Mission: The Leland D. Case Library preserves and promotes the history of the Black Hills, South Dakota, and the Northern Great Plains. We collect historical materials and provide professional collection care. We are service oriented and assist with the research needs of the University, the community, and the world.

Former teacher talks about dark piece of Black Hills history

More than 200 people packed into a Black Hills State University lecture hall last week to hear Charles Rambow describe his more than 40-year journey into the dark and virtually unknown era of Black Hills history.

Rambow, surrounded by original KKK regalia, newspaper clippings, photographs and local KKK charter documents, discussed his years of research during the talk sponsored by the BHSU Case Library. The presentation was part of National Library Week held in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the BHSU E.Y. Berry Library-Learning Center.

Spurred by the discovery that his own grandparents were part of the Ku Klux Klan, Rambow, a longtime Sturgis history teacher, dedicated much of his life to finding out everything he could about the KKK’s movement into the Black Hills. The majority of his research came from interviews with people who were members of one of the Black Hills Klans, had family who were members, or who were targeted by the Klan. The Klan opposed many people including African Americans, Jews, Orientals and Roman Catholics, Rambow said.

“The topic is not my favorite to present primarily because the Ku Klux Klan was very much involved in violence and intimidation and various threats of violence throughout the area,” Rambow said.

The original Klan started in 1865 and disbanded around 1877; however, the organization, that prided itself on serving the community, united again in 1915 after the release of the movie “The Birth of a Nation” based on the novel

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“The Clansman.” The movie depicted the success of the KKK in protecting the South. To make matters worse, then-President Woodrow Wilson was quoted saying, “If it had not been for the Klan the South and the United States would not have survived.”

“That was a pretty strong recommendation (for the Klan),” Rambow said. Two publicity people from Indiana assisted in spreading the word of the KKK and creating the national movement which spread west, he said.

The majority of KKK members in the Black Hills came from North Dakota and Indiana, Rambow said. Nearly every community in the Black Hills had a Klan organization, he said. In Spearfish it was the Queen City Klan, in Lead-Deadwood it was the Mile High Klan, in Rapid City it was the Gate City Klan.

The most violent act of a Black Hills KKK was the Mile High Klan who was thought to have been involved in the murder of Father Arthur Belknap, a Lead Catholic priest. A $500 reward was offered for the capture of Belknap’s murderer; however, since the majority of the law enforcement officers were also KKK members, the priest’s murder still remains unsolved, Rambow said.

Rambow said there were many other instances of intimidation and threats by the KKK throughout their reign in the Black Hills. However, the second wave of the KKK came to an end in the late 1920s as KKK leaders, such as Indiana’s David C. Stephenson who was indicted and convicted of murder, became involved in highly publicized national scandals.

While publicity is what helped the KKK rise to power a second time, it was also publicity that led to its downfall. However, there are still extremists out there devoted to uphold the “white” way of life, Rambow said.

“We would hope that the Klan is dead and gone, but unfortunately don’t believe it, because we have those folks out there who are still organizing,” he said.

Spearfish Area Historical Society – Monthly program, first Tuesday of the month September – May, Spearfish Senior Center, 7:30 p.m. Next meeting DECEMBER 3 ~ AN INSIDE LOOK AT MATTHEWS OPERA HOUSE - Tom Matthews and MOH staff - This meeting will be held at the Matthews Opera House. For complete schedule see their website http://bit.ly/T48UJw

Lawrence County Historical Society – They usually hold a fall tour and a spring meeting. For schedule of events see http://bit.ly/151Fbs4

Adams Museum /Deadwood History Inc. – Upcoming events, Holiday tours of the Historic Adams House, November 30-December 28. For more information and registration call 605.578.3724. For the full calendar see http://bit.ly/16NKvQ6

South Dakota Railroad Museum – Annual Train Show and Christmas Celebration November 29 through December 31, 2013. For events schedule see http://bit.ly/1hTLdzZ


West River History Conference – Annual Conference in early October, watch for news of dates and call for papers at their website http://bit.ly/y07fXI You can also follow them on Facebook.
BHSU alumna preserves legacy of American bison

By BHSU Communications

After several years working with nonprofits, Ricci got burnt out. She wanted to do something different. Her inspiration came after she received a historic preservation grant from a proposal she wrote as part of a project for a class taught by Dr. Robert Campbell, BHSU associate professor of history. With a love of history and the motivation that she could succeed, Ricci decided to set off on a new adventure.

Six months later, Ricci took over the building in the heart of historic downtown Rapid City that is now the Museum of the American Bison. “It’s a beautiful historic building that’s over 100 years old,” Ricci says.

