

## IT WAS SO GOOD—Teresa Sullivan

A round of applause for Jim and Kay Clark who prepared the corned beef and cabbage dinner at our spring fundraiser on March 9th. It was the best that I have ever eaten and I have eaten a lot of corned beef at my own table and elsewhere on St. Patrick's Day. And the servers were not stingy with the amount either. And another round of applause for Marilyn Giles who coordinated the evening making sure that everything went smoothly.

Unfortunately there was not a huge crowd. But fortunately, the membership had made donations that covered the cost of the food. So a big thanks to them and to the set up crew that worked the evening before and the servers and the take down crew after the dinner. Any activity of this dimension requires that many people participate.

Everyone seemed to be feeling Irish with wearing something green. Joan Wittstruck not only wore something green but sported a shamrock headband. While the surname Wittstruck is certainly not Irish, she actually is Irish with the maiden name of Conway.

To add to the Irish evening, the trunk that Mary Riley Gannon used when she came to the US in 1871 was on display. If you look closely you can read her name Mary O'Reilly and her journey's destination, South Charleston, Ohio. Imagine packing all your worldly goods in one trunk.



## FUTURE MEETING AGENDAS

It seems impossible that we have finished a quarter of this year already. But we have a lot to look forward to in the next three quarters. Marilyn Giles has arranged the agenda for the rest of our meetings. PLEASE record these on your calendars for easy remembering. All will be at the Denton Community Center unless indicated.

April 23 2 pm. Joan Buhrman will present a program about her husband Wayne (Red ) Buhrman.

May 28 7 pm. We will tour Spring Creek Prairie SW of Denton

June 25 7 pm Edward Nolte will give a program on the history of the US flag

July 23 7 pm Michael Maas will present a Civil War program

August 27 7 pm Jerry Penry will talk about surveying Nebraska from 1855 to 1883

Sept 24 7 pm Cloy and Linda Stutsman will return by popular demand with a musical program

Oct 24 2 pm Heritage Show and Tell with members presenting program about their heritage.

Nov 26 Noon Annual meeting and potluck dinner. Please attend.

## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome Elaine Ahola from Crete back to the DCHS fold. You can find her at 415 Juniper St ., Tele [#402-826-9035](tel:402-826-9035)

We welcome a new member Diane Gropp who lives at 7640 W. Sprague Rd. Tele # [402-826-5678](tel:402-826-5678). Diane is interested in information about the Wendelin, Kattau, Schlichtemeier, Poetner, Gropp and Miner families from this area.

## BUTTON, BUTTON, WHO'S GOT THE BUTTON

LaVonne Uffelman, a DCHS member, awed all who attended our January meeting with her fantastic collection of buttons. She told us that she started collecting when her children were small when she needed a craft item for a teacher's gift and her hobby grew from there. Thank you LaVonne



## REMEMBERING DISTRICT #101 EAST—Jane Reinkordt

Lancaster County School District #101 East, also known as Bright Light School or Bright Star School, stood on the Southwest corner of W. Pioneers and Southwest 98<sup>th</sup> street, before the streets were known to us by those names. The present “SW 98<sup>th</sup>” was the road to Denton and Grandma’s; “W Pioneers” was just our road, on which we took our short walk down the hill to school. I envied the Sieck, Zicheck, and Schroeder kids who had a longer walk, because I had a fantasy about getting lost in the fog walking to school, and loved walking on the snowdrifts in the ditches. It was also too close for us reasonably to ride our bikes, though a color slide documents that we once did, whereas I have a lasting memory of Jimmy Schroeder pedaling by like mad on his little blue-green bike.

This was before the big curve in Pioneers to accommodate the lake had moved the intersection north of the corners of the original sections. The school stood just southwest of the old intersection, catty-cornered from our farm, straight west of Walt Bottrell’s farm, on the northeast corner of the section my mother Marjorie Smith grew up in the middle of. I know my mother and her siblings went there in the 1910s and 20s, as did I and my siblings in the 1950s. My sister Ann Bredenberg, best friend Joyce Sieck and I experienced the traditional Lancaster County eighth grade graduation at the Stuart Theater in 1959, presided over by Glenn Turner, County Superintendent. We wore our fancy dresses with crinoline petticoats with our first “high” heels and stockings, and walked shakily across the stage. Afterwards we saw a Debbie Reynolds movie and Lois Pester joined us. (She must have been the only eighth grade girl in her school.)

