After the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, recruiting posters like this one by James Montgomery Flagg encouraged able-bodied citizens to enlist in the fight for freedom.
While a number of these service members crossed an ocean to fight the war in Europe, the war was shifting global economic power to the Americas and towards sources of production outside the European continent. Changes to the global economy during the war years were caused by the intervention of the allies’ European sources of goods used in food and production. Trade was barred between combatants and many men who formed the labor necessary for production and agriculture were serving on the front.

As David Reynolds noted in his book, “The Long Shadow: The Legacies of the Great War in the Twentieth Century,” the allied countries solved their subsequent shortages by turning outside Europe to replace their old sources of Russian wheat and German chemical products. The United States had a great capacity for supplying such resources, and Nebraska was one of many states that benefited from an intense economic boom. Although agriculture was the largest component of Nebraska’s economy, the state experienced rapid growth in both agricultural and chemical production following the wartime decline in Europe. Increased demand and new irrigation technologies encouraged farmers to produce more crops on more land. In wartime Nebraska alone, “2.9 million acres of new land were brought into agricultural production.”

For a while, the expanded cultivation paid well too: crop prices increased sharply between the beginning of the war and 1920. While the existing agricultural industry in the state grew up, new opportunities for industrial resource production were born. Nebraska had the natural resources needed to offer itself as a substitute source for German chemical exports of potash; a potassium rich salt used in fertilizer and in other goods.

Nebraska’s potash industry took off just before the beginning of the war. In anticipation of the disruption of trade, potash plants started appearing along the alkali lakes of western Nebraska.

This particular industry, while initially profitable, quickly collapsed in Nebraska following restored U.S. trade with Germany in 1921. By the fall of 1922, the demolition of the Hoffland plant in Sheridan County, the largest potash production plant in the state, was already in progress. Nebraska agriculture also suffered a similar setback. When European production recovered after the war, the resultant surplus of goods depressed prices for years. The economic optimism of the war boom that caused many Nebraskans to pour their profits into their livelihoods in the form of land and new technology left them over-extended as the country entered the Dust Bowl and Great Depression of the 1930s. Although the economic prosperity Nebraskans experienced ended abruptly and painfully as a result of over production, some of the global economic changes caused by World War I were longer lived. By the end of the war boom in 1929 the United States was the world’s largest exporter and second largest importer, marking a shift in the center of global economic activity away from European powers like Great Britain and Germany, according to Reynolds. The decline of the potash industry on the Great Plains left ghost towns like Antioch, Nebraska, behind, but the agricultural industry, against many additional challenges throughout the 20th century, has remained a significant feature of the state’s economy.

Brianna Poppert, from Omaha, is a senior history-social science education major at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Footnotes:
3. Ibid., pg. 21.

TO UPDATE ADDRESS OR CANCEL SUBSCRIPTIONS, CALL 402.474.2301 OR E-MAIL INFO@HUMANITESNEBRASKA.ORG

NEW WORLD WAR I CHAUTAUQUA PLANNED FOR 2016

HN program officer Kristi Hayek Carley has been planning for a new Nebraska Chautauqua which will explore the impact of World War One on America. Scholars will portray historic figures including Woodrow Wilson, Edith Wharton, William Jennings Bryan, W.E.B. Dubois, and Jane Addams. Daily workshops and a youth camp will make for a fun, informative week at each site. Humanities Nebraska is looking for two communities to host Chautauqua in 2016. If you would like to recommend your community, please call 402.474.2131 or check the Chautauqua page on our website.

DISCOVER MORE OF WWI’S IMPACT AT THE 2015 GOVERNOR’S LECTURE

Heard David Reynolds speak on “World War One: Remembering America’s Forgotten War” at the 20th annual Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities on October 1 at the Holland Performing Arts Center in Omaha. For details, visit HumanitiesNebraska.org.

