

**STURGIS
&
MEADE
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

Newsletter, September 2016, Vol. 1, Issue 2



Photo Courtesy of Bob Davis

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Join us for a:

SCOOP OF HISTORY

Sunday, October 16

2:00 p.m.

**Old St. Martin's Chapel
West Sherman Street
Sturgis, South Dakota**



Hear about the history of this wonderful old chapel and observe the statues, paintings, and artifacts.

NOTE:

2nd Annual Steak Tip Shootout Coming in January or February 2017.

Watch for details!

President's Report ... Mark Rambow

The Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society has continued to be busy! Since our last report, we have been involved in a variety of activities, the most important of **which** was the Second Annual Sturgis History Day. Held on June 18th, History Day was another unqualified success!



With many interesting booths at the Sturgis Community Center, bus tours of Fort Meade and historic homes of Sturgis, and a fantastic presentation on Soap Suds Row from the archeologist for the Bureau of Land Management, there was something for everyone.



(History Day Photos: Courtesy of Joan Bachmeier, Historian)

Our special thanks to Brenda Shierts of the BLM, for the wonderful presentation, to



Steve Barry of "Da Bus" for making our bus tours possible through his generous contribution, and to all the sponsors, presenters, historians, attendees and volunteers that made our second History Day a huge success!

Moving ahead, the organization is involved in several projects. We are working together with the Nolin Monument revitalization committee to protect and restore that historical marker; participating in an upcoming effort to unveil a time capsule which was recently found from the original court house dedication in 1894; and continuing to receive donations of documents, photographs and other items pertinent to the history of Sturgis and Meade County. This all takes time and manpower to accomplish. We have set up several committees and en-

courage interested parties to become involved in the organization through the committee which interests them the most! Please contact us for more information on how to help. We are currently working on the calendar of events for the upcoming year and could use some help.

Additionally, we would love to receive your help in developing the "story" of Sturgis and Meade County. If you have items, photographs, documents, stories, or research papers you have written, which pertain to the history of our local area or region, we would love to see them. If you are not prepared to donate original photographs or documents, we will also accept high-quality scans and reproductions of them. Please contact me or the organization to discuss what you have and whether it is appropriate for the Society's small, but growing collection.

I can be contacted at:
mark@sturgishistory.org

or the organization at:
info@sturgishistory.org

Thank you for your memberships and support!

Mark Rambow
President

Historical Musings: *Who was Curley Grimes? ... Mark Rambow*

Near 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.

While many of the core elements of the story are factual, as usual, there is more to the story. Much of the story is influenced by the only "local" papers 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 for, along with two other men, 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 postmaster. 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.

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 outlaws, 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 bullwhacker on a bull train heading toward Sturgis and the Hills.

Two miles down Elk Creek, at about 2 pm, they found the man they identified as Grimes. He gave up without a fight, was handcuffed, and the three were quickly heading 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 off 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 the 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 split 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



Grimes grave & headstone near the BLM park, south of Sturgis.

(Continued on page 5 ...)

Meet the Board of Directors for 2016-2017 . . .

Annelle Afdahl: I was born in Louisiana. My father, Vic Ellefson, had been sent there when the 109th Engineers from Sturgis were activated shortly before WWII. My husband worked for Golden West Telecom for 40 years. I ran Afdahl's Hardware, which we owned for 20 years. Now we run around and enjoy the grandchildren and 2 greats. Most weekends in Sept./Oct. will be spent at their college & high school rodeos.

Joan Daum Bachmeier (Historian): I was born and raised right here in Sturgis. I went all twelve years of school in the Public School and graduated from Sturgis High School in 1955. I married Luke Bachmeier in 1955 also. I worked in retail, first at the Lee Store, then for more than 20 years at Lushbough's Hardware Hank, and then at Campbell's Supply. I got my love for history from my folks. My mother was an avid genealogist and my Dad loved history and taking of pictures, mostly of historical things.

Roxie Bracewell Chowne: I was born and raised north of Sturgis, graduated from Sturgis HS, and Black Hills State University with a major in music. I taught elementary and middle school music there for 20 years. Then Dennis and I spent 20 years in the Army living in 17 locations. Every time they unloaded my piano, I had more students. We moved back to Sturgis where we live now and I still teach music.

Mary Wood Fossen (Treasurer): I was born in 1944 to Helen Jones Wood and Robert I. "Doc" Wood. My sister Susan and I were raised in Sturgis where our parents

grew up as well. Our grandfather, William E. Jones, came to the U.S. from Wales and settled in Sturgis in 1880 and opened a general store that became Jones Grocery. I grew up listening to stories about the "old days" and in some ways, felt as if I lived in those times as well. I am honored to serve on the Board of Directors of the Historical Society and have learned so much more about the rich history of this area in the short time I've been involved. Besides which, it's been a ton of fun and I invite you to join us!

