



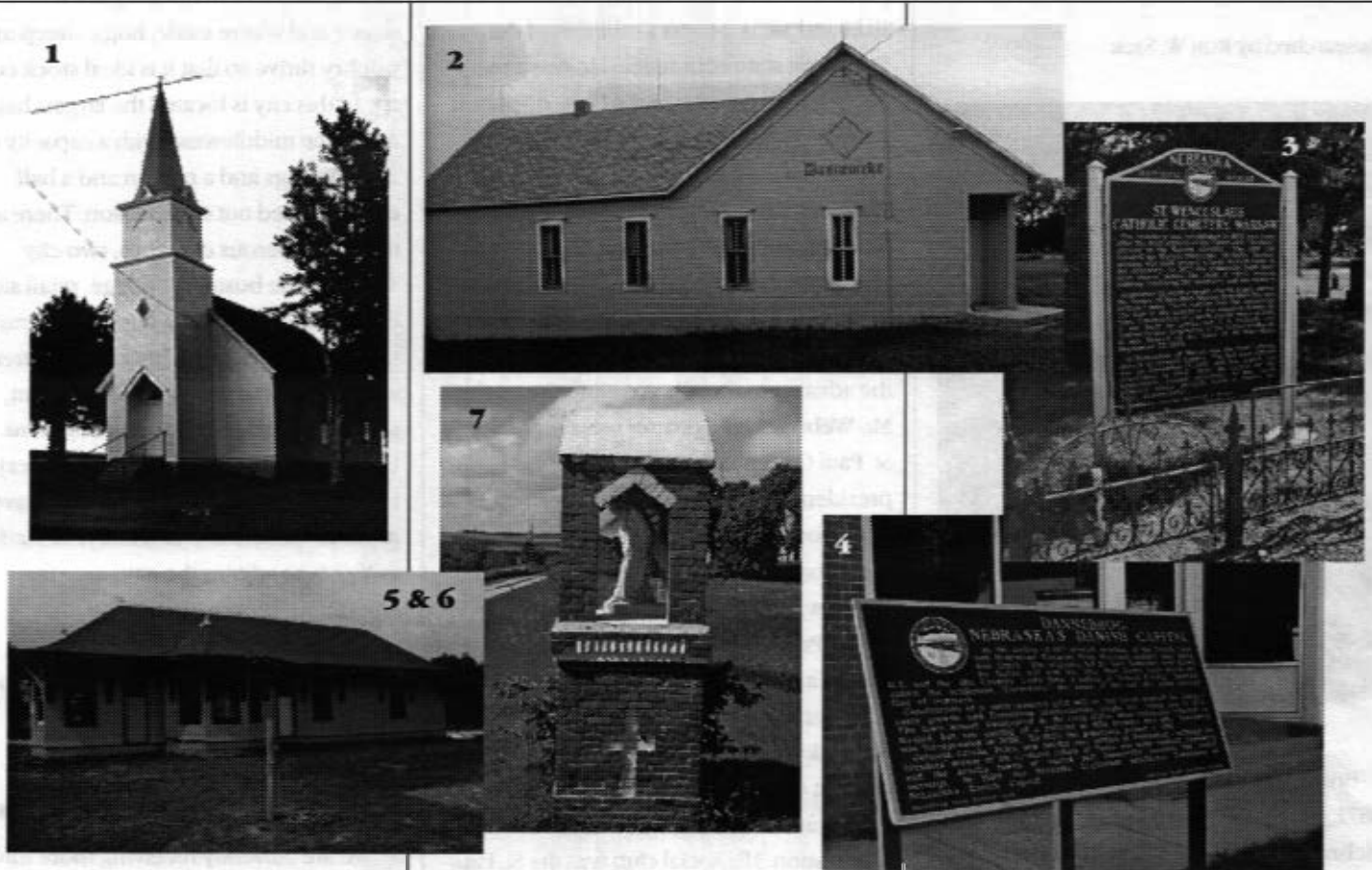
historically speaking

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Fall Issue 1999

Howard County gets bitten by the history bug!



By Ron W. Sack

What a difference a year makes 1999 is only eight months over, and many historic events have already taken place.

