



BANNER

**Dawson County
People Asked To
Buy War Plane**

Are Asked to Invest \$75,000 To Buy a Pursuit Plane To Be Named For County.

MUST BUY BEFORE JAN. 15

The people of Dawson County have an opportunity to buy a Pursuit plane for our boys who are fighting the Axis, and at the same time invest some money which may help them greatly when the war is over.

According to Cliff Young, of Cozad, chairman of the war bond committee, the plane to be named "Dawson County, Nebraska," will cost \$75,000 worth of E War Bonds, which must be sold by January 15, 1943. All bonds and stamps bought from December 1, until January 15, will be applied to the purchase of the Pursuit Plane.

The E bonds referred to are the regular bonds which are usually bought by the individual purchasers.

All the precinct chairmen in the county met with Chairman Young, Tuesday, and pledged themselves to do everything possible to sell the bonds to buy the pursuit plane, which will carry the name, "Dawson County, Nebraska."

Do your part to defeat the Axis by buying as many bonds as possible before January 15.

This article appeared on the front page of the Lexington Clipper on December 10, 1942. For the rest of the story see the insert page of this issue of the Banner.

Director's Choice Art Gallery Exhibit

by Crystal Wenger



The new exhibit in the art gallery at our museum is a Director's Choice Exhibit. That means I got to choose a bunch of my favorite items from around the museum and put them together in one room. Then I tried to display that diverse collection in a way that made sense. Taking an idea out of my head and making it into an exhibit was a lot harder than I thought it would be. But I'm pleased with the end result and hope our visitors will be too. Here's a bit of what was going through my mind.

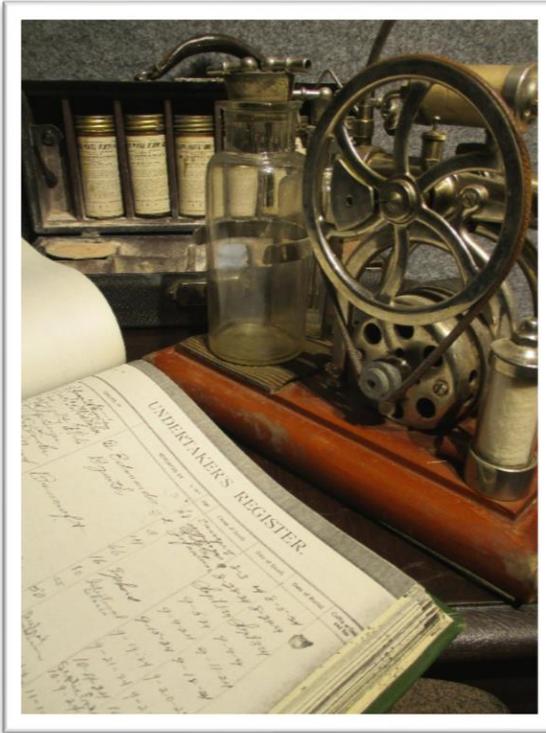
Most people know that I love talking about the Cornland Hotel. Even though it was long gone by the time I came to Lexington, it is a place that has held my fascination since the first time I heard about it. The hotel itself was a magnificent structure that was built to impress. Over its 70-year life span it welcomed guests such as William Jennings Bryan and Mari Sandoz. The beautiful hotel was torn down in 1967, but there are pieces of it that remain today. Some can be seen in this exhibit.

The best part of my job as the Director of the Museum is time travel. For people who don't have that ability, one section of my exhibit gives them the opportunity to see what I see every day. So much in Dawson County has changed over the last 120 years, yet pieces of the past are still visible if you just know how to find them. Ghost signs are everywhere. Let me take you on a trip to the past.

I love all things "girlie". . . clothes, shoes, make-up, jewelry, hats, scarves. When my sister and I were little we used to love playing dress-up in my grandmother's old clothes. One of my favorite books was about a brother and sister who spent a rainy afternoon in their grandparent's attic digging through an old trunk. That was something I actually got to do here at the museum. Except it wasn't an afternoon and it wasn't rainy.

