NEWSLETTER
RICHARDSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
1401 CHASE ST. - PO BOX 45
FALLS CITY, NE 68355
Website - https://www.negenweb.net/RCHS
Email: rchs@sentco.net
Issue #40 Facebook: Richardson County Historical Society Museum **Fall 2026**

Board of Directors 2025-2026:

Leon Wilhelm, President	Jan Deckinger, Secretary
Richard Meinzer, Vice President	Austin Duerfeldt, Treasurer
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David Kentopp	Bill Niedfeldt
Jane Zentner	Justin DeBusk
June Bowers	Shirley Gormley
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Mary Jane Weinert	Terry Stradtman
Kristy Snethen	Bill Rowan
Kathy Perkins	Norma Thompson, Records/ IT
Richard Zentner	Kenny Killingsworth
Ben Simpson	Steve Yoesel

Contact Information: 402-245-4407 or 402-801-1307 Email: rchs@sentco.net

Greetings from the RCHS Board of Directors -

At the Annual Meeting on August 22 officers were re-elected as follows: Leon Wilhelm, president, Richard Meinzer, vice-president, Jan Deckinger secretary, and Austin Duerfeldt, treasurer. Steve Yoesel and Ben Simpson are additions to the Board.

The museum buildings were the site of many gatherings and events this past year. We frequently answer requests for area history and genealogy help, and visitors often are seeking information about county family connections.

We participated in the NE State Historical Foundation Wander Nebraska Program.

Thank you to those who serve as docents and hosts for events: Terry Stradtman (lead), Jan Deckinger, Jean McNeely, Barb Parrish Sickel, Bill Niedfeldt, Norma Thompson, Joan Zoeller, Mary Beth Gibson, Mary Jane Weinert, and June Bowers.

Thank you to Barb for keeping the decorations seasonal and to Mary Beth, Bill N., and others for indoor and outdoor maintenance. Scholl Lawn & Landscaping service are hired this year for mowing. Thank you to Dustin DeBusk for his re-arranging of the equipment in the AG II Bldg and his willingness to help with most anything we ask of him. Nikki Dunn replaced some plants in the AG II berm.

The ceiling in the gallery room was replaced, and the roof above repaired to prevent leaks.

The oldest of the AC units in the main building needs to be replaced.

Tri-State Corners Genealogical Society and the D.A.R. meet regularly in the main building.

An antique equipment show was held during Cobblestone Festival on the Ag II grounds.

Volunteers are continually needed for two-hour afternoon shifts, so please consider being part of this group, even if as a substitute. It is an opportunity to learn from visitors as they see what we have.

Thank you to all who have contributed through memberships, donations, and memorials. Please continue to help with the upkeep of our buildings and expenses and program offerings. Contact us if you are interested in sponsoring a display or exhibit. Our Board of Directors continue to use your gifts wisely and apply for grants when possible. If you have not paid your Sept.1, 2026-Sept.1, 2027 dues or wish to make a contribution, please do so. A form is included in this newsletter for your convenience. Questions? Call the museum, leave a message, or contact one of your board members.

1926
Richardson County High School Graduates

Bratton Union
Cook, Myrtle
Glathar, Roy
Glathar, Ruby
Harshbarger, Gladys
Koehler, Lena
Mayer, Helen
Reagan, Harold
Trimmer, Cecil
Warnke, Lyndon
Yelkin, Oakel

Dawson
Dappen, Lenore
Farrell, Mary
Fenton, Angeline
Gibbs, Everett
James, Alma
Riley, Alice
Ryan, Margaret
Ryan, Mary Alice
Sinnett, Alta
Ulmer, Mildred

Honey Creek
Colson, Carl
Dandliker, Naomi
Delph, Vilma
Kaul, Vernon
Kreps, Roland
Porr, Marvin
Schmitt, Alma
Schneider, Ruth
Von Bergen, Ruby
Wittwer, Lucile

Shubert
Ahern, Beatrice
Boatman, Arletta
Boatman, Elsie
Bodle, Nellie
Burson, Hazel
Coop, Lois
Creel, Velma
Evans, Elva
Fish, Ethel
Harger, Loreen
Kelly, Catherine
Kenton, Alberta
King, Nedra
Kuttler, Raymond
Lambert, Robert
Stanley, Ruth
Weddle, Lucille
Wolfe, Delbert

