



DAWSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

# BANNER

Vol.43 No.4

*A Fresh Look at Our History*

OCTOBER 2021



## Marching Band.

Sweaty uniforms and heavy hats. Early mornings on dewy football fields. Memorizing music. White shoe polish. Counting steps between hash marks. Sleeping on the bus. Frosty mouthpieces.

Left or right? Looooong parade routes. Straight diagonals. Flying batons.

Half-time shows. Fundraisers. Waking up to band practice coming down your street.

Hometown pride.

You didn't have to be in the band to have band memories.

It's that time of year.

GOOD  
MADE  
BETTER

Give Big Lexington | November 10, 2021

## Give Big Lexington Wednesday November 10<sup>th</sup>

This year our Give Big project is the Fairhaven Church. Last fall we ran electricity to the church. Now we want to put in a heating and cooling system. Other renovations will follow. If Fairhaven Baptist Church holds a special place in your memories, please consider giving to this project.

<https://www.givebiglexington.org/story/Dawsoncountyhistoricalsocietyandmuseum>

# A Majorette Among Monuments

- Cheri Bergman

One of the majorettes on the front page was Anna Lee Lammers. She was a Lexington majorette during her sophomore and junior years of high school. We recently received her uniform here at the museum, thanks to her family. They also gave us this photo from high school and another with her modeling it 35 years later. The wide smile on her face in the second photo piqued my curiosity. Research ensued. Anna Lee and her sister Mary Ann grew up in Lexington, in a house next to their parents' business. We're not sure which of the girls is in the photo below.



The girls were the daughters of Herman and Gladys Lee (Wells) Lammers. Their business was Lammers Monuments.

Their home was the building on the left. The workshop is in the back building. (Nowadays, Taco Johns is to the right of this photo.)

Herman L Lammers was born in Illinois in 1888. His family came to Pleasanton, Nebraska when he was a boy. Herman attended business school in Kearney and in St. Paul. In 1924 he moved to Lexington and started his business. Gladys Wells was born in Ludlow, Missouri in 1899. She became a teacher and was teaching at Cottey College in 1930 when she married Herman. They made their home in Lexington.

Herman was involved in the Lexington Rotary Club and was a member of the Cozad Elks Club. Gladys was active in Eastern Star, Business & Professional Women and the American Association of University Women.

Herman retired in 1959. He died in 1969 and Gladys in 1985. They are buried in Greenwood Cemetery.



DCHS Museum presents *From Our Front Porch*

# A Tombstone Talk

STORIES ABOUT GRAVE MARKERS  
AND THE PEOPLE THEY DESIGNATE

Our own Crystal Werger and Board of Directors have been collecting tales from cemeteries throughout Dawson County.

Come share in the stories  
and enjoy a cup of coffee and a goodie.

2:00 Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup>



Saturday November 5<sup>th</sup>

REGISTER NOW

Maximum 8 Per Table

# Trivia Night

FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER

6:00 Mingle & Food Service

7:00 Trivia Competition

## THE STORIES OF OVERTON

Cindy Hasty and Deb Weiland have taken on the project of producing a book covering the history of Overton. It is a big undertaking and many hours have already been spent in our museum archives. They need your help! What do you know about families, businesses, schools, churches, special events and landmarks from the Overton area? They are collecting family histories, photographs, documents and personal accounts. There is also a need for people to help with the research and writing process. You can talk to Crystal here at the museum. Better yet, go to their Give Big page to make a connection and support the project. <https://www.givebiglexington.org/story/Overtonhistorybook>

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**www.dchsmuseum.com**  
308.324.5340

**Crystal Werger, Director**  
crystalwerger@gmail.com



# CANADAY STEAM PLANT

Contributed by Steve Wolff

By the mid 1950's, the growth of central Nebraska was exceeding the capacity of available electrical power. In August of 1955, legislators aware of the shortfall passed LB 501 that enabled legislation for unified state power system. Shortly thereafter, a resolution was adopted on September 1<sup>st</sup> by the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District to build a steam power plant. Ralph Canaday, Tri-County manager of the Central Nebraska District said the proposed plant would have a capacity of 100,000 KW and would be built about seven miles southeast of Lexington. Bids on the equipment were scheduled for posting the latter part of November. The consulting firm of Sargent & Lundy, a Chicago firm, and Beck & Associates of Seattle and Columbus began analyzing bids in late 1955. Completion based on the construction schedule was estimated to be May 1, 1958.

