



AWARD-WINNING ORGANIZATION 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000

historically speaking

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Fall Issue 2000



The new courtyard at the Howard County Historical Village in St. Paul, Nebraska on Memorial Day, 2000.

F ● R T H E
l o v e
O F O U R
c o u n t y

Jay Paul Henry Rasmussen. Thorvald Jacobsen. C.V. Svoboda.
Leonard Bahensky. Curly Jacobsen. Ellen Partsch. Maggie
Christensen. J.A. Haggart. And others. These were the people
that said our history was important. They were the ones that
said our history is worth preserving. They took stands. They
fought battles. They worked hard. And together they did
something great—they preserved our history. Americans have

*This speech was
delivered
May 27, 2000 during
the dedication of the
courtyard
by Ron W. Sadek.*

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.

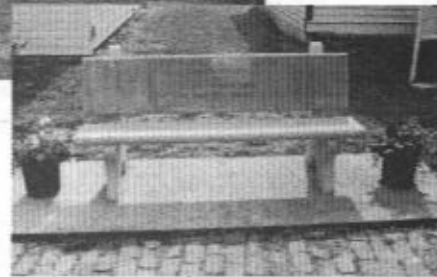
We Americans pay a price for this gift, though: we forget with too much enthusiasm what has come before us. Intent on the future, we throw away the past as it's used up; we are wasteful of memory. We fail to ask our parents and grandparents, before we lose them, the questions we wish we had asked—not "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

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.



It was an emotional day for the families as they dedicated these gifts to their loved ones, Howard County and St. Paul. As a poem was read, members of the family stepped forward and cut the string to five balloons which then ascended up into the blue sky. The church bell then rang five times.

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



THE ARCHWAY

"They told us that the Historical Society is the gateway to the past. So we created an archway for them."

The archway was dedicated to Raymond "Bill" and Doris Forbes.

THE FIVE BENCHES.

"They told us to sit once in a while and listen to the wind and gaze at the moon. So we created benches to sit and reflect for them."

Benches were dedicated to St. Ann Francis Sidel and St. Mary Ann Wissing, George and Pauline Sack, Frank and Lafern Mudloff, Clem and Irene Kezeor, Ernie and Darlene Sidel.

THE COURTYARD PAD.

"They told us all good things need a solid foundation. So we created a beautiful concrete and brick courtyard for them."

The courtyard pad was dedicated to Ed and Tillie Schenck.

THE FOUR STREET LAMPS.

"They provided us with light during the times we were lost. So



Top photo: The majestic Howard County Courthouse's proud new neighbor—the courtyard at the historical village. This area in St. Paul is slowly becoming one of Central Nebraska's finest historic districts. Lower left photo: Ron W. Sack delivers an emotional speech at the dedication. Lower right photo: Crowds gather at the village for the dedication.



we created some beautiful street lamps for them."

Street lamps were dedicated to Gertrude, Leonard and Leonard Jr. Bahensky, C.V. Svoboda, Mary Jo Twehous Eckhardt, and Albert and Clara Schwenk.

THE CLOCK.

"They told us to be wise with our time on earth. So we created a clock to honor time for them."

This clock was dedicated to Dan and Irene Schenck.

"They told us to always give back to our community. And we will."

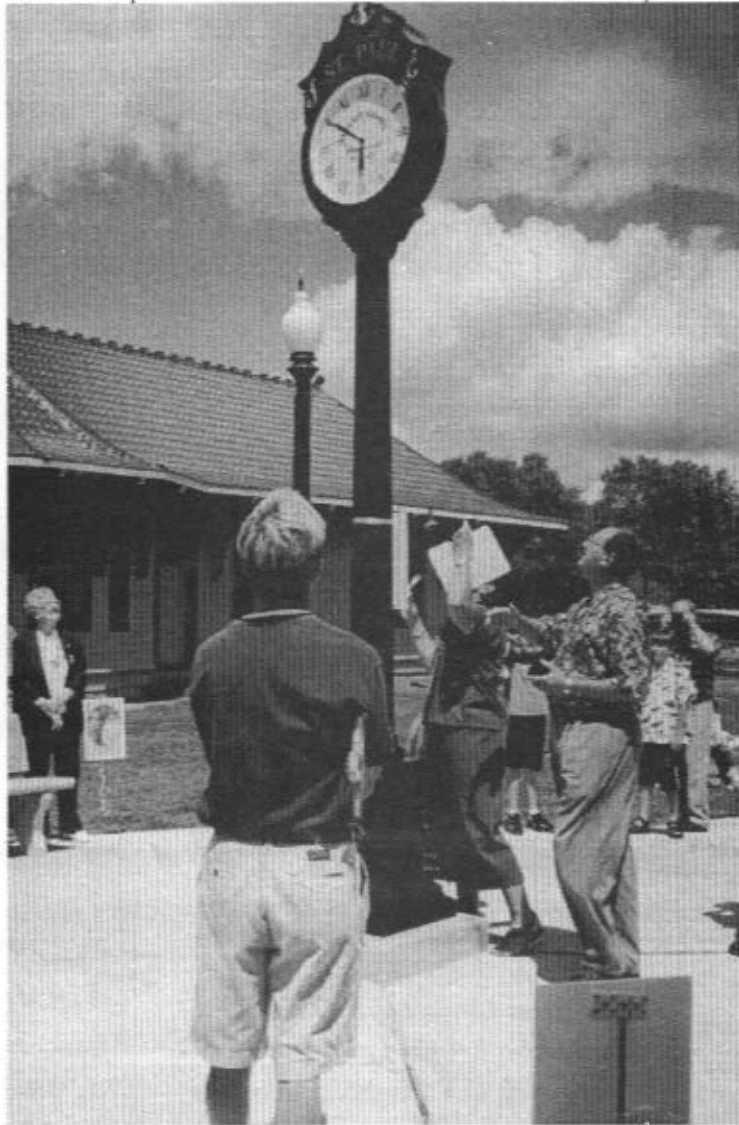
Preservation takes a giant leap forward in Howard County.

