

NEBRASKA HUMANITIES

2008

Volume XII



Fences of every description were used to hold livestock and mark property boundaries on the Jack Roath Ranch, northwest of West Union, Nebraska, circa 1886. Photo by Solomon D. Butcher. Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

featuring
The 12th Annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities
"Presidential Courage," by Michael Beschloss

and including
The 2007 NHC Annual Report



When we ask who we are and what our lives ought to mean, we are using the humanities. The Nebraska Humanities Council enhances the quality of life in communities across our state through programs that study the human race, its achievements, its creations, its dreams and aspirations, its failures and triumphs. The NHC promotes a better understanding of Nebraska—who we are and where we have been—to build a better future.

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Photo and Art Credits:

The cover photo of the Jack Roath Ranch, northwest of West Union, Nebraska, circa 1886, is by Solomon D. Butcher and is reprinted courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society. It was part of a special exhibit of Butcher photographs documenting the variety of fences in Custer County that the Custer County Historical Society Museum developed for the Smithsonian's "Between Fences" exhibition in Broken Bow from Sept. 13 to Oct. 26. The photo of Gov. Dave Heineman on page 3, the photos of Michael Beschloss on pages 4, 6 and 9, the photo of Nebraska Humanities Council Chairman Don Pederson and Sower Award winner Charles "Chuck" Trimble on page 11, and the photos of the NHC benefit on pages 12-14 are by Daniel Flanigan. The photo of "settlers cutting fence on old Brighton Ranch" on page 15 is a theatrical reenactment (circa 1900) staged by Solomon D. Butcher and is reprinted courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Humanities events impress by educating and honoring

By Don Pederson, Chair, Nebraska Humanities Council

Have you wondered what the humanities are? Technically, they cultivate an understanding of our history and culture. If you look at the array of activities of the Nebraska Humanities Council, you will be impressed with all of its programs.

Each summer the big tent is set up to present the Chautauqua. This year the theme is "Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties." Outstanding scholars will portray leading figures of this very difficult time. It opens in Falls City June 25 and moves to Hastings July 2. The audience has a chance to ask questions of the speakers, who respond in character and then as scholars. Scholars also meet with area school children. It is both fun and educational.

Another humanities program is Capitol Forum. Selected high school students and their teachers come to the State Capitol to learn about and discuss international issues. Our state officials and Congressional delegation are very cooperative in this effort. It is a great opportunity for our potential future leaders to engage in discussion with our elected officials.

Last fall, the Governor's Lecture in the Humanities was held at the Joslyn Museum in Omaha. The featured speaker was noted historian Michael Beschloss. The event was a sellout. Be sure to save Sept. 18, when David Gergen will present this year's Governor's Lecture at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln.

Before the Beschloss address, an important presentation was made. The coveted Sowers Award was presented to Chuck Trimble. This award is

for outstanding service to the humanities. Chuck has led the way to a greater understanding of the Indian people. A Lakota Sioux, Chuck was instrumental in the production by Opera Omaha of "Wakonda's Dream." He was most deserving of this award, as was last year's recipient, Ted Kooser, the U.S. poet laureate from Garland, Neb.

Beschloss, the author of the best-selling book "Presidential Courage," drew upon events in the lives of presidents when they had to make a momentous decision that had the potential to damage their presidency and career. The duty of the office places great burdens on presidents. Abraham Lincoln pursued an unpopular civil war. He believed it was his duty to keep the country together. He also decided that slavery must end. Lincoln was certain that his seeking these goals would doom his re-election. And, had it not been for General Sherman's victory in Atlanta, which turned the tide of the war, he was probably right.

Mississippi became a grave problem for President Kennedy. If he took a strong position on civil rights, he risked a strong likelihood of the South turning against him. The South was his strength in the presidential election. Ultimately he determined that he had no choice but to take a stand on the race issue regardless of the political consequences.

The Humanities Council is pleased to bring these lectures to enhance our understanding of our history and culture.



Presidential Courage

Michael Beschloss delivered the 12th Annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities October 2 at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha. His comments follow, in edited form.

By Michael Beschloss

This evening I thought I would talk about the book that I published just a few months ago called "Presidential Courage," which is about 200 years of American history. What I try to do is look at moments in history where this country was essentially saved by having a courageous president, someone who was willing to give up, if necessary, at a crucial moment, his popularity or his reelection or, in some cases, even his life.



Gov. Dave Heineman introduces Michael Beschloss.

One reason I wrote it was I have two boys who are 13 and 11, and they do not have the good fortune of living in Nebraska. If they grew up in the political culture of Nebraska, I wouldn't worry about them a bit. Instead they're growing up in the political culture of Washington, D.C., which, these days, is a very dark place in many ways. You can very easily grow up thinking that people who are in national life throughout American history have operated from polls and raising money and wanting to stay in office, and stay and stay and stay. I wrote this to show that if you go through the last two centuries and delete presidents who were willing to put themselves on the line, many of us would not be here.

