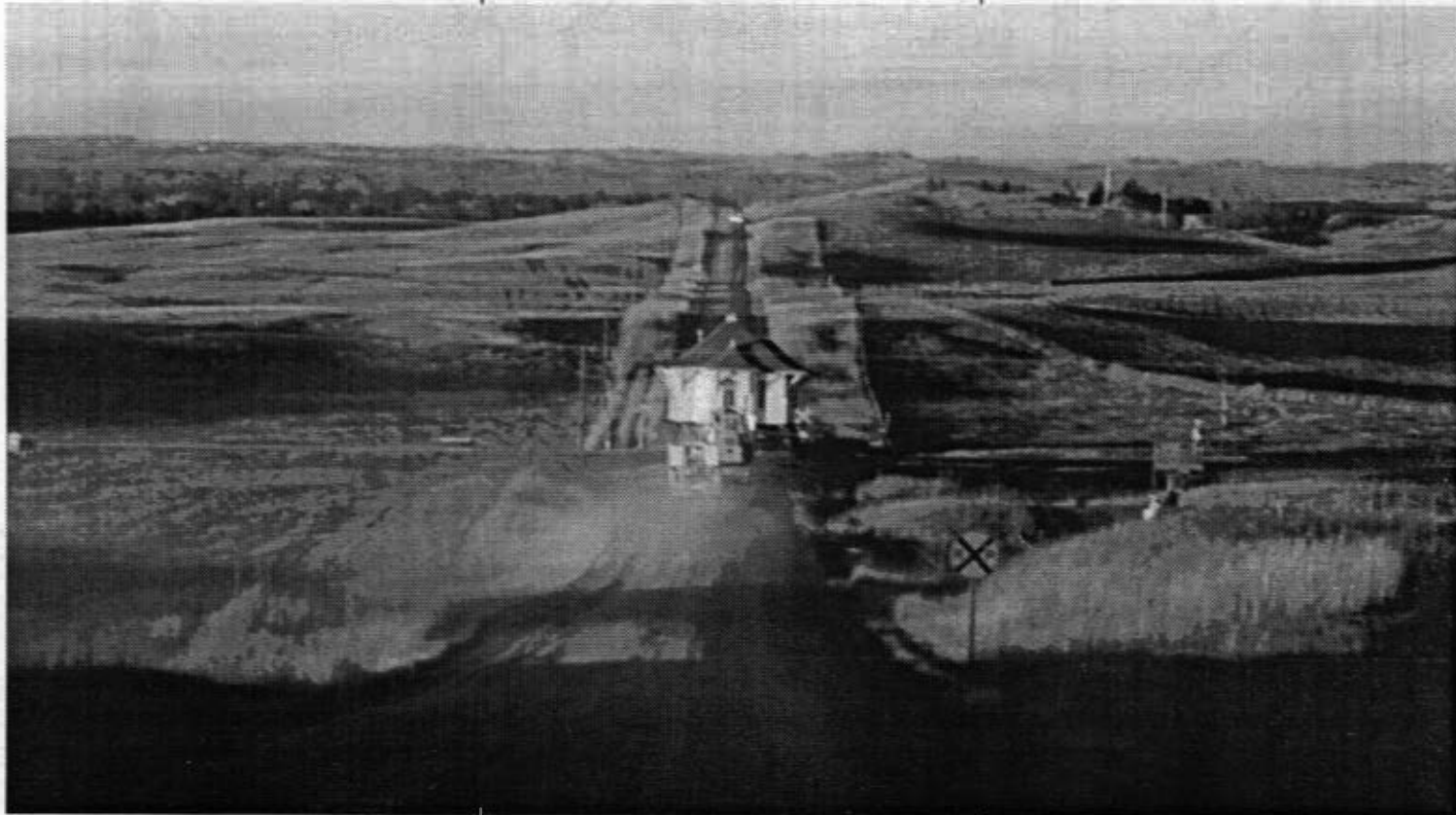


historically speaking

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 304 / St. Paul, Nebraska / 68873

Spring Issue 1999



*“Nothing happens,
unless first a dream.”
— Carl Sandburg*

After over thirty years, the Howard County Historical Society finally has its main museum building — and what a beautiful one it is! Three television stations and three newspapers were on hand to help put St. Paul and Howard County in the state’s spotlight.

