

# *The Story Catcher*

*A publication of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society*

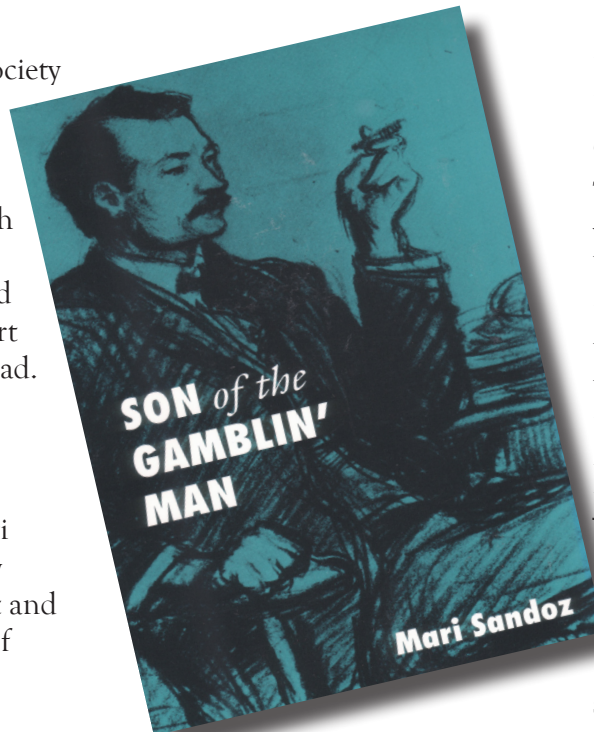
## "Son of The Gambler's Man": Identity on the Plains

*The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Conference*  
March 25-26, 2010 Chadron State College

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society annual conference will feature the author's 1960 novel, *Son of the Gambler's Man*, and explore themes such as concealed or conflicted western identities, the law and life on the frontier, and the art and life of Robert Henry Cozad.

The conference, in Chadron, Neb., begins on Thursday evening, March 25, with a presentation on Robert Henri from keynote speaker, Wendy Katz associate professor of art and art history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Titles of other sessions and speakers scheduled on Friday, March 26, include "Robert Henri: Painter and Teacher," "Holger Cahill and Mari Sandoz: Understanding Robert Henri," and "Frontier Justice."



A Gallery Talk titled "The Henri Connection: The Museum of Nebraska Art presents Robert Henri" will be given by staff from the Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA). A reception and banquet will be held

Friday at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center on the campus of Chadron State College. The Spirit of Mari Sandoz Award will be presented during the banquet.

Friday evening, following the banquet, a Casino Contest will be held at the Olde Main Street Inn in Chadron. The evening will feature Faro (the game choice of John J. Cozad), Poker, Black Jack and Trivial Pursuit. All conference attendees are welcome to come and play or socialize.

No Saturday program is scheduled.

### **Other Conference Topics**

Holly Boomer's presentation, "Gambling on Survival: Gaming as the Modern Trickster," features the conflict in the book *The Bingo Palace*.

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## The StoryCatcher

The "Story Catcher" is the title of a book by Mari Sandoz and it is the title of Helen Winter Stauffer's biography of Mari, "Mari Sandoz: The Story Catcher of the Plains."

The StoryCatcher is published four times a year by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

The Sandoz Society seeks to build an appreciation of Mari Sandoz's body of work, to preserve the literary works and legacy of this premier historian, and to raise funds to support these efforts. Each year, the Society hosts a conference that celebrates and studies the works of the author.

Additionally, the Society provides collections on loan to the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center at Chadron State College. These materials and financial support from the Society's endowments support the College's academic, archival, research, and outreach programs.

Address changes should be mailed to 2301 NW 50th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524.

Contributions to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society are tax-deductible. To join the Society, fill out and mail the form on the back of this newsletter. For more information, e-mail [marisandoz\\_society@windstream.net](mailto:marisandoz_society@windstream.net), or [www.marisandoz.com](http://www.marisandoz.com).

## Mari Sandoz

The feats, the passions, and the distinctive speech of the West come alive in the writings of Mari Sandoz (1896-1966).

As the author of 23 books, including *Old Jules*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *Crazy Horse, the Strange Man of the Oglalas*, she was a tireless researcher, a true storyteller and an artist passionately dedicated to the land.

