

Madison County Remembers...

A Publication of the Madison County Genealogical Society

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President's Message

I looked out this morning and with great astonishment discovered the snow is gone! Is there really a Spring out there. Now I am ready to turn over a new leaf (you will know, much to my dismay, that I am 80 now) and my interest in Genealogy has to take the number one spot in my life if it ever is going to.

I have made progress! I visited my first courthouse and encountered all those grim faces that wonder why you are interested in the 1880's. Should we help this lady--is she crazy? or what? I think I have a challenge facing me. I know that all of you who have been more serious than I have in the past, about finding "Uncle John" or all of those other people, who are hiding out there somewhere, are hopefully out there to help me when I'm in a crisis. That's what our society is all about - guiding others to find a link to somewhere or somebody! Beware you will be put to the test soon.

By the time you get this newsletter you will have been to my house for breakfast, fun, and information. Well at least I hope you survived my attempt to do a light breakfast. We are planning now to meet quarterly hoping to encourage more attendance at our meetings and gain your participation, bring guests and seek help from us. Saturday the 19th of February was a first attempt. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for further information.

The January Christmas party was a blast! You missed a good one if you were not there. The prizes were wonderful. Phyllis, your efforts are so appreciated--thank you. There was the usual attempt to win the prize of your choice only to see it slip away during "take away".

We have two excellent people answering queries now. Marge Fuhrmann who is an old timer at this and Karen Reed. Nancy and Bernice are always there for us too. Thanks girls. With the onset of Spring, I hope your enthusiasm will increase.

May this change of pace lift you out of the doldrums of winter. Lets get some ideas going here for programs and activities you would like to see happen. I am always willing to listen. That is a throw over from working at the City (a trained good listener). When we meet again you and I may have found that long lost relative who has evaded our search.

Betty Bohac

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Madison County Genealogical Society Meeting Notes

The annual Christmas Party of the Madison County Genealogical Society was held on January 22, 2011, at The Granary in Norfolk at 1:00 p.m. After lunch, an informal meeting, with 14 members present, was held with President Betty Bohac presiding. The Treasurer's Report, showing a checking account balance of \$749.60 was presented. It was decided to try having quarterly meetings due to low attendance. The next meeting will be at 9:30 a.m. on the 3rd Saturday in February; Brunch at the home of President Betty Bohac. The program on Karl Stefan will be presented by Betty Bohac. There will be no meeting in March or April. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 21, with Marge Fuhrmann presenting the program. More details will be available later.

August 20th – We will consider a field trip.

After the short meeting, Take-away bingo was enjoyed by the participants.

Frances Beck, Secretary

Madison County Genealogical Society Meeting Minutes

The February meeting of the Madison County Genealogical Society was held on Saturday, February 19, 2011, at the home of Betty Bohac, president at 9:30 a.m. After breakfast, featuring egg bake, fruit cup and muffins, an informal meeting, with 8 members and 1 guest present, was held with President Betty Bohac presiding. The Treasurer's Report, showing a checking account balance of \$780.22 was presented.

It was announced that there is an award for an individual who has performed activities that contribute to the greater good of the genealogy community. Names must be submitted by March so if anyone has a name in mind, they should contact Betty Bohac. A query from Mike Shurtz was received requesting information about Earl Emory Shurtz, Norfolk, 1894, Phillip Shurtz, Ohio, 1859, and Iowa, 1868. \$10 was paid and the query has been referred to Karen Reed. Other queries, Carol Lacey, Bedford Genealogy in Virginia, and Diane Green, Des Moines, Iowa were referred to Bernice Walters. Future meetings are as follows:

May 21st – Marge Fuhrmann will present a program.

August 20th – We will consider a field trip.

November 19th – To be determined.

After the short meeting, Betty Bohac presented a program on Karl Stefan, based on material furnished by the Stefan family to the Elkhorn Valley Museum, including the opportunity to see some of the memorabilia and pictures.

