

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

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Spring 2019

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**Board of Directors:**

Richard Meinzer, President	Rita Seeba, Secretary
Leon Wilhelm, Vice President	Susan Nutzman, Treasurer
John Seeba	Nelle Pfister
Richard Zentner, History/Genealogy ( <a href="mailto:zent@sentco.net">zent@sentco.net</a> )	Ann Meinzer ( <a href="mailto:ameinzer@sentco.net">ameinzer@sentco.net</a> )
June Bowers	Nikki Dunn
Matt Beer	Dee Pounds
Norma Thompson, Records/ IT	JoAnn Koso
Nancy Demmel	Jan Deckinger
Terry Stradtman	Other: Bill Rowan, Historian
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**Greetings From Your Board President**

2018-2019 has been a year of reorganization & adjustment for the Historical Society Board of Directors. Officers stayed the same except for filling Jo Ann Auxier's treasurer position with Susan Nutzman. Susan has been working hard to acquaint herself with the new assignment. Well done, Susan.

A big thank you to Norma Thompson for taking over as the technical director at the museum. She has been able to finally bring us into the present century. We now have WIFI & an updated computer service.

We have added the Genealogy group to meetings at the museum on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month. Richard Zentner's Jam Session group meets on the last Monday of each month. Come down & join them for an interesting night. Rotary & several other organizations meet there for lunch.

The Building Committee has been VERY busy with our new project of the Ag 2 building across the street on the land purchased with the Jenny Margrave memorial. Through donations, memorials & contributions to the museum, we are now ready to break ground on our new building. Thanks for all your support. It will contain a secondary kitchen & restrooms with much more area for antique farm equipment. Come by & watch the progress. We are anxious to complete the project & have it ready for showing.

We have been given many new donations of items for the museum. They are being displayed at one of the buildings. Let a tour guide show them to you. We are open for tours April through December this year. Tues. Wed. Thurs. 2 - 4 & Sat. 2 - 4 . A donation for the tour would be appreciated.

If anyone would like to be a tour guide, talk to JoAnn Koso to get scheduled. You need to be a member of the Historical Society Museum & willing to volunteer. Any questions or donations, talk to me or call the museum: 402-245-4407 or home 402-245-3372.

Richard Meinzer  
President of the Board of Directors

## A Tribute to Jo Ann Auxier

Our dearly beloved museum curator, Jo Ann Auxier, recently passed away on June 14, 2018 at Falls City after a long illness.

Jo Ann gave of herself to help establish the museum at 1401 Chase Street. She spent many timeless hours with the Historical Society Board of Directors as treasurer, curator & director of activities. She amassed countless hours in paperwork to make the new AG 1 building a reality. Everyone looked up to Jo Ann for her abundant ideas & determination.

She will be missed immensely & remembered forever for her generous donations & labors of love for the museum. She was a very gracious lady, so tall & stately. One doesn't walk through the museum without seeing something she hasn't touched.

Jo Ann would be proud to know that we are completing the newest Ag 2 building with her blessing. It was a dream for her that the present Board of Directors is accomplishing.



Respectfully written by  
Ann Meinzer

Three friends and strong promoters for the preservation of Richardson County history and the museum examine artifacts from 384<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group at the Wing Signing, one of many past events organized by Jo Ann.

Robert Ferguson, Bill Schock, Jo Ann Auxier



## Hello from Annie M's Catering at the Museum

Our kitchen is still producing those delicious meals & desserts at the museum. We have much less help now as illness & retirement have taken hold. Your chef, Ann Meinzer, is cooking, Richard Meinzer is doing the dish washing & anything else he needs to help with, & Rita Seeba is doing the serving & helping to clean up. So you see why we have had to cut back on the size of parties. But we are still producing food in our "state certified" kitchen. Soon we will be adding a secondary kitchen in the new Ag 2 building across the street.

Please call Ann at the museum 402-245-4407 or 402-245-3372 at home to schedule a meal. Still those same great prices for food, rental for the museum & remember all tips go back to the museum. Hope to hear from you soon.

Bon Appétit  
Annie M (Ann Meinzer)

## Looking Back: Highlights from the Past Season

### Student Tours

Falls City South School third grade classes visited the museum for guided tours this year. We thank their teachers and our guides for the chance to share and answer questions from inquisitive children.



