



BANNER

THE CDC EDITION

CDC: CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL

Corona Virus is affecting us all. Public buildings and schools are closed. Most events planned for the next two months have been cancelled. The world has not seen a pandemic like this since the Spanish Influenza infected over 500 million people in 1918.

We wanted to keep the museum open for business as usual, but we need to follow the CDC issued guidelines to limit gatherings. Therefore, the DCHS Museum is closed until further notice. But not to worry. As possible we will open by appointment so you can still tour the museum or do research. Now is a great time to work on that family history project you put on the back burner. . . or get a book to read from our gift shop. . . or do a 1-on-1 history lesson with your child!

Call 308-324-5340 and leave a message or email dchsociety@gmail.com.

CDC: COZAD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The C.E. Allen building, located in Cozad's historic downtown, is celebrating its 114th birthday this year.

In 2018 the Cozad Development Corporation purchased the building. Jen McKeone saw a need for a movie theater in Cozad, "the more we looked at the upper floor of the Opera House we became certain that the extra high ceilings and wide open space would be an ideal setting for a movie theater".

Plans evolved to include 3 separate theaters of varying sizes and a community room to hold 50. Knowing that many small-town non-profit theaters struggle, CDC is working with Stuart Fox and the Tiffany Theater in Broken Bow to replicate his successful business model which involves multiple screens, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Fox, along with his partners Penny Goodman and Tania Kreitman, will direct operations at the new Fox Theater in Cozad. Plans are to open this Fall.

Read the history of the Allen Family in this edition.

DAWSON COUNTY F-86 PILOT ROBERT HOLMES LAIER

Robert Laier was a Cozad farmboy who wanted to fly. Turn the page to read part of his story.

Right: Lt. Robert Laier's fatally stricken F-86 49-1298 plummets earthward as Senior Lt. Sutyagin's MiG-15 passes overhead. Accounts vary as to Lt. Laier's possible fate. One version has him ejecting and taken prisoner, while another has him perishing along with his aircraft.



Robert Holmes Laier

Cozad Son - F-86 Pilot



Dawson county native son Robert H. Laier on the wing of his F-86. Photo possibly taken in Korea during his deployment as evidenced by his heavy flight jacket.

Robert H. Laier was born on May 2, 1927 to parents Paul and Bernice (nee Walker). The Laiers farmed south of Cozad. Robert attended Cozad High School, graduating in May of 1945. He was apparently one of those rare individuals that knew at an early age what his life's calling was. He wanted to serve his country and fly airplanes. During high school, he enlisted in the U. S. Air Corps Reserves in July of 1944. After graduation, he attended the University of Nebraska for one term, later transferring to South Dakota State College at Brookings. Honorably discharged from the Air Corps after VE Day, Robert enlisted in the Naval Reserve in June of 1945 with his last assignment at Camp Wallace, Texas. Robert made good use of his posting at Camp Wallace, learning to fly at the Lynch-Parrish Aviation School at Rosenberg, Texas.

Honorably discharged from the Navy Reserve in 1946, Robert enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and completed basic pilot training at Randolph Field, Texas and was assigned to advance training at Williams AFB, Arizona, graduating as a 2nd Lt. in the Air Force

reserve assigned to the 48th Fighter Squadron Bangor, Maine flying F-84 fighters. In 1949, he was assigned to Langley AFB, Virginia and promoted to 1st Lt. and shortly after, married Nancy Ann Dawson.

This is the North American F-86A 49-1298 flown by Lt. Robert Holmes Laier as it looked on June 18, 1951. The F-86A, armed with six .50 caliber machine guns, had greater maneuverability than the MiG-15 at altitudes below 25,000 feet.

In November of 1950, in response to the United States participation in the United Nations Korean Police action, Robert was first deployed to Japan, then Korea as part of the Fourth Fighter Inceptor Group, Fourth Fighter Interceptor Squadron based at Kimpo, South Korea. The following year on June 19th while flying as wingman, his F-86 flight engaged Soviet fighters at 24,000 feet in the vicinity of Sonchon, North Korea. Robert was shot down by future Soviet MiG ace Nikolay Sutyagin.



The following account is given in MiG Menace Over Korea: Senior Lieutenant Nikolai Sutyagin departed China's Dadonggou airfield just north of the Yalu River at 09:34 on the 18th of June 19, 1951. He was part of a group of ten MiG -15's belonging to 303 IAD, (Fighter Aviation Division), 17 IAP (Fighter Aviation Regiment) that were being vectored by ground control to an area of Antung-Charyongwan railroad at an approximate altitude of 24,000 feet. The attack flight was Major G.I. Pulov's; above and to the right of it was Captain S.S. Artemchenko's covering flight, while Senior Lieutenant N.Ia. Perepelkin's element was trailing above and behind Pulov's flight.

