My Remembrances of the Stratosphere Flight, November 11, 1935
By Linfred L. Schuttler

The stratosphere balloon flight of November 11, 1935 from the Strato Bowl near Rockerville drew world-wide attention because it was to send men aloft, higher than any had gone before. It drew an enormous crowd at the launching site, some camping there all night to see the early morning lift-off.

The flight, which reached an altitude of 72,395 feet, or 13.71 miles, drifted southeasterly towards the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and then easterly and slightly north, to the White Lake area, east of the Missouri River, in South Dakota. The day-long episode created a wealth of publicity for the state, since it occurred, from beginning to end, all in South Dakota.

We were living in Farmer, South Dakota and I remember that it generated an enormous amount of interest. There weren't many radio sets, but those who had them followed the course of the flight anxiously and passed the news to their neighbors. Farmer is located 20 miles east of Mitchell, and when the flight crossed the Missouri River and veered north, it was thought it might land near Mitchell, or better yet, close to Farmer. In the late afternoon, men took turns climbing up the tallest of the two grain elevators, to see if they could spot the balloon against the light of the lowering sun.

The radio reported at about 4 PM that the balloon would land before it reached Mitchell. School had just let out and my

A Brief History of the Flaigg Family and the Flaigg Cabin
By Linda Velder

In October 2004 Wayne and Sondra Boggess donated the Flaigg cabin to the Newell Museum. The Flaigg log cabin was built on Horse Creek in 1890 by John and Martha Flaigg and they lived there until 1903. This is the story of the Flaigg family and their connection to Deadwood and the Black Hills.

Johannes Migael Flaigg was born in Zurich, Switzerland on October 11, 1843. His parents were Michael and Elizabeth (Eoht) Flaigg. He arrived in the United States in 1865, and enlisted in the U.S. Army on April 14, 1866, under the name of John Flaigg. This man of slight stature was sent to Indian Country from 1866-1869. He was engaged in the Hay Field Fight near Fort C.F. Smith, MT on August 1, 1867 and narrowly escaped death in the Battle of Goose Creek west of Fort Reno, WY, October, 1866 being among ten soldiers escaping massacre. He was discharged from the 17th Infantry from the Post at Omaha Barracks on April 14, 1869, as a Private. He lived in Omaha until 1871 then moved to Grand Island, NE in 1872. Here he met and married Martha Agatha Lorenz on December 18, 1872.

In 1878, Mr. Flaigg traveled by ox train (bull train) to Deadwood, Dakota Territory via the Sidney Trail. The trip was made in 26 days. He had plans of returning for his family after he secured housing and employment. Mrs. Flaigg grew impatient for word from her husband or his return. She joined a wagon train heading for

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Deadwood; she literally “took the bull by the horns,” commandeering the ox team herself. In the meantime, Mr. Flaigg decided to return to Sidney to fetch his family. Fortunately, they met on the trail and he did not have to make the trip back to Sidney.

John Flaigg worked as a cook in the Black Hills for many years. Some of the establishments he cooked at were The Overland Hotel (1883) in Deadwood and the Campbell House Hotel and the Homestake Hotel (1889) in Lead, and one summer at the Bald Mountain Mining Company. According to a son, Louis Flaigg, “When I was a small boy in Deadwood, the town was full of bull and mule teams, miners, Chinsmen, and Negroes. The lower end of Deadwood was all Chinese, with a Negro settlement farther down. The Chinese had a New Year’s celebration and gave the white kids nuts and candy from China. If they didn’t, we would stuff a sack in their chimney and smoke them out. There were beef, antelope, deer, and bear meat hanging in the Butcher shop, and it was cut on the block. Earlier there had been buffalo meat. Prairie chickens, jackrabbits, cottontails were also hung up, six in a bunch, for sale. We lived across from the Court House. They kept the Bad Indians there and fed them bear meat. The town was a mess, as they had dug up the whole gulch down to bedrock, hunting for gold.”

Around 1890, the Flaigg family “turned farmer” and set up homesteading on Horse Creek, west of the present town of Newell, SD, SE1/4 Sec. 35, TN9. RSE. He built a one-room log cabin, log barn, and dug out with logs hauled from the Black Hills. The homestead wasn’t a successful venture as Mr. Flaigg was an inept farmer and his first love was cooking. He traveled between Deadwood and the homestead, leaving the farming duties to his wife and children. He would supply the various hotels with fresh vegetables, eggs, cream, and meat, when in season. In 1903, he moved his wife back to Deadwood where he continued to cook at the Overland Hotel. In 1905, they moved to Sturgis, where he cooked for many years at the Fruth Hotel until his retirement.

