

A glimpse inside Sandhills Heritage Museum



MARCIA HORA - THOMAS COUNTY HERALD

Kathie Martindale points to a picture of the Home State Bank building and the Wilson Hotel. The Home State Bank is now home to the Sandhills Heritage Museum in Dunning.

Marcia Hora

You'll find yourself stepping back in time as you walk up to the Home State Bank building and open the door of the Sandhills Heritage Museum in Dunning.

Not only will you get a glimpse of the Sandhills, but the hard-working people of Blaine County who lived in and around the villages of Dunning, Halsey, Brewster, and Purdum.

Much of the heritage of the area was being lost before a group of dedicated individuals made up their minds to do something about it.

The idea of creating a museum came up in 2000, and the McMullen family decided to donate the downtown bank building to house items.

Kathie Martindale said the museum has been a work in progress ever since.

A letter was sent to William Zutavern in July of 2002 from Larry Kent Wilson of Carmichael, California. The letter now appears above a 1919 photo of the Home State Bank and Wilson Hotel.

Wilson's grandfather,

William Pearson "Pete" Wilson built the hotel in 1919 and the bank in 1918. He was known in Dunning as "P. Wilson," or by his nickname, "Pete." He is referred to in the Blaine County history book as Peter. His middle name was spelled either Pearson or Pierson.

In 1908, two years after his wife, Elva Melissa Wilson died, Pete and his six children moved from Georgetown, near Broken Bow, to a homestead near Dunning. His oldest daughter, Bessie, helped raise the children, including Lawrence Edward Wilson, who was born in 1904, and was the youngest. The family lived in a two-room sod house. Bessie married Robert Blakely, a local boy. When Bessie and the other kids grew up and left home, Pete and Lawrence Edward moved to Dunning.

Lawrence attended Mizpaw rural school when A.L. Shambelin was County Superintendent and graduated in 1924 from Dunning High School. He recalled that Irma Thompson was his teacher at Mizpaw. The high school principals

who signed his report card at Dunning High School were Charlotte Armstrong (1921-22) and Mrs. Waco McCully (1922-23). Later, he graduated and received his master's degree in education from the University of Nebraska.

The hotel had 16 rooms with steam heat and running water. Lawrence dropped out of school for a year or so to help run the hotel by making beds, sweeping, and operating the front desk while Pete was next door working at the bank he helped establish. The room rate was \$1.25 per night, fresh daily linens were featured, and most of the time the hotel was booked solid.

Pete sold out and left Dunning for Lincoln in October 1924 and he died in Lincoln in 1929 and is buried next to his wife in Broken Bow. The hotel burned down in 1933.

Larry Kent Wilson also included a program for the "Grand Concert" given by the Dunning Band at the Jones Opera House, Wednesday evening, March 21, 1917. Band members listed include P. Wilson, bass drum;



MARCIA HORA - THOMAS COUNTY HERALD

Kathie Martindale, who served as Postmaster in Dunning and Brewster for 31 years, stands next to the renovated post office display that includes original pieces and how it looked when the post office and the bank shared the building. School memorabilia, trophies, and jackets bring back memories for those who stop in for a visit. Recent updates include a new sidewalk, and work has started on the theater room in the former bank vault.

Lawrence Wilson, trombone; and Lyle Wilson, solo cornet and violin. Also listed is Mrs. Rob't Blakely, piano accompanist, and Mrs. H.G. Zutavern, piano soloist.