GOVERNOR'S LECTURE WWI READING LIST

Looking for a book or two in addition to David Reynolds’ “The Long Shadow: The Legacies of the Great War in the Twentieth Century” prior to his presentation at the 20th Annual Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities? Here are some suggestions:

NON-FICTION

“The Testament of Youth” by Vera Brittain


“The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914” by Christopher Clark

“Goodbye to All That” by Robert Graves

“Over Here: First World War & American Society” by David M. Kennedy

“Paris 1919” by Margaret MacMillan

“The War That Ended Peace” by Margaret MacMillan

“The Deluge” by Adam Tooze

“Memorial Fictions: Wilbur Gatter & The First World War” by Steven Trout

“The Guns of August: The Outbreak of World War I” by Barbara W. Tuchman

NOVELS

“Three Day Road” by Joseph Boyden

“One of Us” by Wilma Catlett

“Birds Without Wings” by Louis de Bernieres

“The Three Soldiers” by John Dos Passos

“Full of Giants” by Ken Follet

“A Farewell to Arms” by Ernest Hemingway

“Goodbye to All That” by Wilfred Owen

“Death in the Long Cross of the Lusitania” by Eric Larson

“Her Private Life” by Fredric Manning

“Aubade Or The British Agent” by W.Somerset Maugham

“Mons” by Paul Theroux

“A Quiet on the Western Front” by Erich Maria Remarque

“The Meaning of Names” by Karen Shoemaker

“A Son at the Front” by Edith Wharton

“Who Won the War?” by W.M. Hoyle

POETRY

“Minds at War” edited by David Roberts

“In the Dark: Poetry of the First World War” edited by David Roberts

GRAPHIC NOVELS

“The War Horse” by Nick Bland and Max Brooks

“It Was the War of the Trenches” by Jacques Tardi

PODCASTS

“The Great Shadow: The Long Shadow of WWII” by Baptistery with the History Guys, Episode 84

“World War One” by BBF

“Blueprint for Armageddon” by Dan Carlin, Hardcore History, Episodes 50-59

“The Long Shadow” by Graduate College Lecture, Episode 165

“Victory in the World War” by Imperial War Museums

“Reflections on the Great War” by Public Radio International

WWI READING LIST

“World War I” (Series) - BBC

“The Great War” by Robert Service

“Europe: The War” by Anthony Bateman

“Over Here: First World War & American Society” by David M. Kennedy

“Paris 1919” by Margaret MacMillan

“The War That Ended Peace” by Margaret MacMillan

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ANNE & PAUL SMITH TO RECEIVE 2015 SOWER AWARD

Humaneities Nebraska is pleased to announce that Annette and Paul Smith of Omaha will receive the 2015 Sower Award in the Humanities. They will be honored during the 20th Annual Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities on October 1 at the Holland Performing Arts Center in Omaha.

The Sower Award is presented annually to individuals or organizations who have made “a significant contribution to public understanding of the humanities in Nebraska.”

The Smiths were nominated by Ann Bird, special education consultant for Nebraska Department of Education, with hearty letters of support by multiple individuals.

Ardent supporters of the arts and humanities for decades, the Smiths helped sponsor the Great Plains Theatre Conference, with the premiere events of its kind in the state. They are regular at arts and humanities events in Omaha and elsewhere in the state.

“They have modeled empathy, concern and philanthropy, setting examples for others and inspiring others to become more empathetic, more concerned and givers themselves,” wrote Omaha artist Robert Benzel.

Paul Smith is vice-chairman of the Joslyn Art Museum’s board of governors, president of the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts board of directors, vice-chairman of the Film Streams board and a board member for the Omaha Conservatory of Music.

Annette is president-elect of Boys and Girls Club of the Midlands and past chair of the Women’s Leadership Council of United Way. She also serves on the boards of the Open Sky Policy Institute and the College of Saint Mary.

The couple also supports the Omaha Music Conservatory’s String Sprouts, the Nebraska Writers Collective’s “Louder Than a Bomb” slam poetry project, Omaha-area performing arts, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands board of directors and many other organizations.