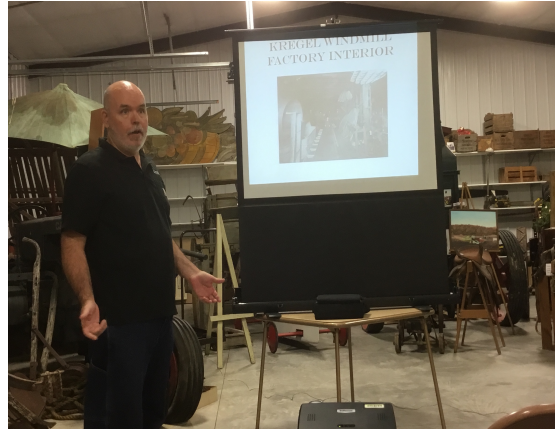
Third graders try out the little kindergarten desks from the Grandview School featured in the last newsletter.



Learning about the 49-Star Flag among the exhibits

### Annual Meeting

David Flatt, Director of the Kregel Windmill Museum presented a program "Windmill Factories in the World Wars." He told about several factories and the adaptations each made to produce other equipment that was important to the war efforts in Europe.



This museum in Nebraska City and the Falter Museum in Falls City are two of the 2019 Nebraska Passport stops this summer.



Cobblestone Parade, August 2018  
Crystal Beach/Stanton Lake

### New at the Museum

The museum now has Internet access through a WiFi Hotspot for use by staff and visitors. Service is through a pre-pay plan, so we can gauge our need monthly and pay accordingly.

We set up an email account for the museum – [rchs@sentco.net](mailto:rchs@sentco.net)

We now have Jo Ann 's personal computer and are sorting the files and great pictures that are on it.

We have a portable DVD player, small tv/monitor, and VHS/CD player for meeting and visitor use. We thank the local library for use of its projector when needed.

Among several acquisitions this year have been:

- Historical books, atlases, and office equipment from Harold and the late JoAnn Auxier.
- Kindergarten desks out of the Grandview School donated by Pamela Gerlt Creasman, former pupil before it closed in 1957 and a high school student desk from Honey Creek HS by Jan Deckinger.
- A large glassed display cabinet donated by Richard and Ann Meinzer, and a tablecloth embroidered with Honey Creek names from Nancy Windle are new in the Blue Room.

## From the Jam Sessions

The “jam sessions” on local historical information continued for the previous year as they had been. Fewer meetings were held, but more events, people, and accomplishments were discussed. There is no end to the things that become uncovered by our researchers. Generally, items are discovered accidentally from the newspaper microfilm reels. While perusing through a given year, an interesting event may be found. It is recorded, made into a presentation by the researcher, or an item in the museum holdings may be expanded on. One such item is an account of the tornado which tore through northeast Kansas and southeast Nebraska in 1896. A lady had written a lengthy article on the back of a newspaper page, and it was found in the storeroom. It was hard to read, so it was “deciphered,” typed up for easier reading, and presented at one of the sessions. Bill Rowan runs across numerous items, which he presents at the meetings. Other attendees have reports, too. Questions arise which brings forth further discussions.

People donate many items to the museum. These are often examined at the meetings. While digging at the future site of the new Ag Building, a little bottle was found with Bell Brothers Druggist molded in the glass. This business was active in the early 1900s. What a coincidence to be found at the museum site.

Portions of the story of establishing Falls City as the County Seat have been heard, but the long ordeal of accomplishing the fact will be one of the future presentations.

We hope members will come to listen to reports and even offer some stories.

Respectfully submitted, Richard Zentner, moderator.

### Looking Forward

### A Word of Thanks

Events 2019	Dates	
Jam Sessions	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday – 7:30 PM	– to JoAnn Koso for serving the museum as chief docent, organizing the schedule and making the necessary phone calls to be sure the museum is staffed for visitors. – to building committee members John Seeba, Leon Wilhelm, Dee Pounds, Nikki Dunn, Matt Beer, and Richard Meinzer for all the planning and decision-making during the bid, permits, and site inspection process for the new construction. – to Luke, Dan, and Matt Goff for their manpower and equipment used to retrieve the horse-drawn farm implements of Charles (Chick) Windle. We look forward to displaying these donations. - to Joan Zoeller and Terry Stradtman for compiling the list of county high school yearbooks. There are over 250 in our collection. - Our special thanks to Carol Kunkel & Harold Auxier for donating Jo Ann's many collections, memories, & valuable paperwork information to the museum. Jo Ann was a keeper of everything.
Board Meeting	4 <sup>th</sup> Saturday, 9:30 AM	
Tractor Relay Across Nebraska	Sat., June 8	
Museum Open for FCHS Alumni	Sat. June 22, 2-4 PM	
Annual Meeting	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sat., Aug. 17, 2:00	
Waffleman	4 <sup>th</sup> Sun, Sept. 23, 10-1	

### Help Wanted

If you have any desire at all to share your time with us, don't wait for us to find you. Let a board member know you are willing to help, and we'll find something for you to do. - No amount of time is too small! Good things can happen with your input.

