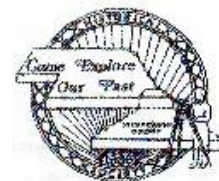


**NEWSLETTER**  
**RICHARDSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**  
**1401 CHASE ST. - PO BOX 45**  
**FALLS CITY, NE 68355**

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**Issue #37**

**Fall 2023**

**Board of Directors 2023-2024:**

Leon Wilhelm, President  
John Seeba, Vice President  
David Kentopp  
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Rich & Jan Duerfeldt  
JoAnn Koso  
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Contact Information: 402-245-4407 or 402-801-1307      Email: [rchs@sentco.net](mailto:rchs@sentco.net)

**Greetings from the RCHS Board of Directors -**

At the Annual Meeting in August it was noted that according to the by-laws officers are elected to a three-year term. Leon Wilhelm, John & Rita Seeba, and Austin Duerfeldt will continue in their offices. .

Welcome to the board is extended to Kathy Perkins, Bill Rowan, Kristy Snethen, and Jason Stevens. We look forward to working with you.

The museum buildings were the site of several gatherings and events this past year. We frequently answer requests for area history and genealogy help, and visitors often are seeking information about county family connections.

We were one of 150 museums in the NE State Historical Foundation Wander Nebraska Program.

The Museum is included within the bounds of the Falls City Creative Art District created this year and certified by the Nebraska Arts Council as one of eighteen in the state.

Thank you to John Seeba and Leon Wilhelm for mowing, maintenance, delivery of heavy items.

Thank you to those who served as docents and hosts for events: Jan Deckinger, Deb Gerweck, Shirley Gormley, JoAnn Koso, Jean McNeely, Barb Parrish Sickel, Kathy Perkins, Terry Stradtman, Norma Thompson, Joan Zoeller, Pam Kunz, and Jane Zentner. Several more volunteers are needed for two-hour afternoon shifts.

Thank you to all who have contributed through memberships, donations, and memorials. Please continue to help with the upkeep of our buildings and expenses. Our Board of Directors continues to use your gifts wisely. If you have not paid your Sept. 1, 2023-Sept. 1, 2024 dues or wish to make a contribution, please do so. A form is included in this newsletter for your convenience. Questions? Call the museum, leave a message, or contact one of your board members. Have a good year.

From Board President, Leon Wilhelm  
Thank you to everyone who has helped us this past year.

## In the AG I Building

### Falter's The Clothing Corner Since 1916



This sign that was on the front of the building at 16th & Stone Streets for many years even after the business closed in 1999 found a home in the AG I Building thanks to the Collection Museum. Darlene Hoemann and Susan Sipple had it removed and delivered by Cole Kirkendall of Bachman Construction, and then it was installed high on the wall by Leon Wilhelm & John Seeba.

### Soap Box Derby Cars



A crowd of nearly 2500 lined 18th Street in Falls City to watch the 11-15 year-old youths compete in a Soap Box Derby in 1948 and 1949. The 1948 race was won by Ward Reesman driving the car on the right above. The car on the left was driven by Ray Simon in 1949. He placed second both years. Ray's hat is on his car. Thank you to Ray Simon and the Reesman Family for donating these. Thanks also go to Jay Morehead, nephew of the 1948 third place winner, Harlan Boatman, for delivery of the Reesman car and the information about the races.

