

GOTHENBURG HISTORICAL MUSEUM

“A Window into the Past”

APRIL 2015

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GOTHENBURG HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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Newsletter Editor:
Anne Anderson

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AND TRAINING—WEDNESDAY APRIL 22, 2015

**You are cordially invited
to the Annual Volunteer & Membership
Appreciation & Training.**

*Please be our guest for a special program to
acquaint you with new items in the museum.*

It will be held at the United Methodist Church beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Refreshments following presentation.

THANK YOU TO THESE 2014 GREETER VOLUNTEERS

They provided 1,140 hours of service to the museum.

Jan Gill	Cathy Simon	Roger Heidebrink	Denise Brittenham
Cindy Peyton	Marcy Wahlgren	Elsie Cyriacks	Charlene Ogier
Janice Gonzales	Dixie Ackerman	Chuck Titkemeier	Carolyn Peterson
Diane Harm	Mary Theasmeyer	Bev Titkemeier	Carol VanOverbeke
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Rhonda Jobman	Donna McConnell	Cordelia Aden	Syd Kite
Connie Bihlmaier	Liz Frerichs	Cora Lee Bosch	Jane Sheets
Rosie Bates	Diane Gaudreault	Cathy Healey	Jack Kniss
Diane Trullinger	Sandi Brestel	Dick Schwanz	Irene Athey
Arlene Franzen	Bonnie Paulsen	Ramona Ollendorf	

Gothenburg Historical Museum Mission Statement:

The mission of the Historical Museum is:

- ***to manage donated and loaned items in a responsible manner,***
- ***to encourage and provide opportunities for genealogy research,***
- ***to enhance the quality of life for the people of Gothenburg by preserving our history and heritage.***

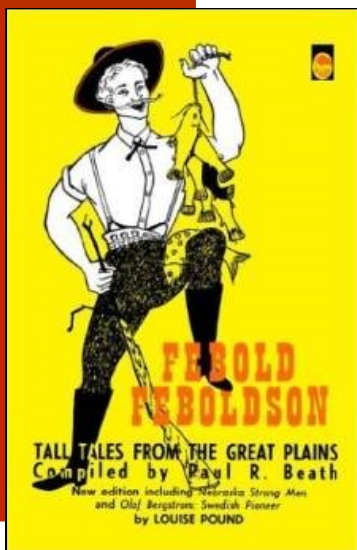
The Lincoln Highway Stair-Steps

The Lincoln Highway Stairs Steps south of Gothenburg were part of the original 1913 highway that crossed the United States from Boston to San Francisco. You can still travel this route by taking the Banner Road all the way to North Platte. If you look closely, there are road signs that mark this historic road. The Gothenburg Tourism Committee is working to provide additional, informational, signage

along this route. There is another feature of this route that may not be quite as well known. A piece of the original roadbed can be seen on Highway 47 just south of Gothenburg, between the Platte River bridge and the Banner Road. Located to the east you will see a "berm" or raised roadway that vehicles traveled after crossing the mile-wide bridge spanning the Platte River. The "berm" is on

private property so please view from the roadside. The Lincoln Highway, while not a "trail", was certainly not the only road in the Gothenburg area in yesteryear. The Oregon, Overland Stage and Mormon Trails passed by our community as well as the famous Pony Express route.

It seems Febold was the earliest settler in these parts, and, it was through his influence that the government decided to run the Platte river through Nebraska instead of Kansas.



FACTS BEHIND STRONGMEN OF YORE!

Paul Bunyan's legendary feats of strength are part of a long tradition that stretches back to ancient Greece, where guys like Hercules and Atlas were known to hoist the whole world on their shoulders.

Out here in Nebraska the most famous strongman distinction goes to Febold Feboldson, reputed to be the first white settler west of the Mississippi.

Feboldson was an acquaintance of Paul Bunyan. They even worked together on a project to re-establish the state line between Nebraska and Kansas. The line was accidentally erased when Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox leveled all the mountains that once cluttered Kansas. Feboldson came up with the idea to breed bees as big as eagles and he hitched them to a plow. He released them at one end of the state and they

made a bee-line for the other end.

Another story goes this way. Febold noticed that Kansas was just as mountainous as Colorado, and in sympathy for the farmers and their laboring animals simply turned the state over to reveal the flat underside. Farming has been much easier and more profitable since then.

Feboldson and Bunyan had something in common. Both were made popular not by pioneers trading lies around the campfire but by companies advertising their products.

Feboldson was the brainchild of Wayne Carroll in the late 1920's. Carroll was a lumber dealer in Gothenburg, and wrote a column for a the Gothenburg Independent where Feboldson was included in his ad called "The Two By Four:". When the Independent folded, Don Holmes of the Gothenburg Times kept the on-going saga of Feboldson alive for years. Eventually Paul Beath of Gothenburg compiled several of the stories and printed a book entitled Febold Feboldson. Beath's work helped cinch Febold's status as Nebraska's most famous strong man. Being Nebraskan,

Feboldson was no lumberjack. Instead, he fought with twisters and droughts and other extreme Nebraska weather conditions. Take 1848 for instance. That was the year the Petrified Snow covered the plains all summer and held up the '48ers in their gold rush to California with the result that they became '49ers. At that time Febold was operating an ox train between San Francisco and Kansas City, because the snow prevented him from doing anything else.