The book opens in August 1795 with George Washington, and Washington is at Mt. Vernon. Washington is in his study, and there's a thunderstorm—lightning, biblical rain coming down—and the dove-of-peace weather vane is spinning on his red roof. It's nighttime, and Washington is a very different Washington from the one that we normally think of. He is tortured, and he is angry, and he is depressed. And the reason is something he has brought on himself.

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Nearing the end of his presidency, Washington became convinced there was a very great chance the British were going to invade the United States and fight us once again. He knew that our military could not resist that, so he felt that there was a very real danger that the British would conquer this country, and the United States would have been a brilliant experiment that died at the age of about 12 or 15 years.



Michael Beschloss

He thought that the only way to save the country was to conclude a treaty with Britain. He sent John Jay to London. Jay came back with a treaty that Washington supported. Washington made

it public. Americans were irate.

It was full of all sorts of provisions they found humiliating. They were saying, "Why do we have to make concessions to the British? We just won the Revolution a few years ago." And they made their feelings known. They wrote to Washington saying, "You should be impeached." Some wrote him saying, "You should be assassinated." Others said, "Are you some kind of British agent? Have you been bribed?" And it was even worse for John Jay when he got back. Jay was burned in effigy all over the United States. He had a pretty good sense of humor about it. Jay said, "I could walk the

length of the United States at night merely by the light of all my burning effigies."

So life was hard, and Washington was heartbroken because this was someone who was used to everyone loving him. He'd been elected twice unanimously to the presidency. He was accustomed to walking into a room, and little children's faces would light up, and people would sing a song called "The Hero Who Unites All Hearts." Now a lot of that was gone. When George Washington left the presidency, a substantial number of Americans were unhappy with him. Many of them hated George Washington. And Martha Washington attributed Washington's premature death two years after he left the presidency to Washington's heartbreak over that sudden, almost instantaneous withdrawal of public affection.

So why did he do it? If he had modern-day political consultants, they might have said, "You're nearing the end of your presidency. You're as popular as you were when you came in. Why not leave this for your successor? Why take all this on?" But Washington was a different person from that; he was a statesman. He knew that he was the only human being with the stature in early America to get Americans to accept this very unpleasant treaty that many of them found so humiliating. He was absolutely right because even with Washington's support, it barely made it through the Senate.

But more than that, I think that Washington was trying to send a message to his successors. He knew that when he served as president, everything he did was setting a precedent for everyone who would follow him in the Executive Mansion. I think that in taking on this big issue over Jay's Treaty that made him so unpopular, he was trying to tell his successors: "Being president is not just about cutting ribbons and being popular. You may at a certain moment encounter an issue that is so important, so

overwhelming, that, like me, you may have to put your popularity on the line and suffer.” And so in doing that, I feel that George Washington was inventing what I call presidential courage.

I won't run through all the nine presidents I write about. Otherwise, we would be here till midnight. We historians sometimes resemble the people that we write about. I should warn you that one of the people I've written about is Hubert Humphrey, who, some of you will remember, spoke in increments of three hours minimum. Once Humphrey even knew that he was going on too long, and he yelled out to the audience, “Anyone here got a watch?” And someone yelled back, “How about a calendar?” I will try to keep this brief so we have time for questions and comments and corrections, if there are any.

Another president I write about is from my home state of Illinois, Abraham Lincoln, who I need not tell anyone in this room had a formative influence on the formation of the state of Nebraska. Unlike my home state, you all had the good judgment to name your capital after Lincoln. We didn't. We really should have because, as some of you may know, Lincoln himself was responsible for Springfield being the capital of Illinois. He was one of those who moved the capital from Vandalia to Springfield.

The story I tell about Abraham Lincoln in the book is in 1864 in the late summer. Abraham Lincoln was living in a little cottage that many people do not know about nowadays, near the Old Soldiers Home in Washington, where veterans sometimes are late in their life. It's up the hill from the White House about a mile. Lincoln spent about four months each summer living not in the White House, but in this little cottage on the grounds of the Old Soldiers Home. People didn't really know much about it. The reason he did it was in those

Washington was trying to send a message to his successors. He knew that when he served as president, everything he did was setting a precedent for everyone who would follow him in the Executive Mansion. ... Washington was inventing what I call presidential courage.

days, a president's office was on the second floor of the White House right next to his bedroom. If you were Lincoln and you opened your door in the mornings still in your long white nightshirt, you'd step out to be greeted by about 110 people who wanted jobs for their brothers-in-law and were angry with you about all sorts of other things.