*Photo above
The Cabbon depot sets
sail across the
Nebraska prairie.
Many spectators fol-
lowed the depot on
portions of its 45+
mile journey to St.
Paul. All were
impressed and
inspired by this his-
toric event.*



*Photo at right
Union Pacific depot
makes its final turn
into the Historic
Village in St. Paul.*

*Photos courtesy of
Marion Bahrosky
and Ron Sack.*



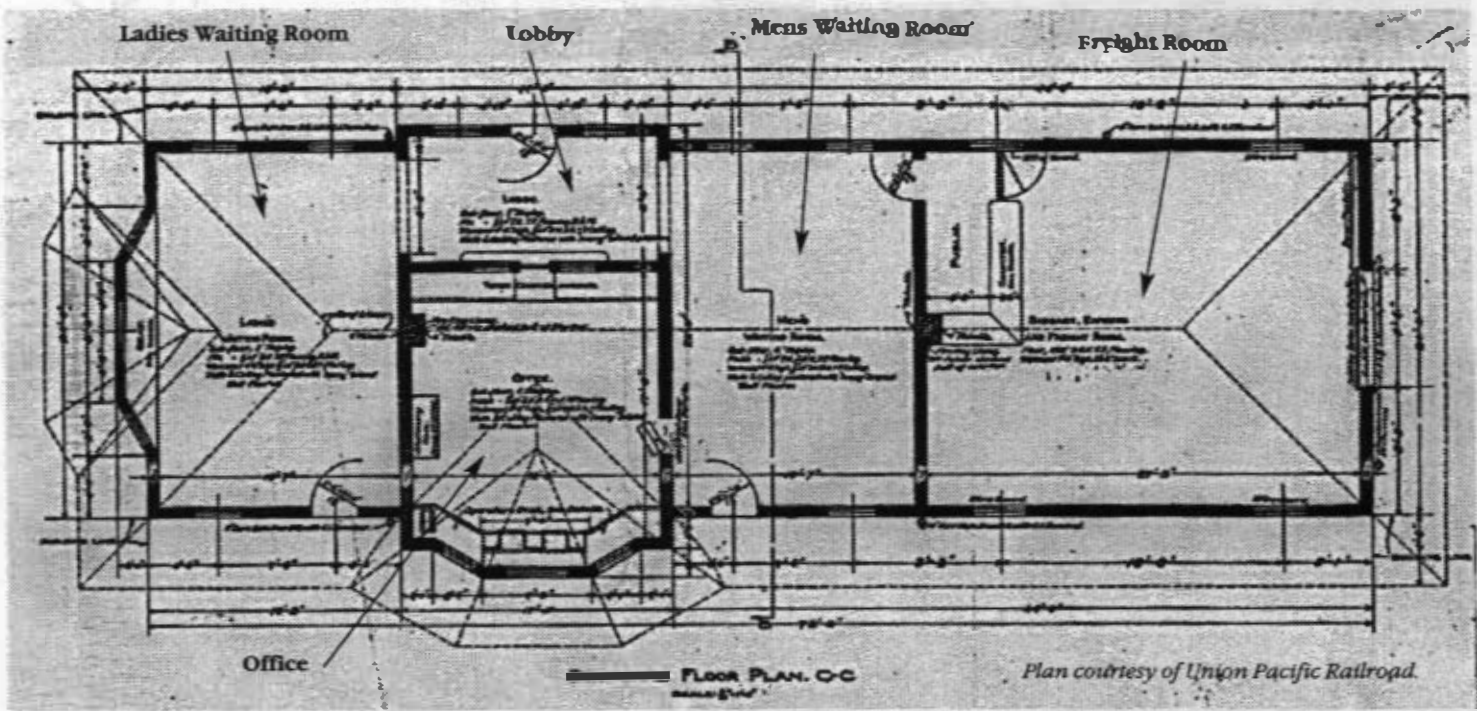
Society begins millennium projects.

Dannevirke Church and Hall are named to National Register.



Cushing High’s class of 1938 is remembered.

Dream finally arrives in St. Paul!



