

**STURGIS
&
MEADE
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

Newsletter, September 2019, Vol. 4, Issue 3`



Photo Courtesy of Bob Davis

Inside this issue:

History Day a Success	2
FEATURE ARTICLE:: Birth of Sturgis Fire Department	3-4
Membership Report	5
Membership Form	5
List of Members	6
Beug Award	7
Calendar of Events	7
Our Sponsors	8

CHARTER MEMBERS REMEMBERED...*Leona Schroeder*

On April 14, 2014, 20 residents of Sturgis/Meade County met to discuss the idea of forming an Historical Society for the area. Under the leadership of Marty Beug, the group formed the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society dedicated to protecting, preserving, and promoting local history.

In January, 2019, Joan Bachmeier, herself a charter member, suggested that the Board approve the compilation of an official charter commemorating the founding of the organization and listing the 20 founding members. The Board approved the idea, appointed Joan Bachmeier to secure pictures and decide on a format, and allocated up to \$150 to have the charter printed and copies provided to each of the charter members. The charter was completed and presented to the Board at the April meeting and displayed for all to see during History Day in June.

The Board is thankful to Joan for suggesting the idea and for doing the work necessary to successfully complete the project.

PLEASE NOTE

Our society is missing some very important members! Are you one of them?

Check out the list of our paid members on page 6 of this issue. If your name is missing but you think you have paid, let us know!

Otherwise, please consider sending in your membership dues ASAP to help us preserve the diverse and illustrious history of Sturgis and Meade County for our descendants.



CHARTER MEMBERS

Joan Bachmeier, Luke Bachmeier, Martin Beug, Duane Boy, Rita Boy
Marlin Connelly, Frances Graf, Velta Grosch, Cathy Hafner, Bob Kusser
Ross Lamphere, Jan Lamphere, Katherine Martel, Bruce McArthur,
Ernest Miller, Stacey Nickelson, Mark Rambow, Kathi Schneider

5TH ANNUAL HISTORY DAY A SUCCESS ... *Kris Hubbard*

More than 200 people passed through the doors of the Sturgis City Auditorium June 14-15 for the fifth annual History Day sponsored by the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society. The event celebrated the 130th anniversary of the formation of Meade County.

Featured were informational booths about early Meade County post offices and communities, many of which no longer exist. Area residents with a connection to those areas of the county were present throughout the two-day event to answer questions and disseminate information. Areas represented included in photos below:



Alkali & Hereford



Boneita Springs



Brushie



Caton



Chalk Butte



Clayton & Goldfield



Clough & Fairpoint



Dalzell



Elm Springs

Participants not pictured above included: Faith, Marcus, Opal, Royal Center, Stoneville, Sulphur, Viewfield and Volunteer.



A parade, led by the Sturgis Police, the National Guard Color Guard and parade grand marshal Gary Cammack, included entries from the American Legion Post 33, Black Hills Bluegrass Festival, Boy Scouts, City of Faith and Faith Museum, Fort Meade Employee Association, Fort Meade Museum, Meade County Commission, Naja Shrine, Polaris Base of the U.S. Submarine Veterans, Ranger Marching Band, Society of Black Hills Pioneers, St. Martin's Academy, Sturgis Area Arts Council, Sturgis Fire and Ambulance Service, Sturgis Lions Club, Sturgis Motorcycle Museum and Hall of Fame and riders, and Western Dakota Antique Club.



Also held were two programs by former longtime Black Hills-area newspaper reporter and editor Tim Velder, who now resides in Sundance, Wyo., and who works in marketing and communications for Powder River Energy. Velder spoke about the Titan missiles and abandoned towns of Eastern Butte and Central Meade Counties.

