



The Carnegie Courier

Newsletter of

The Mitchell Area Historical Society (MAHS)
& The Mitchell Area Genealogical Society (MAGS)

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Fall 2020

Swenson shares more stories

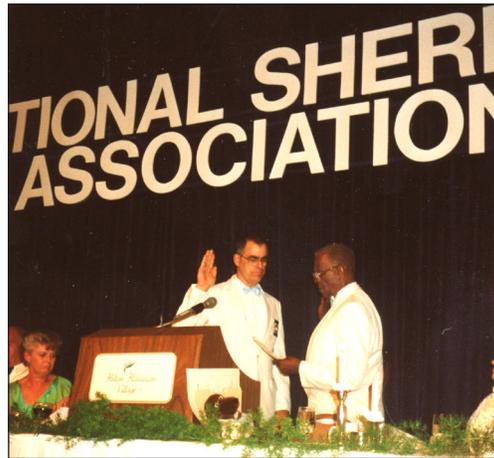
By Lyle Swenson

As promised in the last Courier, I have written about a few more experiences as the Sheriff in Davison County, South Dakota.

All in all, my first year as a sheriff was a real learning experience as I had never been involved in most of the things we had to do and certainly had no training for them it was "OJT" on the job training! Our one and only deputy, Sam Addy, had a short experience at the Mitchell PD before coming to work for the County. We did a whole heap of learning in a short time.

When I started in 1961, I was driving a 1955 Cadillac and did not want to trade until I was sure I could do the job and liked it. I had bought it before I got married and loved it, so it was hard to part with, but the reality of it was evident. It was seven years old but still a Cadillac! I went from a Caddy to a 1961 Rambler - wow, what a step down. We were paid for necessary mileage traveled so it was never a moneymaker for me.

Equipment, we had none to speak of, a siren and four red lights for one car. Oh yes, we did have an emergency red light to use at an

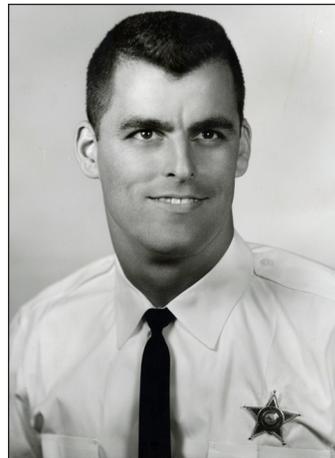


Lyle Swenson's swearing-in ceremony as President of the National Sheriff's Association in 1989 at Honolulu, Hawaii

Bud Williams, Mayor of Mitchell, SD did the honors.

accident scene. It was an aluminum tube with three, fold up legs that contained 5 flashlight batteries and a double-faced red light on the top. It looked official, but that's all. You could not see the red light in the daytime nor at night with headlights shining on it!

Our two-way radio was a single channel low band 39.100 that we shared with the state highway department. One of the major problems with low band radio was called "skip" where radio users across the USA transmissions came across our local radio like they were next door and likewise our transmissions did the same to them. The southern states were the worst. Often when I travelled, I could talk directly with my office from California and



Arizona. Due to the growing number of radio users the state allocated another channel 39.320 to South Dakota law enforcement. That helped a great deal. Eventually, South Dakota law enforcement moved up to high band and UHF to get enough space to have efficient space for transmissions. Over the next

32 years as Sheriff many changes took place in training, mandated training, equipment and vehicles.

Financially, it was difficult to keep up as County budgets could not keep up.

As stated earlier, the Sheriff's Office had no equipment in the office except for an old manual typewriter.

When we finally got an electric, it was a hand-me-down from the court system, but it was better than the old manual!

At one of my earlier NSA conferences I saw the "Jaws of Life" demonstrations and was blown away by them. How much easier we could do our recovery job at an auto accident if we had these. I attempted to find a way to get them, but the cost scared us away each time. Finally, I convinced the salesman to allow us to demonstrate to the commissioners, other counties and service clubs in hopes that we could purchase this wonderful tool. He put the jaws on a trial basis during the winter as he wouldn't demo during the winter.

What makes this such a life-saving tool? The "Jaws of Life" can "provide up to 10,000 pounds of force at a time. *Cont. on page 5*

Mitchell Tokens a rare find

By Dean Randall

Do you have a token from Sebastian's or the Theatre Pharmacy or the Navin Bar all in Mitchell, SD?

These are just of a few of the many tokens to be found from Mitchell merchants in the time period of the 1890's until the 1950's. These tokens were usually "Good For" something in the merchant's store. Good For 5¢ In Trade (or some other denomination) was a common value.

Others were Good For: a drink, a quart of milk, a cigar, a loaf of bread, and a myriad of other things.

So, what is a token? Maybe you've heard of "chits", "egg money", "checks", "tall-eyes", or "trade checks". Other names for tokens could have been used in various parts of the country. You can think of a token as a trade stimulator. The token was only good in the establishment where you received it.

For example let's say you bought apples for 22¢ and you paid with a quarter. Instead of getting 3¢ back in change you might be given a token good for 5¢ in trade.

To be a bonafide token it should meet three requirements.

1) It is like a coin; most are round so that helps the comparison, but it could be other shapes as well – square, oval, octagonal, plus many other shapes.

2) It can be spent or used to buy things from the merchant who issued it.

3) It was not made by the government.

Note that just because it should meet those three aspects, doesn't mean that it has to. In fact, some tokens may meet only one or two of those conditions.

