

# STURGIS & MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter, September 2022, Vol. 7, Issue 2



## THE RECORD

Photo Courtesy of Bob Davis

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### HISTORY DAYS 2023 THEME TO BE "TRAILS OF HISTORY" ON JUNE 17

We are still working out the details, but we would like to add back the house tours with informational maps. "Trail" ideas include hiking trails, biking trails, covered wagon trails, and the Deadwood / Bismarck Trail.

Edited by  
Logan Lamphere

## History Days makes a comeback ... *Kris Hubbard*

The sixth annual History Days, sponsored by the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society, was held this past summer at Sturgis City Auditorium. "History: Lost and Found" was the theme of the event which focused on researching, preserving and sharing history.

Booths included information and displays about Bear Butte Creek preservation, Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society, Silver City, genealogy, USS General S.D. Sturgis-a transport ship, and a display of political campaign buttons.



Brandon Bennett, left, reporter/editor for Meade County News, interviews Historical Society President Mark Rambow. (Photo by Kris Hubbard)



Dustin White, owner of White's Canvas Art Company in downtown Sturgis, presented a program on scanning and preserving photos. He also talked about the history of cameras. (Photo by Kris Hubbard)

## History Days makes a comeback

### *continued from Page 1*

Two programs were held and dealt with “Basics of Scanning and Preserving Photos” and “Family History: Also Known as Genealogy – Getting Started.”



Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society board president Mark Rambow presented a program titled "Family History: Also Known as Genealogy - Getting Started." (Photo by Kris Hubbard)

History Day was possible due, in part, to the support from the City of Sturgis, HomeSlice Group, KBHB Radio, Meade County, and Sturgis Photo & Gifts.



Lee Stroschine, left, greets Chris Liffengeren, who stopped by his booth about the Old Fort Meade Museum. (Photo by Kris Hubbard)

For those who want to learn more about the Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society, there are five levels of membership as follows: individual membership, \$25 per year; family membership, \$35 per year; student membership, \$15 per year; life membership, one-time payment of

\$5,000; and business sponsorship, \$250 per year.



Sturgis Vi Stolz, left, was in charge of the display about Bear Butte Cemetery. Also pictured are Joan Bachmeier and Jan Lamphere. (Photo by Kris Hubbard)

## West River History Conference

The 30th annual West River History Conference will be October 6 through 8, in Custer State Park and Keystone.

Beginning at The Barn event center in Custer State Park, events and speakers include a tour of the New Bison Center by Dr. Julie Stoll, “Having a Baby in the 1920s Rural West River South Dakota; South Dakota State Board of Health Recommendations and Personal Experiences” by Mary Chantry Nelson, “Deadwood Historic Preservation Milestones” by Kevin Kuchenbecker, “A History of the Reynolds Ranch and Stage Stop in the Heart of the Black Hills” by Ted Spencer, “Charles Windolph: Experiences with the US 7th Cavalry” by Dr. Brad Tennant, “WOKIKSUYE: Healing Through Stories” by Jace DeCory, “Stories and Songs from Old Fort Meade” by Randy Bender, “Secrets of Soapsuds Row: Results of Exploratory Archaeological Excavation of Laundress Housing at Fort Meade” by Dr. Linea Sundstrom and “Sheriffs of Meade County: 133 Year, 20 Men” by our own David Super.

To register, visit: [westriverhistoryconference.org](http://westriverhistoryconference.org).



## Digging begins at Bear Butte Creek Historic Preserve

*... photos and captions by David Super*



Archaeologists like Gene Anderson, left, of Sioux Falls, and Belle Fourche native Katie Anderson spent many hours in the various, one-meter square digging pits. Anderson has worked in the Augusta University archaeology lab for more than a decade and Anderson has a degree in anthropology from the University of Wyoming.

Custer native Dr. Linea Sundstrom has decades of experience in field archaeology and is a specialist in the study of indigenous rock art. In this photo she is preparing to measure the Ph content of the soil. Among hundreds of artifacts, Dr. Sundstrom and others found chunks of waste they believe were castoffs from soap making.



Archaeologists from the University of South Dakota visited the Soap Suds Row site in June to stake out 10-meter square grids that helped guide the professionals and volunteers when they started looking carefully for artifacts in the prairie soil. Long, rebar pins were driven into the ground to serve as permanent markers for the corners.



Pop-up canopies and other makeshift plastic screens were used to protect the crew members from wind and sun. Early in the week of the digging, temperatures approached 100 degrees for several days.