Frances Beck, Secretary

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS:

nzaruba@kdsi.net or mcgs@telebeep.com

Do you like the articles on historic Norfolk in this issue of the newsletter? Would you like to see more articles about the people, places and buildings of historic Norfolk and Madison County? Do you have any articles or stories you could submit for this newsletter? This editor is still unable to see well enough to read microfilm or a newspaper and is in need of items for future issues of the newsletter. Anything related to your family history, your genealogy, your research or anything with a Madison County connection would be appreciated. How about sending in a query about your family? Or a problem in your research that you have or have not been able to solve? How about a list of your family names, locations, etc? Perhaps others are researching the same. Do you have clippings from papers that you could copy and send in? Do you have photographs of interest? I can scan clippings and photos into my computer and return original items.

Nancy Zaruba, 304 N. Cottonwood, Norfolk, NE 68701

February Program

KARL STEFAN: OUR SILVER TONGUED WARRIOR

By Betty Bohac

Norfolk has its own silver tongued warrior! He was born March 1, 1884, on a little farm in the hills of Bohemia, and baptized in the only church Mellenhausen, Austria. He came to America with his parents when he was 2 years old. His father was a painter of murals and frescoes and wanted to come to America. Have you guessed who he was? His father put a map on his wall, shut his eyes and walked toward the map. His finger rested on Omaha, Nebraska, which decided the family's destination. How lucky for us.

This young boy became one of the most widely known and respected congressmen in America. He was our own Karl Stefan who lived in Norfolk and served the Third District from 1935 until his death in 1951. He attended school until the 7th grade. When he was 8 or 10 years old his father wanted him to learn German, his mother Bohemian. He ended up attending 6 months in each school. He would grow up to master thirteen languages. This was no ordinary fellow! He furthered his education by attending night school at the Omaha YMCA. His interest was in telegraphy. He became the youngest and fastest telegraph operator in the US.

In 1909, after his marriage to Ida Rosenbaum, he returned to Norfolk and became the AP telegrapher at the Norfolk Daily News. In 1922 he became WJAG's first newscaster. You may remember the program he is most known for "The Voice of The People" and the Voice of the Street, where he interviewed people on Norfolk's streets everyday. In 1924 he purchased a cigar store on the south side of Norfolk Avenue between 4th and 5th streets. He posted on the window of his store the news and especially information regarding baseball from around the country. This was just the beginning. He reported the births, deaths and funerals over the station as well as giving the daily hospital report. The old Viking cowbell rang at noon each day welcoming into the radio family all the babies born each day.

All that knew Karl Stefan instinctively felt that he was a personal friend. This friendliness was not shown to close acquaintances only---it was not posed. It was as natural to Karl as eating and breathing. It was this personality trait that motivated the people in northeast Nebraska to urge him to run for congress so that they would have their voices heard in Washington, D.C. He listened to the call and in 1934 he ran for the House of Representatives as a Republican. He soundly defeated the veteran Democrat with more than 72,000 votes.

Karl Stefan's exceptional ability, his rugged honesty and his desire to please the people of his state and nation were nationally recognized by both political parties. He was given positions of trust and responsibility and he was considered one of the nation's foremost statesmen.

Stefan made the study of governmental expenditures a first priority. Stefan, as a result of his knowledge was made a member of the important Appropriations Committee.

Congressman Stefan was sent to Europe by Congress to report on the huge expenditures being spent under the European Recovery Plan. One of his trips abroad took him to the little mining town of Kamen, Germany in July, 1938 where he and Mrs. Stefan presented \$1,000 worth of C.A.R.E. packages from Bloomfield, NE.

Congressman Stefan never forgot his constituents in Nebraska. Farm issues were a high priority. During his time in Congress millions of dollars were spent to improve the roads in his "Farm to Market" program.

The honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon Stefan by the National University of Washington. The degree recognized his work for better health and physical education programs in public schools, the preservation of American History, and the economy in the administration of government funds.

