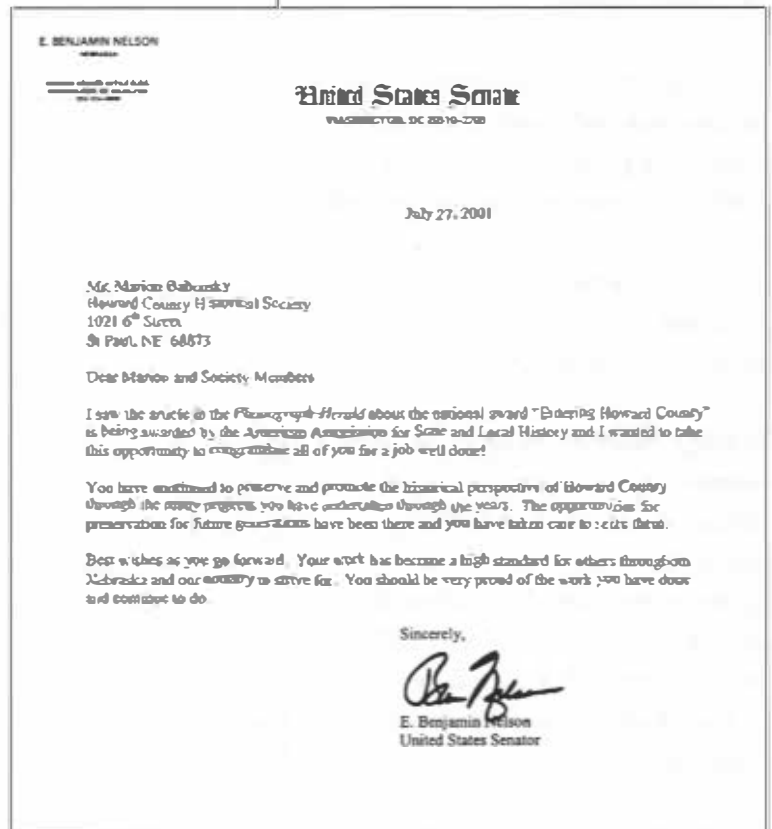
The award becomes the second award won by the Howard County Historical Society for *Entering Howard County*. The first award was a national award given by the American Association for State and Local History in Indianapolis, Indiana.

"It is clear the directors, members and supporters of the Howard County Historical Society are bringing state and national attention to Howard County," stated board member and writer Ron Sack. Bahensky added, "Being a published author was something beyond my wildest dreams, and now we have received a 'best non-fiction

for 2000' award from the best book authorities in the state for our book."

Other winners included *Places in Time* by Leacock, Buckley and Jones, published by Houghton Mifflin; *Troublemakers* by John McNally, published by Iowa Press; *Black Elk Lives*, published by Nebraska Press; *Winter Morning Walks* by Ted Kooser, published by Carnegie Mellon; and *Homefield Sonata in Rural Voice* by Robert Richter, published by Backwaters Press.

Major funding for the Festival was provided by the Nebraska Center for the Book, an affiliate of the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, Peru State College, and the Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC).



News of the awards won by the Historical Society for "Entering Howard County" reached all the way to the U. S. Senate. Senator Ben Nelson sent this letter to Bahensky congratulating the Historical Society on the awards.

Entering Howard County

Continued from page 3:

help the Historical Society by manning the village when we are open. Their response was positive. We thank the Danish Brotherhood for offering to be at the village as often as needed and they were there three times. Others that I want to thank are Catholic Daughters from St. Paul, St. Mark's Lutheran Church from St. Paul, Elba Methodist Church from Elba, Zion Lutheran Church from Worms, the Mason's from St. Paul, Christ Lutheran Church from St. Paul, Job's Daughters from St. Paul, Boelus Methodist from Boelus, Happy Church from St. Paul and St. Paul United Methodist from St. Paul.

2001-2002 schedule announced.

By Marion Bahensky

As part of our commitment to improve the economic well-being of Howard County, we proudly announce our 2001-2002 events and tourism schedule

Sunday, November 25, 2001, 1-5 P.M.
Bake Sale. Main Street, St. Paul. Fun for you and fundraising for us.

Sunday, December 9, 2001, 2-6 P.M.
Seventh Annual Holiday Tour of Homes. Admission \$10 (Advance tickets \$7.50) Includes tax. Six beautiful homes welcome you. Tickets & map available on 12/9 after 1 P.M. at Senior Center, 808 Howard Avenue, St. Paul. Refreshments afterwards at Senior Center.

Monday, January 21, 2002, 7:30 P.M.
Annual Meeting, Updates on depot, school, and store renovations

Howard County Courthouse (enter through back door). Financial report, annual reports on all projects.

Sunday, February 10, 2002, 2 P.M.
Last Of The One-Room Country Schools. Repeat of popular Custer Co. video, also reminiscences of Howard Co. country schools. Refreshments. St. Paul Library, 1301 Howard Avenue.

