

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

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Issue #38

Facebook: Richardson County Historical Society Museum

Fall 2024

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Greetings from the RCHS Board of Directors -

At the Annual Meeting on August 24 it was noted that according to the by-laws Leon Wilhelm, John & Rita Seeba, and Austin Duerfeldt will continue serving in their offices. We thank them.

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.

The new roof on the main building looks great, and the replaced AC unit upstairs is welcome.

We participated in the NE State Historical Foundation Wander Nebraska Program.

The Museum is included within the bounds of the Falls City Creative Art District certified by the Nebraska Arts Council.

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: Terry Stradtman (lead), Jan Deckinger, JoAnn Koso, Jean McNeely, Barb Parrish Sickel, Kathy Perkins, Norma Thompson, Joan Zoeller, Kristy Snethen, Mary Beth Gibson Rowell, Pam Kunz, June Bowers, and Jane Zentner. Thank you to Barb for keeping the decorations current and to Mary Beth & Kristy for cleaning.

Volunteers are continually needed for two-hour afternoon shifts, so please consider being part of this group, even if as a substitute. It is an opportunity to learn from visitors as they see what we have.

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 and applies for grants when possible. If you have not paid your Sept. 1, 2024-Sept. 1, 2025 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.

The Board of Directors wants to recognize and thank Joan Zoeller for her continued contributions to the Museum. She works an afternoon each week making displays patron friendly, repairs books, makes labels, and contributes to research. Her ideas are so helpful. When she is a docent she greets and gives tours to visitors and accepts and sorts donations.

A current project is revamping our three showcases in Prichard Auditorium.

At the RCHS Annual Meeting August 24, we were entertained by Chris Sayre of Lincoln with his program - Nebraska's Musical Smorgasbord: Music from Various Ethnic Groups in Nebraska. He used a variety of instruments. We received funding from Humanities Nebraska for this. The committee served root beer floats and cookies.



The same day was the Cobblestone Parade and festivities. For the first time since 2019, the RCHS entered a float. The committee of Jason Stevens, June Bowers, and Jan Deckinger did a wonderful job creating and constructing a float with items from the Museum to show the parade theme, "We've Got the Spirit," and the float theme:



Shown was that 100 years ago Lloyd Hahn of Falls City competed in the Paris Olympic Games and in 1928 in the Amsterdam Games, Charlie Abbey was the first pro-baseball player from Nebraska, Doug Goltz inducted into the National HS Coaches Hall of Fame. County school uniforms included a complete 1927 FCHS women's basketball uniform, Honey Creek and Sacred Heart cheerleading outfits, warm-up gear, a band uniform, booster clothing, and trophies. A big thank you to the spirited individuals riding the float and to Farm & City Supply for use of a new trailer. We were awarded third place!