Tokens are made of many different materials. Brass and aluminum are the two most common metals used, but nickel, copper, zinc, white metal, and a few others are



used. In the non-metal category one can find tokens made of wood, fiber, hard rubber and plastic.

The most recognizable type of token will have the name of the store, merchant or issuer and the location, usually just the city and state, on the obverse. On the reverse will be the value or what it can be spent for.

As one can see, it might be hard to define what a token is.

Many people confuse medals with tokens. Since there are many exceptions to the above "rules," it appears that the rule itself has little validity.

Tokens started to appear in Mitchell about 1890. Con Sullivan operated a saloon about that time and was one of the first to use tokens.

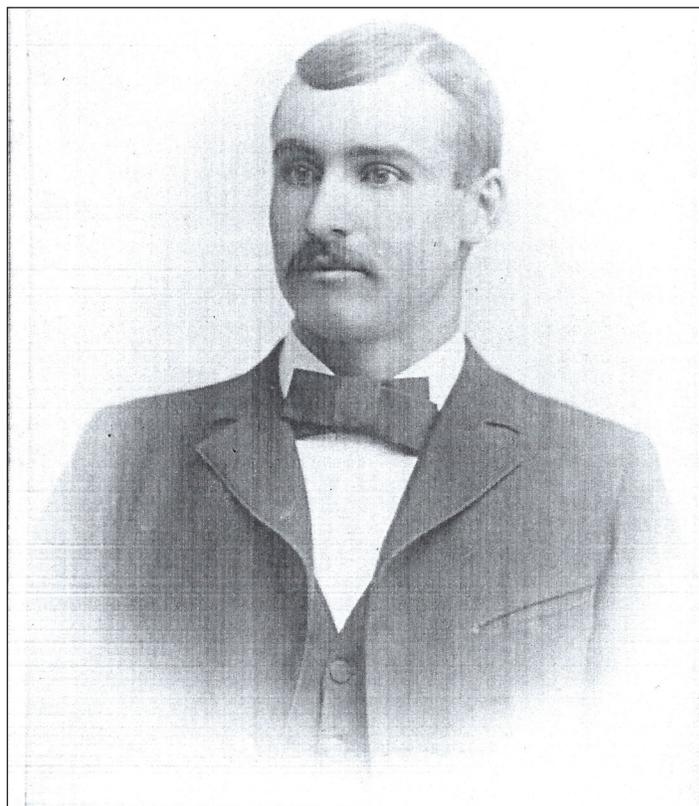
The Mitchell Area Historical Society is always looking to add to its collection. Maybe you have one of these items that we could put on display.

1. "A Guide to Collecting South Dakota Tokens and Exonumia" by Stephen H. Miedema, 2005

2. "Tokens & Medals" an article in Mid-States Hobby News, Dec. 1, 1969 by Jim Rasmussen

3. "Standard Catalog of United States Tokens 1700-1900" by Russell Rulau, Krause Publications, Iola, WI, 1999

4. "What Is a Token" by Tony Chibbaro in Talking Tokens, NTCA, Nov. 2017, p. 10 and subsequent issues.



L. C. Stair

COR. & Main Street,
MITCHELL,
S. DAK.

Thomas Patrick Navin

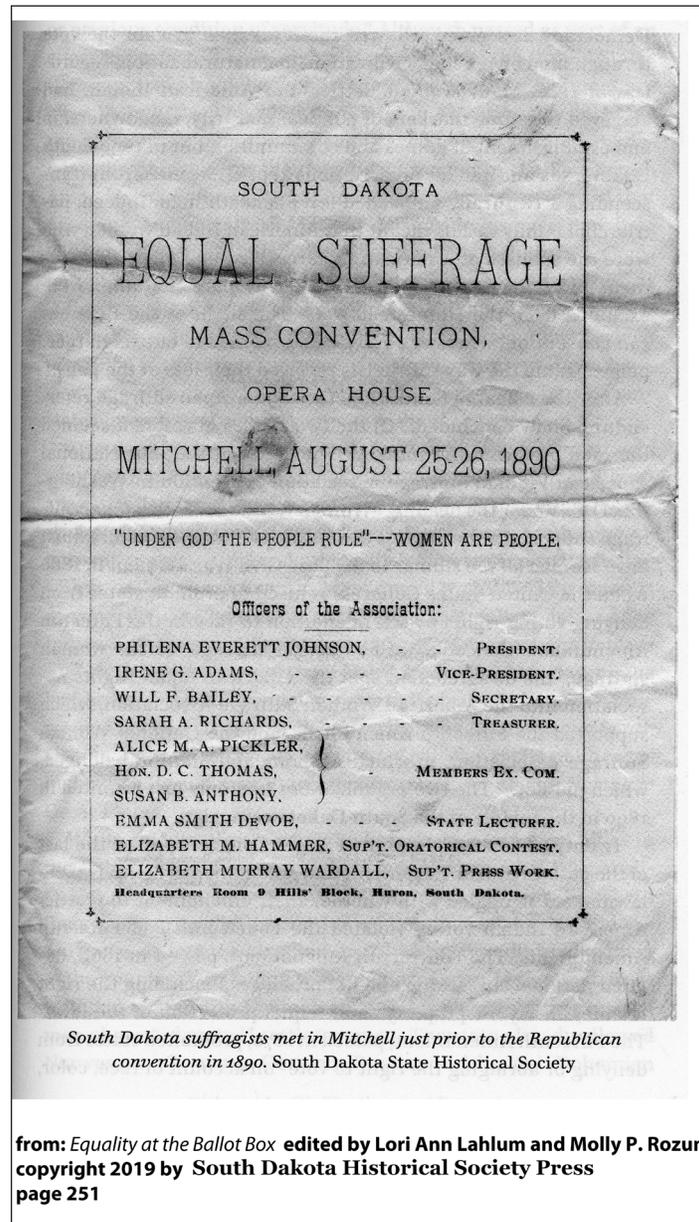
Woman suffrage in South Dakota with Mitchell episodes