In 1945, Karl Stefan was the official Advisor to the United Nations Conference in San Francisco when they adopted their official charter. He also served in a similar capacity in 1951 at the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference. Stefan was also chosen to participate on a committee to inspect Alcatraz in 1940.

In those early years prior to his political career, he was the champion citizen in his home town. He promoted the "shut in" plan through which hundreds of destitute invalids received radio sets. In 1932 he was selected as publicity director of the North Nebraska Committee which brought quick relief to farmers during the grasshopper plague. He was first in line to assist with welfare programs in Norfolk. At Christmas he headed a group which gathered 400 gifts for the children in Norfolk. In recognition of his work for the local development of air service to the community, the City of Norfolk, formally named the municipal airport "Karl Stefan Memorial Airport" in 1955. Stefan had a deep interest in the airport and during his time in Norfolk he organized and promoted pilot training classes for young men of the community.

Stefan's interests even extended to the local Indian tribes. The Omaha, Winnebago, Ponca, and Santee tribes adopted him as "Pah-Hug-Mon-Three" meaning "Leader Man." The City of Norfolk owes a great debt of gratitude to Karl Stefan. He was perhaps the most well known, important, citizen to come out of Norfolk. The results of his devotion as a dedicated American and his love for his hometown should not be forgotten.

There is much more to tell about the "man in Washington" and his many accomplishments. Over 700 documents, photographs and artifacts were given to the Elkhorn Valley Museum. They all have been photographed and carefully stored. An exhibit is planned for 2012. There is a small exhibit in the Karl Stefan gallery at the present time.

Tip:

Always note the names of boarders as found with relatives in a census record. They might show up later as an in-law or neighbor. My great-grandfather John G. Grosam, had boarders and it finally made sense after talking with my older sister and only living uncle. Great-grandpa paid passage for many from the old village to come to America and they stayed with his family until they got on their feet. He must have been very generous! By Nancy Zaruba

The White House

We hear so much about the White House these days. In fact we seem to be bombarded with what's happening now, what has happened and even projecting what may happen. In fact, several hours on public television has been devoted to how to escape the White House in a national emergency. Below is a brief history of one of the oldest public buildings in America.

Exactly 300 hundred years after Columbus landed in the New World, the cornerstone for the White House was laid. It is currently the Capitol's oldest public building and has housed every president except Washington.

When John and Abigail Adams arrived in 1800 only six rooms were ready—a remote, desolate, and scarcely habitable place. In 1814 Admiral Cochrane's raiders burned the building leaving only blackened walls. It was rebuilt and painted white to hide the scars of fire and reoccupied in 1817 by James Monroe who titles it "The Executive Mansion." The name "White House" had been used before 1812, but not until President Theodore Roosevelt's time was it made official.

Set in 18 acres of lawns and gardens, The White House is one of the most beautiful buildings of that period. It has a friendly, simplicity which reflects all that is characteristic of an American Home. Its home's dignity is appropriate to a democracy founded on the honesty and dignity of man.

Millions of people visit the grounds each year and view the rooms that are open to the public. Many great figures in American history—Jefferson, a great Democrat who dared the constitution and his own conscience to double his own country's size with the Louisiana Purchase; Lincoln, fighting and dying to keep the nation whole and free; and many others to our present day.

When you hear news from the "White House", I hope you will give thought to what that building has meant to your ancestors. How their destiny was molded by the people who occupied this "House". It is almost imperative or at least more interesting to follow the events of history that were taking place in their time when doing your research.

This information came with the documents we received from Karl Stefan. It accompanied a picture of the White House that was not among the pictures we received. It was with the color etching reproduced in Talio-Chrome by A. F. Metellel.

TURN OF THE CENTURY -- MEMORIES OF NORFOLK PIONEERS--

Transcribed By Bernice Walters

Life in Norfolk at the turn of the Century was remembered clearly and with great pleasure by **Hawthorne Daniel**, noted author and former native of Norfolk, as he wrote for the Norfolk Daily News during the 1966 Centennial Celebration. Following is an excerpt from his articles fondly recalling early pioneers who lived their lives daily, through hard times and good, laying the foundations for the city of Norfolk as it stands today. Hawthorne Daniel was born Jan. 20, 1890 in Norfolk, served in the World Wars and later lived in Tuckahoe, N. Y.