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The couple also supports the Omaha Music Conservatory’s String Sprouts, the Nebraska Writers Collective’s “Louder Than a Bomb” slam poetry project, Omaha-area performing arts, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands board of directors and many other organizations.

“The Nebraska Writers Collective really owes so much to what we’re able to do to their guidance as they’ve been instrumental in making our Louder Than A Bomb possible,” said Executive Director Matt Mason. “I’m thrilled they’re being honored with this award.”

“They have contributed their talents through extensive volunteerism, and their personal resources by financially supporting multiple organizations, performing groups and galleries,” Bird said.

Community volunteer Jessica Pate lauded the couple’s ready support of innovation in art and culture in the state.

“Paul and Annette’s willingness to invest again and again in the new, the untried, have enviably enriched our cultural landscape,” she stated.

Nominators and review committee members alike agreed that Annette and Paul Smith represent the best in philanthropic leadership.

“They are sowers of our citizenship, an informed and engaged citizenry, one with a voice leading to a greater sense of self, purpose and ownership,” said Pate.

The Smiths will receive the Sower Award immediately prior to the free public lecture by historian David Reynolds.

Table sponsorships and individual ticket to the reception and dinner that will precede the free lecture are still available. Please call 402.474.2131 to make your reservations.

“FREE LAND” CHAUTAUQUA ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE

More than 3,500 people experienced Chautauqua in Alliance and Kearney this June.

In both communities, a talented group of kids learned about local decision-makers with Ride Into History. Each day, workshops for adults and youth focused on different aspects of the Homestead Act, Pacific Railway Act and Morrill Act.

Panhandle crowds welcomed evening performances under the tent in Alliance, June 9-13, and their central Nebraska counterparts were equally enthusiastic in Kearney June 17-21.

We missed Chautauqua scholar Patrick McGinnis, who had to withdraw from portraying Grenville Dodge due to health reasons, but we are grateful to our outstanding substitutes: Curt Fields, who portrayed General U.S. Grant in Alliance, and Tom King, who portrayed President U.S. Grant in Kearney.

Our heartfelt thanks to the many Chautauqua committee members, sponsors and volunteers!

Would you like Chautauqua in your community in 2016? See page 2 for details.
HUMANKINDS NEBRASKA DONORS: THANK YOU!

Many donors make multiple gifts throughout the year. Donors are listed at the level of their cumulative giving for the year in our annual report.

The following contributed between November 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015.

HUMANITIES NEBRASKA DONORS:

Thank you for becoming part of our mission!

STRENGTHEN IN DONOR CHOICE

Community Services Fund (CSF) connects donors to causes they care about. It is a coalition of 57 diverse non-profits, some of whom provide services statewide.

Humbankids Nebraska is a proud member agency.

For more than 30 years, CSF has been helping make Lincoln and Nebraska a better place to live. CSF creates the arts and humanities, protects our environment and creates green spaces, provides health care to those who cannot afford it, provides education and advocacy, and works to protect at-risk children.

HGN strictly appreciates donors who designated gifts to us through CSF workplace giving campaigns in 2014, listed here. For more info, contact CSF at 402.489.4332 or visit www.communityservicesfund.com.

THANK YOU, LINCOLN!

Thanks to 50 donors, HGN raised $73,895 on Give to Lincoln Day on May 28. Sponsored by the Lincoln Community Foundation, Give to Lincoln collectively raised more than $3.2 million to support Lincoln-area non-profits. Most gifts to HGN were designated to our family literacy program, Prime Time Family Reading Time which will take place this fall in Lincoln. You made this day a success for us and more importantly for the families served by Prime Time. Thank you!
The first teacher workshop in preparation for the 2016 Capitol Forum on America’s Future was held on Monday, July 20 at the Strategic Air and Space Museum near Ashland.