## 50 Years Ago

Seaman Paul A. Holtz, Vietnam War casualty, died January 19, 1969

US Astronaut, Neil Armstrong, walked on the moon July 20, 1969

Woodstock Music Festival July 4, 1969

## A Century Ago

Spanish Influenza still rampant in some regions

Second Richardson County Courthouse burned May 7, 1919

Falls City Journal wrote, "all the records were saved."

Congress passed the Equal Suffrage Amendment June 4, 1919

(Ratified by States, 1920)

Treaty of Versailles signed June 28, 1919

Congress passed the National Prohibition Act Oct. 28, 1919



This Picture Was Taken May 7, 1919, While the Court House Was Being Consumed by Fire

## Falls City High School Class of 1919

There is a framed picture of these graduates and their yearbook on display in the museum.

Wallace Abbey	Ray Gantt	Dewey Hoy	Ted Mosiman	Florence Rieger	George Sheehan
Elsie Ball	Elmer Gerhardt	Conrad Knapp	Clara May	Visna Rieger	Edith Shepard
Janice Bowers	Bessie Halbert	Ollie Klumb	Vera McKenney	Laurena Rieschick	Mary Stockman
Rosina Brecht	Shirley Griffin	Helen Lovelace	Charles McManus	Louise Roth	Wilbur Story
John Cameron	Ralph Hammond	Mary Merritt	Opal Nichols	Catherine Scott	Jennie Pearl Stumbo
Elva Cox	Edith Heaston	Bernice Misson	Charles Nutter	Roy Scott	John Whetstine
Ruth Ernst	Nellie Heaston	Helene Morris	Maude Reese	Leon Shaw	Shirley Whitaker
Tom Freshe??					Halcyon Whitford

## Other County 1919 Graduates:

Sacred Heart	Humboldt		Stella	
Dessie Barger	Ruth Atwood	Ila Kuper	Constance Bright	Deaver Lambert
Evelyn Bro	Zona Beutler	Lee F. Marburger	Lyle Burson	Myrtle McGinnis
Elizabeth Coupe	Helen Briggs	Helen M. Ninger	Rena Caskey	Pearl McQueen
Nellie Frederick	Marian Dalbey	Evelyn Richards	Hazel Helmick	Elsie Paul
John Gagnon	Genevieve Fellers	Dorothy Seely	Hazel Henderson	Hazel Rase
Margaret Murphy	Margaret E. Fraser	Iva Stoltz	Una May Hoppe	Clyde Thomas
Clara Schawang	Lydia Giesman	Leo Wedner	Frank James	Helen Williams
	Mary Hynek	Gladys Wilson	Earl Johnson	
	Mary James			

<b>Salem</b>	<b>Dawson</b>	<b>Bratton Union</b>	<b>Verdon</b>
Louella Arnold	Jennie Goolsby	Dean Bennett	Elmer Crook
Hazel Brinegar	Jessie Heim	Amy C. Reagan	Myra C. Franklin
Luella Dowell	Mary Heim	Charles "Dee" Reagan	Edna Gibble
Kathryn Griffiths	Lillith Klima		Mable Goolsby
William Hart	Catherine Riley		Lee (Tiny) Hart
Frank Heskett			
Pearl Oakes			

### **Memorial Contributions**

<b>In Memory of:</b>	<b>Contributors</b>
Albert Rieschick	Richard & Carolyn Zentner
Virgil Jones	Virgil Jones Memorials
Willie Schawang	John & Rita Seeba
Ruth Gruber	Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Godemann
Don, Bill, & Jerry Mullins	Phyllis Davis (correction from last issue)
Bill Schock	Nelle Pfister, Ruth Finck, Robert Ferguson, Paul & Mary Jane Weinert, Doris Erickson
John & Theresa Auxier	Dr. John & Christie Emery, Julia Howe
Linda Karst	Joe & Shirley Gormley
Jo Ann Auxier	Richard & Ann Meinzer, John & Barb Parrish, Ramona Godemann, Joan Zoeller, Gary & Sharon Ogle, Ruth Finck, Merle Stalder, Ruth Mullins, Ruth Woods, Doris Erickson, Nancy Demmel, Theresa Auxier Family, Nelle Pfister, Jan Deckinger, Andy & Nikki Dunn, Katheryn Thomas, Frontier Bank, Elaine Heineman, Paul & Mary Jane Weinert, June Bowers, Marilyn Kentopp, Mildred Appleoff, Carico Farms, Inc., Gary & Glenda Nelson, Don & Norma Thompson, Norma Roland, Shirley Gormley, Richard & Carolyn Zentner, Leon & Madaline Wilhelm, Joann Koso, Robert Aitken, CPA, Julia Howe, Jo Ann Auxier Memorials
Janice Kirkendall	Shirley Gormley
Steve Milam	Shirley Gormley
Tracy Sells	Doris Erickson
Mary Kay Huppert	Terry & Nancy Sullivan
Glenn Rieger	Ramona Godemann
John Parrish	Richard & Ann Meinzer, Nelle Pfister, Susan Nutzman