Some of Norfolk's earliest citizens I remember are **Colonel Mathewson and his son, Charles**, as well as **John Olney**, who were close friends and near neighbors. How many others our family and I knew well I cannot say, but everyone in those days knew almost everyone else, and many of Norfolk's earliest names occur to me, such as **Louis Sessions, John McClary, Norris Huse, Dr. Bear** and many more.

I remember **Leonard's Drug Store** –probably because it had the first soda fountain I ever knew – and **Uhle's Grocery** where I often went on errands for my mother. I remember sitting stiffly before the big lens of the cameras in **Macy & Doughty's** photographic shop, which stood just south of the alley between Main Street (now Norfolk Ave.) and Madison Avenue, on the east side of Fourth Street as I recall.

Pasewalk's implement store was on Main Street just west of the **Olney Block**. Even more clearly I remember **Moldenhauer's** shoe shop, for I knew kindly **Mr. Moldenhauer** very well indeed, and **Mrs. Moldenhauer**, who often gave me generous pieces of her wonderful Kaffeekuchen, and I counted all their children among my friends.

Just as clearly I remember the fascinating intricacies that filled the shelves and hung from the racks in the crowded little shop on Main Street that was then run by **Paul Wetzel's** capable locksmith-gunsmith father. (In those days, incidentally, **Paul was "Powley"** to many others beside myself.) And what a collection of frontier weapons was to be seen in **Mr. Wetzel's** shop—not merely Winchesters and Springfields, but Sharps rifles, as well, and muzzle loaders of a dozen kinds.

I do not know, but there may possibly have been a Kentucky rifle now and then, or some other flintlock that had long since played its part on the westward moving frontier of an earlier day.

In company with my father, I so well remember riding in the little steamboat that the **Wetzel** family built and that they operated for a time on the River (NorthFork) above the dam. And the concern I felt lest its tall funnel be damaged as we passed beneath the railroad bridge, only to see that problem solved when **Mr. Wetzel** himself lowered the funnel's upper section on a hinge and pulled it up again, when we had glided beneath the bridge. On the north side

of the river a little way above the dam was the 'shoo' where we went ice skating, and in my imagination I can still see the sun set at the far western end of Main Street, with the "**standpipe**" rising high from the hill against the sky.

Neither have I forgotten the regular clank and hiss of the pumping engine in the waterworks on First Street, or the shrieking fire whistle that rose above the waterworks roof.

I have never forgotten the horse-drawn street car that came and went between Norfolk and Norfolk Junction. I even remember the one that carried workmen to and from the sugar beet factory on the other side of town. I still recall the echoes that came into existence when we stood on First Street beside the **Olney Block** and shouted at the blank wall of the mill where it rose beside the little canal that led from the dam a block away.

And I especially remember my daily chore of taking our cow to pasture—of following her along First Street from our barn to where **Weideman's** neat and picket surrounded house stood at the corner of the next street north of Main (a street unnamed in those days I believe); following her west to Fifth Street (or was it Fourth?), and from there north across the railroad tracks and down the gentle slope beside the streetcar track.

How far away the pasture lay on the level land ahead I do not know. The distance seemed great to me at 6 or 7, but I am confident that it was only a few hundred yards—a quarter mile perhaps, and surely less than a half. And there, not far from where some 15 or 16 years later I was invited to play a few rounds of golf. I would open the gate and let the patient cow pass through, then close the gate and make my way to school.

No matter where I went in the Norfolk of those days, I was certain every now and then to be greeted by members of families whose names memory brings to mind: **Norton, Harding, Owen, Pahlmann, Sharpless, Bucholtz, Salzberg, Brittingham, Asmus, Ebel, Carabine, Schwertfeger**, and many more beside.

