

Buffalo Tales

NOV/DEC 2009

Beauty in Words, Horror in Life: The Poetry of World War II part 1

Compiled By Katherine Wielechowski



BOEING B-17 FLYING FORTRESS
Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress
(date unknown)
Property of Buffalo County Historical So.

Poetry is one of the most expressive and thought provoking art forms we know. It is also one of the most versatile and accessible for every man, woman, and child. Since there has been a spoken language, poetry has been passed down from generation to generation and when words started being written down, poetry was preserved for a larger audience stretching for eons. From the ancient times of Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* to the more contemporary works of Shel Silverstein, poetry has been used to express some of humanity's toughest struggles and greatest victories.

World War II defiantly fits into the "toughest struggles" category. Poetry captured the fear and worry of a loved one going to war, the terror and pain of combat, and the sadness brought by the loss of a loved one who was killed. It was a vehicle used to cope with the absence of almost an entire generation of men who might not come back from the battlefield.

Many of these emotions were captured by Gwen Rosenthal Koleski in the scrapbook she compiled during WWII while she worked at the Kearney Army Air Field and her brother, Don Rosenthal, fought overseas. All of the following poems were taken from that scrapbook. Some of them were written by Gwen Rosenthal herself while others were clipped from newspapers or found in other sources.

"Untitled"
I hear a roar
And in the Sky
I see a giant bomber fly
It's on its way across the sea
To make this land both safe and free
We pray to God up above
To protect this plane and these boys we love.
-unknown

"Untitled"

A beautiful line of B-17s
 Stood out on the hard packed snow.
 The crew stood tensely waiting,
 For soon they too would join the great show.

The roar of a motor breaks
 Breaks the still of the night
 And then another and another
 Are off to the fight.
 These great silver birds
 Are kings of the sky
 We saw them grow smaller
 As they start to climb high.

The B-17 is majestic and great.
 And the crew of these ships work as one
 The gunners, the pilot and the bombardier
 Will stick to the end and face whats to come.

They just have to come back
 From their job in the sky
 For it isn't fair
 For the young to die.

So God please protect them
 While they help win this fight
 Let them come home
 For it's only right.

Those great silver ships
 Will help to bring them back
 For they have never been known
 From a fight yet to slack.

-Gwen Rosenthal

"Untitled"

Oh please, dear God, on this day—
 The day we have all been waiting for,
 Help those men and boys,
 In this, the greatest battle of this war.

They'll need your protection and your help
 In each important move they must take.
 They'll need our help and our prayers,
 For many sacrifices they will make.

Help the boys who fight from ships
 Help the ones who fight from land,
 Help also the ones in planes
 And help us all to behind them stand.

They're fighting for an ever greater freedom
 Then we have ever seen.
 And freedom, God, to all of us
 Is the principle on which we lean.

So more than ever before in war,
 Help us see this great battle won.
 An so, dear God, to you we pray.
 Send home our sweetheart, father and son.
 -Gwen



Paratroopers, D-Day 1944
 awayfrombams.blogspot.
 com/2010/06/d-day.html

"To Bus"

It seems so long ago-yet not so long,
 Since last we heard your footsteps on the
 ground;
 Your voice uplifted-a bit off-key-in song-
 It seems so long since you have been
 around.

When you come back again we hope you'll
 find,

The farmstead here just like it was before:
 The cattle coming in at milking time,
 And Tony waiting at the stable door.

The same old moon will waft its yellow
 beams

On lonely coyotes calling for the mates:
 The old night sounds will lull you off to
 dreams:-

The turning windmill wheel and swinging
 garden gate.

Your dog, old Diz, I'm sure he'll know you
 too,

Though years lapse before your coming
 home;

He'll follow you just like he used to do,
 When throught the fields and pastures you
 would roam.

The folks back here are praying for the
 day,

When from the noise of battle and the kill;
 You'll breath again the scent of the new
 mown hay

Within the quiet of your native hills.
 -Ruth Southworth (to her brother overseas)

“The Tale of a Cocoon”

Out of the burning plane he fell
To thank her briefly for packing IT
well;

They dined and danced at a local
club
He filled her full of expensive grub
He whispered sweet nothings in her
ear-
The sort of things that she liked to
hear.

