D’em Flormann Boys, Part II
A Sleigh Ride to Deadwood
By Jerry L. Bryant, RPA

In the previous issue of the “Historian,” we met Robert and Charles Flormann. They came to the Black Hills with the gold rush, and while Charles ran a saloon, Robert went into prospecting. The earlier installment closed with Robert investing in the Ft. Meade Hydraulic Co.

As the gold rush slowed some in 1877, mining men such as Bob Flormann looked for new opportunities. One of these opportunities was hydraulic mining. Hydraulic miners used powerful streams of water to disrupt gravel embankments that contained gold. The displaced gravel was then forced through sluices, and the gold recovered. This process had proven successful in California, and some wanted to try it in the Black Hills. Articles concerning the profitability of hydraulic mining began to appear in Black Hills newspapers in the fall of 1877. By the spring of 1878 the Park Pool Hydraulic Company was reportedly working on Whitewood Creek near Deadwood. This company proposed bringing water in from a point two miles below Galena and combining it with the water from Two-Bit creek to provide sufficient water for the hydraulic monitor. Flormann was operating his hardrock mine on the Flormann Claims in Galena at the time, and he may well have gotten his first taste of hydraulic mining then.

These early expressions of hydraulic mining must have ignited a spark in a lot of minds, for soon everyone seemed to be engaged in it. In November of 1879 a man named Durvie arrived in Deadwood with the news of his plans for a grand scale hydraulic works on Rapid Creek. He called it the Ft. Meade Hydraulic Company. That was the last anyone ever heard of Durvie, but the following summer, Sam Sturgis visited the Ft. Meade Hydraulic works and reported being very satisfied with progress made by the new superintendent, Robert Flormann. Robert’s stated plan was to build a 10ft. by 12 ft. tunnel through bedrock, at a point on the creek known as the “Big Bend.” The tunnel would short-cut the creek, and drain 3.5 to 4 miles of the creek bed, barin 300 to 400 acres of gravel. Besides exposing the gravel, the tunnel, which would be 700 feet long and have a drop of more than 70 feet, would provide 2000 miners inches of water for the company’s operations.

Almost a year to the day later, in July 1881, Robert was fired. Robert had several aces up his sleeve though, and when he stopped work, he stopped the company. Robert had no intention of going anywhere until he felt that an equitable settlement had been reached between him and the company. One must assume that this meant money. It seems that while Robert did not own the company he did have all the water rights and mineral claims for that section of Rapid Creek. He also had something else going for him, public opinion. The editor of the Black Hills Daily Times described Robert’s work for the Ft. Meade Hydraulic Company as “both square and efficient,” and that under his guidance, the company’s work had been “pushed forward as rapidly as possible.”

With many folks this would have probably ended their involvement with the area, but not Robert. He appeared in Deadwood the fall of 1881 looking to secure a winter grubstake. His plan at this point was to gain control of as many claims below the Ft. Meade works and form a new company named the “Big Bend Hydraulic Mining Company.” To this end Robert was elected the Recorder of the Ruby Mining District along Rapid Creek. He then began to assemble what appears to have been as many of the placer claims on the Creek below the Ft. Meade Company’s property as he could. This amounted to 86 Claims. Here is where things begin to get a bit murky; it is not clear how many of the claims he owned and how many he leased. One report states that he leased the claims for $80,000. Having said that, there is some evidence that he may have actually owned all the claims, and then leased them to the newly formed Big Bend Hydraulic Mining Company. No matter, for following his acquisition of the claims, Robert... Continued on Page 6
UPCOMING EVENT
in Black Hills History.

