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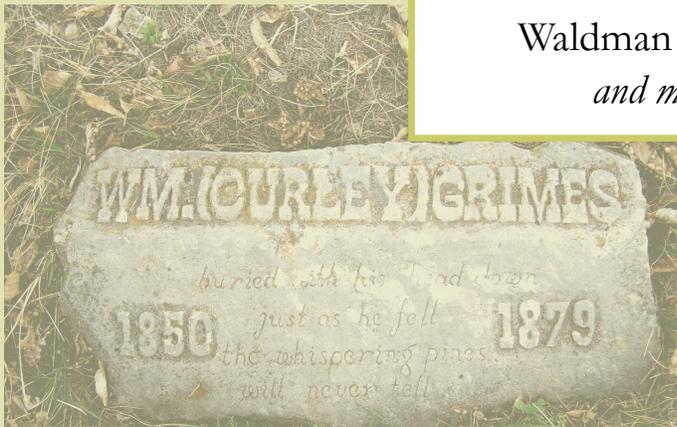
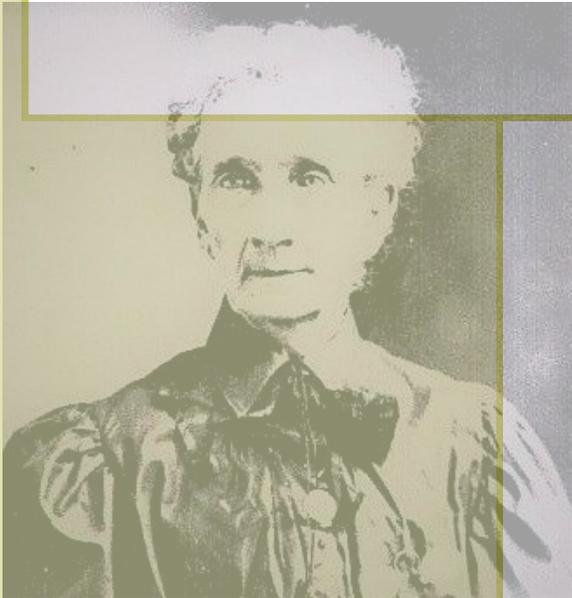


Photo Courtesy of Bob Davis

# Characters of Early Sturgis & Meade County

Including Stories and Short Biographies of:

- Annie Tallent
- Bruce Barnes
- Curley Grimes
- Harry Atwater
- J. J. Davenport
- Miles Cooper
- William Waldman
- and more!*



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STURGIS & MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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## Table of Contents

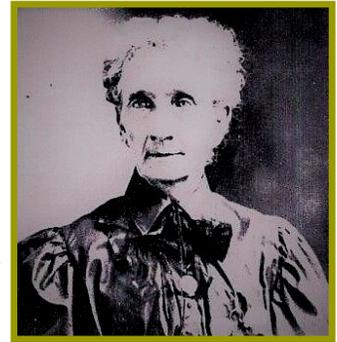
### Characters of Early Sturgis & Meade County

Annie Tallent	3
Bruce Barnes	8
Harry Atwater	12
J. J. Davenport	14
Curly Grimes	17
Major Marcus Reno	21
Miles Cooper	23
Nellie McPherson McMahon	26
Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis	29
Poker Alice Tubbs	32
William Waldman	35

## Annie Tallent ... by Joan Bachmeier

**A**nna Donna “Annie” Frazer Tallent was the first school teacher and the first white woman in the Black Hills of South Dakota. She was born in York, Livingston County, New York, on April 12, 1827, on the Samuel Donnan farm on the Linwood-Fowleville Road.

Her parents, Donald and Margaret Ferguson Frazer, had 170 acres of land that furnished a comfortable living for the family. Annie was baptized in the Scottish church in York. It later became the Associated Reformed Church (Presbyterian)



Annie Frazer Tallent

### WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON ANNIE TALLENT?

\*

**From:**  
York, New York

**Claim to Fame:**  
first school teacher and  
first white woman in the  
Black Hills

**Visit:**  
the Annie Tallent House  
at 1603 Main St., Sturgis

where her father was a Deacon. Annie received a good education and graduated from the School of Fort Edwards, New York, and Lima Female Seminary in Lima, New York, and became a school teacher until her marriage. She had nine siblings, of which two were brothers, one being a lawyer and the other a professor. They both lived in Illinois.

David G. Tallent, a lawyer, married Annie on July 5, 1854, in York, New York. They had a son Robert who was born March 1865 in New York. The three of them as a family moved to Elgin, Illinois, and then to Sioux City, Iowa, in 1874. On October 6, 1874, they joined the Collins-Russell Expedition along with 25 men traveling from Sioux City to the Black Hills. They headed west with four oxen pulling each of the six wagons, five saddle horses, and enough provisions for at least eight months. This was shortly after Custer's discovery of gold in the Black Hills, but a full year before the Deadwood Gold Rush would begin. Sturgis and Fort Meade would not be founded until 1878, four years after the Tallent family headed west.



David G. Tallent

For about \$100, a man could secure all the necessary articles in Sioux City that he needed to outfit himself for a gold-digging expedition to the Black Hills in 1874. Items included a rifle, revolver, flour, salt, ammunition, blankets, cooking utensils, a pick, shovel, and gold pan.

Charles Collins, editor of the *Sioux City Times*, and an early resident of Sturgis, organized the expedition, along with an experienced frontiersman named Thomas H. Russell. Eph Witcher and John Gordon were leading the group from Sioux City to the Black Hills. Collins stayed behind, but Russell acted as a guide.

Organizers advertised the opportunity to join the expedition in newspapers across the country. It wasn't long before officials from the federal government heard about the plans. Because the government had not opened up the area to settlement yet, officials did not want the Sioux City group to continue with their endeavor. In August 1874, an order was given that no “invasion by whites” to the Black Hills was allowed. This was because the Federal Government's Treaty with the Sioux Nation stated that no white person would enter their sacred territory. After that, Collins told anyone who asked that he was delaying the trip. But he and Russell continued with their plans in secret. They didn't believe the military would seriously care about a bunch of gold seekers from Sioux City, Iowa.

## Annie Tallent

Their journey lasted for two months and three days, traveling 15 to 20 miles each day until December 9, 1874. Annie wrote in her book, *The Black Hills, the Last Hunting Grounds of the Dakotahs*, that:

Perhaps some of my readers may like to know how we fared during our long journey over the plains. Well, until the settlements were left behind, we lived on the fat of the land through which we passed, being able to procure from the settlers along the route many articles which we were after compelled to do entirely without.

From that time to the end of our journey, or rather until we returned to civilization, the luxuries of milk, eggs, vegetables, etc., could not, of course, be had for love or money.

Our daily "bill of fare" consisted of the following articles: for breakfast, hot biscuit, fried bacon, and black coffee; for dinner, cold biscuit, cold baked beans, and black coffee; for supper, black coffee, hot biscuit, and baked beans warmed over. Occasionally, in lieu of hot biscuits, and for the sake of variety, we would have what is termed flapjacks. The men did the cooking for the most part. I, the while, seated on a log, or an inverted water bucket, watching the process through the smoke of the camp fire, which, for some unexplainable reason, never ceased for a moment to blow directly in my face, shift as I might from point to point of the compass. I now recall how greatly I was impressed with the dexterity and skill with which they flopped over the flapjacks in the frying pan. They would toss up the cake in the air, a short distance, where it would turn a partial somersault, then unfailingly return to the pan the other side up. After studying the operation for some time one day I asked permission to try my skill, which was readily granted by the cook, who doubtless anticipated a failure. I tossed up the cake as I had seen them do, but much to my chagrin, the down-coming was wide of the mark. The cake started from the pan all right, but instead of keeping the perpendicular, as by the laws of gravitation it should have done, it flew off, as a tangent. In a most tantalizing manner, it fell to the ground several feet away from the pan, much to the amusement of the boys. I came to the conclusion that tossing pancakes was not my forte.

To relieve the monotony of our daily fare, we quite frequently were provided with game of various kinds, such as elk, deer, antelope, grouse, etc., large bands of antelope being seen almost daily along the route over the plains. Each outfit had their own hunters, who supplied, for the most part, their respective messes, with game. Capt. Tom Russell, who was the real 'nimrod' of the party, and a crack shot, bagged much more game than he needed and distributed the surplus among the camps. Besides being a good hunter and skillful marksman, Capt. Tom Russell ever proved himself a brave and chivalrous gentleman, during the long, trying journey, and somehow I always felt safer when he was near.

Strange as it seems while journeying over the plains I was almost always hungry during my waking hours, and which is most remarkable, none of the others were afflicted with this malady. At the outset of the journey I had protested strongly against the kind of food on which we were being regaled, declaring that I never could be tempted to eat such abominable stuff, and prophesying my own demise from starvation within a month. Later, however, as I trudged along on foot in the rear of the wagon, I would often, between meals, approach the wagon, raise the lid of the "grub" box and abstract therefrom a great slice of cold bacon and a huge flapjack as large around as a sombrero hat, and devour them without even flinching or

## Annie Tallent

exhibiting the slightest disgust.

The trip was difficult. Leaving in late fall put them at risk for terrible weather, which they encountered. They packed their feet with gunny sacks for protection against the snow and cold. Annie still wore out two pairs of shoes walking behind the wagons. The cattle were emaciated, their hooves worn to the quick, and the party fashioned leather shoes to relieve them.

Though Annie Tallent referred to herself as “a delicate woman” (which her photo seems to reinforce), she was a hardy soul. She traveled on foot for most of the trip, except a two-week illness when she rode in the wagon. In order to not overtax the animals, it was common practice for any able-bodied person to walk alongside.

Knowing there would be no reading material, Annie had taken two books along with her. They were John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Mary Jane Holmes’ comic romance *The English Orphans*.

The expedition reached the Black Hills, near the future site of Sturgis, on December 9, 1874, two months and three days after their departure. They arrived during a vicious blizzard and camped near Piedmont. Annie spent the first Christmas in the Black Hills washing clothes. From Piedmont they went to Custer, and 78 days after departure from Sioux City, they arrived near Custer. They started building the 80 square foot “Gordon Stockade” near the Lake for protection against both winter weather and the unfriendly Sioux. The stockade had seven log cabins within its walls. Annie ventured out of those walls once, only to be convinced she saw Indians lurking behind every bush. She never went out alone again.

Four months later on April 4, 1875, the US Military removed the entire group from the Black Hills and the Tallent family spent a year in Cheyenne, Wyoming. While there Annie encountered Wild Bill Hickok. They spoke shortly and she never heard of him again until while in Deadwood, Dakota Territory, she heard cries of “Wild Bill is shot!”