Sacred Heart
Bacakos, George
Bolejack, Pearl
Frederick, Grace
Krieger, Earl
Mackey, Madeline
Mahoney, Loretta
McDougal, John
McGuire, James

Humboldt
Ast, Elmer
Avery, Zola
Bidler, Alberta
Brewer, Bessie
Brewer, Mary
Carsh, Ernest
Clift, Warren
Cunningham, Ralph
Fergus, Frances
Fergus, Howard
Fraser, Theresa
Fryburger, Frank
Gentry, Letha
Goodhart, Leo
Green, Joe
Harshbarger, Lucille
Harshbarger, Pansy
Hecht, Willis
Herr, Milton
Hill, Warren
Hudson, Ruth
Hunzeker, Edwin
Hunzeker, Karl R.
Marburger, Harold
McCoy, Alta
Nemechek, Arthur
Nettlebeck, Wilda
Parker, Wanda
Porr, Ivan
Power, Emmett
Ray, Donald
Rist, Frank
Schuetz, Esther
Schultz, Olin
Stoltz, Mildred

Verdon
Becker, Karl
Benedict, Roy
Beutler, Claude
Burns, Clyde
Cawthorne, Mildred
Fisher, Willie
Fritz, Alma
Fritz, Edward
Fritz, Harvey
Gibble, Joe
Goolsby, Wilson
Griffiths, Helen
Harring, Frances
Henderson, Russell
Kelly, Helen
Neman, Gladys
Neman, John A.
Owens, Roland
Parsons, Dale
Pool, Opal
Sloan, Clair
Vollmer, Lulu
Weaver, Charlie
Whitney, Una
Zentner, Sophia

Stella
Allgood, Willard William
Bourke, Minnie Eloise
Davis, Gleneva Leona
Edwards, Charles Harold
Law, Myrtle Ellen
Mason, Albert J.
Mason, George William
Shellenbarger, Leona Irene
Timmerman, Amy Mina
Weddle, Elma Arlene
Williams, Harold
Withee, Eugene Hossack
Wright, James Merle

Salem
Adams, Harriet
Cudney, Mabel
McDougal, Veda
McDowell, Blanch
Rhoades, Wilma
Schulenberg, Mary

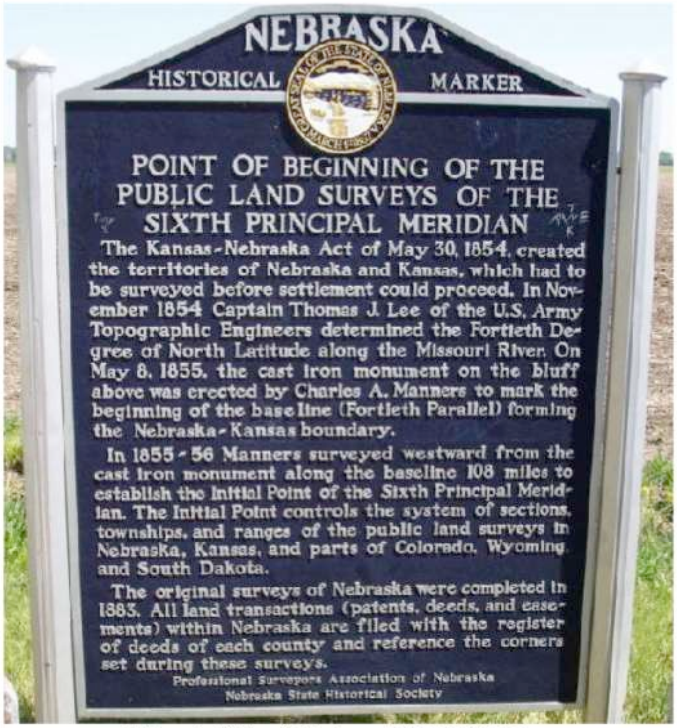
Ruio
Abel, Herbert
Coupe, Agnes
Davis, Marguerite
Simon, Melaine

