Memories of President Calvin Coolidge

By Bob Hayes, Keystone, SD

My story of President Calvin Coolidge may be a little bizarre; however, I feel I have had a longtime association with the president. This association comes from stories told by my parents, other acquaintances throughout the years, and from what I have read.

Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor of Mount Rushmore, coerced President Coolidge to participate in the formal dedication of the carving of Mount Rushmore. The topography between Keystone and the mountain might be described as very rugged due to the dense forests and brush, granite outcroppings, and a steep terrain to gain the approximately one thousand feet in elevation from Keystone to the base of the mountain. The distance from Keystone was approximately three miles. Needless to say, there were no improved roads and only a trail leading to the mountain. Paul Hazeltine of Keystone provided the saddle horses for the president and his party for the last segment of his journey from Keystone to the top of the mountain.

From two to three thousand people gathered at the base of the mountain for the formal dedication. The president gave an address at the inauguration of work on the mountain. This was his first formal address in the Black Hills after his arrival in mid June. Other speakers were Governor Bulow and of course Mr. Borglum. Some historians disagree on some of the details of the inauguration. They have recorded that the president handed Mr. Borglum four pieces of drill steel to start the carving and Borglum scampered to the top of the mountain and was lowered down the sheer face of the mountain where he drilled four holes to outline the bust of George Washington. Reviewing movies from the archives, it is obvious the president handed Borglum six pieces of drill steel rather than four pieces.

Another little known fact which is not publicized is the source of the table used as a lectern. This table is visible in many photos and movies and was loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hoy of Keystone. Mr. Hoy and his father-in-law Andrew Marble operated a pharmacy in Keystone for better than forty years. There has not been a pharmacy since Mr. Hoy, father of the late Edith Peterson, passed away during the mid thirties. The table has been in the possession of the former Susan Talley of Keystone, who resides in Oregon. Susan is the great granddaughter of Mr. Hoy. I understand this table and other historic artifacts have been donated to Black Hills State University and will be preserved for historical purposes.

Now it is time for the real association with the president. The majority of the people who attended the inauguration, August 10, 1927, walked the three miles to the base of the mountain and returned the same way. My parents, Edwald and Gladys Hayes, made the trip on foot and I was born on October 16, 1927. Edwald Hayes later operated the aerial tramway for many years and was the only worker to hold the job classification of hoist engineer.

It was August 2, 1927, the fourth Hayes continued on Page 6...
Upcoming Events:

A Number of Exciting Special Events are on
tap for Black Hills History Enthusiasts. In
Order by Date:

May 3: Island in the Plains Symposium

The Friends of Case Library are happy
to bring the 11th Annual Island in the
Plains Archaeological & Historical
Symposium to the Jacket Legacy Room of
the David B. Miller Student Union on the
campus of Black Hills State University on
Saturday, May 3, beginning at 9AM.

This all day event brings together
archaeologists, historians, and enthusiasts
who present brief papers on a wide variety
of Black Hills topics. Last year 18 papers
were presented covering such issues as
petroglyphs, rockshelter habitations, CCC
sites, Chinese artifacts in Deadwood, and
mammoth locations. Researchers,
interested publics, teachers, and students
are all encouraged to attend the
presentations.

The day culminates with a banquet at
the High Plains Heritage Center beginning
at 6PM with Dr. George Frison, professor
emeritus, University of Wyoming as the
featured speaker.

Conference preregistration, up to
April 30, is $20, registration at the door is
$25. The banquet charge is $12.50. Send
payment to:

Dave McKee
Attn: Island in the Plains
Black Hills National Forest
25041 N. Hwy 16
Custer, South Dakota 57730

With your paid registration you will
receive a handsome Island in the Plains
poster.

For more information contact:
Dave McKee  673-9265 dfmckee@fs.fed.us
Dave Wolff  642-6221 davidwolff@bhsu.edu

May 10: Oral History Workshop

The Historic Deadwood Lead Arts
Council (HDLAC) has begun conducting oral
histories of Homestake, Lead and Northern Black
Hills families. To enhance this undertaking the
HDLAC is sponsoring a workshop on conducting
oral histories on May 10, 2003. Charles
Morrissey, nationally recognized oral historian,
will conduct the workshop. The event will start at
9 AM and will run until 4 PM at the Deadwood
City Hall. Lunch will be provided and the event
is open to the public. The cost is $40 for non-
members and $30 for members of the HDLAC.

The workshop will provide training in the
methodologies and techniques used to properly
conduct an oral history interview. It will address
equipment, interview techniques, documentation,
record keeping, legal concerns and ethical issues.

