

The Antelope County Historical Society Presents



Voices From The Past

August 27-28 29, 2010

**Friday, August 27: Vignettes at the Pioneer Church 5:30 pm
Laurel Hill Cemetery Walk 6:30 pm
Admission: \$10.00**

**Saturday, August 28: Vignettes at the Pioneer Church 5:30 pm
Laurel Hill Cemetery Walk 6:30 pm
Dinner at The Imperial Steakhouse 7:15 pm
Admission: \$20.00**

**Sunday, August 29: Vignettes at the Pioneer Church 5:30 pm
Laurel Hill Cemetery Walk 6:30 pm
Dinner at The Imperial Steakhouse 7:15 pm
Admission: \$25.00**

**All proceeds from these performances will be used to continue the
preservation of the history of Antelope County**

When Joe Starita's book, "I Am A Man", was published with its lyrical description of Laurel Hill Cemetery and the White Buffalo Girl's saga touchingly retold, it triggered in me a new awareness of just how much history we have in Antelope County.

The following resources have been of great value in compiling tonight's vignettes: the research and writing done by Marie and Ken Krohn on Civil War veteran John Hatfield (published in the Antelope County Historical Society Newsletter); the letter about long time Neligh educator Priscilla Wolfe (composed by Bud Pagel in the Antelope County History Book); the interviews of our first European settlers (written by Mabel Guild and published in the Neligh News); and Jane Henery's diary of her journey from Ohio to Nebraska (given to our museum by Eleanor Rakow).

The tragic Forsell story has come from my family's oral history. Parts of the Frank Barnett and Mabel Guild scenes are from my memories, as they were close neighbors while I was growing up. A good share of the words spoken by the actors are as they were spoken or written by the people portrayed.

We greatly appreciate the loan of the pump organ from Dr. Geo and Ruth Strassler, the diligent labors of Pat Kenaston, Bob Wanek, all the advertisers, and you, our audience.

Levern Hauptmann
Compiler, Producer, Director



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VOICES FROM THE PAST

Introduction: Levern Hauptmann

Organist: Jill Bates

I. Native American Tragedy – White Buffalo Girl

Narrator: Levern Hauptmann

Lars Johnson Patrick Moser
Augusta Johnson Karmen Sauser
Fran Troxell Holly Troup
Joseph Troxell Levi Pofahl
Black Elk Perry Smith

II. Family Stories

Narrator: Gloria Christiansen as Mabel Guild

Pioneer Reminiscences

Jane Henery Carolyn Weinman

Family Sorrow

Edela Scogleaf Forsell Janet Davis
Hulda Scogleaf Erickson Paige Kallhoff

A Joy Filled Musical Evening

Mabel Guild Gloria Christiansen
Phoebe Guild Roxanne McNally
Nellie Guild McKnight Jill Bates
Frank Barnett Musyoki Kilonzo

Educator Par Excellence

Priscilla Wolfe Jennifer Norton

III. Patriotism

Narrator: Priscilla Wolfe Jennifer Norton

John Hatfield Andy Beyer

IV. Devotion to Duty

Narrator: John Hatfield Andy Beyer

Abraham Lincoln George Strassler

Mary Todd Lincoln Daphne Hansen

Finale: Battle Hymn of the Republic

I. NATIVE AMERICAN TRAGEDY WHITE BUFFALO GIRL

Levern (narrator): The setting for our opening production is a hillside overlooking the developing town of Neligh. The drama that takes place in Laurel Hill Cemetery was the result of the U. S. government's ceding all of the Ponca's fertile Niobrara river valley land to the Sioux. The Ponca had successfully lived on this land for many years by diligent application of their sustainable corn culture.

In the year of the Ponca's forced march to Oklahoma, one half of the tribe's population was to perish. In spite of the holocaust visited upon these people, there remains a record of early pioneers who did show humanity toward fellow human beings at the time of the Ponca's Trail of Tears.

Our reenactment finds German immigrants Frau Anna Troxel, her 19 year old son, Joseph, and Swedish immigrants Lars and Augusta Johnson, near the gravesite. Black Elk is to bring his 18 month old daughter, White Buffalo Girl, to her final resting place. Her mother, Moon Hawk, is too ill and anguished to accompany her daughter on her final journey.

Joseph: Ther's one thing you can say about these damnable cold rains we're getting' this spring, they made this grave opening easy work, even up here on this clay hill.

Lars: Ja, we made quick work of it. Course we didn't have to make too big of a hole -- they told me the little Indian girl who died yesterday, was only a long yearling.

Joseph: I haven't really figured out why we are doing this. They're only Injuns.