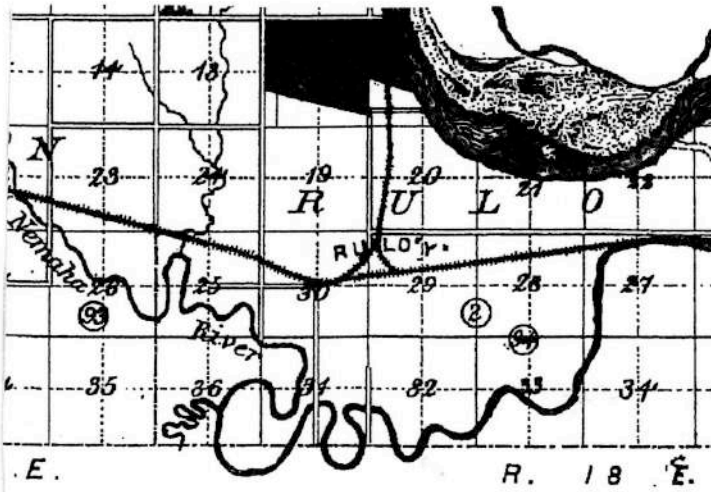
## County 1923 High School Graduates:

Falls City		Sacred Heart	Salem
<p>Allen, Helen, Gould  Bippes, Herman C.  Busing, Lorene W.  Camblin, Alice Gwendoline  Cameron, Martha J.  Cameron, Mary D.  Coatney, Wilma Lucille  Cook, Harry Edwin  Coon, Edna  Cornford, Ernest L.  Crook, Cecil S.  Dodds, Leslie R.  Elliot, Kathleen Mildred  Grush, Marvin Dwight  Grush, Sybil Alice  Haeffele, George H.  Hellmann, Minnie  Huettnner, Albert Henry  James, Helen E.  Johnson, Melvin George  Kimmel, Esther P.  Kirkendall, Juanita E.  Kister, Dora M.  Lichty, Helen Elizabeth  Lichty, John Harkins  Lovelace, Donald E.</p>	<p>Maddox, Fern Evelyn  Massey, Elmer E.  Mettz, Grace Elizabeth  Myers, Grace Arminda  Nixon, Nellie Pearl  Noyes, Eilla Grace Veda  Percival, Wilma Fern  Pointer, Eva Blanche  Redwood, Flora E.  Rieschick, Ruth  Rush, Margareta  Schindler, Wilbur Alfred  Schlicker, Frances Florence  Sharp, Beatrice Lois  Shields, Berlyn G.  Sickel, Minta Ashur  Thacker, Elmer Clare  Thomas, Mabel Margaret  Towle, Mary Delina  Weaver, Archibald J.  Whetstine, Jessie Margaret  Wiltse, Lawrence G.  Winkler, Bertha Henrietta  Wittrock, Carl P.  Wulf, Lydia Elizabeth</p>	<p>Babb, George  Babb, Helen  Eckert, Josephine  Frederick, Vincent  Gehling, Clara  Hill, Margarite,  Keogh, Margaret  Majerus, Carl  McDougal, Lorene  McGuire, John  Rawley, John  Ryan, Vincent</p>	<p>Adams, Clift  Bunker, Ruth  Graves, Stella  Rhodes, Fay  Rhodes, Virgil</p>
			<b>Shubert</b>
			None
			<b>Bratton Union</b>
			None
		<b>Humboldt</b>	<b>Dawson</b>
		<p>Asa, Harold, C.  Bentley, Dorothy  Briggs, Genevieve  Burrow, Ardelia  Cooper, Guy L. Jr.  Glathar, Mabel  Green, Golda  Hunzeker, Wilmer  Kanael, Florence  Keiser, Doris M.  Lydick, Adaline  Miner, Leonard  Moritz, Faye  Paulsen, Clover  Rausch, Oma  Reid, Helen  Schmid, Mina  Sheard, Allen  Shirley, Suella  Stoltz, Carol  Wedner, Wilmer  Williamson, Oma  Wissler, Olin</p>	<p>Allen, Katherine  Boring, Gaius  Cooper, C.E.  Farrell, Bridget  Heim, John C.  Heim, Rosina  McGuire, James  Mowery, Chester  O'Connell, Josephine  O'Grady, Joan  Riley, Frances  Riley, James  Triggs, Lucille  Triggs, Vera  Triggs, Viva</p>
<b>Verdon</b>	<b>Stella</b>		<b>Honey Creek</b>
<p>Cauthorne, Frances  Dameron, Kathleen  Henderson, Victor  Jorn, Perry  Leeblers, Ardall</p>	<p>Bourke, Richard Alphonsus  Goodloe, Tasa Lucille  Higgins, Ralph B.  Hoppe, Thelma Elizabeth  Marts, Joy Tolly  McKenney, Gladys  Pugh, Henry  Ramel, Grace Beatrice  Sherman, Hallie M.</p>		<p>DeFrene, Harry  Jones, Helen  Lee, Thelma  Moore, Mattie</p>
 <p>This Maple Grove Dist. # 47  Bldg. moved into Verdon is now  the D-V School Museum.</p>			