In April of 1876, the Tallents joined a group of six others and returned to the Black Hills settling in Deadwood where Annie taught school. She established the first school for gold miner’s children. Other schools were built to educate the children later as settlers moved into the Black Hills. She also taught in Hill City and Tigerville. Bert Shedd, a student of Annie’s in Tigerville from 1884-85, recalled his teacher saying that:

her method of teaching was thorough. She required her pupils to demonstrate their lessons in arithmetic, geography, and grammar on the blackboard. If a pupil could not do this, he must work until he could. She possessed the quality of teaching without anger or impatience. In appearance she was dignified and attractive. I never saw her punish a pupil.

The family also lived in Rochford where she taught school. Her husband, David, bought milk cows and provided the Rochford community with milk. David was chosen as a delegate to the Democratic Convention and Councilman in November 1884. Annie was elected Superintendent of Public Instruction in October 1884.

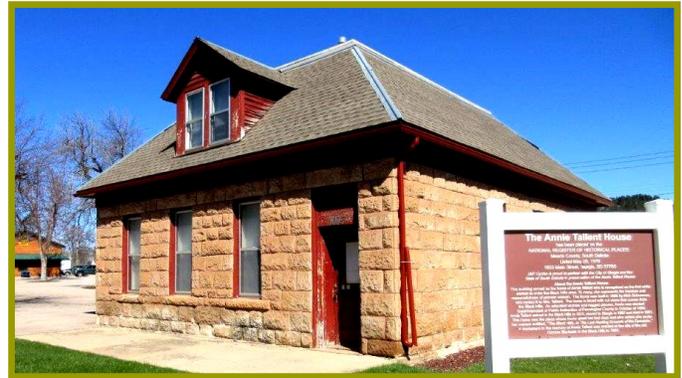
In April 1886, David rented the Van Houten house and moved the family to Rapid City. He was a partner with Thomas Bentley in a real estate business in June 1887. While living in Rapid City, Annie Tallent became one of the first educators in the Pennington County school system which at that time could hardly be called a “system”. Annie organized new schools throughout the county and was county superintendent of schools from 1891 until 1895. In 1895, she became President of the Rapid City School Board.

## Annie Tallent

Annie was one of 153 charter members of the Society of Black Hills Pioneers, where membership was initially exclusive to those who had arrived in the Black Hills Before December 31, 1876. She was a community leader and an active worker in the Episcopal church.

In 1887, Annie and her son returned to Elgin, Illinois, to visit Annie’s brother and sister. When they returned to Dakota Territory, she discovered that her husband had vanished. She never saw him again.

Annie remained in Rapid City until 1897 when she moved to Sturgis to live with her son Robert. They rented a house located at 1603 Main Street from Nick Schummer who built it in 1898. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.



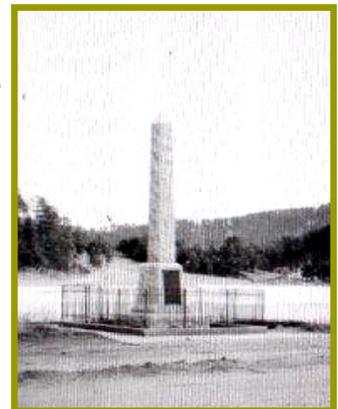
Annie Tallent House, 1603 Main Street, Sturgis, S. D.

It was while living in Sturgis that she wrote the book, *The Black Hills, the Last Hunting Grounds of the Dakotas*. The book, published in 1899, is considered by many to be one of the most complete histories of the Black Hills from that era. The opening pages of the book evince a sympathetic bent toward the plight of Native Americans and include an overview of the history of forced migration and broken treaties. The rest of the book relates her observations on contemporary happenings in the Black Hills and her recollections of the region’s general history.

The balance of the book’s tone has made it a controversial book today. In the book, Tallent, as a product of her times, had some quite harsh and bigoted things to say about Native Americans, referring to them as ‘savages.’ She enthusiastically endorsed the prevailing view that ‘the only good Indian is a dead Indian.’ Annie regarded the Sioux, who engaged in defensive warfare, as “sneaking savages”. She believed that the Sioux went to war, not in the name of self-defense against extermination, but to “arrest the advance of civilization and retard the development of the rich resources of our country.”

Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve wrote about the reprinting of the book in 1974, saying,

Annie Tallent’s malicious, bigoted treatment of the Dakota or Sioux Indians would best serve mankind if it were burned rather than reprinted in this edition to perpetuate a distorted, untrue portrait of the American Indians. Mrs. Tallent called Lakota medicine men “a class of lazy but shrewd imposters who, claiming supernatural powers, have by their incantations and sorceries imposed upon the credulity of these blighted people, the most absurd superstitions, among which was the belief that someday a ‘Messiah’ would appear”. The book, which for the better part of a century, has passed for history in a region which learned, and never forgot how to hate Indians.



Annie Tallent grave, Elgin, Ill.

Annie died February 13, 1901, in Sturgis, South Dakota, and was buried in Elgin, Illinois, in Bluff City Cemetery.

## Annie Tallent

camp in Arlington, Wyoming, where he died in 1911. Robert moved to Denver, Colorado, after his mother died. Robert died in 1917 in Sheridan County, Wyoming, and is buried in Fairmont Cemetery in Denver, Colorado.

In 1924 a monument was erected in memory of this pioneer woman on the shores of Stockade Lake near Custer, South Dakota. In 1950, Rapid City opened the Annie Tallent Elementary School, but 40 years later the school board changed the school's name. Several other efforts have been made to remove Annie Tallent's name from history have not succeeded. Many accounts are recorded of Annie Tallent's excellent character and high ideals. Several schools as well as a street in Rapid City have been named in her honor.

In 1954, the South Dakota Education Association formed the Annie D. Tallent Club to honor the state's women educators pronouncing, "In an evaluation of Mrs. Tallent, all the evidence shows that she was a woman of dignity and refinement, and she contributed to the advancement of culture in the Hills." The club name was changed to Honored Women Educators in 1993, when Annie's book fell into disfavor because of her stance toward the Native American people. The attitudes she expressed in her book demonstrated the beliefs of many people at that time in our history.



## Bruce Barnes ... by David Super

**B**ruce Alfred Barnes, 1885 - 1974, packed a lot into his 88 years—rancher, lawman, school janitor, mayor, and even a stint as the salaried manager of the Black Hills Motor Classic.

Before he was 40, Barnes launched his political career by entering the race for Meade County Sheriff as a Republican. He won his first election in November 1924, against former sheriff Roy Scutt, a Democrat, and Independent Jesse King. Two years later, county voters returned Barnes to office in a contest against King (who ran as a Democrat) and Independent Peter Bauer.

### WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON BRUCE BARNES?

\*

**From:**  
Mondamin, Iowa

**Claim to Fame:**  
State Sherriff during  
Prohibition, Mayor of  
Sturgis, salaried  
manager of the Black  
Hills Motor Classic

**Bonus:**  
Learn about  
confessed murderer  
Ruben Heimark

News accounts of Barnes' career as county sheriff track the expected investigations, arrests, and daily activities that came with the office. In July 1925, he helped destroy 150 gallons of illegal alcohol that had been held as evidence for trials of 22 moonshiners. In court proceedings, the state prevailed in 17 of the cases. Witnessing the set-an-example dumping of confiscated booze were Fred Westgate, a former Meade County Sheriff and by then a state lawman, plus a delegation from WTCU (Woman's Christian Temperance Union) chapters in the Black Hills.

In December 1928, during his final month as sheriff, Barnes was part of a multi-jurisdiction team that guarded confessed murderer Ruben Heimark. During a family dispute on a ranch 14 miles northeast of Blackhawk, Heimark killed his 21-year-old former wife. Heimark was captured by searchers, confessed to his crime, and was sentenced to life in prison by circuit judge James McNenny before 50 hours had elapsed. Barnes and an Army captain from Fort Meade escorted the convicted man on the train ride to the state penitentiary in Sioux Falls.

Barnes briefly tried his hand at being a local implement dealer and selling automobiles after leaving his term-limited job as sheriff. Based in part on his performance as county sheriff, Republican Governor Warren Green appointed Barnes as State Sheriff in 1931.

Barnes did not coast his way out of the state office. In November 1932, he led the arrest of a cigarette tax stamp counterfeiting ring that operated in several East River cities. This was followed by the bust of a slot machine parlor in downtown Sioux Falls, along with a controversial investigation into the sheriff's office in Minnehaha County. The accused sheriff resigned from office and then "un-resigned" in less than six hours.

During 16 years of operation, the office of State Sheriff was something of a political hot bed. The office was created in 1917 to assist local authorities with cracking down on the manufacture and sale of illegal alcohol during South Dakota's "dry" years (1917 to 1918) and then during nationwide Prohibition (1919 to 1933). Lawmen from across the state would seek the job at each change of governor. Barnes joined others in a futile lobbying effort to make the office and its staff of deputies a permanent part of state government.

## Bruce Barnes

While State Sheriff, Barnes organized a vigilante group to assist law enforcement offices with the capture of criminals. He also recommended the principal duties of the job shift away from chasing moonshiners and bootleggers to the persistent problem of livestock theft, motor vehicle law infractions, and other serious crimes that could exceed a county sheriff's ability to investigate properly. Well-known across South Dakota by the end of his term as State Sheriff, Barnes later was chosen to be the first president of the South Dakota Peace Officers Association.

When Democrat Tom Berry was elected in 1932, Barnes was out by January of the following year, replaced by Fred Minier who shut down the office when it was abolished by the State Legislature.

In 1936, the Sturgis School District hired Barnes to be its head custodian, with responsibilities for three buildings. He stayed with his building engineer job into the mid-1960s, and is remembered by aging Baby Boomers as the tall, quiet man in bib overalls who kept the new high school warm and Grunwald Auditorium clean. Most students were unaware that Mr. Barnes had a previous career in law enforcement and city politics.

A Republican faithful, Barnes did run once more for his party's nomination for sheriff in the 1940 spring primary election. Ultimately, in what was a seven-man contest, Matt Flavin became the GOP candidate. Democrat Walter Miller won in the fall general election and was unopposed in 1942.

From 1948 into the early-1950s, Barnes had a summertime gig as the salaried director of the Black Hills Motorcycle Classic when just one weekend of racing was the dominant part of the current, world-famous festival. In the early 1950s, Barnes also managed the "Sheriffs" baseball team in the Black Hills League, was an officer in the Red Cross, and served on the Tri-County Draft Board.

Barnes continued his interest in elective politics by running for mayor in the spring of 1952 against incumbent Katherine Soldat, at the time the state's only woman mayor and one of the few female city leaders in the nation. The election was relatively close, with Barnes winning 801 to 738.

