

# GOTHENBURG HISTORICAL MUSEUM

## "A Window into the Past"

OCT 2017 - 3rd Qtr.

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### GOTHENBURG HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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PO Box 204

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www.gothenburghistory.com

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### NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Anne Anderson

## PAID IN FULL: NOW LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

On August 16, 2005 the Board of Directors for the Gothenburg Pony Express Historical Society met to decide the future of the society. They passed a resolution to purchase the building located on the corner of 15th and Avenue F to be used as a "local repository of historical artifacts and collections as a public museum." Board members present

and

agreeing  
ing  
were

President

Hilton, Secretary Ramona Ollendorf, Treasurer Dick Larson and Board member LaVon Pape.

The Gothenburg Pony Express Historical Society dba/Gothenburg Historical Museum opened their doors in June 2006 and volunteers have welcomed visitors every year from the first of May until the end of September.

Each year a payment was made on the

mortgage with the anticipated last payment due in 2025. With the generous help from the local Tourism Committee and the Dawson County Visitors Committee Lodging Tax Improvement Fund a final payment

on the mortgage note was made early on July 27, 2017.

The board is now

planning for

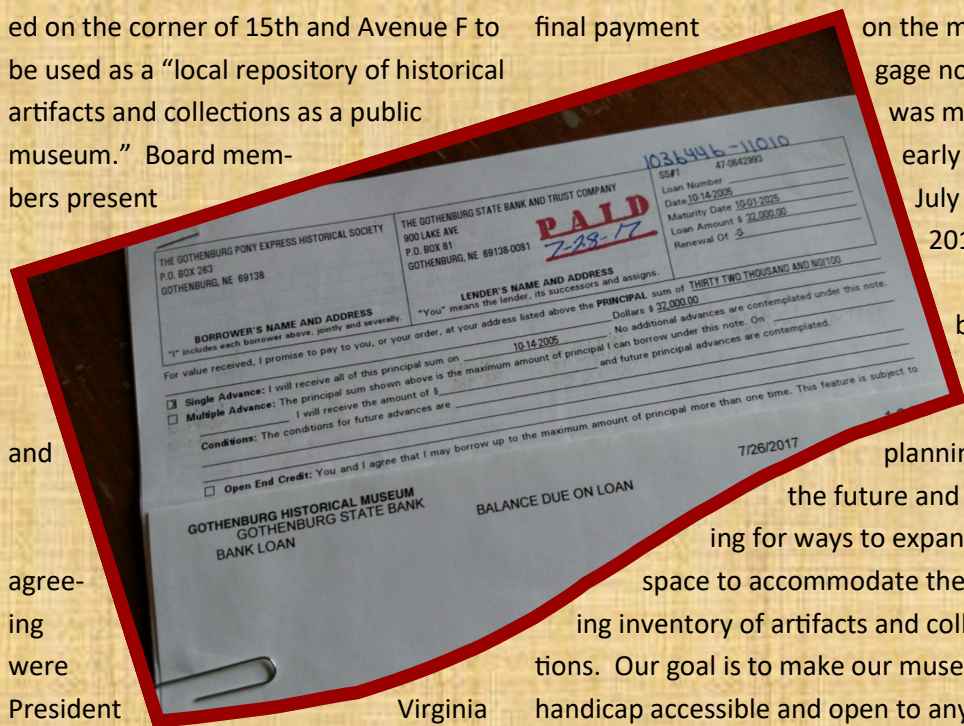
the future and looking for ways to expand our

space to accommodate the growing

inventory of artifacts and collections.

Our goal is to make our museum handicap accessible and open to anyone who has a desire to take a step back in time and explore the history of our area.

**THANK YOU** to all those who have contributed to our building fund and supported us with your membership renewals and a special **THANK YOU** to the Chamber Tourism Committee for their commitment to the expansion of tourism in Gothenburg and Dawson County.



# WHO WAS OLOF BERGSTROM ?

## About Lennsjo, Sweden Birth Place of Olof Bergstrom

Lennsjo, Sweden is beautifully situated 30 miles inland from Hudiksvall in the parish of Bjuraker in Halsingland, Sweden. Halsingland is a region about 180 miles north of Stockholm in the middle of Sweden. There, a memorial dedicated in 1935, commemorates the life of Olof Bergstrom and what he did for the temperance movement in Sweden.

Olof Bergstrom was born in 1841 in the small village of Lennsjo in the Halsingland region of Sweden.

He was most famous for founding the IOGT-movement in Sweden (the International Organization of Good Templars, one of the most popular temperance organizations in the 19th and 20th centuries); but he also initiated and financed several industrial projects. His greatest successes however, happened as entrepreneur and emigrant in the USA.

His father, Nils Johansson Bergstrom, was a day laborer in the local mills but got work for a wealthy farmer and moved to Delsbo in 1841. The family was allowed to settle in an old soldier's homestead, and this is where Olof and his six siblings grew up.