Thomas Bredenberg, my younger brother, was a pupil there until the district was dissolved in 1963 and the lake began to fill. Oddly enough, after all of 50 years, many of the old sidewalks and foundations are not yet dissolved. “Thanks” to the current extreme drought, they are high and dry and in full view as of January 2013. On an unseasonably warm weekend in late January I took my “kids” on a nostalgic tour of the ruins.

The most dramatic sight is the base of the old pump and several feet of the well casing which jut up out of the silt. You can read on the casing that it was made in Kansas City. The long and narrow piece of concrete with a little trough along which the pumped water ran off still points to the east. The sidewalk from the pump leads to the front porch of the school, and looking west from there you clearly see the outline of the crumbled foundation of the single main room, and the brick foundation of the back lean-to room on the west. In our day that back room had a record player in it and was used for storage, and perhaps punishment. It may have been a coal room in earlier days. A mystery to me is a row of large pink native stones right down the middle of the room, going east to west. They are not there by accident, and are rather flat on top. Could they have supported the middle of the floor?

The sidewalk along the south side of the school is also quite intact, and leads straight back to the clearly visible concrete foundations of the girls’ privy. There seems to be a second loose stone and brick foundation right south of it, perhaps an earlier privy that was buried before my time? A branch of the main sidewalk leads northwest to the boys’ privy, and between the two a pile of stone marks where the barn stood. In front of everything to the east is the round culvert which was in the ditch between the road (SW 84<sup>th</sup>) and the school. Our path into school crossed it and led to the big sidewalk where we played hopscotch. We often hid in the culvert and gossiped. To the north, near the normal shore of the lake, you can also see remains of the larger culvert that went under the road (Pioneers).

These exact descriptions of unattractive ruins may seem silly, but the funny thing is how looking at and walking along the actual foundations brings back memories much more strongly than looking at the usual waves or ice above them, or even at old pictures. I guess that is the reason I have gone to see ruins in Greece, Rome, Berlin, and Egypt. They evoke the reality of the place in a different and powerful way.

So nostalgia overtook me, and I told (retold) how my first time being taken home from school by a boy was with Dennis Borgman on his black and white pony Mitzi, who had patiently spent the school day in the barn. This story is guaranteed to make young people think I am about a hundred years old, and telling it in Germany elicits the response: “Just like in Little House on the Prairie!”

## REMEMBERING DISTRICT #101 EAST—Continued

The well reminded me of how we went out to pump water for the day and filled it into a big ceramic blue and white striped water cooler with a spigot so we could drink it from little Dixie cups in the back of the schoolroom by the big blackboard, on which we once made such a beautiful colored chalk Easter picture. And so on....

Later, I reflected that my nostalgia should be tempered with some reality. The talks with the older girls in the privy (there were two or three places to sit) about the “facts of life” are a nice warm memory, but maybe some more and better science education would have been a good idea too. The boys’ privy of course was famous for being upset on Halloween – great fun or silly vandalism?

We surely demonstrated our ignorance and insularity when an inspector from the county came to check our well for the sake of our health and we treated him like an evil outsider we wanted to get rid of. We later realized, come to think of it, that our well was right downhill from Bottrell’s hogs and cattle. Part of the memory of the famous pony ride home, to be honest, is that I didn’t know how to ride a horse at all and bounced up and down hanging on tight behind Denny. We must have ridden at a good trot or gallop. I well remember being very sore when I sat on the hard piano bench to practice for my lessons with Mrs. Flickinger

Still, the smallest things can trip something way back in your brain. My son found a piece of clear blue glass – he knew from an old movie that it was a half of an insulator. I can remember they held the many old phone lines on poles with several branches of them. I saw the holder of a guy wire (like a strong metal tent stake still firmly in the ground with a sculpted metal loop on top) that had probably held up a light pole, and a piece of rusted cable that may have been from that. A piece of metal was sticking up an inch out of the sand, and I kicked it and it turned out to be a doorknob on its metal plate. Very sandy and rusty, but surely the old doorknob I had turned so many times!