So Lincoln is up in his cottage, late summer of 1864, and he's being called on by a number of his political aides. He's running for reelection, and his aides are saying, “Mr. President, you're going to lose the election this fall. You're not even going to carry your home state of Illinois.” And Lincoln said, “Why?” They said, “The reason is Northern voters are frustrated over the fact that the Civil War is going so slowly. Here we are in 1864. It's been going on more than three years. The North has not yet won. They'd be willing to tolerate that frustration except that you did something else. You got into this war on the argument that we've got to save the Union and bring the South back, but you're now saying there must be this Emancipation Proclamation. The war will not end until slavery is ended. Many Northern voters feel that you changed the signals—willingness to fight the Civil War to reunite the country, but not to end slavery.” And the aides said, “Mr. Lincoln, if

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you're going to have any chance of getting reelected, the way to do it is to suggest in some way that you're not going to insist on ending slavery as a prerequisite for ending the Civil War."

I couldn't have imagined Abraham Lincoln would even consider doing the wrong thing. But he did. For a number of days he thought, "How can I somehow distance myself from the Emancipation Proclamation



in a way that will save my reelection?" He rationalized it by saying, "General McClellan, my opponent, would be a disaster. The country would splinter." He was absolutely right about

that. But he felt uneasy. He didn't like the idea of doing the wrong thing. What really turned the trick with him was he finally called in Frederick Douglass, whom he knew and respected, and Douglass knew and respected him. Lincoln said, "How would you take it if I distanced myself from the Emancipation Proclamation?" Douglass' reply has not been recorded for history, but I assume his face was so fierce and glaring that Lincoln immediately realized that this was impossible, and quickly Lincoln said, "You know, I want to win reelection, but more important to me is my place in history." He said, "I believe that my place in history is going to be as the liberator of the race. That's more important to me than winning reelection."

So he stuck to the Emancipation. As it happened, thanks to the fact that General

Sherman made it to Atlanta on time in September, a couple of months before the election, Lincoln was reelected. But if you think about it, how did Lincoln ultimately pay for his political risk sticking to the Emancipation? He paid with his life because why did John Wilkes Booth assassinate him? He was, most of all, motivated by the fact that he hated Lincoln for wanting to end slavery. That was the price that Abraham Lincoln paid.

Another president I write about is Harry Truman in the spring of 1948. I probably could have written about a lot of Truman episodes because he had to make some very tough decisions. I could have written about some of the Cold War decisions of the late 1940s, about Truman firing General MacArthur. General MacArthur, you remember, went to Congress and made the famous speech, after being fired, that almost caused Americans to rise up against their president, made Democrats very nervous, made Republicans absolutely exuberant thinking that MacArthur might even be their presidential nominee. Someone wrote at the time that when MacArthur spoke, on the Republican side there was not a dry eye, and on the Democratic side there was not a dry seat. That was the difference between the two parties. But I didn't write about MacArthur.

What I decided to write about was spring of 1948, Harry Truman having to deal with the possibility of recognizing a Jewish state in the Middle East when it was declared. I did that because it shows all of the different forces that are on a president at a moment like this. In Truman's case, George C. Marshall, the great hero of World War II, Truman's secretary of state, came to Truman and said, essentially, "If you recognize a Jewish state, we don't have the military to support it, and we'll be demanded to do so. And if you recognize it, I may well resign and blast you." This terrified Truman, and

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he said, "I can't afford to have General Marshall out there denouncing me." Truman's own wife, Bess, was a lovely woman in many ways, but she was not exactly sensitive to the Jewish people. She was someone who, it turns out, would not allow Jewish guests in her home in Independence, Missouri, either before the presidency, during, or afterwards. On the other side, Truman had a Jewish friend named Eddie Jacobson with whom he ran a canteen in the Army and ran the famous haberdashery store in Kansas City in the 1920s that failed, but they remained friends. Jacobson came to the Oval Office at a crucial moment with tears streaming down his face saying, "Harry, I've never asked you for a favor, but my people need help. There may be another Hitler. I want you to help them." He had a big impact on Truman. But as I looked at all these forces, the one that I think had the decisive impact, and again you're hearing this from an historian, and you'll have to set the source and context, is that it helped enormously that Harry Truman read history. He was just like Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln had, if you can believe it, probably a year and a half of formal education in his life. Lincoln basically had to be self-taught, and he did everything he could to find books, and he just read his eyes out.

As a result, he became one of our great writers and speakers and political philosophers.

The same was true of Harry Truman. Truman was from a poor family, had nothing more than a high school education, always wanted to go to college, but never could afford it. When Truman became president, one of the things he was very serious about and did a lot to forward was the community college movement. That came out of Truman's personal experience. He wanted to make sure others were not deprived the way that he had been. Truman as a child was an enormous reader. He had terrible eyesight and very thick, wire-rimmed glasses. His family was so poor his parents said, "Harry, you can't do sports because if you break those glasses, we can't afford to replace them." So he did not play football or baseball. He said that he read every single book in the Independence Public Library. As far as I can see the most important book, or at least the most influential on him, was a book that his mother had bought from a traveling salesman—four volumes, gilded, must have cost a lot of the money that they had. The book had the horribly politically incorrect title of "Great Men and Famous Women." The idea was that women could not be great, only famous. The subtitle was "From Nebuchadnezzar to Sarah Bernhardt."