Olof learned to play the violin and at an early age and was hired to play at local weddings and other events. When he was 15 he moved to Hudiksvall, the region's urban center, on the coast where he worked as a carpenter.

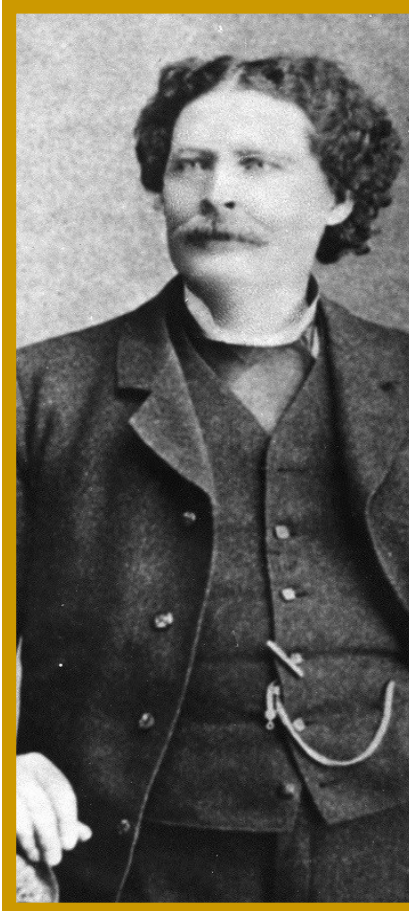
At the early age of 16 Olof was initiated into the very popular Baptist church and quickly rose in its ranks. He was a very talented preacher and was sent to Stockholm to become an anointed pastor. Much of the Baptist activity in Sweden was influenced and financed with the Baptist

came very popular. However, after a time he became unenamored with the Baptist movement.

It is now that Olof begins his business activities in the United States becoming employed as a land agent for the Union Pacific Railroad. It was through this connection that Bergstrom is recognized as the founder of the city of Gothenburg, Nebraska in 1885 and for his efforts to recruit many Swedes to emigrate.

Through his business dealings, Olof became a respected member of society and established himself as a successful entrepreneur.

In 1890 however, he was indicted in a sordid murder trial when a friend of his is shot and killed at Olof's home in Gothenburg. Even though he was acquitted, his life was never the same and many of his business contacts didn't want to do business with him. His new ambitious business projects all fell short and he died in anonymity in 1910 in Maryland, TN.



movement in the US. Through this he learned English and gained important connections in the United States. In 1869 he was offered a position to preach in Moline, IL and be-

*Information provided by Swedish Journalist Jonas Ekblom and the IOGT Lodge in Lennsjo, Sweden.*

# LET'S ALL GO TO THE MOVIES.....

**F**rom the time Thomas A. Edison invented motion pictures, movies have been an important part of entertainment in every new town. Therefore, it is not unusual that Gothenburg would have movies theaters as the town grew and progressed.

Probably the first place movies were shown was in the "Opera House" which was built in 1892. This building was located on the corner of 10th & Winchell Street (later re-named Lake Avenue). The Opera House was a three-story structure with stores on the ground level, doctor and business offices on the second floor and a dance hall, basketball court and stage area on the third floor. The building was destroyed by fire in 1912.

In 1908 George Norsworthy built the Platte Hotel. The north half of the building was leased by George Elwick for a theater called "The Gem Theatre" which ran movies three days a week. By 1915 it changed ownership and in 1920 John Beath remodeled the area and opened a restaurant.

Another early place of entertained which provided movies was the "Auditorium Garage" which was on Ninth Street east of the existing Hicken Lumber Company. This auditorium had a roller skating rink on the ground floor

and movies were shown in an area above the skating rink. This building was also later destroyed by fire.

In the September 25, 1909 issue of the Gothenburg Times it was reported that work had begun on a new "opera house" on the corner of 10th & Avenue D. The design of the building made it very adaptable for stage shows and productions. The auditorium included a balcony, box seats on each side of the stage downstairs and an orchestra pit.

The Lake Theatre was opened in 1922 by Jack Lewis in the south half of the building which once housed Potter's Pharmacy at the corner of 10th and Lake Avenue. After the untimely death of Lewis in a car-train accident the theater was purchased by Glen Van Wey. Van Wey would eventually move to the former Opera House renamed The Sun Theatre located at 10th & Avenue D. He opened the Sun Theatre on February 25, 1927 with admission prices of 10 cents for children and 20 cents for adults.

Since movies in those days were silent, one of the special things to make movies more enjoyable was the use of an orchestra. In late 1927, talking pictures were introduced and being shown in the cities. Many theater owners felt talking movies were just a fad and would never last.

1930 sound equipment was installed and talking pictures were here to stay.

The problem of Sunday movies became an issue in the later part of 1929 and would eventually be put to a vote of the people with a special election. The question was "Shall there be Sunday movies?" with a vote of 479 (For) and 449 (Against) the answer was clear.