The Tri-State Corners Genealogical Society has compiled lists of all county graduates using the resources of our museum, the D-V Museum in Verdon, Humboldt's Bruun Memorial Library, Falls City Library & Arts Center, newspaper microfilm, and files created by Richard Zentner.

## The Forgotten City of South Rulo

South Rulo was a former “city” situated a couple of miles south of the present town of Rulo. It was at the former location of the “Y.” The “Rulo Y” was where the railroad had a spur track that branched off to Rulo from the main Kansas to Falls City line. When the railroad finished its new bridge over the Missouri in 1887, the “Y” became unnecessary as the rails came directly into and through Rulo. The depot at the “Y” was actually moved into Rulo.



The “Y” in 1885

South Rulo came into being in 1897 as an attempt to preserve and grow the businesses that had been established at the “Y.” South Rulo could be seen as a “suburb” of Rulo much as the former East Rulo community in 1877 two miles northeast of Rulo in Missouri.

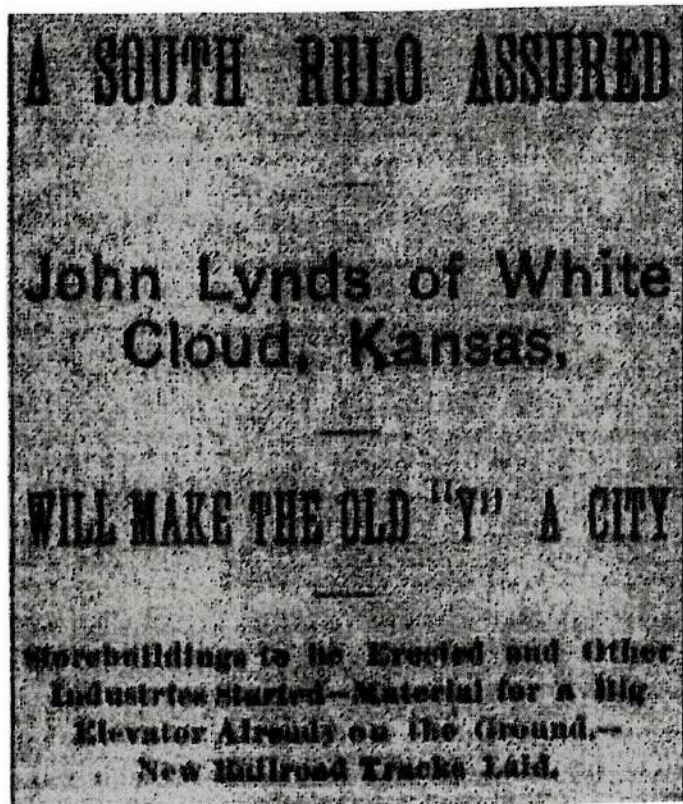
John Lynds, a wealthy shipping merchant of White Cloud, Kansas, was the primary mover for the building of the new town. His idea was to build a new grain elevator at the former “Y” that would handle all the grain business of White Cloud, Reserve Station, and Hiawatha and that South Rulo would rival Nebraska City as a grain shipping point. The new “city” would become to Rulo what South Omaha was to Omaha.