By Molly P. Rozum, Ronald R. Nelson Chair of Great Plains and South Dakota History, USD

Woman suffrage was part of South Dakota's political culture for 50 years before the state's women won the vote in November 1918. Representative Enos Stutsman, who lived near Pembina in northeastern Dakota Territory, introduced a measure that would "confer upon women elective franchise" in the 1868-1869 legislative session. The bill passed the House, but machinations in the Council ensured its failure. Had the bill passed, Dakota might have been the first place in the U.S. to grant women the right to vote. Instead, on 10 December 1869, Wyoming Territory became the first official body in the nation to pass woman suffrage legislation.

South Dakota also could have been the first state to allow women to vote. Since 1879, women in Dakota Territory had partial suffrage rights; they could vote on school matters. South Dakota's 1889 constitution retained women's school suffrage rights. Advocates worked very hard to make sure South Dakota's constitution did not include the word "male" in voter qualifications. However, they failed. Some legislators feared the U.S. Congress might reject their bid to end territorial status with such a radical move as allowing women to vote. Suffrage supporters did succeed in placing a requirement in South Dakota's 1889 constitution that its electorate vote on woman suffrage at the first post-statehood election. The first South Dakota leg-

Carnegie Courier



islature placed the issue on the 1890 ballot. The measure failed. Only two counties (Fall River and Sully) and only 33% of the state's overall electorate voted for woman suffrage.

In 1890, Wyoming—not South Dakota—became the first state when it entered the Union to grant women full voting rights. Several Wyoming politicians claimed they would rather keep territorial status than enter the U.S. without woman suffrage. Indeed,

while advocating for South Dakota's 1890 referendum in the Opera House in Madison, National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) president Susan B. Anthony received word Wyoming would come into the U.S. as a woman suffrage state. To no avail, Anthony toured South Dakota in the fall of 1889 and the summer of 1890 hoping South Dakota men would enfranchise its women residents.

Four additional referen-

dums on woman suffrage in South Dakota would fail before a sixth in 1918 succeeded. Davison County voted favorably on woman suffrage in three of six state referendums: 1914, 1916, and 1918.

The anti-immigrant atmosphere of the Great War period in the U.S., in combination with the growing sentiment to attach voting rights to citizenship, proved key to bringing success in 1918 to South Dakota suffragists. At the 1917 biennial meeting of the state legislature, the South Dakota Universal Franchise League (SDU-FL) succeeded in its goal of placing another woman suffrage measure on the ballot. When Governor Peter Norbeck called a special session to pass wartime legislation, he also successfully influenced the legislature to draft a new amendment to the state constitution that combined woman suffrage and a new citizenship voter qualification requirement, eventually called "Amendment E," to be voted on by the electorate. South Dakota was one of six states to allow what was then called "alien voting," in which a male resident could vote after having filed initial—but not completed—paperwork to become a naturalized U.S. citizen.

In 1889, the state had hoped to attract immigrants with liberal voting rights laws. After the failure of woman suffrage on the 1916 ballot, however, many state suffragists became convinced culturally conservative immigrants, especially German-Russians, had cost them a victory.

Continued on page 4

Woman suffrage ... cont. from page 3

National suffragists Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton also believed immigrants consistently voted against woman suffrage in South Dakota. "Amendment E" eliminated so-called "first papers" alien voting and struck the word "male" from voter qualifications. The long lobbying of pro-woman suffrage advocates in the state had built up considerable support. However, the crafty 1918 "Citizenship Amendment" also, conveniently, did not allow men to vote against woman suffrage without also voting for non-citizen "alien suffrage" rights—a risky proposition amid wide-spread "100% Americanism" and World War One anti-German hysteria.

Mitchell boasted an active Suffrage Club during the long years of the state's movement. For the 1918 suffrage campaign Mitchell residents Jessie Lewis and Myra Weller took charge of promoting suffrage and raising money in Davison County for SDUFL, the state-wide organization. Although the U.S. was at war and the state's women spent considerable time on Red Cross volunteer efforts, suffragists decided their push to perfect democracy fell in line with national war goals.

The state's suffragists distributed one pamphlet called "Suffrage as a War Measure" to express the harmony of their goals. SDUFL planned its 1918 campaign around a financial structure that tasked each county with fundraising amounts based on total population. Already known to be "strong for suffrage,"

SDUFL apportioned Davison County \$469 and expected the county to "raise much more." NAWSA, headed since 1915 by former Iowan Carrie Chapman Catt, donated thousands of dollars and publicity material to the state's effort. SDFUL also asked each county to gather local pro-woman suffrage signatures on a petition that could be mailed directly to county voters on election's eve. The sight of local women's names, SDFUL felt, surely would convince male voters.

Mitchell residents Jessie Lewis and Myra Weller corresponded regularly with SDUFL leadership about Davison County's efforts in 1918. On the same day March, longtime president of SDFUL, Mamie Pyle, wrote Lewis and organizer from NAWSA, Maria McMahon, wrote Weller with a plan the two women had obviously hatched to reenergize the Mitchell Suffrage Club.