With her vivid stories of the last days of the American frontier she has achieved a secure place as one of the finest authors in American literature and one of Nebraska's most important writers.

As a historian and as a novelist, Sandoz was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame in 1976 and posthumously received the coveted Wrangler Award from the Hall of Great Westerners.

## Identity on the Plains (cont.)

Historically, American Indians had gaming traditions long before European contact. Wayne J. Stein in his essay "American Indians and Gambling," explains the logic in using gaming as an economic tool. Gaming was an accepted part of the social life of American Indian nations. It comes as no surprise then, that gambling is big business on Indian lands today, for most tribes have traditionally viewed gaming with great interest and seriousness. (p.147)

*The Bingo Palace* involves both powerful and powerless Indians, some coming home, most living on a reservation, seeking economic and cultural preservation through luck or chance by establishing a tribal casino.

Another session entitled "The Other Son of the Gamblin' Man" by Robert Roy Foresman will investigate the life story and development of John A. Cozad 'Johnny,' the oldest son of John and Theresa Cozad. Foresman will discuss Johnny's new life when he became Dr. Frank L. Southrn of Atlantic City, N.J. and his marriage to Jane M. Jenks, who was part of the "Clark Thread" fortune.

Kimberli Lee will discuss Mari Sandoz's advocacy and promotion of American Indian Art and artists, specifically the work of Amos Bad Heart Bull and Brummett Echohawk. Although *Son of the Gamblin' Man* was her only book to focus exclusively on an artist, Sandoz's support of the arts permeated her life.

Following Lee's presentation entitled, "Artist's Advocate: Mari Sandoz and American Indian Art," the author will be signing her new book, "*I Do Not Apologize for the Length of This Letter*" *The Mari Sandoz Letters on Native American Rights, 1940-1965*. Books will be available for purchase at the Sandoz Center on Thursday prior to the conference. ✨

### Keynote Address Reveals Regionalism As Basis for Henri's Views

According to University of Nebraska-Lincoln Associate Professor Wendy Katz, Mari Sandoz's *Son of the Gamblin' Man* revealed the mostly hidden biography of Robert Henri, a well-known artist and teacher, identifying him as Robert Cozad, son of the founder of the town of Cozad, Neb..

Sandoz describes him emerging from a genteel and patriarchal family, and growing up on a Nebraska frontier that consisted less of rugged individualists than of utopian communal ideals undercut by power- and land-hungry rangers, farmers and railroads.



Wendy Katz, professor and conference keynote speaker

Continued on Page 3

# Identity on the Plains (cont.)

Katz's keynote address at the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society's annual conference is entitled "My People': Mari Sandoz, Robert Henri and the Hidden History of American Progress."

She believes that implied in Sandoz's portrait of Henri is the regional basis for his own political and artistic liberalism, including his concept of "My People" as encompassing the victims of civilization's so-called progress.

As a professor in the UNL Department of Art & Art History, Katz's book *Regionalism & Reform: Art and Class Formation in Antebellum Cincinnati* examines why patrons and institutions in Cincinnati (what was then 'the West') supported such a diverse group of artists, including an African-American landscape painter and a female genre painter.

More recently, Katz and UNL historian Tim Mahoney co-edited a volume of interdisciplinary essays *Regionalism & the Humanities* that cover Nebraska history and authors such as Willa Cather and nature writer John Janovy, as well as contributions by authors such as Annie Proulx.

Katz has also served as interim director of the Plains Humanities Alliance and as a fellow of the Center for Great Plains Studies. Before coming to UNL in 1998, she taught at UCLA (where she received a PhD in art history) and UC Berkeley. Her primary area of research and teaching is 19th-century American art. ✨

## Cozad Family Kept Its Secret

By David Harding (*Excerpted from his article originally published in the Omaha World-Herald 1/25/09*)

Robert Henri had a secret. It was a secret that family members packed up and carried with them when they hurriedly left western Nebraska in 1882. Henri was 18 when the family settled on the East Coast a year later, and he kept the secret as he made a name for himself in Philadelphia and New York art circles.

Henri became one of the most influential American painters of the early 20th century. He was an artistic rebel and a guiding light of the Ashcan School, a group of realist painters who wanted to bring art down to street level in its representation of life. Decades of fame did not dislodge the family secret, and many years passed after his death in 1929 before the world learned that Henri was not his family name.

