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.

South Dakota marks 125 Years of Statehood

by Paul Higbee

One-hundred-twenty-five years ago South Dakotans achieved statehood and celebrated with brass bands and brassy, optimistic speeches. Today, though, a historian could look at November 2, 1889 -- Statehood Day -- and wonder whether the designation was premature.

After all, the new state was not yet one geographic expanse. The mighty and often fearsome Missouri River divided east from west. Some engineers of the era doubted the river could ever be spanned by permanent bridges. The Black Hills’ first state legislators typically got to the capital by riding the rails south into Nebraska, continuing east across most of that state’s width to Sioux City, Iowa, and from there making connections northwest to Pierre. In 1889 South Dakota farmers were well into a drought that would last another eight years, destroying an early state economic development strategy: Promote the notion that “rain follows the plow.” In other words, embrace the shaky science that claimed when vast croplands took form, atmospheric conditions would change so South Dakota could become a lush extension of the Mississippi River valley. A few years into the drought, astute farmers knew the theory was pure nonsense.

Worst of all in 1889, American Indian people saw their reservations shrink and were just getting a grasp on the federal government’s latest plan for them. The Dawes Severalty Act promised allotments of lands native families could farm. The concept was confusing for traditionally nomadic Great Plains people, and the Act further broke down tribal tradition and authority. South Dakota’s first U.S. Senator, Richard Pettigrew, appointed ill-prepared Daniel Royer as Indian Agent at Pine Ridge, and conditions were ripe for disaster. Pine Ridge exploded on December 29, 1890, when federal troops fired on Minneconjou men, women and children. Federal authorities said 153 native people died, while tribal elders claimed fatalities topped 300. That same week South Dakota marked the close of its first full year of statehood, even as news of Wounded Knee spread far and wide. For some observers, the notion of South Dakota as a state unable to pull itself beyond its frontier past lingered a long, long while.

But it’s important to stress that this lingering notion was mostly a national perception, held most adamantly by Americans who had never set foot in South Dakota, and who never would. Plenty of South Dakotans themselves, despite hardships and even outright tragedy, expressed remarkable optimism about their state’s future. An example was Fayette Cook, Black Hills State University’s first true president. Cook was already at his desk on campus when statehood was confirmed and when bullets flew at Wounded Knee. He had arrived in Spearfish from Minnesota and was sometimes dismayed by frontier conditions he encountered here. Still he stayed because, he wrote, “I did not like to abandon an undertaking once begun, even though it seemed impossible.”

His seemingly impossible undertaking was building an institution of higher education in the Black Hills

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and setting high standards for public school instruction across the region. Cook led the way down that path for 34 years. A later BHSU president wrote that Cook built “something out of nothing.” South Dakota’s knack for developing or attracting men and women unafraid of seemingly impossible undertakings, and who consider building something out of nothing the ultimate professional challenge, is its saving grace and the source of its best stories.

Consider mountain sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski and author Vine Deloria, each in his own way committed to replacing the nothingness that has sometimes defined understanding between native and non-native cultures. Consider the men and women who put “scientific farming” techniques to work in the late 1930s and ‘40s, bringing South Dakota back from the Dust Bowl’s devastation. Those farmers’ successful efforts rank among the most dramatic “something out of nothing” stories in American history.

After 125 years, South Dakota hasn’t entirely lost its borderline frontier image, and that’s a source of embarrassment and annoyance for some of our forward-looking citizens. But where better for individuals drawn to “something out of nothing” undertakings to tackle big works?

By the way, that fearsome river was permanently spanned in time for trains to first roll east and west across the entire state in 1907. It could be argued that was the birth of modern South Dakota. If not always united in thinking, South Dakota’s diverse cultures were forever connected geographically.