Conestoga Lake has become very silted in, and appears to be flat and shallow a good ways south of the school now. If they are going to drain and dredge and rejuvenate the lake, they would have a good start with it so dry now. South of the school you can see where I loved to play fox and goose in the winter, and otherwise seemingly eternally played the dreaded work-up softball at recess. I was usually out in right or left field dreaming away and missing flies. If it gets drier we may still find the fence behind the place of the big box-elder tree the whole school could climb at the same time, or a piece of our teeter-totter, or the turning bar, or even the fence and creek that formed the south boundary of the schoolyard, and in which we went “cricking” before that was an organized activity. Our young and flighty teacher, Miss Bish, did not show up for school one winter day, so we just went adventuring, exploring the creek way down towards Holmes Creek, the main one in the lake. We were in big trouble when we got back to find our fathers there (who were also the school board) – but she was in much bigger trouble!



Not only to put an end to this nostalgia, we are all dearly hoping for rain, and thus for these ruins to recede back where they belong. I think my memory of District 101 is refreshed for plenty more years. In the meantime I have some pictures taken by the younger generation to help us remember Bright Light School.

Pictures by Amber Hollmann and Elisabeth Reinkordt

## ROKEBY HAS A NEW COMMUNITY HALL

This article appeared in the Lancaster County Citizen newspaper in the Feb 23, 1922 edition.

**THE NEW ROKEBY COMMUNITY BUILDING**

**A Great Community Achievement**

The new Community House at Rokeby, nine miles southwest of Lincoln, was dedicated Saturday evening. Over a hundred Rokeby people and their friends were present and enjoyed a pleasant, modern, community entertainment. The occasion was important as it marked the accomplishment of a good public enterprise in spite of general adverse conditions.

To this big, new building on the top of the Rokeby hill, came men, women and children. It is for them all and they all enjoyed the celebration of its formal opening. Mingled with the Rokeby people were several families who came out from Lincoln — former residents of the locality who are still interested in its activities. The Citizen editor and family were also present, because Community Work is our hobby and we wanted to congratulate the Rokeby people on this fine thing that they have done. Also among those present were some county politicians, who dare not overlook public meetings, these just-before-election days.

The evening's entertainment was a typical community affair. Chairman C. E. Olmsted conducted the meeting. The Rokeby High School students ably presented a little comedy, "The Depot Lunch Counter." The minister of Rokeby's church, Rev. P. F. Dunn, told some good stories and dedicated the building to the physical, mental and social welfare of the whole community. The secretary of the Community club, H. A. Forman, read the flattering financial record of the project. Professor Paine and his good wife played and sang old-time melodies in a most delightful manner. Col. Tate auctioned off scores of beautiful lunch boxes for a total of \$125 in real money. The Citizen editor was lucky enough to secure Mrs. Olmsted's basket and with her ate to his content. Everybody else seemed to have plenty of refreshments also. The politicians shook hands and admired babies till they ought to be sure of re-election. And everybody had a fine time!

This new Rokeby community center was built after a fire destroyed the old town hall, the Woodmen building, last spring. A community club was organized and bought the choice site and old brick from the Woodmen. Then they wisely decided to build a permanent structure instead of a cheap one. Liberal donations of both money and labor were secured. At one time eighteen men were working together on the building. As a result, Rokeby now has a substantial \$5,000 public property that would be creditable and useful to any town.

It is a frame building, 32 x 54 on the ground with furnace heat. The foundation and basement floor are of cement. The main floor is double lumber laid on extra heavy timbers. The kitchen, dining room and dressing rooms are in the basement. The main floor is a large room or hall for public meetings and games such as basket ball. Later, it is planned to build a stage at one end of the hall and an entrance or vestibule at the other end. These will add a lot to the utility and appearance of the building.

The Community House is already the center of the social life of Rokeby and is a monument to the spirit of co-operation, harmony and successful effort that exists there.

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## TORNADO SEASON

With tornado season just around the corner, Dave Loos presented a recent program on being prepared. He showed what we should have in an emergency kit. Good program, Dave!



