

**STURGIS  
&  
MEADE  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**



Photo Courtesy of Bob Davis

**Inside this issue:**

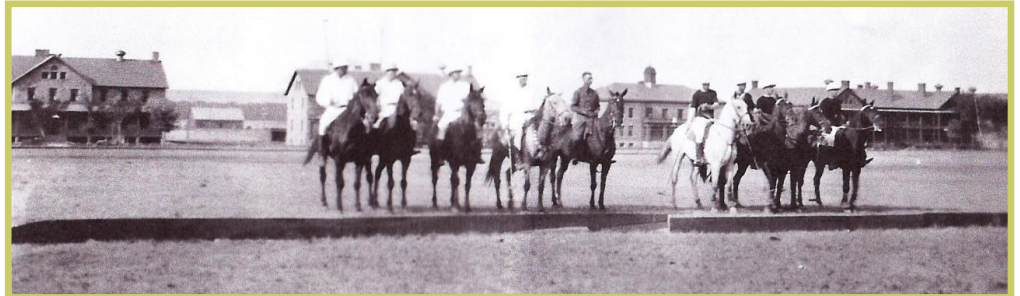
February 11 Scoop of History: Polo: Past and Present	1-3
Wanted: History Days Booths	2
Replaying a Scoop of History: First Presbyterian Church	4
Society Participates in Community Showcase	4
History at High Noon: Sturgis Livestock Exchange	5
Bob Lee Photos	6
Update from Bear Butte Creek Historic Preservation Council	7
President's Message	8
Calendar of Events	8
Membership Form	9

**February 11 Scoop of History:  
Polo: Past and Present ... *Jim Holland***

**P**olo: the Sport of Kings was also the sport of cavalymen and ranchers in the Black Hills of South Dakota starting more than a century ago.

horsemanship skills.

Polo involves mounted riders using the speed of their horses and their skill to advance a small ball, scoring points by using a wooden mallet to strike the ball between



**Members of the U.S. Cavalry prepare for polo (Photo courtesy Ft. Meade Museum)**

The game of Polo was likely played first by nomadic warriors more than two thousand years ago and eventually became an equestrian sporting tradition in the British Empire by the late 1800s.

Nancy Thompson Harlan and Kurt Ketelsen both grew up around the sport in rural Meade County and presented *Polo: Past and Present*, a look at the game's heyday in western South Dakota, during the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society's quarterly Scoop of History on Feb. 11 at the Sturgis Public Library.

The game's popularity was boosted locally in the early 1900s, with the U.S. Army's Fourth Cavalry soldiers stationed at Fort Meade, playing Polo as both a recreation and a way for cavalymen to hone their

two goal posts at either end of the field. Matches consist of four chukkers, or periods.

Polo became established in the 1920s and 1930s. According to a sign at Fort Meade, the first South Dakota Polo Tournament was held there in 1928 and included teams from Hot Springs and Pierre.

Teams from Sturgis and Fort Meade also participated in a June 29 – July 5, 1931 tournament at Fort Robinson, Neb.

Also back then, Meade County rancher Ingwer (Ket) Ketelsen, was buying and selling horses. Asa (Pop) Tyler, a Pierre area rancher, also raised and sold thoroughbred horses to teams and players on the East Coast.

"Ket" Ketelsen, who had played on the

**HISTORY DAYS 2023  
"TRAILS OF HISTORY"  
ON JUNE 16-17  
At Sturgis Community  
Center this year!**

**Includes tours of historic sites and presentations on railroad expansion and the building of I-90.**

**"Trail" ideas include hiking trails, biking trails, covered wagon trails, and the Deadwood / Bismarck Trail.**

**Edited by  
Logan Lamphere**

## Polo ... continued



Sturgis Polo Team in the 1920s, started the Alkali Polo Team east of Sturgis in 1937.

Matches were played on Thursdays and Sundays involving regional

**Polo Equipment (Photos courtesy Ft. Meade Museum)**

teams from Pierre, Chadron, Hot Springs and as far away as Sheridan, Wyo.,

A.B. "Bud" Tyler, Pop's son, a member of the Pierre polo team, went on to be inducted into the South Dakota Hall of



## Wanted: History Days Booths ... Jim Holland

The Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society is seeking live and static booth displays for its upcoming History Days celebration on June 16-17, 2023, in Sturgis.