History Day was possible due, in part, to Historical Society sponsors as follows: Arby's, City of Sturgis, Davenport Family Real Estate, Elk Creek Steakhouse, First Interstate Bank, First National Bank, Grocery Mart, Jambonz Grill & Pub, KBHB Radio, La Risa Mexican Cuisine, Loud American Roadhouse, Meade County Commission, Meade County Senior Citizens Center, Papa John's, Sidehack Saloon, Sturgis Photo & Gifts, The HomeSlice Group, The Knuckle Saloon, The Local, The Oasis Bar, Wanda's Kitchen and Weimer's Diner & Donuts.

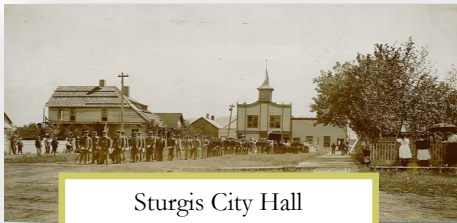
HISTORICAL FEATURE ARTICLE ... *Mark Rambow*

BIRTH OF THE STURGIS FIRE DEPARTMENT

From the beginning of settlement in the Black Hills, fire helped determine the success, growth and political structure of each community. We need look no further than the massive fire in Deadwood in September of 1879 for proof of this.

Sturgis was no different. While it never had a fire as devastating as Deadwood, it came close, and had many significant blazes. The first mentioned was a large prairie fire in December of 1878, just months after the founding of the town. Many ranchers in the vicinity were burned out, and much of the hay that was piled for the use of the new military post of Fort Meade was also destroyed. Fort Meade itself just missed being burned, while it was reported that the new town of "Sturgis City" was saved by a sudden rain shower.

The first large structural fire occurred in 1879, when Iler's Dance Hall, called The Big Bonanza, on the corner of 1st and Main (where the Bank Building currently stands), went up in flames and took a couple of neighboring buildings with it. Many feared it would spread to the entire town, but, once again, the city was spared.



Sturgis City Hall

Fort Meade also had its share of early fires. They had the men and resources to organize two fire companies in late 1879. Sturgis may have leaned on the knowledge that, if needed, the Fort Meade Fire Teams were only a mile away.

Another memorable fire in area papers (Sturgis did not have its own paper until 1883) was in late November, 1881. A drunken bull-whacker was arrested and thrown into the Sturgis calaboose, a small jail building. He piled loose straw on his bedding and lit it on fire, as a means of escape. What he managed to do was burn down the entire structure and require his own rescue.

This event prompted several Sturgis businessmen to take action toward a fire plan. They raised \$300 and used it to form "hook and ladder" and "bucket" brigades. They also purchased several ladders, axes, hooks, and buckets, and had strategically-located wells dug along Main Street. In the event of a structure fire, they felt they would be ready. A month later, in December of 1881, the barn of Mike Owens caught fire and the Deadwood paper reported that it was only through "the strenuous exertions of the citizens and a favorable wind" that the whole town was not consumed.

Results in February of 1882 were not as good when a fire was discovered in a two-story warehouse building owned by Harmon & Co., across the street from their store (the location of today's Sturgis Photo and Gift). When discovered, smoke was already coming from the roof and spreading over the town. Moments later, fire issued from the windows and roof.

The Black Hills Daily Times reported: "Quicker than it takes to tell it, the dreaded demon had communicated to the adjoining building, and it at once became apparent that it would, too, fall a victim to the hungry flames, which lapped up everything before them like veritable fiends. This building was owned by Henry Wallace and was occupied by a woman as a laundry and restaurant. The firemen made desperate attempts to raze the building with hooks and ropes, but were unsuccessful. It was found now that another building, making three altogether, was also on fire and doomed to destruction. This, like the other two, was also a frame structure two-stories high and was owned and operating by H. Foster. "

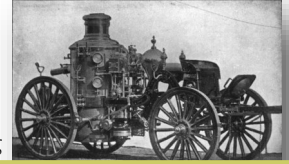
The paper added "It was only by superhuman effort and incessant work that the town was saved. Sparks and cinders flew in every direction but were prevented from doing any harm by the wet blankets and robes with which every building was covered. Harmon & Co.'s store caught once, but the blaze was extinguished before any damage was done. Fruin's building was saved by the most strenuous and heroic efforts, it having repeatedly caught. The fire was gotten under control and everyone drew a long breath of relief as it became apparent that the danger was over."