Charles C. Davis, an owner of the *Falls City News*, was an early investor in the new plan in January 1897. He established a new store and lunch counter there but it apparently wasn't very successful. However, he succeeded in his second attempt a year later (January 1898). Lynds' “latest and most substantial elevator” was being built in November 1897 and by January 1898 it was finished and being painted by Henry Gagnon.

A new scale house was in operation by December 1897 and was being run by Dudley Van Valkenburg, a prominent citizen of Rulo who was also serving as Rulo's police judge and Justice of the Peace. Van Valkenburg's wife was from a prominent family. She was a daughter of county pioneer Stephen Story - founder of the former river town of St. Stephens, and a granddaughter of Joseph Roubidoux - founder of St. Joseph, Missouri. Now her husband, with Lynds, was a founder of South Rulo. He was Lynds' superintendent and general manager for his South Rulo operation.



South Rulo already had a school, District 91, and now it had a general store, lunch counter, and a brand-new grain elevator. The Rulo newspaper, the *Rulo Reporter*, under editor William Witherow was a strong promoter of the new “city.”



*Rulo Reporter* Nov. 5, 1897

The new endeavor by Lynds apparently didn’t survive long because of the national conflict between farmers and the railroads. Farmers were upset because they felt the railroads were overcharging for grain shipments. Also, the new bridge, now ten years old, gave an incentive for farmers to use the elevators and facilities in Rulo itself, making it more convenient, and eliminating one of the middlemen. South Rulo was largely gone by 1900.

Submitted by Bill Rowan



Known as The "Y" Dist. # 91. It was the first county rural school to be designated by the state as a Standard School in 1929. Located at the "Y" south of Rulo. Closed in 1967.

The building still stands on a nearby farmstead.

Some teachers: Fred Marsh, Lillie Brinegar, Truly Walters, Nettie Conner, Ruth Randall, Beulah Livingston, Grace Kuker, Leola Kerr, Virgene Hunley (11 yrs.), Ruth Wehrman (7 yrs.), Maude Hollabaugh

Some families: Adams, Bachman, Bean, Bonney, Buias, Cash, Cox, Curry, Dunn, Foster, Gallatin, Handley, Hartman, Hunley, Hunzeker, James, Jones, Kelly, Lewis, Liberty, Norland, Ogg, Randall, Roberts, Schulenberg, Sharp, Stevens, Summers, Surman, Thomas, Titus, Wehrman, Workman



This beautiful scrolled pattern etagere (parlor desk) was donated recently by Kim Godemann Kneifl, daughter of Joe, Jr. and Kay Schreiber Godemann. It was in the home of her grandparents, Simon and Mabel Kuker Schreiber and is assumed to have been a wedding gift in 1917. Inside are the initials, MRT, presumed to be the name of the creator. Popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s, design patterns could be ordered and used by the buyer on a pedal scroll saw. Question: Who Was MRT?

A very similar desk was made by 16-yr-old Frank Shrimpton, son of the Salem Mill owner, in 1890. His aunt, Ella Shrimpton, donated it to the Wildwood Historic Center in Nebraska City in 1972.

The steins and porcelain dancer figurines in the display were brought from Germany by Ken Zoeller, stationed there in 1955-1956.

This wooden circular sign from the original St. Mark's Lutheran Church southeast of Verdon was discovered behind the front siding when it was torn down on South Stone Street this year by donors, Tony & Barb Brown.

Luth. St. Mariens Kirche  
A.D.  
1883



The church was moved into Falls City in 1913 to St. Paul's Lutheran at 20th & Towle, and then to 7th & Stone in 1938 for the Assembly of God.



St. Mark's built a new church building in 1913 that burned in 1943 and then, after meeting in a basement, rebuilt in 1963.





