





Photo Courtesy of Bob Davis

#### **Inside this issue:**

History Day 2025's Ar-	<i>1-3</i>
chaeology Theme Re-	
veals Drunken Soldiers	
Paths	

Historic House	1-2
Plaques	

#### Camp Ruhlen Living 3-5 History Held at Fort

#### New Archaeological 6-7 Display Installed at Fort Meade Museum

### Tune in to our 7 YouTube Channel for Videos on History

## History at High Noon: 8 "What's in the Names? For Wood Place and Besant Park Road – Stagecoaches and Trains"

Scoop of History:	9
Company F	

West River History	11-
Conference 2025: His-	13
toric 1876 Deadwood:	
I IVING the PAST!	

President's	Message	15

#### Calendar of Events 15

#### Edited by Logan Lamphere

## History Day 2025's Archaeology Theme Reveals Drunken Soldiers Paths ... Logan Lamphere

Sturgis & Meade County History Day was held on June 7 at the Sturgis Community Center.

The theme this year was "Archaeology of the Sturgis and Meade County Area." Keynote speakers gave presentations in the Sturgis Community Center Theater.

Attendees this year included archaeology students from the University of South Dakota, who were in Sturgis for their annual field school at the Bear Butte Creek Historic Preserve.

Dr. Tony Krus from USD, and Aaron Mayer from the South Dakota Archaeological

Society gave a presentation on findings from the "Soap Suds Row" dig near Fort Meade.

After four seasons, the students have definitively identified some of the former cabins where laundresses employed by the U.S. Army lived and worked. Nearby latrines have also yielded many artifacts, including a laundry wringer, buttons, pins, needles, children's toys, shoe pieces, animal bones used for making soap, and a "funky foam" in the ground that is suspected of being a product of soap-making.

A second talk was given by Katie Lamie from the South Dakota State Archaeological Research Center

continued on next page

# Historic Sturgis Plaques Launched... Logan Lamphere

The Sturgis & Meade County

Historical Society has been working on a new project to encourage property owners in Sturgis to install "Year-Built" plaques on buildings 100 years old or older. Built
1 8 9 2

Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society

The project is modeled after ones seen in other towns and cities.

continued on next page

#### History Day 2025 (cont'd)

from Rapid City. She gave a presentation entitled, "Taking One for the Road: An 1878 Bottle Dump Between Grasshopper Jim's Scooptown and Camp Sturgis."



Dr. Tony Krus from USD and Aaron Mayer from the South Dakota Archaeological Society presented an update on recent findings from archaeology students on the Soap Suds Row dig at the Bear Butte Creek Historic Preserve 2024 (Photos by Logan Lamphere)

Lamie's presentation utilized several cutting edge mapping techniques to confirm the exact location of Camp J. G. Sturgis just northwest of Bear Butte. A shovel test on a bottle dump found just northwest of Camp Sturgis, found beer bottles, and only beer bottles that date to the 1878 time period of the camp. The original Scooptown site was a bout another mile west.

Lamie and her team hypothesized that soldiers would visit Scooptown after payday, and take a beer "for the

road" back to camp. Before entering the guarding camp, the archaeologists (who may have had their own experience drinking beer) guessed that soldiers would discard their bottles in the same pile.

Using a path-of-least resistance technique using topography and the known path of the Bismarck-Deadwood Trail, the team proved that the

continued on next page

History Day attendees enjoyed refreshments in the Community Center Meade Room

#### Historic House Plaques (cont'd)

The benefits of such a project could include the following:

- ♦ To raise awareness of historic structures in Sturgis
- ♦ To pique the interest of residents and visitors regarding the history of Sturgis
- ♦ To enhance civic pride

Using Meade County records, the Society has identified over 350 houses and commercial buildings that were built between 1884 (the oldest recorded) through 1925 (100 years ago). A list of these buildings and their owners is available to assist in determining which properties qualify for the plaques.

Each year, about a dozen more buildings will turn 100 years old, becoming eligible for the plaque.

The Society has selected a uniform plaque style which will be manufactured at Rosenbaum's Signs of Rapid City.

The plaques can be ordered at Sturgis Photo & Gifts for \$75. Orders will most likely be placed in batches a few times per year, with the first batch of orders being sent November 1, 2025.

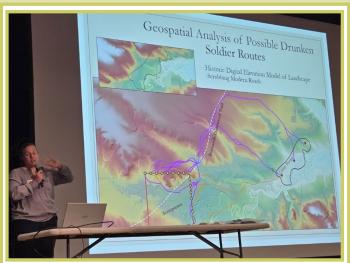
After receiving a plaque, residents are encouraged to install it next to their front door at eye level, so that it is visible from the street. If there is a front porch, and porch pillar may also be a good spot for plaque installation. No predrilling is necessary.