But in the spring of 1948, as Truman was trying to cope with what to do about the Jewish state, what he was remembering was not the chapter on Nebuchadnezzar or Sarah Bernhardt, but the chapter on Cyrus the Great. He was also a huge biblical scholar. His favorite psalm was "Yea we wept when we remembered Zion." He remembered having read "Great Men and Famous Women," the chapter on Cyrus the Great who had brought the Jewish people to Zion 2,000 years earlier. In the same way that Lincoln clarified his problem by saying, "If I stick to the Emancipation, I can be the

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liberator of a race,” Truman said, “Maybe the way to see this is that if I recognize a Jewish state, I can do what this great man did 2,000 years ago,” which he did. After Truman was president, he was speaking in New York. He was introduced by his old friend Eddie Jacobson, who said, “Here is President Truman, who helped to create the state of Israel.” Truman almost pushed him aside and said, “What do you mean ‘helped to create?’ I am Cyrus. I am Cyrus the Great.” He wept oftentimes in telling this story. It moved him deeply in his later years.

Two more stories. One is about John Kennedy and civil rights. If John Kennedy had left this earth in May of 1963, I wouldn't have written about him because his record on civil rights up to that moment was really very poor. In the book that I've written, there's a picture of Jackie Robinson, the great African-American baseball hero. Robinson is side-by-side in 1960 with the presidential candidate he was supporting, whose name was Richard Nixon. It surprises a lot of people nowadays who do not realize that there was a substantial number of African-Americans who still were Republicans, going all the way back to Abraham Lincoln. One reason why Robinson is in this book, at least the picture of him, is that my younger boy, whose name is Cyrus—coincidentally—said, “I'm not going to read your book unless there is a picture in it of my hero Jackie Robinson.” So I did my best to put one in. For the older boy, whose name is Alex, there's a picture of his hero Joe DiMaggio with Ronald Reagan. So they're both represented, and at least they've both taken a look at the book.

But the more pertinent reason that there's a picture of Jackie Robinson is this. In 1958, Jackie Robinson was at a banquet in New York, as was Sen. John Kennedy, who was running for the presidency. At that

Kennedy sent a civil rights bill to Congress and made a lot of people angry... He lost the South overnight. There was a good chance he would lose the election of 1964 as a result, but he said what you'd want to hear from a president in these circumstances.

point, Kennedy thought the way he was going to get the Democratic nomination in 1960 would be to get the votes of white segregationist voters in the South. There were a lot of them in the Democratic Party in those days. So, quietly, he was getting the support of one segregationist governor after another. This became known through the Black community, and so at this banquet, Kennedy said to Jackie Robinson, “Come on over, let's have a picture taken together.” Robinson turned his back and stalked away. He wanted no part of Kennedy. He knew.

By 1960, when Kennedy ran, he had turned a different way. He realized that civil rights was going to be important to him. When he campaigned he said, “Elect me president, and I will end discrimination with the stroke of a pen.” By the spring of 1961, many African-Americans were sending ballpoint pens to the Oval Office saying, “When are you going to act?” because it wasn't happening. The reason was that when John Kennedy was elected over Richard Nixon in 1960, the margin was given him by about a half dozen white Southern states. The state that went for Kennedy in 1960 by the greatest margin was Georgia—66 percent. Those were not civil rights voters. Those were, for the most part, white segregationist Southern Democrats who expected Kennedy to hold the line. Kennedy didn't want to lose

his reelection in 1964, so he did very little on civil rights.

Finally in the spring of 1963, Martin Luther King was generating pressure on Kennedy, most famously in Birmingham, so that Bobby Kennedy, the attorney general and the president's brother, went to Jack and said, "I know you want to preserve yourself for '64, but if you do not act now, Americans white and black will demand to know what their president is doing to get this civil rights revolution out of the streets and into the courts." He sent a civil rights bill to Congress and made a lot of people angry. I try to tell my sons what I'm writing about, and I tell them about this bill. They say, "Well, what was in this bill? Why were people so angry?" I said, "Well, it was a bill that said you could use any restaurant or hotel, whether you were white or black." Thank God, my kids replied by saying, "Why did that make people angry?" Thank God, they live in a time where that seems very foreign, but it increases the pressure on all of us to remind people how horrible things were, in certain ways, in those days. By sending that bill to Congress, Kennedy's poll ratings in some cases dropped 25 points. He lost the South overnight. There was a good chance he would lose the election of 1964 as a result, but he said what you'd want to hear from a president in these circumstances. He said, "If I have to go down in 1964, at least I'm doing it for something as important as civil rights."

