Leland D. Case: His Legacy to Western History

Editor's Note: Since publication of the last number of The Historian, the Case Library's founder, inspiration and staunchest supporter has joined the ranks of Western historians departed. Leland D. Case died at his home in Tucson, Ariz., Dec. 16, 1986. Since BHSC's Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies and The Black Hills Historian owe their existence to Leland's generosity and determination that the region's history be preserved, the lead article of this issue will be a memorial to our friend, Leland D. Case. Special thanks go to Marshall Truax and Carol Goddard for their help in preparation of this article.

Facts fascinated Grandfather, especially new facts. You will read that as a boy at Claremont he had to know how grist mills operated and shoes were cobbled. Then there is his simply narrated experience of climbing Lookout Mountain at Chattanooga, though his strength was strained by sickness. High drama had been played on the slopes of Lookout—by Minnesota boys, too—and he must see it for himself.

Reaching out for new experiences was characteristic. In 1922, grin of gratification spreading over his face as he passed the headgear to me for my turn aloft. It was a great day for both of us, and we said so to the pilot. He was a young Swede fellow, name of Lindbergh. How could I possibly know that five years later in France I, then a reporter for the Paris Herald, would be interviewing him about a hop he had completed the day before across the Atlantic? Did we talk of St. Cloud? The truth is that the moment was so heady the St. Cloud episode didn't occur to me until long afterward.

The Lindbergh interview was followed by dozens of others during the next half-century. These included such notables as Herbert Hoover, Carlos Romulo, Will Durant, Arthur Compt, Sinclair Lewis, Walter Pitkin, Badger Clark, Albert Einstein and Andrei Gromyko.

In 1928 Case returned again to the Black Hills. With brother Francis he became co-publisher of the Hot Springs Star, a joint enterprise that continued until 1934. Contacts that Case made during his Chicago and Paris years and his growing reputation as a talented journalist brought an increasing number of challenging opportunities. In 1930 Case became editor of the Rotarian magazine of Rotary International, a post which he would hold until 1950.

During the Hot Springs years...
Case's father was a Methodist missionary, and the family moved from northwestern Iowa to Sturgis, SD, in 1909. The Case family included five children: sisters Joyce Arman, Caroline Mary, and Estelle Josephine; and Leland's brother Francis, who would become United States Senator from South Dakota.

Case graduated from Rapid City High School in 1918, and by that time his career as a journalist had already begun. Case served as high school reporter for Alice Gossage's Rapid City Daily Journal in 1917-1918. Case began his college career at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, SD, 1918-1920, and graduated from Macalester College in St. Paul in 1922.

After graduation Case embarked briefly on a teaching career at St. Cloud, Minn., Technical High School 1921-1922. Case's time in St. Cloud gave him the opportunity to be near someone whom he had always admired greatly--his maternal grandfather, Samuel Higbee Grannis. Years later Case and his aunt, Grannis' daughter, Edith Grannis, collaborated to edit publication of Grannis' memoirs:


Images of Case's grandfather in the memoirs indicate that, while Leland was concerned, perhaps the apple fell pretty close to the tree. The tremendous optimism, energy and inquisitiveness familiar to those of us who knew Case certainly characterized Grandfather Grannis. Perhaps Case could best describe this in his own words in a passage from the "Memoirs":

"Leland Case in perhaps his favorite role--the Westerner. In this instance he is accepting a buffalo skull gift from Don Reed at the dedication of the Jedediah Smith marker near Buffalo Gap in May 1976. (Clara Lobdell photo)"

when I was living with him at St. Cloud, a barnstorming pilot flew in one day and for three dollars would give one a ride over the city. At the supper table I mentioned this and as casually as possible announced that tomorrow I would fly--then awaited protests. Grandpa tugged at his beard. "Are many going up?" he finally asked. I assured him that the pilot was doing well and hadn't had a mishap.

"Then I'll fly too," he said in his that's-all-there-is-to-it way. I gulped and Aunt Edith started to sputter, "But Daddy!"

