

**STURGIS  
&  
MEADE  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

Newsletter, January 2017, Vol. 2, Issue 1



Photo Courtesy of Bob Davis

Inside this issue:

Scooptown Shootout	2
Trending on Facebook	2
Time Capsule Opened	3
Poker Alice Trial	3
Historical Musings: <i>Buried Alive!</i>	4, 5
Faith Opens Ice House	6
St. Martin's Chapel Scoop of History	6
Nolin Monument Update	7
Upcoming Events	7
Membership Form	8

*President's Report ... Mark Rambow*

**A New Year  
of Possibilities . . .**

As we wrap up the calendar year, it is customary to reflect on the success and failures of the past twelve months. While I would like to review the past year, I prefer to look ahead to the coming months, and years, to some great things in store for the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society.

2016 was a very successful and productive year. As reported in past newsletters, we had several successful events and fundraisers. We have expanded our membership and moved ahead on some important projects. Within the last few months specifically, we had several things worth mentioning.

The planned rebuilding of the Nolin Monument is still on track following the groundbreaking for new construction at the Sturgis hospital. We look forward, in the coming months, to raising funds, raz-

ing the current monument, and rebuilding it to its original glory, with great improvements!

We held another "Scoop of History" event in October. A sizable crowd gathered at the St. Martin's Chapel to hear about the amazing restoration which has occurred and then wander the entire church and explore every nook and cranny. We are planning more Scoop of History events for you in the coming months.

The Society was part of the planning and staging for the opening of the Old Courthouse Time Capsule which was found in the model of the courthouse. Along with event planners, Judge Jerome Eckrich and Kevin Forrester, we were able to witness the opening of the time capsule and the many items contained therein. More is to come from the time capsule as we plan the reinterment at a future date. We have had several volunteers

step forward and become involved in the committees of the Society. Activity from the finance, membership, collections, public relations and programs committees, in particular, point toward some amazing fun and growth in the upcoming year.

Our activities of the next year bode well for the preservation and enjoyment of our local history. We have the Second Annual Scooptown Shootout (formerly called the Steaktip Shootout) on February 10<sup>th</sup>, two more Scoop of History events planned, and are already underway with planning for the 2017 and 2018 History Day events.

We look forward to seeing everyone throughout the year at our events. Have a wonderful 2017!

\*\*\*

I can be contacted at:  
[mark@sturgishistory.org](mailto:mark@sturgishistory.org)  
or the organization at:  
[info@sturgishistory.org](mailto:info@sturgishistory.org).

Join us for a:  
**SCOOPTOWN  
SHOOTOUT**



Friday, February 10th  
5:30-8:00 p.m.  
Boulder Canyon  
Convention Center  
(Holiday Inn Express)  
Sturgis, South Dakota

Vote for your favorite!  
\$10 Adults  
\$5 for those 8 and under

**On December 19, 2016, the U.S. Department of Interior listed the following properties on the National Register of Historic Places...**

**Sturgis Water Works Company Supply Works Site**

**2835 Davenport, Sturgis, vic.**

**Meade County, South Dakota**

# Scooptown Shootout. . . David Super



## READY. AIM. EAT!

Shootouts in Dakota Territory were known for having “fire” as the final command. The Historical Society’s 2nd annual food shootout, now known as the “Scooptown Shootout” on Friday, February 10th, will have a much tastier conclusion.

The entire community is invited to the Society’s fundraising food fest to enjoy steak tips

and more that will be donated by several area restaurants. As part of the fun, attendees will be invited to vote for a “People’s Choice” award that will be presented to the restaurant with the most popular menu item.

The event will be held at the Boulder Canyon Convention Center (Holiday Inn Express)

from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Admission will be \$10 for adults and \$5 each for children 8 and younger.

The Convention Center also will have its cash bar available. Proceeds will be used to support the Historical Society’s activities for the coming year.