After the Flaiggs returned to Deadwood, the cabin changed hands several times. Frederick Gardner moved it across the Section Line to his homestead, and lived in it until 1911 when it became a blacksmith shop. In 1947 it was sold to Julius and Elaine Viken. In 1986 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The End.

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folks decided we should see if we could get close to the landing site, wherever it may be. We had a 1934 V-8 Ford, noted for its ability to do 60 miles an hour or better on a good road, and in 1935 all the “good roads” were gravel, and not very numerous.

We drove to Mitchell, which was on US 16, and asked at a filling station. We had no radio in the car. The attendant said the latest was that it was coming down near White Lake, 37 miles away. Arriving at White Lake, an excited filling station attendant told us it had just landed about 4 miles south of town. There were cars headed that way so we followed them on the dirt road until we came to the place where we could see the gondola, and it was quite a thrill. We drove into the field, as did everyone else, and as I remember it, and a National Geographic photo taken from the gondola shows it too, there was a little corner of hayfield in the corner of the section, with corn on two sides of it. The gondola had landed on the border of the corn and hayfield and the collapsed balloon was spread out across the cornfield. I believe the field was picked, so the corn stalks were down, but if not, they would be trampled down soon. Some of the first arrivals had helped Capt. Stevens and Capt. Anderson stretch out the balloon on the ground and had volunteered to keep people from walking or driving on it. Capt. Albert Anderson and Capt. Orville Stevens had ridden the gondola all the way down to a soft landing. The gondola had a large inflated inner tube device attached to its bottom for such a purpose, although the occupants could have opened the porthole and parachuted if necessary, as was the case in the previous unsuccessful flight in 1934.

Anderson and Stevens were back in the gondola and we could look through a porthole and see them with flashlights, checking the instruments. The gondola rocked back and forth and sideways slightly on its cushion, and everyone got close enough to touch it. It didn’t look too big, and actually it wasn’t, but it was something we had never expected to see and touch, and I remember the words “National Geographic Society” painted on it, and the strange looking instruments packed inside.

The Army had tracked the route of the flight with trucks and soldiers who were to guard it when it landed. Perhaps 15 or 20 minutes after our arrival an Army truck came bouncing into the field and soldiers jumped off and rather roughly and rudely shoved everyone away. They
stretched a rope barrier around the gondola and balloon and no one got near it after that. They blocked the gate into the field so cars started parking on the narrow road.

It was dark by now and Dad decided we better leave before the road got blocked, so we managed to get onto the dirt road and head for White Lake and home. There was a steady stream of cars all the way to Mitchell. We got home around midnight and were the only ones from the Farmer area to make the trip, so we happened to be instant celebrities, for a couple of days.

I was 11 years old and I think the strato flight brought out as much interest then as did the space flights of the 1960s.

As a postscript, about 10 and 1/2 years later, in 1946, we had a neighbor who moved to Farmer from White Lake, Mrs. Elizabeth Wolfe. She had been the cook at the cafe in White Lake in 1935. When it became certain where the balloon would land, the cafe owner went to the grocery stores in White Lake and bought up all the meat, eggs, and bread that was available and brought them to the cafe. He told Mrs. Wolfe to “start cooking,” and she did, until 2 AM when it was all gone. She received a $3 tip for her extra work. Her regular pay was $1 per day, the accepted wage in 1935. Because of the sudden influx of people, many local residents didn’t have time to see the balloon. During the night the Army packed up the balloon and loaded it into an Army truck with the gondola and drove into White Lake in the morning so people there could see it. The End.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

West River History Conference

The Thirteenth Annual West River History Conference is scheduled for October 6, 7, 8, 2005 at the Alex Johnson Hotel in Rapid City. Papers will be presented on all aspects of the history and cultures of the Dakotas and Northern Plains.

For more information contact West River History Conference, PO Box 9276, Rapid City, SD 57709-9276 or email wrhcsf@rushmore.com or call (605) 721-7752.