Stop in to Sturgis Photo & Gifts to see a sample plaque and make your order soon to be included in the initial batch of plaques.

We look forward to recognizing Historic Sturgis!



#### History Day 2025 (cont'd)

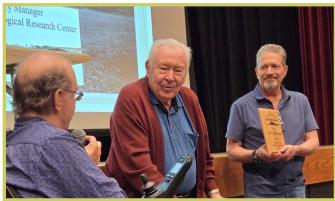


Katie Lamie from the South Dakota State Historical Society Archaeological Research Center in Rapid City presented an analysis of a bottle dump between Grasshopper Jim's Scooptown and Camp Sturgis

bottle dump was indeed on the most likely route soldiers would have taken between Scooptown and Camp Sturgis.

Finally, using a viewshed analysis, the archaeological team proved that the point at which the bottles were discarded was approximately the spot at which a camp guard might be able to first see the returning soldiers.

Amazingly, with Camp Sturgis only being in that location for a few months, the "bottle dump" may have been built up on only five or six evenings of soldiers spending their weekly paychecks in Scooptown, with the bottle dump still present to this day!



Richard Moeller (left) and Mark Rambow (right), present the 2025 Friend of History Award to Guy Edwards (ctr)

Booths displaying local history and related organizations were also displayed in the theater lobby.

#### Camp Ruhlen Living History Held at Fort Meade

...Lee Stroschine

On August 23 and 24, 2025, the Old Fort Meade Museum hosted "Life at Camp Ruhlen 1878," a living history event. The event was held on the old parade ground across from the museum.

Living history reenactors from South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming and Montana showed what life was like for the soldiers in 1878.



Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>- 9am-5pm Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>- 9am-12pm

Building 55 Sheridan St Fort Meade, SD 605-347-9822

Ever wonder what life was like at Camp Ruhlen as Fort Meade was being established? Come exprience it at our living history event.



With financial support from:





Camp Ruhlen was the military camp that was established to build Fort Meade; Camp Ruhlen was renamed to Fort Meade a few months after it was established.

The living historians portrayed soldiers from the 1st Infantry and the 7th Cavalry, which were the regiments that established the camp and built the fort. There were tents that the historians stayed in for the weekend, along with the clothing and equipment the soldiers

continued on next page

#### Camp Ruhlen Living History (cont'd)



Reenactors from around the region participated in the Camp Ruhlen Living History encampment at Fort Meade on August 23-24. (Photos by Jessica Kusser)

would have carried. The clothing and equipment on display showed the differences soldiers had while in the field. Spectators were invited to look at the equipment and ask questions.

Not all the living historians portrayed soldiers. Some portrayed civilians representing Scooptown. One of those portrayed a gambler and had a faro set up to demonstrate that old time card game.

In addition to the items on display, some of the soldiers gave presentations on different aspects of camp life. There was a presentation on the clothing and equipment, one on food



and cooking of the time, and one on military life.

After the spectators left on Saturday evening, the reenactors had some fun. There were a couple of historic photographs that they attempted to replicate. One photo was the well-known photo from the Custer expedition of 1874 of the officers sitting until a tent fly with numerous bottles of champagne.

continued on next page



#### Camp Ruhlen Living History (cont'd)



The museum was pleased with the event and estimates the attendance at over 300 people over the weekend. The museum received a grant from the Mary Chilton DAR Foundation that covered the expenses for the event.

The reenactors from North Dakota are members of the 5th Minnesota Infantry Company D Living History Group. Casey Beck of that group organized the reenactors for the event and worked with board members from the Old Fort Meade Museum for

#### New Archaeological Display Installed at Fort Meade Museum

... Logan Lamphere

display case in the video room at the Fort Meade Mu-

seum has a new display. Representatives from the South Dakota Archaeological Research Center in Rapid City recently assembled some of the more interesting artifacts from the last dig seasons of Soap Suds Row at the Bear Butte Creek Historic Preserve north of Fort Meade.

The display shows various



bottles, buttons, pins, needles, hooks, a horseshoe, plates, and a leather shoe sole all found at the dig site.

The display also details how the students went about documenting and digging the site, and includes some of their instruments and tools used.



continued on next page

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.

Send comments to Mark Rambow at presidentsturgishistory @gmail.com.