1. Dannevirke Church and **2.** Dannevirke Hall have both been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Both structures have been recently restored, too.

3. The Czech Catholic Cemetery of St. Wenceslaus (Warsaw) received a Nebraska historical marker.

4. Dannevirke, Nebraska's Danish Capital, also received a Nebraska historical marker.

5. Our very own Union Pacific depot is currently receiving a much needed face lift through historic preservation. Nearly \$39,000 has been raised for its preservation.

6. Howard County Historical Society's "Depot Plan" was applauded by the Nebraska Rural Development Commission as one of the top 100 initiatives in Rural Development.

7. The Howard County Historical Society continues its photographic survey of county architecture. Well done, volunteers!



Howard County's 400-page history book to be a keepsake for family libraries.



Documenting the architecture of Howard County through photographs.

*J. F. Webster;
a long time St. Paul
promoter and
newspaperman.*

Researched by Ron W. Sack



Born in Sterling, Illinois, on January 20, 1871. John Fabian Webster came to Nebraska in January, 1879. His father, James Webster, and mother Margaret Pollard, were born in Tipperary, Ireland.

John Webster completed the eighth grade in country schools in Plane Center, Nebraska. On July 1, 1902, he married Golda Barnes at Elba, Golda, who was born in Scotia, was of early American ancestry. The Websters had four children.

Until the declaration of war with Spain in 1898, Mr. Webster farmed and worked with his father in railroad construction. On April 22, 1898, he enlisted with the Nebraska National Guard, and on May 10, was sworn into the service for the United States, for service in the Philippines. Upon his return, he was

employed with the Omaha Elevator Company, where he purchased grain for them until February 1, 1909. He then left to take charge of the *St. Paul Phonograph*.

An extremely independent Democrat, he was appointed state printer by Governor Keith Neville, and served two years, 1917 and 1918. During the years of 1928 and 1929, he was a member of the Democratic state committee. He was a member in good standing of the United Spanish War Veterans, and in 1928 served as commander of the Charles E. Norris Camp No. 6. A Catholic, he was affiliated with St. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church and was a member (Grand Knight 1918-19) of the Knights of Columbus.

Always active in every effort towards the advancement of his community, Mr. Webster was a charter member of the St. Paul Community Club, and was president for two years. He was president of the local Lions Club, was a member of the Nebraska Press Association (president 1929), was the first secretary of the Loup Valley Press Association in 1913, and served as its president in 1919. He was a life member of the Red Cross and of the Nebraskana Society, and a member of the Ancient Order of the United Workmen, the American Yeomen and the Parent Teachers Association. His social club was the St. Paul Golf Club, of which he has served as president two terms.

His hobby was getting out a newspaper which told his readers what is going on in public offices.

Editor's note: Webster lived in the house which is currently owned by Bill and Judy Jacobs.

Inscription on the back of the St. Paul promotional sheet at right reads...

St. Paul, Nebraska, population of nearly 2,000, is located in the beautiful Loup River

valley, 138 miles due west of Omaha, 124 miles nonhwest of Lincoln, on the Union Pacific and Burlington Railways. The Union Pacific Railway just completed construction of a beautiful depot in St. Paul. We are the center of a fertile farming community and dairy center, where corn, wheat, oats and alfalfa are grown in abundance and where cattle, hogs, sheep and poultry thrive so that it is ideal stock country. In this city is located the largest hatchery in the middle west, with a capacity of 249,000 eggs and a million and a half chicks turned out each season. There are three prosperous churches, two city schools, one business college, retail stores of all kinds, two strong banking institutions, several miles of brick paved streets and alleys, an extensive water system, sewer, telephone and electric systems located along the White Way Highway, on Highways Nos. 11 and 34, and on gravel roads to Omaha and Lincoln. A beautiful golf course adjoins the city.