## Digging begins at Bear Butte Creek Historic Preserve

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Originally from Maryland, volunteer Bob Whay worked the screening station that was used to sift soil dug from the inspection sites. In this photo, Whay combs through the soil with a small magnet that captured bits of ferrous metal, including nails, pins and small clasps that were made of forged iron.

Archaeologist Allan Johnson provided some informal tool training for crew member Casey Henry. Johnson, a

graduate of Black Hills State University and the University of South Dakota, is an Army veteran who works as a research field assistant for Dr. Linea Sundstrom and others. Henry, a New England native, works for the Bureau of Land Management as a wildlife technician.



This is a sample of the artifacts found in the Soap Suds Row dig sites. Archaeologist Cher Burgess managed the temporary collection lab established at the Lamphere Ranch Campground. Collected items were carefully labeled to identify where they were found in the pits. The found items will be stored and available for further study at South Dakota Archaeology Research facility in Rapid City.



## Digging begins at Bear Butte Creek Historic Preserve

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Orange flags represent “hits” from a metal detector that was used to sweep the entire area before archaeological excavations started. Volunteers named the colorful markers “The minefield.”

Archaeologist Dr. Linea Sundstrom and her professional and volunteer crew members used a wide array of tools in their search for artifacts. The contents of these tote boxes are a representative sample: including, masons trowels, whisk brooms, tape measures and line levels.



## Mining for your Family History: The Basics of Genealogy Research

The Rapid City Society for Genealogical Research in conjunction with the South Dakota School of Mines Deveraux Library are excited to offer “Mining for your Family History” September 30 and October 1 in the Classroom Building at the SD Mines Campus in Rapid City.

They will also be celebrating the South Dakota Genealogy Society’s 40th anniversary during this seminar.

The Friday, September 30 free session is from 6 to 9 p.m., and will be on “DNA Basics: An Introduction to DNA Genealogy.”

The Saturday, October 1 session is from 8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Topics covered include an Introduction to Genealogy; Gems and Junk: A Beginner’s Guide to Online Research; Timelines: Your Ancestor’s Lifeline!; The Bred, the Wed, the Dead: An Introduction to US Vital Records; DNA: I’ve Tested, Now What?; Forgotten Wives, Mothers, and Old Maids: Tracing Women in US Research.

Registration is \$ 55 and includes handouts, refreshments, snacks and a box lunch. For detailed information as well as the registration form visit [RCgenealogy.com](http://RCgenealogy.com). The first 50 individuals registered will receive a neat travel resource booklet, according to the event announcement.





## New life given to two Meade County country schools ... Betty Jo Huff

### Pleasant Valley School

In the fall of 2021, Carri and Darrin Odle passed by the Pleasant Valley School from time to time and realized that history was passing by, too, as the school building weathered and started to show its age.



So, they purchased it and have spent countless hours restoring it. Darin took the old cedar siding off and replaced it. Soon, restoring the old school house became a family affair as their adult children came to help. Carri and Arla Chord would spend hours painting the outside as they closed in on the end of the work, hoping to get the outside completed before winter.



Carri mentioned that this project has been a great labor of love that has brought their family together to be a part of the old school house.



The Pleasant Valley school was built in 1906, and the building was to be thirty-four feet by twenty-feet with ten foot high ceilings. It was voted to have a six-month term that started on September 1 and continued three months starting again on April 1. The school was in District 81.



The Pleasant Valley School was purchased in 2021 by the Odle family and has been saved and restored (Photos by Carri Odle via [Facebook.com/100083319439357](https://www.facebook.com/100083319439357))

The building is at the intersection of Pleasant Valley Road



## New life given to two Meade County country schools

### *Continued from Page 6*



and Fort Meade Way, just off of I-90 Exit 37.

Commenting on Facebook, Kathleen Skalbeck recalls her father George Blair attending this school, along with her eight siblings.

You can follow the Odle's progress and see more photos by going to Facebook and searching for "Pleasant Valley Schoolhouse."



The first day of school in 1969. Kathleen Skalbeck is in the very back row in front of the file cabinet. The other two 5th graders that year were Rick Jordan and Bradley Lambert. (Photos from Kathleen Skalbeck via [Facebook.com/100083319439357](https://www.facebook.com/100083319439357))

### Spring Creek (Harmony) School

North of Sturgis on the old Highway 79 road (Sly Hill), the Spring Creek School (Harmony District #33) sits on the west side of the road on the property that once belonged to the Gullickson family.