And these along with many more, were those who in one way or another during the two or three preceding decades, had turned a bit of Indian country into a pleasant Nebraska town — who had played their various parts not only in the creation of Norfolk, but also of a nation never equaled in all the history of the world as far as equality and opportunity are concerned, and unsurpassed for those who understand the priceless principles laid down by the founding fathers.

One century has passed since Norfolk first came into existence, and another is beginning. What the future holds we cannot know, but the principles and character that have guided the town this far can confidently be counted on to carry it much further.

From the Mary Voss Collection
By Bernice Walters

**Nebraska State
Genealogical Society's
34th Annual Conference
& Membership Meeting
Hosted by the Otoe County
Genealogical Society**

Featuring

Gail Blankenau



**Friday & Saturday
May 6th & May 7th, 2011
at the
First United Methodist
Church
Nebraska City, NE 68410**

Gail Blankenau's Sessions

Session #1:

Introduction to German Parish Records

This introduction and case study will discuss working in the German language, resources for deciphering Fraktur, the German genealogical vocabulary, naming patterns, and the types of occupations genealogists will encounter in these records, with special emphasis on the different kinds of farmers in Germany.

Session #2:

Keeping Up with the Joneses...and Smiths

If you are stymied by your ancestors with common names, you will certainly want to attend this session. Although these families present special problems, there are techniques you can use to zero in on your ancestor as an individual—no matter what his or her name was.

Session #3:

Using Land Records

Your research hitting any walls? It may be that you need to expand your quest to land records. Gail will guide you through the different kinds of land records, and help you to prioritize and identify what she calls "high-value targets".

Session #4:

Rich Resources for Poor Ancestors

One of the most difficult problems in genealogy is researching our more obscure families—the people who were poor enough that we assume they didn't leave a paper trail. This session will provide proven strategies for finding our less-fortunate forebears.

Session #5:

Dating and Identifying Your 19th-Century Photos

Learn how to use power combinations of image type, fashions, photographers and your family tree to reveal the *where, when* and sometimes even the *who* in those intriguing faces.

Our Featured Speaker:

Gail Blankenau

Gail Blankenau is an experienced genealogist and photo historian who shares her research and advice in such well-known periodicals as the *New England Historical and Genealogical Society Register*, *Everton's Genealogical Helper*, and *Family Chronicle* magazine. Genealogists who crave a unique perspective and a fresh point of view will find new inspiration and ideas in Gail's engaging and high-energy presentations.

Guest Speakers:

Dr. Sara Crook

Dr. Crook is professor of Political Science and History at Peru State College. She will be portraying Barbara Kagi Mayhew and discussing the Mayhew family's activities with the Underground RR. A tour of the Mayhew cabin museum will be part of the Friday evening activities.

Curt Wolbert

Curt is a founding member and first president of the Otoe County Genealogical Society. His presentation will be "Research at the *Nebraska State Historical Society Library*".

Dean Podoll

Dean is a member of the Otoe County Genealogical Society and the Historical Societies of Cass and Sarpy Counties. He is a volunteer teacher in the Omaha Public Schools and works with 3rd grade students at the Chandler View Elementary School in Bellevue. He will present "Notable Nebraskans during the Civil War".

Pre-Conference Activities

May 5, 2011 - Thursday evening: The Morton James Public Library at 923 1st Corso will remain open until 9pm. From 6pm to 9pm conference registration packets will be available for pickup at the library and Otoe County Genealogical Society personnel will be on hand to assist anyone wanting to research at the library. The GAR Memorial Hall at 940 1st Corso, will also be open for tours on Thurs evening from 6pm to 9pm. An admission fee of \$3.00 per person is required.