Robert Henri was born Robert Henry Cozad. His father founded the town of Cozad along the Platte River, 230 miles west of Omaha. John Jackson Cozad had left home as a boy and worked on riverboats steaming up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. He developed a fondness for gambling and a remarkable skill at cards.

Cozad later married and settled in Cincinnati, where Robert and his brother were born. Robert's father invested in land on the outskirts of the city and began to develop a townsite, which he named Cozaddale.

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*Robert Henri, who rose to prominence in the art world in the early 1900s, was born Robert Henry Cozad. He was the son of the gambler man.*

The Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center celebrates the life and literature of Mari Sandoz and the culture of the High Plains. The Center is located at Chadron State College, 1000 Main Street, Chadron, NE 69337. Web site: [www.csc.edu/sandoz](http://www.csc.edu/sandoz), 1-800-CHADRON or email [spolak@csc.edu](mailto:spolak@csc.edu).

## Cozad Secret (cont.)

The town had a number of homes, a mill and a general store, but it never took root, and most of John Cozad's investment was lost.

Rather than abandon his dream of founding a community, Cozad shifted his focus to Nebraska, where he bought up land along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and attracted several, dozen settlers to help him establish the town of Cozad.

The community prospered, but there were conflicts between settlers who farmed the area and cattle ranchers accustomed to the land as open range. There was also tension between leaders of Cozad and Plum Creek as they jockeyed for the location of the county seat.

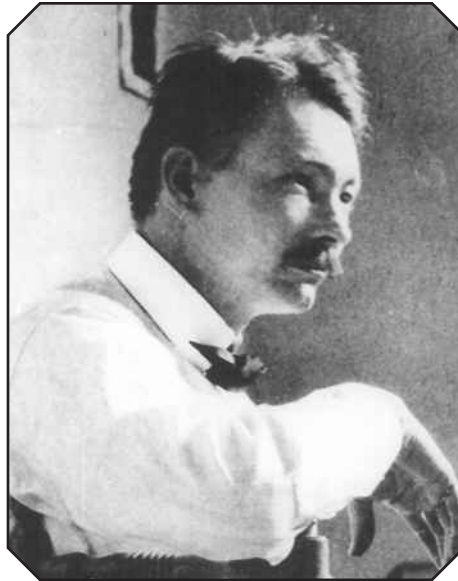
When a disgruntled laborer attacked him during an argument, Cozad pulled a gun and shot the man. He quickly left town, but the laborer died several weeks later and Cozad was indicted for murder.

The family members went underground and changed their names. The boys even assumed new surnames and claimed to have been adopted by their parents. When the family moved to the East Coast, Robert Henry Cozad went as Robert Earle Henri.

John Cozad was eventually cleared of the murder charge, but all of the Cozads kept their new identities.

Robert Henri was a cousin and contemporary of the well-known American artist Mary Cassatt.

However, he was never able to celebrate that connection, because it would have revealed his true identity. Henri preferred to keep the truth a secret and let the world know him by a name that was invented, one that approximated reality, almost like a work of art. ✨



*Robert Henri (Cozad) preferred to keep the truth about his identity secret.*

*The following articles appeared in The Cozad Local on Tuesday, Nov. 27, 1956.*

### Famed Artist Robert Henri Was Really Robert Henry Cozad Who Grew Up Here

What kind of a man was John J. Cozad? What did he look like? Ever since their sudden departure seventy four years ago Cozad and his family were the subject of rumor and hearsay but nothing definite had ever been revealed, not even an old photograph to remind us of the man who founded our town.

When it was learned that the celebrated artist Robert Henri was actually Robert Cozad it was deemed possible that Henri might at some time have painted a portrait of his father and a search was made for the Henri paintings.

Miss Violet Organ of New York City wrote as follows: "Robert Henri did paint John J. Cozad, his father, who died in New York in 1906." Mr. Norman Hirschl forthwith wrote: "I am very happy to advise you that in the collection of paintings of

the estate of Robert Henri there is a marvelous portrait of John J. Cozad by Henri signed and dated January 17, 1903. I would say that it is one of his finest portraits, since it has the specific quality of a portrait painted with great personal feeling."