#### Help us Identify Bob Lee Photos



#### New Archaeological Display at Fort Meade Museum (cont'd)



Megan Ostrenga Fabricius, Archaeological Records Coordinator at the South Dakota Archaeological Research Center prepared and installed the display of artifacts at the Old Fort Meade Museum from the last few seasons of the Soap Suds Row





#### Tune in to our YouTube Channel for Videos on History

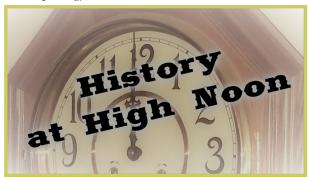
Our YouTube Channel (<u>youtube.com/@sturgishistory</u>) continues to add new videos—now over 40—thanks to Richard Moeller. Here are some of the recent offerings:

- Using Ancestry.com, Part 2 by Mark Rambow, Genealogy Workgroup (February 1, 2025)
- Using Ancestry.com by Mark Rambow, Genealogy Workgroup (January 4, 2025)
- ♦ Let's Get Organized: Examples by Mark Rambow -Genealogy Work Group (November 2, 2024
- 3 145 Years of the Catholic Church in Sturgis by Joan Bachmeier (September 22, 2024)
- ♦ <u>Lakota-Cheyenne Views of Major Battles vs the US:</u> 1865-1877 by Donovan Sprague (June 15, 2024)
- ♦ 2024 Martin C. Beug Friend of History Award -History Day by Ross Lamphere (June 15, 2024)
- ♦ Custer in the Hills by William "Bill" Swanson (June 15, 2024)
- ♦ In Nazi Hands: The POW Experience of Sturgis' 109th Engineers by Mark Rambow (April 13, 2024)
- ♦ "Immigration and Naturalization Research" by Mark Rambow (April 6, 2024)
- ♦ "Beyond Vital Records: Finding Your Ancestor's Story" by Mark Rambow (November 18, 2023)
- Mow to Dress Your Soldier by Lee Stroschine (September 23, 2023)
- "Break Down Your Brick Walls!" by Mark Rambow
   (September 16, 2023)



# History at High Noon: "What's in the Names? For Wood Place and Besant Park Road – Stagecoaches and Trains" October 17 ... Richard Moeller

Ur next season will start October 17 with "What's in the names? For Wood Place and Besant Park Road – Stagecoaches and Trains" by Nancy Davis. Travel with Nancy as she shares her ancestral history of the Bessant (correct spelling) and Wood families.



The Bessant family story is one of tragedy, survival and eventual success. Samuel Bessant (her great-great grandfather) built the Besant Park stage stop that connected Cheyenne with the Northern Hills. The Homestake Mine and gold brought the development of railroad lines throughout the Black Hills and the demise of stagecoach travel. One narrow gauge line bordered the Wood family homestead just north of Besant Park Road. Nancy's great grandfather, Archie Wood, a dynamic entrepreneur, ran the Dumont section house, the store and post office among many other pursuits. The ease of travel by train found a unique friendship between Archie and Gerty (a midwife) Wood and three historical figures: Deadwood Dick, Calamity Jane and Poker Alice.

The History of the Jackpine Gypsies by Brett Winsell with a Panel will be our November 21 program.

We are always looking for ideas. If you would like to tell your family's history or have something history-based, please contact Richard Moeller (running2win@gmail.com, 605-939-3789), Ross Lamphere

(<u>rosslamphere@gmail.com</u>, 605-490-3110), or Diana Hayes (605-347-3007). To learn more, visit <u>sturgisarts.org</u> or <u>youtube.com/@sturgispubliclibrary</u>.

#### Scoop of History—November 15: Who Were the Men of Company F, 109th ENG Regiment (Combat), 34th Division?

In Honor of Veterans Day, the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society will have a Scoop of History titled "Who Were the Men of Company F, 109th ENG Regiment (Combat), 34th Division?" presented by Beverly Rosenboom.

This presentation is based on research of the lives of the men listed on the "July, 1941 Official Roster, Camp Claiborne, Louisiana."



Eighty-eight of the 107 service members listed on the roster

are from South Dakota—most from Sturgis and the Black Hills area.

The presentation will be held at the Sturgis Public Library on Saturday, November 15, at 1:00 p.m.



## Custer Marker Maintained by a Special Connection



The marker and flag commemorating the Custer Expedition camp site of 1874 east of Sturgis on Fort Meade Way has been maintained for the last 10 years or so by A.J. Chipowsky, who lives nearby on Cattail Place and owns A.J.'s Repair. Other neighbors have helped. The site used to be maintained by a 4H club.

"I see people from out of state stopping there to take photos!" said Chipowsky. He is originally from New Jersey and started coming to Sturgis for the Rally starting in 1984 before moving here in 1997. The 7th Cavalry guidon pennants have been donated by Ole Smith and Greg Harrington.