The final story I'll tell, briefly, is about Ronald Reagan, who in 1980 was running, of course, against Jimmy Carter. People don't remember this story well, but a week or two before the election of 1980, he and Jimmy Carter were running about even. There was still a substantial undecided vote. Reagan's aides went to him and said, "You know, Governor, this undecided vote is willing to vote for you, but our surveys show

that the one thing that's holding them back is that they think you're going to be too tough on the Soviet Union. You've been talking about trying to increase the pressure on the Soviets, increase the defense budget. That's scaring a lot of people who are worried about World War III. Why not give a few speeches that suggest that you're really a lot more moderate than that, and that really isn't your intention." Reagan, with great principle, said, "I can't do that because I'm not going to give a speech saying what I don't believe. And plus, if I win after having told people that it's my intention to end the Cold War this way, then I can go to Congress and say, 'Increase the defense budget, put the pressure on the Russians, let's see what we can do.'" Which is exactly what happened.

So in the late 1980s, some of you will remember that even in the 1980 campaign he would say, "If a Soviet leader comes about who wants to sue for peace, I will sit down for as long as it takes to reach an agreement." So comes Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. Reagan meets with him and finds that Gorbachev is for real. Reagan was another president who was influenced by history and literature, although perhaps not always the way that some of the earlier presidents I've mentioned were. For instance, when Reagan went to meet with Gorbachev in Iceland in 1986, he was being briefed by a couple of his briefers, "You know, you're going to Iceland. This is what Iceland is like." Reagan cut him off and said, "You don't need to tell me about Iceland. I've been reading



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Tom Clancy.” Great account of a Soviet invasion of Iceland. Literature helps in all sorts of ways.

But the point is that when Reagan went to Iceland, a lot of his oldest political supporters were saying, “Mr. President, Gorbachev is really a new Brezhnev or a new Stalin with a better tailor, smiling-faced. Don’t take him seriously.” Reagan with great courage and principle said, “No, I’ve met with him. I think he’s for real. I think he wants to end the Cold War, and I’m going to try and negotiate an agreement.” So he did. For his troubles, Reagan was denounced. Many of his oldest supporters called him “a useful idiot,” one of the terms used, “a weak man with a strong wife.” Many other leaders might have said, “These people are my base. I have to keep them happy.” You oftentimes hear about a political base, but to my mind what Ronald Reagan showed was that ultimately he had the understanding that a political leader should have, which is that the ultimate purpose of having a political base is not to be its captive, but to be its leader. Ronald Reagan was, and the result was that he ended the Cold War.

The final image I have in the book, in writing about Reagan, is of his last formal meeting with Gorbachev in December of 1988, just after the election of ’88. George Bush the elder had been elected, and Reagan and Gorbachev met on an island just off Manhattan, and then they climbed onto a platform for a photo op. Reagan was showing Gorbachev the skyline of New York with the photographers snapping pictures, and he pointed with great pride at two gleaming towers, the towers of the World Trade Center, almost as if that was opening up to the next Titanic chapter in American history.

The whole point of it is that if you rewind the tape, if you don’t have presidential cour-

age, you don’t end the Cold War, and you don’t end the Civil War the way it did, all the way back to, remember I was talking about that night with George Washington in the rainstorm at Mt. Vernon in 1795. We all have to look at presidential candidates this year and next. Take a look at these presidential candidates, and if they remind you of the courageous presidents in this book and elsewhere, they deserve your vote. If they don’t, do not vote for them because presidential courage has been too important. God forbid we have a president who doesn’t understand that tradition of presidential courage that goes back to George Washington.

I write about the scene at Mt. Vernon. The candles were flickering and George Washington was dying and looking up at the face of his kindly worried doctor. Just about the last words he spoke on this earth were three words that I’d like to think of as a message to later generations and later presidents. The three words he spoke were, “Don’t be afraid.”



Historian Michael Beschloss is author of the best-seller “Presidential Courage: Brave Leaders and How They Changed America, 1789-1989,” a book about major, controversial decisions by American presidents. Newsweek called him “the nation’s leading presidential historian.” He was appointed NBC News presidential historian—the first time any major network has created such a position—and appears regularly on “Meet the Press” and the “Today” show. He also is a regular on PBS’s “The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer,” and was nominated for an Emmy for his role in creating the Discovery Channel series “Decisions that Shook the World,” narrated by Morgan Freeman. Born in Chicago, he is an alumnus of Williams College and the only political historian of national stature to have an advanced degree from the Harvard Business School.



Sower Award winner is honored by Nebraska's trust

Charles "Chuck" Trimble made the following remarks on receiving the 2007 Sower Award in the Humanities October 2 at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha.

Trust is honor...

To be entrusted with the protection of the rights of our tribes in their sovereignty and their self-determination is a tremendous honor.