Conference Agenda

Day One—Friday

- 8:30 am – Conference Check-in
- 9:00 am – Welcome Message by Society Presidents
- 9:15–10:15 am – Session #1 – Gail Blankenau
- 10:15–10:35 am – Break/Visit Vendors
- 10:35–11:30 am – Curt Wolbert
- 11:30–1:00 pm – Lunch and Awards
- 1:00–2:00 pm – Session #2 – Gail Blankenau
- 2:00–2:30 pm – Break/Visit Vendors
- 2:30–3:30 pm – Dr. Sara Crook

Friday afternoon/evening: Arbor Lodge State Park/J. Sterling Morton home will remain open until 7pm. (NE State Park Permit is Required). The Mayhew Cabin Museum /John Brown's Cave will be open until 7pm. At 6pm there will be a walking tour of Nebraska City's Wyuka Cemetery, one of the oldest cemeteries in the state. Refreshments and a social time will follow the tour.

Day Two—Saturday

- 8:00 am – Conference Check-in
- 8:30 am – NSGS Annual Membership Meeting
- 9:00 am – Welcome Message by Society Presidents
- 9:15–10:15 am – Session #3 – Gail Blankenau
- 10:15–10:45 am – Break/Visit Vendors
- 10:45–11:30 am – Dean Podoll
- 11:30–1:00 pm – Lunch
- 1:00–2:00 pm – Session #4 – Gail Blankenau
- 2:00–2:30 pm – Break/Visit Vendors
- 2:30–3:30 pm – Session #5 – Gail Blankenau

General Information

Date: Friday, May 6th, 2011 ~ 8:30 am. – 3:30pm
 Saturday, May 7th, 2011 ~ 8:00am – 3:30pm

The Conference will be held at:

First United Methodist Church

1023 1st Ave. ~ Nebraska City, NE 68410

†Please note: Depending on registration numbers, conference sessions may be held in the Church Sanctuary. If so, food and drink will not be allowed during sessions and you will need to provide your own accommodations for note taking (no tables).

VENDORS ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT US FOR DISPLAY SPACE REQUIREMENTS.

Hotel Accommodations

(Please mention the NSGS Genealogy Conference when making your reservations)

Arbor Day Farm Lied Lodge & Conference Center
 800-546-5433 / 402-873-8733
www.liedlodge.org

Best Western Nebraska City Inn
 800-western / 402-873-7000
www.bestwesternnebraska.com

Deluxe Inn
 800-325-2525 / 402-873-6656
www.deluxehome.com

Whispering Pines Bed and Breakfast
 877-277-3577 / 402-873-5850
www.bbwhisperingpines.com

Syracuse Inn and Suites
 402-269-2700
www.syracuseinnandsuites.com

THIS BROCHURE WAS FUNDED IN PART BY AN OTOE COUNTY VISITORS COMMITTEE GRANT.

[HTTP://WWW.NEBRASKACITY.COM](http://www.NEBRASKACITY.COM)

Conference Fees

_____ Conference One Day Only.....\$40.00 per person
 (Includes lunch & syllabus for day selected)

Will Attend: _____ Friday or _____ Saturday
 (please select day attending)

_____ Conference Both Days.....\$75.00 per person
 (Includes lunch & syllabus both days)

Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Enclosed is my check payable to: NSGS (Nebraska State Genealogical Society) in the amount of \$ _____

Send Payment and Registration to:

NSGS Conference Registration
 P.O. Box 6
 Auburn, NE 68305-0006

Please return registration by **April 28, 2011.**

Visit www.nsgs.org to register online and for additional information or call (402) 274-7524

Last minute registrations and attendees are welcome but lunch meals may not be available.

ABSOLUTELY NO REFUNDS WILL BE ISSUED

Rome Miller Entertains Prominent Norfolk Citizens

Transcribed by Bernice Walters

Rome Miller, prominent citizen in Norfolk of the 1890s recalls the "Good Old Days" to entertain his old friends at a dinner party he held at the **Hotel Norfolk**, in *August of 1931*. So captioned the article in the *Norfolk Daily News* of that time as Norfolk residents attended his party that August evening.