The annual History Days celebration moves to the Sturgis Community Center for 2023, with this year's theme: Trails of History.

However, tables are available free of charge for non-commercial displays of any local, regional and family history subject, including, for example, community histories, collections and appropriate school student history projects.

This year's celebration also includes local tours of historic sites and presentations on railroad expansion to Meade County in the 1800s and the building of Interstate 90 through the area in the 1950s to 1970s.

Please contact S&MCHS president Mark Rambow at (605) 381-5395, [mrambow2@gmail.com](mailto:mrambow2@gmail.com); or board member Jim Holland at (605) 484-7063, [jbholland74@gmail.com](mailto:jbholland74@gmail.com), for more information on a booth display, or to reserve a space.



Rod Hampton looking at a Historical Society scrapbook with Joan Bachmeier in 2022 (Photo by Jim Holland)

## Polo: Past and Present ... *continued*

Fame in 2015 for his contribution to Polo's growth in the state. He played the game until he was 84.

Bud's wife Dorothy was the first American woman to play the game competitively. A brother, Toby, and sons Ronnie and Lyle also played.

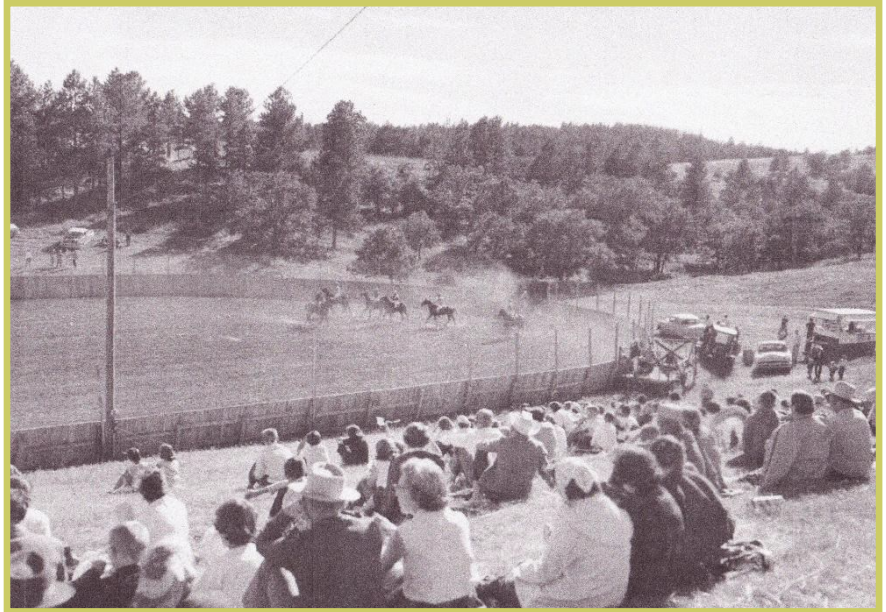
Local matches were played in both outdoor and indoor arenas. An indoor/outdoor arena located in a natural amphitheater two miles north of Sturgis, opened in 1957. The indoor arenas were not necessarily under a roof, but bordered by a wall or fence.

Polo continued to be played locally until the 1990s, including matches at a field in east Rapid City and south at Hart Ranch.