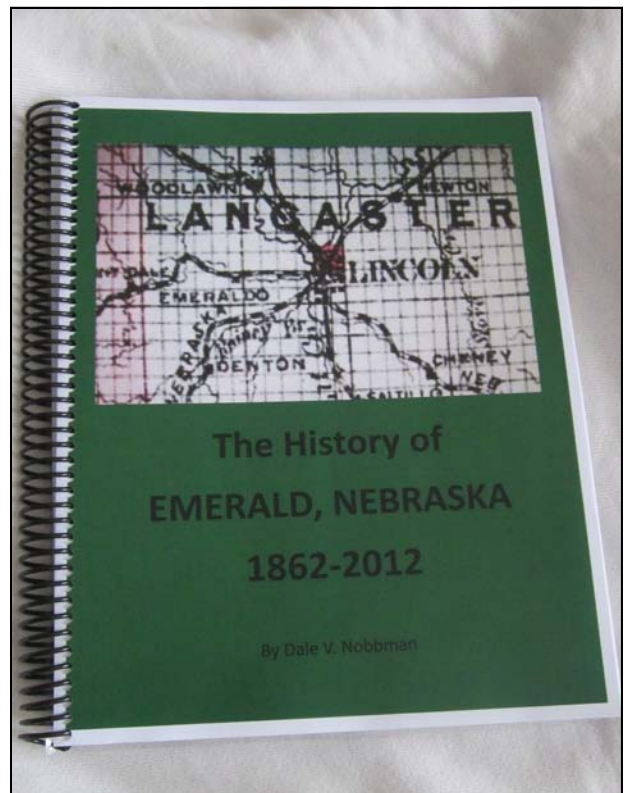
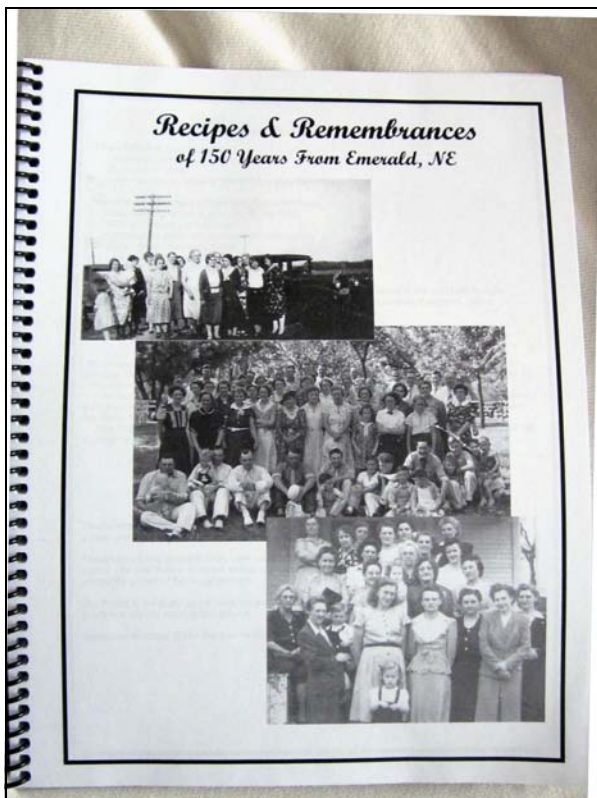
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Editor's note: This is a remarkable history and must have taken hours and hours of time to find all the information it contains. Good reading.



## OBITUARIES

**Robert M. DeHass**, age 67 passed away on Jan 19th. Robert and his brother Ron and their father Ted operated the family fertilizer business in Denton. His brother Ron passed away in March 2011.

**Esther Messman**, widow of Lloyd Messman, passed away January 22. She was born in Hallam to Theodore and Clara Wendelin Von Busch. She and Lloyd lived for many years in the Yankee Hill area. Six children and their families survive.



**Francis W. Ketterer**, age 84 of Lincoln passed away on February 14. He was the son of Frank Ketterer and Eleanor O'Halloran. The Ketterer home while in this area was just SE of Denton. His wife Dorothy and Francis have been DCHS members for many years. She survives as does two sons and families. His sister Ada Ketterer Lisle also survives.

The alumni of Rokeby High were saddened to learn of the death of **Anita Evans Puff** in California. Anita accompanied by her son David attended the June 2012 alumni reunion. She was 88 years old. Her sister Lalie Chavez who lives in Hemet California also survives.