Morrissey has worked with oral histories
for the past 3 decades. He currently works as the
Oral History Consultant for the Baylor College of
Medicine and the Howard Hughes Medical
Institute. He directed the Oral History Project for
the John F. Kennedy Library and the Ford
Foundation. Currently he is working on an oral
history of the Clinton presidency. Morrissey has
lectured at more than 50 universities and
published more than 30 articles.

Supporting Mr. Morrissey will be Eleanor
Swent. Ms. Swent works on the "Western Mining
in the Twentieth Century Series" of the Oral
History Office at the University of California at
Berkeley. The series consists of more than 100
interviews. Swent was born in Lead and both her
father and husband worked for the Homestake
Mining Company. Her professional experience
will provide valuable insight for the workshop.

This workshop is sponsored by the
Historic Deadwood Lead Arts Council with
annual support from the Deadwood Historic
Preservation Commission. Corporate support for
the workshop is also provided by donations from
the Barrick Mining Company and Wells Fargo.

The size of the workshop is limited so
register early. Send the registration fee and the
attendee's name, address, telephone number, and
email address to:

Historic Deadwood Lead Arts Council
POB 595
Lead, SD 57754

For additional information contact
Jonathan Jarolimek at 605-584-1461 or Mark W.
Stromberg at 605-578-1414.
May 23-25: The History and Archaeology of the Chinese in the West Symposium by Mike Runge

The City of Deadwood, is home to such infamous characters as James "Wild Bill" Hickok, Martha "Calamity Jane" Cannary, and martyred Methodist circuit rider Henry Weston Smith. But like all famous people and places, there were hundreds of other nameless faces that helped mold and shape the history of Deadwood that we know today. One such group was the Chinese immigrants that migrated into this region during one of the last gold bonanzas in North America. It is not known when the first Chinese immigrants entered the Black Hills, however, based on the discoveries of gold around Custer City and Deadwood Gulch; the approximate date would be 1875-1876. Building temporary shelters on the lower portions of Deadwood’s Main Street, the Chinese community became a bustling area of activity. Various types of curio shops, laundries, restaurants, and boarding houses would have greeted a visitor upon entering Deadwood Gulch from the northwest. At the height of its existence, Chinatown was reported to have 100 to 400 inhabitants, making it the largest Chinese population east of San Francisco. Due to growing animosity towards the Chinese immigrants coupled with the decline of work, Chinatown’s population began to decline after 1900 and continued until 1931 when the last Chinese resident left the city. Few physical items were all that remained giving testament to this 55 year occupancy.

In the spring of 2001, construction workers unearthed numerous historic artifacts while excavating a vacant lot located on Deadwood’s lower Main Street. The work was temporarily put on hold as archaeologists from the South Dakota State Archaeological Research Center were called to investigate. Upon examining several historic maps, archaeologists were allotted three months to excavate the area of potential effect. During the course of the excavation, archaeologists uncovered the remains of a Chinese/Black boarding house that burned in 1891. The excavated materials from this site helped redefine the living conditions, health, recreational activities, personal items, and sanitary conditions of Chinatown. As the artifacts were being uncovered, some of the more significant items were temporarily placed on display during the dig. As visitors and local residents began to learn about the excavations, there was a renewed interest in the Chinese occupation of Deadwood. This interest has led to additional archaeological excavations within Deadwood’s Chinatown, the creation of several permanent archaeological displays around Deadwood, and the creation of the upcoming symposium entitled "The History and Archaeology of the Chinese in the West" scheduled for May 23-25, of 2003.

"The History and Archaeology of the Chinese in the West" symposium was created to provide an understanding of why Chinese immigrants converged in frontier communities such as Deadwood, how they interacted within these communities, and the causes for their departure. This will be accomplished by having a wide variety of experts in North American Chinese studies talk about the anthropology, archaeology, and history of Chinese immigrants. These experts include Dr. Donald Hardesty, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Nevada-Reno, Dr. Dudley Gardner, Professor of History at Western Wyoming College, Dr. Priscilla Wegars, Volunteer Curator-Laboratory of Anthropology at the University of Idaho, Peter Kwong, the Director of Asian American Studies Program at Hunter College in New York, Terry Abraham, Professor and Director of Special Collections at the University of Idaho, and Liping Zhu, Professor of History at Eastern Washington University.