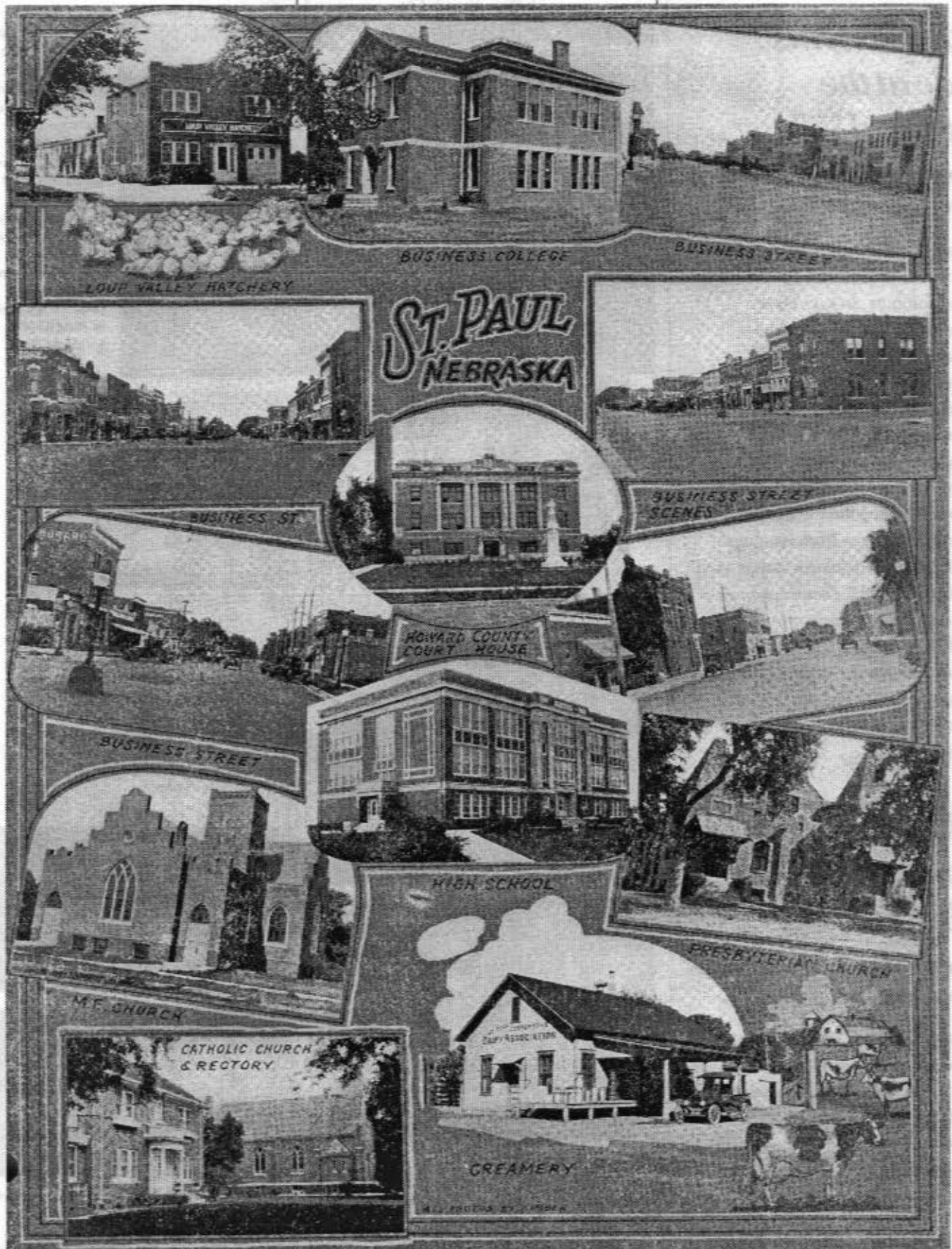
*Newsletter changes
and updates.*

We are currently receiving more information on the second part of our series on Gage Valley, look for stories on Ray Bohensky's gas station and Gage Valley churches in a future issue.

Also, we are receiving more artifacts for our collections. Look for a list of donors and artifacts donations in a future issue as well.

The Board of Directors of the Howard County Historical Society wishes to thank all of the people who have contributed time, talents, money, and artifacts this year.

We are also pleased to announce that Virginia Ieth has been nominated and elected for the Board. Welcome!



J. F. Webster's promotional flyer for St. Paul.
Courtesy of Dyke and Ed Sercik.

Improvements made at the Historical Village.