"You see," he went on, "when I was a boy back in New Hampshire I rode the first train of cars we had there. Here in Minnesota I courted your Grandma in an ox cart--and later bought the nicest new buggy in Vernon Center. Now we have an automobile. Leland, I'm 83 years old and if I'm going to fly before I die, I'd better go with you tomorrow."

Fly he did. I vividly recall the afterwards.

In 1923 Case returned to the Black Hills. He became city editor for the Lead Daily Call for two years. After some practical experience at Lead, Leland moved on to the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., where he served as an assistant professor of journalism for three years and as managing editor of Northwestern's Alumni News in 1925. While at Northwestern, Case received a master of arts degree in 1926.

During this period Case achieved his first great scoop as a journalist. He spent part of this period in Paris as a copy reader, reporter and "in-slot" city editor of the Paris Edition of the New York Herald-Tribune. Case was one of the first American journalists to interview Lindbergh in Paris after his 1927 trans-Atlantic flight. A photograph with Lindbergh hangs proudly in a hall gallery in the Case home in Tucson.

Unfortunately, many of Clark's poems through the years were so often quoted that the author's name was seldom credited. Folklorists today occasionally "discover" Clark rhymes being sung by cowboys to lull restless cattle or enthral tourists. Friends sent him some 50 postcards with "A Cowboy's Prayer" "author unknown." Badger's typically whimsical response was "yes, unfortunately."

The early 1930s brought one other big change in the life of Leland Case. When his work on the Rotarian took him back to Chicago, Case met a talented folksinger
The Black Hills Historian
Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies
Black Hills State College
Spearfish, South Dakota 57783

Leland D. Case Library Committee
Ms. Dora Arn Jones, Chairperson
Dr. Clifford Trump
Dr. Larry Landis
Dr. Paul Haivala
Dr. David B. Miller
Editor, Black Hills Historian
Dr. George Earley
Dr. R.D. Theisz
Dr. W. Edwin Erickson
Mr. Donald E. Young

Friends of Case Library Officers
Donald E. Young, Spearfish, SD
President
Don Howe, Spearfish, SD
Treasurer
Patty Clarkson, Spearfish, SD
Secretary

Field Historians
Richard Hart (1980)
1517 Davenport
Sturgis, SD 57785
Clara Lodbell (1978)
711 Plum Tree Lane
Rapid City, SD 57702
Georgia Hanson (1978)
Box 468
Spearfish, SD 57783
Irma Klock (1978)
320 Railroad
Lead, SD 57754
W. Rimrock Highway
Rapid City, SD 57701
Helen Clark
927 E. Calle Aragon
Laguna Hills, Calif. 92653
Helen Rezatto
RR 6, Box 3460
Rapid City, SD 57702
Mabel Brown (1975)
Box 746
Newcastle, Wyo. 82701

Case Library Donors
The holdings of the Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies continue to grow, and the generosity of donors is a major reason for that growth. The summary of donations which follows includes gifts received during the period of Sept. 7, 1985 through Aug. 31, 1986.

MATERIALS RECEIVED:
American Association of University Women, Spearfish Branch: monographs: 1 title (1 volume) -1 piece

Black Hills History Conference: cassette tapes: 5; programs: 2 titles (15 copies); typescripts: 7 titles -27 pieces

Black Hills State College: monographs: 16 titles (22 volumes); serials: 7 titles (33 issues to 9 volumes) photographs: 1; brochures: 2 (53 copies); bylaws: 1; letters: 1; minutes: 1 title (3 copies) -114 pieces

Brown, Mabel E.: newspaper clippings: 2; newspapers: 1 title (2 issues to 1 volume); typescripts: 1 -5 pieces

Buittner, Sarah: newspaper clippings: 58; photographs: 1; programs: 37; notebooks: 1; miscellaneous: 74 items -171 pieces