Workshops provide teachers who are new to Capitol Forum with an introduction to the program, while also offering professional development opportunities for all participating teachers. In this case, both new and returning teachers had the opportunity to explore the newly released Choices curriculum unit, “Climate Change and Questions of Justice.”

The July workshop speaker was Dr. Clinton Rowe of the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Rowe is one of the co-authors of the recent study, “Understanding and Assessing Climate Change: Implications for Nebraska,” released in September 2014.

During the workshop, the Capitol Forum teachers also participated in some activities to help inspire ideas for the classes that will be using the Capitol Forum curriculum. Teachers will meet again in Lincoln next February to prepare in advance of the 2016 Capitol Forum Days.

With support of the Cooper Foundation, the 18th annual Capitol Forum on America’s Future on March 21, 2016 will bring together teachers and more than 90 high school student representatives from throughout the state at the State Capitol in Lincoln. The program engages 1,500 students in meaningful discussions about crucial global issues, with their peers and elected officials, in order to learn about the complexities that shape our nation’s future and their own important roles as active, informed citizens.

To learn more, contact Kristi Hayek Carley at 402.474.2131 or kristi@humanitiesnebraska.org. Or visit the Capitol Forum page at HumanitiesNebraska.org.

Seven Nebraska museums are preparing local components for the upcoming tour of Museum on Main Street’s “The Way We Worked.” The exhibition was adapted from an installation at Smithsonian National Museum and comes here with the support of the John W. Carson Fund at Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Union Pacific and Brown Transfer Company.

Originating in Gering, this exhibit will highlight the stories of those who worked to survive the rugged High Plains when they have the exhibit September 16 through October 16. The Plainsman Museum in Aurora will explore the diverse cultures of local settlers, farming families, and industries that once thrived in the area. See it October 27 to November 25.

The Sarpy County Museum in Bellevue will focus on a local shift from agriculture to urban businesses with the stories of the Martin Bomber Plant, Offutt Air Force Base and Pilippon’s history as an 1870s railroad town December 9 to January 7.

Elkhorn Valley Museum in Norfolk will compare the work it took to settle the area to today’s jobs. While they host the exhibition January 20 to February 18, the museum will collect interviews for the “My Nebraska” oral history project.

The Hastings Museum will feature the Dutton-Lainson Company, the Naval Ammunition Depot, and Kool-Aid’s Edwin Perkins when the exhibition is there March 2 through April 1.

The Golden Spike Tower & Visitor Center in North Platte will work with the Lincoln County Historical Museum to highlight local railroad work, ranching and farming from April 11 through May 13.

The Platte County Museum in Columbus will showcase area manufacturers, businesses and farming during the last leg of the tour. May 27 through June 26.

THE WAY WE WORKED OPENS SOON WITH LOCAL STORIES

NEW PRIME TIME ASSISTANT SUZY PARSONS

Meet HN’s new Prime Time Assistant in our Omaha satellite location at the Clark Library, Suzy Parsons. Family literacy is Suzy’s passion. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Family Science and a Master’s Degree in Public Administration with concentration in Non-Profit Management from UNO. She’s worked in various family, adult, and children’s literacy programs.

Suzy resides in Bennington, Nebraska with her husband. She has two adult children and two grandchildren. She enjoys spending time with family, gardening, walking, and crafting.

WELCOME BACK INTERN SAM GREENFIELD

This summer, Samantha Greenfield has returned to help in communications. She has already updated our free Nebraska Literary Tour app with two additional writers (see back cover), and she is hard at work on a fun, interactive new app to go along with “The Way We Worked,” the Museum on Main Street exhibition that will tour the state September through June. Sam was one of the original three University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who helped create our Chautauqua app. She is currently a senior studying English at UNL.

BOARD NOMINATIONS DUE OCTOBER 1

Humanities Nebraska is now seeking nominations for its Council board. The deadline for nominees is October 1. Council board members are selected statewide from those who show a strong interest in the humanities and the cultural life of Nebraska. Humanities Nebraska makes every effort to include community leaders from the state’s diverse geographic, occupational and ethnic constituencies. HN also seeks a balance between involvement in the humanities and other professional, business or community pursuits.