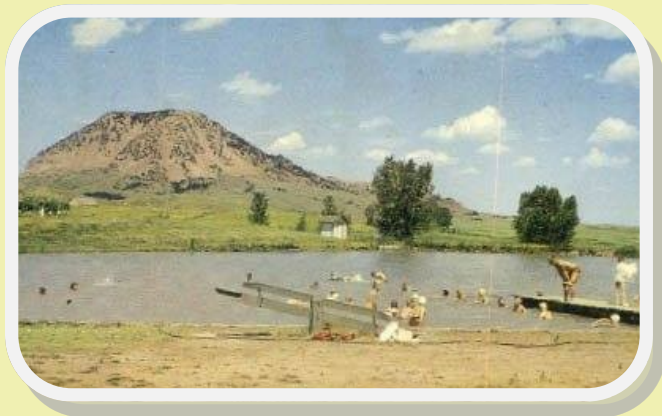
Restaurants on board to support the fund raiser include:

- The Knuckle Saloon
- Sidehack Tap
- Loud American Roadhouse
- Jambonz

(Negotiations are underway with other restaurants in the area to join the fun by supporting the Historical Society.)



# Trending on Facebook . . .



### Bear Butte Lake Swimming Hole

On December 28, 2016, Michele Raposa shared this photo on the History of Sturgis & Meade County page in Facebook. It obviously stirred many memories for local residents. The post was viewed and liked by 237 people, shared by 33 people and prompted nearly 50 responses!

Please send comments, corrections, or ideas for future newsletter content to: [earla.karels@gmail.com](mailto:earla.karels@gmail.com)



## Time Capsule Opened . . . Kris Hubbard

A time capsule containing flags, an election poll book, newspapers, letters and documents from the late 1890s, and other artifacts from the dedications of both the 1894 and 1966 Meade County Courthouses was opened November 6, 2016, by Meade County officials and several descendants of early Meade County families.

County facilities manager, Kevin Forrester, accidentally discovered



the time capsule in a model of the old courthouse that had been on display at the current courthouse. Forrester was

dusting off the model for Judge Jerome Eckrich, who had planned to use it during his talk at a gathering of the Sturgis Area Arts Council's History at High Noon.

Eckrich, who was a history major in college, realized the importance of Forrester's find and of including the community in the opening of the time capsule.

Some items from the time capsule are currently on display at the courthouse.



## Poker Alice Trial Reenactment . . . Kris Hubbard

As a way of appealing to a wider audience for the time capsule opening event, Eckrich organized a reenactment of the trial of Poker Alice to be held that same day. He took the 50-page transcript of the 1928 trial, where Poker Alice was charged with bootlegging and running a house of ill repute, and cut it to a one hour production.

The trial, held in the courtroom to a standing room only crowd, was anything but sedate with the presiding judge, Walter G. Miser, played by Eckrich, tossing a coin to determine the outcome of objections by the defense attorney, played by Bruce Hubbard, and the prosecuting attorney, played by Bob Haivala.

Poker Alice, played by Kasey Sorenson, was found not guilty by an 11-1 vote of the jurors. In actuality, Poker Alice was found guilty but her sentence was later commuted by then-Gov. William Bulow.



Prosecuting Alice Tubbs was bombastic state's attorney John P. Everett, played by Bob Haivala, Pictured in the rear is Judge Walter G. Miser, portrayed by Judge Jerome Eckrich.

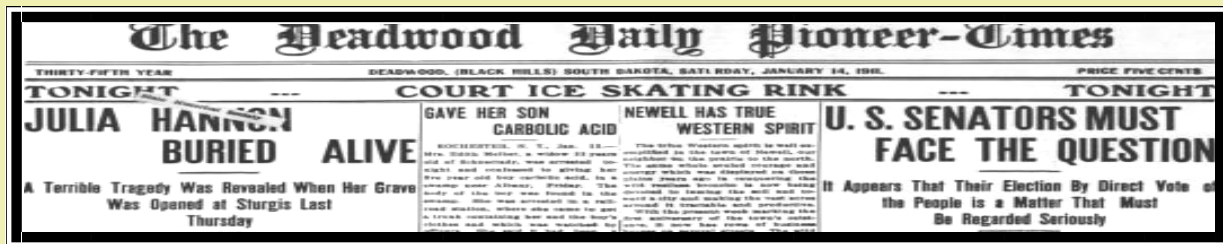
Poker Alice, played by Assistant Meade County State's Attorney Kasey Sorenson, professes her innocence to her attorney Harry Atwater, played by Bruce Hubbard.