Vaughn Boyd of Whitewood recently bought the Spring Creek School and is seeking more information about it. She has stated that she did not want this school to fall over and be neglected, and wants to preserve it.

Since it was once used as a horse shelter, the inside needs a lot of love. She has spent lots of time cleaning the inside. The outside and roof, along with the windows, have all been replaced.



The Spring Creek School west of Bear Butte, before (above) and after (below). (Photos by Betty Jo Huff)

## Bear Butte Creek Historic Preserve christened, meeting held ... *Logan Lamphere*

On September 7, the Bear Butte Creek Historic Preservation Council met at the Lamphere Ranch Campground and on Zoom.

During the meeting, the board voted to name the actual 180 acres that is being leased from the Meade 46-1 School District. The area administered by the council will be called the “Bear Butte Creek Historic Preserve”.

Dr. Linea Sundstrom gave the board a midway update on the week-long archaeology dig that began on September 3 in the former Soap Suds Row area.

“We’re very pleased with the way it is going,” said Sundstrom. “[We] are getting materials related to laundry. [such as] pins, needles, buttons, [shoelace] eyelets. We’re exactly where we should be. Things are the right age—things we can date such as bottles and nails.”

Over 18 volunteers had signed up ahead of time, and more showed up during the hot week, when temperatures reached over 100F. A little rain provided a welcome cooling for the last weekend of the dig.

In June, a team of ten USD archaeology students conducted a soil profile and surveyed the area, creating a grid from which the September team worked. At least one student, Camilla Crosby, who now works with the South Dakota State Archaeology office in Rapid City, was able to return for the September dig.

Council president Ross Lamphere also reported that the metal spiral staircase at the firing range was tampered with. It appeared that someone tried to stand it up against the stone wall that is covered in Cavalry graffiti, and then it fell damaging some of the stones. The council is looking into security cameras and other deterrents for the area.

Lamphere has also given updates to area organizations including the Fort Meade Museum Board, a Sturgis P.E.O. group, and the Black Hills Area Community Foundation, which has donated to the Bear Butte Creek Historic Preservation Council.

## Sturgis Area Arts Council presents *History at High Noon* fall series

The Sturgis Area Arts Council has announced the 2022/2023 season of History at High Noon, starting in October.

They will meet at noon on the third Friday of the month, October through May (taking December off) at the Sturgis Public Library Community Room.

# History at High Noon

**October 21, 2022**

**Sturgis Public Library - 100 Years of Wisdom Begins in Wonder**

This first program of the 2022/2023 season will be on the 100 years of the Sturgis Public Library. Join us as we review its history and will be joined by a panel of current and former employees and board members.

**November 18, 2022**

**A boy doesn’t play with dolls! They’re Action Figures!**

Just in time for the traditional start of the holiday toy shopping season, Jim Holland of Sturgis presents the story of the original toy action figure, 1964’s G.I. Joe: America’s Movable Fighting Man.

Like Mattel’s Barbie and Ken and all of their accessories, “Joe” and his gear were all the rage for many a gift left under the Christmas tree, thanks to a massive marketing offensive from parent company Hassenfeld Bros., (HASBRO).

Holland will present the history of G.I. Joe, with displays of actual figures from his own collection and from other Joe enthusiasts from the area.



## Message from the President's desk...*Mark Rambow*

Another summer is gone, and the Historical Society has been hard at work! Between our own activities and cooperative partnerships, the history of the Sturgis and Meade County area is being revealed and recorded at an amazing pace.

We are taking steps to be able to catalogue and share some of the information we have on hand. The collection of photos, physical items and resources has become impressive, and we hope to develop a method to share them through digital sources and social media, until the time comes when we can develop a museum or repository for everything.

We are still in search of a location to call home, where we could store and research the collection, and possibly host some occasional displays and receptions. If anyone has a facility in mind that we could use, please let us know!

The Society is planning to begin hosting a monthly genealogy group, with "yours truly" as the host. Following the feedback we received about the program during History Days,

we decided that it would be a popular activity. If interested, please let us know!

As always, keep us in mind if you have any interesting stories, photos or items. We are always intrigued by the smallest bits of history!