Long-time student workers graduate and leave a hole in Case Library staff

by Jessica Skorheim and Thawney Stottler

Working at the Archives and Case Library is a wonderful experience. We learn new things about our community and university every time on the job. On a daily basis, we work with the special collections in some form. Here at the Case Library, we preserve South Dakota history through cataloging and organizing collections. But what we do most is show the community what we have to offer in our vast collections. Our favorite job (Thawney and Jessica) is to create display cases for the public to view. We enjoy going through our pictorial collection containing the lost histories of the communities many different lives of its citizens. Another way we show the community what we have to offer is our digitizing of documents and photos to an online database for easier access on the BHSU website.

And by doing this, we preserve all this information for future generations to learn from.

The staff have been wonderful to work with in the special collections. Bobbie (Sago) is a fun-loving historian. She gets to know us on a more personal level, so she caters our responsibilities to our strengths and helps improve our weaknesses. Anna (Gaffey) is a great addition to our staff as well. Her lively personality and assistance to our Black Hills National Forest Historical Collection has been a valuable asset towards future digitizing the database.

We (Thawney and I) are really going to miss working in the special collections.

Jessica Skorheim will graduate in December with an English major and Library Media minor. Jessica hopes to work as a children’s librarian at a public library in her future.

Thawney Stottler will graduate in May 2014 with a Biology and Outdoor Education major. Thawney hopes that with her previous experience in forestry internships that she will travel in the conservation field, meeting and educating new people on environmental preservation.

It has been a pleasure to work with Thawney and Jessica, to see them grow and develop a passion and sense of ownership for the Case Library and University Archives. They will be missed by all of us.

– Bobbi Sago

The Black Hills Historian
(The Case Library newsletter)

Contact info
Case Library is located on the second floor of the E.Y. Berry Library-Learning Center on the campus of Black Hills State University.

Hours are typically 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and may vary depending on staff availability. Appointments aren’t necessary, but if you are making a special trip to campus, call (605) 642-6361 to make sure we are here. You can also contact Bobbi at Roberta.Sago@BHSU.edu.

Leland D. Case Library for Western Historical Studies:
Black Hills State University
1200 University, Unit 9676
Spearfish, SD 57799-9676
605-642-6361
Roberta.Sago@BHSU.edu

Case Library web pages
http://iis.bhsu.edu/lis/specColl/

Friends of Case Library web page
http://iis.bhsu.edu/lis/specColl/friendsOfCase.cfm

Click on Friends of Case Library on left menu

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Case Library presents “Gov. Arthur Calvin Mellette: Before and After Statehood”

On November 2nd, 1889 President Benjamin Harrison signed the Act of Admission making South Dakota the 40th State. In celebration of the 125th Anniversary of South Dakota Statehood, the Leland D. Case Library will host John Timm, who will portray South Dakota’s first governor, Arthur Calvin Mellette. Mellette arrived in Dakota Territory in 1879. Ten years later, President Harrison appointed him Dakota Territory’s last territorial governor, and in late 1889 he was elected the state’s first Governor. He served until 1893. In his representation of the governor, Timm explores unique issues and numerous hardships faced by Mellette both before and after statehood was achieved.

Originally from Canton, S.D., Timm spent a number of years living in California. His interest in Mellette began when he was a costumed docent at the Pettigrew House Museum in Sioux Falls. He has been portraying Governor Mellette since 1999, and has dedicated a lot of time to researching him. In 2012 Timm published Mellette’s story in, And The Last Shall Be First.

Timm’s performance will be October 15, 2014 from 4-5 p.m. in Jonas 305 on the Black Hills State University Campus. All are welcome.

For a map of campus, click on this link: http://bit.ly/lp67o8F

This program is made possible by the South Dakota Humanities Council, an affiliate for the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Library Participates in One Book South Dakota

The library hosted a discussion of One Book South Dakota on Wednesday, September 17th. This year’s title was “Dakota a Spiritual Geography” by Kathleen Norris and the talk was led by Joanna Jones. We had about 15 participants which included students, faculty, and community members. The discussion was lively and thought provoking and lasted for an hour.

Case Library wishes Mrs. Dode Lee a belated 90th Birthday!

On May 16, 2014 Mrs. Dode Lee celebrated her 90th Birthday.