Cast and crew of the "Trial of Poker Alice" included, from the left, Deputy Clerk of Courts Cheryl Barrett; Assistant State's Attorney Kasey Sorenson as Poker Alice; Deputy Clerk of Courts Tina Kopp; Sturgis attorney Bruce Hubbard as Defense Attorney Harry Atwater; Clerk of Courts Linda Keszler; Sturgis attorney Bob Haivala as State's Attorney John P. Everett; Sturgis physician George Jenter as Dr. F.A. Brandt; Sturgis attorney Rena Hymans as Bess Brundate McGibbon; and 4th Circuit Court Judge Jerome Eckrich as Judge Walter G. Miser. Not pictured are 4th Circuit Court Magistrate Judge Eric Strawn and 4th Circuit Court Law Clerk Eric Schlimgen.

# Historical Musings . . . Mark Rambow

## *Curious What Research Will Find ...*



While researching the history of Sturgis and Meade County, one never knows what stories they may uncover. With a rich, diverse history, unlimited interesting finds are always waiting to be uncovered. I am regularly amazed with the discoveries I come across. While looking online through old newspapers of the area, however, one story stood out to me as unbelievable.

I was reading the front page from the Daily Deadwood Pioneer Times of January 14, 1911, as seen in the above clipping. The main story, column one, told the story of...

Well, it's best if you read the story for yourself. ➔

*A tragedy of the most startling character was unearthed at Sturgis Thursday when the body of Miss Julia Hannon, who was buried last August, was disinterred and it was found that she had been buried alive. The position of the body in the casket and other indisputable signs of premature burial led to this conclusion. When the interment was made last August, the girl had been placed in the usual position in the casket, lying on her back, and when an investigation was made Thursday, the body was found turned on its side. But this was not the only, nor most convincing proof that she had been buried alive. Her face was scratched and lacerated, the evidence being absolute that she had thus disfigured her features, in a frenzy of despair, when she awoke from her trance. Her hair was also torn out, in handfuls, another evidence of the terrible mental agony into which she was thrown, when the harrowing truth dawned upon her.*

*Julie Hannon, who was about eighteen years of age, was engaged as teacher in one of the country schools near Sturgis. She was spending the summer vacation with her mother in that town, when one day last August she was taken with a fainting fit and fell into her mother's arms. All the efforts to revive her proved futile and within a short time, a physician was summoned, pronounced her dead. Two days after, she was buried, but her mother doubted that the girl was dead before the funeral took place and has ever since entertained the suspicion that she had been buried alive. The conviction grew upon her that her terrible suspicion was a reality, until the thought became so constantly in her mind that it threatened to overthrow her reason. Her friends made every effort to convince her that she was laboring under a delusion, for which there was not foundation, but her fears would not be quieted. At last it was thought best to disinter the body so that the mother would have absolute proof that her fears were groundless, but this action only brought about the startling discovery that the girl had indeed been buried alive.*

After reading this article, (and re-reading it a couple of times) I quickly switched into detective mode. I located online records of Julia Hannan and her family in Sturgis, (spelled Hannan in the records.) She was listed, along with several sisters, in Sturgis school records in 1898 and again in 1901. Those records indicate a birth of 1893, and that the girls, along with their mother, are living with the mother's dad, Michael Reilly. No Mr. Hannan is indicated. They are again listed in the 1905 census of Sturgis on Main Street. Again, the family is with the maternal grandfather. ... Now I began to get excited! What a great story this is! (and how great would it be in the Society's newsletter) I dug a bit further. The records, in various forms, for each of the Sturgis cemeteries are also online. I need to find this grave, containing the clawed-up, dug-up, re-buried, last resting place, death scene, of Julia Hannan. This is where I hit my first road

block. Despite having thorough records online, I find no record of her grave.