County 1924 High School Graduates:			
Falls City High		Sacred Heart	Stella
Adams, Clift Adams, Gladys Barton, Elizabeth Brecht, Anna Margaret Brecht, Nellie Lee Burchard, Frederic Cornell, Douglas Coupe, Margaret Coupe, Stephen Coupe, Vera Crawford, Lucille Deckinger, Albert Deuchler, Alma Deuchler, Sadie Eberhart, Julie Edwards, Cleo Eickhoff, Clara Ernst, Alberta Fisher, Freda Flowers, Harry Forney, Margaret Gibson, Gladys Graham, Keith Graves, Stella Hahn, Rosetta Horrocks, Robert Hutchins, Hazel Inks, Velma Jones, Morris Kirk, Alan Kistner, Irene Knickerbocker, Mildred Kottman, David Lane, Marvin	Lawrence, Celia Jane Lewis, DeForrest Linsley, Rosalie Massey, Frank McDonald, Lester McDonald, Ruth Metz, Esther Morgan, Imo Morris, Orville Niemeyer, Ervin Norton, Edgar Nott, Carroll Nutter, Clarence Reid, George Reneker, Helen Ruth Richardson, Leon Rieger, Sadie Ross, Mable Ruegge, Orville Sconce, Lovelle Simanton, Sara Helen Steinbrink, Ella Taylor, May Tesson, Peter Waller, Thelma Walraff, Cora Walters, Truly Whitaker, Harvey Whitaker, John Whitford, Grant Wiltse, John Wissinger, Julia Young, Wilfred Zorn, Wilbert	Derr, Effie Gehling, Grace Horan, Philip King, Ailene Landrigan, Grace Majerus, John Stawpert, Elizabeth Vogel, Mortimor Shubert Ahern, Lorella Davis, Pauline Fish, Grace Gaston, Mildred Henderson, Raymond Lewis, Marie Lilly, Alice Marts, Herman Quigley, Jess Stiers, Kenneth Walraven, Harold Williams, Roland Wolfe, Reginald Verdon Bauer, Ethel Bauer, Mabel Boyle, Basil I. Colglazier, Minnie Mabel Davies, Donald E. Farnsworth, Florence Griffiths, Bernice I. Griffiths, Lucile A. Jorn, Alma M. Jorn, Boyd Francis Kelly, Martin F. Knickerbocker, LeRoy Mez, Max Albert Raper, Thelma Fay Rhoads, Virgil W. Stewart, Lafe Wasser, Affa Mae Wasser, Leonard E. Watkins, Grace Watton, Caroline A. (Carrie) Whitney, Howard R. Weick, Alice M.	Alexander, Emma Floy Allemand, Beulah Marjorie Allemand, Eugene Henri Cozard, Ilde Dare Harrison, Gerald J. Helmick, Lila Blanche Henderson, Wilma Janet Hicks, Charles Robert Hicks, Earl Irwin Johnson, Ethel Jane Marts, Maxine Mason, Helen Irene McMullen, Phillip Bard Nedrow, Warren W. Shellenbarger, Ira Herbert Stoltz, Carroll Frederick Timmerman, Lewis Williams, James Lambert Humboldt Albright, George Atwood, Leon Avery, Gertrude Carsh, Harry Clark, Miriam Cooper, Charles Gabausky, Fred Graham, Neola Hoagland, Cleo Hoagland, Otis Howe, Nellie Marie Jenkins, Ruth Kerl, Helen Kirk, Lester Lee, Luther Lehnher, Pearl Porr, Karl R. Powell, Thelma Ray, Loren D. Smith, Merle E. Williamson, Edith Wilson, Ruth Dawson Belden, Madge Clark, Thelma Heim, R. Waldo Heim, Richard A. Hogue, Rosana Lundy, Lloyd Riley, Mary Underkoffler, Alice Wuster, Orville
Honey Creek Adams, Victor Albin, Bernice Mendenhall, Marjorie Walker, Wilton Whitney, Edith Wittwer, Elma Wittwer, Oren	Bratton Union Cook, Blanche Mehlin, Grace Morris, Jennie Reagan, Iva Warnke, Earl		
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.	Salem		
	None The new Salem School building was dedicated November 20, 1924 Built by Bohrer Bros.		

Who Was the First Pioneer Born in Richardson County?

In the late 1920s and early 1930s there was a friendly, and at times, intense competition as to who was the first and second pioneer child born in Richardson County. The "candidates" for the honor were Julia Turner, Frank Leachman, William Whitney, Maria Boyd Coon, Tom Leachman, and Elizabeth Rist.

It has since been generally accepted that Frank Leachman was the first child, but Julia Turner was the first girl. According to Mrs. Isham Reavis in her "Review of Pioneer Days," written in 1927, Julia was born in Richardson County but a later survey placed her birth in Pawnee County.

Frank Leachman was awarded a ten-dollar gold piece in March 1929 for being the "oldest native son of Nebraska." He was born Aug. 25, 1855. Another contender for first-born honors was William Whitney. According to the *Falls City Daily News* of Sept. 22, 1929, he was born near Salem on Nov. 30, 1857, a son of Wade and Melissa Whitney.

Maria Boyd Coon, daughter of David Boyd, was born July 18, 1857 a few miles west of Falls City and believed to be the oldest pioneer child after Frank Leachman died. Her claim was challenged by that of Tom Leachman, Frank's brother, who was born Jan. 24, 1857.

Another challenge to Tom Leachman's claim to be the second child was made by the Rist family of Humboldt in 1932. Frank Rist claimed that Elizabeth Rist was second, being born May 5, 1856, eight months before Tom.

According to the dates given, and not knowing others, those persons born in 1857 are definitely "out of the running" for first place. (Tom, Maria, William) Julia Turner may be a legitimate competitor as early on Pawnee County was part of Richardson County until 1855. Her actual birthdate is unknown.