Case, Leland D.: monographs: 1 title (1 volume) -1 piece

Oedekoven, Phyllis: typescript (photocopy): 1 -1 piece

Parker, Watson: extract (photocopy): 1; proof copy: 1 -2 pieces

Shunk, Harold: tapes: 8 -8 pieces

South Dakota School of Mines and Technology: monographs: 1 -1 piece

Spearfish Daily Queen City Mail: news releases: 8; photographs: 17 -25 pieces

Tiensvold, Opal: monograph: 1 title (1 volume) -1 piece

Truax, Marshall: monographs: 10 titles (11 volumes); serials: 2 titles (21 issues to 7 volumes); photocopies: 17; typescript: 1 -50 pieces

Toms, Donald: monographs: 1 title (1 volume) -1 piece

University of South Dakota: typescript (photocopy): 1 -1 piece

Walker, Dean, Mr. and Mrs.: serials: 1 title (12 issues to 12 volumes) -12 pieces

Young, Donald: monographs: 1 title (1 volume), typescript: 1 -2 pieces
Comprising collections oriented to the Black Hills—a geological/geographical rosette some 60 miles wide and 120 miles long but two centuries deep in history.

(At E.Y. Berry Learning Center; Phone: 605-642-6893)

Purpose of the Friends of the Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies as described in Article II of the organization's bylaws:

"The purpose of this organization shall be to focus campus, regional and national attention on the Leland D. Case Library as an appropriate center for studies, to stimulate gifts of appropriate books, letters, manuscripts and other memorabilia and to raise funds through memberships and other gifts."

An Open Invitation

Those interested in becoming Friends of the CASE Library (everybody is welcome) are encouraged to "saddle up" with those already in the vanguard of enthusiastic supporters. Cash contributions as well as gifts of western historical material are earnestly solicited. Make checks payable to Friends of the Case Library and mail to Don Howe, treasurer, 940 8th St., Spearfish, SD 57783.

Membership fees are:

- Annual Sustaining: $7.50
- Annual Contributing: 50.00
- Annual Endowing: 100.00+
- Life Fellowship: 1,000.00++
- Life Donor: 2,500.00++
- Life Benefactor: 5,000.00++

Annual Endowing Memberships are cumulative; ten will bring a Life Fellowship.

++Funds become Endowment Principal (only income used).

DEPOSITORY MATERIALS RECEIVED:

- American Association of University Women, Spearfish Branch: bylaws, directory and program, scrapbook, treasurer's records, etc.
- Delta Kappa Gamma, Iota Chapter: treasurer's records: 3 books; reports, etc.: 1 notebook
- Northern Hills Community Development: ledger, checkbook, etc.
- Queen City Club of Lawrence County Home Extension Organization: constitutions, minutes, treasurer's records, scrapbook, etc.

RECAPITULATION OF RECEIPTS FOR THE LEVAND D. CASE LIBRARY FOR WESTERN HISTORICAL STUDIES:

DONORS: 31

Monographs: 41 titles (49 volumes)

- Serials: 18 titles (190 issues to 47 volumes)
- Typescripts: 31 titles (33 volumes)
- Photographs:
- Cassettes and tapes:
- Other:
- Manuscript materials 3.128 cu. ft.

TOTALS: 654 pieces, plus 3.128 cu. ft.
Goodbye Standby

Black Hills historians noted the recent passing of the Standby Mill just east of Rochford with a good deal of sorrow. Before it was demolished, the old structure was probably the best remaining example of a wood frame gold refining mill in the Black Hills. Accompanying photos are some from the editor's files showing the mill just a few years ago.

Do you have any old photographs you would be willing to share with Case Library?
The Goat's Eye View of Standby Mine showing roof and dormer details. This photo offers positive proof that even old, fat historians can climb hills if they want to badly enough.

Stone dry walls behind these ore shots offer another view of the quality of construction involved in the old mill and the extent of labor required to construct gold mills in the days before poured reinforced concrete and other modern construction techniques.

Flooring and superstructure where banks of the stamp mills for crushing ore once stood.