C C C Reunion

The 28th annual reunion of the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni will meet in Rapid City October 5-9. Reunion headquarters will be at the Ramada Inn, 1721 La Crosse St. Anyone interested in the CCC is invited to attend. The conference includes programs and tours to CCC camps. For more information go to www.cccalumni.org or contact Peggy Sanders at peggy@rapidnet.com or (605) 424-2795.

EVENTS SPONSORED BY MUSEUMS AND ORGANIZATIONS:

In May, the Journey Museum in conjunction with the South Dakota State Historical Society opened the newest exhibit at the museum called “Writing on Stone: Shadows of Ancient Lives.” This exhibit has reproductions of ancient rock art from the Black Hills and western South Dakota displayed on rock cliffs in the archaeology display.

On September 24, the Journey Museum will sponsor a bus tour covering a portion of the 1874 Custer Expedition route in the Hills with photographer Paul Horsted leading the way. The tour costs $50 for museum members, and reservations are necessary at 394-6923.

The Fall Membership meeting of the Lawrence County Historical Society will be held at 1 pm on Sunday, October 2, in the Club Room of the Silverado. The program will include a buffet dinner and a talk by Eileen French on “Jacoby the Marble Cutter.” The cost is $10 and reservations are necessary. Call David Wolff at 644-0375 by Sept 28.

Beginning on Oct 2, the Journey Museum will have a new gallery exhibit called, “The Black Hills’ Journey Into the Space Age: Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Stratobowl.”

On October 5, noted documentary makers, Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan will present their Lewis & Clark video at the Journey Museum. Seated is limited and tickets are necessary. Call the Journey at 394-6923
BOOKNOTES

Dakota Graphics under contract with the Deadwood Historic Preservation Office has reprinted Seth Bullock: Frontier Marshal by Kenneth C. Kellar. The book hits some of the high points of Bullock's life, and Kellar, Bullock's great-grandson, brings a personal sense to the book. The book was originally published in 1972 and its release is especially timely because of the "Deadwood" show on HBO.

Irma Klock has released another small publication. Titled Spearfish Cyanide and Tille: The Story of Matilda Vanyea Darr and her childhood years in the Black Hills mining camp known as Spearfish Cyanide, it looks at the mining camp from the perspective of a young girl.

The South Dakota State Historical Society Press has released Gilbert Fite’s biography, Peter Norbeck: Prairie Statesman. Norbeck was one of South Dakota’s most influential governors and senators. Black Hills residents remember Norbeck for his efforts for Custer State Park and Mt. Rushmore. The book sells for $17.95, and may be acquired from the state at 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, 57501, with a $4 shipping charge plus tax. A full book review will appear in the next "Historian."

PRESERVATION IN THE NEWS:

A grant from the Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission to the Friends of South Lead Cemetery and the City of Lead is allowing for the restoration of monuments in the South Lead Cemetery. David and Greg Akropol are repairing stones, replacing bases, and setting monuments in their original positions.

Two historic markers interpreting the history of Deadwood’s Jewish community have been placed in Deadwood, one at the Adams House and the other in Mount Moriah. The Adams House was built in 1892 by Harris Franklin, one of Deadwood’s important Jewish residents, and Mount Moriah has a section called Hebrew Hill where there are headstones written in Hebrew. The Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation and the Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission developed the signs.

Mt. Moriah Cemetery has received some more upgrades with a new ticket booth, new concrete steps to Wild Bill’s grave, and new guided walking tours.

The Spearfish Historic Preservation Commission had the Ramsdell and Uhlig Additions surveyed to see what properties may qualify for the National Register of Historic Places. The 2004 survey of Original Town Spearfish identified 11 properties eligible for the National Register. Both surveys will be used to decide if there are enough historically significant structures to apply for Historic District Status.

In 2005 13 projects received a total of $225,000 in the “Outside Deadwood Grant” program funded by the Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission. One grant will allow the DC Booth Fish Hatchery to finish its historic Fish Car No. 3. This fish car is a replica of one of ten old rail cars used to transport fish.

Denver developer Daryl Propp recently hired a contractor to restore the Anderson Dairy Ranch Hip-Cottage, which was built by the James Anderson family in the late 1800s. The dairy provided products to Deadwood and is part of the Frawley Ranch.