Falls City
Alexander, Helen Mae
Auxier, Maude
Bates, Thelma
Biles, Clarence
Bippes, Susie
Bollman, Olive
Boose, Helen
Bragdon, Arthur
Bryan, Arline
Camblin, Edna
Coatney, Ethel
Coleman, Agnes
Craig, Howard
Deckinger, William Jr.
Fehr, Edna
Grush, Roy
Hahn, Herman
Harkendorff, Edna
Hartman, Alfred
Hartman, Henry
Heiser, William
Hutchins, Harlan
Kaiser, Reuben
Kimmel, Edwin
Kloepfel, Ruth
Klumb, Helen Ruth
Krueger, Clara
Lemmon, Gladys
Linsacum, Marguerite
Long, Gertrude
Macomber, Helen
Mayer, Erma
Merritt, Ruth
Miller, Emogene
Mosiman, Delphia
Nulk, Joan
Orr, Frances
Phelps, Joseph
Reavis, Nellie
Reid, James
Reid, Richard
Rieger, Lothair
Rieschick, Kathryn
Ruegge, Kathryn
Sandrock, Homer
Sauer, Marie
Sharp, Ruth
Simon, Mary Adele
Snethen, Howard
Snyder, Foy
Snyder, Ruth
Strawhun, George
Tesson, Rachel
Thomas, Carolyn
Thomas, Lucille
Towle, Edwin Jr.
Tubach, Howard
Walters, LeRoy
Wiltse, Homer

Falls City Journal
Sept. 20, 1926

STUDENTS TAKE OVER NEW HIGH SCHOOL TODAY

Sept. 20, 1926—First classes held in new building as it is occupied by about 400 high school students.



7.5 mi. SE of Rulo at NE-KS Line
There is a maintained trail from here up to the Cast Iron Monument on the bluff.

Mrs. Guy (Marjorie) Surman, was instrumental in calling attention of the monument to Nebraska state historians. In 1890 it was found to be knocked over and almost buried in tall brush. It was reset then. Over the years improvements and maintainance has been provided by the Surman family, our RCHS, a Boy Scout Eagle project, by a surveying class from Southeast Community College in 2014, and by the Professional Surveyors Association of Nebraska (PSAN) which most recently on May 8, 2025, the exact 170th anniversary of the actual installation of the monument, held a site improvement work day there. Search 'Point of Beginning Nebraska' on youtube.com for coverage of this.

The musuem has the April 2022 - May 2025 logbook of comments by many visitors to the site including 1011now News .

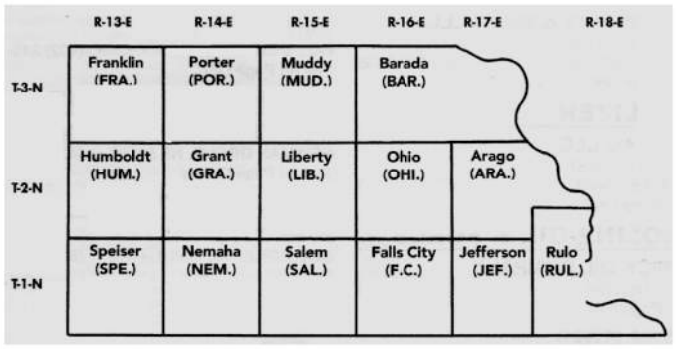


Verdon lies in parts of Section 10 & 11 of T-1-N, R-15-E known as Liberty Precinct. This sign is in the Community Hall there and likely came from the Missouri Pacific Depot. 95° indicates 95° west of the Prime Meridian that passes through Greenwich, England.



Our float was pulled in both the July 4 Semiquincentennial and the Coblestone Parades. This nearly-actual sized Cast Iron Monument replica was built several years ago by John Seeba. As seen on the historical marker, it played an important part in the history of the US.

The Museum has copies of the booklet by C. Albert White, describing in detail the process of getting the monument placed and the survey westward.



T-1-N means the horizontal row of townships closest to the State Line, the 40th Parallel.
R-13-E means the 13th vertical column of townships east of the 6th Principal Meridian that was established 108 miles west of the Iron Monument near Chester and Hubbell, NE.
Most of the Richardson County precincts are 6 mi. x 6 mi. squares. A section is 1 sq. mi. within the township.

The Museum has a Geocache named "Down on the Farm" placed at 95° 36.2238' W, 40° 03.5607' N posted on geocaching.com that attracts frequent hunters onto our site.

Another John Brown Connection to Richardson County

Many county residents have heard that Salem founder Justus Casner ("J. C.") Lincoln was a second-cousin of President Abraham Lincoln. J. C. lived in Salem most of his life before dying on May 4, 1893, just four days after his wife, Eliza.