Top photo: Union Pacific Railroad in Omaha has recently donated the depot's original floor plan to the Howard County Historical Society "Our great working relationship with the Union Pacific Railroad has helped us acquire these plans," stated board member Andy Mostek. Photo above: President Marion Bahensky is interviewed by one of the television stations which covered the historic move. "This publicity is fantastic for Howard County and St. Paul," exclaimed Bahensky.



Photo above: Original floor plans of the depot will help the Historical Society restore it to its former glory. The ladies waiting room (at far left) is the first room to be designated for an exhibit honoring Howard County's Churches.

Photo above: The depot awaits its final move onto the new foundation at the Historical Village. Photo below: Several of the board members proudly gather on the sunny 60 degree December moving day and hold up the sign, "Let us tell you about a place, a plan, and our vision." Photos courtesy of Marion Bahensky and Ron Sack.



Photo above: 1999 board member Andy Mostek surveys the site in early November.



Why understanding our past is so important to our future.

By Ron W. Sack

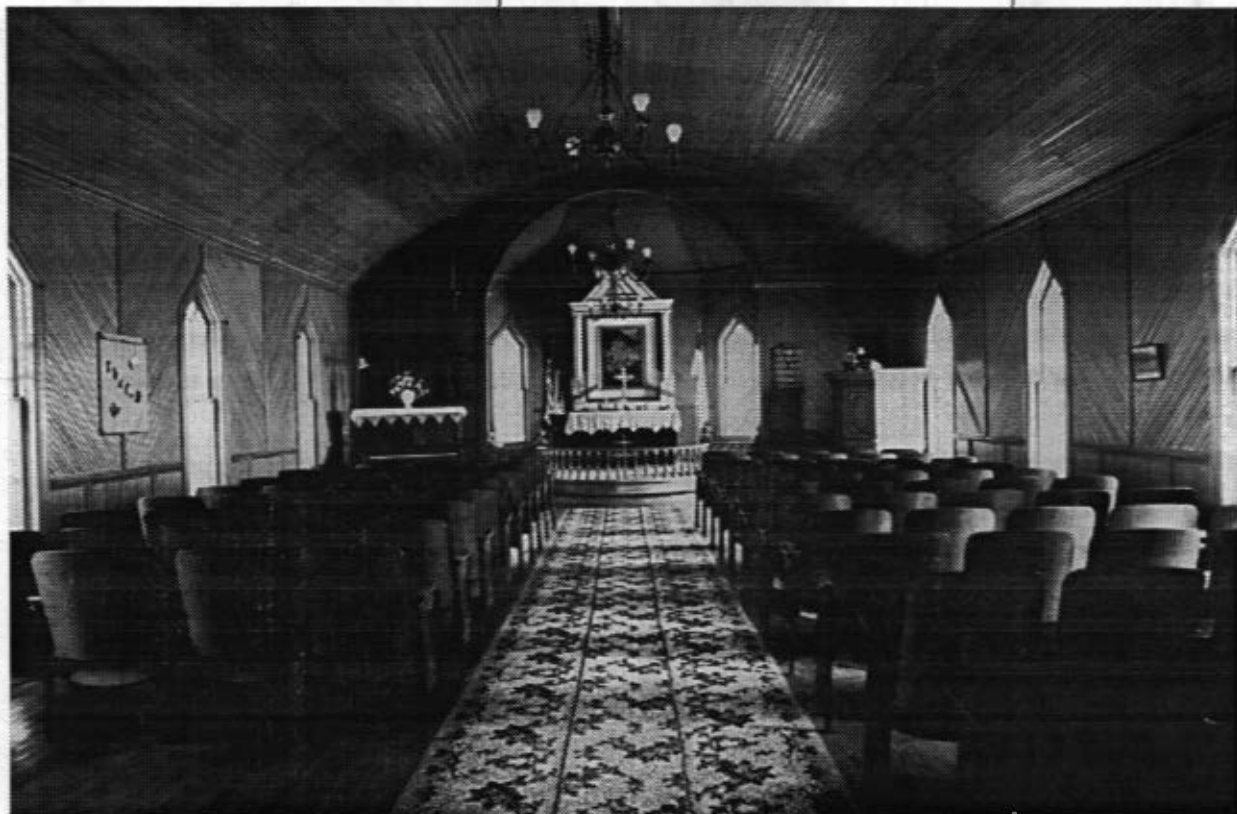
Americans have always respected newness and youth. We are, after all, a new people, a young people: the inhabitants of a New World where old tyrannies have no place and where a man can make himself out of the stuff of his opportunities. The American Dream – brought here in the baggage of millions of immigrants – is a dream, above all, of this newness. Here the past is another country, its citizens other people left behind. An American from the first is a child of the future, a person who starts from scratch. This is the great gift we've been given by those Americans who have preceded us: we are allowed, like no other people on earth, to invent our own personal destinies. We're free to make ourselves up as we go along.