TIDBITS

Paul Horsted continues his work on duplicating historic photos with current photographs in his “re-photography” project called “The Black Hills Yesterday and Today.” The finished product will be a book that promises to be just as spectacular as Paul’s earlier effort, Exploring with Custer.

The Deadwood Chamber of Commerce recently donated the Centennial Clothing Collection to the Adams Museum. The historic clothing collection was put together by Allegra Aldrich and Marion Keef for a fashion show to celebrate the South Dakota Centennial.

The Barrick Corporation recently donated the Lead records and artifacts of the Homestake mine to the Adams Museum. In order to properly care for the material, the City of Deadwood is in the process of of buying the F.L. Thorpe building on 150 Sherman Street. Over the next 18 months, the building will be remodeled and the records moved in. Then the process of accessioning the documents will begin. Once completed the collection promises a wealth of information for anyone interested in the Homestake Mine and the people that worked there.

With the dedication of Gold Run Park, Lead has a new park that celebrates the 125 year mining legacy of the Homestake Mine. The park includes a walking path that extends up to the
foundations of the South Mill, with displays of equipment and interpretative sign-boards set along the trail.

A non-profit society has acquired the Homestead Opera House from Jerry Aberle and his partners in Jerkodie, Inc. The purchase was assisted by loans from the USDA Rural Development program and Lead Economic Area Development, and by a grant from the US Economic Development Agency. With a non-profit in charge, the Opera House should be eligible for more grants and loans, and the society hopes to revitalize fund-raising and restoration efforts.

The Adams Museum will celebrate its 75th anniversary on October 8 and 9. The museum plans two days of programs beginning at 10 am each day. Along with presentations about the museum and Black Hills history, Potato Creek Johnny’s gold nugget will be displayed both days.

Just in time for its 75th anniversary, the Adams Museum recently received and a Certificate of Commendation for General Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History.

Thanks to the efforts of Dave McKee, the United States Forest Service has brought its archival material from the Custer office to the Case Library as part of a long term loan. The United States Forest Historic Collection will include a variety of items from photos to written documents, covering a number of topics. The collection is fairly extensive and is currently being accessioned. The Case Library will sponsor a reception to announce the opening of the collection.

Joseph R. Douda recently donated a portion of his railroad collection to the Case Library. The Joseph R. Douda Collection contains over 35 large format maps, and a stack written documents titled "Register of Engineers at Deadwood." This is a full record of train activity in Deadwood, listing what trains came to town and left, their point of origin and destination, the engines used, and the engineers and firemen involved, on a daily basis, from 1927 to 1958.

Case Collection Additions

Over the past year many new items have been added to the Case Library collections. The library has purchased 133 titles. Fifty-two of these titles were purchased with the ARROW gift funds; the rest were purchased out of the library budget. Some of the titles purchased are: Sharing the Gift of Lakota Songs, Native American Place names in the United States, Researching and Writing Tribal Histories, Encyclopedia of the Great Plains, Storied Stone Indian Rock Art of the Black Hills, and One Room Country Schools.

We have also received gifts of various sizes. The Bob Lee Papers manuscript collection grows steadily; this year Bob has brought us at least 25 inches linear of manuscript material and more than 5 inches linear of photographs. Beverley Bredell sent us four Golden Loads, the yearbook from Lead High School that belonged to her mother. She also sent a book about local people in World War II. We received Custer State Park: From the Mountains to the Plains as a gift of the author, Paul Horsted. Retired Colorado Geology professor Peter Sciasky gave the library 127 books on Geology in the Western United States. Many of these items are rare conference proceedings and such available at only a few Libraries nationwide. Joyce Crawford has sent to us several installments of papers from her mother Frances Haedt. Among those papers is a collection of obituaries clipped from the papers.
of local people, many of them from pioneer families. The obituaries are in files arranged alphabetically for easy access. Gifts from numerous other donors include: A videotape from the film of first flight in Spearfish dated 1913; two years worth of Montana: the Magazine of Western History; Videos from the Westerners programs; books Pioneering in the Rosebud and Montana in the Making; and Peter Thompson’s Account of the Battle of the Little Bighorn: The Waddington Typescript. This list is not comprehensive; but it is a small example of the largesse of our Friends, on whose generosity we greatly rely. Thank you all for your continued support.