Pyle wrote Lewis of her hopes that the latter would bring in younger women "progressive in spirit" from the city's Round Table Club and urged her to begin looking for members even if Weller did not "immediately" appoint Lewis to lead a new membership committee. Saying, "you know great bodies move slowly," Pyle explained, "I know Mrs. Weller wants you, but it may be that she just won't get around to it and after all, the campaign is of the utmost importance to every woman who is raising a daughter in South Dakota." Pyle stressed: "Unless some of you bestir yourselves in Mitchell, we

will still be talking about getting 'from the ball room to hell' on election day." The same March day, McMahon wrote Weller directing her to "ask Mrs. Lewis immediately, to be chairman of the membership committee and bring in, if possible, all the members of the Round Table" as a way of drawing in women "who have not heretofore been connected with the suffrage club." Myra Weller wrote back to McMahon indicating she "fully realized the conditions and am glad the bill is along with the 'alien' bill." Weller suggested she wished to step down from the presidency of the club. After their April meeting, Jessie Lewis became chair of the Franchise League of Davison County.

One of the peaks of the 1918 campaign in Mitchell was of course Corn Place Week. As one of the state's "most representative cities," SDFUL chose Mitchell to be the site of one of its pro-suffrage "large street banners." Mitchell also received an ample supply of votes-for-women pennants, "Amendment E" window cards, posters, literature, and "two boxes of buttons." Pyle suggested Mitchell form a committee to do nothing but place "Amendment E" cards on the windshields of automobiles during Corn Palace Week as a "great propaganda stunt" that would aid the cause "not only for your county but for the whole state." Pyle had plastered such cards in Huron for the State Fair, explaining, "It was a very effective sight to see 400 or 500 automobiles with one of these cards in the lower

right hand corner of the wind shield."

But hanging the big banner was tricky, she warned.

For the State Fair, Huron suffragists had first hung the banner between two three-story buildings, but found "with its weight and the high wind, it was too great a strain on the brick works of the building and the man who had the contract was afraid to be responsible for it and refused to look after it." Finally, the women asked "the electric light company" to hang the banner on two 40-foot electric light poles.

"This raises the banner plenty high enough so that even a good sized load of hay could go under and still make it low enough to be effective," concluded Pyle. She hoped the banner would make it in time, but then again, the Sioux Falls banner went missing during shipping. Suffragist Sadie Weller later reported the Mitchell club's incredulity over the "tremendous charge" for safely "placing the banner."

SDUFL had no extra money and anxiety over debts only increased among the leadership as influenza spread through the state in the weeks before the November election. Pyle wrote Lewis that she and her daughter Gladys had "tried to do all that we could for those in need of help." Gladys worked "every night at our emergency hospital." "Every body has had his full share and we all have had to suffer together," wrote Pyle. "It has made it impossible to finish up our state work, along financial lines, because the

Continued on page 12

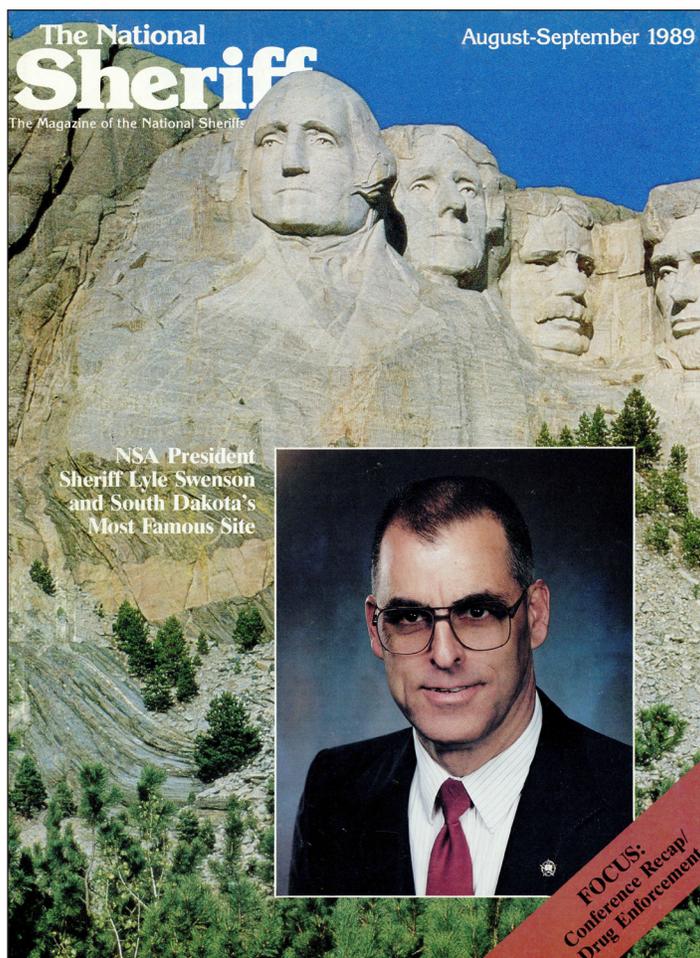
More stories as sheriff ... cont. from front page

There are 8,000 pounds of force at the tip of the "Jaws" and can pry open mangled metal and iron in 40 seconds. It can lift about five tons." (Mitchell Daily Republic) It is made of forged titanium. There are a variety of jobs that the "Jaws" can do; the tops of cars can be cut off, sliding doors can be forced open, train doors can be forced open, air-craft can be untangled to name just a few.