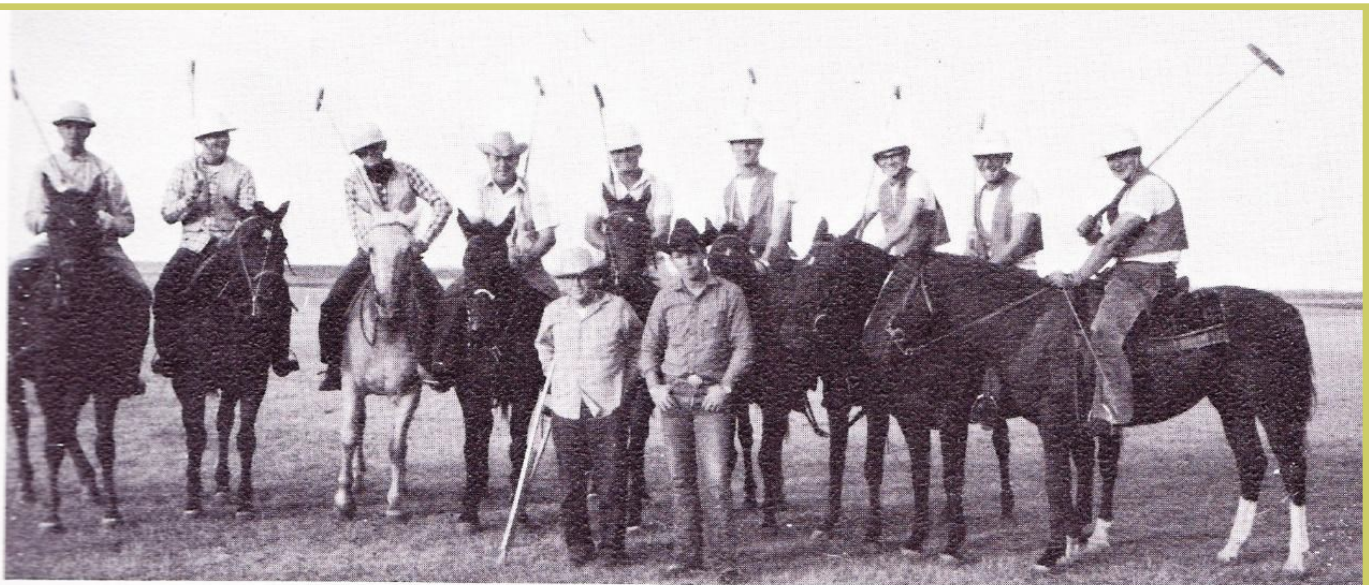
On display during the presentation was a variety of polo gear, mallets, wooden and plastic balls, head gear, special saddles, boots, leg protectors and gloves.

Also attending were other local residents, including Bud Aga of Sturgis, who related his experiences playing the game and Historical Society vice-president Ross Lamphere, who used to earn money walking horses to help them cool down after the spirited play of a chukker.

The video presentation is available on the Sturgis & Meade Co. Historical Society YouTube page: [youtube.com/@sturgishistory](https://www.youtube.com/@sturgishistory).



**Spectators watching polo at the Sturgis indoor/outdoor arena in 1957 (Photo courtesy Karyl Ketelsen Meyer)**



*Alkali and Pierre Pole Teams-Albert Keffeler, Edward Thompson, LeRoy Thompson, Glen Hardy, Raymond Ketelsen, Fritz Forney, Bill Flanigan, Robert Williams, Lynn Mitzinger. Standing-Clayton Thompson, Bill Cross.*

**The Alkali and Pierre Polo Teams after a match (Photo courtesy the Families of Team Members)**

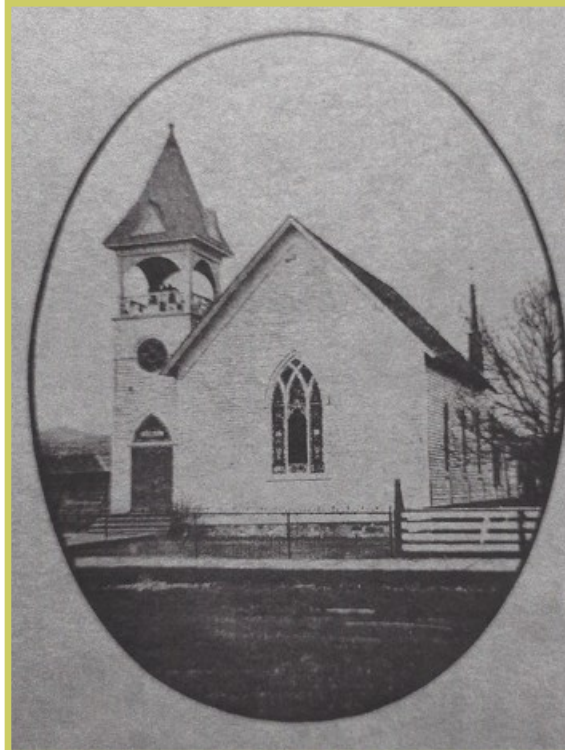
## Replaying a Scoop of History: First Presbyterian Church ... *Janice Lundgren*

The First Presbyterian Church of Sturgis is showing a Scoop of History video featuring the history of the church and the stained glass windows in the church.