Nikolai Sutyagin was in the covering flight with his wingman Senior Lieutenant V.F. Shulev. While in a left hand turn in the area of Sonchon, North Korea, he lagged 1,300-1,600 feet behind Captain Artemchenko's element. Continuing his turn another 50 -60°, he spotted a pair of F-86's below and to the left emerging onto their tail from under the lead flight. Sutyagin issued the command: "I'm attacking, cover me." Sutyagin made a climbing turn to the left while throttling back on fuel and deploying his speed brakes. With a subsequent split-S, he went after the Sabre element which then went into oblique loops. On the second loop Sutyagin

and his wingman were already on the Sabre's tail and in a superior firing position, he gave the F-86 wingman two short bursts. The burst missed. Then he decided to close the range. After pulling out of their dive, the Sabre element banked hard to the right, and then rolled to the left in a climb. The MiG's stayed with them, and the range dropped to 650-1000 feet. Noticing this, the F-86's performed a half roll and dove. Releasing his speed brakes, Sutyagin went after the Sabres diving at an angle of 70-75° as the F-86's dove east in the direction of the Bay of Korea. Pulling to within 500-650 feet, Sutyagin opened fire on the wingman shooting down Lt. Robert Laier's F-86.

Senior Lt. Nikolai Sutyagin's MiG-15 121032. The MiG-15 was heavily armed with one 37 mm cannon and two 23mm cannons and when above 30,000 feet generally had a performance advantage over the F-86.



Senior Lt. Nikolai Sutyagin ended the Korean War as the Soviets' highest scoring pilot with 22 victories. Lt. Laier was his first.

Robert Holmes Laier was declared Missing in Action and later declared deceased in February 1954. Captain Laier was awarded the Purple Heart, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Prisoner of War Medal, Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Presidential Unit Citation and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal.

Contributed by Steve Wolff



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

STEVEN J. WOLFF



Steve Wolff is the guy bringing our St. Peter's Episcopal Church window back to life. He has painstakingly developed a process to restore the window. It is not cut stained glass; it is pieces of glass with a film layer that has the color and design on it. Steve is making good progress with this slow trial-and-error process. It is so fun to see the vibrant colors emerge! We greatly appreciate his work.

Steve is a relatively new member of DCHS. He moved to Lexington from Ecuador in 2016. A retired airline pilot with an avid interest in aviation history, Steve takes on projects and works through them. He spent three years mapping Wyoming's section of the lighted transcontinental airway. Currently, he has mapped Nebraska's section as far east as Wood River and Amherst. In 2012 Steve successfully pursued placing the Medicine Bow, WY airport on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to the Dawson Co. Historical Society, he is a member of the Society of Airway Pioneers, American Aviation Historical Society and the Wyoming State Historical Society.

After being discharged from the US Air Force in 1966, Steve graduated with a major in geology from Fresno State College in 1971. Then he flew for airlines for 35 years and 23,000 hours. His career took him to Africa, former Soviet Union, South America, South East Asia, Pacific Basin and Central America. He has published one book and has written articles for *Air Classics*, *Africa Air News*, *Airliners*, *Airways* and *American Aviation Historical Society*. One article in *Air Classics* is about our McCabe Elliptical Baby. You can purchase that magazine and his book in our DCHS Gift Shop.

C.E ALLEN BUILDING

The C.E. Allen Building is a landmark on the corner of 8th and Meridian streets in Cozad.

In 1906 Charles Edgar Allen needed a larger building to house his growing grocery business. He employed local builders Charles Hart and his assistant, Bob Shanholz, to oversee the construction of the structure. The concrete blocks were made in a small shop approximately half a block west of the building site.



C.E. ALLEN BUILDING c1910 – photo by Solomon Butcher & Son, Kearney, NE

When the store was finished Charles E. Allen had his new and much larger Mercantile on the first floor along with Cozad State Bank. Allen Opera House and several offices took up the second floor.

To celebrate his new building Charles E. Allen held a two-day Grand Opening on July 27 & 28, 1906. Not only did his new store provide the customer with groceries and meat but they also sold men and women's clothing along with a fine line of shoes. The front of the store was clothing and the back was groceries and a cream station.