### Robert Henry Cozad, Younger Son of John J. Cozad, Brings Fame To His Hometown

Robert Henry Cozad was 17 years old in 1882 when he left here in that secret and hectic departure from which he never returned. To conceal his identity he dropped the name, Cozad, and altered the Henry to the French spelling and was henceforth known as Robert Henri (Pronounced Hen-rye).

We now know that the famous painter Robert Henri was indeed our own Robert Cozad who lived and worked here. His distinguished career adds luster to the name Cozad.

Now that the true story of John J. Cozad has been revealed there will be additional publicity given to the City of Cozad and the John J. Cozad story.

Although the Local's editor cannot disclose the names involved, he can tell the readers that one of America's most famous authors is already hard at work on a book that will use the information of today's Local as its theme.

One of the country's largest and best publishing company has already agreed to publish the book that will give this community a great deal of credit and publicity. The author has already visited Cozad on more than one occasion. ✨

# New Board Member Teaches Place Consciousness

New to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society board of directors, Tom Lynch is an associate professor in the English Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

As a relative newcomer to the Plains, Lynch has been teaching at UNL since 2004. His scholarly interests are in place-conscious and ecocritical approaches to literature, an interest for which Mari Sandoz has obvious relevance.

Prior to arriving in Nebraska, Lynch spent six years in Las Cruces, N.M., where he began to pay earnest scholarly attention to the literature of place. His teaching of Southwestern literature at New Mexico State University and his extensive hiking in the surrounding desert culminated in the publication last year by Texas Tech University Press of his book *Xerophilia: Ecocritical Studies in Southwestern Literature*.

As it turned out, *Xerophilia* was the 2009 winner of the Thomas J. Lyon Award from the Western Literature Association, given to the year's best work of literary and cultural studies of the American West.

Lynch is currently co-editing two critical anthologies. One, co-edited with Sue Maher (another Sandoz board member) has the working title of *Artifacts and Illuminations: Critical Essays on Loren Eiseley*. It is the first collection of scholarly essays on Eiseley and is under contract with the University of Nebraska Press.

The other collection is titled



*New Sandoz Society board member, Tom Lynch, who studies literature and the environment, spends as much time as possible outdoors.*

*The Bioregional Imagination: New Perspectives on Literature, Ecology, and Place* and is under contract with the University of Georgia Press.

The *Bioregional Imagination* is a collection of essays from around the world that examines literature from the perspective of the particular bioregions in which the literature is situated.

In addition to these ongoing editing projects, Lynch's major research project is a comparative ecocritical and postcolonial examination of the literature of the European settlement and inhabitation of the Australian Outback and the American West, tentatively titled *Outback/Out West*. The writings of Mari Sandoz will play an important role in this study.

A significant feature of the project will be the inclusion of personal

narratives recounting Lynch's visits to the places portrayed in the literature. He has so far managed to make three visits to the Australian Outback in pursuit of such narratives and numerous trips throughout the American West. A recent visit to the Sandhills, however, was curtailed due to an untimely flat tire and a sudden influx of stormy weather.

Lynch regularly teaches courses in place-conscious and ecocritical studies, including Plains Literature and seminars in ecocriticism and environmental literature. This fall he taught Old Jules for the first time in his Plains literature course.

He previously published an anthology of essays on the reintroduction of the Mexican gray wolf in the Southwest titled *El Lobo: Readings on the Mexican Gray Wolf* (University of Utah Press, 2005). The book tries to provide some context to the issue of the preservation of predators in the American West.

Also on the board of directors of the Loren Eiseley Society and the Wachiska Audubon Society, Lynch has also been active in the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment and serves as that group's awards coordinator.

Lynch lives in Lincoln with his wife, Margaret Jacobs, a professor of History at UNL, their two boys and an intrepid border collie. He spends as much time as possible hiking in Wilderness Park in Lincoln. ✨

## When I Discovered Mari Sandoz . . .

By Kay Lynn Kalkowski

I became interested in Mari Sandoz as a child when my mother reviewed Old Jules for an Orleans, Neb., civic club. As an avid reader who haunted the local library, I was guided toward Nebraska authors by a long-time librarian there. Eventually, I was “allowed” to read Old Jules myself, adding it to the other Sandoz books I had been encouraged to read earlier.

