

Librarian's Shelf by Kelli Keyes

### Living History Presentation: Daniel Freeman

Who was Daniel Freeman? According to recorded history, Daniel Freeman is known as the first homesteader. Born in Preble County, Ohio, he grew up in New York and Illinois, traveling frequently with his family. He was a graduate of a medical institute in Cincinnati, Ohio and then enlisted in the 17<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He was a soldier for the Union Army during the Civil War on secret duty at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Knowing that water was crucial to start his homestead, Freeman had his eye on a piece of land by Cub Creek in southwest Nebraska near Beatrice. Freeman heard the act was going into effect on January 1, 1863 and he had to be back in Fort Leavenworth on January 2. As a result, he persuaded the clerk of the land office in Brownville to open up shortly after midnight on January 1, making Daniel Freeman the first homesteader in the entire nation!

When Daniel Freeman finished his military service in 1865, he returned to Nebraska and built the required twelve by fourteen foot log cabin to prove up his homestead. He later acquired a considerable amount of land around his original homestead. Daniel Freeman was a highly respected member of his community and lived on his Nebraska homestead until his death in 1908. In 1930, the National Parks Service bought Freeman's homestead and preserved it as a national monument.

Why are you learning about Daniel Freeman? Darrel Draper from Humanities Nebraska is coming to the Columbus Public Library on May 4, Saturday, at 2 pm in full costume as Daniel Freeman to tell the humorous and historically factual account of America's first homesteader, and the impact of the Homestead Act in settling the West. Darrel Draper is a dynamic speaker who will make the story of Daniel Freeman come to life for his audience. You will not want to miss this program! Make plans to bring your whole family; Grandma, Grandpa, cousins and kids. They will be entertained and learn history at the same time. Treats are served at the program. You do not need to make reservations and entrance is free.

The end of May brings us to our Summer Reading Registration! Yea! Even adults get to read for prizes. The adult and young adult summer reading registration will begin on May 28, right after Memorial Day. The children's summer reading registration will begin a week later on June 3. The volunteer sign up meeting for the children's program will take place on Saturday, June 1 at 10:30 am. We are excited to present to you all the fun programming we have lined up this summer. To get a list of the summer programs you will need to register for the summer reading program. You will receive a packet when you sign up telling you all the events provided for the summer. Everything is free! You and your children can turn in reading logs throughout the summer for prizes. There are drawings for big prizes that you will want to enter. The adult program is for adults 19 years old and up. The young adult program is for students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and the children's program is for birth up to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. H invited the Horn T Zoo to bring in animals for everyone to see during the children's registration week. Come and sign up for summer reading fun! Call 402-564-7116 for more information.