Mark



Photo credit - [flickr.com/photos/pixagraphics/3414730395](https://www.flickr.com/photos/pixagraphics/3414730395)

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**September 30 & October 1—Rapid City Society for Genealogical Research: "Mining for your Family History," South Dakota School of Mines Deveraux Library**

**Sunday, October 2, 5:00 — 7:00 p.m. — OLD FORT MEADE MUSEUM PANCAKE FEED, Meade County Senior Citizens Center**

**October 6 - 8—West River History Conference, Custer State Park and Keystone**

**Friday, October 21 — HISTORY AT HIGH NOON:  
Sturgis Public Library - 100 Years of Wisdom Begins in Wonder**

**Friday, November 18 — HISTORY AT HIGH NOON:  
A boy doesn't play with dolls! They're Action Figures!**

**Tuesday, October 18, 6:30 p.m. — MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Chamber/Zoom**

**Sunday, November 13, 1:30 p.m.—HISTORY OF THE STURGIS METHODIST CHURCH, Scoop of History, Methodist Church**

**Tuesday, November 15, 6:30 p.m. — MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Chamber/Zoom**



## We Rely on You for Your Membership Dues

Remember, membership is due annually according to the month in which you joined. Options for paying your dues include:

- a) fill out the membership form below and drop it off at the membership table in the City Auditorium during History Days. We will accept your check or credit card;
- b) fill out the membership form below and mail it with your check to the address listed on the form; or
- c) go online to the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society website at [SturgisHistory.org](http://SturgisHistory.org), and click on *Membership and Donations*—> *Membership*, fill out the membership form (renewing members must also fill out a new form), and make your payment through PayPal using your credit card.



If you have any questions, please contact Membership Chair Richard Moeller at [running2win@gmail.com](mailto:running2win@gmail.com) or (605) 939-3789.

*We appreciate all your support and contributions to the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society, and we hope you are enjoying your membership!*

### STURGIS & MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Our goal is to preserve, protect and promote the history of Sturgis and Meade County. We cannot do this alone ... this is done through memberships, sponsorships and donations. The Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Therefore, sponsorships and donations are tax-deductible; membership dues are not tax deductible.

#### Registration Information

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Membership Level Desired

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual: \$25.00                      \_\_\_\_\_ Family: \$35.00                      \_\_\_\_\_ Student: \$15.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Business Sponsorship: \$250.00                      \_\_\_\_\_ Life Membership: \$5,000.00

Please send this form, accompanied by a check for your membership, to:

Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 221  
Sturgis, SD 57785

You may also register, pay dues, and donate online with a credit card or PayPal at: [www.SturgisHistory.org](http://www.SturgisHistory.org)



## HISTORY DAYS 2023



As noted elsewhere, the Historical Society is already planning History Days 2023! Our theme will be "Trails of History." We will celebrate trails of all kinds; from the various wagon trails, pathways, roads and highways, which have brought people and goods to the area for centuries, to the variety of modern trails which exist to bring us closer to our past. We even want to embrace more abstract "trails" which have been used over the years.

We welcome all organizations and individuals to participate, and encourage anyone interested in helping out to let us know. We will need lots of help with pulling this off, and volunteers are always welcome.

### SCOOP OF HISTORY PROGRAM: HISTORY OF THE STURGIS METHODIST CHURCH

As the fourth installment of our series featuring the churches of Sturgis, the Historical Society's "Scoop of History" program is happy to announce our upcoming program on the History of the Sturgis Methodist Church.

One of the oldest congregations in town, the Methodist church has undergone significant growth and change over the years. Presenters will give the entire history of the church, and its role in the development of town itself.

**Date: Sunday, November 13th, 2022**

**Time: 1:30 pm**

**Location: Sturgis Methodist Church**

**1755 Ball Park Road, Sturgis**

**Free Program!!**

**Public Welcome!!**



Here's how the First United Methodist Church appeared in earlier days. It was built on the corner of Howard and Cedar streets in 1887. Note the old parsonage torn down in 1970.

History is not a burden on the memory but an illumination of the soul.

John Dalberg-Acton



## STURGIS & MEADE COUTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 221, Sturgis, SD 57785

### Board Officers

Mark Rambow, President, [mark@sturgishistory.org](mailto:mark@sturgishistory.org)

Ross Lamphere, Vice President

Kris Hubbard, Secretary

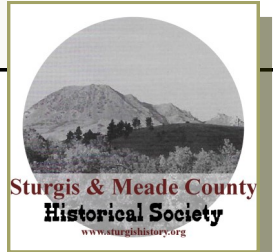
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Website: [www.sturgishistory.org](http://www.sturgishistory.org)

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Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society

P. O. Box 221

Sturgis, SD 57785

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

—David McCullough