Stamp mill banks photographed from another angle. A glance at the size and quantity of timber used in the mill and the amount of labor necessary to erect all of the structure can give the viewer some idea of why costs of restoring Standby made some continued use of the structure out of the question at today's labor and materials prices.
Case—Continued from page 1

named Josephine Altman. Along with common interests in American history and folklore, Leland and Josephine shared similar family backgrounds. She was the daughter of a Lutheran clergyman and seminary president Dr. Frank de Graff Altman and Josephine (Smith) Altman. A University of Nebraska Phi Beta Kappa, Josephine Altman has studied voice at Milan, Fountainbleau and Stockholm and professionally presented programs in Swedish, French, Mexican and Indian arts, crafts and folk songs. On July 28, 1931, Leland and Josephine were married in Knoxville, Tenn.; a union that would last for over 55 years.

variety of frontier history topics. The Buckskin Bulletin, issued quarterly, keeps members worldwide informed of the organization’s activities.

As tourist activity increased following the end of World War II, Case’s attention turned again to one of his favorite subjects—the Black Hills. In 1949 “Lee’s Official Guidebook to the Black Hills and Badlands” became available to area visitors and residents. Written by Case under the sponsorship of the Black Hills and Badlands Association, “Lee’s Guidebook” provided a broad range of historical and geographical information for Hills visitors. Revised editions followed in the 1950s.

As Leland Case celebrated his the city grew toward the place, and the Cases developed their homestead, including adobe buildings, at what became 9900 East Broadway.

In some respects Case’s retirement to Tucson was more like an invasion. For years Case had functioned as President Emeritus of the Westerners and “Keeper of the Pitchfork.” The move to Tucson brought the Westerners International headquarters with it and responsibility for publishing the just-established Buckskin Bulletin.

In characteristic fashion, Case soon had a small army of volunteers at work on various aspects of Westerners functions.

Although he was almost 1,500 miles away, Case’s thoughts continued to drift back to the Black Hills. Remaining active as ever, Case believed there was still work to be done to preserve the heritage of the Hills and prairies where he had spent his youth. Case discussed the concept of a special center to preserve and study the history of the region and the West with the administration and faculty at Black Hills State College. The idea received an enthusiastic reception from the college community and BHSC friends throughout the region, and soon the concept of the Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies was taking shape.

Key elements of the Case Library concept were the donation of Case’s 3,200 volume western history collection and a substantial financial gift to support scholarships for BHSC students and other activities associated with the Case Library. Deserving BHSC seniors would receive the Fayette Cook and Wenona Cook Scholarships. Enter-
totally indestructible. In mid-1986 Leland’s friends began to notice that he seemed less active. Letters discussing Case Library business remained unanswered for more than a week—something which almost never happened. We would guess the reason—Leland was not well. He died at his home in Tucson at the age of 86 on Dec. 16, 1986—the last of the “Chicago group” who founded Westerners International. Case is survived by his wife Josephine and sisters Carol Goddard of Hot Springs and Esther Sunderland of LeSueur, Minn.

Honors have been heaped on Leland Case by the bundle. A partial list, by no means complete, includes a 1949 alumni citation from Macalester College; a 1951 alumni merit award from Northwestern University; the 1959 National Christian Writing Center Award; the 1962 alumnus of the year award from Dakota Wesleyan University; the 1963 St. George’s Award for Distinguished Methodist Service; and the 1964 trustees’ citation from Southwestern University, Winfield, Kans. Case’s honorary doctorates include degrees from Black Hills State College, Dakota Wesleyan University, Simpson College at Indianola, Iowa, Morningside College at Sioux City, Iowa, McKendree College at Lebanon, Ill., and La Grange College, La Grange, Georgia.