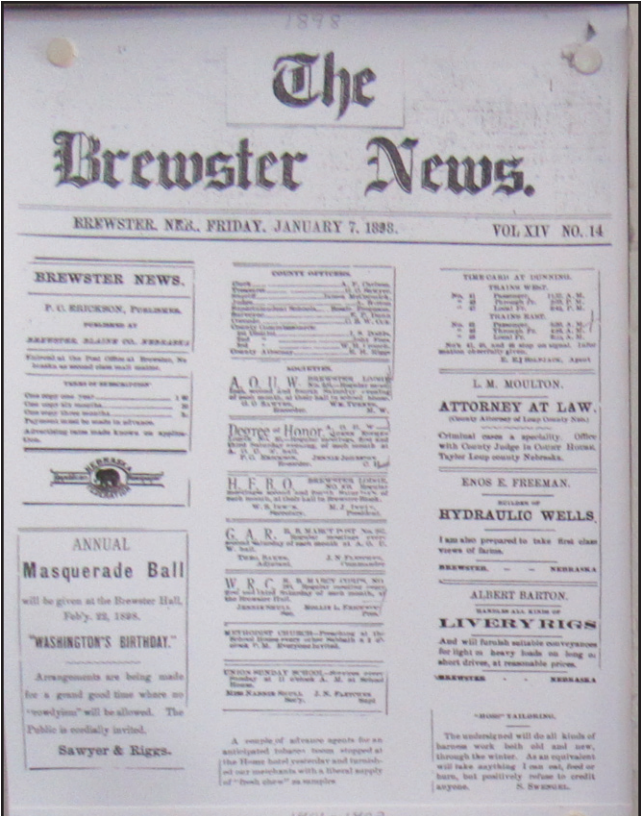
Many of the items housed in the museum have been donated and a few items are on loan.

A three-year agreement has been made with Nebraskans for Hereford Heritage to display items in the museum to promote Nebraska's Hereford heritage for future generations.

Other highlighted items include a wedding dress from Kate Dunning's family for which the town was named, a store counter from a store in Halsey, and the original bank building office that now serves as a hospitality room.

Work has begun to renovate the old bank vault and turn it into a theater where movies can be shown. Plans are also in the works to show DVD's featuring pictures from local photographers to give visitors a sense of what the region looks like throughout the year.

The museum is open



Parts of the front page of the January 7, 1898 issue of The Brewster News has been copied and are displayed, along with other newspapers, on a wall in the museum. Some of the original newspapers have been kept in tact and are now housed in the museum.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons from May - September.

Keep up to date on the

progress being made at the Sandhills Heritage Museum by liking their Facebook page.

R-Project construction could begin this fall

Marcia Hora

Embroiled in extreme controversy and fierce opposition, Nebraska Public Power District will begin work on its proposed 220-mile-long power transmission line across the Sandhills. A petition with over 1,600 signatures opposing the project, countless town hall meetings where voices were raised and comments became heated, numerous trips to the Nebraska state capitol, and a state senator who vowed to fight to the bitter end was not enough to change or stop the "R" Project. The transmission line will stretch from Gerald Gentleman Station at Sutherland, continue through Lincoln County, and continue up U.S. Highway 83 through Logan and Thomas Counties, before heading east and cutting through the counties of Blaine, Loup, Garfield, and Wheeler.

The final hurdle was cleared when The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service signed a Record of Decision, and approved a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that sets aside 600 acres of suitable habitat for the protection and management of the endangered American burying beetle. The decision posted June 18 on The Fish & Wildlife Service's website stated the Service does not issue a permit for the project only a permit for incidental take as a result of otherwise lawful activities; the purpose of the permit is to authorize the incidental take of the listed species, not to authorize the activities that result in the take. Fish & Wildlife Service declined to further hold up the project over concerns about affected cultural resources or migratory birds.

See R-Project
Page 6

Index

Legal Notices.....2
Social Side.....3
Opinion Page.....4
Classifieds.....5
Business Directory.....5
Nebraska Statewide
Classifieds.....5
Local News.....6

Notices

- Sandhills Area Ext. Board Meeting Notice
- Notice Of Organization
- Thedford Rural Fire District Public Notice
- Village Of Thedford Board Proceedings
- Commissioners' Notice

Inside This Issue

- Nebraska Timeline
- Remember When
- Odds & Ends
- Life's Outtakes
- Dave Says

Obituary

- Stanley Rex Pettit