Outside there were two sets of iron stairs leading to the second floor. While it was the Allen Opera House traveling acts and school plays were performed and dances were held there. From 1917 to 1922 the second floor of the C.E. Allen building was used as a City Library run by the Cozad Women's Club. After a new Carnegie Library was built the "old" Opera House was used for basketball and Golden Gloves boxing.

In September of 1925 there was a fire in the upper story. The fire department was able to keep fire from the main floor and the major damage was from water. Most of the store's plate glass windows were broken by the heat. The bank escaped with little or no damage. The *Lexington Clipper* reported, "Mr. Allen's loss is well covered with insurance."

The Allen Family ran the store very successfully until they closed the business in 1957. Since then the Allen Building has held many different businesses including a jewelry store, auto parts store, and drug store but none have remained in business as long as the Allen Store. At the time of closing the Charles E. Allen store had been in business for 67 years with 50 of those years being at the C.E. Allen Building.

In 2018 the Cozad Development Corporation purchased the historic C.E. Allen Building. It is under renovation now and is planning to open again as a theater this fall. Cozad's downtown is an historic district in the National Register of Historic Places. Thanks to the Allen family and the building's successive owners, this building stands today as a signpost in the district. It always warms my heart to see a structure reach its centennial and still be an active part of the community. Cozad has done much to preserve its historic integrity. With new businesses, wonderful museums, and soon a brand new theater, it is definitely a fun place to visit and would be a worthwhile destination on anyone's summer travel itinerary.

- CRYSTAL WERGER

CHARLES EDGAR ALLEN AND FAMILY

Charles Edgar Allen was born at Russell, Lucas County, Iowa on January 8, 1865. His parents Tandy Allen and Joanna Smith (Van Nuys) Allen reared a family of 12 on their Iowa farm. After attending Russell High School he decided to go west on his own. He made his way through Nebraska and chose a homestead site near Sidney. After deciding homesteading was not for him, he landed in Gibbon, Nebraska where he worked as a butter maker in a creamery for a few years. In Gibbon he married Susan Morrow on August 29, 1889. A year later they relocated to Cozad where he established himself in business and the political world.

Soon after their arrival in Cozad, the Allens joined a group to organize the First Presbyterian Church. This was their church home for many years. Charles ran a general store in two different locations before he built his own building in 1906. With a partner he started Cozad State Bank in 1905, and Charles served as Bank President until 1920. He was Cozad Mayor and Councilman. He served 27 years as a member of the school board. Charles was a 32nd degree Mason and Shriner as well as an Odd Fellow.

Charles said his favorite sport was golf. He also listed irrigation as a hobby and was instrumental in the first irrigation projects of Dawson County in 1894. He helped with the first ditches at Gothenburg and Cozad. He served as President of the Nebraska State Irrigation Association. In later years he agreed to try his hand as an historian, and he compiled the original *Early History of Cozad and Surrounding Communities*. Charles E. Allen died in 1962 and is buried in Cozad.

The Wilson & Narcissus Morrow family had come to Gibbon from Ohio in the early 1880s. Their daughter Susan was teaching in the area at age 17. Four years later she married Charles Allen. Soon after they moved to Cozad, they started a family. Seven children were born between 1891 and 1904. Susan was also active in the community. She was the first president of the Cozad Women's Club when it was formed in 1907. Susan died in 1919 when her youngest child was 15.



Edith Isabel, the eldest of the Allen children, graduated from Cozad High School. At Hastings College 1914-15, she took courses in Science, German, Math, Bible and Art Class. She then returned home to Cozad and taught school south of town for several years. When the Cozad Women's Club started a library, Edith volunteered to be librarian of the 100 donated books. For a few years the library was housed on the second floor of her father's building. In 1922 Cozad received Andrew Carnegie money to fund a new library one block north of the Allen Building. Edith recalled years later how they made the move by transporting books in a child's coaster wagon. Once the new library was established, Edith earned \$40 per month as the librarian. She was the Cozad City Librarian from 1918 to 1938.

Esther Marie was second child of the family. She was born in August of 1893. Something happened to her. (We're not sure what.) In *The Lexington News* March 3, 1899, there is a short article in the Personal Notices that says, "Undertaker Cleveland was at Cozad last Sunday, being called there to bury the five-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Allen." She is buried in Cozad Cemetery with her parents and sister Edith.