When I was 8 years old, I decided I wanted to be an artist when I grew up. I really don't know how I came up with that because I have never been able to draw. Never. I enjoyed painting by number but that was the extent of my artistic ability. When I was 10 years old, I wanted to be a truck driver. Strange but true. By the time I

was in high school I understood my love of history and decided I should be an archaeologist. That stuck with me until I started looking into colleges and realized how many science classes I would have to take, so I changed my study to history. Through all the years of dreaming of what I would do as an adult the thought of being a mortician never came up. The funny thing is that I find the whole practice to be intriguing, and I often find myself reading about embalming practices and how we have tended the dead throughout history. That is why I had to include something about the undertaking profession in my exhibit. Dawson County Historical Museum has an interesting collection of items from funeral homes, and some of them made it into my exhibit.



I think one of the best things about Lexington is our Majestic Theater. Many a Wednesday or Friday evening have I treated myself to a movie after a long day at work. The Majestic Theater is over one hundred years old and has been in business for most of that time. In my exhibit I wanted to spotlight the theater's history and the story of the Lexington Middle School class that saved it from dying. It always makes me feel good when communities come together to save a piece of their history.

One cozy spot in the art gallery I claim as my corner. Before the day begins or once it's done, I like to put my feet up in front of the fireplace and just enjoy a good book. If there's coffee and some soft music, even better. Sometimes I read, sometimes I just think—maybe replay the day's events or prepare for the day ahead. I like to be alone in the museum. It's not scary or lonely. It's actually where I feel most safe and most like myself. I encourage others to do the same after they've toured the gallery. Take a moment, put your feet up, and just sit. And don't worry, I'll wake you before I lock up at night.

From the Front Porch

Something we're planning to add to our schedule this year is front porch talks.

Our first talk was February 24 at the Historical Society's Annual Meeting. Scott Foster with KRVN and Dr. David Vail with UNK spoke about the 1948-49 Blizzards. It was a warm homey afternoon after one of our weekend snowstorms.

The next topic will be The Orphan Train Network. Linda Mins will tell us the story of one of the orphans, her grandmother. Come with questions and your stories of children from the trains. Mark Saturday, April 27th on your calendar!



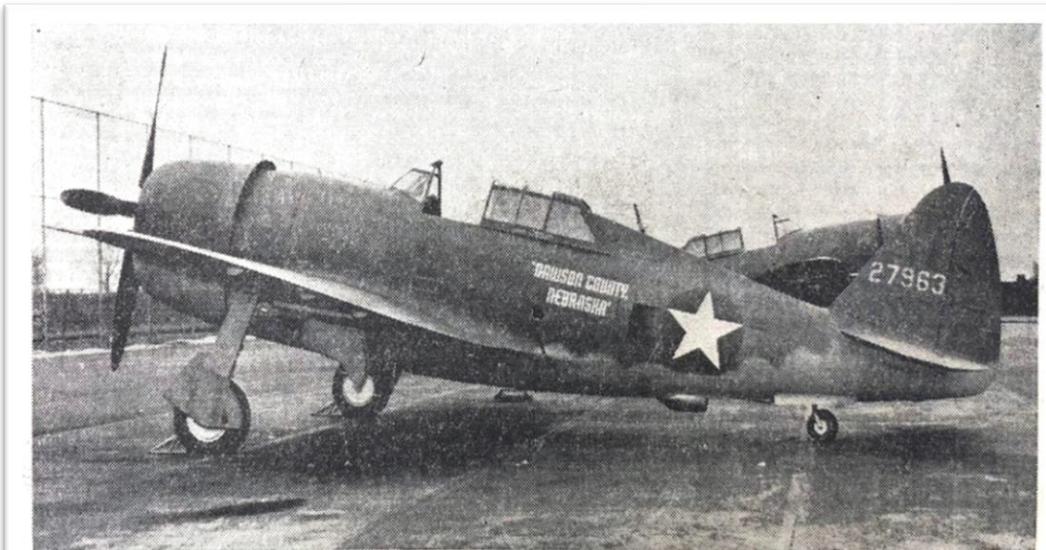
DAWSON COUNTY BUYS A PURSUIT PLANE

By Steve Wolff

With the advent of Pearl Harbor, the Roosevelt administration was in a dilemma on how to pay for the war. The traditional means that of raising taxes, was politically undesirable in view of the potential for slowing economic recovery from the depression years; furthermore, a method had to be found to divert excess purchasing power and the subsequent increase in bank deposits.

After considering several options, the Defense Bond program was instituted which was loosely based on the 1935 Series "A" type bonds also known as the *Baby Bond*. Bonds were issued in various denominations with the series "E" bond the smallest. These could be bought for \$18.75 and redeemed in 10 years for \$25.00. The series "E" were popular with civic groups, wage earners, students and housewives.