April 5-6: The 10th Annual Island in the Plains, Black Hills Archeological Symposium, will be held in Deadwood at the Days Inn Deadwood Gulch Resort. Paper presentations will occupy Saturday, and several will deal with the Chinese digs recently done in Deadwood. There is a registration fee. Contact Dave McKee at 605-673-9265 or dfmckee@fs.fed.us

April 12-13: South Dakota State Historical Society Annual Meeting will feature the Black Hills. The program is titled: "Staking a Claim: the People, Places and Stories of Mining in the Black Hills." It will have eleven presentations, covering nearly every aspect of Hills' mining. The society has invited a number of noteworthy speakers including Jim McLaird and Richmond Clow. It will be held in Pierre at the Ramkota RiverCentre. For more info on times and registration: Jeff Mammenga 605-773-6000 or Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us

April 19-21: The 20th Annual Lakota Omniciyi Wacipi will be held at the Donald Young Center on the Black Hills State University Campus. This celebration serves to enlighten spectators about the culture of the Lakota students on campus as well as all Native American people. It will be a contest pow-wow with drum money being paid to the first ten drums to register. The contest registration opens Friday, April 19 at 5pm and closes Saturday, April 20 at 1pm. The grand entry for the pow-wow is as follows: Friday at 7pm, Saturday at 1pm & 7pm, and Sunday at 1pm. Also a buffalo feed will be served on Saturday at 5pm. The admission for the event is $3.00 per session or $6.00 for the weekend. Elders 60 & over and children 6 and under will be admitted free of charge.

May 3: The Homestake Legacy. Friends of Case Library are sponsoring an afternoon symposium on the Homestake. The keynote speaker will be Duane Smith of Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO. Duane is the nation's foremost mining historian and just recently completed a book on the Homestake. His talk is titled: "Here's to low grade ore, and plenty of it: the Homestake's Heritage." Other offerings will include a video presentation by Wayne Paananen of Lead. Wayne has spent many hours recording the Homestake, including its closing. The symposium will by held in the Jacket Legacy Room of the David B. Miller Student Union on the BHSU campus from 1 to 4PM. There is no charge, but donations will be welcome. Call David Wolff at 605-642-6221 or davidwolff@bhsu.edu

HOMESTAKE

So much has been in the newspapers, we don't know what to add. BUT:

The Mine Plant: With or without the science lab, most of the mine buildings will be demolished. The folks in Lead would like to save a few, but for the historic structures that cannot be saved, photos and drawings will provide documentation. Some Homestake people announced early on that they wanted to save at least the Yates headframe and maybe associated buildings. But no discussion about their disposition or ultimate use seems to be going on.

Artifacts and Documents: The Black Hills Mining Museum hopes to acquire the documents and artifacts held by the Homestake. The directors have developed plans to expand the Museum's Main Street location. A second story is envisioned.

In an effort to support the Museum's cause a number of organizations have formed the Northern Hills Homestake Consortium. Members include the Lead and Deadwood Historic Preservation Offices, Lawrence County Historical Society, Black Hills State University and the South Dakota School of Mines. The hope is to help the Museum attract the collection, and then ensure that the material is handled and utilized properly.

Mark Stromberg, who previously served as the Homestake Reclamation Officer, had a goal to save two of everything the mining company used. The idea was nicknamed "Mark's Ark." We hope that Barrick will continue the process.

Documenting the End: Wayne Paananen of Historical Footprints has been filming the mine's last activities. For instance, Wayne captured footage of the last ore leaving the mine, and the final crushing. Historical Footprints has been recording the mine for 16 years, and is currently working on a Homestake documentary.

Farewell Party: The Lead Chamber of Commerce sponsored a very successful tribute to the Homestake on November 15, 2001. Many of the mine's past and present friends were in attendance. Wayne Paananen also showed a very fine video called "Homestake . . . more than a gold mine: A Tribute to Homestake Mining Company."
A Summer Internship Experience with The Homestake
By Leslie Fuhrman, Student
Black Hills State University

With the closing of the Homestake Gold Mine, the company made an effort to preserve what they could. A summer internship with the Homestake Mine offered me the opportunity to help in this preservation project, and the Slime Plant was one of my areas of study.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Homestake, along with many other mining companies, were looking for ways to recover the gold that escaped the amalgamation process. What emerged was the cyanide process, developed by J. S. McArthur and R. W. Forrest in Great Britain in 1887-88. About ten years later, in 1898, Homestake gave Charles W. Merrill a five year contract to apply the cyanide process at their mills. Merrill first developed a test site to treat the tailings of the Amicus mine. In 1901 and 1902 Merrill built Sand Plant No. 1 and Sand Plant No. 2 for cyanidation recovery. In 1906 Merrill developed a plant to treat the slime which is the fine part of the ore, suspended in a water slurry. Because the two sand plants were located in Lead and Central City, the Slime Plant was built in Deadwood at the junctions of the two watersheds.