Sunday, March 3, 2002, 2 P.M.
Touring American Ghost Towns. Video tour of famous towns which no longer exist. Refreshments. Free will donation. St. Paul Library, 1301 Howard Avenue.

Sunday, April 7, 2002, 2-5 P.M.
SHOW YOUR STUFF! Antiques & collectibles. Legion Hall. Refreshments. \$5.25 admission (\$2.50 for exhibitors); 2 items appraised free.

Sunday, May 26, 2002, 2-5 P.M.
Celebrate annual re-opening of Historical Village and "Grand Opening" of newly restored St. Libory #41 school and store. Take a peek at progress on the depot restoration. Refreshments. Free will donation. Indian and 6th Streets, St. Paul.

Sunday, June 9, 2002, 2 P.M.
Chautauqua preview No. 1. St. Paul Library Book Club presents a panel discussion on three of six Chautauqua scholars who will be portrayed at St. Paul Chautauqua in July. Refreshments. Free will donation. St. Paul Public Library, 1301 Howard Avenue.

Sunday, June 23, 2002, 2 P.M.
Chautauqua preview No. 2. St. Paul Library Book Club members agree and disagree on three of six Chautauqua

scholars who will be portrayed at St. Paul Chautauqua in July. Refreshments. Free will donation. St. Paul Public Library, 1301 Howard Avenue.

Sunday, July (to be announced).
2-6 P.M. Chautauqua Tour of Homes. Special, once-only Summer Tour of turn-of-the Century homes. \$10 admission; map & ticket available after 1 P.M. at Senior Center, 808 Howard Avenue. (Advance tickets \$7.50). Refreshments afterwards at the St. Paul Senior Center.

Sunday, September 2, 2002 2-5 P.M.
Grand Opening of completely restored "Depot." Celebrate completed transportation museum and addition of "lost" Union Pacific coalshed/outhouse. Our Historical Village is now complete, except for landscaping. Refreshments. Free will donation. (\$3 admission charge for Depot hereafter.) 6th and Jay Streets.

Sunday, October 14, 2002, 2 P.M.
Great American Train Rides, Vol. 1. 60 Min. video on historic, scenic train rides. Refreshments. Free will donation.

Sunday, November 17, 2002. Eighth Annual Bake Sale. 1-5 P.M. Main Street, St. Paul. Cakes, pies, cookies sold for a good cause. Smiles free.

Sunday, December 8, 2002. Eighth Annual Holiday Tour of Homes. 2-6 P.M. \$10 (Advance tickets \$7.50) A onceonly open invitation into six of St. Paul's charming homes. Refreshments afterwards at the St. Paul Senior Center.

Entering Howard County

*Unable find the time to help the Historical Society?
 Would like to help at the Historical Village, but don't live nearby?
 Here are some ways you can help us. Give these forms to friends
 you know who might be interested in helping preserve our Union Pacific
 depot or purchase our award-winning history book.*

Photocopy or cut along dotted line and send in.

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMPLETION OF THE
 HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL VILLAGE BY HELPING PRESERVE THE UNION PACIFIC DEPOT.

I want to help fund this much needed and final project which will house new exhibits
 and storage space. I wish to donate:

___ \$100 ___ \$250 ___ \$500 ___ \$1,000 ___ \$2,500 ___ \$5,000 ___ \$10,000 ___ other

Name _____

Address _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone _____

All donations over \$100 will be remembered on the Donor Board which will be prominently displayed in the restored depot.
 Donations of \$2,500 or more will receive special recognition.

 Name you wished to have inscribed.

Your donation, made out to the Howard County Historical Society, is tax-deductible
 (Be sure to indicate the "Depot Campaign" on your check memo area.)

Send in your tax-deductible donation to us at: 1021 Sixth Street, St. Paul, NE 68873

Questions? Contact the Historical Society at the address above or contact any of the other board members

Thank you!

IT'S YOUR MEMORY. IT'S OUR HISTORY. IT'S WORTH SAVING.

"ENTERING HOWARD COUNTY" MAKES A GREAT BIRTHDAY OR CHRISTMAS GIFT
 ORDER A COPY TODAY!

Photocopy or cut along dotted line and send in.

Yes, please send ___ copies of the 544 page history book *Entering Howard County* for me

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

1.) Number of History Books: _____ x \$75.00 = _____

2.) Shipping and Handling (\$5.00 per book, if desired): _____ x \$ 5.00 = _____

3.) Tax: _____

5% Nebraska Sales Tax (\$3.75 per book, if purchased in state): _____ x \$ 3.75 = _____

OR 6% St. Paul City Sales Tax (\$4.50, if purchased in St. Paul): _____ x \$ 4.50 = _____

Total: \$ = _____

*Make checks payable to the Howard County Historical Society
 1021 Sixth Street, St. Paul, Nebraska 68873*

Entering Howard County

Expanded research continues on schools.



Photo above: District #18 in Howard County courtesy of Leo Blaha. The Howard County Historical Society is currently restoring the St. Libory #41 school and is inviting everyone to help preserve the history of rural education. Please see the related story inside this newsletter for details.

Entering Howard County

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