I did find a record for a grave with the same name, right age, in Chelan, Washington. I remembered, despite not finding the family in Sturgis in the 1910 census, I had found a family with all the correct names for the daughters, including Julia, in Chelan, Washington, in 1910. This was our Julia Hannan! But why is she in Chelan, Washington? I returned to the original source of the story, the Deadwood Pioneer-Times, and there the story began to unfold. ➔

### *Deadwood Pioneer Times*

*Deadwood, (Black Hills) South Dakota, Tuesday, January 17, 1911, Pg. 5.*

#### **MOTHER INSANE OVER DAUGHTER'S AWFUL FATE**

*Further detail of the story connected with the burial of Julia Hannon, a former Sturgis girl, which occurred at Chelan, Wash., last summer, came from Sturgis yesterday. It is stated that the girl's mother, Mrs. John P. Hannon, whose husband is in Nome, was so shocked by the awful discovery of her daughter's premature burial, that she has lost her reason. Another feature of the story, which has not heretofore been published, is that some time before the girl's death, she had a dream in which she imagined herself being buried alive. It was so vivid and impressed her so intensely, that she told her mother of it and the memory of this was what constantly kept the mother's mind in fear that her daughter had met the fate depicted in her dream.*

*The incorrect statement in the Pioneer-Times story of the affair last week, that the premature burial had happened in Sturgis, instead of at Chelan, Wash., came through the neglect of the Sturgis informant of this paper to specifically state where it occurred. He was under the impression that the Pioneer-Times knew the family had moved to Washington two years ago.*

*Continued on Page 5*



So, while the Deadwood paper began backtracking, blaming their lack of research and rush to publish a lurid rumor to “the neglect of the Sturgis informant,” they explained more of the story. Her father was absent in Nome, Alaska. He had, apparently, along with many other Sturgis residents and businessmen, gone to Alaska during the 1890s with the gold rush and was still there. They also explained how the family had ended up in Washington. I was starting to smell a rat, and my awesome “Sturgis girl buried alive” story was falling apart! I decided to do a full search on Newspapers.com for the name of Julia Hannan (using both spellings) and found the final word on the subject. It came the same day as the second Deadwood story, but was issued in the “Lead Daily Call.” It seems that paper decided to

test the veracity of the “down gulch” paper, and contacted several relatives of Julia Hannan, both locally and in Washington. They received word from an Uncle that Julia, aged 18, had died of “acute indigestion.” She was buried in Chelan, but no “insane mother,” no disinterred grave, and definitely no evidence of being buried alive, was true. The Lead Daily Call went on to say:

*The publication of a story such as appeared in the down gulch village causes no little amount of worry among a great many people in the fear that they may be a victim of such an occurrence, and while it is possible that hundreds of stories of a similar nature have been faked by newspapermen when hard pushed for copy, it is doubtful if proof can be shown in a single case. The embalming fluid used by the average undertaker contains a sufficient amount of arsenic to cause death, even should a case be one of suspended animation which would puzzle the physicians.*

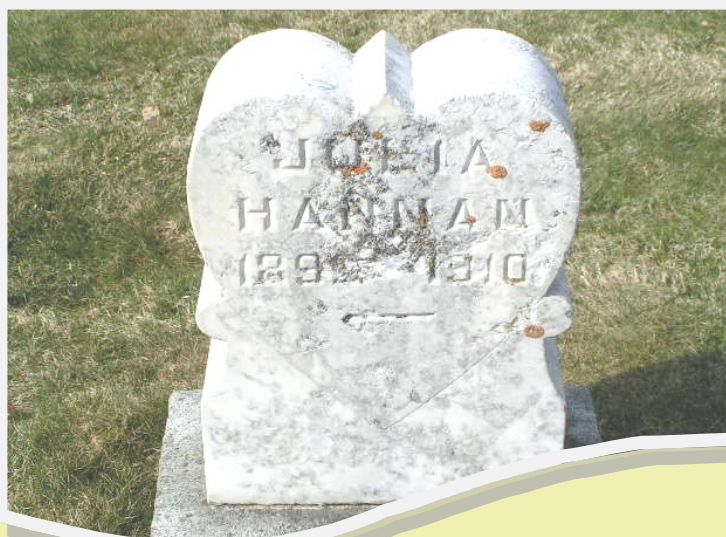
So, there it was. The story was a fake, and while I should have felt relief for the Hannan family of 1910, I was somewhat disappointed. I wanted to see what the Deadwood paper had to say about it.

