

## Librarian's Shelf by Kelli Keyes

### Living History Presentation: NE Settlers

Moriah Monahan huddled in her square of space in the ship's hull, holding her stomach while the vessel rocked on the stormy seas. She was headed to America with her family, to the Promised Land. She held the hope of a new beginning in her heart while suffering the hardships of her long journey. She was hungry but nothing would agree with her stomach until the boat stopped rocking so hard. She turned to comfort her children who were hunkered down close beside her. They would make it to America and build a new life for their family.

The Monahans made it through customs, and after paying with most of their life savings, secured a place in the wagon train that would take them to Nebraska. Moriah settled on the hard wooden wagon seat behind the four sturdy horses, the leather harness straps held tight in her gloved hands. She tried not to worry too much about the weather, if they would have enough supplies, and that her children would stay safe. She continued to hold on tight to the hope of a better life, a country where her children could be free from oppression. It would be worth the long and hard journey to give her children that gift. Raising her arms and bringing them down sharply, she whistled to her team and they were off.

Moriah turned in a wide circle as she surveyed the flat, grassy land where they would build their sod house. It was beautiful, but barren. Not at all like home. She would learn to love this new land that she was adopting. She was determined in her heart to plant her family roots deep in Nebraska's rich soil. She could imagine that the tall grass swaying in the breeze was wheat and corn that her family had planted. It was time to get to work!

If you enjoyed this little recap of our "Promise in a New Land" program, you will want to come and hear the rest of Moriah Monahan's story as told by Cherrie Beam-Callaway. Those that heard her first program so loved the way Cherrie told it that they asked that she be brought back to continue her story. In "Courage to Continue: Changing Homesteads in Nebraska", Cherrie Beam-Callaway continues the Monahan family saga as they sell their homestead and begin again as cattlemen in the desolate Sandhills. She relives the trials of building again, lightning storms, crying for rain, rattlesnakes, and the never-ending wind. She will delight us with tales of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Christmas gatherings, and celebrating American pride.

Mark your calendars for March 31, Sunday at 2 pm and come to the library to learn, remember, and hear the amazing stories of our forefathers and mothers that built our land. This program is funded by the Friends of the Library and by Humanities Nebraska. Bring your friends, family, and students as Cherrie Beam-Callaway is retiring from her 35 year run as a living history storyteller. Cherrie spent nearly 25 years gathering and recording historic tales from Nebraska families. She is a true Nebraskan as she has lived in both ends of the state and is a fourth generation farm girl. Her pioneer stories are factual and reflect the diversity of the people and land from western to eastern Nebraska. Cherrie is an educational storyteller who speaks with an Irish brogue, dresses in period attire, and delivers spellbinding one-act plays that make audiences laugh and cry. Don't miss it!