The symposium will begin on Friday May 23, at 3:00 p.m. with a walking tour of Deadwood’s Historic Main Street. Upon the completion of the tour, there will be a reception at the Masonic Hall. Beginning at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday May 24, key speakers will present and discuss papers focusing on historic Chinese communities in North America. A round table discussion on Chinese communities in western frontier towns of North America will conclude the symposium on Sunday May 25, 2003. In addition to the presentations, artifacts recovered from the 2001-2002 Deadwood Chinatown excavations will be on display all weekend long in the Masonic Hall. Advanced registration postmarked by April 23, 2003 will cost $5.00 for students and $20.00 for general admission. Registration postmarked after April 23, 2003 will cost $25.00 per person. These fees include lunch and dinner on Saturday, May 24, 2003. For more information contact the City of Deadwood at (605) 578-2082.

Reference Cited:
July 4-8: CHAUTAUQUA COMING TO SPEARFISH

Black Hills State University will host the Great Plains Chautauqua this summer in the Chautauqua tent that will be erected at the Spearfish City Park July 4, 5, 6, and 7.

The South Dakota Humanities Council selected BHSU to host this event which has been held in different forms for more than two decades. This year the program titled “From Sea to Shining Sea: Cultural Changes and American Expansion, 1700-1850” will highlight the lives and views of historical figures with presentations by different historical reenactors each evening and will offer the audience the opportunity to experience the time period of 1790-1850 when our culture changed dramatically as America expanded from “sea to shining.”

The lives and views of William Clark, York, and Sacagawea of the Lewis and Clark Expedition as well as Tecumseh and John Jacob Astor will be presented on separate nights by historical reenactors. The character of Dolley Madison will introduce and offer her perspective on the featured speaker each evening. After each performance the audience will be involved in a discussion of these historical figures and how they may have responded to present-day life.

The Chautauqua meetings are open to the public at no charge. The speakers are also available to make special presentations to interested local organizations. A planning committee has been formed to organize the event, contact local organizations and raise local funds. To participate or help in this event contact Holly Downing, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at BHSU, at 642-6420.

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS SPONSORED BY MUSEUMS AND ORGANIZATIONS:

In Order by Date:

April 26: Butte County Historical Society will be sponsoring a Family History banquet. Three area pioneer families will present their histories. The event will begin at 6PM with a potluck supper. For information call Tim Velder at 456-2364 or Eleanor Milberg at 456-2607.


May 1: High Plains Western Heritage Center -- “Old-Fashioned Style Show & Tea” 6PM social & 7PM show. Donations for elevator fund, call 642-9378.

May 4: The Lawrence County Historical Society will meet on May 4 at the Silverado in Deadwood at 1PM. The program will feature Sheila Hansen discussing her project on World War II, “Fallen Sons,” and Harley Noem who will give an update on the Mickelson Trail. The banquet is $10, and reservations are required. Phone Jerry Wickstrom at 722-0981.


May 6: The Spearfish Area Historical Society will present Joyce Jefferson as “Mary Kercherval,” from Custer’s Cook to Homesteader, 7:30PM at the Spearfish Senior Center.


May 15: The Adams Museum will host Ernie Grafe and Paul Horsted who will give a slide presentation about their book Exploring with Custer: The 1874 Black Hills Expedition at 7PM. Call 578-3724 for more information.

May 15: High Plains Heritage Center: Jim Thompson of Creative Broadcast Services continues his programs beginning at 7PM, $7. in advance and $15 at the door.

June 6, 7 & 8: High Plains Heritage Center: "N.R.M. Barbed Wire Collectors' Convention" Private Collections on Display. Door Admission.


July 6: Chris Hills, with the help of the Lawrence County Historical Society, is sponsoring a centennial celebration at Tinton, including a flag raising and watermelon. Chris wants celebrants to travel to Tinton by bus, and the Society is sponsoring the chartered buses. Departure from Spearfish will be at 1PM. Cost has yet to be determined. Call Jerry Wickstrom at 722-0981 after May 4 for reservations.

Museum and Organization News:

The Black Hills Mining Museum received a grant from the Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission to help repair its parking lot, and an Economic Development Grant which will also contribute to the cause. The parking structure was built in the late 1960s and was constructed over the existing foundation of the Hearst Store.

The Booth Society is seeking members to join in its efforts to preserve and enhance opportunities at the Hatchery. If interested call 642-7730.

The Custer County Historical Society received a grant from Deadwood Historic Preservation to help fund an elevator for the 1881 Courthouse Museum. Call Jesse Sundstrom at 673-2443.

Friends of South Lead Cemetery are undertaking a series of projects to help preserve and restore this historic cemetery. These include restoring the flagpole, placing a new archway and gate, and repairing the fence. If you wish to donate, send your check to the group at 323 Julius Street, Apt D, Lead, SD 57754.