Nominations for the Council board must be postmarked on or before October 1. Nomination forms and a complete list of board obligations are available at HumanitiesNebraska.org. For details, contact Humanities Nebraska at 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 330, Lincoln, NE 68508; call (402) 474-2131; or e-mail your request to info@humanitiesnebraska.org.

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEBRASKA’S NATIONAL HISTORY DAY WINNERS!

In the National History Day competition in June 2015, Vanessa Taylor of Ainsworth Community Schools took second place for her Senior Individual Documentary: “Electricity for All: The Leadership and Legacy of George Norris.”

Earning State Outstanding Entry honors were: Mandelin Wollesoens and Bailey Russell of Chadron Middle School in Junior Group Exhibit and Thomas Graul of Lincoln Southeast High School in the Senior Paper category.

National History Day is a year-long educational program for students in grades 6-12 that stresses a combination of creativity and scholarship. In this state, it is sponsored by Nebraska Wesleyan University and Humanities Nebraska with support from the Dillon Foundation.

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Famous Jungle Call was one of three bands that played in downtown North Platte during the Good Living Tour.

NEBRASKA HALL OF FAME SEeks NOMINATIONS

The Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission is seeking nominations. Located in the State Capitol, the Hall brings public attention and official recognition to outstanding Nebraskans — those who were born in Nebraska, or whose time living in Nebraska influenced them and contributed to their greatness. Nominees must have been deceased for at least 35 years, and nominations are limited to one person per five-year period. Nominations will be accepted for at least five years. For more information, please visit nebraskahistory.org (search “Hall of Fame”). Request a form by emailing deb.mcwilliams@nebraskahistory.org.
TWO NEBRASKA WRITERS ADDED TO FREE NEBRASKA LITERARY TOUR APP


Humanities Nebraska has enhanced the Nebraska Literary Tour app by adding locations and literary excerpts for Mignon G. Eberhart and William Kloefkorn.

Mystery author Mignon Eberhart was born in Lincoln, Nebraska and graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University. She published her first novel, “Patient in Room 18,” in 1929, using Nebraska locations as the inspiration for various settings. In her lifetime, she wrote more than 50 novels and numerous short stories. Several of her tales were adapted for film and television. In 1971, she received the Grand Master Award from the Mystery Writers of America. She also served as president of that organization for a time.

Eberhart said she began to write in her early teens, “mainly because I preferred writing to studying Caesar’s Commentaries and algebra.” She first started submitting mystery story manuscripts to editors in her early twenties, which launched her career in one of the most challenging genres for any writer. “The writer hopes that a mystery novel is entertaining to read but it is not easy to write,” she said.

William Kloefkorn taught at Nebraska Wesleyan University for more than 40 years and taught countless other students through the Poets in the Schools program, which he started. As Nebraska State Poet and a member of the Humanities Nebraska Speakers Bureau, he took his poetry, teaching skills and deep, sonorous voice on the road, inspiring many other Nebraskans to try their hands at poetry.

Kloefkorn was honored with numerous local and national awards and received two honorary doctorates, one from Nebraska Wesleyan and the other from Midland College in Fremont. His poems — many about the people and places he visited in Nebraska — and short stories have appeared in numerous publications and anthologies, including his own 44 books. Kloefkorn’s poetic style is marked by his twin loves of nature and people, employing an immense vocabulary to recount stories, images, and ideas with remarkable insight.

If you’d like to suggest a Nebraska author and/or sites to include in next year’s update of the Nebraska Literary Tour app, please send your comments to info@humanitiesnebraska.org.

TAKE A NEBRASKA LITERARY TOUR

Download the free Nebraska Literary Tour app at Google Play or iTunes. Select your tour by author or region, and you will be directed to various locations. Each site includes a literary excerpt, historical information or a photo to help you see the state through the eyes of noteworthy Nebraska writers.