

Portraits Drawn From Cremated Ashes

There's now a new option for memorializing loved ones who have been cremated, thanks to an inventive and artistic Canadian.

Lucas Seaward developed a patented process for making a sketch pencil out of cremated ashes. He then uses the pencil to draw a portrait of the deceased. The drawing is a very personal memento and literally contains the loved one's essence.

"The remaining ashes can still be scattered or kept in an urn," Seaward says. "But thanks to the pencil, the person can be honored through art and passed down as a priceless and irreplaceable family heirloom."

Seaward's company, Honor Industries, is offering the service to the general public, as well as to funeral homes.

Even those whose loved ones passed away years ago can order one of Seaward's portraits if they still have the person's ashes.

Along with the small sample of ashes, the artist requires a good quality photo of the loved one. Depending on the size and complexity of the work, Seaward spends anywhere from 30 to 300 hours completing the picture.

The package he offers includes a professionally framed and matted portrait, an engraved plaque and the used ash pencil. If desired, the pencil can be mounted inside a cutout section of the matting as a permanent part of the artwork.

Prices are as follows: a 12 by 16-in. portrait - \$5,000; a 24 by 32-in. portrait - \$7,000; and a 36 by 48-in. sketch - \$8,000. All prices are in Canadian funds.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup,



Lucas Seaward makes sketch pencils out of cremated ashes and then uses the pencil to draw a portrait of the deceased.



Honor Industries Memorial Artwork, 11714 - 94 St., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5G 1J1 (ph 780 328-4552; madeleine@honorindustries.ca; www.honorindustries.ca).

Surviving Homesteaders Tell Their Stories At New Heritage Center

More than 2 million people homesteaded property in more than 30 states. Some of the later homesteaders are still alive and they're telling their stories at a new Homestead Heritage Center in Beatrice, Nebraska. It opened May 20, 2007, the 145th anniversary of President Lincoln signing the Homestead Act.

Anyone interested in U.S. homesteading should visit the center, says Todd Arrington, a historian who works there. Besides beautiful architecture at the two-level, 10,600 sq. ft. center, state-of-the-art displays capture the whole story of homesteading. That includes a real windmill inside the building, a homesteader's 1867 log cabin, displays from Native Americans' perspectives, and the effect of homesteading on tallgrass prairies.

But at the heart of the center are homesteaders' stories in written and taped form, covering the history of the Homestead Act from 1863 to 1986. Arrington interviewed and recorded many of the homesteaders, including the last one in Alaska.

Arrington explains that the center overlooks property originally owned by the country's first homesteader, Daniel Freeman. The Homestead Act went into effect at the same time as the Emancipation Proclamation and the Railway Act during the middle of the Civil War.

The Homestead Act was one of the most significant and enduring events in the westward expansion of the United States. By granting 160 acres of free land to claimants, it allowed nearly any man or woman a chance to live the American dream. More than 270 million acres of land was transferred from federal to private ownership.

Arrington adds that many people don't realize that 60 percent of homesteaders were unsuccessful. They weren't able to overcome harsh conditions to clear the land, build a resi-



Homestead Heritage Center in Beatrice, Neb., tells the story of American homesteading.

dence and live on the land for five years. Early homesteaders paid \$18 to register and later receive a deed to their land. Fees varied through the years in different states, but the last Alaskan homesteader recalls paying about \$50 for his 50-acre claim.

Arrington says he is always amazed by homesteaders' stories of hardship and endurance. "Something that surprised me is that nearly all said they would absolutely, positively do it again, even though it was a hard life," Arrington says.

The center has many stories of early homesteaders and the last homesteaders, but fewer stories from 1920-1960. Part of that is because there were fewer homesteaders due to the Depression and the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934, which withdrew homesteading land from the public domain.

Arrington says the center is interested in hearing homesteader stories. If you were a homesteader or are a descendant of one, send your name, address, telephone number and e-mail to: Friends of Homestead, Homestead National Monument of America, 8523 W. State Highway 4, Beatrice, Nebraska 68310 (ph 402 223-3514).

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Lou McFadden has about 3,500 milk bottles lined up on cherry wood shelves in the basement of his Ohio home. All the bottles are from his home state.

Milk Bottle Collection Fills Basement

When Lou and Sue McFadden built their retirement home 20 years ago, Lou designed the basement with his milk bottle collection in mind.

"I never figured I'd fill it up, but I have," McFadden says. When he moved in he had a couple hundred bottles. Today he has about 3,500 bottles meticulously lined up on cherry wood shelves. All the bottles are from McFadden's home state, Ohio. The collection resulted in McFadden writing a book, "Ohio's Dairies."

The bottles tell a part of the state's agriculture story, displaying different styles and labels from the vast numbers of dairies that were in business before paper cartons replaced glass bottles. McFadden knows his collection can never be complete. When dairies went out of business, they often dumped their bottles. Few people thought to save any of them.

"Cleveland alone had 1,000 dairies. They were all over the place," he says. He started collecting early in his 40-year career working as a field man for four dairies. As he bought bottles, he had no idea they would become popular collectors items.

McFadden purchased most of his bottles for less than \$10. Now some are worth \$100 to \$300. The most he spent was \$280 for a bottle from the Snows Dairy in Killbuck.

"My strangest bottle says Under Laws, Ohio," McFadden says. He can't find any record of a town by that name.

McFadden has mostly half pint, pint and quart bottles in his collection, but he has larger bottles as well as other dairy-related items.

"It looks nice with 10 on a shelf, and seven shelves high," McFadden says. "I can fit 70 qt. bottles in a 4-ft. section." He fills each bottle with white pellets (which are used to make plastic milk cartons) so the lettering is easier to see. Plus, he puts an acrylic wax on the top of each bottle to make them look more attractive. Twice a year he dusts off every bottle with dry T-shirts.

Collecting bottles inspired McFadden and his wife to travel the state checking out dair-



McFadden purchased most of his bottles for less than \$10. Now some are worth \$100 to \$300.

ies, finding out their history and taking photos. That led to accumulating 1,200 photos of milk plants and documentation of more than 10,000 Ohio dairies. McFadden compiled the information into his book.

He says the most interesting story he discovered was about Lloyd Noaker, an ice cream plant owner. He sold nine plants to Borden's for \$1.2 million — just before the Stock Market crash of 1929. Unfortunately, Noaker died of a heart attack the night after he received the check.

Stories such as that and the desire to collect something that tells the history of dairies, keep McFadden interested in sharing his collection with people, and on the lookout for more bottles.

Instead of traveling to bottle shows, McFadden says he shops mostly on eBay these days. He was not willing to pay \$900 for a specialized Borden's bottle that sold on eBay recently, but there are some bottles he's interested in.

"I can squeeze in a few more," he laughs, but expanding to the upstairs is not an option according to his wife, Sue.

His book, Ohio Dairies, sells for \$45 plus \$5 S&H.

Contact: Lou McFadden, P.O. Box 66, Winesburg, Ohio 44690 (ph 330 359-5370; suzannem@sssnet.com).