Lars: Indians or not, they are human beings. I know when Gussie and I lost our little girl with the whooping cough last winter, she and I just about died along with her. What those poor Ponca are going through shouldn't happen to a dog. There they are up along the Niobrara not botherin' anybody and those dumb sons of bitches running the government back in Washington D.C. take every speck of their land from them and now they're dragging them down to Oklahoma, of all places. You can't grow corn for shisson down there. It will be the death of them.

Joseph: I've heard it's so dry down there your piss don't hit the ground.

Lars: I don't know about that but your feet were sure hittin' the ground good the other night at that dance over at the Peterson's. Kind of think you had a couple of nips before you really got goin'. Ja?

Joseph: Well, a man needs a little something to put up with that music. Ed plays a purty tune on his homemade fiddle but Willie has to get about half full before he really gets the beat on that drum. Then he keeps nippin' and in no time he's past the shape to even keep the beat on the five or six tunes they do know.

Lars: Here comes my Mrs. and your mother. I wondered what was keeping them.

Anna: We lingered awhile over by my Herman's and your Brigitta's graves. It is a comfort to be near them – this is a peaceable place. It is like in the old country – our graveyard there overlooked our town, too.

Augusta: I didn't cry so much today. I see you men folks got your work done. Now we have only to wait. Did you find much to talk of?

Lars: Enough I reckon' though I forgot to tell about our many visitors of a couple of days ago. All though, truth to tell, we only had three young ones who were herding a big flock of sheep – maybe 200. They had let them just keep going in the open country till they got up close to our place and they were plumb lost with no idea how to get home. To make matters worse I couldn't understand hardly any of their words. They were Germans, like you folks. I had heard of a family named Strobehn out towards the Willow bottom who had sheep so I rode the mule out there. I didn't have any trouble findin' the place at all. Once you get close to their soddy the earth is as bare as a baby's bottom. Those sheep have picked off every living green thing. The Mr. could talk some English and he came back with me to guide his flock home. He told me along the way back that he is going to hire a fellow by the name of Henery from further out on the Willow to teach a three month term of school so the children learn to talk right for this country.

Joseph, you better take notice of that family – the little girl, the oldest of them is about as bright and pretty a thing as you'll ever hope to see. She just chatted at full speed; a real go-getter. The boys were kind of hang-backy, but she was somethin' else. In ten years when you've sown your wild oats, she'll be about twenty and a man could do a lot worse than a golden haired beauty like that.

Anna: Mein Joseph does not wild oats sow! He is a good boy. For four years now since his father ist gone, he the work of a man does and complain he does no. Gott on me smiled when to me this son he gave.

Joseph: Muttie, you make me out to be a saint, but I ain't.

Augusta: I hear a drum. I think that they are coming.

Anna: I will not be fearful for peddler Charlie came through yesterday and told me that these Poncas saved even the soldiers who were driving them over the river. Surely then they will not harm us.

Lars: It is not an easy thing that we do, but we will all just try to do the best we can.

Anna: That must be the father that is the baby carrying.

Lars: Welcome! We are sorry for your loss.

Black Elk: I am Black Elk, the father of White Buffalo Girl. I have heard that you return your lost ones into the earth as we do, so I bring to you my beloved girl child to honor with your burial ways. I want the whites to respect the grave of my child as they do their own dead. My people do not like to leave the graves of their ancestors, but we were forced to move and we hope it will be for the best. The one who shares my lodge, Moon Hawk, is not able to be here for she is sick. We leave the grave of our child in your care. We may never see it again.

Joseph: I am not yet old and I promise to honor your daughter's grave for all of my life, as I honor my father's grave just over there.

Augusta: Give me your baby to hold. Ah, she is so tiny. My Brigitta that I lost was larger. Ah Lars, the coffin is much too big – the poor thing looks so lost and small in there. All I had was that piece of muslin to line it with. I washed it up nice but it is not good enough. Anna, hand me that geranium blossom from the front of the Bible. It is a sorry bloom, but it is the only one from that plant I kept alive last winter. Ah, she looks so lonely in that big box. How can life be so cruel?

Gussie starts to recite in Swedish – “Vader var som ar i himlen”.

I am prattling on in Swedish. Lars, you are going to have to say the words I have marked in the Book.

Lars: It is alright, Gussie. I will say the words. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for if such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” Mark 10:13-16

O Heavenly Father, whose face the angels of the little ones do always behold in heaven; grant us steadily to believe that this child hath been taken into the safe keeping of thine eternal love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

And now let us close with *Children of the Heavenly Father*.

Black Elk: I'll be seeing you, my daughter.

Lars: May the little one be with God.

Children of the heav'nly Father
Safely in His bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in Heaven
Such a refuge e'er was given.

God His own doth tend and nourish;
In His holy courts they flourish;
From all evil things He spares them;
In His mighty arms He bears them.

