



AWARD-WINNING ORGANIZATION 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000

# Entering Howard County

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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Winter Issue 2000



*Our newsletter's name has been changed to better reflect a new attitude for the love and romance of our history in Howard County.*

*"It happens to me when I am south of St. Libory, north of Cotesfield, east of Gage Valley, and west of Farwell. This feeling overwhelms me. A chill tingles down my spine. I find it hard to describe, it happens the moment I see that sign, "Entering Howard County." I know I am home."*

*Ron W. Sack, "Entering Howard County"*

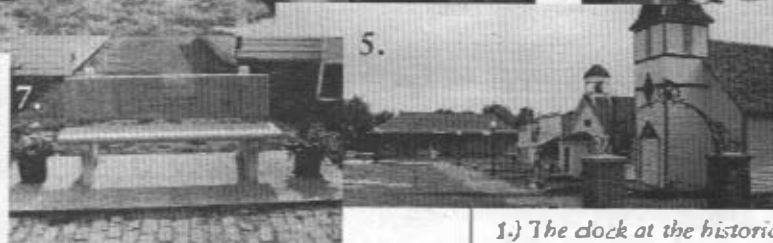
## Embracing HISTORY IN HOWARD County

*The Howard County  
Historical Society  
has its best year  
on record.*

*By Ron W. Sack*

**S**ome major accomplishments were achieved this year by the board, members, and supporters of the Howard County Historical Society: A 560 page history book; a courtyard with street lamps, benches, and a clock; an archway; an expanded veterans' exhibit; a new religious exhibit; educational programs for the youth of Howard County; positive and healthy publicity for St. Paul and the county; a grant challenge; social and cultural events; and more.

## Entering Howard County



1.) The dock at the historical village 2.) History day for St. Paul students at the courtyard. 3.) The archway 4.) Dedication day at the courtyard 5.) Historical village improvements. 6.) Horak's melon stand was part of a story on the history of melon stands in our spring newsletter. 7.) A bench at the village 8.) The dust jacket from "Entering Howard County." 9.) Volunteers Butch Rasmussen, Jerry and Janet Hntze, Carl Christensen, Diana Markvicka, Virginia and Ray Leth, and Donna Dobish relax after cleaning out the agricultural hall.

In 2000 we worked together. We continued the pioneer spirit by working hard and having a vision to better the place we live. This vision and hard work are evident in the following accomplishments made by the Howard County Historical Society in 2000.

Two things topped the list in 2000: Our history book titled "Entering Howard County" and the dedication of the courtyard, street lamps, archway, clock, and benches at the historical village in St. Paul.

Why? The book was necessary. We were losing our history at a fast rate. Photographs and documents were fast

deteriorating while pioneer diaries and other books sat unopened and unread. Our history was saved by the hands of just a few volunteers. The book has been well received by local, state, and national officials and is now being nominated for national awards.

The courtyard/archway are visually stunning. No place in Central Nebraska can equal this beauty. Over 300 people took part in the dedication festivities (that set an attendance record for a single day event at the historical village). The courtyard also showcased how positive actions and hard work can make our communities a better place to live.

Other MAJOR accomplishments included: A continued effort to accession society artifacts; organization of the agricultural hall; expanding the veterans' exhibit; creating a new religious exhibit; Holiday Tour of Homes; Strut Your Stuff; 6th Annual Bake Sale; youth tours; fundraising, fundraising and more fundraising for the depot; quarterly newsletters; weekly columns; summer openings for travelers and alumni; painting of the blacksmith shop and school; and repair of the school belfry.

Our thanks to the board, members, supporters, City of St. Paul, and Howard County. 2001 looks just as bright.

## Remembering Cushing.

By Ron W. Sack and Marion Bahensky

Settlers moved northeast from St. Paul and Grand Island, but their mail came from Fullerton to Cascade, which was a post office located a mile southeast from the present town of Cushing. Cascade consisted of a log cabin on the homestead of Horace Seeley and hopes that the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad branch from Central City to Butwell would come that way. As happened very often, the town was established where the railroad decided to build a depot, and Cascade joined the many other ghost towns bypassed by the train.

When the CB&Q depot was established in 1887, many homes, an elevator, and a general store soon joined it. The post office was moved from Cascade to The Glass House, a hotel built by John Glass and his wife. Glass was postmaster. The name Cushing was the family name of Sarah Cushing Freeman; she and her husband, W.S., had owned the land on which the village was established. Minnie Freeman, daughter of W.S. and Sarah, became nationally famous for heroism in saving her schoolchildren in the Blizzard of 1888.

It is said that Cushing once became famous as Corn Cob City because of its huge piles of corn cobs in 1896, after a bumper crop. At that time a wagon load of cobs sold for \$1, no small sum.