Dorothy was daughter number three. She married Dale Benjamin Murphy. Their son Charles was born in Cozad in 1928. Charles had a son named Dale. Some of you may recognize him – Dale Bryan Murphy – Atlanta Braves 1976-1990; consecutive awards MVP 1982-1983, Silver Slugger 1982-1985, Gold Glove 1982-1986. "Murph" was inducted into the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame in 1991. He has authored three books: an autobiography titled *Murph*, *The Scouting Report on Professional Athletics* and *The Scouting Report for Youth Athletics*.

Ralph Morrow Allen was the first son born to Charles & Susan (Morrow) Allen. He graduated from Cozad High School in 1916. During WWI he served in the US Army and was discharged as a 2nd Lieutenant. He then attended UNL. In 1925 Charles sold the store to Ralph & brother-in-law Dale. Three years later Ralph married Marjorie Currant from Elmwood, Nebraska. They had 2 daughters, Nancy and Stephanie. Ralph & Marjorie ran the store until they sold out in December 1957. Thirty years later Marjorie remembered how the man in the grocery department would write out a list of things a customer wanted, the customer would leave and when she returned an hour later, the order would be filled and waiting for her. Some people paid, but most regular customers charged. She commented on how different things were then. 😊



Edgar VanNuys Allen was the fifth of the seven Allen children. He graduated from Cozad in 1917. He received his MD from UNL in 1925, then studied at Mayo and in Germany and England. He married Margaret Wise in Germany. Edgar was on staff at Mayo Clinic from 1930 until he died in 1961. During WWII he took a leave of absence to serve at Walter Reed in Washington, DC and as medical consultant to the 7th Service Command Headquarters in Omaha. Dr. Allen was a nationally recognized authority on diseases of the heart and blood vessels. He is known for his research of peripheral vascular disease. His name is given to the Allen Test and to Allen-Hines Syndrome. He also did extensive research and development of the anticoagulant, dicumarol. He served as president of the American Heart Association. Edgar & Margaret had 3 children: Kristine (Allen) Rosier, Charles VanNuys Allen MD, and David Wise Allen. Edgar died in Rochester, Minnesota at age 60.

Hortense Louise Allen was the youngest daughter of the family. She graduated from Cozad High School in 1920 and from UNL in 1926 with a BA in Home Economics. She was a member of Phi Mu sorority. Hortense never married. She had a distinguished career as a dietician. Miss Allen was the Food Service Director for the residence halls for women at the University of Nebraska 1932-1944. During WWII she worked in nutrition services for the American Red Cross. In 1946 she joined the staff of the Dietetics Department at Mayo Clinic and was employed there until she retired in 1967. She died in 1996 and is buried in Cozad Cemetery.

Frank Patterson Allen was the baby of the family. He graduated from Cozad in 1922. Frank married Helen Reynolds in 1926 in Beatrice, Nebraska. They had a daughter Susan Lou and a son "Pat". Frank was an entrepreneur with various business ventures. When he lived in Norfolk, he managed several boxers. In Wichita in the 1950s he had a housing project with more than 1000 small houses near McConnell Air Base and the Boeing Plant. Frank suffered from asthma, so he went south. He owned Sunland Vitamin in Tucson, Arizona, where he died at age 58.

Most of the children of Charles & Susan were adults when she died in 1919. Charles ran for Nebraska State Senator in 1923. He served in Lincoln three terms 1923-25, 1931-33 and 1935-37. At the end of his first term, he married Katherine Fay Worley, a newspaper woman. Katherine was an accomplished businesswoman. In 1906 she started the Universal Press Clipping Service. It was a type of search engine before there was such a thing. Her service would collect clippings on a certain topic from all sorts of sources as ordered by customers. In 1920 Governor McKelvie appointed Miss Worley to the Nebraska Board of Control of State Institutions. She was made chairman in 1921, becoming the first woman in the US to hold such a position. She resigned from the Board, returned to running her business, and married Charles Allen in 1925. They kept houses in both Omaha and Cozad. Katherine remained active in Omaha civic organizations, especially Omaha Women's Club. She survived her husband by nine years and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery.



THIS FAMILY HISTORY WAS COMPILED AT THE DAWSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM FROM IN-HOUSE SOURCES AND WITH HELP FROM OTHER SOURCES FROM AROUND THE UNITED STATES. THESE ARE THE ONLY 3 PHOTOS WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND. IF ANYONE CAN HELP WITH MORE STORIES OR PHOTOS OF THIS FAMILY, PLEASE CONTACT US.

— CHERI BERGMAN