To be entrusted with the protection and preservation of the history and heritage of the people of my adoptive homeland, Nebraska, is a great honor.

To be asked to work in providing for and promoting the arts and humanities is both a pleasure and a great honor.

To be given the chance to serve the needs of the poor and the homeless is truly an honor.

So, Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Nebraska Humanities Council, the Nebraska Arts Council and Opera Omaha, and the civic and charitable organizations on which I was asked to serve, thank you for the honor of your trust.

To be recognized with this coveted award—the Sower Award—is an honor most overwhelming to me.

Thank you, Humanities Council, and thank you, Nebraska, for giving me a chance to serve.



Don Pederson (left) introduces Sower Award winner Chuck Trimble.

Charles E. "Chuck" Trimble is a member of the Oglala Sioux Nation who has been active on both the national and state level on behalf of Native Americans. He is the founder of two companies focused on economic development for reservations, as well as the Red Willow Institute, which provides technical and management assistance to Native American non-profit organizations. He was executive director of the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, D.C., representing most tribes in the U.S., and founded the American Indian Press Association, now the Native American Journalists Association. In his long service to the John G. Neihardt Center, he provided a bridge between native and Anglo cultures while providing opportunities for Indian youth to cultivate their artistic and literary skills.



Governor's lecture contributors gather at pre-lecture benefit

Supporters of the 12th Governor's Lecture in the Humanities attended a benefit, co-chaired by Carol Gendler, Angenette Meaney, Carol Russell, and Judy Ueda, in honor of lecturer Michael Beschloss. Gathering October 2 at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, they shared an appreciation for the humanities. *Photos by Daniel Flanigan.*



*Michael Beschloss, Gov. Dave Heineman, Fr. John Schlegel,
J.B. Milliken and Mayor Mike Fahey*



Louis LaRose, Anne and Chuck Trimble and Bruce King



Roy Dinsdale and Tom Rogers



Ardyce Bohlke and Kathleen Foote



Carol Gendler, Allison and Gary Petersen



Robert Duncan, Ron and Chris Harris



*Karen and Kirk Dielman, Lynne Friedewald, Becky Van de Bogart,
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Harvey Perlman, Don Pederson, Chuck Trimble



Tom and Carol Waring



Summer Widhalm, Fred Licon



Fred Kiechel, Bob Nefsky



Pam Snow, Trixie Schmidt, Elvira Garcia



Melissa Marvin has Michael Beschloss autograph a book.

Council works to expand the vision and wisdom of Nebraskans

By Jane Renner Hood, Executive Director, Nebraska Humanities Council

In “cultivating our history and culture,” the Nebraska Humanities Council and Foundation continue to work toward the original intent Congress identified for establishing the National Endowment for the Humanities: “Democracy demands vision and wisdom of its citizens.”

To meet that national purpose, the Nebraska Humanities Council has developed programs designed to serve audiences that are least likely to have access to the resources that would make them wise citizens. For example, 3,147 low-literacy parents and children participated in Prime Time Family Reading Time in libraries and schools in Gibbon, Grand Island, Lincoln, Norfolk, Omaha, and South Sioux City, reading and discussing award-winning children’s books in a bilingual family setting.

Two hundred sixty-nine speaker bureau programs were presented in non-metropolitan Nebraska, and 19 rural schools used the cultural encounter trunks that explore and compare older Nebraska immigrant groups such as Germans and Swedes with the newest Mexican and Vietnamese immigrants. Rural Nebraska also is served by the council’s longtime partnership with the Smithsonian Institution through its Museum on Main Street traveling exhibit program for small or rural museums. Last year saw the beginning of a statewide tour of “Between Fences” in Broken Bow, Chadron and Lexington that will continue to four other sites in 2008.

The council is committed to preparing our youth for citizenship. In addition to 107 Speak-



“Settlers taking the law in their own hands—cutting fence on old Brighton Ranch.” This is a theatrical reenactment (circa 1900), staged by photographer Solomon D. Butcher to illustrate a historical event for his “Pioneer History of Custer County.” The photo indicates the pivotal role of fences in the settlement of the Great Plains. Photo courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

ers Bureau programs that went to K-12 schools, Capitol Forum on America’s Future engaged high school students in a study of U.S. foreign policy at Boone Central in Albion, Ashland-Greenwood, Bellevue West, Cambridge, Chadron, Crofton, Medicine Valley in Curtis, Holdrege, Howells, Lincoln North Star, Lynch, North Platte, Omaha Benson, Millard West, Omaha South, Platteview High in Springfield, Stanton, Sterling, Sumner-Eddyville-Miller, Superior, Centennial in Utica, Valentine Rural High, and Wilcox-Hildreth High School. In collaboration with Secretary of State John Gale, 85 students and their teachers came to the State Capitol on March 26, where they talked with Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy, U.S. Reps. Adrian Smith and Jeff Fortenberry and U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel, as well as state Sens. Tom Carlson and Bill Avery.