In 1883, Sturgis took additional steps toward the establishment of a fire company. The publication of the town's first successful weekly newspaper, "The Record," allowed the editors to campaign for fire safety, the building of "fire-proof" buildings of stone and brick, and plans for fire safety. They complained that most of the buckets and ladders, which had been the city's defense against fire, had over time, been scattered or "borrowed" and never returned. They stated "all that remains of the once great Sturgis fire department, or hook and ladder company, is a very strong hope that a fire will not break out."

Under pressure, an election for a Fire Warden was held in December, 1883. The election gave the Fire Warden the power to abolish dangerous stove pipes, work with insurance agents to give cheaper rates, etc. Based on the approval for the position, W. F. L. Souter was appointed the first "fire warden" of Sturgis. Souter set about fining people for unsafe stovepipes, regulating the wood used in new buildings, and a variety of other measures to reduce the fire hazard in a largely wooden town.

By 1887, work had already begun on securing funds for a first-class fire organization. This was pressed in February, 1888, after another huge fire occurred at a newly built building on the northwest corner of Second and Main. Again, a heroic effort was made to save the town. This fire led the town to finally determine that they needed a complete fire department. A meeting of citizens decided on the purchase of a steam fire engine, hose cart, a few thousand feet of hose, and fire cisterns built along Main Street. A new Hook & Ladder team, Hose Team, and Fire Engine Team were all formed and became the elements of the first Fire Department.

Sturgis took donations from business owners and held dances and other fundraisers to purchase the materials needed. A new hook and ladder cart was ordered from Gleason & Bailey in Seneca, N. Y. It was finally decided to order a Mansfield Steam Engine, From Mansfield, Ohio, along with hose and hose cart, arriving in May of 1888 to a parade through town. The Sturgis Advertiser reported that it was "A beaut!," decked out with brass mountings and trimming. "It is guaranteed to throw 350 gallons per minute as long as water and hose holds out. It will raise steam and throw water in six minutes after the fires are lighted. It weighs about 4500 pounds with its working dress on, and can rip the shingles off any house ever built."



Double Piston Engine Built by Mansfield Machine

Early fire departments were all about flash. Caps and belts were received by the firemen, the caps being gray in color, and the belts of black Moroccan leather, with the word "Sturgis" in white raised letters. These matched the dark gray uniforms which were ordered. The Sturgis Fire Department also incorporated the community band into their ranks to lead them in all parades.



Key City Fire Department

Even before the fire equipment arrived, Sturgis started talking confidently about dominating all of the fire competitions in the area. They even planned their own, on the Fourth of July, before ever learning to use the equipment. They started practicing at every chance. The Sturgis Advertiser of May 30, 1888, reporting: "The entire fire department was out on parade Thursday afternoon last. The parade headed by the band togged out with their uniforms of gold and gray, followed respectively by the Hook and Ladder boys, the Engine company, steamer and Sturgis Hose No. 1, made quite a showing and proved conclusively that Sturgis has a department to be proud of and one that nobody can sneeze at. After the parade, the engine was placed over the First street cistern and, throwing two streams, soon emptied it. Owing to inexperience in handling the pipes, the hose men succeeded in wetting nearly everybody within reach, as well as giving themselves a good soaking. The engine showed up well, considering it as a new machine and somewhat stiff in the joints, and taking into consideration the fact that, although handled by competent engineers, they were not thoroughly acquainted with the workings of a steam fire engine."

