



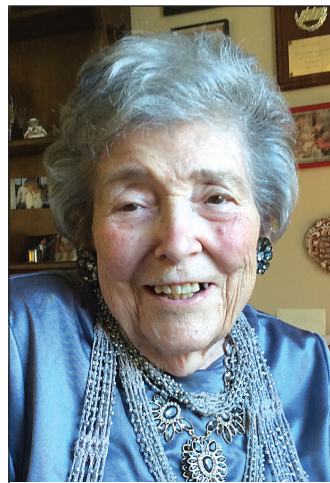
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COURTESY PHOTO

Helen Graning

## WWII Nurse Took Long Way To Battle

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This is one of a series of stories written by Dave Hosmer of Yankton about people and events tied to World War II.*

BY DAVID HOSMER  
For the Press & Dakotan

Helen Graning was probably born to be a nurse. Having been raised near Mission Hill, however, she would never have guessed that she would travel the world as part of her nursing career. During an era when it was expected that women would work in the home, what forces pushed her away? Were the same things driving her to join the military?

The Kiepke family came to the Mission Hill area many years ago. Her Grandparents — the Kiepkas and the Marquardt — both spoke German, but the prior was low German while the latter was high German. That mattered in 1920 in South Dakota.

She knew the Marquardt side of her family — she annually traveled there for a reunion — but she was much closer to her paternal Grandparents. Grandfather Edward Kiepke farmed, just as the vast majority of people during the 1920s. He was a proud man; he always wore a suit coat. The Kiepkas had four boys, which was fairly common and useful for farm families, and one boy died when he was 3 months old, which was also fairly common during a time when medicine was in its infancy. One of the boys — Henry — was Helen's Father. Families at that time were very close. After Ed's Wife Florentina died in 1912, he lived with his Children, which was fairly common then, but not so much now.

Henry married Johanna Marquardt Kiepke and they had six children, all girls. They too farmed, although Henry was also a well driller, a blacksmith, and a machinery mechanic. You might think he had to work harder without sons, but this was not so. All of the girls worked on the 160-acre farm. Helen, who was born in

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## Tackling Flood Waters

### NDOR Delays Plan To Re-Route Highway 12

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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NIOBRARA, Neb. — In the face of strong local opposition, the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) has put on hold its plans to relocate Nebraska Highway 12 east and west of Niobrara. The NDOR announced Tuesday

it has withdrawn its permit application for the Highway 12 project. The proposal was offered in response to frequent, long-term flooding from the adjacent Missouri River. The permit was sought under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

The NDOR decision was made following a public hearing earlier this month at the Niobrara school.

The hearing was hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. National Park Service and NDOR officials were also on hand for the open house and hearing. Portions of the roadway lie within the Missouri National Recreational River (MNRR).

The NDOR proposal would re-route the highway around the bluffs to the south of Niobrara. The

various proposals for the relocation of the proposed roadway will cover 111 to 1,064 acres of farmland and hunting area at a cost of \$164-217 million, depending on which proposal is chosen, the *Press & Dakotan* reported.

The Department of Roads

NDOR | PAGE 10A

## A Song In His Heart



JAMES CIMBUREK/P&D

Wilbur Foss playing the fiddle at last year's Czech Days in Tabor. Foss passed away Nov. 18 at the age of 94 and was known nationally for Prairie Home Companion and his musical and entertainment talents.

## Local Fiddler Brought Joy To All Audiences

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF  
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SCOTLAND — Wilbur Foss started fiddle playing while in his 50s — even mastering the instrument without three fingers lost in a childhood farm accident.

The Scotland man founded the Old Time Fiddlers Association, bringing joy to audiences both in person and on Yankton radio station WNAX. He entertained for 40 years, recently preparing to perform for a fundraiser in his hometown.

He continued collecting accolades throughout his life. At age 90, he was inducted into the South Dakota Country Music Hall of Fame. "This is really exciting," he said at the time. "It's kind of nice when you get to be 90 years old."

Now, his fiddle will remain forever silent. Foss passed away Nov. 18 at the Land-

mann-Jungman Memorial Hospital in Scotland at age 94.

Because of the loss of his fingers, Foss never attempted to play the fiddle even though he had a passion for the instrument.

"I never tried to play, because I was right-handed," Foss said in a 2011 interview with the *Press & Dakotan*. "I needed my left hand for pressing the fiddle against me so I could play the strings."

Then, at age 55, Foss underwent a life-changing moment when he saw a one-armed fiddler from Missouri.

"The man put the bow between his knees and then straightened up and moved the fiddle over the bow," Foss said. "I thought, if he can do that, I can learn to play with my left hand. I played with my left hand and held the fiddle in my right hand."

Foss and his wife, Elizabeth, started promoting fiddle music in 1969. They founded the

South Dakota Old Time Fiddlers in 1976, and they entertained often in the five-state area. They traveled to Arizona 14 winters and made countless friends there who shared a love for old time music.

Foss' talents became known nationwide thanks to a live variety radio show in the Twin Cities, said his daughter, Nancy (Foss) Penk.

"My parents and grandfather and some friends were on the popular national public radio show called 'Prairie Home Companion' in 1983," she told the *Press & Dakotan*. "(My father) took this in stride and kept up with the dialogue with (host) Garrison Keillor. (Foss) created records, then audio tapes, then CDs galore."

Foss also touched people's lives as a state senator, bank officer, teacher and hardware

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PHOTO: RANDY TRAMP

The River City Harmony Sweet Adelines are still in tune and still having fun. The local chapter of the organization was formed in 1978. There are currently 21 members in the local group.

## Real Women, Real Harmony, Real Fun: Sweet Adelines Keep In Tune

BY RANDY TRAMP  
P&D Correspondent

Sweet Adelines International is a worldwide organization of women singers committed to advancing the music art form of barbershop harmony through education, competition and performance. The local chapter is a group of women from Yankton and the surrounding areas, working hard to keep the perfect pitch and harmony needed to perform.

"Voices are the instruments," says Assistant Director Marlene Herman.

Known as River City Harmony Sweet Adelines, the group has 21 members. Two members, Phyllis Christiansen and Marilyn Hansen, have been with the group since the beginning.

The music is a four-part harmony, base, baritone, leads and tenors. At present, Herman sings tenor. "My voice is changing. I

may have to switch over to lead, but I may try baritone," she said.

Herman has been with the Yankton Sweet Adelines since 1981. Previously she belonged to the Freeman singing group.

"We didn't have the required amount of members to keep the group going in Freeman, so after it disbanded, I joined Yankton's Sweet Adelines," Herman says.

The Yankton group began

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