### **Membership**

Enclosed with this newsletter is a Membership/Donation form and an addressed return envelope. Some of you have the previously offered lifetime memberships, some need to continue a current or lapsed membership, and some might be joining us for the first time. If you have questions about your membership status, don't hesitate to ask. We welcome and appreciate your support.

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## Early Falls City Hospitals

1900 – 1932

Falls City has had numerous hospitals in its history. Originally referred to as “sanitariums,” One of these was located in Roys Addition on the southwest corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Smith Streets (what is now 14<sup>th</sup> and Barada). This was in the early 1870s. Sanitariums were primarily for invalid and convalescent care.

The first facility called a “hospital” was established by Dr. Hannah Fleming on Apr. 23, 1900 on the southwest corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Harlan. It was called appropriately “Falls City Hospital.” Dr. Fleming was an innovator with an inventive mind. The Falls City Journal reported in Jan. 1901 that she had been granted a patent on a new surgical instrument “of great value to the profession” but didn’t mention what it was. Her hospital, while available to all doctors, didn’t get much support from them, but she managed to operate it until 1903 when she moved to McCook, NE. Her leaving made the community realize what an asset a community hospital could be.

Falls City’s next hospital, Mercy Hospital, was started in Aug. 1904 by Drs. F. C. Wiser and I. M. Houston. They leased the Lindell Hotel building at 1523 Chase and moved their offices there. They ran it until May 1905. The Falls City Tribune of May 19, 1905 reported that they spent a “large sum of money. It seems that Falls City is not yet ready for an enterprise of this character.” This building, remembered by many as the old Pyle Apartments, burned in 1996.

Falls City’s third hospital, the Harris Hospital (better known as the Nemaha Valley Hospital) was established eight years later, in Jan. 1913, at 1901 Chase by nurse Mrs. Arthur Harris. It lasted until Jan. 1919 when she sold it to Prof. H. A Reynolds of the Reynolds Restorium. He was a “suggestive therapist” and “magnetic healer” who also practiced massage therapy. One condition of the sale was that she be allowed to stay until her sole remaining patient recovered.

In January 1914, a year after the Nemaha Valley Hospital opened. Benjamin and Bessie Slagel saw an opportunity and remodeled their home at 1108 Fulton into an up-to-date hospital with Bessie assuming the title of “matron.” Their hospital, the New City Hospital, had an operating room, wards, and private rooms, but it was much smaller than Nemaha Valley. The Journal reported that its “location is a good one and no doubt will be welcomed by the city physicians.”

The next hospital was opened in August 1916 by Dr. C. L. Hustead and his nurse, Miss Robson in the Powell building south of the court house at 111 E. 17<sup>th</sup> St. The Doctor had his office there, and after buying a house for his family, he had space to accommodate 5 - 6 patients. Successful, he was considering building a new hospital that would accommodate up to ten patients, but he was urged to wait and help work to get a new community hospital instead. His Powell location had to be temporarily evacuated in October 1918 due to the Richardson County Bank fire across the alley. This early hospital apparently closed in April 1919.

Also, in April 1919, another hospital run by nurse Frances Burger was at 1814 Chase, not far from the closed Nemaha Valley Hospital. This one, the Burger Hospital, apparently didn’t last long.

Earlier, starting in late 1918 and in 1919, people were increasingly concerned about the rising influenza epidemic. Many were getting sick and there weren’t enough hospital beds and nurses. In November 1918 the Convent Sisters and Father John J. Hoffman, of what is now Sacred Heart School, offered their dormitories as an Isolation Hospital during the epidemic. They had sixty beds and the Sisters would serve as nurses. The offer was gratefully accepted.

On Sept. 22, 1918 the cornerstone was laid for the new Evangelical Lutheran Hospital at 2307 Barada. A community effort, it was contracted to be completed by June 1, 1919, but didn't open until Oct. 15 of that year.