II. FAMILY STORIES

Pioneer Reminiscences

Mabel Guild (narrator): I am Mabel Guild and I came into this world at the beginning of a new century. I was lucky to be born into a loving Christian family and though we didn't have much for worldly possessions, we had a lot of good times along with the sad, hard ones. I attended country school District 72 for eight years and I learned alot. By the time I started school the term was for nine months rather than three but most of the boys didn't go for the entire year. They came after the corn was out in the late fall and attended until before spring planting started. We had boys 18 years old some winters, some of them older than the teacher!

We had to pass 16 subjects in our 8th grade exams. I did well on mine. I was proudest though of my writing skill. For years I wrote a column of Willowdale news for Mr. Reutzel, editor of the Neligh News. Some of my interviews with our earliest settlers were published on the front page.

Here then, is the reenactment of my interview with Jane Henery, at the home of her daughter, DeEtta Rakow, of Neligh, where her final years were being made pleasurable.

Mabel: Good day, Mz Henery. How are you doing today?

Mrs. Henery: Well, hello Mabel. I'm doin' just pretty good but I must have dozed off.

Mabel: Do you remember that I was going to ask you about your first years in this area and how you got into Antelope County, for a story in the paper?

Mrs. Henery: Do you think anybody wants to read about such as that?

Mabel: I'm sure they would. You know not many of our first settlers are around anymore. Do you remember much of your journey to get here?

Mrs. Henery: I can recall more of that than what I had for breakfast today -- or for that matter if I even had breakfast.

Mabel: Well, let's get to jotting down a few of your trip stories.

Mrs. Henery: We started in Stockton, Ohio in May of 1880. It took clear to just before the 4th of July to get into Nebraska. We had good days and bad days. Some days we made 25 miles, others, because of bad roads or weather, only 5 or 6. Sometimes when we had a bad crossing, broke a wheel or had a horse play plumb out, we had no progress. We had a stove on the wagon but sometimes the families along the road allowed me to use their oven to bake our bread. Prices were dear! Our costs per day was about 35 cents for corn, 20 cents for sausage, 25 cents for a weeks supply of sugar, 10 cents for tobacco, and 25 cents for potatoes.

Mabel: Did you have time for church or any entertainment?

Mrs. Henery: Folks almost always invited us to their meetins' and oft times they asked us to their sings. I particularly remember *Come Let Us Our Journey Pursue*.

Mabel: Do you remember much of your first year on the Willow?

Mrs. Henery: Winter came early in 1880. Our house wasn't quite finished yet and we got a mean blizzard on October 15. The doors and windows were not on yet and the snow got in through the blankets. The only way the younguns and I could stay warm was to lie abed under all the covers. The Mr. and the older boys were away workin' on the railroad and after they did get home they had to walk the 11 miles to Neligh for provisions as there was four foot of snow most all over everywhere. All four horses we brought with us died and for a few years the Mr. had to farm with an ox team. They were slow and steady.

Mrs. Henery drifts off singing: *Come Home Come Home* ye who are weary come home.....

FAMILY SORROW

Mabel (narrator): There were some sad times in the hard lives of my early pioneer neighbors. When I interviewed Selma Anderson in 1946 she told me the tragic story of her 15-year-old step sister, Hulda, who died in childbirth along with her baby girl, Mary. 'Course, I didn't write that up for the paper, but it caused all the neighbors to call on the mercies of God. Hulda was the daughter of Edela Skogleaf Forsell and the step-daughter of Gustof Forsell.

This is how it was on that day – March 4, 1891 in the Forsell home.

Hulda: Mama, I don't hurt so bad anymore.

Edela: Stay still child and rest. The bleeding has let up but save your strength.

Hulda: Can I see my baby girl?

Edela: When you're a bit stronger and I get her arranged. She was a pretty little thing. It was just too hard for her to get borned.

Hulda: Her name is Mary. That's what my teacher called me – my second name, after I did good work in school. Once I learned to talk her talk she said it was a nice name for an American. Miss Lee was nice, but why was Mr. Forsell so mean to me and Axel when he married us?

Edela: My Mr. thought he did right. He is the Justice of the Peace so he has the power. His mother back in Sweden had no husband when he was born so his life was hard, hard, when he was growing up and he has been easin' up a little. He'd said you girls could go to Chautauqua when it comes to town next year.

Hulda: We did have some good times along with all the work and the troubles, didn't we? I loved when the lambs came in the spring. Mama, sing to me like you used to. I will rest.

Edela: sings: *Amazing Grace* how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost but now am found, was blind and now I see....

Hulda: (faintly) ...bright shining as the sun... Now it comes so quick – see the light.

Edela: Peace. Peace. Oh my God, grant peace.