We extend our warmest wishes to Mrs. Lee.

Local happenings

E.Y. Berry Library reception celebrating the original work by Don Montileaux – Oct. 14th, 2-3 p.m. in the library, next to the coffee shop on the main floor of the library.

Case Library presents “Gov. Arthur Calvin Mellette: Before and After Statehood” – Oct. 15th, 4-5 p.m. in Jonas Hall 305.


Deadwood History, Inc. – Preservation Thursdays, for upcoming events see their webpage http://bit.ly/16NKvQ6

West River History Conference

The 22nd Annual West River History Conference - October 16, 17, 18, 2014, Hilton Garden Inn, 815 E. Mall Drive, Rapid City, SD.

For more information: http://bit.ly/y07fXI

To register go to: http://bit.ly/YOi2IH

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 archive or museum).


Donating organizational records: http://bit.ly/w0FrMZ
Pioneers’ Gallery

Photos of early Spearfish luminaries from the Case Library Photograph Collections.

William H. Harlow
W. H. Harlow was one of the first Spearfish Board of Trustees members and served the community in a variety of other public positions. During his 20+ years in Spearfish, he was also involved in the real estate and insurance businesses. He was the manager of the Harrison Telephone Company.

Richard B. Hughes
Early settler, journalist, historian, and editor at the Black Hills Journal, served on the first South Dakota State legislature.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Evans
Early settlers supported building the Normal School

J. F. Summers
Early settler, leading business man in the region, 1887 President of Band of Spearfish. Member of the Normal School Board of Trustees.

Early settler William B. Lown, established the Lown Mercantile also called the “Pioneer Store”. Later built a large sandstone building at the corner of 5th and Illinois Streets that was called W.B. Lown & Sons General Store. His sons Ernest and Charles “Brownie” ran the store up until the 1950s.

William and Clara (Short) Lown in front of the Pioneer Monument at the corner of 5th and Illinois. Monument was later moved to Spearfish Park. Photo ca. 1926.

E. H. Warren
South Dakota State Legislature and head of the Appropriations Committee of 1899 and was instrumental in securing state funds for building the Women’s Dormitory that became Wenona Cook Hall.
Recently received books


Enss, Chris. The Doctor Wore Petticoats: Women physicians of the Old West. Guilford, Conn.: TwoDot, c2006. (Has chapter on Flora Hayward Stanford – First female physician in Deadwood)


Goulet, Mary Ellen. Reveille in Hot Springs: The Battle to Save Our VA. [Charleston, S.D.]: [CreateSpace], [2013].


Murray, Jim. A Wasicu (White Man) in Indian Country. [Place of publication not identified]: Xlibris Corporation, 2012.


Dr. Wolff discusses Watson Parker Collections

On August 12th we held an incredibly successful reception to officially unveil the Watson Parker Ghost Town Notebooks. More than 50 people attended and the Reading Room was packed. We enjoyed the reminiscences of Watson by Dr. David Wolff. Watson’s family was in attendance including: Olga Parker, James Parker, David Parker, Rebecca Jensen, and Troy Schmidt. It was a pleasure to see our many friends at this celebration. A KOTA news team was here and we were featured on the 5 p.m. broadcast.
Case Library Updates

Robert Sago,
Special Collections Librarian

You have read about the Watson Parker Ghost Town Notebooks reception on page five, so I won’t repeat that. Here are the other exciting things that are going on in Case Library.

Anna Gaffey and I both submitted grant proposals to the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant we applied for was the Humanities Collections and Reference Resources, Implementation Grants. Anna applied for funding to continue work on the Black Hills National Forest Historical Collections. I applied for funding for processing the Bob Lee Papers and photographs. We won’t know until March if we will be receiving funding for the projects.

July 25th Case Library staffed the BHSU Booth at Spearfish Downtown Friday Nights showcasing the Black Hills National Forest Historical Collection. Staff from the Black Hills National Forest Spearfish Office joined Dr. David Wolff and Anna Gaffey in the festivities. Again this year they ran the “Where in the Hills?” identify the photographs contest. William Enderby won and received a signed copy of Seth Bullock by David Wolff.