Photo by Brian McKim, Falls City Journal

Eight children of Otto Gibson and many other descendants and family friends met at the Museum this summer. The purpose was to donate his Carnegie Hero Award Medal, the congratulatory letter for his Interstate Commerce Commission Medal of Honor from President Eisenhower, and Photo Album of the Missouri Pacific Railroad sponsored family trip to Washington in 1956. The heroic act was covered nationwide and statewide. Pictured are:

Mike (aka Mooch), LaMarr, Mary Beth Rowell, Doug (aka Hoot), Karen Ramsey, Bob, Connie Fiddler, Richard (aka Butch). Children of deceased Susie Scholl and Yvonne Thieman were also present.

These items are now displayed in the Railroad Exhibit showcase at the Museum.



The back of this Carnegie Medal reads:  
 Otto L. Gibson  
 Who Saved  
 Daniel Galvan  
 From Being Killed By A Train  
 Omaha, Neb.  
 June 14, 1954

## The Story of John W. Dorrington

A pioneer in his own right, John Webster Dorrington, son of English immigrants David and Ann Dorrington, was an adventurous and prosperous figure who witnessed and participated in the westward expansion of our growing nation. John was born at Utica, New York, the third child of six. After attending schools in New York, John joined his family in Falls City, where they had settled in 1857. When John arrived two years later in 1859, his father David was in charge of area mail routes.



John helped his father by serving as a mail carrier between Falls City and Topeka, Kansas. He alleged later that he sometimes would cross trails with William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody near Powhattan, KS, in 1859 and 1860, when Cody was riding for the Pony Express as a young teen. John said that they would wave their hats at each other when Cody raced past. Many years later, when Buffalo Bill was quite famous, John met him at one of Cody’s Wild West shows in 1908, where they traded memories of their exploits. There are those who contend that Cody didn’t ride the Pony Express, but his age (14) and proximity (Leavenworth, KS) seem to back up John’s story.

Upon John’s arrival in Falls City in 1859, parents Ann and David were also involved in another activity – helping freedom seekers along the Lane Trail as stationmasters of the Underground Railroad! This was a perilous venture in which the family members who were living in Falls City participated. While in Falls City, John’s stature in the community grew. Consequently, John served as councilman, mayor, and acting sheriff. But Falls City was not to be his last stop.

John joined his eldest brother Fred Dorrington in starting the first daylight stage between Omaha and Lincoln, by way of Plattsmouth, where night stages to Lincoln were being conducted. John once remarked, “There was no town between Plattsmouth and Lincoln except Weeping Water, and it was only a settlement. The country was rough and the Indians were bad.”

John entered military service in 1862, but he didn’t fight Confederates. Instead, he became a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nebraska Cavalry, Company G, commanded by Col. Robert Furnas. He saw action in the Dakota Territory in the American Indian Wars until 1864, and participated in Sully’s Expedition.

In 1869, when John’s brother-in-law Isham Reavis was appointed by President Grant to be a federal judge in Arizona, John accompanied Isham and sister Anna to Yuma, AZ. Following his arrival, John soon acquired an interest in *The Arizona Sentinel*. Working as a journalist, by 1881 he became sole owner of the newspaper and served as its editor and publisher until he sold the paper in 1911. He also became director of the First National Bank of Yuma.

John was elected to Arizona’s House of Representatives several times and was an Arizona Territorial delegate to four Republican National Conventions. In 1897, he was appointed to the position of superintendent of prisons. John resourcefully invested in farmland and mines in the area.

John Dorrington found great success in a faraway place, but his heart remained in Falls City.

John never married, nor did he have children to share his fortune or happiness. When his mother died, he was grief-stricken. He refused to come home because he could not bear to come back and not find her there. Some years after his father died, John started the Dorrington-Reavis-Towle Mausoleum Trust, using his acquired means to build and maintain this memorial to his beloved parents.

While visiting Honolulu for his health in 1916, John died. His sister, Anna Dorrington Reavis, who was there with him, found a photograph of his mother in the pocket nearest his heart, where he had always kept it. Today John lies beside his mother in the family mausoleum, her picture still in his vest pocket.