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

RECENT ARTICLES RELATED to BLACK HILLS HISTORY


In the January/February edition Paul Higbee writes "Poker Alice: She's Been Dead for Seven Decades, but We're Still Inventing Her." Also in this issue Norman Gullickson presents "In the Dark with Badger Clark." For info on the Magazine call 1-800-456-5117.

BOOKNOTES

The South Dakota State Historical Society Press has recently republished Watson Parker's Gold in the Black Hills. Originally produced by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1966, this production includes a new introduction by Parker. Copies may be acquired from the SD State Historical Society Press at 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501, for $17.95 plus $4 shipping. SD residents need to add 6% sales tax.

PREPARATION IN THE NEWS

The Deadwood Methodist Church at the corner of Shine and Williams which was constructed in 1885 was demolished in early 2003. The Deadwood Historic Preservation Office felt the building was a public hazard and that demolition was necessary. Before destruction the building was fully recorded.

The South Dakota State Historical Society recently approved of putting two Black Hills properties on the National Register of Historic Places. One is the Burlington line from Hill City and Keystone, also known as the 1880 Train. The
nomination includes the tracks, bridges, equipment, and structures associated with the line.

The second property added to the National Register is the St. Lawrence O'Toole Catholic Church in Central City. Built in 1879 it is considered a "first generation" church in South Dakota.

The Treber building on Sherman Street will soon be demolished. It was built in 1892 along the newly arrived railroad. John Treber bottled and sold Budweiser Beer, a popular Deadwood refreshment, from this location.

DEADWOOD PRESERVATION FUNDS

Gambling money from Deadwood funds two different preservation accounts for projects outside of Deadwood. The Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission handles one account and the South Dakota State Historical Society manages the other.

The Deadwood board funded a study of PWA/WPA era athletic fields; money for the Mining Museum parking lot; $43,000 to advance the work at the Homestake Opera House; $30,000 to help restore the Organ at the Christ Church in Lead; money for an elevator in the Custer County Courthouse Museum; over $5000 to the Galena Historical Society to stabilize the school; $25,000 to stabilize the walls around the Homestake mansion in Lead; $13,000 to repair the walls at the First United Presbyterian Church; $25,000 to preserve the exterior of the Matthews Opera House in Spearfish; and $10,000 to help save an historic outhouse in Nemo.

The State Historical Society recently funded eight projects with its Deadwood funds, most with $10,000. This included projects in Gregory, Redfield, Rapid City, Yankton, Vermilion, Sioux Falls, Volin, and Lead.

TIDBITS

The Slime Plant project in Deadwood seems to be moving ahead. Can you imagine that building with a gaming hall inside?

The Vore Buffalo Jump just into Wyoming could become another major tourist attraction if the plans of the Vore Buffalo Jump Foundation come through. They anticipate spending over $10 million dollars developing the site.

The Franklin Hotel in Deadwood will celebrate its 100th anniversary throughout 2003. A variety of special events are planned.

HBO is planning a series about frontier Deadwood beginning in 2004. Rumors have it that while the names will be familiar, the location may not.

Lead is planning a memorial to honor those who lost their lives working at the Homestake.

Work continues at the Homestake Opera House as the workers uncovered gold leaf and hidden designs as layers of paint were removed.

CASE LIBRARY NEWS

Good News! On April 21, Roberta “Bobbi” Sago will join the Case Library for Western Historical Studies as the Special Collections Librarian/Archivist. Bobbi comes to Black Hills State from the University of Texas at El Paso where she served as a manuscripts librarian/archivist. She has a BFA from the University of Montana and a MLS from Catholic University of America. Bobbi has experience in accessioning, original cataloging, and creating digital photo collections. We are excited to have her at the Case Library.

The Case Library and the Friends of Case Library have endowed two scholarships at Black Hills State University. The Case Scholarships go to two incoming Freshman who plan on majoring in history or social science. Each receives $500.

Hayes continued:

anniversary of President Coolidge taking the oath of office. He announced his famous message, "I do not choose to run for President in 1928." Some historians maintain the President made this announcement from the Summer White House, the State Game lodge. This apparently is not true as he made this statement in Rapid City from his office which was located in the Rapid City High School on Columbus Street which was later called the Coolidge Building and has since been razed. I attended classes in this building when I attended RCCHS.