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!
Thro' many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;
'Tis grace hath bro't me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

A JOY FILLED EVENING

Mabel Guild (narrator): My home was about one-half mile north of the Forsell home and before my time there was such a deep cut track in the sand from the wagons traveling between the two places that clear up to today you don't want to hit the ruts too fast with your pickup when you're crossing that pasture.

Along with the times of sorrow back then, there was an awful lot of babies lost. There were also many real good times – the thirties were tough, but in our house we had the pump organ and a lot of fun filled evenings of music and socializing.

This scene takes place in my home with Phoebe and Nellie Guild McKnight.

Phoebe: Glad you came over early to practice the music for our box social. Mabel isn't back yet from running across the road to borrow a couple of cups of sugar for the special Mahogany Cake that she's makin' for her box. She'll be back soon and Frank will stop by a bit later to practice that song he heard on the radio that Mabel worked on.

Nellie: I brought along the postcard that Mabel wrote to me from Cheyenne, Wyoming when she was out there on vacation. I've been forgetting to show it to you. That Mabel can get more words on a penny postcard than you can believe possible. She wrote:

Lee House – July 19 – 6 pm

Dear Nellie: This has been a sultry day but is better after a nice shower. I've not been much good. We are going uptown now. Last night we went up and heard an evangelist on the street corner. Liked him so well we are going up again. He sure gives it to them all – short skirts, paint and all.

Wednesday morning. Well, we went last night. There were three evangelists in town, yes, with plenty of use for them all. I saw boys like our Glen who were so drunk they couldn't walk without help and some as old as Papa smelling of it. If it wasn't for that I'd like Cheyenne fine. You ought to see the store windows. All decorated for Frontier Day. Every little kid has chaps, hat and spurs on. Tell Col. there are lots of cowgirls – snappy ones at that.

Take good care of yourself. Mabel

Phoebe: What a caution she is but I too have a letter to share with you. I was going through some old letters today and came across this one from my cousin, Eunice, from several years ago. I only found four pages but Eunice set down some funny stories and some sad ones. It starts:

Well, here it is November and no calf yet. I wish I could talk to you. Hope you're over your nasty cold. I'm takin' my medicine like a

good girl. Charlie brought us over some milk. Since then I've made a cake and four pies. Had Johnny Cake and milk gravy and lots of things for noon today including rice. This leaves us well fed up.

Glen was here all day. He wants to get a job pickin' for somebody.

Pa got it in his noodle the other day to go to town and he couldn't be stopped. I figured he was gittin' short of tobacco. He went out and got his horses by himself and got them ready. It was cloudy, windy, and real snappy but they went anyway. Both got awful cold.

Henry has had a real time. Laura thought she was gittin' milk leg and was really worked up. Grandma Binger went over, hot packed her legs, and calmed her down. Then Laura came to her milk and she and the baby are doing fine.

Ah, here is Mabel.

Mabel: Hello, Nellie. Sorry I'm late. Just couldn't get away from Martha. She had so many stores that she got on the bench at the Council Oak store on Saturday night. It almost made me have a little regret that we're Adventists and can't be a part of the goings on in Neligh on Saturday. I think her best one was about Beaut. She had just went on and on about how nobody should look at her 'cause she had her winter hat on rather than her summer straw. Frank had put it on his head earlier in the week when he'd been horsin' around with her man so she felt she could no longer have it on her head. Such foolishness! You know, we better practice up our number for the socials entertainment before Frank stops by to practice with us.

Nellie: I'll get to the organ for your *Whispering Hope* duet.

Mabel and Phoebe sing together.

Phoebe: My, that is a pretty piece, if I do say so myself.

Mabel: And we are finished not a minute too soon. I heard Frank's Chevy coming up the lane and now he's knockin'.

Frank: Good evening, Miss Mabel. Hello, Mz Nellie.

Nellie: Hello, neighbor.

Frank: Best of the evening to you Mz Guild. How are you doing today?

Phoebe: I'm doing just fine. You pull up a chair and visit awhile before we go to practicing.

Frank: I'll pull up a chair, but I'm purty nearly so roiled up about my trouble the other night that you probably heard about. I kin hardly set still.

Mabel: About those two thieves that stole your coupe?

Frank: That's the gospel truth. I was sittin' up late Friday night listenin' to my radio set and a station from clear away was comin' in real clear, when these bad actors came bustin' into the house and tied me up. They was big and ugly. They took my car and got it clear to Foster. I only had 20 cents of gas in it or no tellin' how far they would have got. I got one hand loose and got free. The next day the sheriff brought my car back with no damage so all in all I got pretty lucky, I guess.

Nellie: My, that must have been a real fright!