The year 1919 was pivotal for Falls City hospitals. Anticipating the opening of the Lutheran hospital in June, there apparently weren't any hospitals operating that month. As reported by the Journal of June 3, 1919, Dr. J. M. Greene had an emergency patient and he could not find a hospital to take him. He finally had to take the patient to his own house, as he would not survive the trip to an out of town hospital.

About the time the Lutheran hospital finally opened, in October, the Eads Hospital was also in business. This was established by Herman and Iva Eads at 217 W. 15<sup>th</sup> St. Iva was a nurse and it was a small home hospital.

The delay of the opening of the Lutheran hospital was caused by unsettled labor conditions and various causes resulting from the recent war, according to Rev. John Matthiesen. The hospital would be a general institution with no difference in creed or personality. The poor would be taken care of in a real Christian spirit. The church would finance it, but as it turned out, it wasn't able to fully support it. The hospital had to rely on donations of money and food and numerous fund-raisers. Miss Maud Howell, Hospital Superintendent, wrote a long letter to the newspaper trying to explain. People would donate and participate in fund raising and wonder why operations still cost at least \$50. She had to point out that the hospital could keep costs low, but doctor fees were separate. The hospital was in financial trouble and passed out of control of the church. The building and fixtures were bought at the bankruptcy sale by Dr. Husted (actually in his wife's name) on June 1, 1921. The operating room equipment were acquired by the Towle brothers, John and Ed. The sale left the community divided. Some thought that Husted would take what was donated and make the hospital private. Husted insisted it would remain a "Falls City Hospital" not become the "Husted Hospital." Many didn't believe him, including the Towles. They wrote an open letter to the newspaper, offering the operating equipment to anyone willing to open a "community" hospital.

After about a year's delay, the hospital re-opened as the "Falls City Hospital" under Dr. Husted.

Meanwhile, some had been preparing to take the Towles up on their offer. In late June 1921, what was called "the sanitarium at 1919 Morton St." opened with a complete operating room loaned by the Towles. It was in the old Maddox home built in 1870 and it came to be called the "Maddox Hospital." It had the support of some of the town's doctors. This facility was in use for about two years, finally being sold as a house in February 1924. The Maddox Hospital provided some competition with Husted's Falls City Hospital. The city doctors were still divided, along with the community – Pro and Anti Husted.

Not defeated after the Maddox closure, some Anti-Husteds (nine doctors, among them Drs. W. R. Boose, J. M. Greene, O. F. Lang, J. C. Gillespie, and R. G. Henderson) decided to found a "New Community Hospital" "for the best interests of our profession and for the community" which became known as the "General Hospital." They leased the old Miles house at 2102 Stone. After preparations, it opened in January 1926, and thanks to the Towles, it had a complete operating room.

Joseph H. Miles, owner of the house, lived in California and often returned to visit. Sometime around 1929, he came and decided to stay a while. The General Hospital had to move. By April 1930 the hospital was relocated to 1924 Fulton in the John H. Morehead house. It was here until late 1932 when it was no longer listed in the phone directory.



That 1932 phone directory, published in the fall, only lists one Falls City hospital. The General Hospital isn't listed – it appears to have been quietly closed in April when it is last mentioned in the paper. While the Journal often mentioned the Falls City Hospital, the name preferred by Dr. Husted, the directory called it the “Husted Hospital,” possibly because Ed Towle was on the phone company's board.

The division within the community eased somewhat when Dr. Husted sold the hospital in April 1940 to the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, KS and it was renamed Our Lady of Perpetual Help Hospital. This hospital is now in a new location as Community Medical Center.

Bill Rowan



Mercy Hospital 1904-1905  
Formerly Lindell Hotel  
Later Pyle Apartments  
Burned Down 1996  
1523 Chase Street



Maddox Hospital 1921-1923?  
Built 1870 Still Standing  
1919 Morton Street



General Hospital  
1930-1932  
Still Standing  
1924 Fulton Street



Dee Pounds, John Seeba, Richard Meinzer, Leon Wilhelm

Special guest, Harold Auxier, who with wife, Jo Ann, were two of the original creators of this project for an additional Agricultural Building.  
 At far left above is JoAnn Koso, wife of former board president, Darrel Koso, who also shared that vision.

Construction of the New Agricultural Building began April 8. A Ground-breaking Ceremony was held April 19 as concrete was being pumped for the floor. Among the large group attending included past and present board members, Mayor Shawna Bindle, City Administrator Gary Jorn, Edge Director Becky Cromer, Chamber Director Amber Holle, County Commissioner John Caverzagie, Attorney Mike Dunn, and representatives of the Falls City Journal, local realtors, museum docents, Historical Society members and community supporters.



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