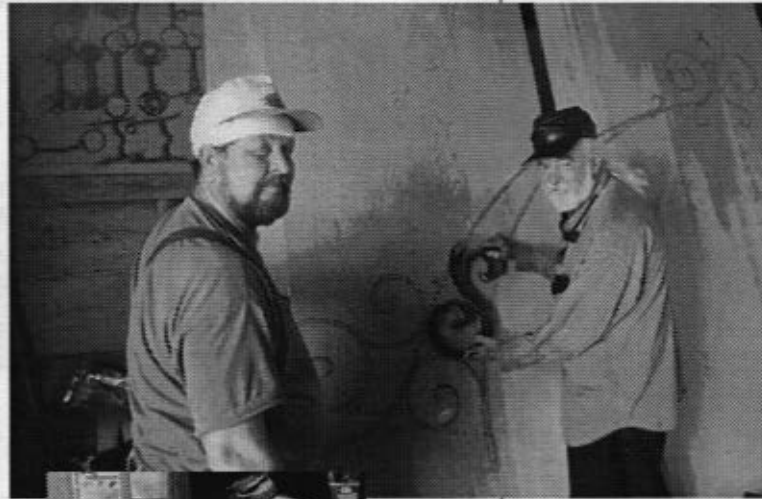
By Ron W. Sack

The Howard County Historical Village will have an archway and entrance columns So says Dave Sprague, president of the Prairie Blacksmiths Association and vice president of the historical society His blacksmith group, which has a membership of over 60, has volunteered not only to create the decorative iron archway, but the entrance columns as well Spearheading the the iron arch and columns is Jim Peirce from Hastings Some of Peirce's brickwork can be seen at the Hastings IMAX Theater. A project like the entrance columns would normally have a price tag of \$2,000 to \$3,000 attached to it, but everything is being donated. "It's just our way of supporting a great organization," stated Sprague.

Seeking information on Dublin station.

By Roderick Carls

As part of our effort in documenting the evolution of the railroads in Howard County, we are seeking information on the Union Pacific station named Dublin Dublin was located south of Bunker Hill. If you have any information or photographs on Dublin, please contact us.

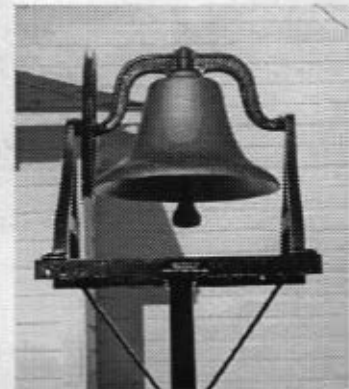


Dave Sprague and Jim Peirce, both members of the Prairie Blacksmiths Association, discuss plans for the archway and entrance columns which will greet visitors to the Historical Village. The columns and arch are being donated in memory of Raymond A. (Bill) Fortes and will be completed in the Spring of 2000.



Top photograph: Peggy Lang, Donna Dobish, Carl Christensen and friend Cole take a breather while painting over 5,000 tin shingles for the depot.

Photograph above: Laura, Lindsay, Becky and Luke Knox are among the many volunteers who help paint the Union Pacific depot. Photos courtesy of Marian Babensky.



Photograph above: Members of the Pauline and George Sack family dedicated a school bell in memory of their parents and grandparents over Memorial Day weekend. The bell came from Howard County's very own District #13. It was placed near the St. Libery Schoolhouse.



Top photograph: Mena Sprague and Doris Lett greet attendees at Company's Comin'. Photograph above: A large crowd came to Company's Comin'. Those facing the camera are Dorothy Szama, Alice Battle, and Marian Potts. Photos courtesy of Marian Babensky.

Howard County Historical Society to expand current exhibits; create new ones.