Frank: I'll admit I was powerful scared but I tried to think of good things to keep my wits about me. I thought about a good time I'd had just a couple of days before when the Grabowski brothers had took me along and we fished for cat along the Elkhorn till we got close to Norfolk. We'd only had fair luck and after a long afternoon in the sun we were powerful dry so when we spotted a joint we went in and ordered three draws. The smart mouthed bartender only brought two and said, "We don't serve niggers in here." My good buddies both spit in their beers and walked out without paying. It's mighty fine to have good friends.

Mabel: That is surely the case.

Frank: Mabel, did you get that tune that I first heard on the radio worked on?

Mabel: I did. You are gonna recite a line after me – then we keep adding on till we get the whole crowd at District 72 joining in.

Frank: Sounds like fun.

Song: *The Green Grass Grew All Around*

WHISPERING HOPE

Soft as the voice of an angel,
Breathing a lesson unheard,
Hope with a gentle persuasion
Whispers her comforting word:
Wait till the darkness is over,
Wait till the tempest is done,
Hope for the sunshine tomorrow,
After the shower is gone.

If, in the dusk of the twilight,
Dim be the region afar,
Will not the deepening darkness
Brighten the glimmering star?
Then when the night is upon us,
Why should the heart sink away?
When the dark midnight is over,
Watch for the breaking of day.-

Hope, as an anchor so steadfast,
Rends the dark veil for the soul,
Whither the Master has entered,
Robbing the grave of its goal;
Come then, oh, come, glad fruition
Come to my sad weary heart;
Come, O Thou blest hope of glory,
Never, oh, never depart.

REFRAIN: Whispering hope, oh, how welcome thy voice,
Making my heart in its sorrow rejoice.

EDUCATOR PAR EXCELLENCE

Mabel Guild (narrator): While I was living my life and doing my writing out on the Willow, there was a lady of exactly my age in Neligh living a very different life.

Priscilla Wolfe was a legendary teacher in her own time and when she neared the end of her days on earth she fell, broke her hip and had to be in Antelope Memorial Hospital. While there she was visited by a fellow reader, Father Clifford Stevens, who stated to a friend of hers waiting in the hall, that Miss Wolfe should be proclaimed a “national treasure”. Here then is Miss Wolfe.

Priscilla: I am Priscilla Wolfe. I was born in Neligh in 1899 to Emanuel and Lois McGintie Wolfe. My father was the owner/operator of one of the largest general merchandise stores in this area. My mother was a teacher and her father was a professor at Gates Academy. Major joys of my life were my dear friends, my 1933 Chevy coupe, which gave me nearly forty years of service, my cats, my treasured poodle, Gay, and of course, teaching. I received my degree from Oberlin College in 1921 and taught in a school for delinquent girls in Pennsylvania for two years. Then for 37 years I taught at Neligh High School. I’m not a prideful person but, from my perspective, I take great satisfaction from Bud Pagel’s “Letters to Pooh” which is found in the *Antelope County History 1868- 1985* book.

It reads as follows:

It is the nature of life that gentle people usually pass unnoticed.
So it was with Pooh.

That was not her real name, of course. Legally, it was Priscilla...Priscilla Wolfe. But she never really shed herself of Pooh, the nickname a mumble-mouthed young nephew attached to her some 50 years ago. And it fit her nicely, somehow.

Not at school, you understand. There it was Miss Wolfe, always. For 35 years she taught a variety of subjects at Neligh High – general math, civics, economics, freshman English. History, though, was her special love. She savored it; thrilled to it.

At college level (She turned down several university offers over the years.) her students probably would have become infected with this love for the past. High school students are not so easily inspired. But those at Neligh learned history. Miss Wolfe saw to it.

Her tests were legend. Impossibly hard. There was, in fact, only one way to pass them....study. Classes that were slow to discover this secret to academic survival were “encouraged” by daily quizzes, loathsome things that bent the will. Even the most reluctant eventually waived and opened their books. And learned. They learned names and dates and places and what happened “back then” and why and what it all meant.

Pupils who complained of such “educational brutality” received knowing smiles from older sisters or brothers, or parents, even, all survivors of Miss Wolfe’s history lessons.

“Some day, you will thank her,” they’d advise.

But even through the agony, there was freshness to Miss Wolfe’s classes. She was tough, but she was dead game. One group of students, emboldened by notoriously low test grades on a mid-term, challenged her to take an exam of their making. She agreed.

It was a monster, covering little-known facts from the back alleys of history and demanding hours of research and study by the cheeky students. Miss Wolfe herself termed it “quite difficult.”

She passed, of course, with flying colors. And, strangely, the four students bolstered with the knowledge they had gained in developing the test, did exceptionally well on their finals. Miss Wolfe smiled at that.

She smiled, too, the night our class graduated. She was one of our sponsors.