Dave Kentopp



## The Dorrington-Reavis-Towle Mausoleum

When entering Falls City's Steele Cemetery, it would be hard to miss noticing the chapel nestled on the top of the hill to the left. The Dorrington-Reavis-Towle mausoleum chapel has been sitting there since 1928 – a small, elegant edifice in a serene setting. Beneath it lie the remains of many of one of Falls City's first families.

Pioneers David and Ann Dorrington, along with their children and their children's families, rest together with members of successive generations. The mausoleum was a gift of love from their son, John W. Dorrington, to honor his parents. The present structure was completed in 1928, over ten years after John's passing. Previously, a smaller, above-ground mausoleum had been built. It was David Dorrington's memorial to his wife Ann, conceived through the anguish of his loss.

The present mausoleum was built to replace the older one with a version so well-built that it would stand the test of time, and also hold more family members. Some sixty-five family members presently lie in the underground chambers that exist below the chapel and the chapel grounds. There are 105 spaces for occupants, located in four sections that together cover an area totaling 50' X 50'.

Mausoleums with underground rooms (often referred to as crypts) are very uncommon in this country. This and the chapel's English styling were intended to be a little reminder of England – a sort of "Westminster Abbey," befitting their family heritage.



Upon entering the heavy bronze doors of the chapel, you notice the two beautiful stained-glass windows behind the lectern. One is a memorial to Ann and David Dorrington. The other window memorializes their son, John W. Dorrington. A bronze plaque on the north wall mentions David and Ann, along with their children. Another bronze plaque again commemorates John, and recognizes his contribution. At the center of the room there is a rectangular opening in the floor with railing around it. Caskets are placed there on the "casket lowering device" for graveside services, before descending to their final destination. On the right side, concrete steps extend down to the burial chambers.



Below in the burial area, you find large marble endcaps that are engraved with names and dates of the departed, showing visitors who is where. Rows of family members' spaces are three-high along the walls. Family branches are separated into sections.

Looking carefully at the interior walls in the lower level, one can notice that they are over a foot thick. These walls are made of poured, steel-reinforced concrete. Ceilings are gently sloped, to repel outside moisture. Someone was very careful when designing this structure. Dr. Aemal Khattak, structural engineer at the University of Nebraska and a personal friend, was quite impressed when he toured the facility. He couldn't get over how much hand labor it must have taken back then, when modern equipment wasn't available. He said that it must have been very expensive to build, and that it should last hundreds of years.

John W. Dorrington donated the funds to build the present facility through creation of the J.W. Dorrington Investment Company in 1913, providing funding through a declaration of trust. That trust is still maintained and is controlled by the family. The intent of the trust is to provide for the mausoleum in perpetuity.

Presently, Cindy Kopf and Cece Simon are in charge of the cleaning and upkeep of the mausoleum. Marc Morehead, Cindy, and I are involved in mausoleum affairs. Marc has been especially instrumental in updating the mausoleum, instigating repair work, and overseeing the creation of a successful water leakage solution. The mausoleum is kept locked, but maybe we could schedule a time for a visit.

Submitted by Dave Kentopp



Eldon Raines, age 15, bought this drum set in 1940. He was the only son of Dewey & Blanche Randolph Raines. He played this in jam sessions until shortly before his death in 2017.

Framed in front is a picture of the Shubert High Band in which he played the snare drum at the right in 1938-1939. His payment book and other pictures are included.

On either side of the drums are shelves holding part of our large collection of county high school and some college yearbooks. The Dawson, Verdon, and D-V graduates pictures are shown in the swinging panels at the right. Nearby are other musical instruments, sports pictures/objects, and uniforms.

This 1900 watchmaker's bench and assorted tools and instruments were used by jewelers L.C.Hutchins, Frank Malicke, and Jane Zentner.