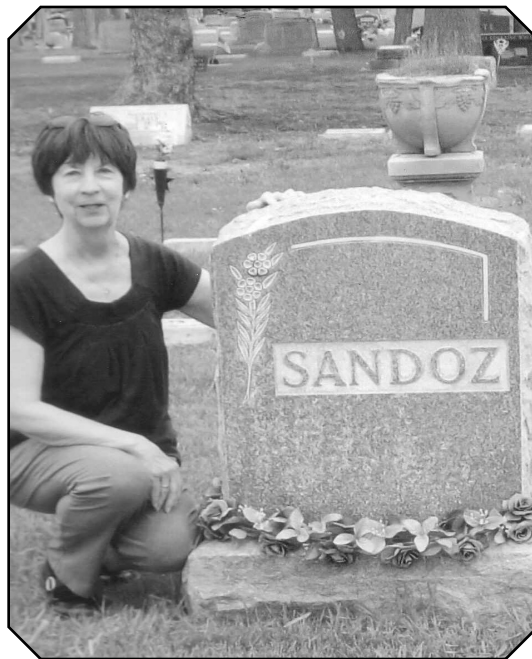
Thus, I was familiar with Sandoz’s works when I became a music major/English minor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1957. I was excited to learn that my voice coach, Katherine Dean, had actually known Mari Sandoz (although we both still called her “Marie”).

Dean loved to recall the story that she had invited Sandoz to her university sorority to tell the girls’ fortunes. Dean gave Mari a pair of silk stockings—considered a very fine gift in the late 1920’s—for her “performance” as a Gypsy fortune teller.

When I became a music/English teacher at Rock County High School in Bassett, Neb., in 1961, I included Sandoz works on my American literature reading lists. In pre-Internet days, I constantly clipped articles from newspapers and magazines about the authors I taught.

My Sandoz file contains a gem from my mother: a June 23, 1935, feature story from the *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star* about Sandoz winning the \$5,000 Atlantic Monthly prize after writing Old Jules. Later, when I met Caroline Sandoz Pifer, I showed her a clipping she had never seen.

In the late 1960’s, educational television came to outstate Nebraska. It provided a wonderful opportunity for me to bring the



*Kay Lynn Kalkowski visits the Jules and Mary Sandoz graves in Alliance Memorial Day, 2009.*

world into my classroom.

I became involved with the movement, serving on the Bassett advisory committee for over a decade and I spent several summers helping write teachers’ guides to accompany the televised English programs and worked on curriculum for ITV.

Along the way, I met NETV pioneers like Ron Hull, programming manager, and Esther Montgomery, the first instructor of English on television. Both produced and researched many Sandoz television programs that I used in my classroom.

In 1986, Dan Hobbs, a young man from Gordon, Neb., stayed in our home in Bassett while attending a workshop. Later that summer, my two sons and I were invited to Gordon by Dan’s family. The first thing we did was to tour the Mari Sandoz Room in the furniture store owned by the Chamberlain family.

Then Dan’s grandmother, Lloy Chamberlain, took us south of town to meet her good friend Caroline Pifer. From Caroline’s, we drove to

the Flora Sandoz ranch where we saw Old Jules’s orchards and visited Mari’s grave.

Caroline and I corresponded for several years and I glimpsed her attempts to get Mari’s remaining manuscripts published and to do a bit of writing herself. I remember smiling when I read in a Dec. 21, 1987 letter, that the “Son of Old Jules” has been accepted by University Press. She said, “So someday I can say I’m actually an author. And if I have to attend an autographing party, I can.”

Throughout the years, my interest in Mari Sandoz, her writings, and her family has never diminished. I waited eagerly for the Mari Sandoz Heritage High Plains Center to open. And I have continued to read and re-read Sandoz works, relying on passages from them for the “Aging in Nebraska Literature” presentation that I have done for Lincoln organizations.

Intriguingly, other Sandoz fans seem to find their way into my life. Just recently, I had separate opportunities to meet Mari Sandoz Heritage Society board members, Phyllis Stone of Lincoln and T.R. Hughes of Crawford.

As a native Nebraskan, a farmer’s daughter and a rancher’s wife, the writing of Mari Sandoz has always been relevant for me. As a life-long teacher, I appreciate Sandoz’s scholarship, authenticity, and compulsion to visit the places she would describe. I am grateful to the Sandoz Society and others who work to preserve her legacy and keep her writing in the public eye.

