



SIGN POSTS

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The Official Online Newsletter of the Robert Henri Museum and Art Gallery



MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

The museum's director and volunteers are in the process of creating a new exhibit in the Art Gallery. The new show will open later this year. Entitled *Through My Own Language: Robert Henri and His Portraits, Paintings and Sketches*, the show will include almost all of the museum's paintings, and sketches, some of which recently been conserved due to generosity of three members. The show will also include a new biographical section on Henri and another section on his students. A great deal of research has gone into finding out more about the items that we own and their respective histories. In addition, the items are also being accessioned into the museum's collection.

By the time you read this the gallery will have been repainted, new portable dividers constructed, and the redesign will be well underway. The improvements to the gallery have been funded by a number of grants from foundations and the generosity of our membership. Be sure to pencil in December 6, 2019 onto your calendar as we will be officially opening the show on that evening as part of Holiday at the Henri program.

PREMIERE OF THE GAMBLER'S SON

UNL Opera in the Glenn Korff School of Music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is delighted to announce the premiere of a new opera, *The Gambler's Son*, by Tyler Goodrich White (composer) and Laura White (librettist). *The Gambler's Son* is adapted from Mari Sandoz's 1960 novel, *Son of the Gambler's Man*, which tells the true story of the founding of Cozad, Nebraska, of its larger-than-life founder, John J. Cozad, and of Cozad's son, the illustrious American painter, Robert Henri.

The opera will premiere in Cozad, Nebraska, at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, October 17th, at the Cozad High School Auditorium, 1710 Meridian Avenue, Cozad, Nebraska, to be followed by a staging at Kimball Recital Hall at the University of Nebraska, both Friday, November 15th (7:30 p.m.) and Sunday, November 17th (3 p.m.). The work was created with the generous support of Jane Rohman, the Family of Willard Bellamy, the Family of Ivan and Shirley Paulsen, the Lincoln Community Foundation, the UNL Friends of Opera, and the Wilson Foundation. The production tour to Cozad is made possible by a generous gift from the James C. and Rhonda Seacrest Tour Nebraska Opera Fund. At UNL, Tyler Goodrich White is the Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Activities; Laura White is the John E. Weaver Professor of English. The director of UNL Opera is William Shomos.

To reserve your ticket to the Cozad performance, visit go.unl.edu/cozadopera. The best way to reserve tickets is on-line, but if you don't have access to the internet, please call and leave a message at 402-472-2494 to make your reservations. To celebrate the opera's premiere the museum and gallery will be open on October 15, 16, and 17 from 10-5.

HISTORY AT OUR DOORSTEP

*History is constantly being revised, rediscovered and rewritten. Sometimes it is because new information has been found, sometimes it is because new interpretations have been made or a new generation of researchers look at events differently. Rex German recently submitted this piece that takes another look at the altercation between Alf Pearson and John Cozad. The results of that dispute forever changed both families forever. Rex was the author of the **Battle of the Bridges**, an excellent history of the various bridges that crossed the Platte River. It is well researched and sourced and provides an insightful look at the early years of Dawson County's history.*



Another Look at the John Cozad and Alf Pearson Altercation

By Rex German

An altercation between Alfred Pearson, a family man who had staked a claim north of Cozad, and Mr. Cozad, the investor who was struggling to establish a friendly-town on the 100th Meridian which bears his name, resulted in an unfortunate tragedy that changed the lives of both men and their families. As a young man, Mr. Pearson had worked for the County Sheriff's office. One of his duties was to deliver collection notices to landowners whose tax payments were delinquent. The Plum Creek ranchers were 'free grazers' who did not take titles to the land on which they grazed their cattle. Therefore, the whole issue of the county levied taxes on his 40,000 acres of land was a very sore subject with Mr. Cozad. He knew that the money collected by the county was spent on improvements benefitting Plum Creek such as the county courthouse and a bridge over the Platte River. Further insult to Cozad's effort was that the county commissioners, who sympathized with the cattlemen, refused to recognize Cozad as a town.