Following the 4th of July competition, Sturgis started traveling to other communities to compete for the community's honor, always putting on a good show. At their first competition in Spearfish, the Sturgis department paraded proudly, leading with a man carrying a decorated scoop shovel on his shoulder.

At a tournament in Rapid City, the Rapid City Journal described the Sturgis team's arrival as follows: "After taking their hose cart from the train, the Sturgis men manned the drag rope and marched to the Sweeney hose house, where they will make their headquarters while in the city. Their foreman led the company, carrying on his shoulder a "scoop" shovel, handsomely ornamented with bright colored ribbons, and beautifully painted, having on the inner side a horse shoe garlanded with flowers, and the legend, "Return with the Laurels or Remain," and on the other side the picture of a good sized porker, and the words, "Sturgis - We Want the Earth." The boys presented a handsome appearance as they marched through the streets to the Sweeney's hose house on St. Joe Street."



Sturgis Firemen's Race

After another tourney, they were described as follows: "In the contest for the best appearing company the prize of \$50 was awarded to the Sturgis Hose Company. The team made a fine appearance indeed and had their hose cart tastily and appropriately decorated for the occasion. The banner carried by the company was a most beautiful piece of work and was presented to the fire team by the ladies of Sturgis. Some idea of its excellence and beauty can be obtained from the fact that the banner cost the neat sum of \$380. A scoop shovel was also carried baring upon it the words, "We Want the Earth."

Its fine appearance aside, the Sturgis Fire Department proved to be effective in the field. While fires still occurred, as they do today, they were able to stop the threat of a single fire destroying all of Main Street, or spreading to other areas of town. Well established, the fire department would continue to be a point of pride and community unity until the present day.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT ... *Leona Howe Schroeder, Membership Chairman*

As you may recall, last year the Historical Society voted to make all memberships due on June 15 each year to simplify collecting of dues. Our new system began this past June 15 during History Day. I would like to report that it was a great success and that we have received 100% of the number of memberships that we had last year but, while most of you have paid your 2019/2020 dues, there are still many who have not.

If paying your dues has slipped your mind, below is the membership form and information on how to submit your payment. Feel free to share this information with others who you think might be interested in joining.



PLEASE NOTE: On the following page, I have listed those members who have paid their 2019-2020 dues. Please take a look and, if you aren't on the list but feel you did pay, contact me at leonags@aol.com or call me at 605-939-9979.

We appreciate all your support and contributions to the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society and hope you are enjoying your membership as well.

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 501©3 nonprofit organization. Therefore, sponsorships and donations are tax-deductible; membership dues are not tax deductible. New membership year starts June 15.

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

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP FOR 2019-2020 ...*Leona Howe Schroeder*

Adams, Linda	Lamphere, Ross & Jan
Ackerman, Vonnie Whitman	Lindquist, Helen
Afdahl, George & Annelle	Linn, Marv
Alberts, Francie & Mike	Lundgren, Janice & family
Asheim, Bernard	Martin, Michael & Linda Coyle
Bachmeier, Luke & Joan	Massa, Joseph
Balyeat, Don	Massa, Mark & Beth
Basel, Dallis & Tammy	McNenny, Dean & Sandi
Boy, Duane & Rita	Moeller, Allen
Carpenter, Larry & Nancy	Moeller, Richard
Chaney, Joe & Jeri	Nickelson, Stacey
Chaplin, Susan	Otto, Robert & Donna Laughlin
DesJarlais Farms family	Rambow, Charles
Draine, LeRoy & Cathie	Rambow, Mark & family
Edwards, Guy	Reed, Jason
Erickson, Carl	Rose, Gordon
Hafner, Cathy and family	Rose, Coleen
Hardenbrook, Linda	Roth, DeeAnn
Hendrickson, Linn	Schneider, Kathi
Holland, Deb & Jim	Schroeder, Leona Howe
Howe, Bob & Joan	Shaver, Craig & Patricia
Howe, Stan	Speakman, Gordon & Valorie
Hubbard, Bruce & Kris	Steinle, Jan
Huston, William	Stoltz, Violet
Jackley, Michael & JoAnn	Stroschine, Lee
Jolley, Clint & Sandy	Super, David & Carol
Karels, Gordon & Earla	Tesch, Bob
Kenoyer, John	Thompson, Jim & Sherry Solberg
Kenoyer, Clifford	Walker, Janeen
Killam, Lola	Watson, Michael & Rebecca
Kleven, Marguerite	Weyrich, Bruce & Darci
Kotab, Gordon & Marlene	Whitford, Jesse
Kusser, Bob	Wood-Fossen, Mary
Lamphere, Logan	