On Saturday, May 27, 2000 at 2:30 p.m., the Howard County Historical Society dedicated its latest improvement to Howard County and the city of St. Paul. An archway, five benches, a courtyard, four street lamps and a clock having a value of \$70,000 were dedicated to the community.

"It was a dream we had back in 1997 when we presented a site plan for the Historical Village," stated the Board of Directors. "And now all of these wonderful people came together and made this happen."

The plan which the board is talking about included adding a courtyard, benches, archway, street lamps, brick walkway, post office and a depot. This overall site plan would later be named one of the "Top 100 Initiatives in Rural Development" by Governor Ben Nelson and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development in 1999. The Historical Society has been busy executing this plan in just three years. The post office was moved in 1997 from Cotesfield and restored in just less than one year. The WPA outhouse soon followed. That project won a national preservation award from *Midwest Living* magazine. Brick walkways, four street lamps, and a restored Farwell Lutheran church were reality in 1998. The beautiful Union Pacific depot moved into town in December of that year. 1999 saw a historic school bell added to the village and a repaired St. Libory school and general store. The depot's exterior was repainted and a new roof was completed.

"Progress of this magnitude doesn't happen by chance," stated HCHS president Marion Bahensky. "All of the above projects involved many planned hours of volunteer service and money. True, we are supported by the county (\$6,000 a year), but the majority of our funding for these projects came from countless hours of fundraising and



Bonnie and Gary Clayton, along with Ron W. Sack, witness the balloons ascend as Bonnie and Gary dedicate the clock to Dan and Irene Schenck. The Claytons were the driving force in getting the courtyard completed.

financial donations from businesses, members, board members, and supporters."

The \$70,000 value for these recent improvements includes many volunteered professional hours and donated services as well as substantial cash donations. It is noted this money was earmarked for this project by the families who are dedicating this to their

families two years ago.

Bonnie Clayton, one of the donors to this project stated, "I always wanted to honor my parents for instilling in all of their children a love for family and community."

These improvements follow a grant which the Historical Society was awarded from the Nebraska Department of Roads/Transportation Enhancement Grant. The Society applied for a \$156,000 grant to restore the depot. The grant awarded was for \$125,000. The Society must raise \$31,000 (a 20% match of the full amount requested), or lose the grant.

"We are all responsible for community building," stated vice president Ron W. Sack. "We are excited to see our community understand that preservation is good for both main street and tourism."

"Take a look at the before and after photos from just 1997 to 2000," stated board member Mena Sprague. "You can't tell me this isn't one of the most attractive spots in Central Nebraska."

*Entering Howard County.
A history of the people and the land of Howard County, Nebraska.*



Photocopy or cut along dotted line and send in.

- 556 pages of Howard County history.
- Over 500 photographs.
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- 290 family histories.
- A salute to County Veterans.
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Yes, please reserve _____ copies of the 556 page history book *Entering Howard County* for me.

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5% Nebraska Sales Tax (\$3.75 per book): _____ x \$ 3.75 = _____

Total: _____ \$ _____

Make checks payable to the Howard County Historical Society.

Send payment to: Howard County Historical Society, P.O. Box 304, St. Paul, NE 68873.

*Historical Society
needs your help in
bringing \$125,000 grant to
Howard County
and St. Paul.*

By Marion Bahensky



*We must raise
\$16,000 by December 1
in order to receive a
Dept. of Roads
grant for \$125,000. We
are counting on you to
help us out. Please consider
as big a donation as you can handle. Please pay your dues (\$10 per person
for 2001) as soon as possible. Please consider purchase of the county
history, *Entering Howard County*, as a Christmas gift for family members—
and send in your prepaid order before December 1. We are bending every
effort to raise the necessary money. It will be a great pity if we lose the
grant (all to be spent in Howard County) at a time when the farm economy is
way down.*

*The grant will pay for first-class restoration of the depot as a
transportation museum. We will keep it open from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday
through Sunday from Memorial Day through Labor Day, plus all other Sundays
from 1-4 p.m. This is with volunteer hosts. We are planning firstclass exhibits
on transportation topics and are applying for grants to make this happen. We
will be adding much more museum space in order to display artifacts already on
hand. This excellent museum, in a newly attractive setting, will bring people and
dollars to Howard County. We Directors are donating all the time and money we
can. Please help. Thank you.*

*P.S.: We have an excellent web page (also done by donated labor & talent) at
www.cornhusker.net/~minelhchs.htm. We will include a weekly update on the
Society. We believe you have every reason to be proud of Howard County and its
Historical Society. Take a look, please.*

The Howard County Historical Village—named one of the “Top 100 Initiatives in Rural Development” by Governor Ben Nelson and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development in 1999.