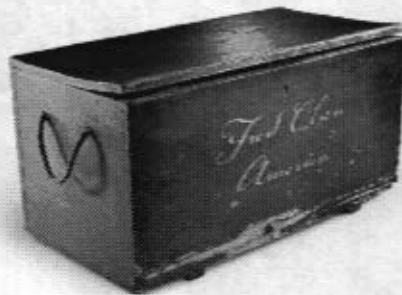
By Mera Sprague

More progress occurred at the Friday, August 13, meeting of the Board of Directors of the Howard County Historical Society. A unanimous vote to allow the Veterans group to expand into the space which houses the Museum of Nebraska Baseball Greats was given. Mike Schmidt, Jerry Hruza, Leo and Ruth Blaha, Evelyn Dvorak and Ray Rubesh were on hand to show support for the expansion of the exhibit. "We are pleased the Veterans group wants to grow with us," stated President Marion Bahensky. "We loved feeding, watering, housing and caring for the Baseball Museum for the past several years, but are excited about these new and expanded exhibits which will give our museum a larger focus." Also approved Friday by a unanimous vote, was to start with the creation of a Howard County religious exhibit. This exhibit will be placed in the room which currently houses the Veterans display. Heading up the research team will be Janet Hruza, Evelyn Dvorak and Ron Sack. "Our eventual plans are to find a permanent home for our research and artifacts on Howard County's religion- some of which has gained national acclaim," explained Ron Sack. "This is a great way to house an exhibit," concluded Sprague. "We just couldn't pass up this climate controlled space in the Gruber House."

The Board is working on plans to complete the Historical Village site with

the remaining four street lamps and decorative archway along with several other surprises which are yet to be announced. "We want to play a role in the 2000 SPHS alumni reunion," stated Ron Sack. "We are working on plans for an exhibit at the library which focuses on St. Paul High School. It's just our way to show support for the Alumni Association." Dedication for the archway, street lamps, and other improvements is scheduled for Memorial Day/SPHS Alumni weekend of 2000.

Restoration to the Union Pacific depot continues. Carl Christensen and Marion Bahensky are heading up a group of volunteers to paint over 5,000 shingles. "Anyone wishing to help be a part of history may call me at 308 754 4454," said Bahensky.



Inspiration for promotional poster came from a simple wooden box.

By Ron W. Sack

If you were in St. Paul this summer, chances are you saw our new awareness poster entitled "Help our immigrants find

a home." The visual for this four-color poster is Fred Olsen's immigrant trunk which he brought over with him from Denmark in the 1870s. The message for this piece focuses on the depot restoration and the need to expand our exhibit space to have new exhibits focusing on immigration, education and religion. Currently, many of the Historical Society's artifacts cannot be properly displayed, because they have "no home." 1000 four-color posters were created. This \$3,800 project was produced and funded for the Howard County Historical Society through the generosity of the following businesses and individuals in Omaha: Barnhart Press, Field Paper Company, Bozell Worldwide, Robert Ervin, Mark Romesser, Dustin Black, and the Pauline M. Sack Memorial Fund. Volunteers canvassed the town to get the poster displayed for GCA Days.

This wooden box started with Fred Olsen...

Fred Olsen came to this country from Denmark in 1878. He had a blacksmith shop on his farm that was located east of Farwell. In 1890, he went back to Denmark and married Pava Jensen, coming back in 1891. To this family there were born three sons: Hans, Jim, and Clarence. They lived on this farm, except for three years when they operated a grocery store. In 1918, Jim took over the farm. Hans was a teacher, and taught in several different schools. Clarence was killed in World War I. Fred held many local and county positions. Jim lived his entire life on the family farm. In 1918, he married Henlia Rasmussen, also of Farwell. Five children were born to this couple: Clarence, Edna (Mrs. Howard) Petersen, Roy, Dale, and Harold. Jim, like his father, held many important positions in the county. Fred died in 1974, after which Henlia moved to St. Paul.



Fred Olsen's immigrant trunk from Denmark, circa 1870s.

Help Our
Immigrants find
A Home



For many years, portions of Howard County's history have been unable to be displayed - stored away without a home. We've found a new home - a beautiful Union Pacific depot. Once restored, the depot will house exhibits such as education, religion, and immigration. Please help us get there by making a donation to help preserve your history.



Biggers of the Howard County history book will be pleased to note such features as historic maps, charts and photographs will be included. The map shown at left was published in 1880 and shows Howard County's post offices. Yes, post offices existed in Gage Valley, St. Paul, Grantville, St. Libory, Dannebrog, Cotesfield, Loup Fork, Kelso, Warsaw and Cotesfield. Map courtesy of the Howard County Historical Society archives.