On December 10, 1942 a small column appeared in the Lexington Clipper appealing to the residents of Dawson County, Nebraska to purchase \$75,000.00 of series "E" bonds to buy a pursuit ship. The plane would be named Dawson County Nebraska and the funds had to be raised by January 15, 1943. In an amazing outpouring of patriot zeal, in a period of 21 days by the end of December 1942, the residents of Dawson County met the deadline and exceeded the quota set by the War Bond Committee.



Dawson county was the second county in the state to complete successfully, a war bond "buy a bomber" campaign. Above is the picture, released by the army, of the plane Dawson county's \$75,000.00 bought.

The pursuit ship, a Republic P-47 Thunderbolt, bears the inscription "Dawson County, Nebraska" on sides of the fuselage of the ship. Dawson county citizens are proud of their plane and feel well paid for their small ef-

fort, as compared with the boys who will fly it.

This is a new plane of the very latest design, and last week it was reported in London, that similar planes have gone into action in the European theater of operations. The U. S. Air Forces report the Thunderbolt is the "fastest single-engine plane in the world, having done 680 miles per hour in a power dive."

Incidentally,—It not only takes money to build these planes, but a lot of material. And right now

Dawson county is cooperating in another Scrap Drive, and every piece of old scrap metal is very badly needed to keep up the production of these planes and other war equipment. The money from the bonds you purchase is useless unless the vital materials can be secured.

Make another survey of your farm, homes, and discarded machinery piles for scrap metal and haul it in and sell it to your local junk dealer, at once.

*Left -- Republic P47D,
42-7963,
Dawson County Nebraska,
on the east coast
before shipping to the
8th Air Force in Europe.*

The plane was shipped to England April 7, 1943 and arrived May 5, 1943, and was assigned to the 8th Air Force, 78th Fighter Group, 83rd Fighter Squadron Duxford, England. The plane was identified by the call letters HL-T which was displayed prominently on both sides of the fuselage. Flight Officer Archie F. Daniels was the pilot assigned to 42-7963 Dawson County Nebraska.

Flight Officer Archie "Sonny" Daniels standing in front of his P-47D HL-T, Dawson County, Nebraska.



On February 11, 1944 shortly after takeoff from Duxford, Flight Officer Daniels was seen to be lagging well behind his flight and seemed to be having trouble raising his landing gear. His flight lost sight of him during climb out due to low clouds in the area and he was not seen again until spotted by a returning 84th Fighter Squadron aircraft flown by Lt. Marlow. As Lt. Marlow passed HL-T, he noticed fuel streaming from the auxiliary fuel tank of Flight Officer Daniel's aircraft.

Lt. Marlow contacted HL-T on the radio and advised Flight Officer Daniels that it would be advisable to return to base in view of his fuel tank problem. Lt. Dorian, also from the 84th Fighter Squadron, saw off his left wing an aircraft enter a spin at which time it passed

from view. His next sighting of the aircraft was of it burning on a shallow hillside. Although it appeared that HL-T was under control until touchdown, the aircraft caught fire immediately after contacting the ground. This was likely due to the streaming fuel coming in contact with the hot exhaust manifold which travelled back under the cockpit to the turbo-charger. Local residents attempting to extract Flight Officer Daniels from the cockpit found that he was killed on impact and could not be removed the burning wreckage.

Flight Officer Daniels, known as Sonny, enlisted from Montgomery County, Illinois and arrived at the 78th Fighter Group in December 1943 and was on his escort ninth mission. Sonny was buried on February 15, 1944 at the American Cemetery near Cambridge, England. He was engaged to Miss Dorothy Hesketh of Lancastershire, England and they were to be married on March 1, 1944. Miss Hesketh was killed in an automobile accident July 22, 1944.

Remains of P-47 42-7963 Dawson County Nebraska near Great Horstead, England at 1130 hours.



Thanks to Steve Wolff, DCHS Member, for this article. We appreciate his time and research.

Steve was published in *Air Classics* in September 2018 with an article on our McCabe Elliptical. We have copies of that magazine and his book *Sudden Impact* for sale in our Gift Shop. Stop in and pick one up!