What many don't know is that famed abolitionist John Brown, who passed through the county several times in the 1850s, also had second-cousins residing in Richardson County. Among them were sisters Pamelia and Rebecca Brown and their brother John. They were children of Jubal Brown, a first-cousin of Owen Brown, father of the abolitionist.

Jubal and his family had moved from Morgan County, Illinois where the daughters were born, 1845 and 1849 respectively, as members of one of General Jim Lane's parties of Free-Soil settlers. Lane and other anti-slavery leaders encouraged settlers to move to Kansas in their efforts to make that territory a free state. Both sides of the slavery issue were encouraging this settlement in their efforts to influence the coming statehood vote. Would Kansas be a free or slave state?

In 1856 Jubal and his family had journeyed west in an ox-drawn prairie schooner and settled near Sabetha, Kansas Territory, where they resided until 1863. They soon moved to Pony Creek near the new town of Falls City in the neighborhood of the Nemaha Falls Mill. The mill stood where his famous relative had last crossed in 1859.

It is easy to imagine that abolitionist, and Underground Railroad conductor, John Brown would have visited his relations when entering Kansas, but obviously not when leaving, as he would have been hurriedly transporting run-away slaves north to freedom.

On July 4, 1867 Pamelia ("Millie") Brown married William Harrison Stringfield, a Civil War veteran. He was a son of Loderick Hudson Stringfield who, with John Stumbo, had built the Falls Mill in 1853/54 and is buried in the nearby cemetery.

According to the *Falls City Journal* of Apr. 11, 1945, about a year after their marriage they built a log cabin on the banks of the Nemaha. Their nearest neighbor at the time was the noted Indian chief, Mesouquit.

In 1880 William and Pamelia moved to Stella, and later to Humboldt. William died Oct. 27, 1923 and is buried in Stella. Pamelia lived almost to her 100th birthday, dying Apr. 10, 1945 at a daughter's home northeast of Humboldt. She and William had eight children.

The younger sister, Julia Rebecca Brown, married a local pioneer photographer, Lawson Howell Wells, on Mar. 9, 1873 at the Methodist Episcopal parsonage in Falls City officiated by Rev. Col. William Presson, a somewhat controversial person who didn't stay long. (A child of Presson is buried in the old Falls City cemetery.) Lawson Wells' parents had moved their family to Falls City about 1865. They had lived in a house where the library is today before moving south to a farm on the state line.

Lawson and Rebecca left the area about 1880 for several years, during which they visited her parents and brother John who had moved in 1878 to Hesparus, Colorado. They returned to Falls City about 1897

and rented a home at 812 Lane. Lawson continued as a photographer for a few years and then as a carpenter. The couple had three children.

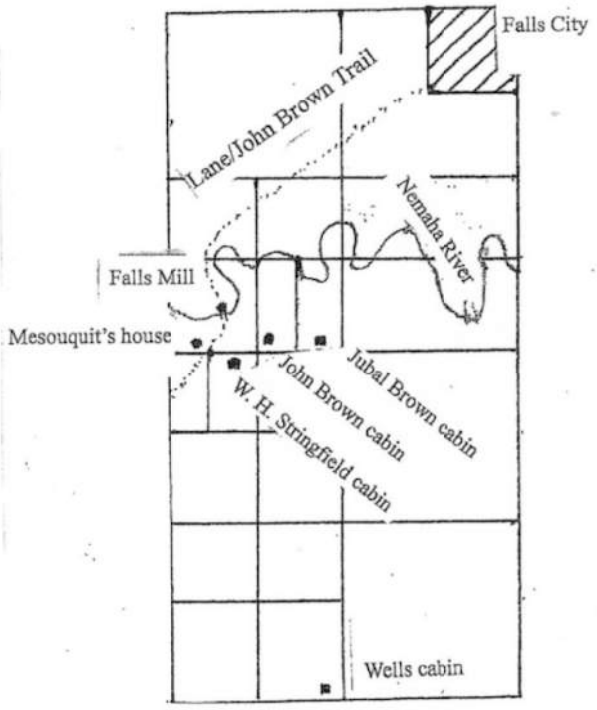
Rebecca died at their home in Falls City in July, 1922. Her husband in October 1922 was described as a "grisly warrior" who habitually carried several guns. Facing eviction, but refusing to leave the house, he resisted arrest by three officers by firing at them. He consequently was committed to the state asylum on Oct. 22, 1922 by the County Sanity Board consisting of Dr. H. R. Miner, James R. Wilhite, and Miss Alice Cleaver.

