



# Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation

*Connecting people with Nebraska history since 1942.*

ABOUT

PROJECTS

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As we gather around the table with family and friends to give thanks for the blessings in our lives, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to all of our supporters. Your generosity has made a significant impact on our organization and the preservation of Nebraska history and we are truly thankful for your support.

The Staff at NSHSF



## Planned Giving Through The Oldfield Brigade



Gail Debusse Potter and her husband James Potter, "Potter," joined the Oldfield Brigade in the late 90s, but both have had lifelong passions for Nebraska History. Gail originally graduated from the University of Nebraska with a degree in Family Consumer Science and architecture. Upon graduation, she said she had "no job and no money" and was "hours away from enlisting in the army," when she was offered a job at a Lincoln architecture firm. A few months later she went to work for the Nebraska State Historical Society as the Museum Registrar.

At the Society, Gail proved skillful in the planning and renovation of museum exhibits and historic homes with her early background in architecture. After finishing her master's program, Gail went on to work for the Society as the Senior Museum Curator the 25 years. Gail left the Society when she was offered a position as Director of the Museum of the Fur Trade in Chadron, Nebraska, where she worked for another 20 years before moving back to Lincoln.

Gail's favorite topics in Nebraska history include Christmas (which she did her master's thesis on), textiles, and early women. She relishes in all the interesting people she has met, stories she has heard through her career, and her interest in Nebraska history.

"The Foundation has played a crucial role in the history of the Nebraska State Historical Society. They worked tirelessly in 1953 to secure a dedicated building for the Society, and have also made significant contributions to the education and presentation of Nebraska's

history. With my legacy gift for future generations, I hope to see the staff produce more publications, more exhibitions showcasing the Society's collections, and a long-lasting relationship between the Society and the Foundation." - Gail DeBuse Potter

The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation would like to thank the Potters for entrusting the Foundation with their endowment, which will benefit and preserve Nebraska history, both now and beyond their lifetime.

Please know that any donation, bequest, or endowment over \$15,000 (pledged over 3 to 5 years) will qualify you as a Member of the Oldfield Brigade. Donors can choose specific projects or causes they would like to support through their planned gift. If you are interested in joining the Oldfield Brigade, please reach out to Carolyn Hove at [chove@nshsf.org](mailto:chove@nshsf.org).

## The Pershing Mural A Cultural Treasure and Historic Nebraska Landmark



The Pershing Mural is considered by many as a cultural treasure and historic Nebraska Landmark. A monumental example of public art, the Mural measures 38' x 140' and is made up of 763,000, 1" x 1" square ceramic tiles (a medium rarely seen today) in 40 shades and colors. When it was created in the mid-1950s, the Mural was the largest of its kind in the Western Hemisphere. The Mural's composition includes 38 figures of various genders and races depicted in the costumes associated with the activities expected to occur within the structure. It has been described as a 'ceramic

YouTube video of the times and a remarkable physical depiction of life across the auditorium's mid-century timeline.' When taking a closer look, it appears the mural also contains a stylized, abstract topographical atlas of the State of Nebraska, with highways, roads, train routes, rivers, lakes, and even the historic pioneer trails (Oregon and Mormon), carefully drawn and cemented within the tile patterns.

Unlike its original installation on the western façade of Pershing Auditorium, within Historic Wyuka Park the Mural will be closer to eye level, which will allow individuals the opportunity to examine it up close and at a distance, including teachers who will be encouraged to bring their students to see, analyze, interpret and admire the Pershing Mural within an outdoor classroom setting. Utilizing the Mural as a springboard of inspiration will provide opportunities for deeper contextual contemplation and appreciation of its realistic, abstract, and symbolic composition, allowing educational experiences in the areas of art (visual and performing), literature, history, mathematics, and science.

The Committee committed to the historic preservation of the Pershing Mural reflects a kind of "grit" that defines the culture of Nebraska communities. In our State, we have a commitment to things that are out of the "ordinary," in conditions that are often uncomfortable and on an impressive scale. That spirit and commitment are reflected in the Pershing Mural and is what makes Nebraska and Nebraskans "different."

Together we do big, difficult things in this State for the benefit of friends and family we have yet to meet. That's who we are. That's what the Mural says.

**Contact us:**

Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation  
1201 Lincoln Mall  
Suite 100  
Lincoln, NE 68508

**Connect with us!**



Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation | 1201 Lincoln Mall, Suite 100, Lincoln, NE 68508  
402-435-3535

[Unsubscribe cheri@duryeastrategicmarketing.com](mailto:cheri@duryeastrategicmarketing.com)

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Sent by Ifattig@nshsf.org