

STURGIS. Black Hills Illustrated 1904

One of the most progressive towns of the Black Hills country is Sturgis, which might be said to be about an hour from Dead-wood or from Rapid City. Its population at the last census numbered 1,150 souls, and to date has probably increased to 1,300. The town was platted in August, 1878, and was called Sturgis City. It was incorporated ten years later as Sturgis and as a city of the third class.

The city government consists of a mayor and six aldermen. A board of education numbers seven members and has in charge a public school, with 450 pupils, which takes children from the primary to the high school grades and graduates them into the normal. There are 13 grades, presided over by eight teachers.

Churches are represented by the Episcopal, Methodist, Catholic and Presbyterian.

Societies include the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Eagles, Modern Woodmen, Redmen, A. O. U. W. and G. A. R. The ladies have Degree of Honor, Rebekahs and Royal Neighbors.

The Sturgis Commercial Club of 50 members is a growing organization and is doing much good in promoting the interests of the city and country and in acting in the capacity of a board of trade.

St. Martin's academy is an institution of note. It is a Catholic convent, having boarders of all denominations, from Nebraska, Wyoming and North and South Dakota. About 250 students are in attendance, and include boys and girls, the former as boarders up to 12 years of age, the latter of all ages. The site of the convent and its adjoining dormitories is just back of the court house on a hill, and the three buildings are a very great adornment to the city. The capacity is at all times being tested and new buildings will have to be added in the near future. The institution has been established about 14 years.

Sturgis is lighted by electricity. S. A. Oliver established the Sturgis electric-light plant, which is located on the main street and is furnished with a 100 K. W. Warren dynamo and a 14x36 Epallis Corliss engine. The building is 50 feet square, with iron roof and sides, and the boiler and engine rooms are in an adjoining building. One hundred and forty-seven horsepower is furnished for lighting and two new high-pressure internally-fired boilers are about to be installed. These works light Fort Meade also, by contract with the government.

The city has two excellent brickyards, one of them with a capacity of 25,000 and the other 15,000 bricks per day.

The city has two hotels, one of them, the Hotel Scollard, being owned by John Scollard, an April 1876 pioneer of the Black Hills, who built the Custer House in Deadwood in 1876 on the present site of the First National bank. Mr. Scollard has been in Sturgis 26 years, and owns not only the hotel of 30 rooms, but also a nearby lodging house of 30 rooms, which acts as an adjunct of his hotel.

One of the greatest prides of Sturgis is the waterworks system, which was conceived and started by J. J. Davenport, after the granting of the

franchise. The plant was received by the city in 1893. In the mountains four and one-half miles south of Sturgis three reservoirs have been made by damming the canyon. The water comes from the mountain springs, flowing through eruptive rock called trachite; thus it is perfectly pure. It is conveyed to the city in cast-iron pipes, but on leaving the reservoir and before entering the intake the water is aerated, thus giving it the most perfect purity possible. It has a natural fall of 712 feet from the reservoirs to the city. This would give it 306 pounds pressure to the square inch, but in order to reduce this pressure three automatic regulators are used in the conduit to the city. This pressure can be regulated in that way, and in case of fire a very heavy pressure can be given. Connections are made in the city with thirteen hydrants.

It is probable that the waterworks will in time furnish water for the electric-light plant, mills, and a trolley line to Fort Mead, as well as furnishing Fort Meade with water. This splendid water plant has cost \$150,000 and is unexcelled in any part of the country.

The Sturgis roller mills, owned by Van Winkle & Metzger, have a capacity of 100 barrels per day, running fourteen hours, and manufactures the Dewey, New Century and Eagle A brands of flour. The flour is of the finest quality, on account of the fact that the wheat in this section is unexcelled, and took the first prize at the Chicago exposition. It is shipped to all Black Hills points, as well as to Lincoln, Fremont, York, Thayer, Stockholm and Charlestown, 'Neb. The firm has also an excellent flour and feed business in Deadwood.

On account of the quantity of cattle, sheep and horses received and raised and sold in the immediate neighborhood and the country tributary, large stockyards have been erected for facilitating receipt of shipments of cattle. Much wool is shipped from Sturgis. Farming is also very extensive. Wheat is the leading cereal, but excellent corn is also raised.

It is interesting to note that most of the farmers were never farmers before they came here. Some were miners, some mechanics and some were business men, but almost to a man they have been successful, and in many cases are worth from \$35,000 to \$40,000 apiece.

Fort Meade, which is located about a mile and a half from Sturgis, is a permanent government post, with eight troops, consisting of over 500 men (all cavalry), and a band. This post cut a very prominent figure during the Indian troubles. The post is now being rebuilt, the old wooden barracks being replaced by stone and brick. The improvements will cover a number of years and thus enable the contractors of Sturgis to handle the proposition, rather than have it in the hands of outsiders, as would be necessary if it had to be completed in a very short period.

Thirty-three thousand dollars is being spent in Fort Meade macadamizing roads and sidewalks.

There is a volunteer fire department for Sturgis, with electric alarm system. There are four companies of 30 men each, and armed with four hose and a hook and ladder. Three of these companies are organized under state laws, by which they have a certain percentage of the insurance premiums.

The Bare Butte Oil Company, with indications of oil five and one-half miles north of Sturgis, sunk a well 600 feet and encountered fine artesian

water. This will be blasted at 600 feet to increase the flow and will be used for irrigation purposes. The company has found good indications of oil in Wyoming and has appropriated capital sufficient to sink wells there.

The city has two excellent newspapers, both of them being weeklies, and two banks.

The Meade County Bank was organized as a state institution in 1896 and bought out the First National Bank. Its capital is \$20,000, with surplus and undivided profits on February 1, 1904, of \$33,000. The deposits are very heavy, running about \$300,000, a big portion of these deposits coming from farmers of the Butte valley and the stock-raising industries. Loans are made mainly on personal security, chattels, cattle and horses in small enclosures. The bank has been very successful, paying 15 per cent per annum in dividends and accumulating every year a large surplus. The officers are as follows: D. A. McPherson, president; H. O. Anderson, vice-president ; H. E. Perkins, cashier, and G. W. Huffman, assistant cashier. Mr. Perkins, the cashier, is mayor of Sturgis for a second term and state senator, has been president of the Meade County Republican Central Committee for six years, and is president of the Sturgis Commercial Club. He was at one time city treasurer of Sturgis, and previous to coming to this city was assistant postmaster at Deadwood.

The Commercial National Bank is a late comer to Sturgis, having been opened October 1, 1903. Its capital is \$25,000 and surplus \$2,500. The deposits February 1, 1904, were about \$30,000 and increasing at about \$7,500 per month. H. C. Bostwick of Omaha is president, Edward Galvin, vice-president; M. M. Brown, cashier, and F. M. Shaw, assistant cashier. The other directors include some of the best known men of the Hills, including Thomas Sweeney, Charles J. Buell, I. M. Humphrey, O. J. Hansen and Henry Rodenhaus.

The altitude of Sturgis is 3,200 feet.