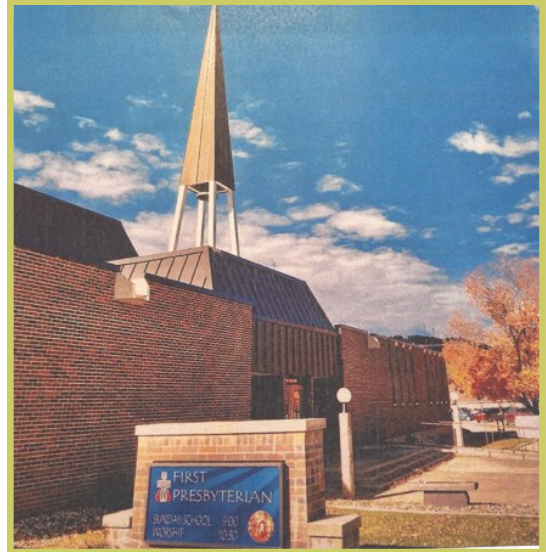
You are invited to a potluck that will be served as 11:30 a.m. on May 28, 2023, in the downstairs fellowship hall.

The video will follow the potluck. We would encourage people to come and share their memories of the church.

This Scoop of History was originally



The original Presbyterian Church in Sturgis which was dedicated on January 23, 1887 (Photo courtesy First Presbyterian Church)



The “new” Presbyterian Church, the cornerstone of which was laid on March 29, 1967 (Photo courtesy First Presbyterian Church)

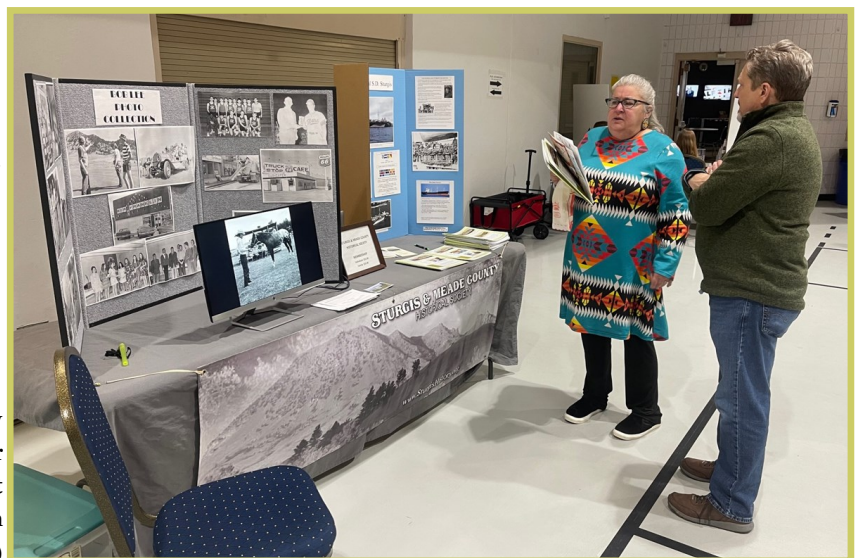
recorded April 8, 2018. Rev. Denzel Nonhof and Linda Beulke prepared the slides and wrote most of the presentation. See you there!

## Society Participates in Community Showcase ... *Jim Holland*

The Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Showcase on Wednesday, March 22, included displays by local businesses, civic organizations and non-profits to highlight off-season activities in the community.

The Historical Society’s booth featured displays of the Bob Lee photo collection and the USS S.D. Sturgis World War II transport ship.

Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society President Mark Rambow talks with a visitor during the March 22 Community Showcase at the Sturgis Community Center. (Photo by Jim Holland)



Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society  
& Sturgis Public Library

## GENEALOGY WORK GROUP

Welcomes



**Dr. Molly Barari**  
**HEIRLOOMS:**  
**Creative Life Writing**

**Saturday, May 6, 2023**

**1 - 3 pm, Sturgis Public Library**

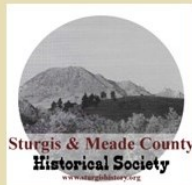
Molly will discuss creatively writing family histories and stories, to be cherished by your family for years to come .

**THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME!**



For information,  
(605) 381-5395  
or

[mrambow2@gmail.com](mailto:mrambow2@gmail.com)



## White Owl to Celebrate 130 Years

White Owl, in rural Meade County, will turn 130 years old this year! Some of the residents are putting together a celebration, possibly in mid to late July.

Some of their ideas include:

- ◆ Marking old building sites
- ◆ Q&A with our "old timers"
- ◆ Visit to the Cemetery
- ◆ Community Celebration

If you are interested in helping, please contact Ann Shaw at [whiteowlcreekboutique@gmail.com](mailto:whiteowlcreekboutique@gmail.com) or 605-515-0749.

## Sturgis Area Arts Council Presents: "A History of the Sturgis Livestock Exchange" at *History at High Noon* ... *Richard Moeller*

**H**istory at High Noon is a program on the third Friday of the month (October and November, January through May). We meet at noon in the Community Room of the Sturgis Public Library. It is sponsored by the Sturgis Area Arts Council.



We are always looking for ideas. If you would like to tell your family history or have something history-based, please contact Bonnie Lange at [blange@rushmore.com](mailto:blange@rushmore.com) or Richard Moeller at [running2win@gmail.com](mailto:running2win@gmail.com).

The following is from the SAAC website: "Our April History at High Noon program is going to be part of the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" exhibit at the Sturgis Public Library.

The program on April 21, will be: "The Sturgis Livestock Exchange".

Karen Speed will be the presenter of this program about the Sale Barn and how it affected our community.

The March and April programs will coincide with the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street Crossroads traveling exhibit at the Sturgis Public Library.

On May 19, the History at High Noon topic will be, "Who are These Men? Eight Civil War Veterans Who Settled in the Sturgis Area," presented by Lee Stroschine, based on a photo that was discovered at the library.

To learn more, visit [sturgisarts.org](http://sturgisarts.org) or [youtube.com/@sturgispubliclibrary](https://youtube.com/@sturgispubliclibrary).

## Help us Identify Bob Lee Photos

The Bob Lee Photo Collection, thousands of photo negatives taken by the late Bob Lee during his many years with the local paper, was generously donated by his wife, Dodi Lee. The photos range, primarily, from the late 1950s

through the mid 1970s.

Please help us out! We would love to have any information or memories of these sample photos. We plan on continuing to share more in the coming months!



## Update from Bear Butte Creek Historic Preservation Council ... *Ross Lamphere*

The final report on this year's "Dig" was sent to the Deadwood Historic Preservation Office to complete our requirements of receiving their grant. We are awaiting reimbursement and will complete paying any outstanding expenses.

Since my last communication we have some great news. Our application for another Deadwood grant was awarded for more than we even requested. This 'never' happens according to their staff. We received a \$10,000 grant for our next dig in September of 2023. We also carried over a \$5,000 grant from Black Hills Community Foundation for a total of \$15,000 to apply to the upcoming year's work.

Dr Sundstrom will again lead our efforts along with many dedicated volunteers. I have asked Logan Lamphere to begin planning for the possibility of including a Historical Marker/ Informational Kiosk to be included in our funding for this year's dig.

With the passing of Board member Jace Decory I have inquired of Brenda Shirts to be nominated to our Board as a voting member. She recently accepted a position with NRCS and has checked with them concerning any conflict-of-interest issues about serving on our Board. No concerns of a conflict of interest were given. We will accept additional nominations and will vote at our next meeting. Brenda has served on our Board as a non-voting member since our inception.

Katie Anderson presented an excellent program on Soap Suds Row at the Tri State Museum & Visitor Center in Belle Fourche to 50+ people recently. Katie was one of our volunteers at this year's Dig. She is a graduate of University of Wyoming with a degree in Archeology planning to get an advanced degree. Thank you to Katie for your involvement in our project and helping to spread the word about our Historic Preservation.

## Annual Report from Old Fort Meade Museum ... *Jessica Kusser*

We had a fantastic 2022 season. The museum had over 2281 visitors in 2022 which was just below our 2021 season by 9 visitors. This number is taken from those who sign into guest book.

