



18 East 22nd St.  
Kearney, NE 68848-1180  
(308) 233-3214  
www.cityofkearney.org

---

## **CITY OF KEARNEY** **PRESS RELEASE** ***For Immediate Release***

Issued Date: November 30, 2022

Point of Contact: Christine Walsh, Assistant Library Director, 308-233-3283

### **Frenzied First Years of Nebraska by Jeff Barnes at Kearney Public Library**

The wild and woolly first years of the Nebraska Territory is the subject of Nebraska historian Jeff Barnes presentation of “The (Mad) Queen of the Prairies: Frenzied First Years of the Nebraska Territory” at the Kearney Public Library for Tuesday, December 13, at 7 p.m. The talk is sponsored by Humanities Nebraska.

Nebraska’s approach to establishing a territory was unusual to say the least, says Barnes. “We actually had a territory where an Indian chief was proclaimed as its first governor, where banks printed and passed their own money, and where women nearly first won the right to vote,” he said. “We went through a time when governors were seemingly switched every few months, and where the battle for the capital was a constant.”

The baby steps taken during the 1850s accidentally and deliberately set the path Nebraska followed for generations to come. Barnes shares rarely seen images and maps, along with seldom-heard stories of the unconventional, dysfunctional first years of Nebraska, a territory that newspapers of the day called the “Queen of the Prairies.”

A former newspaper reporter and editor, Barnes writes and lives in Omaha. He is a former board trustee with the Nebraska State Historical Society, past chairman of the Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission, and a frequently requested speaker with Humanities Nebraska. He is also a twice-awarded recipient of the Nebraska Book Award and the author of *Cut in Stone, Cast in Bronze: Nebraska’s Historical Markers and Monuments*, *150 @ 150: Nebraska’s Landmark Buildings at the State’s Sesquicentennial*, *The Great Plains Guide to Custer, Forts of the Northern Plains*, and *Extra Innings: The Story of Modisett Ball Park*.

This presentation is made possible by Humanities Nebraska, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and Kearney Public Library as part of the HN Speakers Bureau.

Kearney Public Library is located at 2020 1st Avenue, Kearney, NE

**Check out our web site at [www.cityofkearney.org](http://www.cityofkearney.org).**

*We are sending this News Release as a service to the news media and citizens of Kearney.*

pc: City Council  
Kearney Hub  
KGFV  
KKPR

KHAS  
KRVN  
KHGI TV  
KSNB Local4

1011Now  
City Department Heads