

STURGIS & MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter, December 2021, Vol. 6, Issue 1



Photo Courtesy of Bob Davis

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HISTORY DAYS THEME TO BE "PRESERVING YOUR HISTORY" ON JUNE 17 AND 18

History Day has become History Days, with two days of planned events on June 17 and 18, 2022.

The Historical Society Board of Directors has chosen the theme, "Preserving Your History" to focus on the efforts of local families, communities and organizations to document and preserve their stories

Stay tuned for more details!

Dode Lee receives Friend of History Award ... *Richard Moeller and Logan Lamphere*

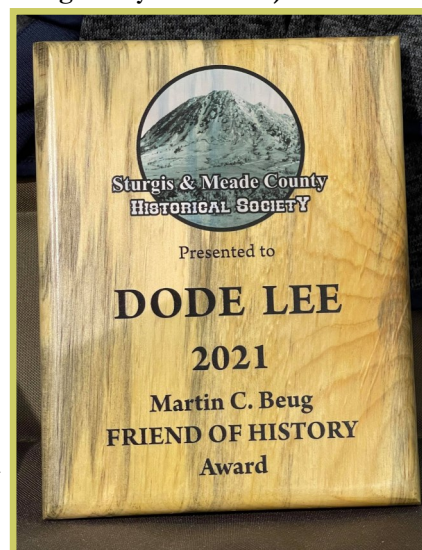
The Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society's presented Dode Lee with the 2021 Martin C. Beug Friend of History Award on December 1, 2021. According to Richard Moeller, who wrote the nomination, Dode Lee has been a major player in the preservation of Sturgis and Meade County history for over 40 years. She spearheaded the establishment of the Sturgis Area Arts Council and History at High Noon, a monthly local history program.

In 2008 she was recognized at the West River History Conference for her contribution to local and regional history. Even her late husband, Bob Lee, mentioned her "constant encouragement" as pivotal in his own history writings and research.

Though on a smaller scale, even in her 90s, she continues to be involved. She is a true example of "preserving, protecting, and promoting Sturgis and Meade County History", which are the criteria for this award.



Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society member Richard Moeller presented Dode Lee with the 2021 Martin C. Beug Friend of History Award on December 1, 2021. (Photo by Deb Holland; Award designed by Bob Davis)



Collection of Stories replaced History Day 2020 ... *Logan Lamphere*

As we all reluctantly participated in history-in-the-making via the Corona virus pandemic, cancelled events gave way to new and creative ways to keep community organizations moving forward. The Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society was no different.

In-person meetings were replaced with on-line meetings held via the Zoom virtual meeting application, and have since evolved into hybrid meetings, with some members participating in person, and some still “dialing-in” via Zoom.

Members believe this will be a handy tool to have when blizzards threaten travel to wintertime meetings. Folks who live outside of Sturgis also find the Zoom meetings as a great way to stay involved and connected with Historical Society progress.

The board also agreed to proceed with History Days on June 17 and 18, 2022. Watch for details.

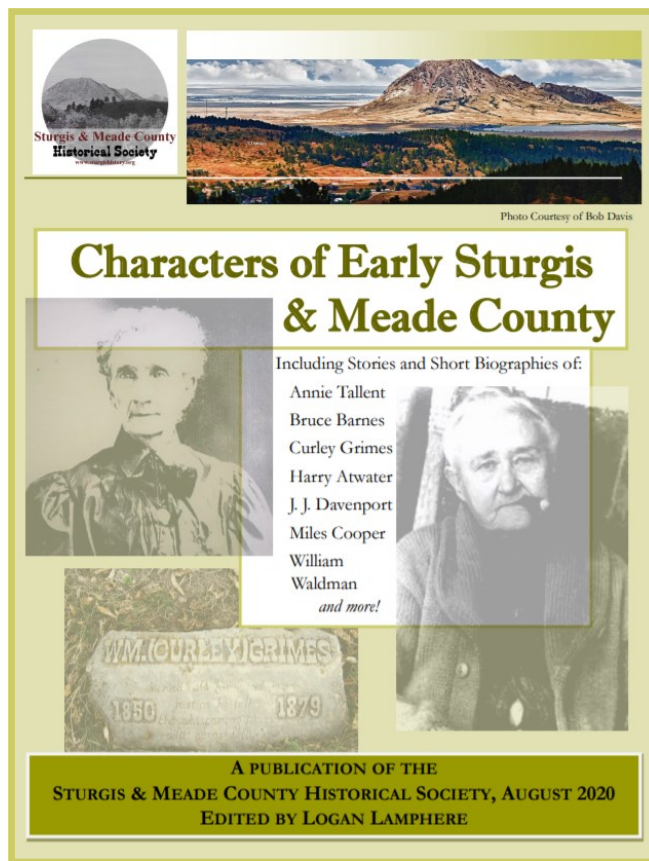
Members will also resume the Scoop of History sessions this winter—keep a watch for dates and topics.

After cancelling what was supposed to be the 6th annual History Day in 2020, society members looked for other ways to gather, document, and disseminate the stories of our local history. From this sprang the “Characters of Early Sturgis & Meade County” e-booklet.