C.C. Gideon, who made the Game Lodge, was the President’s fishing guide. I personally knew Mr. Gideon and I often visited with him when he operated the concession at Mount Rushmore in 1949. Was the president so naive that he did not
know the fish were trapped between nets on each end of a two-mile section of Squaw Creek and was being stocked for his enjoyment. Mr. Gideon designed the famous pigtail bridges on Iron mountain drive and also designed Borglum's last studio which occupies the models of the four busts at Mount Rushmore.

The story has been told many times about the President and Mrs. Coolidge attending church in Hermosa for the first time. The sermon was delivered by Ralph Lium, a twenty year old medical missionary student, the first sermon he ever preached. Mr. Lium must have been in shock to learn the President would be in attendance for his first sermon. He must have held up real well and later he was invited to the Summer White House by the President.

July 4, 1927, was the President's fifty-fifth birthday. The Boy Scout troop of Custer, the Custer Mounted Patrol under the leadership of Rev. Carl Locke presented the president with a thoroughbred saddle pony, saddle, bridle, chaps, boots, and spurs. Rev. Locke had colored lantern slides of Carl Locke, Jr. handing the reins to the President. Rev. Locke was very proud of these pictures and showed them at numerous gatherings. Unfortunately the slides disappeared over the years. Rev. Locke was the pastor at the Keystone Congregational Church for a number of years and built a beautiful cabin in Grizzly Bear Gulch.

During my college years in Rapid City I roomed in the Buell Home at 815 West Boulevard. This is the home of the late Judge Charles Buell and the founder and owner of the Buell Building at the corner of 7th and St. Joseph Streets. The late Jim Buell used to tell me of the history of the home but apparently I was at an unimpressionable age Jim and Stella Buell's daughter, and granddaughter of Judge Buell, Rhonda Schier and Husband Harry have spent several years restoring the Buell house. They have the same table, china, and silver that Judge and Mrs. Charles Buell entertained President Calvin and Grace Coolidge and Gutzon and Mary Borglum. Recently I have been entertained in this home and have learned to appreciate this historic setting. The Schiers have done a beautiful job with this project.

After I retired from a career as a mining engineer I worked one season at Mount Rushmore as an interpretation ranger. I gave a geologic tour once a day and gave the visitors an insight that they perhaps did not get from any other ranger. I pointed out that the area between the studio and the Borglum View Terrace was the Coolidge Terrace. I have never heard anyone else refer to this area as the Coolidge Terrace. This is the same location where the President gave his address on August 10, 1927. I called the attention to the visitors the beautiful outcrop of feldspar and other minerals in this area. I told them that if it would not have been for Mount Rushmore that this dike would certainly have been mined for feldspar and other strategic minerals such as beryl, mica, tantalum, etc. during World War II, which were so essential to the war effort. Perhaps the mineral wealth below the Coolidge Terrace and Doane Mountain is more valuable than the entire cost of carving Mount Rushmore.

According to the chronicle of the President’s stay in the Black Hills, he received numerous invitations in and outside of the state of which he apparently did not have the time to accept. Apparently Mr. Borglum was fortunate to persuade the President to participate in the inauguration ceremony at Mount Rushmore. Perhaps this was the catalyst that was needed to start the carving in earnest because there were many who thought this was a preposterous idea and would have stopped this dream in a heartbeat.

These are a few of my memories of President Calvin Coolidge. I do have an association with President Coolidge.
FRIENDS OF CASE LIBRARY

Several people have shown their support of the newsletter and the activities sponsored by the Case Library by joining or renewing their membership to the Friends of Case Library since the last newsletter. Welcome to these new Friends of the Case Library:

Patrick M. Clune -- Belton, TX
Kenneth O. Leonard -- Keystone
Darlene Young -- Spearfish
Chris Hills -- Spearfish
Will Larson -- Isanti, MN

Thanks to these new Friends, as well as to our "old" Friends. If you would like to be part of the "Friends" send a minimum donation of $10.00 to the Friends of Case Library, Unit 9059, BHSU, 1200 University, Spearfish, SD 57799

WE NEED YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome your contributions to the "Black Hills Historian." We need information about Black Hills events, and brief historical articles. We would love to run your brief story for the readers of the "Historian."

Contact Dave Wolff, Friends of Case Library, Black Hills State University, Unit 9059, Spearfish, SD 57799 or DavidWolff@bhsu.edu, or 642-6221.

REMININDER:


May 10: Oral History Workshop with the Historic Deadwood Lead Arts Council, Deadwood City Hall.

May 23-25: The History and Archaeology of the Chinese in the West Symposium, Masonic Hall and Silverado, Deadwood.