The first Cushing town hall was built from lumber from an old mill on Spring Creek; the town hall had a livery stable in the same building. August



*Danish Independence Day on June 5, 1903 on Cushing's Center Avenue looking to the southwest. H.C.H.S. photograph donated by Catherine Jacobsen.*

Doll built and operated another mill on the same site. A lumberyard, blacksmith shop, implement shop, hardware store, and two general stores were added to Cushing's "downtown."

The first (elementary) school was built in 1902 of wood; a combined grade and high school was built of brick in 1922. The high school closed in 1954. The grade school merged with St. Paul some years later. The old wooden school was moved to Main Street to serve as City Hall, but was destroyed by fire. Lutheran and Methodist churches were built in 1906, and also the Cushing

State Bank. The Lutheran church burned down in 1960; the Methodist church was moved into Palmer and became a residence. The bank was demolished after standing empty for some time.

The village of Cushing was incorporated in 1914, as petitioned for by 35 resident taxpayers. There were 116 inhabitants. In 1930 the population



*Cushing's depot agent and family (date unknown). The CB&Q had an active branch line in Cushing as early as 1887. Photo courtesy of Ron W. Sack.*

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reached 126; it is 25 in 1999. The first "trustees" were Nels Anderson, C. W. Holm, L. Kennedy, F. Meyers, Arthur Tuttle. There were two newspapers published in Cushing. The first, date unknown, was *The Courier*, published by W.W. Kerlin. In 1914 Charles Holm published *The Cushing Lantern*.

Cushing was almost destroyed by fire in 1927, when six buildings were burned. The economic depression of the 1930s forced many people to move away from Cushing. The railroad abandoned its line in 1983 and the post office closed in 1968. The top half of the depot was moved to a farm near Wolbach and is used as a garage; the bottom half was demolished. The Bum Steer, a bar, was Cushing's last business; it closed in February, 1999 after a fire.

Rumors of other businesses opening continue. Some hope for a Danish museum in Cushing's last brick main street building (The Bum Steer). Time will only tell. Our hope is with them.

### *Cushing Churches.*

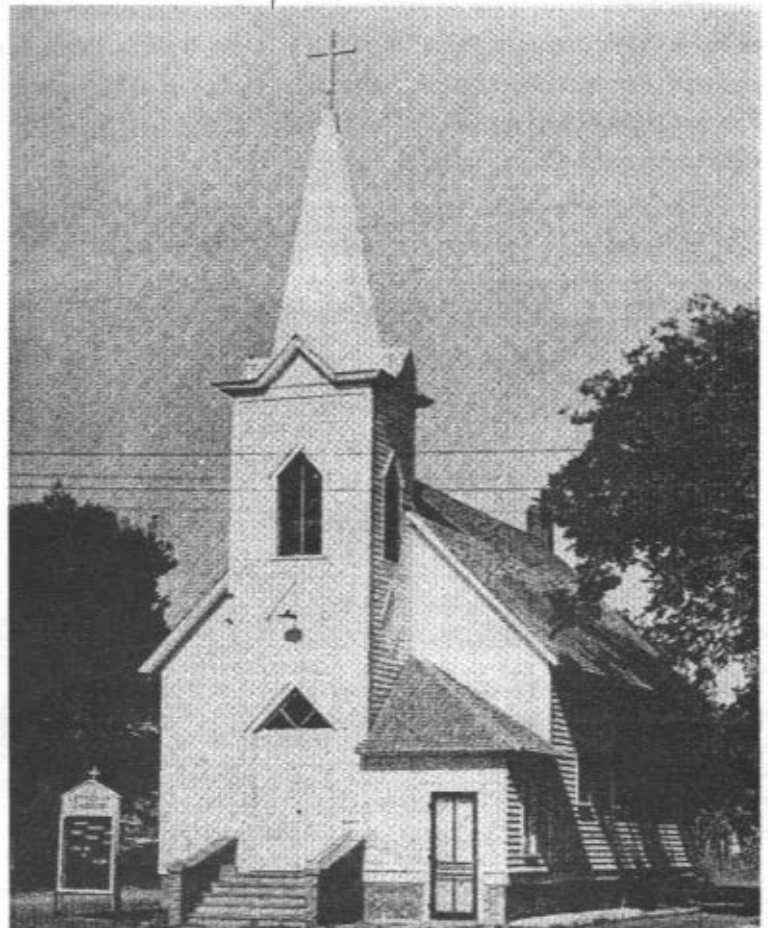
*St. John's Lutheran.* This church was organized in 1903, with women serving as two of the three officers. A church building was completed in 1906. There was never a cemetery. A golden jubilee was celebrated in 1953. The church burned down in 1960. The congregation voted to merge with St. Mark's in St. Paul and the insurance money was used to improve that church.