He was handsome and she was
young;
He'd won her heart ere the night was
done

A goodnight kiss and he was gone,
He left the Field at the break of
dawn.

He left the Field for unknown parts
And left behind him a broken heart.

She packs and pines and pines and
packs
And prays someday that he'll be
back.

But he so fickle as a man must be
Has found him a girl across the sea.

So, as the wheels of the fortress turn
Girls, here is a lesson that you must
learn.

Pack your 'chutes the best you can,
But don't fall in love with a combat
man.

-Ruth Southworth, Parachutes

“Soldier's Christmas 1945”
Across the snow he saw the
lights of home-
The little German village was
no more-
The rays from yonder win-
dows gleamed for him alone,
Just like the ones across the
hills back home.

He saw a wreath of holly
hanging there,
A circled shadow dark above
the snow;
He could discern his dad's old
easy chair,
And thought he saw the old
man dozing there.

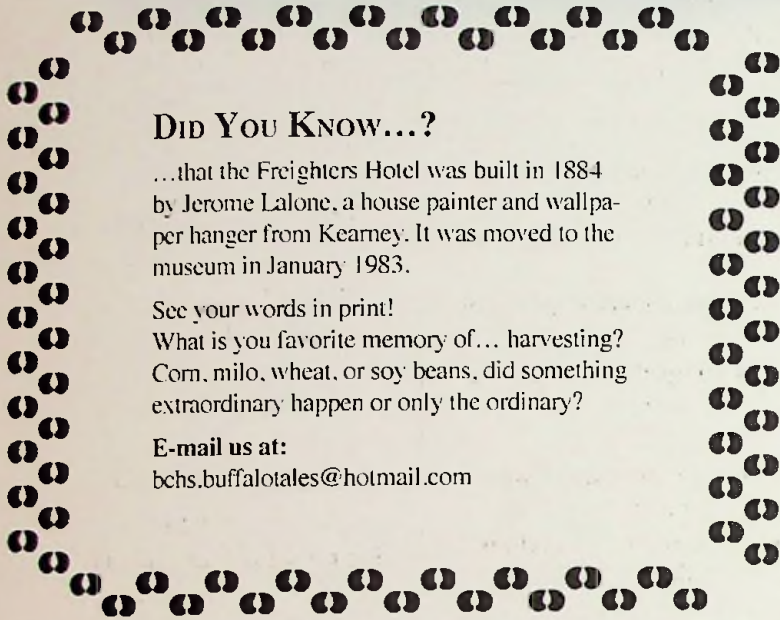
Through frosted panes he
could distinguish here
The family's, tinsel'd, spangled
Christmas tree,
Crowned with a silver star for
him he felt a tear-
The only one away from home
this year.

His heart was touched, this
hardened warrior lone,
As 'cross the miles he viewed
the lights of home.

-Ruth Southworth, Parachute
Section

War was very hard on the men and woman who were stationed so far from home. They faced the threat of death at the hands of the enemy or capture and the unknown of POW camps. To many, the thoughts of home were the thing that got them through the horrors they witnessed.

Some of those images were captured in poems, written both by the people on the front lines and the ones they left behind.



DID YOU KNOW...?

...that the Freighters Hotel was built in 1884 by Jerome Lalone, a house painter and wallpaper hanger from Kearney. It was moved to the museum in January 1983.

See your words in print!
 What is your favorite memory of... harvesting?
 Corn, milo, wheat, or soy beans, did something extraordinary happen or only the ordinary?

E-mail us at:
 bchs.buffalotales@hotmail.com

2009 Christmas Tree Walk

The 22nd Annual Christmas Tree Walk will be December 5-13 during regular business hours and on Friday, December 11 from 1-7 pm. at Trails & Rails museum. It will feature Christmas Trees decorated by area businesses and organizations. The theme this year is "Christmas Memories." Vote for your favorite trees by putting pennies in the jars in front of them! You can also contribute to a little friendly competition by putting silver coins and bills in the jars by other trees. All donations go to the BCHS and Trails & Rails Museum.