Rebecca's obituary on July 22, 1922 closes with the statement – "deceased was a second cousin of the famous John Brown noted in Kansas and Nebraska history in civil war days."

These two relatives of John Brown are now resting in Richardson County. Pamelia Brown Stringfield is in the Stella Cemetery. Her sister Julia Rebecca Brown Wells' grave is unmarked in the Wells family plot in Falls City' Stelle Cemetery just west of the Dorrington mausoleum – another Brown/Dorrington connection.



Pamelia Brown Stringfield



Locations of Brown, Stringfield, Wells Farms about 1870

Submitted by Bill Rowan

Memorial Gifts in Honor of:

Paul Weinert	Gilbert Thompson	Ada Magdanz	Fred Deckinger
Marty Peck	Delores Oliver	Bev Kimmel	Kay Whitney Castner
Kenny Kirkendall	Marlene McKim	Frank Palmer	Kenneth Schawang
	Jean Niedfeldt		

We thank the Kay Whitney Castner family for choosing our museum to receive memorial funds.

Recent Acquisitions







This beautiful white ceremonial robe is embroidered in red, gold and black. Staff Sgt. Robert Appleoff brought it from the Philippines for his fiancée, Mildred Hinton. He was a combat soldier there in WW II.

This rocking horse crafted by Leonard Kimmel with woods from throughout the country was donated by Beverly Sefried Kimmel

In the AG II Building, this showcase's second shelf holds a replica 1850 wooden train set created by Leonard Kimmel for Jim Sefried and trains belonging to Jim Gerweck and Leon Wilhelm. The iron 1887 numerals were on the abutment of the first railroad bridge at Rulo. They match the ones on the large iron marker outside the AG I Bldg. that was on the bridge above the tracks on the Rulo side. On the left are aerial photos of the current bridges. The little copper musical train shown is from the E.V. "Pete" Elliott family.







Our Gehling Opera House Display

These letters were high on the front of the building until they had to be removed due to the necessary demolition of the third story. After the stage curtain and other items were shown in the Falls City Library and Arts Center's Stalder Gallery, the curtain is in the possession and stored by the Arts & Humanities Council. Historian Bill Rowan gave two informative talks at the library about the opera house. Thanks to the Kiekhaefer Family, long time owners of the building, we have several pieces to add, and with pictures from our files, from the recent showing, and those acquired by Bill and others, we will continue to tell the story of the opera house.

Farmall F20 Tractor ca 1938



Owned by Dan Lundy & donated by Terry Frank



This 1954 Dawson High School red corduroy cheer outfit belonged to Joann Krueger Niedfeldt. Several school class pictures from her were added to our school collections.

Other school items received include these yearbooks:
Falls City High: 1922, 1910, 2026
Bratton Union: 1931
Rulo School: 1947-48, 1949-50

A Few Other Acquisitions:

Honey Creek Community/School items & Zion Church dishes from Richard VonBergen family
Apple cider press belonging to Vern Lewis
Two barbed wire display boards
Large framed photos of Tanner and Bower family members.
Spinning wheel
Edwards History, large oval framed photographs, and other Tipton,Hauck, Kister family items
Many photographs, tapes, and CDs of PeeWee Erwin, Judge Al Maust, and their bands
Three large scrapbooks of FCHS class of 1947 and other reunions from unknown source
1920s Mary Frances Woods 11" Indian woman doll belonging to Norma Wickham Browne



Annual Meeting Program
Joan Wells
"Trick Roping on the Wild West Shows"



At the August 22 Annual Meeting, Joan Wells, champion trick roper and popular Nebraska Humanities Speaker entertained us with her amazing skill and her knowledge of the sport.



In September, Joan Zoeller, conducted a workshop on book repair. She demonstrated using proper glue for tears (not tape), heavy duty binding tape, and waxed paper between pages to keep pages from sticking together during repair. She emphasized that "Patience" was the most important thing to remember! Joan has repaired many books and atlases over the years for the Museum.



Bev Bernhardt on her accordion. The museum has one that was owned by Don "Jigs" Mullins.

Christmas Tea
December 6, 2025
Featured
local performers and demonstrations of the Museum's musical instruments.