*Cushing Methodist.* Not much information is available on this church. A copy of the list of ministers who served this congregation indicates it



was open from 1889 to its closing in 1954. The 1955 *Minutes of the Nebraska Conference of the Methodist Church*, page 871, contain a *Resolution of Abandonment*. The building and contents were sold at public auction on September 29, 1955. A note in the Cushing file indicates that the first addition to the Cushing Church building was in 1906. Another note indicates that the first church burned, and that a new church was built in 1928. Research also shows records for membership, baptismal records, etc. for 1904-1914, and for the period 1930-1952.

*Top photo: St. John's Lutheran, Cushing. Interior photograph of the Lutheran church was taken around 1940. Photo courtesy of Doris Jepsen Forbes. Bottom photo: St. John's was one of 12 Danish Lutheran churches in Howard County. It would be destroyed by fire in 1960. Photo courtesy of Rev. Eugene and Joan Wekander.*



Cushing Schools.



Photo at left: Cushing's wooden school was an attractive structure. It was built in 1902. H.C.H.S. photo donated by Catherine Jacobsen.

Photo below: Cushing's school bus. H.C.H.S. photo donated by Catherine Jacobsen.



Photo below: Cushing's beautiful brick high school. When built in 1922, it housed both the grade and high schools. The high school closed in 1954 and the grade school stayed open until it finally closed and merged with St. Paul. H.C.H.S. photo donated by Catherine Jacobsen.



*Baking up success.*

By Mena Sprague

I wish to thank all of those supporters and members who made the 6th Annual Bake Sale a success. If you were unable to bake something and wish to donate, please send the donation in or call me at 754-4901.

*Possible changes with county historical societies.*

---

By Marion Bahensky

*We have just learned that the Historical Society is probably subject to a new Nebraska law that any organization which receives tax money must allow every registered voter in the supporting county to vote in elections of directors and officers. We also probably may not require membership dues.*

*We are seeking clarification. However, at this time we believe that we will mail out our ballot as usual, on December 26, with the return envelope to be postmarked no later than January 15. We will make provision for voting at the annual meeting (January 29), as well as nominations from the floor, by any registered Howard County voters. Names of persons who have already voted by mail will be recorded from the returned envelope, so that nobody votes more than once.*

*If we cannot require membership fees, but still must support our activities, especially the newsletter, probably an annual \$10 subscription fee, or similar, will take the place of the regular membership fee.*

*We do not expect a contested election this year, since any and all persons active with the Society have been requested to run for office. However, a "worst-case" scenario would indicate that a person nominated at the annual meeting, and not approved by the Nominating Committee, could possibly be elected if a very large number of usually non-active people came in to vote. It is important for all past "members" to vote and to return their ballots promptly.*

*This law, if it does apply to the Historical Society, would suggest that non-Howard County residents could not vote in a local election. We have about 300 current members in 107 other zip codes. Only 151 present members reside in Howard County zip codes. We cannot believe that any law could make us restrict our membership, or voting membership, to Howard County. Our other-state or other-county cousins are very very important to our health and growth.*

*If any previously nonactive Howard County residents do come in to vote, we will have available a sign-up sheet for committee activities and participation in other Society needs, such as hosting programs and museums, housecleaning, yard work, furnishing food, donating money, bookwork, etc. All past "members" have recognized their responsibilities to the organization; we are sure that all Howard County citizens would accept more responsibilities than merely voting in a once-a-year election.*

*Those running for the board of directors for two-year terms for 2001 include: Marion Bahensky, Alice Bartle, Carl Christensen, Donna Dobish, Janet Hruza, Carl Huebner, Marian Potts, Dave Sprague, and Bernadine (Buzz) Welch. Those running for officers include: Carl Christensen, President; James P. Jacobsen III, Vice President; Ron W. Sack, Secretary; and Marion Bahensky, Treasurer. Those continuing their two-year term are: Roderick Burkhardt, Diana Markvicka, Ron W. Sack, Mena Sprague, Leona Swanson and Setha Zimbelman.*

# HISTORY IS DISAPPEARING RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES.

(ORDER THE HISTORY BOOK BEFORE THEY'RE GONE!)

Photocopy or cut along dotted line and send in.

Yes, please send \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the 560 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  
P.O. Box 304, St. Paul, Nebraska 68873

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: 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.

Entering Howard County

*Our thanks to the 2000 board of directors, members, supporters, area television stations, local and state newspapers, City of St. Paul, and the people of Howard County for making 2000 our best year on record!*

Entering Howard County

**PUBLISHER:**  
Howard County Historical Society

Including the settlements of:  
Boelus, Coatesfield, Cushing,  
Danachrog, Danesjike, Elba,  
Fairdale, Farwell, Nysted, Paplin,  
St. Libory, St. Paul, and Wacaw

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Ron W. Sack

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The HCHS is a non-profit organization.

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- Roderick Burkhardt
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- Dave Sprague
- Mena Sprague
- Leona Swanson
- Setha Zambelman

**2000 OFFICERS:**

- President: Marion Babensky
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