When two of the three Slime Plant buildings were demolished in 2001, Homestake took steps to preserve some of the Slime Plant's history, as best they could without actually preserving the buildings. The two buildings that were torn down were the Sludge Building and the Solution Building, their most common names. The Sludge Building received a mixture of slime slurry and lime from the gold mills near Lead and Central City. This slime slurry and lime mixture was deposited into redwood tanks before being transported to the filter presses in the Main building. The Solution Building then received the precipitated gold and cyanide solution where the solution was then pumped through small precipitate filter presses. The product, a gold-zinc precipitate, was then sent to the refinery in Lead while the cyanide solution returned to the Main building.

Before the destruction of the two buildings, photographs were taken of the buildings, inside and out, to record their appearances. Working as an intern this summer, I cataloged the historically relevant material. I collected pictures and reprinted them to give to the Mining Museum in Lead and the Adams Museum in Deadwood. Along with the photos, an interpretive display of the history of the Slime Plant and two diagrams of the Slime Plant process were given to the museums for display.

The historical impact of the Homestake has been great. Efforts to preserve the mine's past are still underway; gathering and recording what has been a feature for over one hundred years.

RECENT ARTICLES RELATED to BLACK HILLS HISTORY

The Fall/Winter 2001 issue of South Dakota History celebrates the 125th anniversary of the gold rush. Entitled "Gold Rush: The Black Hills Story," it contains five articles compiled by John D. McDermott:


Harry H. Anderson, "Wake Up!: Community Efforts to Promote Travel to the Black Hills Gold Fields."

James D. McLaird, "I Know . . . because I Was There: Leander P. Richardson Reports the Black Hills Gold Rush."

Bob Lee, "It Started with a (Mining) Boom."

Ernest Grafe and Paul Horsted, "Dakota Resources: In Illingworth's Footsteps."

Issues of South Dakota History can be obtained from the South Dakota State Historical Society, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501, for $15 plus $2 shipping.

But, this issue will also be released as a book by the State Historical Society Press. Tourists and those who are not members of the State Historical Society will be able to enjoy these fine articles. The City of Deadwood partially funded this book version through a publications grant. Look for it soon at $17.95.

Deadwood was the featured town in the January/February 2002 South Dakota Magazine. Jerry Wilson's lengthy article is titled "Deadwood: The Town Built on Luck." A giving a brief history of Deadwood, Wilson discusses preservation efforts and some of the town's attractions.

Paul Higbee also has an article in this issue about Jack Parks' blacksmith shop in Piedmont. An active blacksmith, Parks is refurbishing 30 iron fence sets from Deadwood's Mount Moriah Cemetery.
BOOKNOTES

The South Dakota State H. S. Press is also releasing an exciting new book about Black Hills' mining. Chasing the Glitter: Black Hills Milling, 1874-1959 by Richmond Clow covers the variety of techniques and machinery used in the Hills' many metal mills. The Black Hills was at the nexus of change in milling practices, and Clow covers them all. This handsome book is generously illustrated and will be available in April. Clow is a familiar name to Black Hills historians. He is a South Dakota native, attended the University of South Dakota, and has published several articles in South Dakota History. Funds from the City of Deadwood also support this publication. Hardcover copies will sell for $59.95, and soft cover for $29.95.

Something else from South Dakota State H. S. Press! They have reprinted John Miller's Looking for History on Highway 14. Part history, part travelogue, it covers towns along the highway, but after Wall it veers off to Mount Rushmore. It sells for $17.95.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE NEWS:

Mitigation concerning the Removal of the Juso Log Structure, Main Street, Deadwood.