The other one was the superintendent. He had come to Neligh the year our group had entered kindergarten. He had stayed, he told us the night of graduation, a few years longer than he had planned, just to see us through. The thought of this personal shepherding almost overcame the otherwise unsentimental man. His voice choked as he delivered his final words.

“In all my years of teaching,” he said, “I have never been so pleased to see a class graduate.”

It was Miss Wolfe’s turn then. She rose and stood silently, glancing from face to face, remembering less emotionally than the superintendent, perhaps, a class that excelled at little, other than devilment and football. Finally, she spoke.

“I will agree wholeheartedly with the superintendent,” she said sweetly. “I, too, have NEVER been so happy to see a class graduate.”

It must have been difficult for her, during all those years of teaching, to present the required sternness. It was not her nature. Those of us who lingered a while, who became acquainted with her as adults, who came, eventually, to call her Pooh, discovered this.

We found a gentle person, almost shy. We found a woman of keen wit, based primarily on a clever turn of words; never harsh, never hurtful. And we learned from her – now that we would allow it – the excitement of new knowledge.

I can’t recall a visit to her home that didn’t, in a matter of moments, result in the inevitable question: “Have you read....?”

And she would be off, teasing you with hints of the thrills awaiting those fortunate enough to search between the covers of a marvelous new book. Usually, it worked. You would read the book.

Maybe it was this enthusiasm, this tempting with the never-fully revealed, that gave Pooh an aura of living in a secret, joyous world. Something did.

In reality, perhaps it was not that joyful. Her father, a prosperous pioneer merchant, died during the early years of the Depression, his fortunes dwindled. Pooh became the breadwinner, keeping up the big old family home, looking after first an aging grandmother, then her mother. And for nearly four decades she taught reluctant Neligh kids history.

The school board established a scholarship fund in her honor when she retired. They wanted her to present the first award. Embarrassed, she refused.

Pooh lived quietly the last years, in a little house she built for retirement, surrounded by family heirlooms and books and friends. A few months ago, she died.

Typically, she had requested only a graveside service. Bad weather thwarted these wishes and, at the last minute a handful of longtime friends gathered at the Congregational Church she had supported so loyally.

Her nephew, now a civil engineer, gave the service. It was as simple as she would have wished.

“We are here to say goodbye to Pooh,” the nephew told us. Then he read a few paragraphs from a bundle of letters, found tucked in the back of a dresser drawer. Some, indeed, had remembered to thank her.

I wish my letter had been there.

By Al (Bud) Pagel

III. PATRIOTISM

Priscilla (narrator): For those many years that I taught history in Neligh I was aware that when I was growing up there was a veteran of the Civil War living in our town who had served our country well. He had visited with one of the greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln, at the White House. I present this gentleman, John Hatfield, to you now.

IV. DEVOTION TO DUTY

John: I was born on the 4th of July in 1834 in Indiana, but I'd moved to Illinois before volunteering in 1861. I was in several hard fought battles in our beloved country's Civil War. I was unfortunate enough to be taken prisoner along with 200 of my comrades by the rebels in 1863 near Jackson, Mississippi. I was sent to Libby Prison and although it wasn't quite as bad as Andersonville, it was, believe you me, no Sunday school picnic. After about 3 months a hundred or so of us managed to tunnel out and after 5 hellish days, with only one decent meal, provided by a Negro, I managed to reach the safety of Union lines. General Butler gave me a pass to Washington D. C. There I met a brother of Governor Morton of Indiana. He knew President Lincoln and took me to the White House to meet him. I remember that meeting more clearly than anything else in my life. It went like this:

Hatfield: Lt. Hatfield reporting Sir.

Lincoln: Welcome Lt. It has been reported to me that you have made a heroic escape from Libby Prison and I honor your achievement, but I must tell you that I've always said that if I ever found a man homelier than myself I would kill him. I believe, with you, I have found him.

Hatfield: All right then. I'm not much good anyway. I am about played out.

Lincoln: I'll give you one chance. I'll leave it up to Mrs. Lincoln.

Hatfield: If you do, my life will be spared.

Lincoln: Mary, come in here.

Mary: What are you needing now?

Lincoln: I want to introduce you to Lt. Hatfield. He has made an escape from a prison camp.

Hatfield: I am honored to meet you.

Mary: No, the honor is mine.

Lincoln: Mary, haven't I at last found somebody uglier than me?

Mary: No! If he were rested and polished up a bit he would be a much better looking man than you but it is now nearly noon and the President and I would like to have you join us for dinner.

Hatfield: I would be honored.

Lincoln: If you would follow me to table I would much enjoy hearing the particulars of your escape. Then this afternoon I will take you up and introduce you to the Congress and then to the Paymaster. You could surely use a new uniform. Come.