Mary Yoesel, caterer of the wonderful savory, scone, and sweet tea goodies, listening to Mid Bauer perform "Jingle Bells" and tell about its history..





Wes Karst singing
"Oh, Holy Night"
accompanied by June Bowers



Jan demonstrates one of many vintage musical instruments in the Museum by playing a holiday music roll on this player piano , once owned by James & Nina Sefried.



The new Courthouse had a museum in its east entrance from 1925 to late 1930s. It was maintained by the Women's Club and the D.A.R. In 1940 artifacts were moved into the newly built Prichard Auditorium according to the wishes of benefactor, Mrs. Laura Prichard Auxier. The Richardson County Historical Society was organized that year. The space shown above in 1969 was later reduced to expand the kitchen area. Late 1999 when the auditorium was to be renovated, the museum contents were moved into storage.



Ray Parrish, Tom Lock, Mrs. Floyd Larson, Mrs. R.E. (Pinky) Hampton - volunteers working at spring cleaning in the museum in 1969. The spinning wheel shown is still on display in one of our three showcases in the east concession area. Photos from FCJ clipped by Alvin Henry.

In Feb. 2002 the RCHS purchased the former Clark Funeral Home and on May 6, 2003 held its Grand Opening.
The AG I Building was completed in Fall 2009.
AG II Building was completed September 2019.

Straussville

When you consider the other mostly-forgotten settlements in Richardson County that didn't survive, people seem to be curiously aware of Straussville, Nebraska. Most people in the area at least know where it's located. It's doubtful that the majority of locals can pinpoint the exact whereabouts of the once-larger communities of St. Stephens, Arago, or even Archer. Straussville was founded long after those towns, but there is a reason why it was created and a reason why it still remains.

Straussville was officially founded in 1901 by Johann Gustave Strauss, aka Gustave (or Gus), the man who provided the land on which it was built. A German immigrant born in Gross Drensen, Prussia in 1844, Gustave served as a marksman in the Prussian army as a young man. He immigrated to Meyersdale, PA, where he worked in coal mines. There he married Sevilla Crissinger before moving to Richardson County, NE. He engaged in farming in the Straussville area until his death in 1929, aged 85.

Straussville is located in the SW quarter of section 28 and SE quarter of section 29 in Ohio Township. It is 4 ½ miles northwest of Falls City on 650 Ave., 2 ½ miles south of U.S. Hwy 73. Gustave's town included four blocks with two streets that crossed each other, just south of the mainline Missouri Pacific Railroad. Main Street was the present county road 650 Ave., running north and south. First Street was the east-west street, and can partially still be found. Each of the four blocks had twelve lots. Strangely, Straussvlle had a post office in 1899, though the town wasn't platted until 1901. The plat map was not filed until 1912 – the year the post office closed!

The important significance of Straussville was that it was a point of trade, not a residential development. That's the reason it didn't completely disappear. Its lifeline was the Mo Pac railway.

Straussville had a grain elevator by 1897. It was built by Elias Abraham Maust, a Pennsylvania native and Civil War veteran. Maust was a dynamic presence in the area. He started the first grain elevator in Falls City. His businesses included elevators in Verdon, Reserve, KS, and two in Straussville. He amassed several thousand acres of farm land in four states. Maust's early Straussville holdings were two small elevators, a coal yard, and a livestock loading area between the MoPac tracks just to the west of the townsite and "Maust Avenue" (now 710 Rd). His businesses were later owned by his sons, Irving C. and Albert Maust Sr.

The Farmer's Elevator was organized in 1904 by a group of 30 area farmers. Shares were sold for $100 each, plus a $3 membership fee. It opened in 1905. Its directors included H. J. Pritchard, F. M. Shafer, Francis Shafer, J. H Dietrich, and W.W. Curry. The elevator was managed by Charley Stump, who also managed Stump's Store.

Not all went smoothly for Farmer's Elevator. In 1907 Farmer's Elevator brought suit against the MoPac railroad, contending that a switch should be supplied on a side track so they could load grain through chutes so grain wouldn't need to be moved twice by hand. In 1910 the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court. They ultimately lost. The court decided that the side track was not owed to them.

In 1912, J.H. Dietrich became the manager of Farmer's Elevator. On July 13, 1913, the Farmer's Elevator burned down but it was soon rebuilt.