Moving of the Historical Juso log cabin on Main Street of Deadwood was an action several years in the planning, but after an agreement was reached with the Days of 76 Museum to take the structure and restore it, things almost seemed to happen overnight. Well, a flash compared to other preservation projects. The first action that the city's Historic Preservation Council took was to hire an archaeologist to examine the site. Jerry L. Bryant, RPA was hired and initially he did a pedestrian survey of the area. This survey indicated that there were cultural materials, artifacts eroding from the surface of the parking lot west of the structure. Artifacts included melted glass fragments and fragments of English white Ironstone ceramics. Contractors excavated a trench around the building giving Bryant an opportunity for subsurface examination. On the west side of the structure Bryant encountered a trash midden at a depth of 19 inches. The midden, exposed by the contractor's trench, produced a number of historical artifacts and a large quantity of charcoal and fragments of burnt wood. A second midden was observed at a depth of 23 inches in the southwest corner of the trench and when explored this turned out to have artifacts from the late 1950s and early 1960s, along with more burnt wood and charcoal. This information indicated that the clastic sediments nearest Main Street were considerably older than those closer to the creek, a situation caused by multiple deposition layers of different temporal periods. Bryant then notified Jim Wilson, Historic Preservation Officer for the City of Deadwood, of these findings, and recommended that the proper mitigation for this situation was to remove the structure with the least amount of surface disturbance, push the foundation into the existing hole, cap and seal the surface.

On October 21 Bryant returned to the site. A new trench has been dug at the entrance of the structure and the front porch had been removed. Bryant tested the west side wall of this trench. At a depth of approximately 12 inches multiple glass shards were encountered along with large fragments of heavy stemmed glassware. A total of 19 artifacts possibly dating to the late 19th century were recovered, including fragments of cut bone and heavy white ironstone. As with the initial test area, this lens of clastic sediments contained high concentrations of burnt wood and charcoal. The last area test confirmed that the earliest cultural depositions were those found nearest to Main Street, and closer to Whitewood Creek were more modern and represented mid 20th century fill intended to level the erosional flood plain of Whitewood Creek.

Following the recommended mitigation, the walls of the Juso Structure were collapsed into the existing foundation depression and fill from an outside source was used to fill the foundation and cap the parking lot. The Juso log structure was moved to the Days of 76 Museum, where it awaits restoration. Jerry Bryant, RPA.

Upcoming events in archaeology:

In June the U. S. Forest Service wants volunteers to continue its work at Curran's Cabin. This 100 year old miner's cabin near Rochford was worked on last year, but more logs need to be replaced to stabilize the structure. Some surveying and excavating will also be done. This is part of the Forest Service's "Passport in Time" educational program. Contact Jerry Bryant at the Spearfish Forest Service Office: 605-642-4622.
MUSEUM AND ORGANIZATION NEWS:

Adams House and Museum has a full schedule of events ahead, including forums, lectures, and concerts: phone 578-1928.

The Black Hills Mining Museum is attempting to attract the large collection of Homestake material. In the meantime, the Museum is receiving the last car of production ore, and the drill bits used in May 2001 to get the last ore samples.

D. C. Booth Fish Hatchery and Society are working on the interpretation of their “fish-car.” They are seeking items to furnish the car such as office and kitchen equipment. If interested contact curator Randy Smith. Call 642-7730.

Butte County Historical Society published a 2002 calendar. It contains a variety of views from the county. The society also holds a general meeting three times a year. Contact De Johnson: 456-2938.

The Case Library for Western Historical Studies has received the good news that Johanna Meier of the Black Hills Passion Play plans to donate documents relating to the Play’s history to the Library. As Paul Higbee says: “This is an important collection in many ways. It shows the activities of an early traveling theater company, and the past of a long time Spearfish institution.”

The Custer County Historical Society meets the first Saturday of most months at 2PM in the Custer County Courthouse Annex. For more call Jesse Sundstrom at 673-2443.

The Hermosa Arts and History Association has been working since 1999 to preserve historical and cultural aspects of the Hermosa area. The group secured the 1889 school house and has plans to remodel the building for displays, gift shop, and meetings. They meet the second Sunday of each month at 2PM at the museum in downtown Hermosa. Contact: PO Box 175, Hermosa, SD 57744-0175.