We Americans pay a price for this gift, though: we forget with too much enthusiasm what has come before us. Intent on the future, we throw away the past as it's used up; we are wasteful of memory. We fail to ask our parents and grandparents, before we lose them, the questions we wish we had asked – not "What happened in your life?" but "How did it feel?" and "What was it like?" We fail to search for, in them, what we look for in ourselves as we too grow older: a sense of continuity, a sense of belonging, of being part of the stream. We look for a genealogy of names. But what we finally want is a genealogy of feeling. We want emotional roots in a history that we ignored when it was available.



What's true of us as individuals is true of us as a people. American history, for most of us, is an old distant legend full of mythic figures. With the present – like the future – clamoring for our attention, we don't recognize how close our history really is, how new and, in one sense, how ordinary. America has had its share of great men and women. But the history of the American democracy is itself a democratic history. It's been made – more than in any other society – by ordinary people: the immigrant, the preacher, the schoolteacher, the farmer, the store owner, the blacksmith, the postmaster, and the depot agent. These people were ordinary, like us. And they're nearer to us than we think.

Old people and old buildings – declining in numbers as we reach the end of the century – are a special resource, a resource that, for our own sakes, we should not waste. For they carry within them the sources for our identity and our history. They are witness to a time that will never come again. They are living chronicles, the elders of the American experience. And we would do well to listen, to remember, and to preserve.



Interior of the Dannevirke Church in 1925, untouched by change. Photo courtesy of Ron W. Sack

Both the Church and Hall have been placed on the National Register for Historic Places.

Dannevirke Church and Hall are named to the National Register.

By Ron W. Sack

Heloise Bresley of Ord, Nebraska is one of those individuals who makes you feel proud of being from Howard County. Her dedication to her roots in Howard County has led Dannevirke Church and Dannevirke Hall to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Please plan to attend the special Danish Independence Day Celebration at Dannevirke which takes place on June 5th. Many events are planned.

We at the Howard County Historical Society are extremely proud of what dedicated individuals (and HCHS members) such as Heloise are doing to promote preservation in Howard County.

Several years ago, I was inspired by my friends, Chester and Elda Miller, to learn more about Dannevirke. Elda directed me to the book "A Story of the Danish Settlement in Dannevirke" written by Arthur Christensen in 1961. I wish to share with you two excerpts from that book which to me, convey some of the strongest feelings I have towards this wonderful place called Dannevirke.

DANNEVIRKE HALL

"It was May 1901: the evening had arrived — and people came from right and left with their families. At one end of the stage was a large American flag, at the other end was a Danish flag of the same size. Now the main speaker of the evening, John Andersen, President of the Dannevirke Hall Association, came onto the stage. The facts were that John Andersen was inordinately proud of his mastery of the English language and he wanted to impress his compatriots with his attainments. He stopped for a few seconds for effect, then pointing with his right forefinger at his chest, said

solemnly, 'I, John Andersen, President of the Dannevirke Hall Association, forecast an era of amity and love throughout this settlement. I foresee unbounded prosperity and, as our children — the first generation of Americans — take over where their elders leave off, they will build within this settlement a new Denmark within the boundary of the U.S. A.' A little more along that line he bowed and left the stage. He was roundly cheered. John Andersen had reached the zenith of his career; he was in seventh heaven."

DANNEVIRKE CHURCH

"The church was completed in the fall of 1906 and dedicated December 9, 1906. At the church dedication, a full day affair, not a word of English was spoken — neither at the morning nor a afternoon services."