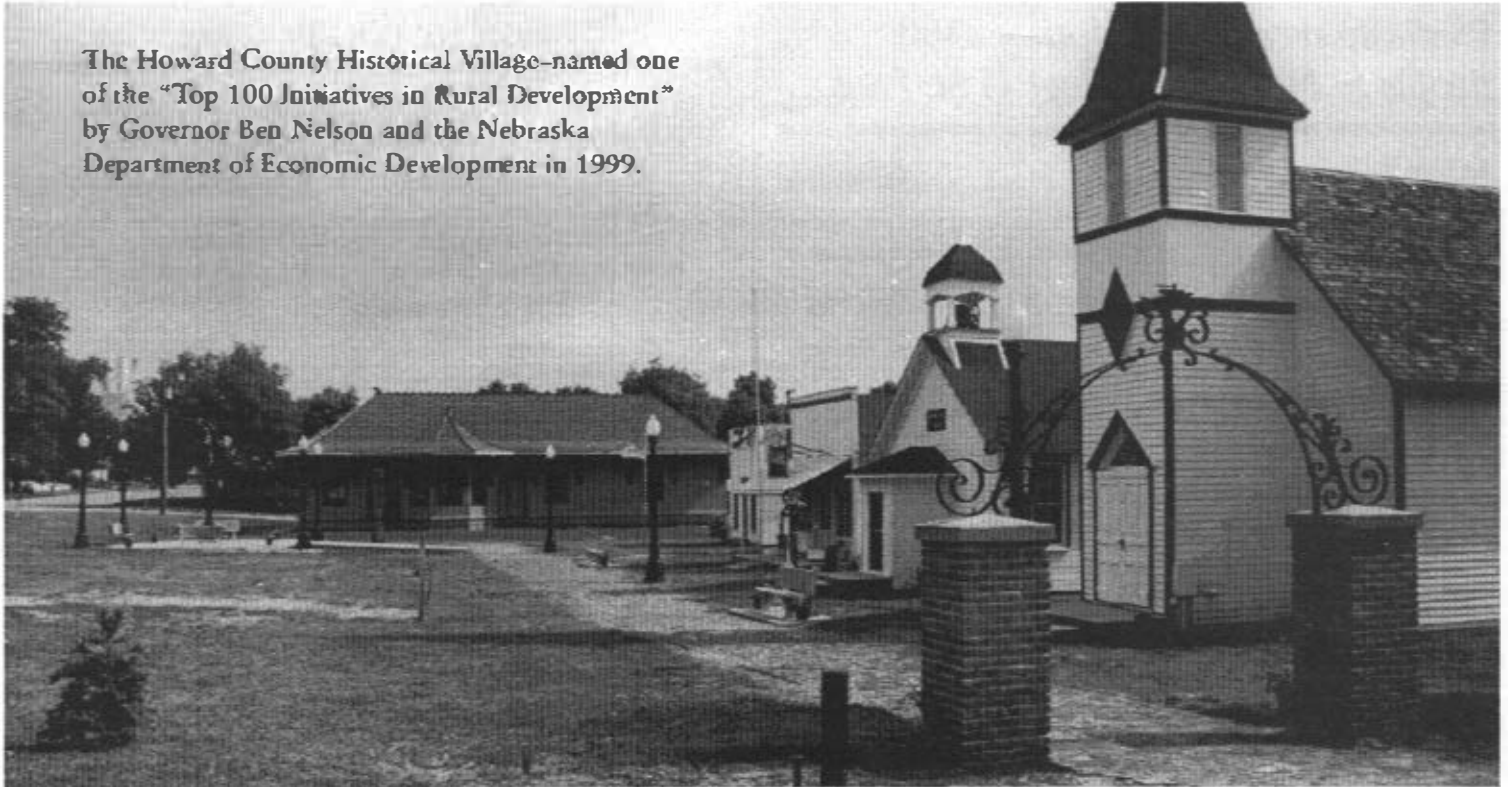


Photo © 1999 by the Howard County Historical Society

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 68783

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.

Dedication ceremonies attract 300 people to Historical Village in St. Paul.

By Ron W. Sack

Nearly 300 people took part in the dedication ceremonies held at the Howard County Historical Village in St. Paul on May 27, 2000. The Board of Directors of the Howard County Historical Society would like to thank all of the people who donated countless hours of labor and money to make this weekend one of the most successful on record. Special thanks to the following for their great coverage of the activities in St. Paul: *St. Paul Phonograph-Herald*, *Grand Island Independent*, *Omaha World-Herald*, *Kearney Daily Hub*, *Hastings Tribune*, *Lincoln Journal-Star*, KHAS TV of Hastings and NTV of Kearney.

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