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.
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Dr. Mark R. Ellis, Editor
 Katherine Wielechowski, Production Manager
 2009 Annual dues, payable January 1, are:

Individual	\$35.00
Family	\$40.00
Institutional Membership	\$50.00
Supporting Membership	\$75.00

We have replaced the word 'Basic' to 'Family'.

Directors
 Term expiring June 1, 2010: Jim Cudaback, Janice McGregor, Sharon Mason, Jolene Ward
 Term expiring June 1, 2011: Dr. Mark Ellis, Sharon Martin, Duane Muhlbach, Barb Riege
 Term expiring June 1, 2012: Mary Kenny, Janice Martin, Dan Speirs, Garry Straatmaan

Officers (1 year term)	Sharon Mason
President	Barb Riege
Vice-President	Janice McGregor
Secretary	Jim Cudaback
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2009 Buffalo County Historical Society Calendar of Events

Friday, January 2 from 3-4 pm: Girl Scout Cookie Train exhibit

Saturday, February 21 from 2-5 pm: Cake Fundraiser

Sunday April 19 from 1-3 pm-BCHS Annual Meeting

May Date/Time TBA: Youth Chautauqua Birthday Party for Mrs. David Anderson born May 11, 1849 (2009=160th)

Saturday, May 30: 24th Annual Wagons West Celebration- Music from 10-7 pm and Exhibitors from 10-6 pm

Sunday, June 14: 2nd Annual 1/2 Marathon: Buffalo County Stampede-reg. is at 6 am-race begins at 7

June Date/Time TBA: Youth Chautauqua Birthday Party for Mrs. William Nutter born June 16th, 1835 (2009=174th)

Friday, July 3 from 9-10:30: Members Only Night (watch city's fireworks)

Saturday, July 11 from 10-6 pm: Family Farm Days

Thursday, July 23 from 6:30-9 pm: 3rd Annual Trivia Contest

AUGUST –dates and special correlating events TBD: Smithsonian Harmonies

August Date/Time TBA: Youth Chautauqua Birthday Party for Ms. Fannie Graves born August 1885 (2009=124th)

Saturday, August 15 from 10-3 pm: 5th Annual Genealogy Open House with spotlight on One-Room School w/ a picnic!

October: Date/Time TBA: Youth Chautauqua Birthday Party for Maud Marston Burrows in 1864 (2009=145th)

Friday, Dec. 4 from 6-8 pm: MEMBER'S ONLY preview of Christmas Tree Walk

Sat. Dec. 5 through Sun. Dec. 13 from 1-5 pm daily: Open to the public: 22nd Annual Christmas Tree Walk***Special Night: Friday Dec. 11 from 1-7 pm

December Date/Time TBA: Youth Chautauqua Birthday Party for Sarah Oliver born Dec. 1, 1832 (2009=177th)

Volunteers, chairpersons, and sponsors are still needed. Please contact the office for more information on supporting your Buffalo County Historical Society!

PO Box 523, 710 W. 11th St., Kearney, NE 68845
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We hope you enjoy these stories about Buffalo County. We would love to have a stock pile of Buffalo Tales ready, so they can go out in a more timely manner. Please submit your memories and stories to us by e-mailing them to bchs.us@hotmail.com or sending them to our post office box: BCHS, PO Box 523 Kearney NE 68848.

We appreciate your support!

Director's Report

-Reminder: The Trails & Rails Museum will be closed December 24-January 4 for Christmas.

-Kearney Keno grant for new blinds: awarded and in progress.***City's Keno check was deposited into our account on 8/28/09 for the full amount of \$2224.53.***waiting for the blinds to come in from back order and then be installed.

Be sure to Join our Buffalo County Historical Society group or our Buffalo County Historical Society/Trails & Rails Museum fan page on Facebook!



Trails & Rails Museum
Buffalo County Historical Society
710 West 11th Street Box 523
Kearney, NE 68848-0523

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www.bchs.us

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