



DAWSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

BANNER

Vol.43 No.3

A Fresh Look at Our History

JULY 2021

SUMMERTIME AT THE MUSEUM

The "official" first day of summer was June 21, but The Dawson County Museum's summer began May 29 with our annual Car Show, and we've been busy ever since! As it was for everyone, last summer was pretty slow. Even though we got a lot accomplished throughout the museum it just wasn't the same. This summer seems so crazy compared to last year. After the Car Show we had an event with Jeff Barnes, on June 12, who spoke about Nebraska's Historical Markers. We got to start having Wednesday morning coffees again! Cheri has been busy working on two new exhibits (why work on one when you can work on TWO!). Carol & Chris are doing quality control on our obituaries collection. Mary is editing our library. Steve is doing the initial work on the locomotive. I got to do a short program at Lexington's Grand Generation Center. Add to that the summer tourist crowd and Lexington's Alumni Banquet weekend! And that's not counting all the committee meetings we're all a part of. I feel like I haven't had time to take a much-needed breath but, oh, it feels so good to be busy again!!!

In this newsletter we'll talk about some of the craziness we've been experiencing and how much fun it's been! (Just in case you missed out on the crazy) We're only halfway through the summer so don't worry if you missed some of the fun, there's much more to be had.

So, get your favorite summer beverage, sit back in your lawn chair (or hammock) and enjoy the summer edition of THE BANNER!



Crystal Werger

How Hot Was It?

We recently came across this article in the July 6, 1934 edition of the *Dawson County Pioneer*.

Paving Blows Up West Of Kearney

Kearney, June 28.—Prevailing temperatures from 100 to 104 the past week caused almost an entire section of paving on the highway three miles west of this city to blow up. The first upheaval was not so severe, but the second upheaval, with a report like a cannon, blew concrete paving as far as 25 feet.—Bee-News.

Carol & Chris Do Obit Maintenance



An ongoing project at the Dawson County History Museum is the collection of obituaries. Carol Nelson, the museum's Staff Assistant, has been collecting obituaries for over 20 years. With over 17,000 obituaries filed by cemetery in the Historical Society's archives and more coming in every day, maintenance needs to be done quite often. Chris Johnson, a volunteer at the Dawson County Museum, created a hardcopy book several years ago to help visitors and staff find obituaries without having to look through each cemetery file. It's a wonderful resource that gets updated often to stay current with the files.

Over the last year Carol and Chris have been going through all the obituaries the museum currently has and making sure they're correct. Some of our cards were created with just a funeral notice, so the ladies have been searching for actual obituaries for those cards. Many times the obituary has a misspelled name or a wrong date; now and then even the burial place is wrong. Sometimes the names on the obituary and the

names on the grave marker don't match, (like when a widowed lady remarries and is buried with her first husband and with his name, but the obit has her most recent name). Not to mention those transcription errors and refileing mistakes that we occasionally make. They have been comparing what the museum has on file with information on findagrave.com. Chris said the site has been a wonderful asset to their project and recommends it whole-heartedly! Find A Grave's search capabilities are amazing!

After verifying the obituary information on our Excel spreadsheets with the information on paper obituary cards and Find A Grave digital entries, Chris and Carol have then made sure the paper cards are in alphabetical order. We have 41 cemetery files from Dawson County and the close proximity. Plus there's a file titled *Other* that includes unburied cremations and people who are connected to Dawson County but buried in other counties, states and countries.



Even though the museum adds to the obituary files daily this update is nearing its end. It has been a lot of proofreading and verifying information and once the ladies are finished they will have gone through 17,687 obituaries. I appreciate the long days and eye-crossing work Carol and Chris have done for the Dawson County Historical Society archives!

- Crystal Werger

The #485 Baldwin

by Crystal Werger

We've been planning this for a very long time, and I am so glad that we're finally able to begin. I had no idea how hard a project like



this would be. I had read in the Historical Society's archives that it had been done before, but the amount of planning and labor that would go into such a project was definitely out of my grasp when I started thinking about restoring our 1903 Baldwin Locomotive.

Almost 30 years ago a gentleman by the name of Bob Skinner had been a part of the last restoration project when he painted the locomotive in 1993. He emailed the museum when he read about our intent to again recondition the #485. This time, Steve Wolff, a DCHS volunteer will be handling the process. Steve loves anything and everything old and as we've all seen with his last project (St. Peter's Episcopal Church stained-glass window) he does a very good job and likes to pay close attention to detail. We are blessed to have him and his expertise to help us with this overwhelming project. I just hope it doesn't scare him away!