I put the word out to law enforcement agencies in the area that we had them. If they had any accidents where they could be used, they were to call us. On the day after Christmas 1975, it had rained during the night and had frozen to glare ice everywhere by mid-morning. We received an accident call involving a semi-truck losing control and tipping over in the median on Interstate 90 with the driver pinned in the cab.

Trooper John Neihart was the first officer to respond, and the best he could do was to try to keep the driver calm under the circumstances. The driver's foot was pinned in the semi-tractor which came to a halt on its side. When I arrived at the scene and got the jaws in operation, it only took two separate movements and we had him out. Our alternative would have been to tip the cab upright and take the risk of further injuring the driver. The driver left the scene with just a bruised ankle. We were so amazed at the ease of getting the job done.

The following Tuesday, I went to the County Commissioners meeting and



LYLE SWENSON WAS FEATURED ON THE FRONT OF The National Sheriff, the magazine of the National Sheriff's Association, or NSA. He was sworn in as president of the organization in 1989.

explained the details of the semi-truck accident. I asked for help to purchase the "Jaws of Life." After some discussion the board agreed that it would be important to have a set and authorized said purchase through the bid process. On January 27, 1976, the purchase was made. The final cost was approximately \$5000, but I always felt it was in fact the best \$5000 we ever spent with the number of lives saved and further injuries lessened.

Feeding prisoners was always a problem; do we let the prisoners do all

the cooking or should the jail staff do it all. Early on I had numerous returning prisoners who were good cooks, and guys I could depend on to get the job done right. One such inmate, Spencer, cooked my favorite fried potatoes. I loved those potatoes so at the end of the day I would go to the jail kitchen get a huge helping of fried potatoes with onions then return to the apartment for the rest of my meal. Incidentally, Irene never felt bad about me eating "Spencer's" potatoes!

Spencer was a heavy

smoker and had no money to buy smokes. I had him polish my boots every day in exchange for "Bull Durham" tobacco. He was happy as were my boots that looked great all the time!

We realized that the jail kitchen was very inadequate to handle the number of prisoners and posed a security question. We set out to remodel it as well as close the security gap. In order to enter the kitchen, we had to enter the jail which breached security several times a day. In the new construction design, we changed the access to be prior to the main jail door. It all worked out for the better, improved overall jail security and enhanced safety for the kitchen personnel.

When we lived next to the jail, it was easy to get close to the inmates on a personal basis. In 1965, my first year in office, we had a very artistically talented inmate doing time on alcohol charges. He asked me if I would get him some wooden stick matches and a few other items. He would make me a picture frame. His design involved the burned matchstick heads laid out in a decorative design for picture frames and on lamp basis.

They turned out very nice and were very well received by the public. I assisted him in getting set up, and all went well until he completed his sentence and got out of jail at 10:00 a.m. The first thing he did when he got out was to go right back and get drunk! At 11:00 a.m. he was back in the office drunk!

Continued on pages 6 & 7

More stories as sheriff ... cont. from page 4

I told him to leave, but he refused so it was back to jail. He was happy!

On another occasion, I was riding with a Milwaukee railroad detective during the evening in the railroad yards when we spotted what appeared to be a hobo carrying a bunch of copper pipe. We stopped him and our investigation showed that he had just broken into Armour Creameries and stolen the copper.

We arrested him. He wanted to plead guilty and get it over with. His FBI rap sheet was 8 pages long starting in 1926. Having been arrested in at least 28 states, Washington, DC and Canada. We added another state to his record!

A tragic night still rests in my memory. One thing was always certain when the phone rang, you just never knew where it would take you. It could be anything from a family dispute to a car accident investigation or a weather-related event. The call might be minor in nature or a major event like the night we were called to a car accident northwest of Mitchell. Several units responded but could not find the accident at the location given. Units responding fanned out to other locations. I located it two miles east of the reported location which was known as the Old Crooked Bridge southeast of Loomis, South Dakota. On arrival I found what turned out to be a very tragic and the strangest auto accident I had ever been involved with up to that time and in the many years since!

Three young men, one from Loomis, were headed to Mitchell on a gravel road



Sheriff Lyle Swenson demonstrates how "Jaws of Life" works.

Mitchell Daily Republic
Spring, 1976/35

which was a detour due to the bridge replacement west of there. The investigation revealed that as the car approached the bridge, the driver realized he was going too fast, hit the brakes, lost control hitting the bridge with the passenger side of the car. It was an old overhead metal structure and as the car, sliding sideways, hit the bridge it

tore a large piece of metal loose. The piece of metal went through the passenger's car door, through the passenger's right side, exiting out his left buttocks deep into the seat cushion. The Loomis man was pinned in the car and it took me several minutes to realize the situation.

All I could see was that the car was pinned tight-

ly against the bridge. The passenger could not move, and I could not feel the end of the piece of metal anywhere. The metal had penetrated the door and the passenger and had exited him where it could not be seen. He was literally crucified to the car! Doctor Preston Brogdon was brought to the scene by a highway patrolman and remained with the patient throughout the long 2 1/2-hour ordeal.

Once we figured out how he was pinned, we began the long ordeal to remove him.

A cutting torch was brought to the scene to cut the angle iron away from the bridge structure. Now we could pull the car away from the bridge but could still not open the door; the young man was still pinned inside. With the doctor's permission I attempted to pull the iron with no movement and much pain for the passenger! We finally had to strip away the outer part of the door, get a larger cutting torch head to cut the hinges off and very carefully removed the door. We were then able to guardedly remove the victim to the waiting ambulance. Incidentally, this was the very first day of the new ambulance service. What a terrible call for this new crew.