The High Plains Heritage Center is hosting a series of radio programs on the Heritage of the American West presented by Kay Jorgensen and Jim Thompson of Creative Broadcast Services. Upcoming shows are scheduled for March 20 and April 17. The Center also plans to again sponsor their popular Campfire series.

The Journey Museum will sponsor the National Symphony Orchestra at 7:30 in the Theater on March 16. Admission is $10. The museum is also planning a series of art exhibits for 2002. From March 8 to May 12, the show will be Mel Spinar’s “Bohemian Women of the West River.” On Saturdays, March 9 and 23, the Museum will sponsor more musical performances; Sundays March 17 & April 21 are free admission.

The Keystone Area Historical Society meets the last Monday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Senior Center. The society sponsored the highly successful West River History Conference this past September. We look forward to this year’s Conference. For info: Bob Hayes: 666-4630 or Betty Jo: 666-4824.

The Lawrence County Historical Society will meet on May 5 at 1PM in the Wild West Winners at 622 Main Street Deadwood. Ernest Grafe and Paul Horsted will talk on the Illingworth photographs of the Custer Expedition. They carefully retraced Custer’s steps, and took photographs from identical locations. Their program is great! The Society is also planning a tour of Centennial Valley on June 2. Contact Dave Wolff for info: 642-6221 or 644-0375.

The Spearfish Area Historical Society meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 in the Spearfish Senior Center. On March 5 Linford Schuttler will talk on Spearfish Hotel Fires; April 2 Joyce Jefferson will portray Lucherta “Aunt Lou” Marchbanks; May 7 Colleen Kirby will talk on the Black Hills Teachers College’s Lab School. Pres.: Rand Williams 722-7204.

The Westerners meet on the second Sunday of most months at the Phil-Town Restaurant in Sturgis for a noon luncheon. The March meeting will be Charlie Hunt, author and cowboy poet, who will talk on “All the Horses that He’d Rode.” Charlie will bring a collection of pictures and poems relating to the West.

If your group has not been included, we apologize for the oversight. Send in some information and we shall include it next time.

AWARDS AND HONORS

We are pleased to recognize Bob Lee for winning the 2001 “Zoom Zoom” Award at the Ninth Annual West River History Conference in Keystone. It goes to a person who has devoted much time and effort to promoting and preserving South Dakota history.

RESEARCH NOTES

R. A. Meeks is searching for information on pioneer R.D. Jennings who was an architect, physician, public official and founding father of Hot Springs. If you can share any information: P.O. Box 177, Deadwood, SD 57732 or scribbler@yahoo.com
TIDBITS

The Historic Homestead Opera House has recently received another grant. This one comes from the State of South Dakota in a community block grant. With this $750,000, the Opera House society has raised $3 million. Work is advancing, with the foyer nearing completion.

The City of Deadwood is making plans to enhance the city’s “gateways.” The plans include new signs and visitor centers.

In December, Deadwood purchased the soda-fountain lunch counter that sat in Goldberg’s. It came to town in 1902, and the city is looking for a buyer who will keep it in town.

The South Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board has recently published a “Guide to Historical Repositories in South Dakota.” This booklet lists the archives, libraries, and museums that exist in the state. It lists them by town and cross-lists by subject. Copies are available from the State Archives in Pierre.

Talks have been going on to place the 17-piece sculpture of a Lakota buffalo hunt originally commissioned for the Dunbar resort somewhere else in Deadwood.

Bob Lee recently presented Dewey Beard’s Lakota peace prayer pipe to the museum at Crazy Horse Memorial.

In October, Deadwood’s Historic Preservation Commission acquired the United Methodist Church, “the mother church of the Black Hills.” It sits at the corner of Williams and Shone Streets. The church needs repairs estimated to cost $200,000.

A bronze replica of the original Wild Bill Hickok grave marker has been commissioned by the Deadwood Historic Preservation Office. It will be unveiled on August 2, 2002, the anniversary of Bill’s death.