**L. E. Hutchins of Clifton, Kas., arrived Tuesday to begin work at T. L. Davies' jewelry store as watch repair man.**

From the Falls City Journal, July 28, 1922

Mr. Hutchins left that position a year later to manage the jewelry department of another store, then to his own business inside the Johnson Drug Store. He then moved into the store remodeled to his specifications at 1616 1/2 Stone in 1937. He closed in 1943 during the war due to lack of merchandise and reopened in January, 1945.



Frank Malicke owned Frank's Jewelry in that location for 25 years, and Jane Zentner had PJ's Jewelry there many of her 28 years in business before she moved into the former Richardson County Bank Building.

### Some Other Recent Acquisitions

- Photograph of the 1947 Sacred Heart champion basketball team from Gibson brothers
- Horse-drawn Emerson sulky plow, corn lister, and a go-dig cultivator from Dee Pounds
- Rulo History items including "*Celebrating the New Missouri River Bridge*" and 1904-06 Bank of Rulo cash ledger, and jewelry store equipment from Jane Zentner
- Large Aerial photographs of the Commodore Trailer Home & Flying L Stock Trailer Factories and Flying L Warhawk stone marker from Richard Gerdes family
- Square Dance and Red Hat Society garments, bookcases and cabinets, office and display supplies, painting by Donald Baxter, Jr., cemetery index books from Terry Stradtman
- Two ca 1910 long black wool skirts belonging to Carrie Vonderschmidt
- Medical instruments used by Drs. Brennan and Burghart
- Old bottle from the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Falls City from 1910-1970.
- Vintage GOMCO Vacuum Suction Aspirator from Falls City Care Center
- Motor used on the Elwood Steinke farm to operate washing machine and corn sheller
- Eight unique metal pencil sharpeners, Handy Andy toolbox, 1920s toy typewriter
- Many children's books and other vintage items from Shirley Dodds
- Wooden rocker belonging to Mildred Walker donated by grandson, Gary Almquist
- 1917-1919 Kentopp Bros. Buick baseball shirt and glove worn by Tom Frehse
- Cream Separator used by Frank & Rowena Brewer
- Assortment of plat atlases, yearbooks, family pictures and histories, school pictures

This newsletter does not provide a complete list, but every donation is important to us. Each acquisition has a story to tell about its former owner and its use in county history.

### Memorial donations were given in honor of:

Marvin (Sonny) Cambell	Lonnie Goff	Mary Helen Nussbaum
Don Clark	Kenneth Hunzeker	Rick & Susan Nutzman
Bernice Davis	Leonard Karst	Bev Parrish
Elizabeth Dunn	Laura Kottich	Don & Dorothy Sailors
Robert Ferguson	Leo (Butch) Linn	Ron Shubert
Richard Frederick	Karl & Marcella Lock	Scott Shubert
Frank Gill		Elaine Wittrock

We invite you to visit the museum to see the new and updated displays. We really do need volunteers, and suggestions are most welcome. Contact a board member.

Consider having your group meeting at the museum or arrange a tour. 'Closed' means that no docents are scheduled, but we will gladly arrange a showing at other times.

If you are visiting in Richardson County, consider a visit to our Richardson County Historical Society Museum and to the other museums in the county - Quad County Museum in Humboldt, Penn Colony/Community Museum at Dawson, Collections Museum, John Philip Falter Museum, and the Military Museum in the Courthouse.

This and past newsletters are available in color on our website.

**<http://www.negenweb.net/RCHS>**



BULK RATE  
U. S. Postage  
P.A.I.D.  
Permit #39  
Falls City, NE 68355

Richardson County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 45  
Falls City, NE 68355



Inside the AG II Building completed in 2019, you will find a large collection of antique farm implements, a county transportation exhibit, an equipped kitchen, restrooms, and a large space for entertaining.

Contact one of the Museum Board members if you would like to use this building for your event in any season.

**Support for mailing this newsletter graciously provided by Falls City Care Center.**