The young man survived that night. There was little Dr. Brogdon could do at the scene except to give comfort to the victim. Unfortunately, this young passenger suffered after the accident for a couple of years and ultimately passed away from complications resulting from his injuries.

Over the many years of service, the daily events led to many experiences that are hard to believe but were ever so true! The hours were long and difficult.

I told possible new hires that all we ask was for them to work seven days a week 24 hours a day, and what they did with the rest of their time was their business! Of course, I was being facetious, but there were times it seemed to be true. An example occurred one Labor Day when we were contacted about a possible drowning at Lake Mitchell in the late afternoon. We ended up dragging the Lake all night and early the next morning; we located the body and then continued the drowning investigation. Of course, we still had to do our normal duties that day without any sleep.

I was about to hit the bed and get a night's rest, but that was not the case for Deputy Doug Kirkus. He also got to bed but was immediately called out to an accident.

While taking care of that one, he received a call to another accident on the Mount Vernon curve which ended up as a fatal accident. He called me in the morning to advise me about the details. That made two nights without sleep for him! Thank goodness that was a rare couple of days, but it did happen occasionally; it made the job very difficult to say the least.

National Sheriff's Association Involvement

At the 1966 Conference of the SDSA, Pennington County Sheriff Glen Best, an officer in the National

**RE-ELECT
LYLE SWENSON**



SHERIFF

★ There is an old adage that "experience counts". Right now, that experience is doubly important in the Office of Sheriff. With continuous changes in the state and federal laws, both civil and criminal, which a Sheriff is charged to enforce, experience is critical in insuring that the responsibilities are carried out effectively. Lyle Swenson has that experience. One result is that, in an era when lawsuits against law enforcement agencies are a regular occurrence, the Department under Lyle's leadership has been sued only twice, and both suits were dismissed on their first appearance in court. This type of leadership has saved the taxpayer a great deal of time and dollars by avoiding not only negative judgments but also costly legal defense expenses.

★ "It continues to be an honor and a privilege to serve you as your sheriff. I have tried to provide you with fair and efficient law enforcement. I am asking you for your support and vote so that I may continue to serve you."

LEADERSHIP FOR
A NEW DECADE

VOTE NOV. 6, 1990

DAVISON COUNTY

DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES



County Democratic Central Committee, Jim Stopfer, Treasurer.

Sheriff's Association urged us to attend the NSA Conference in Las Vegas. The conference would be held in June. When I returned home, I had pretty much forgotten about the convention until Glen called me the evening before we were to leave to tell me he would be flying his plane to the convention.

He would pick me up the next morning at the Mitchell airport. I was totally unprepared.

I started making excuses why I couldn't go, but he would not take no for an answer. I really did have a good reason as I had promised to take my sister Sheila and her new son to the Sioux Falls airport as they were moving to Phoenix, Ariz., where her husband Mike was already employed.

In addition, Irene was eight months pregnant and was not crazy about me leaving her alone having just moved in May to our new home at the Lake. Long story short, I finally agreed to go, but only after Glen offered to fly Sheila and Jeff to Phoenix.

Getting to the convention was an adventure. What a day it was as Glen loaded a prisoner in Rapid City and headed to the penitentiary in Sioux Falls, unloaded and flew to Yankton where he picked up a prisoner, flew to Mitchell and picked up the three of us and headed to Rapid City.

He unloaded his prisoner, we all had lunch and headed to Phoenix. On arrival in Phoenix we located Mike and left Sheila and Jeff off. Glenn and I headed to Las Vegas where we had

supper. Just think about that, so many miles all in one day. I attended all the training sessions as well as the displays showing the latest in equipment. I was totally in awe of what I saw.

The conference lasted four days with a banquet on the last evening. The board was dressed in white dinner jackets, etc. I was very impressed with the whole conference and said to myself, "Someday I want to do that."

On June 20, 1989, twenty-two years later, I was elected president of the National Sheriff's Association, the first South Dakota Sheriff to hold that position.

My long-time dream had come true and was made more special when then Mayor L.B. "Bud" Williams came to Honolulu, Hawaii and swore me in as president of the National Sheriff's Association.

I traveled to some 25 states and national meetings, with Irene accompanying me on several, telling the story of the National Sheriff's Association. It was truly an honor to represent the national sheriffs as well as my home state of South Dakota. It was a dream come true. The first-class training and law enforcement contacts I gained were always so very useful in my capacity as sheriff here.