Just after buying the property, A.J. was going through an old trunk of his mother's and found old documents and items of his grandfather, Charles Way Mathuse from Titusville, New Jersey, who happened to be stationed at Fort Meade in 1906-07!

The sign reads "Camp Site Gen. Custer Expedition Aug 14-15, 1874 Entire command of 7th Cavalry consisting of 1200 men and horses 110 wagons and equipment." (Photo by Logan Lamphere)

#### Step Up Your Research with AI

#### ...Mark Rambow

Our next Genealogy

Workgroup is scheduled for Saturday, October 4, at 1 pm. We will be meeting in the Community Room at the Sturgis Public Library.

Our topic will be "Step Up Your Research with AI."

Artificial Intelligence is holding a larger and larger role in our lives every day. Your family history research is no different!

From tools to enhance, color-

ize, or even animate your photographs, to "research assistants," some built into your favorite Genealogy websites, and others as standalone search engines. We will be exploring these resources to increase your comfort as you intersect with AI.

As a follow-up to our conversation last month, I also wanted to send links to some of my favorite genealogy-related YouTube Channels. As I mentioned, there are almost limitless presentations on nearly every discipline in Family History on YouTube. Some of these people are well-respected professionals in the FH community, and I encourage you to drop in on their channels.

First, let's start with a couple of essential channels to visit, like and subscribe:

- voutube.com/@sturgishistory Channel for Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society
- voutube.com/@sturgispubliclibrary Sturgis Public
   Library Channel

#### **GENEALOGY WORKGROUP**



#### Step Up Your Research with Al

Learn the basics about <u>using Artificial Intelligence</u> in your genealogy, offering tools for your research, writing, photos, and so much more!

#### Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025, 1 pm - Sturgis Public Library.

For more information: (605) 347-2624, lstroschine@sturgisgov.com



The Genealogy Workgroup, a program of the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society and the Sturgis Public Library, meets the first Saturday of every month.

The Public is Always Welcome!



Then you can learn more at:

- voutube.com/@GenealogyTV GenealogyTV is my favorite! Connie Knox is amazing!
- voutube.com/@AncestryAimee Aimee Cross is another amazing pro!
- ♦ youtube.com/@AncestryUS Ancestry.com's home channel
- ♦ youtube.com/@familysearch Family Search Channel
- ♦ <u>youtube.com/@familytreemagazine</u> Great Channel from the equally amazing Family Tree Magazine
- voutube.com/@BYULibraryFamilyHistory BYU's
   Family History Studies Department. These are a little
   more dry and delivered like college lectures, but the content is awesome!

I look forward to seeing you all on October 4th!

#### Lamphere Presented at South Dakota Archaeological Society

At the September 9 meeting of the Black Hills chapter of the South Dakota Archaeological Society in Rapid City, Logan Lamphere gave a presentation on the work he did with the Historic Sturgis plaque project.

Of particular interest to employees at the South Dakota Archaeological Research Center was his use of Meade County's online Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping tool and the data used to create a map of properties older than 100 years within the City of Sturgis. The presentation is recorded on their YouTube channel: <a href="mailto:youtube.com/@SDAS1x1">youtube.com/@SDAS1x1</a>.

#### West River History Conference to be Held October 1-3 in Deadwood

he 33rd annual West River History Conference will be held in Deadwood, a National Historic Landmark city.

The 2025 theme will be "Historic 1876 Deadwood: LIVING the PAST!" The schedule of speakers are on the next two pages. Below is the current WRHC Board of Directors. To learn more and register, visit continued on next page westriverhistoryconference.org.



#### West River History Conference (cont'd)



#### **2025 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

October 1-3, 2025 (as of 9-19-25)

#### Historic 1876 Deadwood, South Dakota

A National Historic Landmark City

Venue: Muley Lodge, 20829 Mattson Lane, Deadwood, SD

#### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1ST

1pm - Insider Tour: CLOVERLEAF MINE SURFACE and Fall Foliage TOUR @ Roubaix (must register-bus transportation provided with guide from History Below the Pines-walking required ) Bus courtesy: AFFORDABLE ADVENTURES.