A short history of the now acknowledged "winner." From an article in the *Falls City Journal* of Aug. 25, 1926. "Seventy-one years ago today, the first white child was born in Richardson County, according to old records and the memories of the pioneers...It is Frank Leechman (sic) who lives on the banks of the Muddy straight north of Falls City. Mr. Leechman(sic) is older than the town of Falls City, and while he says he cannot remember when it started... he can remember the town in 'its infancy.'"

His mother Ann (a Davenport) had been married before to ___ Hershberger. She married her second husband Benjamin Franklin Leachman in the fall of 1854 and they settled on his farm north of Falls City. Frank was the first of their four children. Others were Thomas, and twins Samuel and Jesse Crook Leachman. The last was named after their respected neighbor, Jesse Crook. Samuel died young, with the other brothers living into the 20th Century.

Frank (B. F. Jr.) and his brother Thomas, known throughout the county as the Leachman boys, continued to live on the old home place, never marrying. They were regarded as somewhat eccentric, in what historian D. D. Reavis called "a tale of human peculiarities rarely seen." The *Journal* in 1932, reporting Frank's death, said they lived practically in seclusion for years. They never saw a picture show and had no radio or electrical appliances. They still used a team and wagon.

Frank was not prominent in public affairs, though he once served as a township assessor. His father, who had come to Richardson County in 1854 had once run for Territorial Legislature in Nov. 1856 but had lost. He died in the fall of 1860.

Frank's mother, Ann, married a third time, presumably about 1864, to Andrew S. McDowell, who as a private in the 2nd Neb. Cav., was a Civil War veteran, and had mustered out in Dec. 1863.

Ann McDowell died Aug. 10, 1898 and was buried in Maple Grove Cemetery. She has a large stone. Her sons Frank (d. 1932) and Jesse (d. 1909) are buried nearby in unmarked graves. It is unknown where her second husband Benjamin and son Samuel are buried.

Son Thomas had a heated dispute with the county authorities when they wanted to straighten the Muddy Creek through the Leachman farm. Consequently, he refused to be buried in Richardson County and lies in the Peru Cemetery in Nemaha County near other relatives.

Ann's third husband, Andrew (d. 1872), is buried in the old Archer Cemetery, his stone badly damaged.

The Leachman family lives on in the history books as none of the "Leachman Boys" married. However, the name lives on, as it has been given to the hill north of Falls City.

Some *Journal* Headlines of Conflicting Claims

**Claims Mrs. Maria Coon Is Oldest
Native White Child in Richardson**

July 21, 1932

**Tom Leachman and Not Mrs. Maria
Coon Is County's 2nd White Child**

July 25, 1932

**Members of Rist Family Dispute
Claim That Tom 2nd White Child**

July 27, 1932

The Leachman Boys



Left, Tom Leachman and his brother,
Frank.

Submitted by Bill Rowan



This light green painted and stitched quilt created by Eunice DeWald Ferguson from her memories and research of buildings in Falls City in 1940. There are trains and tracks on the border. Facing east (top) at left center are shown the courthouse and uptown buildings. Her sisters, Roberta DeWald Taylor and Kay DeWald Pottorff helped her complete it.

Election of 1924

President: Calvin Coolidge

Vice-President: Charles Dawes

U.S. Senate: George W. Norris

U.S. House of Representatives: John H. Morehead, Falls City

Nebraska State Senate: John Wiltse, Falls City

Nebraska House of Representatives: Edward E. Auxier, Dawson

County Commissioner 3rd District: Edward Uhri, Humboldt

County Commissioner 2nd District: Joseph Lewis, Verdon

Clerk of the District Court: Florence Cleaver

County Assessor: Gust Duerfeldt – However, the same election abolished the Assessor's Office. Voters defeated a measure to change from three commissioners to seven supervisors.

