



Buffalo Tales



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Introducing Sherrie Dux-Ideus:
Buffalo County Historical Society Director
by Roger P. Davis
Editor, Buffalo Tales

On January 2, 2001 the Buffalo County Historical Society initiated the first full-time Director of the Society, Ms. Sherrie Dux-Ideus. Sherrie is a resident of Amherst and a fifth-generation Nebraskan. She brings a variety of educational and work experiences to the Director's position. Sherrie received an Associate Degree from Southeast Community College in Fairbury in 1975 and completed her Bachelor of Arts in History at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in 1977. Shifting her focus to library training, Sherrie received her Masters in Library Science from Emporia State University in 1978 and that same year began working as a librarian at the Beatrice Public Library.



Sherrie's career as a librarian spanned sixteen years, as she served as the Librarian and Training Officer at the Beatrice State Developmental Center from 1980 to 1988, as Library Director of the Sun City Library in Sun City, Arizona, from 1988 to 1990, and as the Director of the Reference and Interloan Center at the University of Nebraska at Kearney from 1990 to 1994. Sherrie then moved to the private sector becoming the Book Manager of the Hastings Books, Music, Video, and Software store in

Kearney. After seven years in retail, Sherrie is now bringing those skills, plus her academic talents and library experience to the service of the Historical Society.

What does the Director of the Buffalo County Historical Society do? The formal job description defines the Director responsibilities as overseeing all museum and archive operations, newsletters and publications, programming and websites, as well as being responsible for grant writing, fund-raising, and publicity. In a recent interview, I asked Sherrie about her new job and what her average day was like.

Sherrie said she was attracted to the position because she has always been fascinated by local history, and that the position would allow her to apply all of the skills she has acquired from her educational training and work experiences. She is already at work in the area of grant writing, working on a project for funds from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development to produce a promotional video about the Buffalo County Historical Society, which could be shown at public events to introduce the public to the Trails and Rails Museum and the

WITH THE SOCIETY

A Note from the President:

As I prepare my message for the Buffalo Tales, I suspect a lot of you folks may be nursing a severe case of "cabin fever" and I cannot see an early cure for it after reading what the Farmer's Almanac has to say about it—30 inches more snow for us in March.

So much for the bad! I would like to talk about some very good news.

First off, we have received a sizable gift from a very generous Society member to be used for a nice gazebo to be built on the Trails and Rails Museum grounds. This will be used to purchase the material if we can come up with the volunteer help to do the construction. As soon as the weather breaks, we may put out a plea for every person who can saw a board and swing a hammer to come down and show us your skills. I am looking forward to seeing you.

April is the time for the Societies Annual Meeting. Since Palm Sunday and Easter are the second and third Sunday in April, the Board of Directors have set the fifth Sunday, April 29th for the meeting. Please mark this day on your calendar. The time and place to be announced later.

The Board has set Thursday, April 26th at 10:00 a.m. for a news conference to announce the drive for our new exhibit building at the Museum.

—Larry Nansel, President

Buffalo County Historical Society Annual Meeting: April 29, 2001:

The Buffalo County Historical Society Annual Meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn in Kearney on Sunday, April 29, 2001. The business meeting will begin at 4:00 p.m. Dinner will start at 5:00 p.m. and the evening's program will begin at 6:00 p.m. The program will feature Clifford Lowell presenting a history of the Burma Shave sign campaign. Dinner is \$11 a person and reservations can be made by calling 234-3041 or sending your name and a check to P.O. Box 523, Kearney, NE 68848.

Buffalo County Historical Society Hohnholt Open House: May 6, 2001:

The Buffalo County Historical Society is hosting an open house for Margaret and Henry Hohnholt on Sunday, May 6, 2001, between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. in the church on the ground of Trails and Rails. The event is to thank Margaret and Henry for having donated nearly twenty years of volunteer service to the Trails and Rails Museum and the Historical Society. No gifts please, but if you want to honor the Hohnholts it is requested that you make donations to the Museum.

Farmstead Update:

Now that the snow has finally melted and spring is arriving, it's time to make plans for planting the prairie pasture at the farmstead. Members of Cub Pack 139, under the leadership of Laurie Becker, will meet at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 21 to broadcast seed and forbs (wildflowers) provided by the Nature Conservancy. This will be followed by drilling more prairie grass seed from Pheasants Forever. Funding for the preparation of the ground was provided by a grant from the Central Platte Natural Resource District.

The next project will be installing a security fence as the funds are made available. Volunteer help as well as donations will be appreciated. Call Ed Anderson at 237-7339.

90th Birthday Reception for Alice Howell:

The children of Alice Howell invite you to attend a reception in honor of her 90th birthday. The reception will be on Saturday, May 12 in the Library of the First Presbyterian Church, 4511 6th Avenue, Kearney. Alice and the family request that there be No Gifts Please.