During the transition City Council meeting, aldermen had voted to pay themselves and the mayor for attending meetings at a rate of \$10 for a council and \$12.50 for mayor. The ordinance passed under "old business" during the meeting. Mayor Soldat objected, saying that she was honored to serve as a volunteer and felt that others should follow her lead. She vetoed the measure. Then during "new business," Barnes was sworn in and the pay question was again brought to the table. It passed. He was unopposed in his bid for reelection in 1954, but resigned in December 1954, for health reasons.

Barnes was born in 1885, in Mondamin, Iowa, and was raised in Boyd County, Nebraska, where he married Mabel J. Gray in 1908. The couple started their family in Boyd County before moving to South Dakota in 1919, to settle on a farm near the community of Lakeview, east of Sturgis. By 1924, they moved to town as Barnes was launching his campaign for county sheriff.

## Bruce Barnes

Their three children were enrolled in the public school, and Mabel became an active member in Presbyterian Church activities, the Eastern Star, and Ladies Aid Society. She died in 1965. For many of their years in Sturgis, the Barnes family lived on West Sherman Street.

Daughter Doris Laverne was the eldest, graduating from high school in 1925. Laverne attended Dakota Wesleyan in Mitchell, and had a career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other agencies in Washington, D.C. She was killed in a D.C. area car-bus accident in 1953, and is buried alongside her parents in the Bear Butte Cemetery.



In this 1923 photo, children Laverne, Melvin, and Faye are standing behind their parents, Bruce and Mabel Gray Barnes. The parents were married in Boyd County, Nebraska, in 1908. Their children were born in Nebraska before the family moved to rural Meade County in 1919.

Son Melvin was next, a Sturgis graduate with the class of 1928. During his father's relatively brief tenure as State Sheriff, Melvin served as one of his deputies. He eventually settled in the suburban Chicago community of Barrington and died in 1997.

Faye completed the trio of children. In 1931, he finished high school where he played trombone. Faye joined the U.S. Navy and had a career as a shipboard engineer. After his military career, Faye was a member of the South Dakota Highway Patrol. He died in 1995 and is buried at the Black Hills National Cemetery.

Barnes' final stint of civic duty came in 1966 when he was named Justice of the Peace to replace the late Sidney Voorhees, another 20th Century Sturgis stalwart with a long record of community service.



## Ruben Heimark, Murderer

In 1928, Ruben Heimark and his wife Frances Eldora Hasselstrom were divorced. The court gave custody of the couple's two young children, Orlin and Sara Coleen, to Frances "Dora," along with a restraining order against Heimark to stay away from his former family. On the day of the November 28 murder, Heimark hid in the barn of the Hasselstrom farm near the community of Bend, north of Box Elder in Meade County. Dora was living in the ranch home of her brother. When Dora and the children were alone in the farmhouse, Heimark entered the home, most likely had words with his former wife (only the children witnessed the crime), and attacked Dora with a razor, cutting her in several places, including across her throat. He fled the home on foot and eventually was caught in a straw stack on a farm near Box Elder.

Dora's parents were Ludwig Bernhard Hasselstrom and Sarah Elizabeth Chantry Hasselstrom. Heimark, a World War I veteran, was born in 1896 and died in 1984, not in the South Dakota Penitentiary.



## Harry Atwater ... *by Violet Stoltz*

**H**arry P. Atwater was an able lawyer and opened his office in Sturgis, South Dakota, after passing the bar in April 1902. He continued practicing law until his death in 1943, and was particularly well known for his ability in handling criminal cases.

Harry was born at Cataract, Monroe County, Wisconsin, on November 8, 1871, the fourth in order of birth in a family of eight children. His parents were Wesley D. and Harriet (Schultz) Atwater, natives of Ohio and Pennsylvania, respectively. His father was born in 1840 and his mother in 1841. In Harry's early life his father entered the ministry, to which he devoted many years of active service, and later retired from a useful career near Auburn, California.

**WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON HARRY ATWATER?**

\*

**From:**  
Cataract, Wisconsin

**Claim to Fame:**  
early Sturgis attorney  
and four-time Mayor

**Visit:**  
the Atwater's house on  
Sherman Street, Sturgis

Harry attended grade school in Wisconsin, and when Harry was aged 14, the family moved to Central City, South Dakota. There he continued to attend public school in the Black Hills. Prior to that he tried his hand in the business world, and at the age of 15 he secured employment as a clerk in the Sturgis Post Office. He remained there for two years. For the next seven or eight years, he worked at various occupations including clerking in a mercantile business.

He pursued his dream to study law while holding an office of Justice of the Peace from 1902 to 1904. As a law student at the State University of Nebraska (now the University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Atwater prepared for the bar exam.

In 1905, at the age of 33, he married Mattie Hughes, but was divorced by 1910.

Atwater was elected to four terms as mayor of Sturgis from 1915 to 1919. (Mayoral terms in Sturgis were only one year long in those days.)

While serving as mayor, a young Canadian lady, France Mary, caught his eye. France and Harry were married in 1919 in Sturgis and lived in a stone house on Sherman Street, pictured as it stands today. It looks much like it did in the 1950s. In 1920, the house was valued at \$3,500.



Atwater house, Sherman Street, Sturgis, S.D.

In April of 1902, Atwater opened an office in Sturgis where he remained, following his profession in general practice. He also had a large clientele in criminal work. It was said he had a keenly analytical mind which enabled him to readily determine the strong points in a case. He marshalled his evidence with the precision of a military commander, and in the presentation of his cause was always strong, resourceful, and logical. Aside from his professional interests, he was the owner of land in South Dakota and his property interests earned him a good return.

## Harry Atwater

Harry was active in several civil groups. His father, Rev. W. D. Atwater, spoke during the women's suffrage discussion at the Farmers Alliance district convention in the Black Hills in April 1890, and was vice president-at-large during the organization of a Lawrence County suffrage association. During his time as mayor, Harry made the introduction at a suffrage meeting during Catherine Waugh McCullough's campaign tour in October of 1914.

According to the *History of Dakota Territory*:

Mr. Atwater is a prominent member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles and for ten years served as chief official in the local aerie. His political allegiance has always been given to the republican party since age conferred upon him the right of franchise. He is the present mayor of Sturgis and for one term he served as county judge of Meade county. He was also a member of the board of aldermen of Sturgis for two terms, was city attorney for three terms and now as the chief executive of his city is doing much practical and effective work along municipal lines, his labors being a potent element in bringing about needed improvements in city affairs. [*History of Dakota Territory*, George W. Kingsbury, Vol. 4, 1915.]

The obituary in the Sioux Falls *Argus Leader* newspaper said Harry was mayor of Sturgis four different times for an aggregate of 21 years, but believe this to be of service to the city of Sturgis. As stated earlier, he had been a councilman, city attorney, plus chairman of the state cement committee. Harry was also active in the South Dakota League of Municipalities. He died in 1943 in the hospital in Sioux Falls and was buried in Sturgis Bear Butte Cemetery.

## France Mary Atwater

France was born in Canada in 1883, and arrived in the United States in 1893 at the age of 11. She married Harry in 1919. There is little written about her, but when the Sturgis Library was moved to a tiny room of about 20' x 25' in the new City Armory building in 1922, she became the Librarian. She held this job until the library was moved to the city administration building in the 1950s. During her career in the library, Mrs. Atwater worked with high school students to help them earn credit in English, teaching them a bit about libraries.

*Author's Note: I (Violet Stoltz) was one of the chosen ones to help at the library, and she taught me how to scan a page so I could read faster. As new books geared towards students arrived, she would hand me one to scan so I could tell the students the gist of the story. When my time was up, one of my close friends took over for a semester.*



## J. J. Davenport ... by Katherine Martel

**J**oseph Davenport was born on January 23, 1850, in Woodford County, Illinois. His childhood was not carefree or easy with the death of his father when Joe was eight years old. He assumed the duties of a man and began performing chores and working the family farm to take care of his mother Lucy, and twin sister, Maria. At 12 years old, Joe lied about his age so he could serve during the Civil War. He enlisted with the 108<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry, where a few months later, he contracted typhoid and was sent home. He managed to get some formal education late in his teens, and at 21 years of age, attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for three years. There is much more to his story before he makes his way to Dakota Territory in 1884, but for this publication, his bio is brief.

### WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON J. J. DAVENPORT?

\*

**From: Woodford  
County, Illinois**

**Claim to Fame: formed  
the Sturgis Water  
Company and built the  
Davenport Dams**

**Descendants: Katherine  
Martel is the great-  
granddaughter**

A novel could and should be written about Davenport's life. The archive he left is rich with information about the formation of the City of Sturgis and surrounding area. He was involved with every aspect of building this community where people could prosper and be proud to live. One example of this was a public works project Davenport took on in 1890. The city was growing, the needs of the community were growing, and water was a growing concern. The Ft. Meade military post east of town was having trouble with water. Wells and cisterns around the city were not always reliable or efficient, and Davenport had a front row seat to the issue as he ran the First National Bank, situated on Main Street in the heart of Sturgis.

A group of prominent, local businessmen, including Davenport, were working on a large project to build more infrastructure, including a waterworks, to meet the needs of the municipality. These men's efforts for the large project ended with the sudden death of one of them, which left Davenport going it alone on a waterworks plant. The City of Sturgis granted him a 20-year franchise for the construction and operation of a waterworks system. Ordinance

number 37 passed on January 12, 1892, and Joe got busy the next day on January 13! The Sturgis Water Company was incorporated on February 2, 1892, by Joseph J. Davenport, George Ladd, and Martin LaMent. An engineer from Ohio was hired to design and lay out a pipeline and determine where best to build dams. Material bought and men hired, construction began of the waterworks in a canyon south of the young city of Sturgis. By 1896, two dams were built, the pipeline was laid, and water was flowing into the city, and with a government contract in hand, soon to the military post. This was good for public health and fire protection. Joe built the system on his own time with his own money. He resigned from the bank in 1896 to pursue his interest in the Sturgis Water Company, and focus his energy on a lawsuit brought against the company.

Written in the corporate minutes book of the Sturgis Water Company:

On March 24, 1896, a summons was brought by, Charles Farwell, Jessee Cox, John Kelly, Alexander Cruickshanks, Isaac Miller, and Peter McQuillen, on behalf of themselves and any other parties owning land through which Alkali Creek runs thru Meade Co., SD against Sturgis Water Co. Asking for an injunction restraining said Water Co. from taking water from Alkali Creek and also asking for damages in the sum of \$500.00 each.

## J. J. Davenport

The case went to trial in circuit court before Judge Plowman. Both sides had witnesses but Davenport has expert witnesses. Professor Frank C. Smith, South Dakota School of Mines, and Dean of the school, Valentine McGillicuddy, testify on behalf of the Water Company. They both presented facts of science to back their observations and conclude the Davenport Springs in no way make up the waters of the Alkali Creek. The Plaintiffs' witnesses testified about their observations of the waters they see running in the Alkali Creek, but are not experts. After hearing from both sides, Plowman makes a point to visit the springs and creek himself before rendering his judgment.