Anyone privileged to know Leland can testify that association with him was always a great adventure. Sometimes it was the telephone ringing at 6 a.m. followed by Leland’s voice enthusiastically proclaiming: “I have an idea that...”. Leland’s long-time friend and Case Library field historian Marshall Truax offers an assessment

Case saw most of the American West in his 86 years. This 1977 photograph shows him examining the ruins of the trading post at Wounded Knee, SD. (Marshall Truax photo)
Leland Case never ran out of new projects. Responsibilities as editor of the Rotarian would have been more than enough to keep most individuals busy—but not Leland. He was anxious to share his practical experience in journalism with others. He began work in Chicago on what became “Editing the Day’s News”, a journalism textbook used for years in college classes.

Case’s efforts to promote scholarship were not limited to journalism. Beginning at Dakota Wesleyan University in 1939, he organized a series of college campus-based organizations to gather, study and preserve historical resources. The Friends of the Middle Border at Dakota Wesleyan combined academics and interested people off-campus into a unique organization with diverse interests and broad-based resources.

Success of the Friends of the Middle Border encouraged Case to expand the concept. His idea was an organization that would combine historians, teachers, writers, buffs—anyone with an interest in studying one of Case’s favorite topics—the American frontier. Feb. 25, 1944, in a Chicago suburb, a group gathered by Case and Elmo Scott Watson met to form what became Westerners International. From this small gathering the Westerners have grown into an organization of more than 100 corrals (chapters) in the US, Mexico, Europe and Japan. Westerners corrals hold monthly meetings and have participated in thousands of projects to preserve the history of the American frontier. Brandbooks published by the various corrals examine a wide

50th birthday, he showed no signs of “slowing down.” Friends and relatives who knew him for decades agree that “slowing down” was not in Leland’s nature. He left the Rotarian editorship in 1956, retaining the position of field editor. Soon he was deeply involved in a whole new publishing venture—the creation of Together Magazine, a family journal for Methodists. Case served as founder-editor during 1955-1963. During the same period he was also editorial director for the Christian Advocate, a professional magazine for Methodist clergy. When Case announced that he was “retiring” from these positions, few people who knew the journalist believed that he had chosen the most accurate expression.

They were correct. Case was soon off on a new venture. The Cases went to Stockton, Calif., where Leland became editor of the Pacific Historian. The concept that he applied at Dakota Wesleyan was reborn at Stockton on the University of the Pacific campus, in this instance with the creation of the Holt-Atherton Center for Western Studies. The Jedediah Smith Society also found a home at Stockton. This organization was intended to honor another of Case’s heroes—the great fur trapper and devout Methodist, Jedediah Strong Smith. In a brief period from 1823 to 1831 Smith probably explored more of the Trans-Missouri West than any other single figure during the “mountain man” era.

In 1968 the Cases began a second retirement. Thirty years earlier they had purchased land in the desert east of Tucson. Over the years

ing freshmen would receive one of ten scholarships named for Black Hills pioneers such as Annie D. Tallent, Henry Weston “Preacher” Smith and Joseph W. Pickett.

Speaking at the dedication of the Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies in the spring of 1976, Case compared the event to the mission which brought Pickett to the Black Hills in 1878. Pickett was “the carrier of old New England culture—that which came from Cambridge and Oxford—from Plymouth Rock as a stepping stone to Spearfish.”

Case described the dedication as the beginning of a wellspring for research on the history of the region: “I would like to think of this library as something like Cascade Springs, ever-flowing, pouring out water on a thirsty soul.”

In more than a decade since that dedication, the Case Library has more than doubled its holdings and thousands of dollars of additional financial support have been contributed.

Even Leland D. Case was not which could be echoed by hundreds of the friends Leland made in a long and very busy lifetime:

“All of us who knew Leland and were stimulated by his ‘get up and go’ will always remember him with respect and affection. He was a ‘deer’ and gave so much to preserve and promote the history and collection of records about our great Black Hills. He prodded and cajoled people to do things; to see things that were important to preserve about our past, and the work and life experiences of the pioneers who came to these Hills from 1874 and up to today....He was a man for all seasons who had visions and made those visions come true. The cowboys would say of him ‘he’s a man to ride the range with....We can all say with true affection, ‘Vaya Con Dios Compadre’.”

Vaya Con Dios, indeed.

—David B. Miller