**Maybelle Shefferd**, age 97 passed away March 15 in Albany Oregon. Survivors include her daughters, Marie, Lila, and Nancy and their families. Another daughter is Carol Daniel who with her husband Melvin are DCHS members. Among Maybelle's many joys was her 2000 plus collection of salt and pepper shakers.

**Jeanette Birkett Priess** passed away on March 21 at age 78. Jeanette and her husband, Lloyd, who survives, farmed in the Yankee Hill area for many years. Also surviving are her four daughters and their families. She was very active in 4-H activities and the Extension Club as well as many other interests. Lloyd can trace his ancestors back to the Emerald area.

## MRS. OWENS' COOK BOOK AND USEFUL HOUSEHOLD HINTS—Teresa Sullivan

Somewhere along the line, my mother acquired an old cookbook as per above. It ended up with her pictures etc in a big box. I don't think that she really ever used the recipes it contained. For some unknown reason I found I could not throw it away. It appears from the info on the internet that there was a Mrs. Frances E. Owens who published this book in 1884. I especially like the household hints. This book can be found on the internet and can be read on the internet.

**TO STOP EARACHE** Turn the little sufferer on the side and from a height of a foot or more pour into the affected ear a small stream of water just as hot as you dare use. It will cause a momentary screaming but the pain will cease. I have tried this with a child two years old who was suffering intensely from earache, and the entire face and head seemed inflamed. It was not fifteen minutes before he fell asleep, and that was the last of the earache.

**A HOME MADE CARPET** Paste the floor of the room over with newspapers. Over this, paste wall paper of a pattern to look like carpet or oilcloth. Put down as smoothly as possible, match it nicely where the widths come together. Use good flour paste. Then size and varnish it. Dark glue and common furniture varnish may be used.

Place a rug here and there and your room is carpeted.



**TO WASH LINEN SUITS** Fill a pail with old, dry hay; put scalding water on it and let it stand until the water is colored; then wash the linen in it, and it will look as nice as new.

**NOW ABOUT IRONING** If your husband's nightshirt is smoothed in front and folded artistically, who is to know whether the back has been ironed or not. I'll venture to say, that he will not, unless you tell him. The same with your own night-dresses; and the children's' drawers. Little romps, they soil them in less time than it takes to do them up.

## YANKEE HILL YARNS

### TAKEN FROM THE LANCASTER COUNTY CITIZEN NEWSPAPER FEBRUARY 1922

The state's new pumping station, located on our hill, is attracting no little attention to those interested in modern methods of water supply. It supplies water for the state insane hospital and several residences in our neighborhood. The water has been analyzed by the state chemist and is said to be soft and free from salt. This clear, cold, fresh water is highly appreciated after enduring the salt water from the old well, which was very unpleasant to drink, injurious to plants and destructive to water pipes and machinery in general about the institution. L. B. Loso of Lincoln is the contractor in charge of this work. He put down several test wells in our neighborhood to locate the proper place for the pumping station. He has had much experience in this line of work. He also made the drill tests on the

State Hospital grounds. Four 8-inch drilled wells, each 140 feet deep, supply the water for this pumping station. Each well has a capacity of seventy-five gallons per minute, making a total of 300 gallons per minute. Each well is equipped with a Mast Foos deep well pump Jack, driven by electric motors. The motors are each 7 1/2 horsepower and run 1,200 revolution per minute, the voltage of 210 coming from the penitentiary. Each pump weights 1,900 pounds. The cylinders in the wells are double acting, thus throwing a continual stream of water.

The machinery is set 5 feet underground to prevent freezing and over each is built a brick pump house, 10 by 10 by 15 feet. They are 60 feet apart and 6-inch cast pipe connects each well so that the wells can be pumped separately or all together. The large reservoir at this station is 44 feet in diameter and 14 feet deep; capacity, 39,807 gallons. The standpipe is 10 feet in diameter and 100 feet high; the capacity is 48,700 gallons, and it can be filled in two and one-half hours with all pumps going. The two wells have been running day and night since January 15. The work will soon be completed if the weather permits.



Denton Community Historical Society

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