Plowman wrote about his findings of the case in a rather lengthy, wordy, dry article. It appeared in the June 4, 1896 *Sturgis Advertiser* and consumed two pages. He noted that the case had brought up the issue of defining waters. He writes, "Again, are the waters that are diverted by the defendant waters of a running stream or waters from natural springs or are they merely percolating waters? It calls for definition of what is meant by a running stream, and for a definition of what are percolating waters under our statute. These questions have never been fully determined by our [South Dakota] Supreme court."

Further into the text he notes:

I have finally come to this inference perhaps the only one I can draw, because the weight of evidence compels me to draw it, that there is since the construction of these reservoirs a diminished supply of water down there. How much, I do not know; but that is the evidence. It is alleged by the defendant the burden is on the plaintiff to establish all these allegations, and all these facts material to his recovery in this case; and that is true. Our Supreme court has laid down the rule that as to a spring, where there is no evidence to show that it is a natural or running spring, they will presume it is caused by percolation. What is the presumption that must be applied where a well known and well defined channel is proven and that water runs therein during certain seasons of the year, and that water is found there during other portions of the season standing in holes and pools. It is not the fair presumption that it comes there in the natural way, to-wit, along the course of the channel? I have concluded this and shall so find, and shall find that the water has been diminished by the act of the defendant by this diversion. The quantity is impossible to determine, and perhaps it is not necessary for the purposes of this case.

Plowman recognized that the waterworks served many and was necessary. He goes on to write:

A permanent injunction stopping this, or removing the dam deprives them of whatever benefits they may get out of it, and I have concluded in order that the case may go to the Supreme court speedily and these questions settled that I will grant this injunction but that I will give the defendant leave to apply for a suspension of it, by filing a stay bond, if the case is to go to the Supreme court until it can be heard there.

The case was heard in the South Dakota Supreme Court in August of 1898. Professor Smith testified and stated, "Under the circumstances, I can see no way that the waters disappearing in the limestone could reappear in the agricultural district east of the military post." The diversion of water from the Davenport Springs had nothing to do with the disappearance of water in the Alkali Creek.

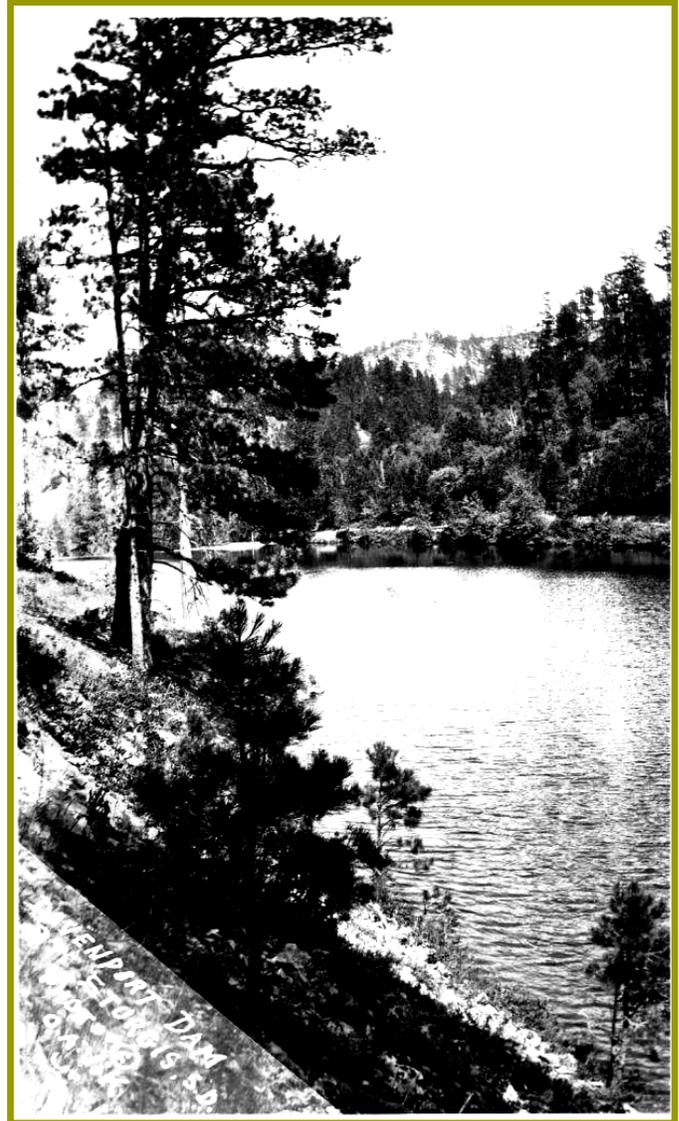
## J. J. Davenport

In the *Northwestern Reporter*, volume 73-74 of the case *Farwell vs Sturgis Water Company*, the Supreme Court judge wrote:

The learned counsel for the respondents called to our attention the fact the judge of the circuit court made an examination of the springs and creek himself. But, as the law has made no provision for such an examination by the judge, and has not provided any method by which the result of such an examination can be reviewed by this court, we are compelled to disregard it in consideration of the case and to look only to the evidence presented by the record. The conclusions necessarily lead to a reversal of the judgement of the circuit court and order denying a new trial, are reversed and the case is remanded for such further proceedings as may be in accordance of the law.

From the corporate minutes book of the Sturgis Water Company:

The water case was decided in favor of the Water Co. in Deadwood on Aug. 11 after a six day trial. Four days was taken up in the trial of the case in Sturgis where I had summonsed 32 witnesses in all. I employed as experts F. E. Tucker (?) of Deadwood, B. Moody, Sam Blackstone, and R. Blackstone from Lead City. Also Prof. F. C. Smith who was one of the experts on the last trial. After the 4 days trial the case was adjourned to Deadwood for Aug 10 to cross examine Prof Smith where two more days was taken up with the trial. The money expended by me in the expense of this trial to date and charged on the books as legal expense is \$293.75 the items are as I have stated.



One of four Davenport Dams started from 1891

The matter was settled.

Shortly after this case was decided, Joe got busy with planning and building a third dam. He supplied Sturgis with clean, safe drinking water until his death in 1937.



## Who Was Curley Grimes? ... by Mark Rambow

**N**ear the southern edge of Sturgis, across Interstate 90 from the Black Hills National Cemetery and along Old Stone Road, lies the largely forgotten grave of western outlaw, horse-thief and holdup man, “Curley” Grimes. Locals and historians who are familiar with Curley’s story are largely accepting of the information which has come down through the years of his career in crime, and his arrest and shooting by two officers of the law while trying to escape. However, a closer look into the newspaper reports of the time show that the case was not as clear cut as we remember.

The story we know today is varied, but, roughly, follows: An arrest warrant was issued in Deadwood for William “Curley” Grimes. He was a career criminal and a very desperate character who had been involved in a variety of crimes. Most stories today report that he had a two-year career of robbing the famed “Deadwood Stage.” He was hunted down by US Marshal, W. H. H. Llewellyn, and Deputy US Marshal, Boone May. While they were returning him to Deadwood for trial, the three were caught in a horrible blizzard, during which Curley Grimes spurred his horse, and attempted to escape into the night. Both law officers were forced to fire on Grimes when he refused to stop, and shot him in the back. He was left where he fell, and the officers rode on to Fort Meade to report the incident and escape the storm.

**WHAT’S THE SCOOP ON CURLEY GRIMES?**

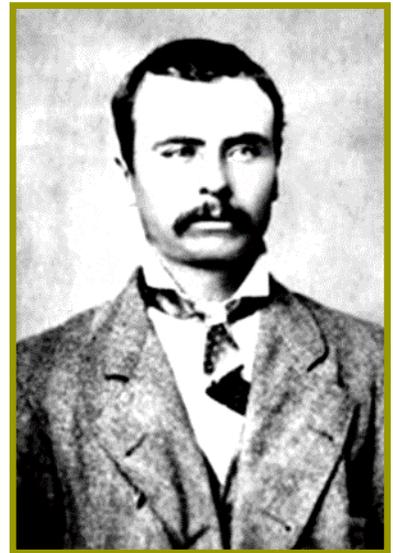
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**Claim to Fame: Arrested for stealing postage stamps; shot and killed trying to escape**

**Deadwood “law enforcement” or vigilantes: Gunslinger Boone May and Indian Service Agent W. H. H. Llewellyn**

While many of the core elements of the story are factual, there is more to the story as is often the case. Much of the story is influenced by the only “local” newspapers which were around to report it, all of them in Deadwood.

In early February, 1880, a warrant was issued by the court in Deadwood for the arrest of William “Curley” Grimes. He was wanted, along with two other men, for robbing a post office in Boone’s Creek in Sioux County, Nebraska. The three men made off with \$1.50 worth of stamps, some groceries, and a brand-new suit of clothes belonging to the post master. The warrant was handed over to “special agent” W. H. H. Llewellyn, an agent of the Indian Service from the Dakota-Nebraska border area. He had a special interest in Curley Grimes, whom he suspected as being a member of the gang of horse-thieves led by the infamous “Doc” Middleton, who had been robbing, among others, many tribal members of the reservation areas along the Dakota-Nebraska border area. Llewellyn was part of the group who ran down and arrested Doc Middleton and several other members of the gang. Llewellyn had then proceeded to travel throughout the region finding and arresting other “suspected members” of the gang. When arresting two of these members, Llewellyn claimed they had informed him of Curley Grimes’ role in the post office robbery and participation in Middleton’s gang.



Deadwood gunslinger  
Daniel Boone May

To aid him in running Grimes down, Llewellyn asked the well-known Deadwood gunslinger, Boone May, to join him. Daniel Boone May had a reputation in Deadwood as the shotgun messenger for the stage coaches and treasure wagons which were often beset by outlaws. Boone May was said to have confronted and killed many out-

## Who Was Curly Grimes?

laws, being best known for his “shoot first, ask questions later” attitude to law-enforcement. He was also known for not bringing in his prisoners alive. He once killed a suspected outlaw, and upon learning there was a reward offered for him, returned, dug up the body, and cutting off the head of the man, took it to Cheyenne to collect his reward.

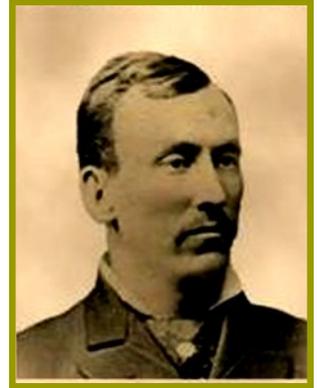
The two men proceeded to the Fort Pierre trail to find Grimes who was rumored to be working as a bull-whacker on a bull train heading toward Sturgis and the Hills. Two miles down Elk Creek, at about 2 p.m., they found the man they identified as Grimes. He gave up without a fight, was handcuffed, and the three quickly headed back toward Sturgis and Deadwood, as the temperature was well below zero and a snowstorm had begun.