"The good old days" formed the chief topic of conversation and the subject of several informal talks at the dinner party given by Rome Miller of Los Angeles, a former prominent resident of Norfolk, for nearly a score of his old friends in the **Pheasant Room** of the **Hotel Norfolk**, Friday evening.

Mr. Miller, who is now one of the most widely known hotel owners in the United States, at one time operated a railroad eating house at the Northwestern Station in South Norfolk. The restaurant was one of a chain of similar establishments owned by Mr. Miller along the main line of the Northwestern. While a resident of Norfolk Mr. Miller was also interested in many enterprises and probably had as much to do with "putting Norfolk on the map" as any of the city's early citizens. He left Norfolk in 1895 after living here twelve years.

The guests at the dinner Friday evening were all men who had known Mr. Miller when he lived here. The list included: **C. E. Burnham**, who acted as informal toastmaster, **C. F. Marquardt**, **John Flynn**, **J. W. Ransom**, **C. E. Doughty**, **P. F. Bell**, **Herman Gerecke**, **J. C. Stitt**, **W. R. Hoffman**, **L. P. Pasewalk**, **C. H. Kelsey**, **Gene Huse**, **George Dudley**, **Harry Miller of Stanton**, and **H. H. Graham of Omaha**.

Mr. Miller gave a most interesting talk about the days when he lived here. He described the building of Norfolk's horse car line, which he built and operated. The car line ran from his eatinghouse in South Norfolk to his residence at Thirteenth Street and Norfolk Avenue. The Jersey dairy herd owned by Mr. Miller was one of the things about which Norfolkans boasted in the early 1890s. Mr. Miller told his guests about wagering his entire herd on President Cleveland's opponent the first time that Cleveland was elected, and was forced to turn over the entire herd to the late Jim Dahlman of Omaha.

The founding of the Masonic and Knight Templar Orders here was described by Mr. Miller. He told of helping to persuade the late C. A. Mast to build the Norfolk National Bank Building three stories high instead of two, so that the Masonic Lodge could have a home.

The rounding up of 100 men to "put up" \$100,000 to bring the Norfolk Beet Sugar Factory here was also narrated by him. The venture proved costly to some of those interested but all of the money was paid, and the sugar factory operated here for some time.

Among the people and places recalled by **Mr. Miller were: John Olney's** store at First Street and Norfolk Avenue, once the leading store of north Nebraska, where the Post Office was located; **Dr. Daniels; McClary and Hayes** stores; the **Carl Asmus** grocery; **N. A. Rainbolt; W. W. Marple; Dr. Alexander Bear; W. N. Huse; C. H. Reynolds and Horace McBride**. The speaker related some incident in connection with each, which was instantly remembered by the diners.

During the term of office of Norfolk's first mayor, **Herman Gerecke**, **Rome Miller** was a member of the city council. At a council meeting one night Mr. Miller asked Mayor Gerecke what he would "take" for the lot just east of the present Hotel Norfolk. Having no intention of selling the lot, and recalling that no Norfolk lot had ever sold for more than \$400. up to that time, Mayor Gerecke replied "One thousand dollars". Mr. Miller promptly took him up on the offer and bought the lot for \$1,000. Mr. Gerecke admitted at the dinner Friday evening that he thought Mr. Miller was foolish for paying that amount for the lot, but when Mr. Miller sold it again in a short time for \$2,500, Mr. Gerecke quickly changed his mind.

Many of the guests at Mr. Miller's dinner gave short talks about the early days. Everyone present pronounced the affair one of the most enjoyable get-together sessions of "old timers" they had ever attended. The **Hotel Norfolk Pheasant Room** was gorgeously decorated with garden flowers. It was cooled by means of large cakes of ice with fans behind them, blowing cool air toward the diners.

Since leaving Norfolk Mr. Miller has become owner of the Rome and Fontenelle Hotels in Omaha, two or three hotels in Los Angeles, and is interested in the Hamilton Hotel chain on the west coast.