The plant fueled by natural gas from Kansas-Nebraska pipelines, offered several advantages to central Nebraskans: It would allow conservation of water (the steam plan does not require the release of water) now stored in Lake McConaughy during non-irrigation seasons when reserve storage is low, and would generate power during high demand caused by pump irrigation; its output would be integrated with the statewide power grid and serve the heavy load centers of eastern Nebraska; areas that typically had low voltage problems due to the high use of induction motors during irrigation would have additional power from the Central District's three hydro plants of approximately 6000 KW; low cost of operation was assured by the availability of natural gas with an estimated annual consumption of five billion cubic feet and a daily peak consumption of approximately 23 million cubic feet.

The plant would utilize water from the tail race of the Johnson No.2 plant for cooling and would either return the water to the Platte River or run it through the headworks of the district's 57-mile Phelps County Irrigation Canal. Electricity generated would be turned over to the Nebraska Public Power System (NPPS) jointly owned by the Loup River and Platte Valley and delivered over NPPS transmission lines to serve the eastern two-thirds of Nebraska. Receipts generated after operating costs would be returned to ratepayers or revert to plant improvements. Land was purchased adjacent to the proposed site, and with the addition of a railroad spur, to be developed into a large industrial district.

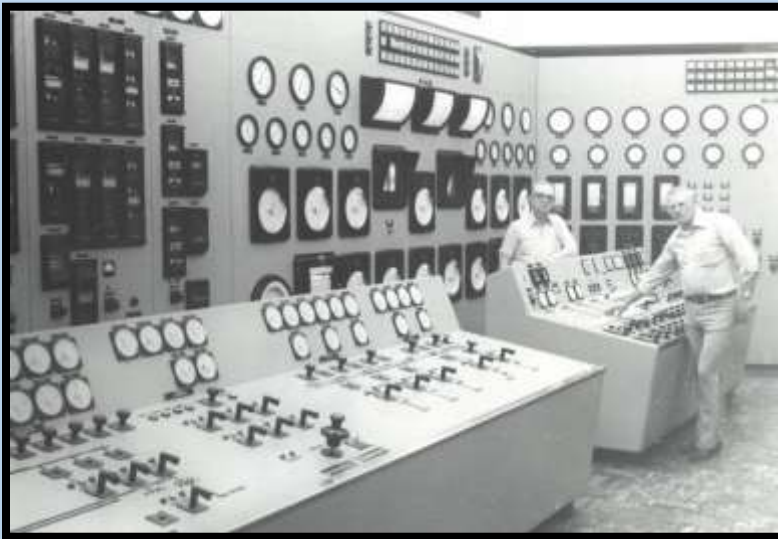
Canaday conferring with bankers in New York was assured that borrowed money would not exceed 3.5%. Bonds to finance the plant were put on the market in January 1956. Cost of the plant was estimated at \$17 million. The Dawson County Power District was instrumental in getting the Nebraska Rural Electrification to put up nearly one million dollars to get the project started. The District acting as its own prime contractor would eventually save \$1,280,000.

By February 1957, thirty-one separate contracts for equipment and construction, totaling \$11,000,000 had been awarded. Another \$2 million for electric wiring, substation and transmission lines were to be advertised. Bridges between the Bertrand railhead and Lexington had to be upgraded to support heavy equipment loads up to 200 tons. Deep wells and sumps were constructed by Layne-Western. The boiler built by Combustion Engineering, and condenser & turbogenerator built by General Electric were shipped in March. Parsons Construction of Omaha was awarded the contract for the foundation supporting the turbine and the boiler. Winger Construction of Ottumwa, Iowa installed the auxiliary mechanical equipment and automation.