On May 3, 1918, arson was discovered at the elevator by Charles Beatty, who had taken over Stump's store, located on the west side of Main Street. Beatty saw a flash, and his actions saved the facility. Rags soaked in coal oil were discovered. A culprit was not found. Since World War I was still raging, some suspected the Germans.

Businesses not on the MoPac tracks were built on the west side of Main Street. Just to the north of Block 2, on the corner of Maust's Avenue and Main, sat the blacksmith shop. It was first owned by Phineas Fischer, then J. D. Spragins, who advertised "Vehicles of all kinds for sale at the Straussville Carriage and Wagon Factory."

Next door south was the Straussville General Store, also known as Stump's store, where the post office was located. Stump provided foodstuffs and dry goods such as men's shirts for 90 cents, overalls for 85 cents, flannels for 17 cents, men's shoes for 3 dollars, and sweaters for 85 cents… Everything you

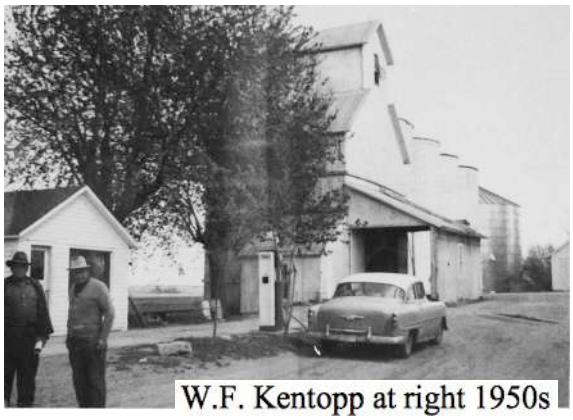
could want!

Charles W. Beatty owned the store after Stump. He added a gas pump for the new model T Fords. But on June 28, 1929, fire destroyed the only general store in town. At that time, Edmund Bauer was managing for Beatty. Bauer lived in a house that was directly to the south of that store. Years later, that house was consumed by flames when it was occupied by Marlin and Evelyn Krug. Further south, just south of First Street, stood a house belonging to the Beattys. Charles Beatty rebuilt his general store south of that home, farther up the hill. The double-car garage that still remains was part of that business. The business expanded to include automotive repair. A gas pump was included there.


Charles Beatty Store & Gas

The Beattys' son Earl was occupied in back of the store with a new kind of communication – "ham" radio. It was a popular place. Local men gathered there to play card games – especially pinochle.

Tragedy hit the Beatty family on April 15, 1941, when Earl W. Beatty, 46, having been despondent and in poor health, took his own life with a .22 rifle. He was found on the floor of the garage. Earl's father Charles died two months later on June 15. Unable to bear the strain, Earl's mother Luella was committed to the state hospital in Lincoln in September. She died two months later on Nov. 19, 1941.


W.F. Kentopp at right 1950s

By 1930, the only elevator that remained was sold by the Maust family to William F. Kentopp. "W.F." was the second youngest son of the immigrant William Kentopp, a farmer, then state and federal game warden. W.F. served with the AEF in France and England in World War I. By 1920, he was married to Elizabeth Krueger and was managing the elevator for the Mausts.

While Kentopp's grain business flourished, the rest of the community all but disappeared. In September of 1941 the Frank Pflaum family moved out, leaving the Kentopps the only family remaining in Straussville. Their small home is still there. W.F. and Elizabeth raised their five children there during the Great Depression. Their children were Evelyn E. (Krug), Warren W., William F. (III), Carol E. (Hunter), and Richard C.

W.F. was active in his business until he passed away in 1970, 50 years after he started working there. The elevator was managed then by the Kentopp's son, Bill. The Kentopp estate sold the property to Elmer and Elizabeth Esther Duerfeldt in 1996. The Duerfeldt family operated the elevator under the name Straussville Grain, Inc. until recently. The family still uses the facility, which they expanded, to store grain.

Straussville never had a church or a school. North of the village 1 ½ miles were the Maple Grove School and the Evangelical Church and cemetery. Most children around Straussville didn't attend school there, however, because the low-lying land and Muddy River were often impediments. Instead, most local children attended Harkendorff School, Dist. 82, located ½ mile south of Straussville and 1 mile west (SW corner of section 29). The 1917 Edwards book says that this school was the first public school in the County (Maple Grove, Dist. 47 – second oldest).