In more recent years, Mr. Pearson had married, started a family, lived respectfully and didn't talk about his working for the county sheriff. But, adding to this old sore, Mr. Cozad felt that Pearson had grazed his cattle on some of Cozad's land. And on that fateful day, Cozad approached Pearson for the grazing fee he felt was due him. The encounter grew hot and resulted in Cozad shooting Pearson. It is interesting to note that Pearson did not carry a gun because Cozad banned guns, bars and ladies-of-the-night in his town. Although he was very aware of these elements on the river boats where he gambled to make money to finance his town and his attempts to build a bridge across the Platte south of Cozad. Mr. Pearson didn't die immediately but lingered several days giving the community time to talk about lynching the murderer. As a result, Sam Schooley, a young pacifist friend of Cozad's, helped Mr. Cozad escape by going south to Kansas. Cozad and all of his family changed their names. The City of Cozad attempted to change its name to Gould, the name of Union Pacific Railroad's president. But the Railroad wouldn't accept the change. During that time if you wanted to go to Gould, you had to buy ticket to Cozad.

Alfred Pearson is buried on a hill north of town. Many of his relatives continue live in Dawson County.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Our next big event for the museum will take place on October 17 as the commissioned opera about Robert Henri will premiere here in Cozad. We are working on our Holiday at the Henri program, our popular festive celebration here at the museum. It will be special this year as we will be unveiling our new exhibit in the gallery. The museum will be decorated beautifully by our members and we will be hosting our annual house tour. We are working on some other events that will also take place during the course of that celebration. Then it will be time for a well

earned rest for our staff and volunteers.

As we look to 2020 we looking for artists of the month and one artist in residence so if you know of anyone who might be interested please feel free to contact us. Our 2019 program was very successful and we were pleased with the results. We have a busy year planned as we move along on a list of projects that our director and board have put together.

COLLECTION NEWS

Tammy and Larry Paulsen recently donated two Miles Maryott paintings to our collection. Maryott had lived at one time in the old Hendee Hotel, formerly the hotel that the Cozad family owned. He went on to become a hunter, marksman, tour guide, ballplayer, taxidermist and painter. We own a number of his paintings including a scene with two hunters with a bear. The painting had previously been damaged when it fell as can be seen around the head of the standing man. Our artist in residence, Randall May, volunteered to make the necessary repairs and now they are almost invisible unless pointed out. He also repaired two other Maryott paintings and then shellacked all three. They now are as beautiful as they were when they were originally painted in the 1910s and 1920s. Thank you Randall and thank you Tammy and Larry for enhancing our collection.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Museum Hours From October 1, 2019 - May 1, 2020

By Appointment Only

The Gambler's Son - Opera

October 17, 2019, 7:30 pm, Cozad High School Auditorium

The Museum and Gallery will be open to the public October 15, 16, 17, 2019, 10 am - 5 pm to celebrate the Opera's premiere

November 15 and 17, 2019, Kimball Recital Hall, University of Nebraska in Lincoln

Holiday at the Henri

December 6 and 7, 2019 - Plans to be announced

Opening of new gallery exhibit on Robert Henri



WHAT WOULD ROBERT HENRI SAY?

Pretend you are dancing or singing a picture. A worker or painter should enjoy his work, else the observer will not enjoy it.

The Art Spirit

Robert Henri

(Photograph Courtesy Library of Congress)

Our newsletter's name, *Sign Posts*, comes from a phrase at the beginning of Robert Henri's *Art Spirit*. He wrote:

There are moments in our lives, there are moments in a day, when we seem to see beyond the usual. Such are the moments of our greatest happiness. Such are the moments of our greatest wisdom. If one could but recall his vision by some sort of sign. It was in this hope that the arts were invented. Sign-posts on the way to what may be. Sign-posts toward greater knowledge.



Visiting the Robert Henri Museum and Art Gallery

Open: May 1 – September 30

Tuesdays-Saturdays, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Admission

\$5 for Adults

\$2 for Children (5-18)

We accept all major credit cards

Closed on the major holidays

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