The Deadwood paper was always quick to print any story they heard and then simply retract or ignore any “facts” which may come later. There was a particular animosity toward Sturgis in this regard, as Deadwood, and this newspaper, took every opportunity to cast aspersions toward the town. Along those lines, the Deadwood Daily Pioneer-Times came out with a brief retraction two days later with this statement:

*The parties who phoned from Sturgis on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup>, the sensational rumors of the death, burial and disinterment of the body of Julia Hannon, seems to have taken rumors for facts, and while he was no doubt honest and sincere in his assurances that he was giving absolute facts, his mistake has placed the Pioneer-Times in an embarrassing situation. Relatives of the Hannon's living in Deadwood and other sections of the Hills have been in frequent communication with them, and there has been nothing in their letters to give rise to the rumors floating around Sturgis, or that the death was anything other than natural, or that the condition of the mother has at any time been other than normal. In fact, Mrs. Hannon has herself written a number of letters to relatives here since the death of her daughter.*

So, in the end, they laid blame on their phantom informant and not on their lack of professional inquiry. Ironically, the Sturgis papers, the *Sturgis Record*, and the *Black Hills Press*, from that period did not make mention of the story. Apparently the “rumors floating around Sturgis” were not as prevalent as indicated.

Ultimately, a lesson can be learned from this story. The media of our past was eager to fill space in their pages and would, at times, print rumors, personal items, and other questionable information, to sell papers—the more lurid the better. We need to be vigilant when researching history to check, and double-check, resources to ensure accurate information.



Another thought about this journey I was on: I was able to do the entire research described above, except for the Sturgis papers, online. While they say you can't believe what you read on the internet, you can definitely find many sources to cross-check and verify the information you do read. I was able to take a simple news story, from over 100 years ago, check its sources, look for supportive documentation, and ultimately verify, in this case, the false nature of the story.

Unfortunately, my “unbelievable story” proved to be exactly that—unbelievable. But while our story here was false, the history of the people, the event, and the chase for the truth was very real. Who knows which lurid story may prove true!

# Out and About in Meade County ... Annelle Afdahl

**On August 14, 2016, Flannery's Beer and Ice House in Faith opened to the public for the first time in 100 years!**

Ice House, 9-12-16



The "Ice House" in Faith was built in 1911 when James Flannery made a deal to wholesale Golden Grain Belt beer put out by the Minneapolis Brewing Company. The new wholesale house held two or three carloads of beer and 100 ton of ice, which was shipped from Mobridge, South Dakota.

At that time, this Minneapolis Brewing Company Warehouse, also known as Flannery's Beer and Ice House, sat along the railroad tracks, which have since been removed.

The walls of the Ice House were constructed with 8'x8'

wooden beams as framework. In between these, 1'x6' boards were fixed on either side to make the walls. Sawdust was packed between the beams for insulation. A tin floor was installed, and is still present, on the second floor of the building where the ice was stored. Drains removed water from the building. A large pulley remains on the north side of the building, which was used to directly load ice from the train cars to the second floor.

Prohibition ended the use of the Ice House as a beer distribution facility and the building was in danger of being destroyed when the local Faith and Area Historical Society formed and interceded to save it. After that, the building was used for storage by several entities for many years.

In 1992, the cedar shake roof of the Ice House was replaced

and the first attempt at cleaning and clearing away clutter began.

In September of 2015, Faith Line Information Center board members, along with willing volunteer workers, hauled several loads of debris to the landfill. Restoration work and planning continued through the fall and winter months of 2015-2016. During that time, city employees Donn Dupper, John Collins, and Chuck Jones removed clutter from the second floor.

Ongoing cleaning and restoration work continued until, on

August 14, 2016, the restored Flannery's Beer and Ice House was opened for public view.

Updates included the rearrangement of The Information Center and the addition of a History Research Center in the office (phone #605-967-2001).

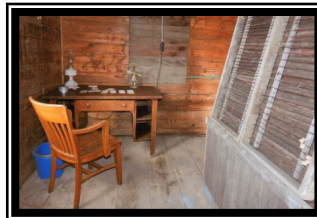
The Ice House will continue to be a "work in progress" as we strive to preserve the heritage of this captivating historical building in Faith!