The free, electronic-for-now booklet contains stories on familiar and not-so-familiar colorful characters from early Sturgis and Meade county history.

We plan to continue adding to this publication, so if you are interested in doing a story, please let us know!

You can download a free copy at sturgishistory.org/images/articles/char_early_smc.pdf



Subjects include:

- ◇ **Harry Atwater**
- ◇ **Bruce Barnes**
- ◇ **Miles Cooper**
- ◇ **Curley Grimes**
- ◇ **J. J. Davenport**
- ◇ **Nellie McPherson McMahon**
- ◇ **Major Marcus Reno**
- ◇ **Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis**
- ◇ **Annie Tallent**
- ◇ **Poker Alice Tubbs**
- ◇ **William Waldman .**

Bear Butte Creek Historic Preservation Council Update

... *Ross Lamphere*

It has been a little over two years since the spring of 1999, when the first idea of a group to help preserve the area along Bear Butte Creek on the east side of Sturgis, SD, was born. Initial efforts of Mike Elliott, originally having grown up at Ft. Meade, started the process that eventually evolved

book *Soap Suds Row* by Jennifer J. Lawrence, she writes that “not all laundresses lived in squalor; some of the housing was quite nice. At Fort Meade, South Dakota, the army provided single-family houses for laundresses and their families. The dwellings were conveniently located on Bear Butte Creek, with enough housing for thirteen laundresses” (p. 70, *Soap Suds Row* by Jennifer Lawrence).



Early Day picture of Ft Meade (*Soap Suds Row* left center)
(Photo courtesy Old Fort Meade Museum)

into our Preservation Council.

In an effort to honor his late father Al, Mike enlisted the help of Ross Lamphere, a local living in the area, to become involved. Together, they grew the idea into an opportunity to help preserve a much larger area encompassing land owned by the Meade 46-1 School District.

Fast forward to the spring of 2021, and the council is now composed of a Board of Directors representing a wide and diverse group from Native Americans, City, County, State groups and agencies. The Council is a 501c3 classified organization, with a 99-year lease on approximately 190 acres of property owned by the Meade 46-1 School District that has significant historical value. Included among those valuable areas is an area referred to as Soap Suds Row.

During the time from as early as 1802, to the War of 1812, Civil War, Indian Wars, up to the early 1900s, the U.S. Military had laundresses that were employed to provide laundry services to the troopers and officers that served at many military posts. Fort Meade was no exception. In fact, in the

108 *Soap Suds Row*



The Laundress Nash story was covered by the Bismarck Tribune in detail and picked up by East Coast newspapers. This artwork claiming to be "an authentic portrait" appeared in the National Police Gazette.

At Ft. Abraham Lincoln in Dakota Territory (modern day Mandan, ND), Libbie Custer's laundress, Mrs. Nash, was actually a man who may have been transgender.

Bear Butte Creek Historic Preservation Council

continued from Page 3

Another valuable historic area contained in the lease is what is known as the “firing range.” Most of the use of the firing range took place after the time of laundresses, perhaps more in the era of WWI up to WWII. The firing range is in the process of being documented. It also has some very unique problems of how to preserve and protect the area moving forward.

Perhaps the most exciting portion of the Historic Preservation Council’s opportunities lie with the Native American history. The leased land borders Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property, and together there are significant historical sites from which to draw interest. We are working together to move



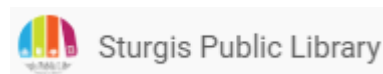
Petroglyphic rock found on subject area housed at Ft Meade Museum (Photo courtesy Old Fort Meade Museum)

our preservation efforts forward and at the same time offer educational and tourism opportunities.

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History at High Noon Archive

Did you know that the Sturgis Public Library maintains a repository of previous “History at High Noon” videos on YouTube? You can view them all, including the last one in November entitled “Murder in the Night. Who shot Father Belknap and why?” by local historian Tim Velder at [youtube.com/channel/UCZdwSKpTXdyhumfKmTTvUA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZdwSKpTXdyhumfKmTTvUA). (Or instead of typing that awful URL, go to YouTube.com and search for “Sturgis Public Library” and subscribe for free.)



Membership Report ... *Richard Moeller, Membership Chair*

As things seem to be getting back to “normal,” the Sturgis and Meade County Historical Society continues with their mission of “bring together persons interested in preserving, protecting, and promoting the history of Sturgis, Meade County and the surrounding region.”

We are getting quite a collection of artifacts and are looking forward to sharing them in a more permanent location. We are also looking at bringing back historical presentations,

events and publications.

Unfortunately none of this is possible without funding. The simplest way to help with this is by purchasing an annual membership.

Whether you have supported us in the past or are looking at becoming a new member, please visit the membership page on our website at www.sturgishistory.com/membership-donations.