After twenty years, he gave up on taming the state's climate and moved to the sunny climate of California.

In 1973 the "Old Codger" shows up in the office of Tot Holmes by surprise. For those who don't know who the "Old Codger" is, he's the one and only Bergstrom Stromsburg, grand nephew of the legendary Febold Feboldson. Tot would continue the tall tales of Bergstrom Stromsburg for everyone's enjoyment until July 1985.

LAKE HELEN—THEN AND NOW



In the book Paul R. Beath compiled on “Febold Feboldson”, Mr Beath describes Febold as “an indomitable Swedish pioneer who could surmount any difficulty.” He goes on to write: “(Febold) wrestled with regional adversities which beset early settlers as tornadoes, hostile Indians, drouths, extreme heat and cold, unsavory politicians and floods.”

Is it possible that the resourceful and visionary Febold hitched a mighty team of mules to an oversized plow and ripped out

the Gothenburg Canal which leads to Lake Helen and eventually Lafayette Park, which led to the flume and to the pow-

er plant that supplied electricity to Gothenburg in the early years? Well, the part about Febold, although intriguing, is not how it happened, but the other parts of the story are true!

We are looking forward to water in the lake again sometime soon. Construction is nearing completion.



1895 Independent News reported “Gothenburg today is the leading city in Western Nebraska ever since the completion of the Gothenburg Canal in 1890 for power purposes and for the development of the young city as a manufacturing center.”

2015 VISITORS.....

TWENTY THREE JOURNALISTS AND TRAVEL WRITERS TOUR GOTHENBURG:

Gothenburg hosted a group of journalists writing for national and regional media outlets on Sunday March 22nd. This tour which included several areas of Nebraska was sponsored by the Nebraska Tourism Commission. While in Gothenburg

they visited the 1913 Lincoln Highway “berm” located just south of the Platte River, the historic Pony Express Station located in Ehmen Park and the Gothenburg Historical Museum. The visiting journalists write for a wide variety of publications including Better Homes & Gardens, Reader’s Digest Global Traveler Magazine, Western Art & Architecture, Calgary Herald, MSN.com,

Country Living, Forbes Life, Yahoo! Travel, USA Today, Miami Herald, RV Life, plus many more. Thank you to Matt Weiss, Joyce Sabin, Roger Heidebrink, Dick Larson, Rhonda Jobman, Anne Anderson and Jane Sheets for their help showcasing Gothenburg for these visitors.

VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS WELCOME

Would you consider becoming a volunteer for the Museum? If so, drop a line at our mailing address, call or email us:

GOTHENBURG HISTORICAL MUSEUM

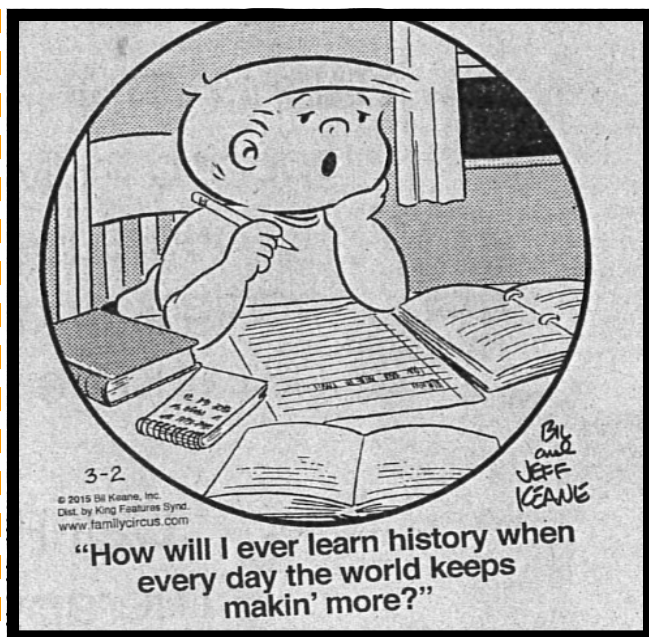
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E-mail: gothenburghistory@outlook.com



2015 RENEWALS

Thank you to the following individuals who have renewed their membership and contributed to the museum building fund to date.....

- Dick & Connie Larson
- Pam Slack
- Bev & Chuck Titkemeier
- Denise Brittenham
- Leonard France
- Gene & Velma Schriver
- Jim & Janice Gonzales
- Milan & Barb Franzen
- Tom & Rhonda Jobman
- Gary & Anne Anderson
- Roger Heidebrink
- Jane Sheets

FYI

The museum will open for the season on Friday, May 1st. Hours will be:
Tuesday-Friday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Form of Payment

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Check payable to:

- ☐ **Gothenburg Historical Museum**
PO Box 204
Gothenburg, NE 69138.

- ☐ **Cash**

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Email Address

2015 Annual Membership

Life Time Membership

- ☐ **10x Building Fund Contributor \$1,000**

Building Fund*

- ☐ **Building Fund Benefactor \$500+**

- ☐ **Building Fund Contributor.....\$100+**

* Contribution to the Building Fund includes an annual membership.

Annual Membership

- ☐ **Supporting Membership\$50**

- ☐ **Contributing or Family Membership\$25**

- ☐ **Base Membership\$15**