According to Ricci, in the two months the museum has been open, they’ve had more than 2,000 visitors and the response has been great. “We’ve had all sorts of visitors including kindergartners on a field trip; people from France, Russia, Poland…people from all over the country and all over the world,” Ricci says. “Their responses have been overwhelming. We have a comment book, and it’s been great to see how people are amazed by the museum, as well as how they have been touched by the story of the bison.”

Their story is one of survival and resiliency, Ricci said. The American bison, commonly referred to as the buffalo, once roamed this continent, 60 million strong, but were exterminated by the thousands in the 19th century until less than 1,000 remained. They were slaughtered for their hides and to make way for western expansion. Thanks to rescue efforts by several ranchers across the Great Plains and conservation groups such as the American Bison Society, there are now more than 400,000 bison in North America.

Aside from Ricci’s museum, there is only one other museum in the nation dedicated to American bison history - The National Buffalo Museum in Jamestown, N.D.

Ricci’s museum features exhibits for visitors of all ages including a dig site where children unearth bison bones; a “tracks and scat” table which educates visitors on wildlife indigenous to the bison habitat; an art gallery with current bison projects taking place in the Dakotas and Montana; and the star of the museum, Bruno, a full-sized mounted bull.

Ricci says she hopes that visitors will take away an appreciation of the incredible survivor skills of the American bison having lived in America since the ice age and surviving nearly being exterminated by man. “If people knew why that animal was still standing, they would really respect and admire the bison,” she said.

Ricci hopes to one day expand the museum. “My immediate wish-list would be to do a mobile museum of some sort. Our state is the heart of where the bison lived and where the revival took place, so I would love to take some of our exhibits on the road to rural kids who otherwise wouldn’t have the chance to visit the museum,” she says.

Ricci’s board of directors includes one of her former BHSU history professors, Dr. Mitchell Stone who serves as president; Donovin Sprague, BHSU adjunct instructor; and two wildlife biologists who specialize in bison ecology.

To learn more about the Museum of the American Bison, stop by the museum located at 607 St. Joseph Street, Rapid City; call (605) 791-3266, or visit www.bisonmuseum.org.
Help us preserve our history:

These links are to the Society of American Archivists pamphlets on donating your personal papers or business records to an archive.

Please consider donating your historical photographs, scrapbooks, diaries, personal and family papers, and business or organizational records relating to the history of the Black Hills to the Case Library (or another favored archives or museum).

http://bit.ly/w0FrMZ

Very exciting news, the Case Library reading room has gotten a facelift. In addition to brand new paint, the room has been totally rearranged. The main feature of this rearrangement is a new shelving and display unit to be constructed. Once the changes are complete, we will showcase the upgrade with an open house.

National Library Week
April was very busy with us organizing and hosting two National Library Week events on April 18th. In the morning the E.Y. Berry Library celebrated its 40th Anniversary. Speakers included: President Kay Schallenkamp; Dr. Rodney Custer; provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, previous library directors, Dr. Ed Erickson and Dr. Rajeev Bukralia. Dr. Erickson was hired as the library director in 1972 to open the Library and he served as library director until 2005.

In the afternoon Charles Rambow spoke about the Ku Klux Klan in the Black Hills. There was a great turnout with more than 200 people filling a lecture hall in the Jonas classroom building.

Students examining the KKK artifacts shared by guest speaker Charles Rambow.

Generous Donations
We have received a number of generous donations throughout the summer and fall. One very valuable gift is the addition of the Watson Parker notebooks. In June Watson’s family transferred his research notebooks to us. There are 120 binders with meticulously documented research notes and photographs. The shelves to be built in the reading room primarily will be used to house this treasure trove of Black Hills history. My students and I are in the process of indexing these notebooks into a database that will greatly enhance access to the information they contain.

Other items we received include: four framed photographs of local scenes; two scrapbooks compiled by the late Georgia Abrahamson containing photographs and newspaper clippings about Republican Party activities; a poem written by long time Spearfish resident and BHSU alumna Mattie Welch detailing her family’s experience moving from Iowa to South Dakota; a book of poems written by Lilian Forde, the second art instructor on campus; and scans of photos of Spearfish and BHSU in the 1940s taken by Lorenzo Alton Williamson from the Army Air Corps.

By Bobbi Sago

BHSU President, Dr. Kay Schallenkamp

Guest Speaker

Charles Rambow

Russell Jonas and his son Allen from 1940

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We’ve also begun to process the Linfred Shuttler donation mentioned in the Spring 2013 newsletter. The collection consists of notebooks and files of research and newspaper clippings, photographs, and postcard. Many of the image are views I’ve never seen before.

Downtown Friday Nites
July 12th we sponsored a “Where in the Hills?” contest at Spearfish

Downtown Friday Nites. We displayed three photographs that folks were to identify to be entered into a drawing. The prize was to be a signed copy of Dr. David Wolff’s book, Seth Bullock: Frontier Lawman. Unfortunately we stumped everyone, next time we will give folks a better chance. However, we did get a lot of visitors and had a great time chatting.