During the early thirties and the days of the depression, many people didn't have money to spend on such pleasures as going to the movies. The Sun Theatre would have what they called "egg nights". Eggs were six cents a dozen, so the theater would admit a child or an adult for one dozen eggs. The eggs were then sold to a poultry company in Kearney.

In 1956 Ernest Van Wey would take over the Sun Theatre following the death of his father. Later, with the competition of television, more school activities and an increase of film

rental costs, the Van Wey's announced they were retiring at the end of 1981.

Almost immediately the Gothenburg Community Playhouse began a fund drive to "Save the Sun" and they purchased the building in December 1982. They continue to make changes and improvements and keep the tradition begun over 100 years ago by offering first class entertainment to the Gothenburg area.



*The Auditorium Garage*

The information about OPERA HOUSES, MOVIES & THEATRES DURING GOTHENBURG'S FIRST 100 YEARS was taken from the 1992 Gothenburg Area History Book.

To read more about Gothenburg's early history, visit the museum and find more stories of our exciting past.

# 2017 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

**T**hank you to the following who have renewed their membership and contributed to the museum building fund to date ....

- |                               |                               |                               |                             |                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Dennis & Sue Kirkpatrick*** | • Gothenburg Feed Products**  | • Charlie & Connie Bihlmaier* | • Daryl & Velma Schriver*   | • Jim & Janice Gonzales |
| • Marcia Welch***             | • Leonard France**            | • Milan & Barb Franzen*       | • Robin & Lynnette Stevens* | • Father Wayne Pavela   |
| • Gerald & Janet Kranau***    | • Loren & Mary Koch*          | • Chuck & Bev Titkemeier*     | • Cathy Simon               | • Mid Nebraska Realty   |
| • Pam Slack***                | • Larry & Kathy Nichols*      | • Mike & Deb Bacon*           | • Robert Ronnekamp          | • Sus Peden             |
| • Roger & Carol Wahlgren***   | • Robert & Mary Theasmeyer*   | • Carolyn Peterson*           | • Eddie & Regis Fruit       | • Jane Sheets           |
| • Terry & Cathy Healey**      | • Jan Gill*                   | • Gary & Anne Anderson*       | • First State Bank          | • Karen Oliver          |
|                               | • Henry & Patricia Potter*    | • Dick & Jackie Schwanz*      | • Lyle & Arlene Franzen     | • Mary Kite             |
|                               | • Verlin & Charolett Janssen* | • Dick & Connie Larson*       | • Eugene & Lettie Morse     | • Tim & Cordelia Aden   |
|                               | • Stone Hearth Estates*       | • Norm & Colleen Geiken*      | • Monty & Sheri Schriver    | • The Home Agency       |
|                               | • Arlan & Tip Ronnekamp*      | • Jack & Faye Kniss*          | • Tom & Rhonda Jobman       |                         |
|                               | • Dave & Linda Loostrom*      | • Roger Heidebrink*           | • Romaine & Joan Aden       |                         |
|                               | • Denise Brittenham*          | • Dick & Connie Ostergard*    | • Leigh & Marilyn McNeal    |                         |

\*\*\*Life-Time Member  
\*\*Building Fund Benefactor  
\*Building Fund Contributor

## LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS

- |                         |                            |                             |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Karla Blasé           | • Donna McConnell          | • Pam Slack*                |
| • Denise Brittenham     | • Ramona Ollendorf         | • Marcia Welch*             |
| • Jan Gill              | • Blaine & Arlene Peterson | • Dennis & Sue Kirkpatrick* |
| • Gothenburg State Bank | • Jenny Raymond            | • Gerald & Janet Kranau*    |
| • Terry & Cathy Healey  | • Tot & Pauline Holmes     | • Roger & Carol Wahlgren*   |
| • Ronald Klein          | • Marcy Wahlgren-Aden      |                             |
| • Dick & Connie Larson  | • Jack & Mary Ostergard    |                             |

*\*New 2017 Lifetime Memberships*

## Form of Payment

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Check payable to:**

**Gothenburg Historical Museum**

**PO Box 204**

**Gothenburg, NE 69138**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

## 2017 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



You are Invited to the  
**11th ANNUAL VOLUNTEER &  
MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION  
OF THE  
GOTHENBURG HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

on Sunday, November 12, 2017

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Please be our guest for a  
special dessert bar & program  
*at the First United Methodist Church  
1401 Lake Avenue, Gothenburg, NE*

Please RSVP to

Anne Anderson—529-0906 or  
Roger Heidebrink—529-2196

## HELP NEEDED DURING OFF-SEASON

**WANTED:** Volunteers willing to take on short-term tasks during the winter months. No experience required as we are willing to train you as necessary. Hours are flexible and working conditions are excellent. Pay is your personal satisfaction of helping to maintain a first-class museum. Help with any of the following:

- Sort and file pictures
- Scan pictures into the computer
- Update displays
- Gather information about local businesses both new and old
- Take pictures of items we have on display
- Help to update and organize filing system
- If you like to use a hammer, we have a couple small construction projects waiting just for you.

*Contact Roger at 529-2196 if available*