What are We Reading? ... *Logan Lamphere*

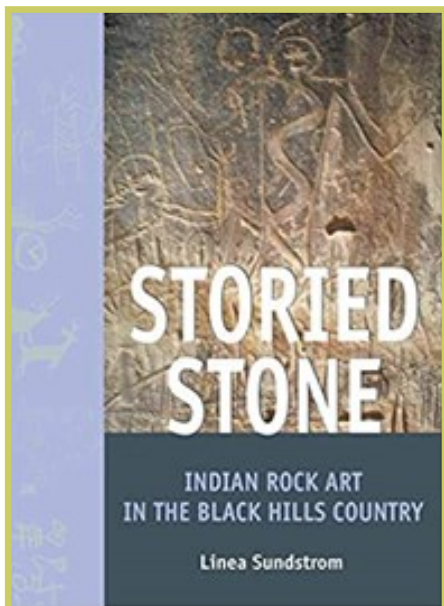
Here are some books members are reading:

Storied Stone: Indian Rock Art in the Black Hills Country

by Linea Sundstrom
ISBN-10: 0806135964

(Description from Amazon): Ancient petroglyphs and paintings on rocky cliffs and cave walls preserve the symbols and ideas of American Indian cultures. From scenes of human-to-animal transformations found in petroglyphs dating back thousands of years to contact-era depictions of eagle trapping, rock art provides a look at the history of the Black Hills country over the last ten thousand years. *Storied Stone* links rock art of the Black Hills and Cave Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming to the rich oral traditions, religious beliefs, and sacred places of the Lakota, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Mandan, and Hidatsa Indians who once lived there.

Drawing on more than twenty years of fieldwork, Linea Sundstrom identifies the chronological depth, stylistic variations, and multiple interpretations of petroglyphs and cliff paintings in this richly illustrated volume. Sundstrom describes the age, cultural affiliation, and meaning of a wide variety of petroglyphs and rock paintings—from warriors' combat scenes and images related to girls' puberty rites to depictions of creation myths and sacred visions.



Soap Suds Row: The Bold Lives of Army Laundresses 1802-1876

by Jennifer J. Lawrence
ISBN-10 193714710X

(Description from Amazon): Women have always followed the troops, but military laundresses were the first to be carried on the rolls of the U.S. Army. They traveled and lived alongside the soldiers during two of the most important conflicts in United States history: the Civil War and the war on the western frontier. A few laundresses made names for themselves. Laundresses who got written up in records, diaries, and newspapers were often involved in colorful or unfortunate circumstances. No, they were not all loose women. Some were; however, most were simply brave, adventurous, and unorthodox women. They marched with the army for hundreds of miles, carrying their babies and tugging small children behind them.



Among the first non-native women on lonely frontier outposts, they waited in frightened huddles in camps and forts for their soldier-husbands to return from dangerous campaigns.

Susie King Taylor, born a slave, taught both black children and soldiers to read and write between washing piles of laundry. A Mexican-American War laundress was eulogized as able to whip any man, fair fight or foul; shoot a pistol better than anyone; and outplay or out-cheat any gambler. A well-known laundress from the Indian Wars period, Mrs. Nash, kept a secret that remained undiscovered until her death. Little note was made of laundresses who worked hard day after day, like Maggie Flood, who faced special family challenges on the frontier.

HISTORY DAYS 2022: Preserving Your History...*Mark Rambow*

Message from the President's desk

While the pandemic wreaked havoc on our activity for the past year or so, the Historical Society is very excited to announce that we will hold History Days again this coming summer. (Other activities and events will be announced as they are planned.)

History Days 2022 will be held on June 17 and 18 at the Sturgis City Auditorium. Our theme for the year is "Preserving Your History," focused on the efforts of local families, communities and organizations to document and preserve their stories.

We will be offering programming about methods and tools for researching, preserving and sharing your history.

Applications are welcome for booths or presentations from individuals wishing to share their story and experiences.

We hope to get an agenda put together by March, so please reach out and let us know of your ideas!



Photo credit -

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/pixagraphics/3414730395>

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Friday, January 22, 2022, Noon — HISTORY AT HIGH NOON (Sturgis Area Arts Council), "How Did I Get Here? Cowboy Poetry and Music with Robert Dennis,"
Sturgis Public Library

Dennis, from Red Owl, will share some family history and how this child born in Switzerland ended up in Meade County.

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

Tuesday, February 15, 6:30 p.m. — MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Chamber/Zoom

Tuesday, March 15 - 6:30 p.m. — MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Chamber/Zoom

Friday & Saturday, June 17 & 18 — 6TH ANNUAL HISTORY DAYS,
Sturgis City Auditorium

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 Day. We will accept your check or credit card;
- b) fill out the membership form below and mail it with your check to the address listed on the form; or
- c) go online to the Sturgis & Meade County Historical Society website at SturgisHistory.org, and click on *Membership and Donations*—> *Membership*, fill out the membership form (renewing members must also fill out a new form), and make your payment through PayPal using your credit card.



If you have any questions, please contact Membership Chair Richard Moeller at running2win@gmail.com 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. 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

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



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The Knuckle Saloon

The Local

The Oasis Bar

Uncle Louie's Diner

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