Heloise shared with us the history she compiled for the application to get the buildings on the National Register. Look for that story in the next issue.

1999 Historical Society Tourism and Economic Development Plan

Company's Comin'

April 11

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

American Legion Hall

Displays of place settings and Mother's best china and silver or Aunt Betty's picnic basket.

Admission is only \$5.

Refreshments included.

34th Annual opening of the Historical Village and Gruber House

May 30

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Special Guests: Lower Loup Muzzleloaders

Suggested donation: \$1

View our award-winning Cotesfield Post Office and the six other historic buildings as well as the Gruber House and Baseball Museum. Tour the work in progress on the Union Pacific Depot — St. Paul's latest claim to fame. Experience living history with the Lower Loup Muzzleloaders.

Civil War Encampment and Prairie Blacksmith Association

June 18-20

Historical Village, St. Paul

The 9th Texas, Co. Green acts a Civil War Encampment for the second time in St. Paul. Authentic tents, clothing, cookery, and lifestyles are shown as well as demonstrations by both the Encampment and the Prairie Blacksmith Association.

Grover Cleveland Alexander Days

July 9-11

Historical Village, St. Paul

Gruber Grandstand Gala

September 12

Historic music from the veranda of the Gruber House.

Holiday Gift Show/Bake Goods/Open House

November 21

Crafts, baked goods, and business open houses.

Fifth Annual Holiday Tour of Homes

December 12

Admission: \$7 per person; refreshments.

From the President.

By Marion Bahensky

We have acquired a beautiful, very special building — the Gibbon/Shelton depot. It has two large bay windows, twenty tall windows, attractive and unique transoms, a double floor in the freight/baggage room, high ceilings, and pleasant proportions. We could not get it moved here in time to get it scraped and painted before winter, so it has looked tattered and tacky all winter. We will be painting and scraping as soon as we can. A new roof and storm windows are most essential — and expensive. We are working hard to raise money for repair and restoration.

The St. Paul Jaycees have been promoting and planning a "Dinner Train" to Ord. They approached us about using the depot for a staging area. We have enthusiastic support from all towns up the river for a "Historic Tour of the Beautiful North Loup River Valley." It's the first time an organization from St. Paul has taken a major leadership role in promoting tourism/economic development for St. Paul and the entire region. We will be delighted to use the depot for historic displays of railroad history for the entire valley, as well as an interpretive center. A dinner train is something that will be fun and will help our local economy.

We are planning several major exhibits to be in this main museum building. The first

will be a focus on Howard County Churches. This exhibit will spotlight Churches which have given Howard County state and national acclaim. All churches will be documented and included in this exhibit as well.

We continue to be one of the few groups who are bringing people and money into St. Paul's economy. Our programs, activities, and events will be big draws for tourists and travelers in 1999. We hope to break our record-setting number of 1500 visitors in 1998. 2,000 seems to be a realistic goal. Our Civil War Encampment is back, as well as other events such as the Holiday Tour of Homes, Company's Comin', Craft and Bake Sale, Lower Loup Muzzleloaders, 34th Annual Opening of the Village, and the Village Celebrates GCA Days.

For a millennium project, or Y2K as the computer people say, or Jubilee Year as the Pope says, I want the Historical Society to publish a County history. I want to print the stories of the pioneer families, along with Ellen Parach's Howard County History, Ron Sack's County church history, and Evelyn and Virginia's veteran lists. I also want to include some reminiscences of N. J. Paul, Fred Haggart, C. V. Svoboda, and others who wrote about early experiences in Howard County. Anybody wishing to send a family history may have one free page of text or photos. The book will probably cost \$50.60 for purchase. We need to get these stories into print before it's too late. We need to keep what records we can. Early settlers experiences are enormously moving.

We want to thank all those who took the time to vote. Nearly 100 people, or about 35%, voted. Most historical societies say a 10% turnout is appropriate... we are pleased at 35% even with an uncontested election.

We have had some early support from members, area businesses, community leaders, and organizations contributing to the depot. Nearly \$28,000 has been raised or pledged to the depot project. We are ecstatic! Let's keep it up! Thanks for your affirmation of what we are doing.



Cushing High School is remembered.