MADISON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

PO Box 1031, Norfolk, NE 68702-1031

Information and queries:

mcgs@telebeep.com

Membership and newsletter:

nzaruba@kdsi.net

Memberships are \$15 per year.**Research Requests:** \$10 and a family group sheet to:
MCGS, PO Box 1031, Norfolk, NE 68702-1031**Meeting Information:** Subject to change
Call Nancy 402-379-4654**Website:** www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nemcgs/
or <http://mcgs.nesgs.org>**2010-2011 Officers**

President: Betty Bohac

Vice-President: Phyllis McCain

Secretary: Frances Beck

Treasurer: Bernice Walters

Newsletter Editor: Nancy Zaruba

Website Address Please note the new address for one of our websites. The Nebraska State Genealogical Society moved their website to a new server which therefore changed the address. Our new address is now: **<http://mcgs.nesgs.org>** which stands for: mcgs is Madison County Genealogical Society and nesgs for Nebraska State Genealogical Society and its an organization not a commercial business which is why its .org not .com - this might make it easier to remember actually. (Note: there is NO www in front)

Membership Reminder

The date above your name on the mailing label shows when your memberships is expiring. Membership renewals will continue your membership for one year after your expiration date. Thank you for your renewal. Your donations to our society are greatly appreciated.

HECTOR'S BLISS: Black Homesteaders at Goose Lake

By: Dennis Vossberg, Plainview, NE

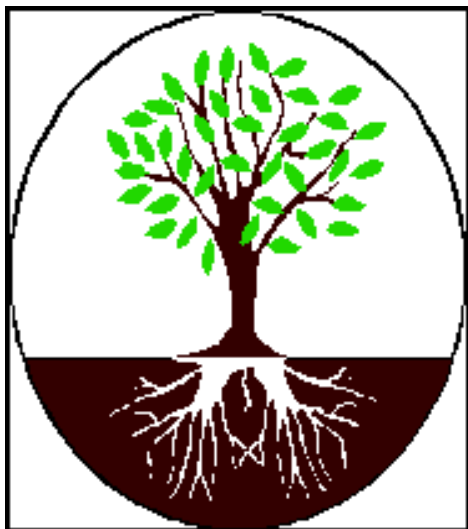
This book is about the first ex-slaves who rolled into the desolate, rugged Sand Hills of Northern Wheeler County, County, Nebraska , after the Civil War. They must have thought they had landed at the end of the earth. Among other things, they had been told that their contained abundant coal deposits, and that ample rain would follow once the sod was opened up by plowing. These black pioneers had little choice but to desparately make a living on 160 acres of dry, sandy soil that was barely suited for grazing. An ironic twist resulted in the community to be named "Bliss", so called because a local family by that name had the first Post Office. A determined few stuck it out until the end of World War 1. Then they all simply vanished. The book continues through their burial in a lost Negro Cemetery by peaceful Goose Lake. Dennis has spent many years researching the story of these people.

This true story is brilliantly written by Dennis Vossberg, who will take the members of the Madison County Genealogical Society on a tour to walk in the steps of those former Negro slaves. Mark your calendars now for this exciting adventure on **AUGUST 20, 2011.**

More information will be coming to outline the details of this planned outing.

MADISON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

PO Box 1031, Norfolk, NE 68702-1031



The date on your label is your membership renewal date. Please check it and renew to save postage/printing costs.

TEMP RETURN SERVICE FIRST CLASS

MCGS Meeting Announcements

The May program will be presented by Margie Fuhrmann. The date and time will be announced in the next issue.

There will be no meeting in March or April due to low attendance.

The annual elections will be held 100% by mail this year. If you wish to hold any office please contact any officer of this group or write a note to PO Box 1031, Norfolk, NE 68702-1031.

The August meeting will be our annual outing. We are planning a tour to Goose Lake and environs as detailed in the book *Hector's Bliss* by *Dennis Vossberg*, the author. Dennis will give us a personal, guided tour leaving from Neligh about 10 am on August 20. More details in a later issue of this newsletter.