Howard County History book promises to be a real keepsake.

By Ron W. Sack



Committee members met last Saturday, August 14, to discuss content of the book. Heading up the

committee are Marion Bahensky, Selma Zimbelman, Virginia Leth, Doris Leth, Ken Leth and Ron Sack. *The Phonograph-Herald* is also part of the committee as they will be handling the printing of the book.

"The history book is proving to be a real keepsake," stated Virginia Leth. "It will be a hardbound 400-page beauty with over 300 never-before published photographs."

Currently, the group has histories for the following towns and settlements: St. Libory, St. Paul, Farwell, Cotesfield, Cushing, Dannebrog, Dannevirke, Fairdale, Warsaw, Paplin (Choynice), Nysted, Boelus and Gage Valley.

The town of Elba has yet to send a history for the book.

The group is also covering other unique aspects such as sections devoted to the history of St. Libory watermelons, Danish immigration, and state championship teams from Howard County. Histories on clubs, organizations, churches and businesses, as well as historic sketches written by Paroch, Haggart (St. Libory area), Towar, Svoboda and Wall will be included.

For example, the Dannebrog Boosters, St. Paul Farmers Union and Sts Peter and Paul's Catholic Daughters have supplied the committee with histories and photographs.

All histories and photographs of organizations, businesses, churches, schools, athletic teams, etc are being published free of charge. Family histories of 500 words or less are free of charge. There is a small charge to publish family photographs and there is also a small charge for family histories running over 500 words.

Anyone wishing to take part in this historic book is encouraged to contact the Howard County Historical at P.O. Box 304, St. Paul, Nebraska 68873.

A sneak preview at some of the photographs which will be included in the Howard County history book.



Photo above: Farwell's Chicago Lumber Company. Courtesy of Randy Lukasiewicz.



Photo at right: Knotbe house (still standing and located on Howard Avenue), St. Paul. Courtesy of Ron Sack.



Photo above: The Methodist Church in Boelus. Courtesy of Ron Sack.



Photo at left: St. Paul's business district. This photograph was taken by the famous photographer Solomon Rubner. Courtesy of Ron Sack.

Photo below: A special feature of the history book will include research topics on what makes Howard County unique. Shown below is the Ambrose melon stand titled "The Shack." It was one of the many melon stands which have dotted the St. Libory area over the years. This photograph gives one a good idea of what Howard County was like coming out of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Courtesy of Phyllis and Leonard Ambrose.



Photo above: St. Paul's Howard Avenue in the late 1920s. Of special notice are the street lamps which once graced the intersections. Courtesy of Ron Sack.



Union Pacific depot donations and pledges

Tom Taylor
 Vance Clark
 Ray and Shirley Johnson
 Vanice and Lyle Bahensky
 Jeanie Scott Bruntz
 R. Hawes
 E. Vetter
 Carl Christensen
 George Jensen
 Elaine Jacobs Boettman
 Hazel Lawrence
 Jim and Marilyn Nelson
 Corrairie Stewart
 Bernie and Dale Johnson
 Bonnie and Gary Clayton
 Allied Insurance
 ION Energy
 Eileen Bader Chapin
 David B. Hald
 Kristi Johnson Holcin
 S.P.H.S. Class of 1979
 Donald Niedfeld
 Citizens Bank
 St. Paul Jaycees
 Marion Bahensky
 Birch Healthmart
 Ron W. Sack
 St. Paul Equipment/Leon Smarczyk

Sowers Club
 T. Haas
 DeVry Family
 St. Paul Bank
 Jacobsen Funeral Home
 Col. Russell Klingensmith
 Dorothy June Ruback Collins
 Barb and Dan McIntyre
 Dr. Maurice and Maedean Mathews
 Pat and Lowen Clausen
 Marj Southard
 Joyce Strong
 Farwell Arms
 Swinarski Pharmacy
 St. Paul Absarcon
 Dan and Marlene Syas
 Ron Bahensky
 Liz and Terry King
 Heritage Living Center
 Dan Sevcik
 Dr. and Mrs. Floyd Tesmer
 First Federal Lincoln
 Kathy Scmerad
 Elaine and Wayne Swadley
 Betty and Gary Schwenk
 Carl Christensen
 Pizza Hut
 Dr. Jean and Claire Pare
 Office Bar
 Bill Mannelein
 Roderick Burkhardt
 Nancy Forbes