FRIENDS OF CASE LIBRARY

Several people have shown their support of the newsletter and the activities sponsored by the Case Library for Western Historical Studies by joining or renewing their membership to the Friends of Case Library. Thanks to the following

Thomas R. Hills -- Spearfish
Donald P. Howe -- Spearfish
Ken Wetz -- Newell
Bob & Dode Lee -- Boulder Canyon
Genevieve Howard -- Rapid City
Judy & Lennis Larson -- Spearfish
Linfred L. Schuttler -- Spearfish
Peg Lamont -- Aberdeen
Dora Jones -- Spearfish
Mary S. Garman -- Sundance, WY
Joseph R. Doula -- Westmont, IL
Dave Wolff -- Spearfish

If you would like to be part of the “Friends” send a minimum donation of $7.50 to the Friends of Case Library, Unit 9059, BHSU, 1200 University, Spearfish, SD 57799

D’em Flormann Boys, from Page 1:

went to the East Coast to secure the financial support of eastern capitalists. He must have been very successful because in April of 1883 the Big Bend Hydraulic Mining Company was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York. That same year also witnessed the publication of the first report to the shareholders of the Big Bend Hydraulic Company.

During this time, Robert and his family lived full time in Rapid City, but Robert spent his days on Rapid Creek. In June of 1883 Robert had a close call with the creek. He was attempting to cross near the Ft. Meade tunnel when his team and wagon were swept away by the current. Leaping out of the wagon, Robert swam ashore and followed his wagon and struggling team of horses down stream. For a quarter of mile he followed them and then they got caught up in a small eddy. The eddy slowed them down enough that Robert was able to swim out and cut the harness, saving the horses but losing the wagon. It was at this same time that Robert reportedly leased the Big Bend Property, yet the works would sit silent for the next four years.

The Big Bend and the Ft. Meade properties may have sat inactive because Robert became distracted. In the spring of 1884 Robert and his son, Louis, were investigating new digs on Boxelder Creek in Lawrence County near what was then called Slabtown, in the Nemo area today. In June of that year Louis Flormann worked for the survey party that established the corners of Placer Claims 404 and 403 along Boxelder Creek. These two claims became the center of the Greenwood Mining Company and
the town of Greenwood. Soon after location Robert sought investors in his mine and town project. He also opened a school, saloon, general store and built a beautiful home for his brother Charles. Charles had been working in Black Tail Gulch the last few years, but with the offer of a new home for his family and the position of foreman of the new Greenwood milling operation, he reestablished himself and his family in Greenwood.

Soon a Joseph Taylor appeared on the scene. It is not known when Robert Flormann first met the infamous Professor Taylor, but he would become a major player in the events that followed. As early as 1879, the local newspapers labeled Joseph Taylor as an eminent mining expert from London, England who was looking for promising mines for his overseas investors. In 1881 the Black Hill Daily Times reported that he represented overseas capitalists with 100 million dollars to invest in Black Hills mines. His examinations of the Welcome Group of mines in February of 1883 and the Berkshire Mine in March of 1883 were thoroughly covered by all the local newspapers. Besides mining, another area that the eminent Joseph Taylor spoke about around Deadwood was religion. He was not afraid to let his feelings be known to the miner and their families on the curse of alcohol, and the sin of working on the Sabbath.

By early 1884 Professor Taylor and Bob Flormann were working together on the Greenwood project. Taylor soon journeyed east to look for investors for the Greenwood works. He returned with $100,000. The principle investor was Matthew Laflin, of the Laflin and Rand Powder Company. The Greenwood Mining Company was incorporated under the laws of Illinois with a reported operating capital of 500 million dollars. Inspections were made, ore tested and the decision was made to build a mill at the Greenwood site. And a grand mill it was, of 150 stamps. A narrow gauge steam locomotive was purchased and brought to Greenwood to haul ore from the mine to the mill. A saw mill was also constructed, but the building and mining were happening at such a rapid pace that the saw mill could not keep up, and contracts had to be let for additional mining timbers. With all the work going on, Greenwood suddenly became more than just another camp in the hills. In a the span of just months, the Boxelder flood plain was transformed. Monheim and Lorey established a general store, Smith opened a saloon, and Joe Irwin of Deadwood moved to Greenwood and opened the Vienna Bakery. Then in September, the U.S. Postal Service established a Post Office there. Because there was already a Greenwood in Dakota, the town was renamed after the mine's principle investor, Laflin, and Robert Flormann was named Postmaster.