Dawson County Historical Society and Museum

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Open 10-4 Tuesday – Saturday
or Call for Appointment

Find us on facebook
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DAWSON COUNTY RURAL YOUTH

Last year the Dawson County Museum received a donation of several bright blue boxes with the words "Rusty Gate" painted on them in big black and white letters. The largest box was an old record player with two speakers and the smaller boxes were filled with old record albums. Many of them were songs for square dancing. Jo Sherman had been by the museum one day and told me that the "Rusty Gate" had been a square dance club for single young adults and that was how she and her husband had met. I also spoke with Jo Brown who gave me even more information about the Rusty Gate Dance Club and how it started through the Dawson County Rural Youth. . .yet another name I didn't know about, so I asked more questions. What was Rural Youth, and what did it have to do with Square Dancing???

The Dawson County Rural Youth was established in 1937 and was sponsored by the Dawson County Extension Service. Membership was available to single men and women between the ages of 17 and 30. The group's purpose was to provide leadership training, educational programs and recreational opportunities for its members. Regular meetings were conducted, and officers were elected.

The Mid-Winter Institute, held in February, brought the many RY groups in the state together to meet new people, listen to speakers, attend workshops, and have fun. The Dawson County Rural Youth Group hosted the Mid-Winter Institute in February 1960. At this two-day event they held workshops on square dancing, toured area businesses, and listened to Harold and Virginia Stevens talk about "Being a Good Host". They even had a workshop on planning a wedding.

The state Rural Youth also sponsored an International Foreign Youth Exchange. The purpose of the program was to promote better world understanding. Dorothy Bremer, of Lexington, grew up in Grand Island and joined the Rural Youth group in her area after graduating from High School. Through Rural Youth she went on a 3-week tour of Europe in 1967-68 and toured the Caribbean in 1965-66. While in the Caribbean she lived and worked with families on coffee and sugar plantations in Puerto Rico.

Other activities the Rural Youth participated in were corn pick-ups (gleaning) and ice cream socials. They hosted Spring formals, Halloween parties, and took tours of hospitals and retirement villages. Rural Youth gave young adults an opportunity to learn more about the world and prepare for their life ahead while having fun doing it! Yet, somehow at some time it stopped. I don't know what happened to Rural Youth. I found minute books from the Dawson County group dating from 1952 to 1970 but nothing explaining if it morphed into another group or just stopped altogether. Hopefully, someday I'll find out

If you were part of Rural Youth please come talk to me at the Dawson County Museum. I would love to hear your story. I enjoy watching Jo Brown talk about the Rusty Gate Square Dance Club and the fun times she had with Rural Youth. Her eyes light up and she smiles so big that I find myself wishing I could have been a part of something like that, something like Rural Youth.

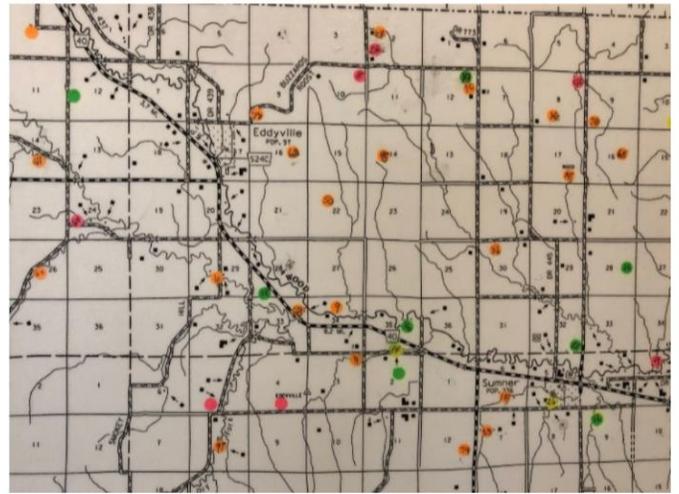
– Crystal Werger



Can you tell me where that was?

Just inside our front doors we now have a map available for researchers, travelers or the merely curious. The Dawson County Genealogy Society spent hours on this project, matching up people's memories, written descriptions, and old maps to designate landmarks on a consolidated map.

As a result, we have a Dawson County map with schools, churches and cemeteries (historical and current) labeled and color-coded. In the process we encountered a lot of conflicting information, so we don't claim this as absolute authority, but it's a really good start!



COFFEE with CAROL – 1st Wednesday of every month

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From the Front Porch – 2:00 Sat, April 27th