Hatfield: The President did as he said and by the end of that day I received \$1015.00 in back pay. I was with Sherman in his march to the sea and in 1864 I was promoted to Captain. In 1873 I went buffalo hunting in Nebraska and heard of cheap land in Antelope County. I bought 480 acres and also got a tree claim. I did well in those years. My family moved here in 1885. I switched from the Republican party to being an Independent, served as the County Treasurer in 1909 and 1910 and later as a Nebraska State Senator. For all of my life I look back to the words spoken by Abraham Lincoln on the Gettysburg Battle field in 1863.

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Abraham Lincoln – 1863

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we can not dedicate – we can not consecrate – we can not hallow – this ground. The brave men living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people by the people for the people shall not perish from the earth.

FRANK BARNETT * CEMETERY

Greetings! Although it's powerful hot up here this evening I'm gonna tell you about a cold winter evening when I played Santa Claus for the kids that went to school at District 72. That's the school that you just joined in at a box social entertainment.

In 1937 when I played Santa after the kids had presented their program, I well remember one 5 year old boy named Vernie Hauptmann who really stared at my brown hands as I passed out the sacks of goodies.

Times were different then and the kids were really pleased to get some popcorn, an orange, hard candy and a Tootsie Roll.

Now on to my good friends, the Guild's.

NELLIE GUILD * CEMETERY

I'm Nellie Guild McKnight and I'm buried here beside my husband, Colonel McKnight. The rest of the Guild family is buried up there (motioned toward the grave stones of Phoebe and Mabel). Colonel and I were married in 1909 and I was told that I would never be able to bear children. Lo and behold, 20 years later, my beloved son, Dale, was born. I believe many of you may have known Dale. He graduated from Neligh High School in 1947 and I just happen to have a 1947 yearbook right here. In high school, Dale was involved with many music activities including band, chorus, pep band, and boy's quartet. Later, he sang with a well-known gospel quartet, the Kordsmen. I believe that Jerry Schrader also sang with this group. Jerry, can you tell us more about the Kordsmen?

PHOEBE GUILD * CEMETERY

My story is one of joy and faith. I was in frail health when young and was in a wheelchair when I married my husband, George, in Illinois. My health improved when we moved to Antelope County near the turn of the century. I was pleased with my little home and with my dear husband and his children. Our daughter, Mabel, was born in 1900. Times were hard! I found it difficult that I was unable to write back home to Illinois because we just didn't have the 2 cents for postage. I was so happy when some of my family later moved to this area. Eventually I moved to Oakdale. I lived a long and blessed life, helped much by my dear Mabel.

MABEL GUILD * CEMETERY

Mabel: I'm Mabel Guild and you've heard me say that I was proud of my writing ability but I have many other interests.

Jane (Ruterbories), do you remember what I showed you when I moved into Oakdale?

Jane: I surely do, many, many buttons and handkerchiefs.

Mabel: Jerry (Schrader), do you remember when Dale brought me back to my home place where you now live and you showed me your music room?

Jerry: I do indeed and I told you that the wood in it came from your old house where you said many a fine musical evening had been enjoyed.

Mabel: Now in death, as in life, cross the road and visit my neighbors, the Forsell's.

FORSELL FAMILY * CEMETERY

Edela: I'm close by my marker. The big one is for my husband and along here are three of my children. This daughter, Ella, was living in Brunswick when she was killed in a automobile accident in 1924. Her husband and six young children survived. Over here is the stone of two other daughters and my first granddaughter. They all died real young.

Hulda: I wanted to tell of an exciting time in my life. On the first day of June in 1884, I was 8 years old, and here come quite a bunch of riders on fine horses! We had heard of Doc Middleton's gang being in the neighborhood so we were about skeered out of our wits,

Edela: The Mr. was off tending to the sheep and these folks were as polite as could be, asking for water to drink. It was getting' close to noon and I had just made up a batch of Johnny Cake and had a good fire going. I doubled the batch, sent the older girls to pick some Lamb's quarter for greens, and invited them for dinner. I had the fixings for some milk gravy for the fry bread and an egg apiece. It went fine.

Hulda: Mama forgot to say that one of them was a girl. She was 15 years old, real pretty and rode as well as a man. She was gonna marry Doc Middleton in Neligh.

Edela: All travelers were well satisfied with their dinner. Doc, a real fine looking and gentle man, left a 5 dollar gold piece as payment. What a gift!

PRISCILLA WOLFE * CEMETERY

Hello and good evening. I am Priscilla Wolfe. I am as much a student as I am a teacher. I am curious and love learning new things and am an avid reader. Speaking of which, Joan (Baker), have you read *The Help* by Katherine Stockett? And did you like it? And tell me have you started that book I helped you find by Adriana Trigiani, *Big Stone Gap*?