4pm - Insider Tour: Deadwood - HISTORIC GREEN DOOR CLUB
(Downtown Deadwood Main St. above Sick Boy's Motorcycles)

**5:30pm - Welcome Mixer** with *complimentary* light hors d'oeuvres, wine and beverages *for members only* at **Muley Lodge** featuring:

RANDY BENDER, historian, Stories & Songs from Old Fort Meade

#### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2ND

7:30am Welcome Table and NETWORK CAFÉ open with complimentary

coffee bar, variety pastries and more

8am Welcome. Board Introduction and Sponsor Thank You,

TIM VELDER, President, Board of Directors

Welcome, CHARLES EAGLESON, Deadwood City Commissioner

Conference Notes, LAURA HOVEY NEUBERT, Executive Director

8:30am JACQUELINE WYATT, The Vore Site-Communal Bison Hunting

During A Time of Transition

Pam LEVI KESSLER, History Below the Pines presents Black Hills

Forgotten History

9:30am BRAD TENNANT, West of the 100th Meridian

10am NETWORK CAFÉ break

10:30am JUSTIN HORN, Bear Butte or Bust: Lieutenant G.K. Warren's

Three Western Expeditions

11am TIM VELDER, Running Antelope-The Chief of the \$5 Bill

11:30am DAVID WOLFF, Monopoly and Competition: Railroads Arrive in

the Black Hills, 1885-1893

12pm NETWORK CAFÉ and COMMUNITY UPDATES— complimentary

**BUFFET LUNCH** 

12:45pm KEYNOTE: KEVIN KUCHENBECKER, notable Historic Preservation

projects and JIM WILLIAMS, Deadwood History Update

1:30pm PAUL HIGBEE, Fayette Cook: Pioneer Educator and Fruit Farmer

2pm HAROLD 'BILL' O'DONNELL, The Prairie Pantry: an examination

of the multitudes of natural foods available on the northern plains

2:30pm JIM MCKEOWN, The Kids Were Great: the 1954 Deadwood

Basketball Team continued on next page



#### 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 <u>SturgisHistory.org</u>, and click on *Membership and Donations—>Membership*, fill out the membership form (renewing members must also fill our 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 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-ma	il:			
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 Soc P.O. Box 221 Sturgis, SD 57785	ciety		
You may also register, pay dues, and donate online with a credit card or PayPal at: www.SturgisHistory.org				

#### Message from the President's Desk

...Mark Rambow

With the coming of Autumn, everything seems to slow down and speed up at the same time.

We are officially past the busy summer season, and now there is time for more local activities and programs. As you can tell by our listing of upcoming events, there is no shortage of events for anyone interested in area or local history, genealogy, or a variety of other topics!

While we have events of our own, we also continue to partner with a variety of local interests, and are happy to include them in our newsletter, website and social media.

If you have anything relating to area history, culture and research, please feel free to reach out and we will get it included here!

In the meantime, enjoy the extended list of activities happening in the next couple of months. There is something for everyone!

Mark Rambow



#### Calendar of Upcoming Events

Wednesday—Friday, October 1-3 — <u>WEST RIVER HISTORY CONFERENCE</u> "Deadwood: LIVING the PAST!", Deadwood

Friday-Saturday, October 3-4, 6:00-8:00 p.m. — <u>TWILIGHT TOURS OF OLD FORT MEADE</u>, Fort Meade Museum

Saturday, October 4, 1:00 p.m. — GENEALOGY WORK GROUP, Sturgis Public Library

Friday, October 17, 12:00 p.m. — <u>HISTORY AT HIGH NOON</u>, "What's in the Names? For Wood Place and Besant Park Road – Stagecoaches and Trains" by Nancy Davis, Sturgis Public Library

Tuesday, October 21, 6:30 p.m. — <u>MONTHLY BOARD MEETING</u> Zoom/Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce

Saturday, November 1, 1:00 p.m. — GENEALOGY WORK GROUP, Sturgis Public Library

Saturday, November 15, 1:00 p.m. — <u>SCOOP OF HISTORY</u> "Company F, 109th ENG Regiment," presented by Bev Rosenboom, Sturgis Public Library

Tuesday, November 18, 6:30 p.m. — <u>MONTHLY BOARD MEETING</u> Zoom/Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce

Friday, November 21, 12:00 p.m. — <u>HISTORY AT HIGH NOON</u>, "Jackpine Gypsies," presented by Brett Winsell Sturgis Public Library

#### STURGIS & MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 221, Sturgis, SD 57785

#### **Board Officers**

Mark Rambow, President, presidentsturgishistory@gmail.com

Ross Lamphere, Vice President

Jim Holland, Secretary

Janice Lundgren, Treasurer

Joan Bachmeier, Historian

#### On Line

Website:

www.sturgishistory.org

YouTube:

youtube.com/@sturgishistory

Instagram:

instagram.com/sturgishistory

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/sturgishistory.org

#### **OUR SPONSORS**

City of Sturgis

Oasis Bar & Fireside Lounge

**Historical Society** 

KBHB Radio

The HomeSlice Group

Meade County Commission

Sturgis Photo & Gifts

#### 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