In the driving snow, progress was slow, and it was nine o'clock when they reached the “ranch” owned by the notorious Madam Bulldog. Madam Bulldog’s was located in the vicinity of the current Pleasant Valley Exit 37 off of I-90, the nearby creek being named Bulldog Creek in her honor. At Madam Bulldog’s they had dinner and several drinks. Some witnesses reported that the two “law officers” repeatedly tried to get Grimes to drink with them, which he refused.

After leaving, it is said that Grimes asked the two men to remove his handcuffs, as they were freezing to his wrists. They obliged him before crossing the ranch of James McFarland and entering the southwest corner of the Fort Meade Military Reservation (roughly where the Black Hills National Cemetery currently sits). The trail splits here, with the left branch going into Sturgis and on to Deadwood, and the right going around the hill toward Fort Meade. The men turned to the right and headed toward Fort Meade, ostensibly to return the government horses they had borrowed.

It was a short way down this trail, at about 11 o'clock, that Grimes made his attempt to escape, spurring his horse into the night and the driving snow. Llewellyn later testified that he fired a shot into the air to make Curley stop, but when he didn't, both officers opened fire. Grimes immediately fell from his horse, dead, with gunshot wounds in the side. His body was left where it fell, about twenty steps from the road, and the men went on to Fort Meade, where they reported the shooting and spent the night. The next day, soldiers went out and buried the body where it was found, frozen to the ground, in a shallow grave. A couple of days later the body was exhumed by the county coroner for a coroner's inquest. Several members of the coroner's jury examined the body before it was reburied in the same spot.

While this may have been the end of the story of the killing of Curley Grimes, it was not meant to be. Within a couple of days, letters were written to the Deadwood newspapers which were proclaiming the two “law-men” as heroes for ridding



Indian Special Agent  
W. H. H. Llewellyn



Curly Grimes grave and headstone near the BLM park, south of Sturgis on Old Stone Road

## Who Was Curley Grimes?

the area of such a desperate criminal. The letters, written largely by residents of the Sturgis area, questioned the chain of events, the legality of the killing, and even the identity of the man who was shot. They called for the two men, Llewellyn and May, to be tried for the murder of Curley Grimes. Both of the men, for their part, claimed to be eager to defend their honor in court, but both promptly left the territory. Each claimed they were not fleeing justice, but were needed elsewhere, and both refused to come back until much later.

It was a full six months later in August of 1880 when a Deadwood court finally got around to looking into the killing. Both men, May and Llewellyn, were charged with murder, and, after a couple of weeks, returned to face charges. Their bail of \$10,000 each was quickly offered by many of Deadwood's most prominent citizens, including Sol Bloom, Sol Star, and Seth Bullock. When the trial finally occurred in late August, it was clear that the defense lawyers for both men had used the time wisely. There were suddenly many people who claimed to have witnessed Grimes' dead body and swore on their oath about his identity, the many times they had met him, and the vileness of his character. While the Deadwood paper had previously stated that very little was known about Grimes, they now shared many details of his life. His criminal career was suddenly one of legend, with people ascribing many crimes to him, including robbing the Deadwood stage, stealing many herds of horses and cattle, and a litany of other crimes, way beyond the theft of \$1.50 in postage stamps. They also said he was the fastest gun in Dakota Territory, which, ironically, had also been said about Boone May.

The jury, made up of twelve of Deadwood's finest citizens, barely needed to hear the evidence. They never even left the jury box before proclaiming, without needing to take a poll of the jury, a unanimous verdict of "not guilty." The entire court burst into cheers and the defendants, like a scene from a movie, were virtually carried from the courtroom.

While the men were exonerated, both left the territory quickly. W. H. H. Llewellyn went to New Mexico, where he continued to work as an Indian Agent before going into business and then politics. He became a Territorial Senator, and was involved in all of the steps of New Mexico becoming a state. He and his son even served as Rough Riders with Teddy Roosevelt during the Spanish American War.

Boone May's life took another path. He also headed to the American Southwest, but after running afoul of the law, fled to South America. It is said he worked in Chile as a shotgun messenger for a few years before he



Headstone near the BLM park, south of Sturgis on Old Stone Road

killed an army officer in a dispute and fled to Brazil. He died there of yellow fever. Boone May is best remembered today for being a character in the tourist show on the streets of Deadwood, where he, several times a day for the entertainment of tourists, and despite never actually being a Marshal, roams the streets of Deadwood as their Marshal, blasting desperate characters in shootouts.

As for Curley Grimes, much remains unknown. He was variously known as William Grimes, Lee Grimes, Lew Grimes, and even by the name of Bowers. He was described as being rather tall, broad-shouldered, with long, dark, curly hair and a thick, light-colored mustache. All we really know for sure is the basic story of how his life ended and the location of his

## Who Was Curly Grimes?

grave, and even that was in danger of being lost at one time. At some point, his headstone was stolen from his grave and now resides in a display case in the basement of Deadwood's Adams Museum. Even it does not have the story straight, misidentifying the year of Grimes' death as 1879, instead of February 2, 1880. In 1979, in order to keep the grave from disappearing completely, local historian and artist, Dave Rambow, made a new headstone from a piece of sandstone he found lying near the grave. He inscribed it with a quote from a poem written about Curley Grimes by the late historian and educator, R. B. Williams. It simply states, alluding to the mysteries surrounding his death, "Buried with his head down, just as he fell; the whispering pines will never tell."



Curley Grimes' grave

## Marcus A. Reno ... by Jim Holland

**S**ome measure of military justice finally caught up with Major Marcus A. Reno, a central figure in one of the nation's most stunning military defeats, the June 1876, Battle of the Little Bighorn.

In 1879, a military court-martial found Reno, then commanding officer at Ft. Meade, Dakota Territory, guilty of "conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline" in connection with the assault of a subordinate officer. Reno was dishonorably discharged from the service on April 1, 1880.

### WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON MARCUS RENO?

\*

**Claim to Fame:**  
a central figure in Custer's defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, and former commanding officer at Ft. Meade

**Fact:**  
Received an honorable discharge 88 years after his court-martial

**Watch:**  
"The Court-Martial of Major Marcus A Reno," a three-act play written by Bob Lee

Less than four years earlier, in December of 1876, Reno, then in command of Fort Abercrombie, D.T., faced charges of making unwanted advances toward the wife of another officer. He was found guilty on six of seven charges against him, and was ordered dismissed from the Army. President Rutherford B. Hayes later reduced the dismissal sentence to two years. But Reno, an Illinois native and West Point graduate who served with the Union Army during the Civil War, could not shake charges of cowardice and drunkenness as senior officer during Lt. Gen. George Armstrong Custer's ill-fated expedition to the Little Bighorn River in what is now southern Montana during June 25-26, 1876.



Major Marcus A. Reno  
COURTESY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Custer and his 7th Cavalry command were wiped out to the last man in what is known in the annals of the Great Sioux Wars as the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Custer's Last Stand, and, to the Lakota, the Battle of the Greasy Grass.

Custer and the 7th had set out from Fort Abraham Lincoln in what is now North Dakota on an expedition to track down and defeat what was believed to be a significant force of Lakota and Northern Cheyenne warriors encamped near the river. However, Custer underestimated just how significant was the force in front of him. Some estimates ranged from 2,600 to as many as 10,000 warriors. Even the lower number was far more than Custer's entire command.

Unknowingly outnumbered, Custer mistakenly divided his forces. He personally led five companies of cavalry in an attack from the north. He ordered Reno to lead three companies to attack from the south. Three more companies, led by Capt. Frederick Benteen, were tasked with reconnoitering the terrain further south of the village.

## Marcus A. Reno

When Reno and his men forded the river and approached the encampment, they initially encountered little resistance, but after dismounting and forming a skirmish line, they were quickly attacked and flanked by hundreds of warriors. Reno and his men fell back, finding protection in the timber along the river.

The retreat became a rout, with Reno reforming with Benteen and his men atop bluffs on the other side of the river. By this time Reno's command of 140 men had suffered 40 dead, with seven wounded. Still more men had been left behind in the timber during the frenetic retreat, although most would later rejoin the company.

Attacks were continuous all that day, until the pursuing warriors began to disengage and head north. Reno and Benteen held their defensive position in spite of the sound of gunfire coming from the north, fueling contentions that both officers had abandoned Custer to his fate. Other surviving officers later said Reno had appeared to have been drinking and was disoriented during the battle.

On the morning of June 27, Reno and Benteen's surviving troops moved closer to the river, where they were found by Gen. Alfred Terry and Col. John Gibbon. Reno and Benteen faced private and public wrath for their part of the defeat at the Little Bighorn, which cast a pall over the nation's centennial celebration.

Responding to charges of cowardice and drunkenness in battle, Reno demanded and was granted a court of inquiry, which convened in Chicago on January 13, 1879, calling as witnesses most of the surviving officers from the fight.

After 26 days of testimony, Judge Advocate General W. M. Dunn recommended to Secretary of War George W. McCrary that Reno be exonerated of charges of cowardice. The court of inquiry may have ostensibly cleared Reno, but the proceedings did little to sway public opinion. Stories circulated of enlisted men claiming to have been coerced into giving testimony positive to both Reno and Benteen.

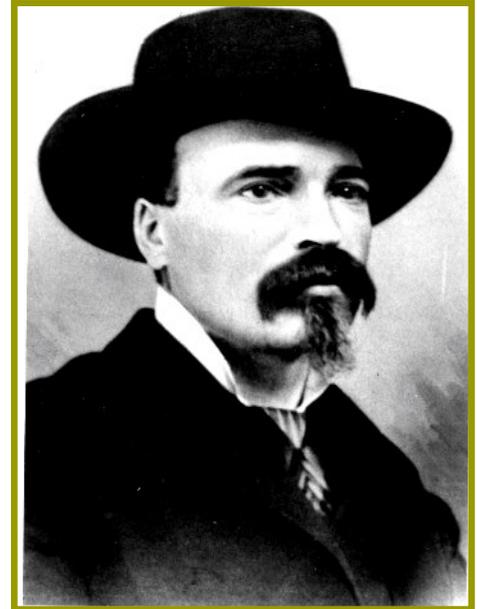
After his 1879 conviction on court martial charges, Reno continued his fight to be reinstated in the Army. But on March 30, 1889, Reno died of pneumonia, a complication of recently diagnosed mouth cancer, at Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C. He was 54 years old.

He was initially interred in Washington, D.C. A later attempt to rebury his remains next to his first wife, Mary Hannah Ross, who had died of kidney disease in 1874, stalled from lack of space in the cemetery in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. In the 1920s, a move to erect a monument to Reno met with vehement opposition, including harsh criticism from Custer's widow, Elizabeth Bacon Custer.