\*\*\*

Annelle Afdahl can be contacted at 605-967-2051

\*\*\*

Interior, 9-12-16



PLEASE NOTE: The Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society is tentatively planning a member bus tour from Sturgis to Faith to view the restored facilities in September of 2017. Watch for more information and join the fun!

## October 2016 Scoop of History Visit To St. Martin's Chapel a Definite Success . . .

Community visitors were hosted by the St. Martin's Chapel Restoration Committee, recipients of the 2016 Martin C. Beug "Friends of History" award. Ramona Saubers gave a presentation on the history of the chapel and Sr. Yvette helped explain the history and significance of different murals on the chapel walls and ceiling. Following the presentations, visitors were invited to tour the historic structure and share stories about days past. Approximately 75 members and guests attended and this step back into history was enjoyed by all.



Ramona Saubers and Sr. Yvette

Visitors enjoying the presentation



Mike DeMersseman sharing memories of school days



## The Charles Nolin Monument Update ... Ross Lamphere

If you haven't driven by the hospital lately, you should.

Things look different and many changes are coming. What an exciting addition for our community with a new health care facility and investment by Regional Health!

The Nolin Monument Committee is busy getting the work done that makes these things happen. Different people are working on the five kiosks that will make up the NEW look to the Nolin Monument. **The current monument will be taken down soon!** Site work on the monument will take

place this spring. Organized fundraising efforts will also be kicking off soon, with several opportunities for those interested in donating.

Terry Hermann leads the fundraising efforts and can be contacted by phone at: **605-490-1179** or by e-mail at: **thermann@rushmore.com**

Donations will also be received by the Historical Society. All donations are tax deductible. Please indicate Nolin Monument on your donation.

**Contributions can be made to:**

Sturgis & Meade County  
Historical Society  
Nolin Fund  
PO Box 221  
Sturgis, SD 57785

## Calendar of Upcoming Events ... Leona Schroeder

Friday, January 20: History at High Noon, Sturgis Library  
Randy Bender presenting...CCC Camp and German prisoners

Friday, February 10: 2nd Annual Scooptown Shootout, Boulder Canyon Convention Center  
Taste and vote for your favorite restaurant any time between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.  
Adults \$10 ... Children 8 and under \$5

Friday, February 17: History at High Noon, Sturgis Library  
Neal Rowett presenting...Rowett Family History

Friday, March 17: History at High Noon, Sturgis Library  
David Super presenting...Sturgis Armory/Auditorium

Sunday, April 2: Spring Scoop of History, Sturgis Armory, 2:00 p.m.  
Hear about the history of the armory and take a tour!  
PLEASE NOTE: This event is tentative, watch for updates!

Friday, April 21: History at High Noon, Sturgis Library  
Wood and Jones family presenting...Jones'-Wood's Pond

Friday, June 23 & Saturday, June 24: 3rd Annual History Day, Sturgis Community Center  
Watch for addition of Friday evening mixer and exhibits, as well as exhibits, tours, and speakers on Saturday.

September: Fall Scoop of History, group bus trip to Faith to visit their Ice House and Museum  
PLEASE NOTE: This event is tentative, watch for updates as to specific date and time

*Who remembers?*





# STURGIS & MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 221  
Sturgis, SD 57785



## Board Officers

Mark Rambow, President, mark@sturgishistory.org  
Ross Lamphere, Vice President  
Leona Schroeder, Secretary, leonags@aol.com  
Mary Fossen, Treasurer

## On Line

E-mail: info@sturgishistory.org  
Web: sturgishistory.org  
Facebook: The History of Sturgis & Meade County, SD



## OUR SPONSORS

BOULDER CANYON  
STATION  
CONVENTION CENTER



Davenport Family Real Estate



Sturgis Photo & Gifts



## 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. We are a 501©3 nonprofit corporation, therefore donations and sponsorships are tax-deductible.

### Registration Information

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

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

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

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

### Membership Level Desired

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Business Sponsorship: \$250.00/year \_\_\_\_\_ 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)