BEUG FRIEND OF HISTORY AWARDS ... *Kris Hubbard*

The Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society's Martin C. Beug Friend of History Award was presented during this year's History Day to Rod Bradley and Family for The Hotel Sturgis and to Meade County Commission for the Meade County Erskine Office Building.

This award is presented annually in honor of the contributions made by the late Martin C. Beug, who started the Historical Society. Recipients of the award must demonstrate preservation, protection and promotion of Sturgis or Meade County history.

"Renovating the old J.C. Penney Building on Sturgis Main Street, the Bradley family is contributing a new and exciting addition to Main Street," said nominator Leona Schroeder. "The vision, investment and hard work of the Bradley family in developing The Hotel Sturgis has definitely fulfilled the spirit of the preserve, protect and promote goals of the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society."



Bradley family receives Beug Award for J.C. Penney Building preservation.



Meade County Commissioners receive Beug Award for Erskine School Building preservation.

In nominating the Meade County Commission, Mark Rambow said "In preserving and redesigning the old Erskine School building into the Meade County Erskine Office Building, the County Commission has allowed the community at large to continue to enjoy the beauty and dignity of this historic structure, while repurposing it to a modern audience and need, guaranteeing its future relevance and significance."

The award was first presented in memory of Beug to his daughters in 2015. Other recipients of the history award include St. Martin's Chapel Restoration Committee in 2016, the Sturgis Area Arts Council's History at High Noon Committee in 2017, and the Charles Nolin Monument Restoration/Revitalization Committee in 2018.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS ... *Leona Howe Schroeder*

Tuesday, September 17, 6:30 p.m.—MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Chamber Office

Tuesday, October 15, 6:30 p.m.—MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Chamber Office

Friday, October 18, Noon— HISTORY AT HIGH NOON, Library
St. Aloysius Cemetery, Joanne Harmon

Friday, November 15, Noon— HISTORY AT HIGH NOON, Library
Restaurants in Sturgis, Guy Edwards

Tuesday, November 19, 6:30 p.m.—MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Chamber Office

Tuesday, December 17, 6:30 p.m.—MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Chamber Office

Friday, January 10, 2020—5TH ANNUAL TASTE OF STURGIS, Auditorium

Friday & Saturday, June 19 & 20, 2020—6TH ANNUAL HISTORY DAY, Auditorium

STURGIS & MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 221, Sturgis, SD 57785



Board Officers

Mark Rambow, President, mark@sturgishistory.org
Ross Lamphere, Vice President
Rebecca Porter-Watson, Secretary
Janice Lundgren, Treasurer

On Line

Website: www.sturgishistory.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/sturgishistory.org

OUR SPONSORS

Arby's	The HomeSlice Group	Meade County Senior Center
The City of Sturgis	Jambonz Grill & Pub	The Oasis Bar
Da Bus	KBHB Radio	Papa John's
Davenport Family Real Estate	The Knuckle Saloon	Sidehack Saloon
Elk Creek Steakhouse	La Risa Mexican Cuisine	Sturgis Photo & Gifts
First Interstate Bank	Loud American Roadhouse	Wanda's Kitchen
First National Bank	Meade County Commissioners	Weimer's Diner & Donuts
Grocery Mart		

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