



BANNER



CAR SHOW

On Saturday, May 25, the Dawson County Historical Museum hosted their second annual antique car show. The weather was beautiful. The turnout was fantastic! We had 20 more cars than we did last year and just as many visitors! Here are some pictures just in case you missed it.



Mark your calendar for next year, Memorial Weekend.



INTERNS BRING FRESH ENERGY TO DAWSON COUNTY MUSEUM

The Dawson County Historical Museum is very fortunate to have two interns working for us this summer. Aaron Ray is a graduate student with the University of Nebraska in Kearney and Mekenzie Beattie is an undergraduate with the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

Mekenzie will be spending her hours here at the museum going through Alfalfa Dehydrator's Association archives. After the Association disbanded the Dawson County Historical Society received many boxes of information from the ADA. With the help of Terry Healy and John Montgomery, Mekenzie is working her way through each box (there are over 30) organizing and inventorying their contents.

Mekenzie Beattie grew up on her family's diversified farm in Sumner, Nebraska and graduated from high school in 2018. Her main area of study at UNL is Agricultural Business and Agronomy. She loves being on the farm and is passionate about all things agriculture! Mekenzie is a great fit here at the Dawson County Museum because she says she loves learning about the past and this project gives her a great opportunity to combine agriculture and its history.



Aaron Ray graduated from Gretna high school in 2011. He then went on to receive a Bachelor's Degree in History and German in 2015. After working for Professional Research Consultants for 3 years he decided to continue his education with history and is currently working on his Master's Degree. In his free time, Aaron enjoys playing video games, reading historical fiction and science fiction (man after my own heart) and is often seen riding his bike around Kearney for exercise.



Since Aaron's goal is to be in Museum Administration, he spends his days at the Dawson County Historical Museum doing many different things. We want to give him a taste of the diverse tasks necessary when working at a small museum. He is helping inventory our collections and entering them into Past Perfect. He's an extra research assistant. We also tend to utilize his height—he sorted through projects on our tall shelves. He came in very handy when we needed to clean the outbuildings to get them ready for summer. Aaron has a great attitude and is willing to do anything we ask him. It may have taken him a bit to get used to all the ladies at the museum, but I think he's getting used to us and all our little quirks. I admit he's teaching us almost as much as we're teaching him.

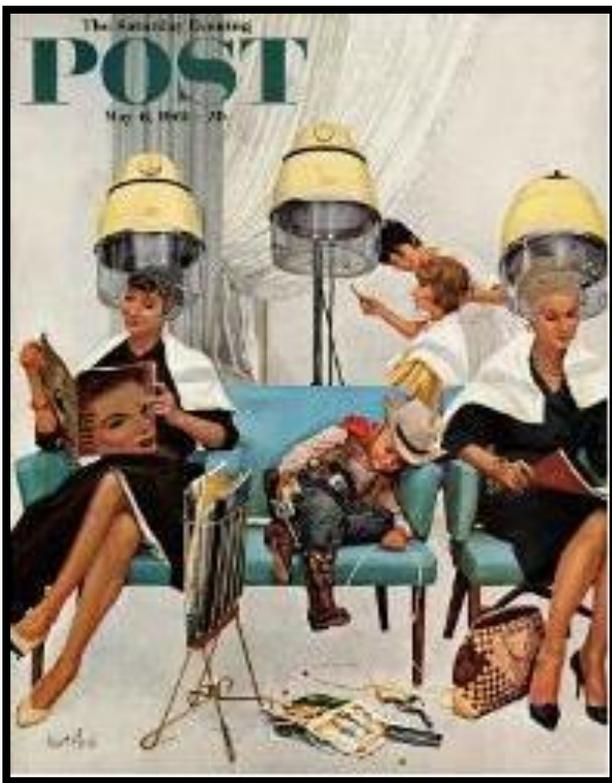
I enjoy having Mekenzie and Aaron at the museum and I'm afraid the summer is going to go by way too fast. Stop in and meet them sometime. They have been a great addition to our team, and I will be sad to see them go.

The Beauty Shop Experience

Beauty Shop. When I say those two words many different images go through my mind. They're pleasant words to say and they leave me with a good feeling. Actually, it's more like excitement. Is there anybody who doesn't like going to the Beauty Shop? My earliest memory of a Beauty Shop was going with Grandmother to a shop along main street in the small town of Elmwood, Nebraska. I remember the wallpaper. It had a raised black (or was it red?) velvet pattern that I used to rub my hands over. It felt nice, and the room had a smell to it that wasn't exactly pleasant but wasn't horrible either. I remember it was a place my grandmother enjoyed going.