Information compiled by Arclie Lind
Edited by Ron W. Sack

Situated near the junction of the Nonh Loup and Loup Rivers, the community of Cushing was founded upon the Burlington Railroad branch in 1887.

In 1902, School District 122 had built a new grade school building. Soon after, ninth and tenth grades were added.

Superintendent Nelle Folson and School Board Member Paul Anderson reported an all-school enrollment of 51 students.

As the town was booming, voters approved the construction of a two-story brick building. This building made it possible for Cushing to offer a four-year

high school. The building was completed in 1922. By 1924, the first class of graduating seniors were: Catherine Jacobsen, George Gallup, Amos Petersen, and Bertha Wilson. Superintendent P. E. Brown reported a total high school enrollment of 35 students in the four-year high school.

1924 saw the purple and white uniformed Hawks travel to the Nebraska State Basketball Tournament in Lincoln. They competed in Class "O". Other popular athletic events were track and baseball.

Among the noteworthy graduates were Catherine Jacobsen (1924), who would work for the United States government in Washington, D.C., Dorothy Petersen (1931), who with her husband Art Lynch, developed the well-known Dorothy Lynch salad dressing marketed in the midwest, and Dr. Robert Johnson (1947), who received his Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin and would set up agricultural extension administration programs in Nigeria, Uganda and Russia.

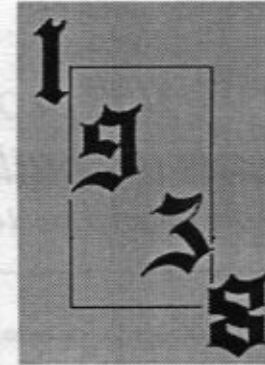
Photo above: The Cushing High School. The official years the school operated a high school were from 1904-1954. 1904 marked the first year ninth and tenth grades were offered - thus ushering in 50 years of high school education in Cushing. The photograph above was donated to the Howard County Historical Society by former Cushing teacher Grace Potts.

Photos at left: Howard and Frieda Oakeson have recently donated a wonderful class photograph collection from Cushing High School. The photographs at right are from Howard's graduating class. It is hoped to display this photograph collection and others from Cushing in the display racks located in the Gruber House. The Society extends its THANKS!

Cushing High School would graduate its last senior class in 1954 with Ellen Gay the lone member of the class. The school would later merge with St. Paul High School.

An Alumni Association was formed in 1977, and holds reunions to keep the memories alive. The school building was later sold to a private owner and demolished.

historically speaking



Cushing Class of 1938

Ruth Sailing
 Carl White
 Ruth Jensen
 Bill Green
 (Vice President)

Esther Sailing
 Dorothy Mortensen
 Edwin McCormick

Ward Mans
 Jesse Meyers
 Ruth Luch
 Ralph Sorensen
 (Class Sponsor)

Irene Paulsen
 Fernie Jeffres
 Wayne Schomburg

Irma Paulsen
 George McCormick
 Alice Sailing
 Howard Oakeson
 (President)

Dannebrog loses yet another landmark



Photo courtesy of the St. Paul Phonograph Herald.

“We will probably be judged not by the monuments we build, but by those we have destroyed.”

New York Times editorial on the destruction of Penn Station, October 30, 1963

On February 23, a wrecking crew came to Dannebrog and demolished City Hall. By a narrow margin in November, residents of Dannebrog voted to let the Village Board decide the building's fate. The Village Board voted for demolition.

The Howard County Historical Society values those who banded together to support the preservation of City Hall. Taking a stand such as this can be difficult, but encourages all of us to think in a different manner. The village of Dannebrog not only lost an important building on its main street, but it also lost the walls which told the story about the citizens of Dannebrog who donated 160 days of labor to build City Hall in 1922.

According to an article in the *Grand Island Independent*, the building's former space will now become a parking lot.



Photo above: Early photo of a parade in Farwell honoring veterans. The Historical Society wishes to permanently honor all veterans. Photo courtesy of Randy Lubiszewicz.

Photo at left: St. Paul's very active American Legion Hall. Photo courtesy of Ron Sack.



Long journey to peace.

By Evelyn Dvorak

The Veterans Committee of the Howard County Historical Society is continuing to compile information on Howard County veterans. As we look back in time, there is a sense of responsibility telling us that we owe a bit of "American History" to our children and coming generations.