Changes for the “Black Hills Historian”

The “Black Hills Historian” will be changing from a newsletter to a small journal. This will allow for longer and more articles, covering a wider variety of topics. We encourage anyone with a story to tell, or an author with an article prepared, to send it to the “Black Hills Historian,” Black Hills State University, 1200 University, Unit 9059, Spearfish, SD 57799

FRIENDS OF CASE LIBRARY

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

Thanks to the following for recently joining or renewing their membership in the Friends:
L.A. and Norma Kranmer - Nemo
Cheryl Miller - Spearfish
Beula Rehorst - St. Onge
Peggy Sanders - Oral
Beverly Lindblom - Rapid City
Velma Walker - Rapid City
Mary S. Garman - Sundance, WY
John Wheeler - Rapid City
Paul Horsted - Custer

Call for Articles, Papers and Stories

If you have an article or story you would like to have considered for inclusion in the new “Black Hills Historian,” please send it to “Black Hills Historian,” Black Hills State University, 1200 University, Unit 9059, Spearfish, SD 57799.
"The Black Hills Historian" is Changing

The next issue of the “Historian” will be reformatted and expanded into a small history journal. It will carry articles, stories, and vignettes related to Black Hills history, expanding upon the type of articles in past “Historians,” while not carrying as much news. It will also go from its current letter size down to about 5 inches by 8 inches, but its length will increase from eight pages to around 50. Two issues a year are anticipated.

The mission of the “Black Hills Historian” is seen as three-fold:

1. To expand our knowledge and understanding of Black Hills history and culture.
2. To provide a venue for Black Hills authors, enthusiasts, students, scholars, and old-timers so their information can be made available to a wider audience.
3. To stimulate more interest and research in the history and culture of the Black Hills.

The rationale of the “Historian,” Or: How does this fit with other publications?

Newsletters: Many Hills’ organizations produce excellent newsletters, and some offer brief history articles. The new “Black Hills Historian” will provide longer and more complete stories than space allows in newsletters, and over a wider variety of topics.

Scholarly Journals: The South Dakota State Historical Society currently produces South Dakota History, which is one of the nation’s best scholarly publications. The “Black Hills Historian” cannot and will not compete with South Dakota History, or any other scholarly journal. Scholars will continue to send their articles to prestigious journals, while the “Historian” will invite a much more diverse authorship, and will accept topics that other journals may shy away from.

Magazines: Several magazines run popular stories on Black Hills history, and Deadwood Magazine is among the best. Its articles often give overviews of the area’s history, appealing most to those who are fairly new to the Hills. The expanded “Historian” will probe lesser known topics, and provide more detail than magazines generally do. The “Historian” will appeal to those who already have some understanding of the region’s past.

The “Black Hills Historian” will be produced under the guidance of the Case Library for Western Historical Studies at Black Hills State University, and the Friends of Case Library, in cooperation with the Deadwood Historic Preservation Office and the Adams Museum and House. The Advisory Board of Editors currently includes:

Mary Kopco, Director, Adams Museum and House, Deadwood
Bob Lee, Black Hills Author and Historian
Watson Parker, Black Hills Author and Historian
Bobbi Sago, Special Collections Librarian, BHSU
Jim Wilson, Historic Preservation Officer, Deadwood
David Wolff, Associate Professor of History, BHSU

(Continued on the Back)
Because of its size, there is a charge for the new "Black Hills Historian."

There are two ways to subscribe to the "Historian." One is to become a "Friend" of Case Library. The journal is a benefit of membership. The other is to subscribe just for the publication. Fill out the proper form below:

To Subscribe:

I wish just to subscribe to the "Black Hills Historian." I have enclosed $5, which will entitle me to two issues of the journal (and maybe a third if finances work out).

Name ________________________________

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Email address ___________________________________________________________

Please enclose $5.

________________________________________

To Become a Friend of Case Library:

I wish to become, or renew my membership as, a "Friend of Case Library." I have enclosed $10, which will entitle me to two issues of the "Black Hills Historian" (and maybe a third if finances work out), and which will support projects and activities of the Case Library. These include:

- Funding two Freshmen history scholarships
- Sponsoring the District 6 National History Day competition for Middle School and High School students.
- Supporting the annual Island in the Plains Archaeology and History Symposium
- Providing support to the Case Library for the acquisition and preservation of collections.

Name ________________________________

Address ________________________________________________________________

City ___________________ State _______ Zip _______________

Email address ___________________________________________________________

Please enclose $10.