Continued next page

Continued from page 15

The Oct. 26-27 Nebraska Book Festival, held at sites along Lincoln's Centennial Mall and co-sponsored with the Nebraska Center for the Book, the Nebraska Library Commission, and the Nebraska Secretary of State, also had a focus on young people with a successful new partnership with Lincoln Children's Museum, where nearly 200 children listened to storytellers and participated in other reading activities. Their parents and 900 other adults took part in workshops on novels, poetry, and other book-related activities and gathered at the State Capitol for a lecture by Joseph Marshall III, biographer of Crazy Horse.

Kearney's Centennial Chautauqua included an opportunity for middle-school students to study local historical figures and present their research as performers in the big Chautauqua tent at the Great Platte River Road Archway. The June 21-24 Chautauqua focused on notable Nebraska reformers and featured scholars portraying progressive-era reformers William Jennings Bryan, Grace Abbott, and George Norris, with Malcolm X reminding both Bryan and Norris that their reforms had largely neglected African Americans during the first half of the 20th century.

The council announced in March the second of a three-part program emphasis on the demographic forces shaping Nebraska's future: "The Good Life: Rural—Urban—Suburban." This topic joins the emphasis announced in 2005, "The New Nebraskans: Immigrants and Refugees," as areas of particular interest for funding. So far, the council has awarded 26 grants in response to requests for proposals for the two new areas.

At the very heart of the council's work is its grant program, which encourages community organizations to propose projects for funding that meet their local needs. In 2007, the council awarded 72 grants totaling \$248,069 to orga-

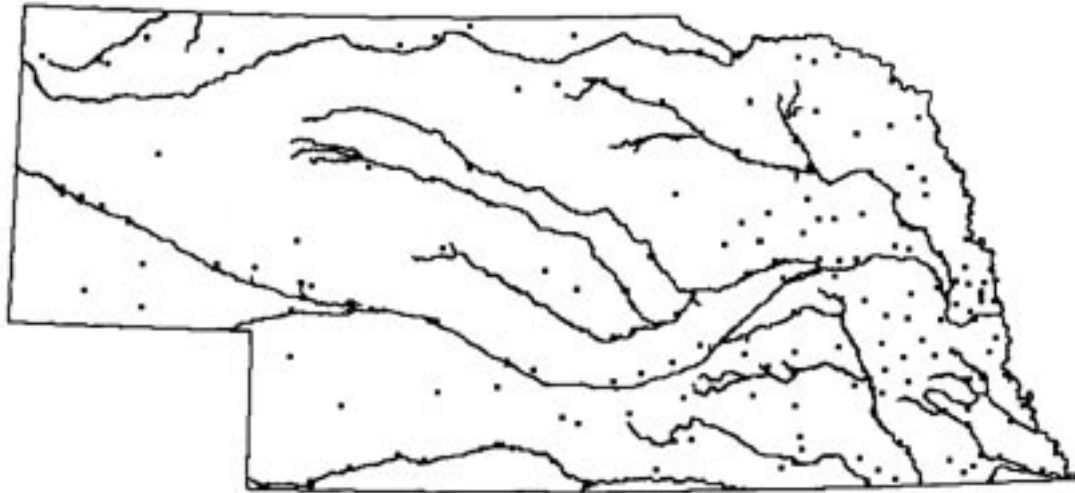
nizations across the state, including support of "The War in Nebraska," vignettes produced by NET Television to accompany the PBS broadcast of Ken Burns' "The War"; Opera Omaha's community outreach for "Aida" and "All the King's Men"; the award-winning Plum Creek Children's Literature Festival in Seward; the Great Plains Theatre Conference at Metro Community College; "Prayers For The People: Carl Sandburg's Poetry and Songs" presented by the University of Nebraska-Kearney; "Latino Heritage and Culture Series" at El Museo Latino in Omaha; National History Day competitions at Nebraska Wesleyan University and other regional sites statewide; "Vision Maker Film Festival," sponsored by Native American Public Telecommunications and UNL's "Blacks in Film Festival," both at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Center in Lincoln; a conference on Crazy Horse at the Neihardt Center as part of the 2007 One Book One Nebraska, Mari Sandoz's "Crazy Horse"; and the Hall County Sesquicentennial Humanities Festival at the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer.

Humanities Desk draws upon many of the NHC-funded programs for stories broadcast weekly on NET Radio and KIOS in Omaha. For a complete list of grants and a current calendar for council programming, please go to www.nebraskahumanities.org.

The Nebraska Humanities Council and Foundation's 2007 programs have been funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, an appropriation from the State of Nebraska, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and you, the reader, who has made a generous contribution to the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities.

Thank you for helping to prepare Nebraskans to be the wise and visionary citizens our democracy requires.