Brian Neben, a journalist for the *Lexington Clipper-Herald*, wrote a wonderful article about the old #485 Baldwin Locomotive in the Saturday, June 12, newspaper. As Brian writes in the article, "The locomotive was donated to the city of Lexington in 1956...and found its home along Highway 30 under the water tower, where it was a local attraction." Eventually it made its way to the Dawson County History Museum as an exhibit next to the Willow Island Depot.

We, as The Dawson County Historical Society, are entrusted to take care of each artifact we have in our collections, even if it's a huge steam locomotive. This project won't be easy, and it will take a lot of time and energy, but in the end it's worth it and I don't think I could handle the alternative.



Future Exhibits

We would like to put together an exhibit honoring Dawson County FFA & 4-H. But we need several really awesome artifacts to use for display.

We know that some area families have several generations of alumni. If you believe your generation isn't "history" yet, you may want to rethink that. When you are ready to let go of one or two of your mementos, give us a call.

We can't take everyone's project books, ribbons, t-shirts and snapshots.

However, it would be great to get some clear photos that are dated and where everyone can be identified, a few exceptional projects, and maybe a blue jacket or two from a couple of different eras. We would welcome concise histories of various clubs and personal journaling of special events for our files. Think about the things that really represent the history of these great organizations. Please remember our focus is Dawson County and expect to label & document the story of each item.



DAWSON COUNTY HISTORY MUSEUM

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Thursday August 5th
6:00-8:00

Donations Welcome



JEFF BARNES: CUT IN STONE, CAST IN BRONZE

Dawson County History Museum's summer *From Our Front Porch* hosted Nebraska author and speaker Jeff Barnes. The topic was Jeff's new book, *Cut in Stone, Cast in Bronze: Nebraska's Historical Monuments*. This was not about the Nebraska Highway Markers, these were off-the-beaten-path monuments. Jeff featured historical markers in Nebraska that have been lost or hidden over the years. He showed pictures of markers or monuments from history that most people don't even know about. You can see and read about them in his book, which is available in our gift shop!



It was a fascinating program! He said it's been a lifelong project for him because it's something he enjoys. If you were unable to be here in June, try to catch his presentation somewhere in the area.

He is scheduled to be at the Nebraska Prairie Museum near Holdrege on August 10th at 7:00 pm. To find out where else he will be, visit his Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/authorjeff>

You can also click here to listen to a KRVN Podcast Conversation, with Jeff Barnes and Scott Foster, radio personality & DCHS Board President. <https://p.ftur.io/krvnam/14130>

Shave & a Haircut... 2 bits

by Cheri Bergman



*c1885 Lexington
Northwest Corner
5th & Washington Streets*

*Left half of building was
Quinby & Olive Meat Market*

*On the right half (enlarged)
TW Proffitt, Barber
Dr RR Baker, Dentist*



*Kids sitting
on the
barber pole*



Our newest exhibit is the Main Street Barber Shop. We put in one of the original Cornland Hotel doors connecting the Barber Shop to our hotel. From its grand opening, through several decades there was a barber shop in the Cornland. On the other side will be one of our medical offices. That is also appropriate because for several centuries barbering and dental or surgical professionals worked together or were one and the same. In the photo above from early Lexington, the barber and dentist had the same entrance.

During the Renaissance the Barber-Surgeons could cut your hair or beard, but they also performed procedures such as blood-letting, tooth pulling, bone setting and wound dressing. Barber poles were the guild sign. Red and white symbolized the blood and bandages. Blue seems to have been an American addition. We have a barber pole that was given to DCHS by a Lexington barber, Clayton Todd, who said it came from an old barber shop on main street.

As always, searching our collections for artifacts was interesting. Editing the items for display was again a challenge! I did include a case of straight razors collected by Roy Batie in 1960 when the museum first opened. There is a barber chair from Oconto. My favorites are photos of barbers at their stations ranging from the 1890s to 1960s. Stop in to see the exhibit and tell us your stories.

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

2021 DCHS CAR SHOW

PHOTOS COURTESY
PAUL PACK

The DCHS Car Show on Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend has become a tradition. The first year we hosted the show it was REALLY hot. The next year it was a bit cooler. Last year we had to cancel and this year it was cold and rainy! But the one thing that has always been constant is the amount of interest in our show! Even last year we had people hoping we were still going to do it. This year, although the weather was pretty icky, we had 40 entries and well over a hundred visitors!

Thank you to everyone who either brings a vehicle to our show or who just comes to look. It's a big day for us and we really look forward it. If you haven't been to one of our car shows I highly encourage you to come next year. Besides all the awesome cars, we serve lunch. We have a great museum for you to stroll through too (which comes in very handy when the weather isn't so nice).