Cady Harrington: I was born in Sturgis, South Dakota and attended Meade School District K-12. After graduating high school in 2008, I attended Black Hills State University where I graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in History. I think it's important to know where we come from and am very passionate about preserving the history of both Meade County and the City of Sturgis. I currently live with my husband and puppy in White-wood, SD.

Jan Lamphere: I have been newly elected to the Board of Directors for the Sturgis Meade County Historical Society but have been involved with the group from the beginning. My interest in history started with my mother who helped establish the Ft Meade Museum many years ago. I grew up at Ft. Meade and have a deep appreciation for our local history. I graduated from Sturgis High School and have a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary and Special Education from the University of South Dakota. I taught kindergarten and pre-school in Sturgis for many years. I am married with

2 grown children and 2 grandchildren.

Ross Lamphere (Vice President): I am a self-employed rancher. I also own and operate Lamphere Ranch Camp Ground. I graduated from Sturgis High School and the University of South Dakota with a Bachelor's Degree in Geology in 1973 and was a science teacher in the Meade 46-1 School System for 20 years. I was instrumental in organizing the Sturgis Williams Middle School Science Fair. I am an active community member serving on the Sturgis Regional Hospital Advisory Council; the VA Black Hills Health Care Research and Education Foundation Board and former member of the Meade 46-1 School Board. I also am a member of the Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce (having served on the Board of Directors) and an active member of Sturgis United Methodist Church. I am a member and the past chairman of the Regional Health Network Board of Directors and serves as the vice chairman of the Sturgis/Meade County Historical Society and chairman of the Nolin monument Revitalization committee.

Janice Jordan Lundgren: We moved to Sturgis when I was 5, so it has always been home. I married Dale in 1967 and we have three grown daughters: Lori Zeigenbein, Rebecca Burke and Keri Kinabo. We also have two grandchildren: Erin Burke and Akii Kinabo. We moved to the Lundgren Ranch in the spring of 1972 and raised sheep up until three years ago. Now we run summer herds and Dale still puts up hay to sell. I enjoy seeing the reminders of my childhood

in the historical pictures...though I realize them being only 60 years old isn't really that old. I am interested in learning earlier history of the area.

Katherine Ward Martel: I am the great-granddaughter of Joseph J. Davenport and granddaughter of Jarvis D. Davenport. My sister and I still own property that belonged to our great-grandfather who was an early pioneer of Sturgis, Dakota Territory. I currently reside in upstate NY and return to Sturgis often. The Davenport family has left an incredible archive of early Sturgis and state history that we are currently trying to organize. My love of history came quite naturally as I grew up in the hills, in cabins that were built around the late 1890's. I'm trying to preserve much of the property left to us and keep the related archives intact for generations to come. I find great pleasure in piecing the puzzles of the past together in sharing stories, artifacts, and photos. I may be contacted at #605-490-5043.

David McPherson: I am a third generation Sturgis resident. I graduated from Sturgis High School in 1966, the son of Arnold and Maxine McPherson of 1517 Pine Street and McPherson Propane (1939-present). I have two siblings, Eugene and Marcia (Johnston), who also live in Sturgis. After an unproductive attempt at college, and several years in the Army, I returned to Sturgis to work for Arnold in the propane business. I met and married Susan Trumpe in 1973. I

(Continued on page 4 ...)

Meet the Board ... Continued

was later joined by older brother Gene, and was CEO of McPherson Propane, Inc for the last half of my forty years there. Susan and I adopted five children from other states and countries. I retired in 2012 and, with my wife and friends, toured Europe for several weeks prior to the London Olympics where our daughter, Paige, competed. Paige became the first and only female Olympic athlete from South Dakota to medal. I spend the glorious summers in the Black Hills, and the not-so-glorious winters in Florida. Golf has replaced employment in my world.