Construction proceeded according to schedule. George Johnson, Chief Engineer & Manager of the steam plant at Hastings said in February of 1957 that the completion date for May 1958 would be kept. The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District did \$200,000 work with its own crews. This included excavation for the buildings, grading and strengthening the haul road from Bertrand. By October nearly 200 men were working at the plant site, and with the installation of the boiler in November, this increased to 260. The Platte River Valley benefited by an annual payroll of \$140,000 increasing the Lexington-Gothenburg Central District payroll in excess of \$300,000.00.

Operating personnel began arriving in December. Orville Rhol, former chief engineer at Municipal Utilities of Spencer, Iowa with 21 years in steam generating plant construction & operation, was hired as assistant engineer. Additional employees were: Robert Miller, control operator; Harold Schreiner, shift supervisor; Burwin Bean, shift supervisor; and Leonard France in charge of instruments and radio equipment. Five homes were completed for operating personnel and their families.

During April 1958 one month before full operation, residents in a ten-mile radius were warned that testing of the boiler would begin with the blasts sounding like a sonic boom. This was a necessary procedure to clear out scale and metal particles in the 151,000 lineal feet of boiler tubes. The boiler, suspended from the ceiling was 140 ft high and weighed 2500 tons, and would be subjected to 600 pounds per square inch during testing. The plant rested on a five-foot slab weighing 10,692 tons. Interior of the boiler reached 1900°F with the steam leaving at 1000°F. The cooling condenser utilized water from Central Nebraska District's supply canal at the rate of 60,000 gallons per minute while the plant was operating, and returned the water 400 ft downstream, 15 degrees warmer. The plant became fully operational by May 15<sup>th</sup> and was placed on the power grid June 1<sup>st</sup>.



*1975 – Keith Leggott & Bob Miller at the controls*

Formal dedication and open house of the steam plant was September 19, 1958, with Governor Victor Anderson addressing 2500 attendees. The plant was named for Ralph O. Canaday in recognition of his efforts to get the plant built and his role in securing financing for the \$16 million plant — actual cost was closer to \$15.5 million. At the time Canaday was the nation's largest Rural Electrification Agency's power plant.

The plant was fully automated in 1973 reducing the need for operators per shift from 4 to 2. In 1991 further automation took place and presently almost all operations are done by

computer. Canaday Power Station was acquired by NPPD in 1995. It was removed from regular use but is maintained so it can be powered up as needed. While Canaday and several other power stations are not used every day, they add diversity to Nebraska's power sources and are available in emergency situations. The Canaday Steam Plant has been called back into action during the ice storm in 2009, the drought in 2012, and again last February when temperatures reached -35°F in central Nebraska with some areas reaching -55 wind chill.

# DECADES OF CHRISTMAS TREES



- A 1860s Victorian Tree
- A Roaring 1920s Tree
- A 1940s Rations Tree
- A Groovy 1960s Tree
- A 1950s Elvis Tree

Sign up yourself  
or group today  
to reserve a tree  
& preferred decade.

Call or email Crystal.

We invite you to decorate a Christmas Tree  
for our museum's holiday season.  
The theme is *Decades of Christmas Trees*.  
Choose a decade from the 1860s to 2010s.  
Trim your tree in the style of that era  
or representing events from that time.

Set up must be done the week of  
Tuesday, Nov 30<sup>th</sup> - Saturday, Dec 4<sup>th</sup>.

Watch for times of treelight strolls  
during December evenings.

 <b>COMING THIS FALL</b> 	
October 24 <sup>th</sup> 2:00	<b>From Our Front Porch: <i>A Tombstone Talk</i></b> Crystal Werger Director Dawson County History Museum
November 5 <sup>th</sup> 7:00	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Trivia Night</b> Team Tables \$250 -- Maximum 8 per Team -- Register Now!
November 10 <sup>th</sup> All Day	<b>Give BIG Lexington</b> All Donations go to Renovation of Fairhaven Church
Nov 30 <sup>th</sup> Thru Dec 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Decades of Christmas Trees: <i>Set Up Week</i></b> If your group wants to decorate a tree, Sign Up Now!

**COFFEE and a Chat 10:00am till noon**  
 First Wednesday of each month