Memorial donations were given in honor of:

Nelle Pfister John Anno Vernon Bletscher Ron Shubert	Gerald Fritz Danny Noll Neal Frost	Mary Little Shirley Fritz Myron Nussbaum	Roy Rieschick Shirley Meinzer Marie Parsons Laura Kottich
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General George A. Stone

1834 - 1901

Rulo Mayor and State Senator

After the Civil War Gen. George Augustus Stone engaged in the banking and mercantile business in Iowa and in communities along the Missouri River. His business travels took him to Rulo in 1873 and to Atchison, KS in 1875. He eventually settled in Rulo about 1876 and opened a mercantile store at 1st and Rulo Sts. He also engaged in the lumber business with a lumber yard near the town's railroad tracks in Rulo's block no. 44. A prominent businessman, he was elected Rulo's mayor in April 1877. As the newspaper article from the *Lincoln World* published in the *Falls City Press* states, he was persuaded to run for state office. He won the election and served in the 15th State Senate which convened Jan. 7, 1879. After his term ended, he returned to Iowa. He was later appointed by President Cleveland during his first term to be the National Bank Examiner for Iowa, serving until his death in Burlington on May 26, 1901.

Falls City Press 1/30/1879

SENATOR STONE.

Lincoln World.

Gen'l. Stone is one of the most prominent men in the State Senate. He is about forty years old; was born in New York. His parents emmigrating west while young. He was educated at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Married the daughter of Hon. F. J. Clark, of Mt. Pleasant, in 1857. Entered the army in 1861, as Lieutenant 1st Iowa Volunteers, and was promoted to Major of the 4th Iowa Cavalry Volunteers, for meritorious conduct at the battle of Wilson Creek, where the lamented Lyon fell, and was afterwards promoted to the Colonelcy of the 25th Iowa Infantry, Vol. He was promoted to Brigadier General for the brilliant manner in which he captured Columbus, S. C., while with Sherman on his march to the sea. After the war was over, in July 1865 he was discharged. Before the war he was cashier of the Saunders bank at Mt. Pleasant, which during the war was changed to a National bank. On his return he took his old position as cashier. He afterward was elected cashier of the Ottumwa bank, which position he held until he came to Richardson County this State, where he is engaged in the mercantile business. He was elected senator from that county despite the combination of the county ring. Although Senator Stone is not a politician, yet his quick perception and his experience with men gives him a rank in the senate with the ablest diplomats of that body. Richardson County will never regret having sent Gen Geo. A. Stone to the Senate as her representative.



General Stone
about 1864



George A. Stone
Rulo Mayor 1877 – 1878

Official Directory.

CITY.

Mayor—Geo. A. Stone

J. A. Randolph,	} Councilmen, 1st Ward.
T. C. Hoyt,	
M. X. Stehle,	} Councilmen, 2nd Ward.
Eli Plant,	

Police Judge—Wm. Vanluc.
Marshall—Geo. E. Taylor.
Treasurer—Geo. D. Kirk.
Clerk—James Taugney.

Rulo Independent 2/2/1878

Rulo Independent 2/2/1878

Geo. A. Stone,
Rulo, Nebraska.

GENERAL

MERCHANDISE

AND

LUMBER.

I WILL MAKE A SPECIALTY OF

LUMBER IN

Car-load Lots.

Submitted by Bill Rowan

More about Rulo

This river town was laid out in 1856 and incorporated January 8, 1858.

Rulo had the first county newspaper, the "Rulo Western Guide," in 1858.

By 1885, it was known to offer watch repair, blacksmithing, attorneys, bakery, grain mills, breweries, lumberyard, restaurants, hotels, general stores, saloons, drug store, two barber shops, grocery stores and churches. Streets were graveled in 1926. First Street was blacktopped in 1941.



Cash register from the first Rulo Bridge toll booth. Bridge was dedicated in 1939. Became toll-free in 1957.



From the original Burlington Railroad Bridge that was replaced in 19____

The Lewis & Clark Expedition camped nearby in 1804 when this region was part of the new Louisiana Purchase. Two historical markers at Rulo describe this.

Two hundred twenty years later on October 9 a large crowd of Rulo citizens and others from surrounding communities welcomed the Lewis & Clark Discovery Expedition of St. Charles to its River Rat Campground. A cannon salute announced the approach of their replica keelboat. There were twenty-two men and women. They met the public and gave visitors a close-up view of the 55-ft. boat. There was a flag lowering ceremony, and Board Chairman, Becky Simmonds, was presented a peace medal. They expressed thanks to Rulo for its hospitality and use of the campground where five replica tents were staked and used by the crew before leaving the next morning. The overnight stop at Rulo was part of the group's re-enactment trip from Omaha to Kansas City.