Sue McPherson: I was born at the end of 1947 at St. John's Hospital in Rapid City to a young navy doctor, and wife, who was assigned to the small pox ward at Ft. Meade after WWII. We moved away when I was a year so that my father could finish his schooling and establish a private practice in Iowa. We came back to Ft. Meade when I was a junior in high school so that my mother could live in a drier climate due to her severe asthma. My parents were delighted to be back in the hills and my mother started the Ft. Meade Museum with Bob Lee, RB Williams, Marilyn Bender, and some others. This began my respect

for and interest in the history of the Northern High Plains. I married David R. McPherson, a descendant of Meade County homesteaders on both sides, in 1973, after graduating from Colorado State University Fort Collins with a B.S. in Sociology/Anthropology. We built our home 43 years ago and raised our 5 diverse adopted children in it. I homeschooled the last 3 plus our oldest grandchild. We retired in June of 2012 and headed for Europe and London where we cheered on our 4th child who competed in the London Summer Olympic Games and received a Bronze Medal! We now spend half the year in South Dakota and the other half in our condo on Navarre Beach, Florida. We have a second grandchild now and are hoping for many more.

Mark Rambow (President): After growing up in Sturgis, I received a degree in history and political science from the University of South Dakota. I worked in politics for many years in Washington, DC and South Dakota before beginning to work in the non-profit world. I have worked in non-profit fundraising and management for the last twenty years. In addition to serving as the President of the Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society, I serve as Secretary for the

board of the Sturgis Soccer Association and am on the Board of Directors for the Old Fort Meade Museum Association. I am married to Nancy and have two children, Hannah and Gabriel, and we are hosting a foreign exchange student this year, Stine (from Norway), all of whom are attending Sturgis Brown High School. My personal passions include researching genealogy, local history and coaching and participating in soccer. With any spare time I have, I can usually be found in a library or on the soccer pitch.

Kathi Schneider: I was born in Chicago, IL. My Dad joined the VA when I was seven, and after a few moves we wound up at Ft. Meade in 1963 where I thought I'd arrived at the end of the earth. But the Black Hills and Sturgis became home and I'm still here. I graduated from Sturgis High School ('68) and attended USD and WDT before graduating from BHSU ('92). The longer I have lived amidst the history of Sturgis, the more I have become interested in its history before I got here, the stories that make up the fabric of our town and enrich our lives. History is more than facts and dates memorized for a test in school, and I want to help the understanding of the people in-

involved and the lives they lived that make Sturgis the place it is.

Leona Howe Schroeder (Secretary): I was born and raised in Sturgis and attended St. Martin's Academy, graduating in 1962. I received my teaching degree from BHSC in 1970 and taught US History in Rapid City and Columbus NE, as well as working in municipal government and owning a video store in Moorcroft, WY, before retiring in 2010. I moved back to Sturgis a couple of years ago and got involved in the Historical Society at that time. I enjoy learning more about the history of the area and working with all the members of the Board.

David Super: Comanche Court (today's Meade Avenue) was my home base in Sturgis following my little family's 1954 move to the frontier from Minneapolis. After finishing high school in 1965 and a lackluster collegiate career first at USD and then BHSU, my working years began as a newspaper reporter/photographer in Sturgis, Sioux Falls and Rapid City. I entered active duty military service via the National Guard and spent more than three decades in the Washington, D.C. region. I now live in Rapid City where I work as a freelance writer and tour guide.

Please send comments, corrections, or ideas for future newsletter content to:

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Sturgis Main Street in 1942 (looking west)

Who was Curley Grimes? ... continued

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 papers, which were proclaiming the two "law-men" as heroes for ridding 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, but both refused to come back until much later.

It was a full six-months before, in August of 1880, 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 most 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 that territory 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 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, 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 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 doesn't 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."

~



The Charles Nolin Monument Update ... Ross Lamphere

The committee has made great progress since our last report. Sturgis Regional Hospital has been a great partner and work on the consolidation of facilities will begin this fall along with work on the Nolin Monument.

Don't worry when you notice that the Monument is taken down. We must build a

good foundation to better support the rebuilt Monument on the same site. There will be several additions as well. The committee has decided to include a total of 5 kiosks to help tell the story behind Charles Nolin and this community. The kiosks will include a short description along with pictures and links to web sites for those interested in learning more

about each topic. They include the Ft. Laramie Treaties, Broken Promises, Charles Nolin, Ft. Meade and Sturgis. All stone work will be done by talented local contractor Tom Hildebrand.

The total budget for the project has been set at \$60,000, which will all come from private donations, and a \$25,000 matching grant from the Dead-

wood Historic Preservation Fund. All donations are tax deductible. Please put [Nolin Monument](#) on your donation.

Contributions can be made to:

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

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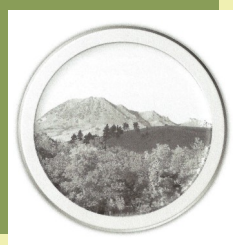
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Sturgis & Meade County
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*"The past actually happened but
history is only what someone
wrote down."*