The photos were Lower Deadwood along Highway 85, Harney Peak Fire Tower, and Sylvan Lake Hotel.

The E. Y. Berry Library holds a collection of artwork by Lyndle Dunn. Dunn was a prominent wildlife illustrator in the mid-20th Century. He mostly worked in Colorado by later in life moved to Sturgis, SD. The artwork usually hangs around the second floor of the library. We are currently working on an inventory & reframing project and hope to return the artwork to the walls soon. In addition to the artwork, we have a number of prints of Dunn’s work for sale and over the summer, we created a web site about the Dunn Collection and information on purchasing the prints. This information is located here: http://bit.ly/XcX6Kt. Images of these prints were also added to DLSD.

The Case Library/University Archives participated in the Swarm Week festivities by decorating a door. The theme was “Sting Lightening”, harkening to the 1950s.

Reaching more student researchers is currently a top priority. I have scheduled visits to the Case Library from five classes. Friday September 19th, Jace Decory brought her Siouan Tribal Culture class (AIS/SOC 444) in for a tour. Sixteen students spent their hour long class getting a general tour of Case Library, examining related resources, and “touring” the Special Collections web pages.

I’ve completed our collection of W. R. Cross images on DLSD. The grand total for that collection is 533 images. We continue to add items to our Digital Library South Dakota (DLSD) collections as well. We currently have in excess of 5,300 images in the database. http://bit.ly/NP7rYk. This is largely thanks to the work of Anna and her student that there has been such a great increase in the number of images in the database.

We also continue to add collection records on our materials to our Past Perfect collection management database.

With the students gone things are quiet around the library. That gives us the opportunity to work on large projects and ‘housekeeping’ tasks. Over the summer I re-inventoried and organized our remote storage areas in preparation for getting that information into our database. It isn’t much to talk about, but was a massive undertaking, the completion of which was quite gratifying. We are now working on re-inventorying of our collections here on the second floor. The result of these efforts will be easier access to the contents of the collections.
Along the road to statehood were many events and issues of Territorial and National importance. One such issue was Prohibition. It was one of the largest issues on the table during the Constitutional Convention for South Dakota in July of 1889. To avoid rejection of the Constitution by voters due to this controversy, Prohibition was listed separately on the ballot put before the people on October 1, 1889. The voters approved Prohibition, but it was repealed some years later. One item of interest in the Case Library related to this matter is a Constitutional Prohibition Songster for South Dakota. It was edited by Rev. William Fielder with music by Prof. W. R. Evans and published by the Non-Partisan Constitutional Prohibition Organization and printed by the Aberdeen Daily News Company in Aberdeen, SD, in 1889.

Railroads had a profound effect on settlement of South Dakota. Towns that welcomed the railroads flourished and many towns bypassed by the railroads floundered. A great deal of promotional materials was written by or about settlement and tourism along the rail lines. One such item held in the Leland D. Case Library is "Opportunities for Settlers in Dakota along the Chicago and Northwestern Railway." It was published by the New York Tribune in 1889. The cover states "Facts collected by a special correspondent of the New York Tribune during a Special visit to Dakota in the summer of 1889." Various articles tout the desirable attributes of cities along the line. The Chicago Northwestern was formed in Chicago in 1859 by combining several smaller Illinois railroads. Several routes came into South Dakota from the east, however, the Black Hills was served by a line that came north just west of Chadron, NE. It entered the Black Hills at Buffalo Gap and eventually built to Deadwood, Belle Fourche and beyond.
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__________________________________________

Please return to:
Dr. David Wolff, Friends of Case Library
Black Hills State University
1200 University St., Unit 9003
Spearfish, SD 57799-9003

From the Archives

Class of 1889/1890

Back row: Julia P. Day, Carlotta Thomas, Ethel Miller, and Mable Richards

Front Row: Cornelia Storman, Unidentified