I have continued to organize the office and the accession records. My next goal is to work in the basement and organize by decade so it will be easier to find items when family members call.

The Sturgis Veterans Club located on Main Street in Sturgis has borrowed some of our items that are in storage to redo their basement bar. It is now called the Got Your Six Bar and items have been viewed by many locals and others as they have seen the bar. The Veterans Club staff and board members have strongly encouraged their guests to visit the museum.

We are still looking for pictures to make the honor wall for those who helped establish the museum. Please reach out with any information about the founders you have and pictures by emailing [info.oldfortmeade@gmail.com](mailto:info.oldfortmeade@gmail.com).

I am still working on the curriculum totes as I have been watching the South Dakota Department of Education continue to work on the Social Studies Standards.

Looking forward to a wonderful season. Please join us on April 23rd at 2pm for our Annual Meeting. Or even this summer - Opening Day is May 15th at 10am!!

Jessica Kusser, Director



## Message from the President's Desk—The March of Time ...*Mark Rambow*

**S**pring Greetings! The Historical Society has been busy this winter. Coming out of the pandemic, we weren't too sure what to expect for attendance at our events but have been surprised with good turnouts!

We have been working hard on our collections as well. We have held two displays with a small portion of the Bob Lee Photo Collection that is scanned and catalogued. (Of the estimated 10,000 to 20,000 negatives, we have about 600 finished!)

The biggest obstacle to processing and maintaining the historical collection we have is space. We continue to look for a climate-controlled site for storage. If you have ideas, please let us know!

The Genealogy Work Group is going strong. We have held four gatherings so far, with another planned for May 6. We will welcome Dr. Molly Barari, a South Dakota Humanities speaker, who is doing a presentation entitled "Heirlooms:

Creative Life Writing." She will discuss writing your family stories for preservation and doing personal interviews. The public is, as always, welcome! No need to be into genealogy to benefit from the information we will learn.

Lastly, we are gearing up for History Days on June 16 & 17. We will be at the Community Center, and our theme is "Trails of History,"

focusing on the various trails and transportation which has brought people to our area. Please put it on your calendar!

Looking forward to seeing you all at the next gathering!

Mark Rambow,  
President



## Calendar of Upcoming Events

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

**Friday, April 21 — HISTORY AT HIGH NOON:**

The Sturgis Sale Barn, Sturgis Public Library

**Sunday, April 23, 2:00-4:00 p.m. — FORT MEADE MUSEUM ANNUAL MEETING,**

Presentation on Bear Butte Creek Preservation and Soap Suds Row projects, Meade County Senior Citizen Center

**Saturday, May 6, 1:00-3:00 p.m. — GENEALOGY GROUP:**

Guest speaker: Dr. Molly Barari, SD Humanities Council: HEIRLOOMS: WRITER'S WORKSHOP. She will discuss how to creatively write family histories and document individual interviews. Held by Mark Rambow, Sturgis Public Library

**Tuesday, May 16, 6:30 p.m. — MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Chamber/Zoom**

**Friday, May 19 — HISTORY AT HIGH NOON:**

Who are these men? Eight Civil War Veterans Who Settled in the Sturgis Area, Lee Stroschine, Sturgis Public Library

**Friday & Saturday, June 16-17 — HISTORY DAYS 2023: "Trails of History"**

**Tuesday, June 20, 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)

## STURGIS & MEADE COUNTY 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

Janice Lundgren, Treasurer

### On Line

Website:

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

YouTube:

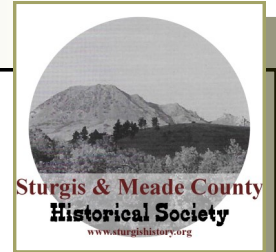
[youtube.com/@sturgishistory](https://youtube.com/@sturgishistory)

Instagram:

[instagram.com/sturgishistory](https://instagram.com/sturgishistory)

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/sturgishistory.org](https://www.facebook.com/sturgishistory.org)



## OUR SPONSORS

City of Sturgis

Sturgis Photo & Gifts

KBHB Radio

The HomeSlice Group

Meade County Commission

***THANK YOU!***

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