And Marie (Krohn), have you read *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks? How about her 2006 Pulitzer Prize winner, *March*? Did you like them?

Mr. Starita, have you read the political gossip and commentary bestseller, *Game Change* by Heilemann and Halperin? No, well may I recommend it to you and suggest you check it out from the Neligh Public Library. I'm sure they have it.

And Jim (Norton), have you read the book by the renowned Nebraska author, Joe Starita, *I Am a Man*? And did you like it?

Mary Ellen (Taylor), have you read *The Painted Veil*? And are you ready for your book discussion group tomorrow?

And is my student here, Beverly, I believe it's Bennett now? Please raise your hand. It's nice to see you, Beverly. Have you read *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks? No, are you sure? Well, what about her Pulitzer Prize winner from 2006, *March*? I highly recommend them both.

Oh, and Tad (Henkenius) have you read *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee? Did you like it? And tell me, is the author a man or a woman, do you recall? Yes, a woman. And just a little aside, did you know that *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the 1961 Pulitzer Prize winner, is celebrating its 50th anniversary since publication?

Happy reading, everyone. Don't forget to visit your Neligh Public Library. Good evening.

JOHN HATFIELD * CEMETERY

We are now at my grave, J. D. Hatfield. I'd like to say, I don't take very kindly to being called a hero. I'm not a hero. I was only doing my duty, just like all the others who fought in that great war. They are all around you. Whenever you see one of these stars, with GAR on it, it marks the grave of these men. This cemetery is full of them. Many of the first settlers here were veterans of that war.

JANE HENERY * CEMETERY

As you know, I am Jane Henery and I see some of my descendants are here tonight. Earlier this year one of my grandsons, Boyd Bennett, was the oldest Neligh High School graduate at their reunion. He graduated in 1930. He is now 100 years old.

Jane (to Harold): Great great grandson, Harold L. Henery, I hear you were at the Oakdale Henery reunion last Saturday afternoon. How many of my descendants did you count up?

Harold: We came up to right close to 500.

Jane: That's wonderful and I hear there's one famous young man that plays University of Nebraska football.

Harold: That would be your great great great grandson, Alex Henery. He's a great kicker and his dad, Guy, gave me an autographed photo I'll show you.

Jane: Thanks much. I'll look at it while the crowd moves on.

WHITE BUFFALO GIRL * CEMETERY

At the cemetery the cast sang 3 verses of the old Swedish hymn *Children of the Heavenly Father*.

Saturday evening there was an exchange student from Germany with us and she asked about Joseph and wanted to meet him.. In fluent German, Frau Troxell, made the introductions.

Children of the Heavenly Father

Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord His children sever;
Unto them His grace He showeth,
And their sorrows all He knoweth.

Though He giveth or He taketh,
God His children ne'er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely
To preserve them pure and holy.

Lo, their very hairs He numbers,
And no daily care encumbers
Them that share His ev'ry blessing
And His help in woes distressing.

Praise the Lord in joyful numbers;
Your Protector never slumbers.
At the will of your Defender
Ev'ry foeman must surrender.



The cast, from left to right: Andy Beyer, George Strassler, Jennifer Norton, Daphne Hansen, Paige Kallhoff, Janet Davis, Jill Bates, Gloria Christiansen, Levern Hauptmann, Carolyn Weinman, Musyoki Kilonzo, Roxanne McNally, Perry Smith, Holly Troup, Patrick Moser, Karmen Sauser and Levi Pofahl.

Comments From Attendees

Vern: We just wanted to make sure you know how much we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves Saturday night. It was a magical, mystical evening that we won't soon forget. Joe Starita & Chris Lesiak, Lincoln, NE

Levern: We enjoyed your play, found it very interesting and now have more knowledge of Neligh's history. Ron and Fran Gilg, Neligh, NE

Levern: Thanks to you, our road trip started out perfectly. If this is truly your last production, you went out with a great job. Bob and Joan Barry, Raymond, NE

Levern: We both enjoyed the performance. Perhaps this might become a "tradition" as the lives of our settlers are remembered. There remain many stories to be told. Thank you and God bless. Galen and Debbie Furstenu, Tilden, NE

Levern: What a wonderful performance! Thank you and your cast so much for putting together "Voices From The Past". It was so much fun, as I "knew" almost every family that was depicted. The cemetery walk added, weather cooperating, much for a nice evening. This was a big project and you completed it wonderfully. Judy Wagner, Elgin, NE

Levern Hauptmann of rural Neligh, put together a series of historical vignettes, chose a lively cast, directed and produced a play which evoked memories and emotions. It was sort of like seeing another version of "Our Town".
Joan Hoffman—Clearwater Record Ewing News