In 1967, a military review board, convened at the request of great-nephew Charles Reno, reversed Maj. Reno's 1880 court martial, ruling his dismissal from the service improper and awarding him an honorable discharge. Later that year, Marcus Reno's remains were reinterred with honors in the Custer National Cemetery, on the Little Bighorn Battlefield.

## Miles Cooper ... by Clint Jolley

**E**very family loves to have an ancestry, rich in history with deep roots and especially if that family is living in the area of birth and childhood. Such is one leg of our historic legacy, springing out of the northern Black Hills and bordering on rich heritage of the prairies of Meade County. All this began with the arrival to western South Dakota of Miles M. Cooper, farmer, stock raiser, and politician.



Miles Cooper

The Cooper family came from England. There were six brothers.

### WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON MILES COOPER?

\*

**From:**  
Seymour, Indiana

**Claim to Fame:**  
farmer, stock raiser, and politician

**Fact:**  
Built a toll road from Sturgis to Deadwood

**Descendants:**  
Clint Jolley, Marty Jolley

Among the six brothers were Samuel C. Cooper who located to Tennessee, Thomas Cooper who settled in Ohio, and James Cunningham Cooper who lived in Virginia following the Revolutionary War.

James Cunningham Cooper carried on a trading business, dealing in hides and furs, carrying these over the waters of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans. When business was concluded in New Orleans, the company would abandon their rafts and walk the entire way back to their homes. On one of those trips, James met a French Acadian girl, Virginia Dudwitt. The Acadians, about 6,000 of them, were cast out of their homes in northeastern North America, primarily modern Nova Scotia, by the English in 1756. They were given homes by the French via a French land grant in Louisiana. The Acadians in Louisiana became known as Cajuns. It was in Louisiana that James Cunningham Cooper found Virginia Dudwitt and married her. To this union were born John J. Cooper, Israel Cooper, Nelson Cooper, and Rose Cooper.

Israel Cooper, who was born in 1820, died in 1900 and was buried in Oklahoma. His wife, Elizabeth Graham Cooper, died in 1908, and was buried in Mt. Moriah Cemetery in Deadwood. Fourteen children were born to this marriage: James, Miles M., Barbara, Robert, Dean, John, May, Israel, Rose, Alice, Ella, Lillian, Nelson, and Lafayette.

Miles M. Cooper, the second son, was born in Seymour, Jennings County, Indiana, on November 16, 1845. During the Civil War, Miles, being only 16 years of age (later information states age 13), was not eligible to join the Union Army, so yielded to a long-standing desire of making an extensive trip throughout the West.

Miles' uncle, John J. Cooper, had extensive ranch holdings near Abilene, Kansas. In 1864, at the age of nineteen, Miles drove a six-mule team and wagon loaded with supplies to Abilene, Kansas, alone. It was in Abilene where he became well acquainted with William Hickok, known as "Wild Bill", and they became very close friends. He then made several trips driving large herds of cattle from Texas to Montana, with a normal crew of about 50 cowboys assisting. This was a six-month trip. While in Kansas he learned to speak Spanish quite fluently. This helped him when moving the trail herd north as the cowboys were sometimes 100% Mexican. He then spent some time (it is said, the greater part of three years) in Montana and the Virginia City region

## Miles Cooper

placer mining for gold. He operated for some time in Alder Gulch and various other places where he had reasonably fair success as a gold seeker. Then he went to Utah and Wyoming and entered the employ of the Union Pacific Railroad. He was also superintendent for a Judge Carter, who had the contract to supply railroad ties to the Union Pacific Railroad. There Cooper had six hundred men in his charge. His cook at the time was Jack McCall, who was later hanged at Yankton, South Dakota, for the murder of Wild Bill Hickok in Deadwood in 1876. From 1871 to 1873, Miles engaged in the livestock business, buying cattle in Kansas and shipping them to various Eastern markets.

In 1873, he located in the vicinity of Ft. Bridger, Wyoming, where he again prospected and mined, all the while completing a number of contracts for government work north of the fort. While freighting in Wyoming, he became acquainted with Jim Bridger, famous fur trader and Indian scout. The two became close friends. In addition to Wild Bill Hickok, Jim Bridger, and Judge Carter, Miles' early efforts brought him into contact with other nationally known pioneers such as William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, John Baker, Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis, and many others.

Following the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad and the driving of the Golden Spike in Utah, he became interested in the new land in the Black Hills of Dakota. In March 1877, Miles migrated on the first permitted wagon train, from Cheyenne to Deadwood. Most of the travelers, of course, were seeking gold, but not Miles. Miles filed for a homestead title on a small ranch in Boulder Canyon. Sturgis and Fort Meade would not be founded until the following year, 1878. He then operated a mule and ox freighting train from Pierre to Deadwood

Miles returned to his original home in Indiana, and married Mary Philomena Ranft on March 9, 1881, at North Vernon, Indiana. To this marriage eight children were born: Otto P., Allyn R., Harold M, Lawrence C, Edith (Mrs. Charley Waldman, grandmother of Marty and Clint Jolley), Jefferson J. (grandfather of Jeannie Blair), Edna, and Bryan. Miles and Mary settled on his land at Boulder Park, along with his sister, Barbara Story.

In 1883, Miles and Mary moved to Bear Butte Valley, six miles east of Sturgis at the foot of Bear Butte. There they engaged in raising cattle, horses, and grain farming. During his time at Boulder Park and Bear Butte Valley, he and Joe Volland laid out and constructed a toll road from Sturgis to Deadwood. The *Sturgis Weekly Record* reported on February 4, 1887, that the road had receipts of \$60 from the stage company, and \$250 to \$300 per month from freight companies. Taxes paid to Lawrence County on the Boulder Park road valuation of \$6000 were \$175.20. The toll road was discontinued a few years later when the State took over the improvement of the road.

In the fall of 1889, he was elected to the first state Legislature from Meade County. He was reelected to the House of Representatives in 1891. According to the *History of South Dakota* by Doane Robinson published in 1904, Miles Cooper wielded a strong influence for the Democratic party. While in the Legislature he was a prominent factor in local affairs and public matters of his district and state. He took an active part in the general deliberations of the House and earned the reputation of one of the hardest workers in the body. He also won recognition as a leader of his party. Few men in Western South Dakota were as widely known or enjoyed greater esteem and confidence of the people regardless of party.

Miles was extended a Colonel's commission by the staff of Governor Arthur C. Mellette, first governor of the state of South Dakota, to protect Sturgis and its environs during the Indian scare of 1890 to 1891. Weapons given to Col. Cooper for the militia were supplied by Brig. General George W. Carpenter, Chief of Supply,

## Miles Cooper

South Dakota National Guard. The guns and ammunition were to be distributed to settlers along Bear Butte Creek and the Belle Fourche River. The guns, mostly fifty-caliber “Long Toms,” were given for \$1.15 in express charges to any farmer who wanted one. The *Sturgis Weekly Record*, reporting on the formation of a local Home Guard unit, jocularly describing it as composed partly of “dismounted cavalry and part mounted infantry.” The *Rapid City Journal*, however, insisted they were “some of the best men in the Black Hills” and were motivated only by an unselfish desire to make the country safe.

Miles Cooper, in the strictest sense of the word, was a real pioneer of the West. As the *Sturgis Weekly Record* stated in March 1931, on the occasion of the Coopers’ 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, “The Black Hills People can well be proud of the citizenship of the sturdy, upright couple who have done their share in building this wonderful region in its present place of the best spot to live on earth.”

Miles’ ranch holdings were later owned and operated by three sons, Lawrence and Jeff on the two ranches near Bear Butte Creek and their brother Otto, who operated the ranch which was the site of the old HU cattle ranch on the Belle Fourche River southeast of the old community of Volunteer.

Mary Cooper died March 24, 1931, and Miles died May 23, 1935. Both are buried in Bear Butte Cemetery in Sturgis. Miles, at the time of his death, was believed to be the last surviving member of the first state Legislature of the state of South Dakota.

*This information was taken from a story written by Marty Jolley in 2003 for the Society of Black Hills Pioneers annual publication.*



## Nellie Thiers McPherson McMahan ... *by Mark Rambow*

**O**n Saturday morning, July 30, 1910, at about 10 a.m., the quiet of Main Street in Sturgis was disrupted when Mrs. Nellie McMahan, the recent widow of Sturgis attorney Michael McMahan, put a 32-caliber bullet through the forehead of her late-husband's law partner, David Thomas. Mrs. McMahan was arrested and held for murder. It should have been a very straightforward case, but it would vex the local community for several years.

Little is currently known about Nellie's origins. It seems she was born in Minnesota in 1871, and was 39 years old at the time of the shooting. Her maiden name may have been Thiers, as that was the name she used to file for a land claim near Hereford, South Dakota, in 1901, or it may have been a name from a previous marriage. No clear records have yet surfaced to tell us much else about her past.

### WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON NELLIE MCPHERSON MCMAHAN?

\*

**Claim to Fame:  
Convicted of murdering  
attorney David Thomas**

**Fact:  
Married wealthy older  
men who died under  
suspicious circumstanc-  
es soon after marrying  
Nellie**

**Visit:  
Dakota Territorial  
Museum, housed in the  
Mead Building, built in  
1909 as the women's  
ward of the Dakota  
Hospital for the Insane,  
Yankton, South Dakota**

Nellie first appeared in Meade County when she married the prosperous and well-known rancher, George B. McPherson in 1901. Nellie was roughly 30 at the time, compared to the widower McPherson's age of 61. McPherson lived on a ranch near Hereford with his two adult sons. He was known to have some of the best-blooded stock in the area, and was a stalwart of both the communities of Sturgis and Rapid City. He has been a widower for many years prior to marrying Nellie.

In November 1907, after a little more than five years of marriage, George McPherson died. He was advanced in age for that time, and most people assumed that he died of simple natural causes, as his health had begun to decline in recent months. Some speculation arose, however, that he died from poison, possibly by way of a suicide, as he was in the middle of some serious legal proceedings.

Nellie found herself a fairly well-to-do widow. Within a year, people were surprised to hear that she had remarried. She married long-time Sturgis pioneer and lawyer, Michael McMahan, in October of 1908, in Chicago. Marriage records show her age as 37, while that of McMahan indicates he was 62.

Mr. McMahan died in May 1910, about a year and a half after marrying Nellie. He had been in very good health, but had seen a sudden decline in the preceding weeks. Some even whispered that he may have been poisoned, although none could imagine who would have done such a thing. Once again, however, Nellie inherited considerable resources and property. It was this property that led to the fateful shooting on that quiet Saturday morning.