The Deadwood newspapers reported the activities of Greenwood/Laflin several times a week during the year of 1884, but there was a certain paucity of information specifically concerning Robert Flormann. The Rapid City newspapers, on the other hand, were well occupied reporting what appeared to be the orchestration of a nation builder. It was publicly reported that Robert had received $120,000 dollars for a 49% interest in the Greenwood Mining Co., while maintaining the controlling interest. With this money he began to build a three-story office building on St. Joseph Street in Rapid City, the Flormann Block. He made claim to a homestead in Meade County near Rapid City, and took out options on land near the Flormann Block with the intentions of building a grand hotel. It was also reported that Robert tried to woo a railroad. With trips to Chicago and promises of right-a-way, Robert must have appeared to be a very influential man in the Black Hills to the gentle but well funded folks in the East. Then things in Greenwood began to slip.

In the late fall of '84 the Greenwood mill was almost finished, but the air was laced with rumor. During an open house held at the mill for the public, a Deadwood newspaper reporter took several ore samples from the main ore bunker. Later in the confines of his office, he ground the ore and tested it. Worthless! He called a colleague into his office and showed him the results of the test. He performed it again with the same results, which neither man seemed willing to believe. The mill ran for only a day in late December, and then Robert ordered his brother Charles to shut off the water. Accusations shot back and forth across the telegraph lines between Taylor and Flormann, and the mill sat silent. Matthew Laflin ordered the mill to start up again, and when it didn't, he filed a criminal complaint against the mill workers. In January the Sheriff in Deadwood was dispatched by sleigh with warrants for the arrest of the mill workers. So many were arrested that it took two trips with two sleighs to bring them all back to Deadwood in chains. The arrests did not occur without incident, and one worker was critically injured resisting arrest. Among those arrested were Charles Flormann and Robert's son Louis. But Robert could not be found, and neither could the books of the company.

It was a tumultuous time in Greenwood,
with warrants being made, the mill starting and stopping, arrests being made and then charges being dropped. Through it all, one thing became very clear; the only gold in Greenwood was in Professor Taylor’s teeth. After all was sorted out, Matt Laflin had a warrant issued for the arrest of Professor Taylor. Taylor had not endeared himself to Laflin or the workers. He demanded each morning begin with a long prayer, refused to allow alcohol to be sold in the town of Laflin, and would not allow the mill or the mine to run on Sundays. When all the smoke cleared, Taylor went to jail for a time and the papers reported that Matt Laflin had been duped out of more than $300,000. Some how, through all the tough times, the town of Laflin survived into the 1890s. When Professor Taylor got out of jail he headed east to Chicago where he protested the alleged wrong that had been done to him by Laflin. Then a final note about Taylor appeared in the news in February of 1887. Reportedly, he had been hung in Mexico for involvement in another mining scandal.

The final installment of this story follows Robert and family from Rapid City to British Columbia and or to the Alaskan Gold Rush.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We welcome your contributions to the “Black Hills Historian.” We need information about Black Hills events, and brief historical articles. Also, if you haven’t sent your address to stay on the mailing list. Please do: David A. Wolff, Friends of Case Library, Black Hills State University, Unit 9059, Spearfish, SD 57799 or davidwolff@bhsu.edu, or 642-6221

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENT

Make plans to attend the Homestake Legacy symposium sponsored by the Friends of Case Library, Friday, May 3 starting at 1 PM in the David Miller Student Union on the Black Hills State University campus. The activities will include Duane Smith talking on the Homestake’s Heritage and Wayne Paananen showing some of the video he has taken over the years of the mine. It should be an interesting afternoon.