Bob Forbes
 Anna B. Smith
 Gerald Farkowski
 Ed Schmidt
 John Weitzel

Union Pacific depot memorials

Lucille Levine
 Earl C. Hald
 C.V. Svoboda (Lamp by depot)
 E.R. Jarecke
 Keith Davis
 Bill Gordon
 Harry Larsen
 Hazel Kryzcki
 Peg Zocholl
 Pat Kelly
 Evelyn Svoboda
 Louise Shaughnessy
 Violet Vardaman
 Gertrude Bahensky
 Willard and Dan Ross
 Ernest Becker
 Alvin Taylor
 Eva Bahensky
 Kenneth Berggren
 James G. Cook

All donations are as of August 15, 1999.
 Please advise us if there are any corrections or additions.

Photo COPY 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, meeting space, 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: P.O. Box 304, 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.

Photographic survey of Howard County continues.

By Ron W. Sack



Over the past four years, I have been busy preserving our history: the history of who we are... at this moment. Too often,

preservation groups focus much of their attention on preserving the past - forgetting about the not-so-obvious - the present.

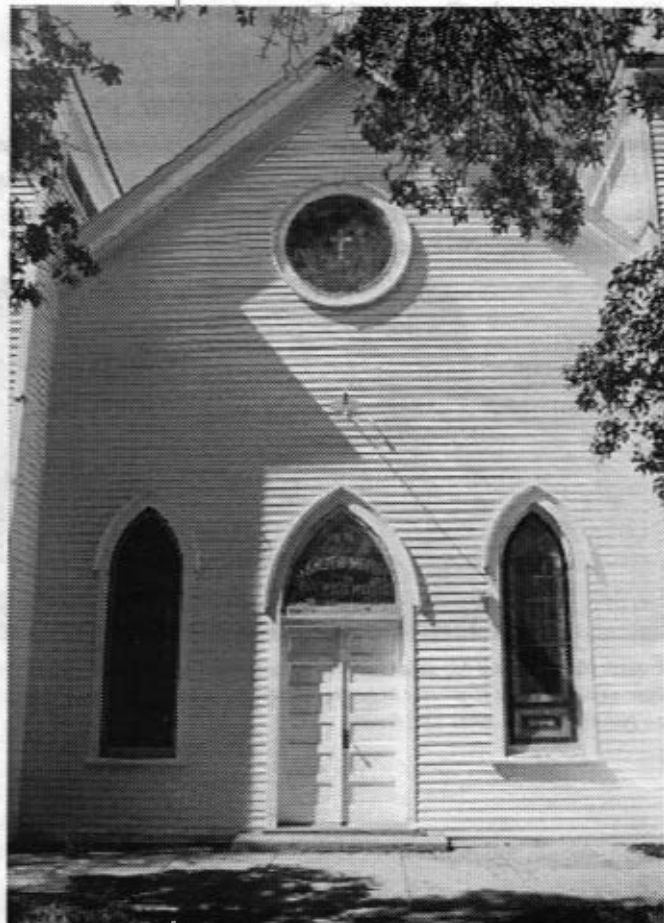
When asking for photographs and information on Howard County, many people would tell me, "We don't have any. We saw the building everyday, and thought nothing about taking a photograph of it. We took the buildings for granted."