Spearfish 125th and BHSU 130th
The Case Library and University Archives were used heavily for the Spearfish 125th and BHSU 130th celebration. It was my pleasure to work with Larry Miller from the Spearfish Historical Preservation Commission and the Spearfish Area Historical Society. Larry produced a video that was shown at the Matthew’s Opera House during the celebration. He also headed up a committee that helped select images that were hung in various venues around town. The committee also selected images that were published in the Black Hills Pioneer one each week from July until the celebration Sept. 13th - 15th. Courtney Slaight from Visit Spearfish shared our photos with the community via their Spearfish 125th Celebration Facebook Page. One of our favorite images came from the Father Szalay Collection. It is of the Spearfish train station once located at Canyon and Hudson where the fire station is currently located. You can see this photo in our Featured Photo on the back page of this newsletter.

As part of the anniversary celebration on campus I worked with Marketing and Communications to create a Campus Walking Tour booklet. I introduced the Walking Tour at a Brown Bag lunch on Friday September 13th in the Student Union. I followed the featured speaker of that event, Dr. David Wolff talking about the founding of the institution. I had my student workers install an anniversary exhibit in the display cases near the coffee shop on the main floor. This banner didn’t make it into the case due to a lack of space, but sharing it by photograph is the next best thing.

I expect the exhibit to be up through the end of the semester.

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Since my staff works hard I let them decorate a door for the Swarm Week competition. It furthers our aim to be more visible on campus and in the community. The theme this year was “Swarm Olympics”. The door was titled “BHSU Archival Olympics.”

Another way we are making ourselves more visible is the new display case as one enters the library. It is a tower cabinet with glass on all four sides. We will feature different collections there on a rotating basis. Currently featured are the Watson Parker Notebooks and the Black Hills National Forest Historical Collections.

We continue to add photographs to our Digital Library South Dakota (DLSD) site. We now have in excess of 1,600 images available to our researchers online. http://dlsd.sdln.net/cdm4/browse.php?cat=institution&value=BHSU

We are looking for ideas about how the Leland D. Case Library and the E.Y. Berry Library-Learning Center can celebrate the South Dakota Quasquicentennial.

Please send your ideas to Bobbi at Roberta.Sago@BHSU.edu or to Dr. Wolff at David.Wolff@BHSU.edu. You can also call Bobbi at the Case Library 605-642-6361.

We look forward to hearing from you.

South Dakota turns 125: Help us celebrate

Library staff display the door they decorated for the annual Swarm Days event on campus.

Thawney Stottler holding the banner displayed on page 6 from the University Archives.
Meet the 2013 Friends of Case Library Freshman Scholarship Winners

Each year the Friends of Case Library award two scholarships for freshman history majors. This year’s scholarship recipients are Sarah Shoop and Kayla Hallock.

Kayla is a graduate of Laurel High School in Laurel, Mont. She is a history education major who chose BHSU because of our strong School of Education also because she would have the opportunity to play softball.

Her passion for history was inspired by several of her teachers and her decision to go into History Education is driven by her desire to someday make a difference in her students’ lives.

Her favorite period is American history and this semester she most enjoys her Governments of the World and Western Civilization II classes.

Kayla is also a member of the Honors Program and in her free time practices softball and hangs out with friends. After getting her bachelor’s degree she is considering going on to law school.

A graduate of Lead-Deadwood High School, Sarah chose BHSU because it is close to home and offers a history education major. She doesn’t recall what sparked her interest in history but has always been fascinated by it and had a strong desire to know more. She is most interested in U.S. History.

School keeps her very busy, but in her free time she reads, watches movies, and spends time with her family. Her career goal is to be a High School History teacher.

We congratulate Kayla and Sarah.

Scholarship donations continue to transform the lives of BHSU students

How to donate to the scholarship
Donations to the Friends of Case Library Scholarship can be sent to:
University Advancement
Black Hills State University
1200 University, Unit 9506
Spearfish, SD 577899

Please make checks payable to the BHSU Foundation. Let them know that the gift is for the Friends of Case Library Scholarship. Or you can donate online at: [http://bit.ly/Su3Fjo](http://bit.ly/Su3Fjo)

How to apply for the scholarship
To apply for scholarships students can go to the online application form. [http://bit.ly/SPURVn](http://bit.ly/SPURVn)
Friends of Case Library
Join Today!

☐ Annual Individual: $10

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(cell) _______________________________

E-mail:____________________________________
____________________________________

Please return to:
Dr. David Wolff, Friends of Case Library
Black Hills State University
1200 University St., Unit 9059
Spearfish, SD 57799

Featured Photo

Spearfish Train station at the corner of Canyon and Hudson where the current fire station is located. Photograph from the Father Szalay Collection.