Michael McMahan was law partners with David Thomas. While McMahan had owned the building housing their offices, there was a disagreement over who owned all of the contents of the law office, Thomas indicating that they had shared the cost. Nellie insisted that Mr. Thomas had to immediately vacate the property, but he had refused, saying that the partnership allowed him to remain in the building. The disagreement lasted for several weeks until that day when Nellie walked up to Thomas, who was seated in his chair, and demanded he vacate the property. Before he made a move, she shot him just above the left eye.

## Nellie Thiers McPherson McMahon

She initially claimed that he had physically threatened her, pulling a gun, and she was forced to shoot in self-defense. Witnesses, however, indicated that she had fired under no duress, and no other weapon was found. She then claimed that she had not intended to shoot, but was startled by his sudden movement, and did not realize the safety was off on her gun.

As her story continued to evolve, the community, including law enforcement, began to smell a rat. The case against Nellie began to grow as more evidence came to light that she had borrowed the gun from a local doctor, after several other people had refused to loan her one. She stated that she needed it because she was afraid of a break-in at her home.

At this point, many began to question Nellie's role in the death of George McPherson, as well as that of Michael McMahon. The old rumors of poison began to come together in a lurid tale of murder in the eyes of many. There was even a discussion of efforts being made to disinter the bodies of both men to see if there was any sign of poison. With no evidence to bolster the claim, however, the investigation of that thread ended, and the dead remained buried.

Nellie was charged with the murder of David Thomas, however, and when the trial commenced, the prosecution brought eight witnesses, two of whom were in the room when the shooting occurred. They had a very strong case for murder, and laid out the case professionally. When the defense began their case, however, they took a unique approach, a combination of self-defense, temporary insanity and accidental shooting. The widow McMahon took the stand, and now with a different story entirely, said that she had been the victim of disturbing and inappropriate advances from Mr. Thomas. She said that he pressed her to marry him, saying that he would divorce his wife and leave his four young children, taking her to South America. She claimed that he would not take no for an answer and it caused her to fear for her safety. It was due to her fear that she began to carry a gun, and caused her temporary insanity. It was in this state that she went to the office and, thinking the gun was on safety, accidentally shot him in the head. While the community was outraged by this, her third version of the events, the jury reached a different conclusion and, on November 21, 1910, found her not guilty due to temporary insanity.

The law was not clear on the insanity defense, and the local judge was not able to simply send her to the state hospital in Yankton. It would be left for the local "insanity board" to meet and determine if she should be hospitalized. Several days after the verdict, the local insanity board did just that, ordering her removal to Yankton. Before they could take her away, however, her attorney appealed to a judge in Rapid City, who granted her freedom in January 1911, stating that "the causes which had contributed to the insanity at the time of the killing had been removed and that the woman had recovered her normal condition."

People were furious, and the State Legislature acted immediately to redefine the law. A week after this ruling, a legislator from Meade County introduced a bill to allow the circuit judge the discretion to immediately sentence a person found not guilty by insanity to the state hospital. The new state law was too late for this case however.

In June 1911, the case returned to the spotlight, when Nellie McMahon was sued by the wife and children of David Thomas. An award of \$10,000 was given to the family, leading Nellie to file for bankruptcy in October of that year. It also led her to threaten the lives of the prosecuting attorney and others, leading the Meade County insanity board to, again, declare her insane and order her to the state hospital. She once again fought this action, but was unsuccessful this time, being handed over to the state in late November.

## Nellie Thiers McPherson McMahan

By August 1912, she was again in court, suing the Attorney General of South Dakota for her release. The case drag out for months and ended up before the state Supreme Court. During this time, testimony was made that Nellie had suffered a head injury in a buggy accident when she was 20 years old, and had, since that time, occasional fits of unbalance and temper, but would appear normal to most people. The doctor from the asylum in Yankton testified that she was a “moral imbecile,” not knowing right from wrong, but otherwise appearing very sane. In January 1913, the state Supreme Court denied her case, leaving her in the care of the state hospital.

That should have ended the case, but, again, it did not. In September 1913, Nellie McMahan showed up back in Sturgis. It seems that there was an obscure state rule that allowed the “incurably insane” to be released to the care of a family member. Nellie was released to the care of a sister in Chicago, but gave her brother-in-law the slip in Sioux City and headed back to Sturgis. Again, legal wrangling ensued. As she was released from the hospital to her sister, the hospital could not accept her back without a recommendation from the Meade County insanity board. While all of this was being worked out, Nellie disappeared. Nothing was heard of her until late June of 1914, when a telegram was received in Sturgis, stating that Nellie had died in Greeley, Colorado, of cancer.

The newspaper that delivered this news stated that her body was to be shipped back to Sturgis for burial, but we know that it was not, with records showing that she is buried in Greeley, Colorado. Had her body been returned, she could have been buried in Bear Butte Cemetery where the remains of George McPherson and David Thomas lie, or in St. Aloysius Cemetery where Michael McMahan is buried. Instead, she only leaves our community with a strange tale of a possible black-widow murderess, judged to be insane, who redefined the laws of South Dakota.



Graves of David Thomas, Nellie McMahan, and Michael McMahan, respectively

## Samuel D. Sturgis—The Untold Story ... by Randy Bender

**O**kay, maybe it's not an untold story, but I would like to share some of the lesser known details about Col. Samuel D. Sturgis – Commander of the US 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, Fort Meade, Dakota Territory.

Sturgis had graduated from the United States Military Academy, West Point, in 1846. Before serving in the Civil War, he saw duty in the Mexican-American War and

### WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON SAMUEL D. STURGIS?

\*

**Claim to Fame:**  
Was the first commanding officer of Ft. Meade, and is the namesake for the town of Sturgis

**Fact:**  
Camp Sturgis, the temporary military outpost near Bear Butte that built Ft. Meade was named after his son, Lt. J. G. Sturgis, who was killed with Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn

**Visit:**  
A stature to Samuel D. Sturgis at the Sturgis City Park

served at several locations in the West. After the Civil War, he was placed in command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry.

His career during the Civil War was rather undistinguished. From then on, a pattern emerged that whenever his troops were going into the field, he would be placed on a detached service and someone else would be placed in command. This is what happened during the time of the Little Bighorn. Sturgis was placed on detached service and was at the Cavalry Depot, St. Louis, Missouri, when the troops, under Lt. Col. George Custer, marched out of Ft. Abraham Lincoln, near modern day Mandan, North Dakota. However, Sturgis' son, 2nd Lt. Jack Sturgis, was part of Custer's command, and was killed in the battle.

Shortly before the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry moved from Ft. Abraham Lincoln to what would become Ft. Meade, Col. Sturgis issued General Order #7. It took place on April 8, 1878, and was done partially out of respect for an old comrade, and partially to keep peace in his family. The horse Comanche, famous cavalry survivor of the Little Bighorn, had become the pampered pet of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and Ella, the attractive and outspoken daughter of Sturgis, was occasionally given permission to ride him. She began to pout when other young ladies of the post were allowed to do the same. General Order #7 was given that Comanche would never be ridden again but would be treated with respect and become the treasured mascot of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. And thus, further battles in the Sturgis household were avoided, and Comanche was able to enjoy life on the post unmolested.



Samuel D. Sturgis, namesake of the town of Sturgis, S. D.  
COURTESY AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST



Lt. James "Jack" G. Sturgis,  
son of Col. Sturgis,  
killed at the Little Bighorn

## Samuel D. Sturgis—The Untold Story

The 7<sup>th</sup> moved down in the Spring of 1878 and set up Camp J.G. Sturgis near Bear Butte, named after the Colonel's son Jack Sturgis. This was a temporary location while the final site for the new fort was selected. While at this location, Jeremiah Wilcox, a cousin of the commander's wife, invited Sturgis to invest in a new town to be started in the vicinity of the new fort. Sturgis invested a \$20 gold piece in the project, and later expanded his investment to include several blocks of lots in the new town. Col. Sturgis was later to prove himself a friend and benefactor, not only to the town that bore his name, but to the whole region. On July 16, 1879, the Colonel's family arrived at the newly completed fort, and Ella was once again slated to cause problems for her father.

A fire broke out in Deadwood on September 26, 1879. Following pleas for help, Col. Sturgis sent Company C, three officers, and 44 enlisted men to fight the fire. They remained in town to police the area and prevent looting. Sturgis also provided rations to the many destitute people and offered emergency housing back at Fort Meade, although most of the people elected to remain close to their Deadwood gold claims.

Always on the lookout for a good investment, he helped form and later became the president of The Fort Meade Hydraulic Gold Mining Company, a major mining and lumber operation in Rapid City. In 1882, it was reported that they had completed a 700-foot tunnel, 10 ft. wide by 12 ft. high, about 10 miles west of Rapid City for the purpose of diverting Rapid Creek for mining purposes. Later he helped Rapid City again, by working to get the military telegraph line routed through the town.

When Sturgis returned from one of his frequent business trips, he was surprised to find Major Reno visiting his wife and daughter. Reno had several strikes against him: he was considerably older than Ella, who he was obviously smitten with, he was a widower with a son, he had a reputation for drinking, he had come to the house uninvited, and perhaps worst of all, the Colonel blamed him for the death of his son at the Little



Statue of Col. Samuel D. Sturgis in the Sturgis City Park PHOTO COURTESY FILMFREEWAY

## Samuel D. Sturgis—The Untold Story

Bighorn. Eventually Reno was court-martialed for being a Peeping Tom and looking at Ella through the parlor window of the commander's house. The whole story can be found in Bob Lee's book *Fort Meade and the Black Hills*.

In the spring of 1881, Sturgis left Fort Meade for the last time when he was appointed superintendent of the Soldier's Home in Washington D.C., a post he was to hold until his retirement in 1886. It was during his time at the Soldier's Home that Sturgis received his promotion to General, shortly before retiring. While there, he did find himself in one more controversy. In 1882, he was asked to resign his position due to mismanagement of the facility. He was spared this fate when the Secretary of War stepped in to prevent it. General Samuel D. Sturgis passed away on September 28, 1889, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery with other members of his family.

What about Ella, the 'Belle of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry'? Gen. Sturgis attended her wedding to Mr. John D. Lawler of Mitchell, Dakota Territory, one week after his retirement. After being widowed in 1896, she remained single for a few years and then married Mr. Edmund Pennington of St. Paul, Minnesota. Of her eleven children (5 from her first marriage and 6 from the second), eight survived to adulthood.



Ella Maria (Sturgis) Pennington  
PHOTO COURTESY GENI.COM

## Poker Alice Takes On the US Army ... *Mark Rambow*

**W**hile Sturgis has been home to several true “characters” of the Old West, perhaps none is more associated with the town than “Poker Alice.” Alice Ivers Tubbs was known throughout the West, but it was in Sturgis where she went from being a recognizable name in Western mining towns, to being a true legend of the American West.