*Kay Lynn Kalkowski, Ph.D., is retired adjunct faculty in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication at UNL and is a columnist for the Rock County Leader, Bassett, Neb. ✨*

# When I Discovered Mari Sandoz . . .

By Jeffrey M. Winn

I first learned of Mari Sandoz in late 1967 when I began attending the “Mari Sandoz Elementary School” in Millard, Neb.

During the three years that I attended the school, I remember checking out library books by Sandoz and Willa Cather. At the time, however, I think I was more interested in Bob Devaney’s Nebraska football team.

After I graduated from the University of Iowa in 1983, moved to New York City and became a lawyer, I rediscovered Sandoz when I came upon a used first-edition of *Old Jules* in the basement stacks at the Strand Bookstore in Greenwich Village. Just a ten-minute walk from where Sandoz used to live in the West Village. Now, there’s fortuity.

I suppose that *Old Jules* is the perfect choice if you are reading Sandoz for the first time. To appreciate her work, you have to understand where this author came from and what she endured.

The book rekindled a long-dormant interest I had in my native state of Nebraska and I learned that Jules Sandoz’s first stop in the state was in Knox County, from where my maternal grandparents and great-grandparents hailed.

Having never visited the Sandhills, it sparked an interest and my wife and I visited the region in July 1996 and August 2005.

Professor Helen Winter Stauffer’s biography was the second Sandoz-related book I read. The most significant thing that struck me about that biography was that, in her chosen profession of writing, Sandoz was almost a complete failure until she was 39 years-old.

That tells you about the kind of person she was with much

courage, mettle, and persistence.

Moreover, her books are about struggle and power—European natives versus Native Americans, ranchers versus farmers, ranchers/farmers versus hunter-gatherers, East versus West, big business (railroads) versus everyone else.

These are the struggles that shaped us and explain a lot about who we are and the world we live in.

It seems to me that a person who has read books such as *The Cattlemen*, *The Buffalo Hunters*, and *Crazy Horse* can better understand the power struggles occurring elsewhere.

I did not really understand the roots of the Arab/Israeli conflict until I had read these books. There are many of parallels between the struggles faced by 1860s homesteaders on the high plains and the Yishuv trying to scratch out a living from the Negev in the 1930s.

I am a member of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society because it supports my memory of this important author. We live in the most fascinating place on Earth, but it is such a complex balancing act.

Mari Sandoz needs to be remembered and promoted because she has enhanced our understanding of who we are and how we got this way.

*Jeffrey M. Winn is a partner with Sedgwick, Detert, Moran & Arnold LL in New York, NY. ✨*

If you are a member of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society and would like to tell us when or how you discovered Mari Sandoz, please email your story to [marisandoz\\_society@windstream.net](mailto:marisandoz_society@windstream.net).



# Cozad Cleared of Pearson Death

The “Dawson County Pioneer” Dec. 9, 1882, reported that Alfred Pearson died on Dec. 4, 1882, from the gun shot wound to the front side of his head. An indictment for murder in the first degree was filed Dec. 9, 1882 against John J. Cozad.

The warrant read: “The State of Nebraska vs John J. Cozad. Before me, Judge R. B. Peirce, within and for the county of Dawson Neb. personally came Alex Trimble who being sworn according to law deposes and says that John J Cozad on the 14th day of October 1882 in the county of Dawson did unlawfully maliciously and feloniously shoot with a pistol with intent to kill one Albert Pearson of said county and further this deponeth sayeth not.”

The final chapter of the death of Alfred Pearson was written 12 years later on the 9th day of May, 1894, in the District Court of Dawson County, Neb.

“The State of Nebraska, Plaintiff vs John J. Cozad, Defendant.”

“Comes now E. A. Cook, County Attorney, in and for the County of Dawson, and represents to the Court that he has investigated the facts and circumstances connected with the charge of murder in first degree preferred against said defendant and is of the belief and opinion that no conviction can be had on said charge or any charge included therein.

“That the affidavits, which are hereto attached and given as the reason therefore I with the consent of the Court enter a ‘Nolle Prosequi’ in said cause.”

*Nolle Prosequi is a Latin legal phrase meaning to be unwilling to pursue.*

Submitted by Beverly Scrutchfield Diefenderfer to the USGenWeb Nebraska Archives, August, 1998.

## 2010 Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Board Members

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Yes! I would like to support the work of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. I have enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

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