Letter from the Editor:

Thanks to the many readers who have sent in their own Historical Vignettes. In this edition we have an interesting slice of life from Leroy Walker of Gibbon in addition to our UNK offering. Watch for future items on the local Kiwanis Clubs, the Cedar Township Literary Society, and an interesting exchange of love letters from Bertha Alice Haug and Ora Oscar Hayman. Remember, if you have some interesting documents, stories, or historical artifacts, we want to hear from you. If you are not sure of your writing skill, send along what you have and we will work with you to get your story in shape. In particular the Editor would like to receive some stories and information about our Hispanic families and history in the Buffalo County and Platte Valley area. As the new census demonstrates, our Hispanic heritage is a significant part of the quilt work of Nebraska.

Historical Vignettes

A vignette is a short scene or incident. Historical vignettes are like short poems or story fragments that may seem incomplete but suggest an internal story or a micro-history that can be appreciated for their own value to inform or amuse while they may also inspire consideration and reflection of larger themes and events.

Historical Vignette: The Tea Pot

Told to Leroy A. Walker by John Nutter in the 1920's

This story has to do with the Nutter family of Gibbon and it happened before the Colony arrived—in fact, before the railroad was built in 1866.

The Nutter family lived in a log house, just north of where the eight-sided Nutter house now stands. The Nutters came from England and like all good Englishmen, liked their tea. In fact, they had two tea pots—identical tea pots, sitting on the shelf. But through habit and convenience, only one of the tea pots was used daily. The other one just sat there waiting its turn.

Came the day when the supply of tea ran out. There was no store to buy more, closer than Grand Island—a day's journey away by ox team. These two-day shopping trips were not taken without real necessity. Day after day without tea soon became the real necessity. So, Mr. Nutter left for Grand Island. On the afternoon of the second day, one of the children was sent to the top of the log house so he could more easily spot the returning father—with the tea. As soon as he was sighted as a speck on the horizon a child was sent to get the tea and hurry back with it. A child could run faster than an ox team could plod, and the tea could be made and ready for drinking the very minute Mr. Nutter came to the cabin. This was done. Never had tea tasted better. So refreshing. It was only when the tea pot was being washed that it was discovered that in the haste to make the tea, that the second tea pot had been used—the tea pot in which the rattle snake rattles had been stored.

[Special thanks to Leroy Walker for this Historical Vignette. If you would like to contact Leroy his address is P.O. Box 116, Gibbon, NE 68840.]

*Historical Vignette: Emma Barney**by Christy Hagler*

UNK Senior - Alliance, NE

It is March 26, 1928. A woman dies in Denver, CO of tuberculosis. All the while a tuberculosis hospital is in its 16th year of operation in her hometown. But the Kearney TB hospital had finished its facilities for women only three years after her death—perhaps too late for her to receive treatment nearer to home.

This woman was Emma Barney.

Buried in Kearney's Cemetery in the Barney family plot, Emma rests alone. The other eight footstones under the Barney family marker are clumped neatly together. Resting more than 10 feet away is Emma, alone.

Her simple granite stone reads, "Emma-Howard's Wife 1883-1928."

Howard, her husband mentioned on the stone, is not buried with her nor is Elizabeth, her daughter.

On March 26, 1928 at only 33 years of age, Emma died. Her obituary in the next day's *Kearney Hub* repeatedly mentioned how, "well known," Mrs. Barney was.

Despite this statement, very little can be found about Emma Barney. Local history does not provide her maiden name or her middle initial.

Kearney Cemetery records note her middle initial as "D" while the 1920 Census Bureau recorded her middle initial as "T".

County Clerk records show Emma and Howard were not married in either her home county of Dawson or his county of Buffalo. The couple moved to a farm north of Wood River shortly after being married. Then according to the census, they rented a farm in the Riverdale Township in 1920.

Howard's family owned and operated W.W. Barney & Son Bonded Abstractors and Real Estate. Despite the family business, Howard farmed while he and Emma were married. The couple's daughter, Elizabeth, was 10 when her mother died.

Emma could read and write, according to the census records, but like most women in the early 1900's she apparently did not have a career of her own.

After Emma became ill, she and her family moved away from the Kearney area to Omaha and later Denver where Emma died.

Emma apparently left Central Nebraska to seek medical attention. Ironically, Kearney had a tuberculosis hospital. The tuberculosis hospital opened on June 30, 1912. Although the facility was opened in 1912, the patient ward for women was not completed until 1925, which may have been too late for Emma to receive the treatment she needed for her disease.

At one point in America, tuberculosis was the leading cause of death. In 1930, tuberculosis killed 348 people in Nebraska alone and 101,500 people nationwide.

Eventually the TB hospital grew to the rambling building that UNK students now know as West Center Campus.