One thing I want to make very clear is that going to a Barber Shop is completely different than going to a Beauty Shop! When I was young my mother took my sister and I to a barber shop to get our hair cut. The barber was nice, but girls don't generally like going to see a "barber", so we finally talked our mother into taking us to her beautician. Even though her shop was in her home it was still a Beauty Shop, and it had all the utensils and curling rods and hair accessories you want to see and smell in a Beauty Shop. Barbers are great for men, but women want a *beauty* shop.

Beauty is the key word. Women go to the Beauty Shop to make themselves more beautiful. And when you look beautiful you feel beautiful. Today I can go into a Beauty Shop and not only get my hair done but get my ears pierced, my body tanned, and my fingernails and toenails painted as well! It's fun and relaxing and a completely pleasant experience. Women look forward to going to the Beauty Shop! We plan our day around it! It might even take up our whole day depending on what we're having done.



Cowboy Asleep in Beauty Salon by Kurt Ard
The Saturday Evening Post, May 6, 1961, Cover Art

Beauty shops are also pretty. Ladies like that. We like pretty things, so a lot of thought goes into the interior design of a Beauty Shop. They're always pleasing to the eye and comfortable to be in because sometimes you're there for a very long time. The chairs are comfortable, the pictures on the wall are pleasing to look at, and most of the time these days there's a TV to watch while you're waiting for just the right hair color. Beauty Shops are not an in-and-out kind of thing. They never have been and probably (hopefully) never will be.

A trip to the beauty shop meant some time away from home. Time for a woman to think about herself for just a little while and do something fun. It's almost sacred time. The experience should always be enjoyable and that's what we're hoping for here at the Dawson County Museum when you see our newest exhibit, The Beauty Shop.

Crystal Werger

The Beauty Shop Entrepreneurs

Today we take the existence of hairdressers for granted, but they are a relatively recent development for all but the upper class. The profession of hairdressing can be traced back to ancient Egypt. Throughout Greek and Roman cultures there is evidence that wealthy men valued the services of personal hairdressers and barbers. In 1092 there was a boom in demand for barbers when Roman Catholic clergymen were asked to remove facial hair. In Europe the 18th century was all about wigs, so hairdressers became wigmakers. That fad lasted about 100 years. By the mid-1800s the natural look was back. Men had barber shops. Wealthy women had servants to care for their hair or contracted with professionals who made house calls. Most women did as they had for centuries—kept their hair long and tended to its cleaning and styling on their own.

Toward the end of the 19th century, beauty emerged as one of the few skilled occupations that provided women with the opportunity to become entrepreneurs. One innovative young woman was Martha Matilda Harper. She was born in Ontario in 1857. Her father sent her away to work as a domestic servant at the age of seven. Harper worked for over 20 years, saving her earnings and learning from an employer, a physician, who taught her about hair health and left her the formula to his hair tonic when he died. She immigrated to the United States where she continued working as a servant, while experimenting with natural products to improve the tonic. In 1888 Harper opened the first public hair salon in New York using her life savings of \$360.

The Harper Hair Parlour emphasized customer service and comfort. She hired former servants to staff her shop. They offered scalp massage, childcare, and evening hours. She marketed her natural tonic at her salon, using her own hair as advertising. She invented the first reclining shampoo chair, which with the new indoor plumbing and shampoo bowl made the idea of a central beauty shop much more practical than the hairdresser going to the customer.



Martha Matilda Harper

In 1891, she pioneered modern retail franchising. She allowed franchisees to open salons using her name. Each salon was owned by a woman trained in Harper Method. She personally inspected salons to ensure quality. At the peak of its success, there were more than 500 Harper salons in operation, as well as several Harper Method training schools. Her company produced a full line of hair care and beauty products. Celebrity customers were Susan B. Anthony, Grace Coolidge, Helen Hayes, and Jacqueline Kennedy. Martha Matilda Harper died in 1950. Her company was divided and controlled by various owners. The Founder's Shop in Rochester, NY, closed in the early 2000s. It was the country's oldest and longest running beauty salon.

Here in Dawson County, the first and only Lexington beauty shop we have record of in the early 1900s was run by Clara (Krier) Robb during the years 1907-1911. In contrast we have a list of seven shops during the 1920s. This seems to follow national trends. The Roaring 20s ushered in bobby pins, hair dryers, permanent waves, and hair coloring. It was the age of jazz and Coco Chanel. Women needed someone else to cut their hair into short bobs and give it Marcel waves.