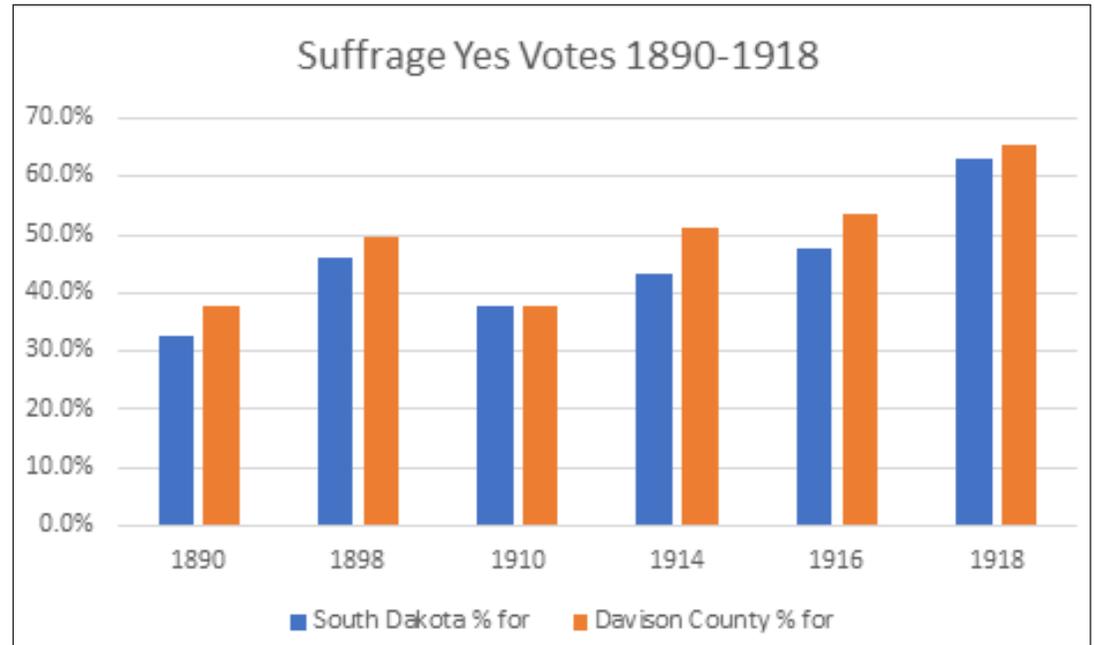
I am recording some of my experiences as the President of the National Sheriff's Association and as a U.S. Marshall to have ready for the next Courier. I am so thankful for the life I have had as a law enforcement official and the service I could render to my community.

South Dakota celebrates the Nineteenth Amendment

Biography Note: Ruth Page Jones graduated from Plankinton High School in 1973 and the University of South Dakota in 1977. Following careers in computer technology, political advocacy, and charitable non-profit work, she is now pursuing her interest in documenting the history of women in South Dakota. Jones earned her Master of Arts in History from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2015. Jones case study of women in Aurora County, 1880-1920, formed the basis of her thesis on rural women creating community, Jones wrote the chapter on School Suffrage in the book "Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains."

The National Story: The long struggle for women's equal voting rights finally succeeded on August 18, 1920. That day, Tennessee became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment, thus making it the law of the land. One week later, the United States certified the action and enshrined these words into the Constitution, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

The desire for equal suffrage incubated in the early 1800s, as women became better educated and began entering the workforce. They soon found themselves at a disadvantage in a legal system that treated them inferior to men. For example, working women had no recourse for labor



abuse, and married women could not own property or retain their own earnings. The unjustness of their status led them to seek legal reform. Those reform efforts, often unsuccessful, led to their demand for enfranchisement, both as a matter of equal justice and as a method to achieve desired reforms.

There were many battles. The first happened during the Reconstruction Era. In 1866, as the country debated the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments dealing with the emancipated slaves, women hoped to be included in the measure that removed race as a voting condition, but only 'male' voters were included in that amendment. So then, they lobbied to amend the United States Constitution. Although woman suffrage amendments were often introduced in Congress, none succeeded before 1919, when Congress finally approved the Nineteenth

Amendment.

In the meantime, women organized and fought different battles. Some territories, without constitutions, enfranchised women simply through legislative action. Wyoming Territory enjoyed the first success in 1869, and then, as a state, in 1890. In some states, women earned voting rights in school or municipal elections. By 1900, women in twenty-five states, including South Dakota, could vote in school elections and run for school offices. Many states held amendment campaigns to change their constitutions and add women to the voting population. In 1893, Colorado became the first state where voters approved woman suffrage. South Dakota became one of the last, when the woman suffrage amendment succeeded in 1918. Only fifteen states, as well as Alaska Territory, enfranchised women before Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment

two years later.

The South Dakota Story: Women's long quest for full voting rights in South Dakota started with the introduction of the first woman suffrage legislative bill in 1868 in Dakota Territory. Their struggle persisted through a number of unsuccessful amendment campaigns in 1890, 1898, 1910, 1914, and 1916. Finally, fifty years after the first bill was introduced, South Dakota women secured those rights through a constitutional amendment. Despite many close calls, the suffragists struggled to advance winning arguments that would persuade voters to expand the electorate. Inexperience, infighting, and powerful enemies also contributed to their failures. Because early suffragist proponents also favored Prohibition, the liquor lobby worked hard to defeat all measures. That opposition fell silent when South Dakota passed Prohibition in 1916.

School Suffrage in Dakota Territory and South Dakota

By Ron Fuchs

"The Women Voted" is a chapter written by Ruth Page Jones in the book *Equality at the Ballot Box* edited by Lahlum and Rozum that addresses school suffrage in Dakota Territory and South Dakota. It showcases Grace Reed Porter as an example of women's involvement in early Dakota voting; she took it to the next level of getting educated, homesteading and involvement in various educational positions.

Grace Reed Porter, "born in 1869, called Spring Green, Wisconsin her home until finishing high school. She attended Muskingam College in New Concord, Ohio ... before studying at a home economics school in Chicago. She completed a hotel training course. Porter worked as a teacher



at several levels, including rural school, grade school, high school, normal school, and university." In 1906 leaving a job in Boone, Iowa she homesteaded northwest of Fort Pierre

and taught in a one-room school.

Two years later she was recruited by the county superintendent, Mrs. Weed, to serve as deputy in an office in Stanley County. She would hold down her homestead claim by riding 20 miles in each direction on weekends.