I believe we are at great risk of losing our history of the present. That's why I am currently focusing on another important part of our history: *The history of who we are at this moment*

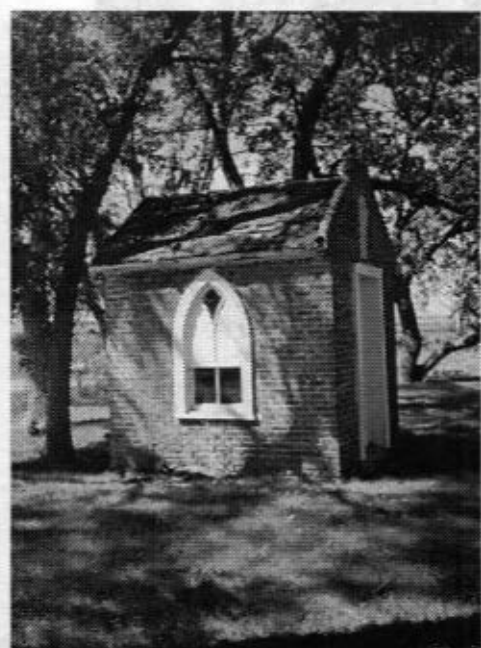
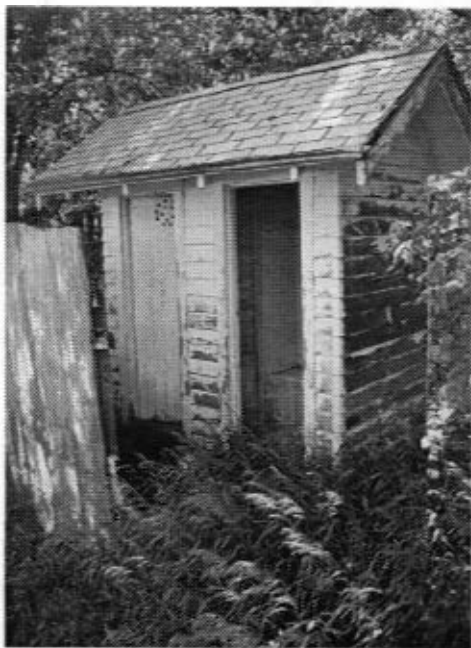
Currently, this collection contains over 400 photographs and snapshots of Howard County in the 1990s. This is a great collection for our family and friends to uncover and research 50 years from now. Documentation has been completed on St. Paul's Howard Avenue (some of which has been changed dramatically in just the past four years), St. Libory, Farwell's main street, Puplin and Danneville. Next up: something we see every day and take for granted - St. Libory's melon stands.

Documenting architectural features of our main streets, churches, and even those outhouses which are vanishing way too fast.

I wish to focus on the architecture of the common man, the farmer, the school teacher, the business owner, and of us. The buildings we see every day. The buildings we don't take enough time to appreciate, until they are gone.



Photograph above: Puplin's Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church. Photographs below: Outhouses at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church, entrance grotto and Corpus Christi building.



Company's Comin', parades, and Civil War Encampment prove to be popular events for the Historical Society.

We are pleased with the success of Company's Comin', parade participation, and the Encampment. All brought tourists to St. Paul. Thanks to all of the volunteers who helped make these events such a success.



Vanessa Hahn created this award-winning float for the St. Paul CCA Days Parade. Vanessa also had an active role in getting many young volunteers to take part in our parade floats in 1999. Well done!



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

historically speaking

PUBLISHER
Howard County Historical Society

Including the settlements of:
Boelus, Coresfield, Cushing,
Dunsmog, Danneville, Elba,
Farwell, Nysted, Paphn, St. Libory,
St. Paul, and Warsaw.

EDITOR
Ron W. Sack

CIRCULATION:
300+

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. Box 304, St. Paul, NE 68873

MEMBERSHIP:
\$10 per person.
Merna Sprague, Membership Chair
844 20th Ave
St. Paul, Nebraska 68873-3518

1999 BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- Marion Babensky
- Alice Barde
- Rudrick Rickhardt
- Carl Christensen
- Bonnie Durbish
- Jamet Hirtz
- Virginia Jeth
- Diana Markovicka
- Andy Mastek
- Alice Mayae
- Marian Pans
- Ron Sack
- Dave Sprague
- Merna Sprague

1999 OFFICERS:

- Marion Babensky: President
 - Dave Sprague: Vice President
 - Marion Babensky: Secretary
 - Jamet Hirtz: Treasurer
- The HCHS is a non-profit organization.

Non-profit organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 23
ST. PAUL, NE 68873