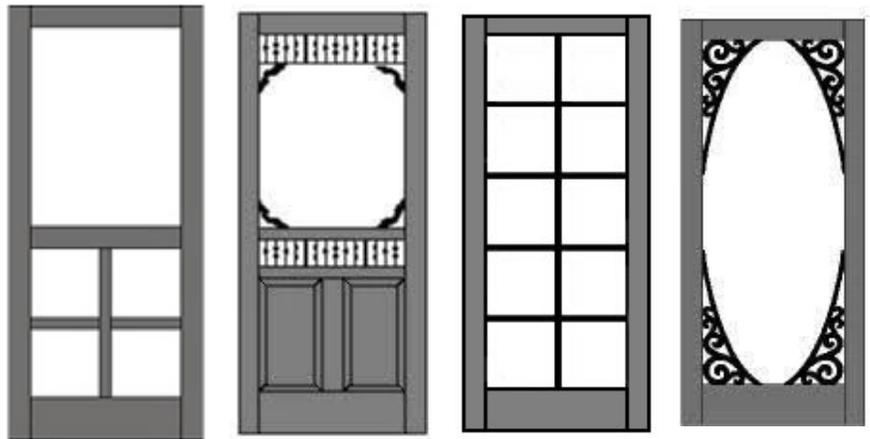
Since then styles have changed more and more quickly. It takes professionals to keep up with fads and products. Many Dawson County women entrepreneurs have stepped up to fill that need. In our new exhibit, we showcase items from salons run by beauticians Mary Kearney, Pauline Collicott, Evelyn Feist, and Marty Kleppinger. We would like to put together a scrapbook to document Dawson County Beauty Entrepreneurs. If you can give us information and a photo about a beauty shop and its owner, please contact us soon! Dawson County may not be New York, but our women have appreciated the convenience of walking through a friendly door and asking a professional to "make me look like Betty Grable, or Grace Kelly, or Marilyn Monroe, or Audrey Hepburn, or Jackie, or Farrah, or Di, or Rachel."

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Our Depot Needs a Screen Door!



We're looking for a screen door for our depot.
35½" x 84"

If you have one laying around that we could repurpose,
please bring it in!

COFFEE with CAROL – 1st Wednesday of every month

*These boots are made for walkin', and that's just what they'll do...
one of these days these boots are gonna walk all over you...*



But what about climbing? I don't think these boots were made for climbing up and down a ladder all day. Actually, I'm not even sure our bodies were made for climbing up and down a ladder all day but that's exactly what Cheri was doing when her boot finally gave up its sole.

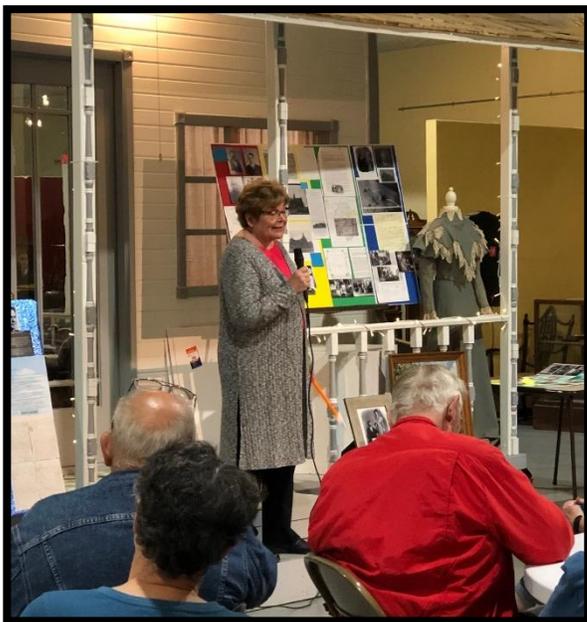
We seem to be having a problem with the bottom of our shoes around here. First Carol's shoe fell apart after a day of walking around the museum and now Cheri's boot! I'm not sure if this is a good thing (because now they can buy a new pair of shoes 😊) or if this is a bad thing? Am I working these ladies too hard? Oy vey!

Cheri has been working very hard on the Mainstreet Exhibits this year and has completed two so far. I shouldn't be surprised if she brings another ruined pair of shoes to me before it's all said and done. I think there are 6 more to go. I'm not sure if she has that many pairs of shoes...

We are working on an exhibit that will require CHILD-SIZED MANNEQUINS.



If you know where some are available
OR if you are willing to help cover the expense, please contact Crystal.



From the Front Porch



Our spring *From the Front Porch* was Linda Mins and the story of the search for her grandmother's story. Linda and her sister Nancy have spent many hours and much energy tracking their grandmother's journey from New York via the Orphan Train.

Linda shared the results of their search: their family stories and the complexities of the Orphan Train.

Our summer *From the Front Porch* will be July 27th—Save the Date. Courtney Anthony will moderate a panel of Plum Creekers. If there is something from the Plum Creekers story that you want to make sure is on the agenda, let us know.

