

Librarian's Shelf by Kelli Keyes

WWII Focus on Upcoming Library Programs

The beautiful and talented Nebraska novelist and historian Melissa Amateis will come to the Columbus Public Library on Saturday, December 11 at 2 pm to discuss her book, *World War II: Nebraska*. It's a book about how the fight against the Axis required sacrifice and dedication, and how Nebraskans proudly answered the call. Melissa Amateis will tell us about the building of three ordinance plants and two naval munitions depots and how they brought employment and economic opportunities, but also housing shortages and racial disturbances. She will also tell us about how the U.S. Army Air Corps established 11 air bases here, leading to community engagement through USOs and war bond drives. You will hear about how, in central Nebraska, the North Platte Canteen welcomed thousands of service members en route to war on troop trains. How Henry Doorly's successful scrap campaign became a model for a nationwide operation. How local farmers fed the nation, K-9 war dogs trained at Fort Robinson, and native sons Ben Kuroki and Andrew Higgins affected the war in very different ways. Through detailed archival research, author Melissa Amateis tells the remarkable story of the Cornhusker State's home front. You will not want to miss this program. Bring your friends and family for this memorable talk. Treats will be served!

Right after Christmas and the New Year celebrations, I was fortunate enough to be able to schedule the busy author, James Kimble, on Saturday, January 15, 2022 at 2 pm to talk about his book, *Prairie Forge: The Extraordinary Story of the Nebraska Scrap Metal Drive of World War II*. This book was chosen as 2021's One Book One Nebraska selection. Kimble takes readers across the entire state of Nebraska during the scrap metal drive early in America's involvement in World War II. He will delve more into the history of how, in the wake of Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt called for the largest arms buildup in our nation's history. A shortage of steel quickly slowed the program's momentum, and arms production fell dangerously behind schedule. The country needed scrap metal. Henry Doorly, the publisher of the *Omaha World-Herald*, had the solution. *Prairie Forge* tells the story of the great Nebraska scrap drive of 1942—a campaign that swept the nation and yielded five million tons of scrap metal, literally salvaging the war effort itself.

James J. Kimble chronicles Doorly's conception of a fierce competition, pitting county against county, business against business, and, in schools across the state, class against class—inspiring Nebraskans to gather 67,000 tons of scrap metal in only three weeks. This astounding feat provided the template for a national drive. A tale of plowshares turned into arms, *Prairie Forge* gives the first full account of how home became home front for so many civilians.

On January 15, James Kimble has carved time in his tight schedule to come to our library to show and tell about his book. He will have copies on hand for purchasing and refreshments will be served to complement the event.

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend these historic programs and learn about why we are proud to be Nebraskans, and how our ancestors not only rose to the challenges presented to them but excelled!