In 2007, the Nebraska Humanities Council funded programs in the following 144 communities:

Ainsworth, Albion, Alexandria, Alliance, Alma, Arapahoe, Arnold, Ashland, Atkinson, Auburn, Aurora, Bancroft, Barneston, Bassett, Beatrice, Bellevue, Belvidere, Bennington, Big Springs, Blair, Blue Springs, Boys Town, Brainard, Brewster, Broken Bow, Burwell, Cambridge, Cedar Rapids, Chadron, Clarks, Clarkson, Clay Center, Columbus, Cozad, Crawford, Creighton, Crete, Crofton, Curtis, Cushing, Dannebrog, David City, Denton, Dewitt, Dodge, Dorchester, Eagle, Elkhorn, Ellsworth, Eustis, Fairbury, Fairmont, Falls City, Fremont, Fullerton, Genoa, Gering, Gibbon, Goehner, Gothenburg, Grafton, Grand Island, Gretna, Halsey, Hampton, Harrison, Hartington, Hastings, Hemingford, Herman, Hershey, Holdrege, Homer, Howells, Humboldt, Kearney, LaVista, Lexington, Lincoln, Louisville, Lyons, Lynch, Madison, Manley, McCook, Mead, Milford, Minden, Mullen, Murray, Nebraska City, Neligh, Niobrara, Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha, Oshkosh, Ord, Overton, Paxton, Peru, Petersburg, Pickrell, Plainview, Ralston, Randolph, Raymond, Red Cloud, Rushville, Scottsbluff, Seward, Shelby, South Sioux City, Springfield, Stanton, Stella, Sterling, Stromsburg, St. Paul, Sumner, Superior, Syracuse, Table Rock, Talmage, Tecumseh, Tekamah, Tilden, Unadilla, Utica, Valentine, Valley, Valparaiso, Verdigre, Wahoo, Wausa, Wayne, Weeping Water, West Point, Wilber, Wilcox, Wood River, York, Yutan.

2007 Financial Overview

Our Dollars Working in Communities Across Nebraska

Support

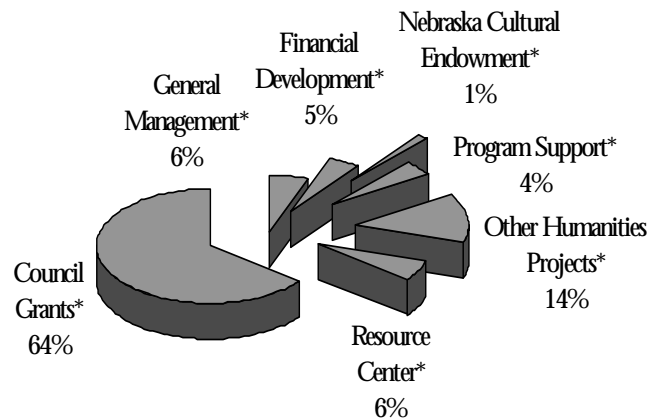
National Endowment for the Humanities Grant.....	\$536,616
Other Federal Grants.....	\$1,000
State Appropriations.....	\$217,500
Nebraska Cultural Endowment.....	\$132,394
Private Cash contributions.....	\$380,055
Earned Income.....	\$22,935
Miscellaneous Income.....	\$2,227
Interest Income.....	\$36,606
Cost Share, Cash and In-kind.....	\$1,726,049
Total revenue.....	\$3,055,382

Expenses

General Management.....	\$163,836
Financial Development.....	\$136,692
Nebraska Cultural Endowment.....	\$36,240
Program Support.....	\$73,339
Special Projects.....	\$396,653
Resource Center/Speaker Bureau Programs.....	\$114,568
Council Regrants.....	\$268,562
Cost Share by Grantees and Volunteers.....	\$1,726,049
Total expenses.....	\$2,915,939

Excess (deficit) of support and revenue over expenses..\$139,443

Summary of Expenses - 2007



**Includes cost share*

Audited financial statements from Dana F. Cole and Co. are available for inspection at the NHC office and on our website at www.nebraskahumanities.org

Contributors January through December 2007

The Nebraska Humanities Council and the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities thank the following donors for their contributions during the 2007 calendar year. We extend special thanks to those individuals who are members of the Vision Circle (\$1,000 a year), the Gold Sower Club (\$500 a year), the Silver Sower Club (\$250 a year), and the Sower Club (\$100 a year). We also appreciate members (\$45 a year) and those who donated \$44 or less to support the NHC in 2007. If we have not reported your gift correctly, please let us know so that we can correct our mistake.

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We invite you to join the Vision Circle of donors to the Nebraska Humanities Council. Your contribution of \$1,000 or more will help nurture a vibrant civic and cultural life in Nebraska and ensure continued statewide access to the humanities now and for future generations. We are grateful to the following individuals for generously supporting current humanities programs by joining the Vision Circle in 2007:

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