Jane Zentner gave the group a scrapbook she compiled when the Discovery Expedition of St. Charles stopped in 2004 and 2006 on its bicentennial trip in the same keelboat. She is creating a similar one of this stop, including a paw print from "Captain," portraying Seaman, Capt. Lewis's dog. She gave each crew member a set of souvenir pins of that trip.

Six of the crew, living in Ohio, have connections to Falls City. They are descended from early settlers, David C. Barnes and Franklin and Janetta Brenizer. Family tradition says that Harry Cashell of Ohio met Beulah Brenizer when he was a carpenter on a depot and she was playing piano at a hotel in Falls City. They married in 1911 and moved to Ohio.

Their grandson, Robert Shannon Anderson of Ohio portrayed his uncle, Pvt. George Shannon, on the 2003-2006 bicentennial trip on the same keelboat. He came into Falls City then to research and visit gravesites. Pvt.

Shannon is best known for getting "lost" for 16 days in now northeast Nebraska in 1804.

Mr. Anderson's daughters and grandsons and a six-year-old great-grandson were on this memorable stop.





This wagon was built by the Vocational Agriculture class of Falls City High School in 1928 for Lothair Rieger, 1926 graduate and farmer north of Preston and later Hiawatha.



This Advance Rumely thresher was bought at Paul & Wilbur Last's auction by Marlin Peck.

Some Other Recent Acquisitions

- * **Sixty** scrapbooks of Community Hospital history lovingly compiled by Lee Ferguson, long-time administrative assistant and donated by her. Her husband, Robert, researched and wrote histories of the railroads, Falls City Municipal Airport, Boy Scouts, etc.
- * Governmental and family photographs and documents of Judge & Rep. Archibald J. and Martha, Gov. Arthur J. & Maude (Hart), and Rep. Phil & Jane Weaver donated by Fred & Rita Weaver.
- * Many Sacred Heart, Salem, Honey Creek, and Rulo & Peru State school pictures, family documents, wedding dress, and a large variety of items used around a farmstead. Also a collage of 1938 county town main street pictures and FC ornaments from Don "Jiggs" & Ruth Frederick Mullins' son, Keith.

* Bride dolls, a painted cocoa pitcher set, Navy service, 1946 baseball, and postal service items and Kanaly family pictures belonging to Lawrence "Dick" & Nina Hall Frederick donated by their daughters.

This heavy cardboard array of slots was used by Dick Frederick to practice sorting mail. > >>>



- * 1860s bed frame in which Annie Gist, daughter of Isham Reavis was born in 1865. It had been used many years in the Burton family Colorado cabin. Donors: Cindy Burton Kopf and David Kentopp.
- * 1904 rocking horse given to Fred Roesch by his grandfather, Jacob. Donor: Glenda Roesch Nelson
- * Cartoon sketch by Art Parchen found in basement of former Morsman Studio.
- * Portable embalming kits
- * Tire bead breaker tool donated by Bones (Mrs. Lloyd) Rowland.
- * Vietnam War Commemorative banner and declaration from Reavis-Ashley Chpt. of D.A.R.
- * Pink Depression Glass set used to serve lemonade to hay crews from Verna Mae White.
- * Verdon Bulldog yearbooks donated by June Bowers.
- * Candle holder, plate, and three porcelain silverware holders, painted by Gladys Gerweck, several FCHS yearbooks, and a painting of Brick School #53 by Luella Weddle from Jim & Deb Gerweck.

Upcoming Event: Christmas Tea- Saturday, December 7, 2024

Program by Rayma Volkmer "Lady's Got Back," The Evolution of the Victorian Bustle
Space is limited, so contact the museum for advance tickets.

Volunteers and suggestions for programs are most welcome.

Open Wed., Thurs., Friday 2-4 April – October, but we will gladly arrange a showing at other times.
Consider having your group meeting at the museum or arrange a tour.

We invite you to visit our Museum & 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



A peek into one of our display booths in Prichard Auditorium that has been updated.

This sad little elephant brought smiles to many children when they slid down his trunk at the city park – Dallas Jones Park. Now he is waiting for a facelift and a place to rest at the Museum.



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