Still many questions linger about Emma Barney's life and family. Why did her husband Howard appear in the 1926 Kearney City Directory as a janitor for his family's insurance company just two years before Emma died. What happened to the couple's daughter? Why wasn't Elizabeth listed in the 1928 directory with her widowed father? Why does Emma Barney rest alone and separated from other family in the Barney plot?

The mysteries that linger around Emma's life are sharply contrasted by the repeated statement in the newspaper's obituary that, "she was well known." Yet this "well known" woman's obituary occupied only one-eighth of the space that the neighboring ad for \$3.95 Easter shoes occupied on the last pages of the *Kearney Hub*.

work of the Society. As many of you know, Sherrie will also be busy with the revised campaign to raise monies to construct a new archive and exhibition building, which will get under way this month. As Director, Sherrie is a member of the Chamber of Commerce Hospitality Committee, and in that capacity she networks with leaders from other community organizations to inform them of Buffalo County Historical Society events and operations and learn from their experiences about more ways to work with the public.

She reports that her most interesting task to date is working with the Great Platte River Road Archway Monument to build a positive relationship of benefit to both the Monument and the Buffalo County Historical Society. Currently the Archway reserves space in its lobby for Buffalo County Historical Society brochures and directs tourists to the Trails and Rails Museum as a follow-up experience to the Arch. In turn the Society loans artifacts and assistance to the Archway Monument to assist them in maintaining the quality of their presentations. Sherrie hinted that future joint ventures might include the use of Archway re-enactors for programs at the Trails and Rails Museum, and creating a series of historical postcards.

What is an average day like for the Buffalo County Historical Society Director? In addition to paperwork associated with the above-mentioned tasks, Sherries' time is filled with ongoing correspondence with Society members and the general public, and working to catalogue the museum holdings. Telephone calls and email includes inquiries about genealogy, museum and archive hours, archival holdings, and general historical questions. The day is also busy working alongside Margaret and Henry Hohnholt to coordinate public school visits to the museum. The most challenging task at hand is the ongoing project to enter information about the thousands of museum artifacts into the *Past Perfect* cataloging program. *Past Perfect* is the standard for museums, and once completed will allow for computer searches and inventory of artifacts by assigned keywords, subject, donor information, artifact number, and other characteristics.

The new Buffalo County Historical Society Director would like to hear from the membership. Her office is in the Museum and she is generally available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. You can reach her at 308-234-3041 or via email at <bchs@kearney.net>. Be sure to call or drop her a line and make her feel welcome.

What's in the Archive?

Ever wonder what exactly IS in the Buffalo County Historical Society archives? Well, among other items there are the following: Embalmer Register for 1900-1901; Kearney City Directories since 1889; Register of Dentists in Buffalo County for 1888-1891, 1896-1932; Family history and papers of Myron Scott and Lauritz Larson; Optometrists Register for 1912-1913; Nurses Register for 1910-1915, and the following papers: Kearney Weekly Hub, New Era Standard, Central Nebraska Press, and a collection of Shelton newspapers.

BUFFALO TALES is the official publication of the Buffalo County Historical Society, a non-profit organization, whose address is P.O. Box 523, Kearney, NE 68848-0523.

Dr. Roger P. Davis, Editor

2001 Annual dues, payable January 1, are:

- Basic Membership \$15.00
- Institutional Membership \$20.00
- Supporting Membership \$30.00+

Life memberships are \$150.00 for individual; \$200.00 for husband and wife.

Directors

Term expiring June 1, 2001: Edward Anderson, Wilma Larsen, Janeen Vokoun and John Shafer.

Term expiring June 1, 2002: James R. Ganz, Sr., Larry Nansel, Dan Speirs and Robert W. Goldenstein.

Term expiring June 1, 2003: Dora Day, Jan Fern, Joyce Sullwold and Mitch Humphrey.

Officers (1 year term)

- President Larry Nansel
- Vice-President Robert Goldenstein
- Secretary Janeen Vokoun
- Treasurer Mardi Anderson

TRAILS & RAILS MUSEUM
We have some exciting times coming up at Trails and Rails. Kearney Public Schools fourth graders will be coming for two weeks. A number of rural schools have scheduled tours. We will be participating in Kids Explore-courtesy of Cash-Wa and the Soil Sisters Garden Club.

We will again have a Garden Class at Trails and Rails this summer. The format will be a little different so watch for more information. Wagons West is coming up June 9th. This is the time of the year when the wagon trains heading west passed through this area. They needed to be here around that time so that they would be past the mountains before snow would fly. Perhaps they will take a day off to get ready for the long journey ahead. Music and fun will be the themes.

Many new things are planned for this year. If you can help in any way, please call the museum, or me.

—Margaret Hohnholt, Volunteer Director

Trails & Rails Museum 706 West 11th Street (308) 234-3041

Buffalo County Historical Society

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