The incident which did so much to propel Alice to infamy took place in 1913. Alice, after spending a portion of the 1890s in

### WHAT’S THE SCOOP ON POKER ALICE?

\*

**From:**  
Devonshire, England

**Claim to Fame:**  
Brothel operator,  
gambler, and rancher

**Visit:**  
Poker Alice’s house at its  
new location at 1802  
Junction Ave

Deadwood and Lead, had married Warren G. Tubbs and retired to ranch life north of Sturgis near the Moreau River, raising a family. When Tubbs died in 1909, however, Alice buried him in Sturgis, and opened a gambling house to support herself. It was located in a two-story house just outside of the city limits on the north bank of Bear Butte Creek, at the crossing of Junction Avenue. Alice’s “house” featured not only gambling, but also prostitutes, catering to the cavalymen stationed at Fort Meade, just over a mile to the east.



The “Poker Alice” Tubbs house at its original location north of Bear Butte Creek on the east side of Junction Avenue, Sturgis, S.D.

On the night of July 15, 1913, Alice’s place was busy. Fort Meade was home to elements of the 12th US Cavalry, but that week it was also hosting 12 companies of the South Dakota National Guard, who were there for summer training.

On this particular evening, it is said that five regular Army men, accompanied by a number of the members of the National Guard, went to the Tubbs “resort” with the avowed intention of starting a “rough house.” The proprietress and the women residing within the house recognized that their language and condition suggested trouble, so they refused them entrance.

Angered by the refusal of the women to entertain them, the soldiers surrounded the house at about 10:30 p.m. They began by cutting the telephone and electrical light wires leading to the building, and, in the darkness, began throwing stones through the windows.

At this juncture, Mrs. Tubbs, “Poker Alice,” the fifty-year-old gambler and madam, appeared in an upper window and started shooting calmly into the crowd with a Winchester rifle. It is said that five shots took effect on the unruly soldiers. One soldier, Private Ben Koetzle of Troop K, 12th Cavalry, was shot in the head, inflicting a wound from which he died at about midnight. He was 26 years of age.

## Poker Alice Takes On the US Army

Another bullet struck Private Joseph C. Miner, about 22 years of age, also of Troop K, about three inches from the heart, piercing the lungs, causing an injury from which he was not, at the time, expected to recover. The other bullets hit three other men, one of whom was said to be a private citizen.



“Poker Alice” Tubbs

Once things had calmed down shortly after the shooting, Sheriff Collins and State’s Attorney Gray, along with local police, went to the Tubbs resort and placed “Poker Alice” and six of the female “inmates” of the house under arrest. They were placed in the county jail, and at a preliminary hearing the next evening before Justice Marshal, the State filed charges of disorderly conduct binding each of the defendants over in the sum of \$3,000.

This was while awaiting the results of the wound inflicted upon Private Miner, after which the State was expected to file more serious charges.

Following the shooting, the officer in command at Fort Meade issued an order forbidding any of the United States troops to enter the town. A similar order was issued by the officer in charge of the National Guard encampment.

The fallout from the incident was quick. Within a couple of days, the National Guard stated that “after a most careful investigation of the facts,” they came to the conclusion that none of the State Guard were involved in the incident, despite reports of two being in the group assaulting the house. They stated that “nothing but United States Cavalrymen were at Poker Alice's place when the trouble occurred”. They then cut short their training, hired two special trains, and shipped all of the troops back to their respective corners of the state.

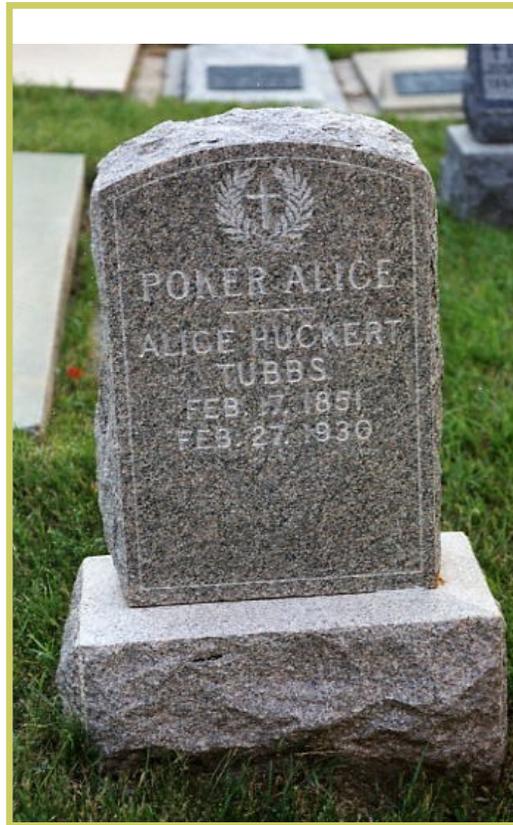
Alice was not charged in the killing of Private Koetzle. It was found that she had been protecting her property and acting in self-defense. However, she was charged with “keeping a house of ill-fame,” and bound over with a \$1,000 bond, which she promptly paid.

The six women who had also been arrested with her, Jennie Palmer and Bessie Brundidge, both of Sturgis; Ann Carr and Birdie Harris, of Lead; and Mabel Smith and Edith Brown of Deadwood, each pled guilty to “frequenting a house of ill-fame,” were fined \$15, and ordered to appear as witnesses against Alice in her trial. Ultimately, Poker Alice was only fined for operating her “house of ill-fame”.

With the ban against soldiers coming into Sturgis being quickly lifted, everything soon returned to normal.

## Poker Alice Takes On the US Army

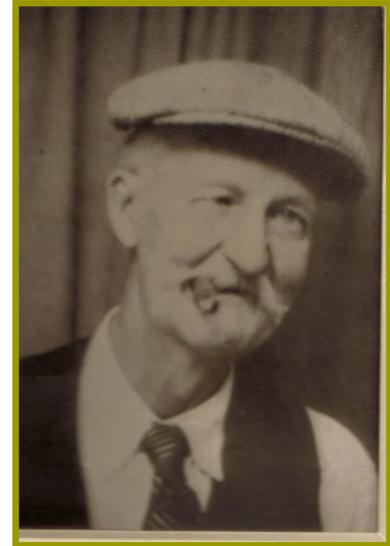
There were more brushes with the law in the years to come, including more gunplay, and even serious charges during prohibition. However, this episode cemented “Poker Alice’s” reputation and reminded people that she was not a character to be reckoned with. Her status as an early character of Sturgis and the American West was assured.



“Poker Alice” Tubbs grave at St. Aloysius Catholic Cemetery, Sturgis, S.D.

## William F. Waldman ... by Clint Jolley

**W**illiam Waldman loved to write a good story. And if the story wasn't necessarily interesting or favorable to the subject, Waldman was known to take creative license in his writing. But this is the true story of William Frederick "Bill" Waldman, son of John J. and Dorthea Elsner Waldman, who was born in Detroit, Michigan, February 7, 1870. He was one of six children, five of whom died in 1882 during a diphtheria epidemic in Detroit.



William F. Waldman

In early summer 1882, he came to Sturgis with his parents to join his uncle, Charles Henry Elsner, who founded and operated a hotel, later known as the Fruth Hotel. It was located on the southwest corner of Second and Main Streets where First Interstate Bank is currently located.

**WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON BILL WALDMAN?**

\*

**From:**  
Detroit, Michigan

**Claim to Fame:**  
Editor of the *Sturgis Weekly Record*

**Fact:**  
Came to Sturgis by covered wagon

Bill often told of arriving in Pierre when the Missouri River was at flood stage and the thrill of being carried across the river in a boat. He and his parents came to Sturgis in a covered wagon, only to find a small settlement of a few buildings--the business houses being built mostly of logs. He worked for a time at his uncle's hotel, but then in October 1883, at the age of 13, he went to work at the *Sturgis Weekly Record*. The newspaper was the first newspaper in the community and was established July 1, 1883, by C. C. Moody and John Elliott. Elliott withdrew from the partnership a few years later. Bill also assisted in the Post Office and in the print shop, setting type, operating a Washington hand press, and making himself generally useful.

Charles Moody learned the printing trade in Yankton. Then in 1878, he moved to Deadwood where his father became Judge of the District Court for the first Territorial district. Charles soon found work as foreman in the *Deadwood Times* office. Later he took charge of the *Deadwood Evening Press*, a paper started in interest of the DeSmet Mining Co.

C. C. Moody died on June 28, 1906, at which time, Bill took over the editorial duties and management of the *Sturgis Weekly Record*. He held that position for seventeen years. He then purchased the plant from Mrs. Moody on December 26, 1924, and operated it until May 30, 1946, when he retired from active work and sold the paper to the *Sturgis Tribune*.

The equipment, at the time, was the oldest in the County. The press was an A. B. Taylor cylinder, brought to Sturgis by bull train. Its big fly wheel was turned by hand by Ed Schacklett for the two press runs each week for several years. A foot-powered Pearl platen press was also piece of the paper's equipment. The newspapers were folded by hand as they came off the press and then addressed by hand.

The amount of work required in printing a hand set paper, where each individual character of type had to be picked from the case and justified in a composing stick for the complete single line, was tremendous and tedious work. Nina McCracken set type by hand for each issue for over twenty years.

## William F. Waldman

The phrase “Pie-Type” originated in the days of the old hand-set newspapers. “Pied-Type” happened when a type setter dropped a galley of the hand set type and it spilled into a million pieces. A line of hand-set type 8 point news type might contain as many as 30 individual pieces, while on the linotype slug casting, the line is cast on a solid slug as one unit.

In the early days there were no electric motors in the *Record* shop, although in later years, electric lights replaced the lamps and candles of the earlier years. In the sixty-three years Bill worked at and published the paper, it had a total of five different homes.

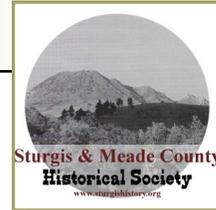
Bill was a 45-year member of the old Key City Hose Company of the Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department, and was the first of five generations of Sturgis volunteer fire fighters. He served on the Sturgis school board and was a member of the Sturgis band and orchestra for 19 years. It is said that “he possessed the outstanding quality of speaking evil of no one and could always find extenuating circumstances for anyone being criticized by anyone else for any reason at all.” However, if you ever read the *Sturgis Weekly Record*, you will find that he was quite an editorializer and had no problem embellishing the facts, good or bad.

On December 7, 1890, Mr Waldman married Hulda M. Peterson in Sturgis. Hulda was a Swedish immigrant. They had three children: Charley W. Waldman, Sturgis, Ella (Mrs. J. J. Cooper), Bear Butte Valley, and Alfred Waldman, Sturgis. Hulda Waldman died in June 1935. William died April 30, 1951, at his home on the north-west corner of Sherman and Middle Streets. Both are buried in Bear Butte Cemetery in Sturgis.



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*"History is who we are and why we are the way we are."*

—David McCullough