Some would like to eliminate from our memories these episodes in U. S. history relating to all wars. Because of this, the committee wishes to receive information on all veterans from Howard County who served in the Spanish American War through the present. Those who control what children see, hear, and are taught, control the nation.

Therefore, those who wish to be recognized in our military museum may request forms from the committee. Once this simple form is returned, it is then typed, assembled and filed for viewing. This project was started in 1995 by interested American Legion members. Approximately 400 have responded to this project. This includes veterans from all wars as well as anyone who served in the military during peacetime to date.

Recently, we have uncovered some photos showing World War I men as they were leaving for military service. You may remember these framed photos when they were hanging in the court house. These photos were taken on the steps of the Howard County Court House with the American flag in the background. Family members of these men may still have a photo and we would appreciate a copy.

The committee is very grateful to the Sonderup Trust for the recent grant

received for a display case of military weapons. Plans are being drawn and hopefully the display will be completed in the very near future. There is also interest shown in the other military memorabilia we have on display.

We are asking for the support of everyone who had veterans who served our country. "Memories fade in time if not preserved."

Please contact any of the following committee members if you wish any information on any of our present projects.

Ray and Virginia Ieth
922 Farum St., St. Paul, NE 68873

Jerry and Janet Hnizda
1360 Jansen Rd., St. Paul, NE 68873

Evelyn Dvorak
585 Hwy. 92, St. Paul, NE 68873

Recent artifact donations.

Elaine McClellan, St. Paul

Early photograph of the Union Pacific depot (to be placed in Gruber House photo display rack).

Richard and Lillian Haggart, St. Paul

Boy Scout uniform and other clothing.

Howard and Frieda Oakson, St. Paul

1938 Cushing graduation class photos (to be placed in Gruber House photo display rack).

Arnold Miller, Dannebrog

Strawhat (to be placed in Gruber house bedroom).

Inez Gist estate, St. Paul

History of the Second Brigade book (to be placed in Veterans exhibit)

Florence Ociniager, St. Paul

Early 1900s toaster (to be placed in Gruber House kitchen)

From our mailbox.

"A special 'thank you' to all that have made our trips around the world of Howard County so enjoyable and enlightening – we are left with deep appreciation and nostalgia for the past and great anticipation for the future after reading the newsletter!!"

Betty and Gary Schwenk St. Libory

"...Happy New Year and continued success with all the Society's projects!"

Marie Voilbracht St. Paul

"Great newsletter – extra to help with that [\$\$\$]"

Doris Schreffler San Diego, CA

"Happy to continue my membership in the Howard County Historical Assn. 'historically speaking' is worth it alone...Can y on the good work!"

Betsy Bell Olympia, WA

"Really enjoy your newsletter. Especially enjoyed the rededication of the Farwell Scandinavian Lutheran Church and the church service."

Joyce (Peterson) Strong Omaha

"The past two newsletters have been outstanding I plan to make a copy of the Fairdale Church issue and send it to the Rev. O.W. Stromborn family in Wisconsin."

Connie May Benet, NE

"Thank you for sending us the last two newsletters. We are so impressed with all that has been done."

Mary and Jim Hedrick Grand Island

"Thanks to you and all the others who are doing such a wonderful job. I will see all of your great works in October as I plan on attending the Czechoslovak Society Meeting in Lincoln. Keep up the great work!"

Dan Sevcik Olympia, WA

"...Good luck on all of your ambitious undertakings!"

Anna (Dahlberg) Smith Napa, CA

historically speaking

PURPOSE

Howard County Historical Society

Including the towns and settlements of Borfus, Coatesfield, Cushing, Dannebrog, Dannevirke, Elba, Farwell, Nysted, Paplin, St. Libory, St. Paul, and Warsaw.

EDITOR

Ron W. Sack

ORGANIZER

300+

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<http://162177101/seraibc/HCHS.html>

MEMBERSHIP

\$10 per person

Mena Sprague, Membership chair
844 20th Ave., St. Paul, Nebraska, 68873-3518

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Your support is important to us.
The HCHS is a non-profit organization.

"...I really enjoy the newsletter and certainly appreciate the work you are all doing to preserve our history."