Other interesting Straussville facts:

- There was a train depot in Straussville for an undetermined time.
- Albert Maust Sr. was elected mayor in 1900.
- A disastrous train wreck between Falls City and Straussville occurred in 1906, when a freight train ran head-on into a passenger train. One man was killed and another severely injured. Many cattle being transported perished, and more were put down.

- Fire destroyed the railroad bridge near Straussville in 1947, diverting rail traffic for months.
- Straussville had a baseball team in the 1920's.
- In July of 1936, robbers bored into a rail car to steal 13 ½ bushels of wheat, which they later sold at elevators in Humboldt and Falls City. They plugged the hole before they left!
- The general store was also victim of theft many times. In 1905 Stump's store was robbed of $1. The register was stolen and taken across the tracks, netting 18 cents. A can of lard was found by the road. This was big news in the Falls City Journal.
- During the Great Depression, Elizabeth Kentopp made sandwiches for transient hobos who were passing through on rail cars. She did this so they wouldn't steal.
- South of the Beatty's second store on land now owned by the family of Joe Fleskoski, the Fed. Commodity Credit Corp. set up 20 grain bins and 2 quonsets to store surplus grain for farmers who didn't want to immediately sell. They could obtain a loan, using the grain as collateral. Storage fees applied. This project started in Sept. of 1949 and was in effect until Dec. of 1969, when the binsite was released for private use. Other area FCCC sites existed at Falls City, Shubert, and Humboldt.
- The post office in early Straussville was popular because mail came twice daily, and you could receive your mail there 24 hours before it could be delivered.
- Straussville has been victim to tornadic activity throughout its history. A storm on April 13, 1909 nearly blew an elevator down. On June 1, 1949, a wide-spread tornado damaged farm houses and buildings and uprooted trees. The elevator, weigh station, and the Kentopp house were badly damaged. On July 1, 1965, a tornado destroyed two 2500-bu. grain bins and a 30,000-bu. grain tank there. In May of 2025, A 25,000-bu. Grain tank and a 5000-bu. bin were also destroyed at Straussville.
- The John Harkendorff cabin, built around 1853, was believed to be the first home of white settlers in Richardson County. It was 20' by 20' and built of walnut logs. It's now long gone. It was built on the south bank of the Muddy River. The site is south of the river today, due to the river's straightening. It was approximately 1/4 mile NW of Straussville, just north of 710 Road. William Kentopp (the immigrant) and his wife Pauline Strauss Kentopp (sister of Gustave Strauss) lived there in 1881. Jesse James and his gang passed by there and were fed by Pauline a year before Jesse was shot in St. Joe.

With Falls City so close, it may be hard to imagine why Straussville was necessary at all. But rural people found convenience in trading there, and business owners took advantage of that. People could sell their grain and livestock and buy food and supplies without having to spend hours on horse-drawn transport or in later, rudimentary gas-powered vehicles. The 5 ½ miles of county road between Hwy 73 and West 21st Street wasn't even graveled until 1943.

A complaint was once made many years ago that other communities placed obstacles in Straussville's way, both fair and unfair. But modern transportation and technology were the actual reasons for its demise. It was simply progress.

Straussville served a vital role in the development of Richardson County. It was a supply center and market for the commodities produced by the early settlers of the area. Most notably, Straussville was an important destination for grain producers for over one hundred years!

Sources include various articles and notices from the *Falls City Journal* and L. C. Edward's *History of Richardson County Nebraska* book. Special loving thanks go out to Richard C. Kentopp for his information and insight.

Dave Kentopp

Richardson County Historical Society
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Falls City, NE 68355

BULK RATE
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We welcome volunteers and suggestions for programs. Open Wed., Thurs., Friday 2-4 April – October, but we will gladly arrange a showing at other times. Consider having your group meeting at the museum or arrange a tour.

We invite you to visit our Museum & other museums in the county - Quad County Museum in Humboldt, Penn Colony/Community Museum at Dawson, Collections Museum & Underground Railroad Interpretive Center, John Philip Falter Museum, and the Military Museum in the Courthouse.

This and past newsletters are available in color at:

http://www.negenweb.net/RCHS

US 49-Star flag that flew at Frontier Homes Manufacturing on south side of Falls City

Support for mailing this newsletter graciously provided by Falls City Care Center.