Viola Carter Pocatello, ID

Historical Society begins research on County Churches.

By Ron W. Sack

Our group is in the process of not only recording the history of all Howard County Churches, but we are working on an extensive exhibit as well.

1999 marks the first year in which an attempt will be made to research and document all of Howard County's Churches — both past and present.

It's true, the Danish Lutheran and Polish Catholic Churches in Howard have received State and even National acclaim. These honors alone are worthy of an extensive research project. But we also want to focus

on the other aspects which make Howard County churches so unique — not only to Howard County — but to Nebraska as well.

My journey started with the obvious: St. Libory Catholic Church. My ancestors founded this town and church in the 1870s. The history I uncovered here — a very small portion of which is shown at right — indicated to me that all churches in Howard County have a great story to tell.

Here's where you come in. We will be sending out letters to all churches asking for them to supply us with their history. We will also be asking them to look in their archives to see if there are any artifacts they wish to donate to better tell their church's story.

From there we will do additional research with members — both former and current. We will also be looking to the Nebraska State Historical Society for additional assistance as well.

But probably the most important and impactful stories will come from you. It's your opportunity to be a part of an outstanding exhibit which documents a place and a community close to your heart.

Please take a moment to write down and



St. Libory Catholics are among the first to respond in gathering research for a new exhibit on County churches. The exhibit will be located at the Society's main museum building — the Union Pacific depot. Photo above: 1907-08 music class at the St. Libory Catholic School courtesy of Albert and Clara Schwenk. Photo at right: Book entitled "He Sent Two" written by Sr. Francis Borgia Borgia, a former resident of St. Libory would spend her early years in Howard County, enter the convent, and would eventually lead her religious order — the School Sisters of St. Francis. During her leadership, this order boasted a total of 4,000+ worldwide. Its motherhouse is located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Borgia would receive her Masters in English from DePaul University. Her knowledge put her in the national spotlight. She was interviewed on such television talk shows as the "Phil Donahue Show." Currently, she lives in California and is working on another book. Another woman from St. Libory, Sr. Martine Hundelt (Clara Hundelt), would also join the same order; earn her Masters, and become the second woman in the U.S. ever to teach at a seminary. Sr. Martine currently lives in Milwaukee and has recently been honored as Professor Emerita in History of the Church from Sacred Heart Seminary in Hales Corners, Wisconsin.

send what you have. We are also in the process of soliciting artifacts to be included in this permanent exhibit, too. We will be going through a selection process to accept only those items which have historical significance to Howard County and also help tell the story of that particular church or faith.



Book shown above appears courtesy of the School Sisters of St. Francis.

We would like to hear from you. You may send your information to us at: Howard County Historical Society, Church Research Project, P.O. Box 304, St. Paul, NE 68873.

Our eventual plans are to publish this research in the millennium history book. We will be updating you on our progress in the coming newsletters.

1999 Memberships are due.

By Mena Sprague

1999 memberships are due now. They can be sent to me at the following address: Mena Sprague, Membership Chair, 844 20th Ave., St. Paul, NE 68873. Memberships are \$10 per person. If you liked this issue of the newsletter, you'll like the next one even more. Our major research story will include a look at the settlement of Gage Valley, complete with historic photos, letters and memories. Thanks to all of those who have provided us with the wonderful letters of encouragement on how we are preserving your history. We look forward to hearing from you.



HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 304
ST. PAUL, NEBRASKA 68873

"On the Right Track" campaign nets nearly \$28,000 during its first three months.

By Dave Sprague

It's true. Nearly everyone is falling in love with our newest addition to the Historical Village. Over 40 individuals, businesses, and organizations have given or pledged nearly \$28,000 towards our \$100,000 goal for preservation of the Union Pacific depot. Please contact us if you wish to make a contribution. A complete list of donors will appear in June.

Historical Society welcomes Press to St. Paul - again.

By Liz King

As mentioned, three television stations and three newspapers were in St. Paul to cover the moving of our Union Pacific depot. The last time three stations were in St. Paul was for another Society sponsored event - the Grand Opening of the Cotesfield Post Office!

We are proud to be one of the few organizations to be putting St. Paul on the map.

Non-profit organization
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