"That fall, she ran for Stanley County superintendent on the progressive ticket of the Republican party" against several candidates. She made several trips throughout the county and won with a sizeable percentage in every precinct but one. (Jones)

"Once elected, she oversaw 120 rural schools, wrote bonds for new schools, audited records, and supervised building of new schools, among other tasks." The challenges of

work required travel by horse to get to designations as the railroad only went to larger towns. "She later organized a teacher institute providing two weeks of trainings for 150 teachers.

Porter, who married between her first and second elections, served as county superintendent for four years, the maximum allowed by law. Her capacity and leadership skills led to other opportunities, including four years as principal of the Fort Pierre high school, five years on the state board of education, and appointments to other roles in state and national organizations. In addition, she served as the dean of women at Dakota Wesleyan University from 1926-1932.

Continued on page 10

Women's strong support of the troops during World War I earned them new respect as citizens with a duty to vote. Finally, in 1918, with the endorsement of both major political parties, weakened opponents, and a persuasive "good citizen" argument, the women won.

School Suffrage in Davison County: Starting in 1881, women in South Dakota could run for the elected office of County Superintendent of Public Instruction. Six years later, they could cast ballots in school elections and run for any school office. School Suffrage was important in that it gave women opportunities not just to vote, but to run campaigns, win elections and serve in leadership position. When

women voted I school elections, they "normalized" the concept of women casting votes, making the unimaginable imaginable. Between 1884 and 1920, Davison County elected five women to serve as County Superintendent, with Jennie C. West being the first to win that post.

The Mitchell Story: During the 1890 suffrage amendment campaign, Mitchell hosted a prominent suffrage event, featuring well-known national figures; Susan B. Anthony and Anna Howard Shaw, president and vice president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), Rev. Olympia Brown, national suffrage speaker, Henry B. Blackwell, Editor of the *Woman's Journal*, and Car-

rie Chapman Catt - who would later lead the country to its final victory, the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Prominent South Dakota leaders included Philena Everett Johnson, Alice Pickler and Emma Smith Devoe. In addition, several ministers and a priest gave short addresses.

The state Equal Suffrage Association held its two day "Mass Convention for Woman Suffrage" August 25-26 at the Opera House (formerly a skating rink). Attendance reached an impressive 500 during the day and 1,000 in the evenings. Two days later, the Republican Convention convened in the same meeting hall. Hoping to garner their support, the women instead felt disrespected that day.

First, the party leaders seated them in a remote location, where it was hard to hear and to see. Their frustration grew when the chair adjourned the session just as Brown stood to speak, leaving her to address an empty room. Most disappointing, though, was the party's endorsement of Native America suffrage and not woman suffrage. Their resentment found its way into many speeches and formal histories, often with racist tones.

In 1890, supporting woman suffrage was too risky for most politicians. The state suffragists had to wait until 1914 before the political parties finally added woman suffrage to their party platforms. Four years later, their quest for equal voting rights succeeded.

Jones to speak on Suffrage at DWU

Ruth Page Jones will speak about the women's suffrage movement in SD on Sept 22, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. in Tiger Café.

Due to COVID, she will likely be recorded, but we'll have her live on a Zoom call to answer ques-

tions.

We also have four historical displays designed by the national archives available for viewing.

Furthermore, we'll have artifacts from the women's suffrage movement in South Dakota donated by

the Turchen family.

Lastly, we'll have a table set up for voter registration.

— Joel Allen, Ph.D., Dakota Wesleyan University, Associate Professor of Religion and Philosophy

School suffrage ...

cont. from page 9

Laws that allowed women to win elective offices, such as County Superintendent, gave Porter and others an opening to develop skills, build reputations, improve their suitability as leaders for other public roles." (Jones)

Along with other women mentioned in the book *Equality at the Ballot Box* edited by Lahlum and Rozum, Grace Reed Porter employed three strategies in her fight for equal voting rights for women.

Gaining an education and using that education to further the rights of women to vote, becoming part of the spirit of the land by homesteading, and running for public school office all brought Grace Reed Porter into public life and proved that women were valuable political contributors in South Dakota prior to the 19th amendment. School suffrage played an important part in the fight. The 19th amendment was passed by Congress June 4, 1919 and ratified on August 18, 1920. It guarantees all American women the right to vote. This achievement did not come easy or fast; victory took decades of activism and campaigning.

Jones, *Equality at the Ballot Box*, (Pierre, South Dakota Historical Society Press) pp.206-208; www.ourdocuments.gov

From the South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, S.Dak. Vol. 49, No4 Winter 2019 pp. 304-305

Although some local franchise leagues disbanded, others transitioned to educating new voters. In Mitchell, Myra Weller and other suffragists formed a county League of Women Voters chapter that began holding monthly luncheon meetings at their Carnegie Library a block west of Main Street. The time and place were designed to be convenient to men and women employed in the business district.¹⁵⁶ In June 1919, the South Dakota League of Women Voters (SDWLW) was organized at a meeting in Huron, with Mamie Shield Pyle as president. The organization held its first state conference in Mitchell in October to coincide with state meetings of the South Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs and the South Dakota Library Association. Julia Lathrop of New York and Anna D. Oleson of Minnesota appeared as guest speakers for an evening program at the Elks Hall on Main Street, a block south of the Corn Palace. Alice Daly, as state chair on Women in Industry, spoke on contemporary issues for teachers' unions and equal pay for women working at state colleges and universities. The SDLWV set forth a program of resolutions in support of a wide number of political issues, including prohibition, equal pay, teacher training, Americanization and citizenship standards, literacy, and physical training for rural students.¹⁵⁷

^{156.} *Madison Daily Leader*, 28 Jan., 24 June 1919; *Scotland Citizen-Republican*, 12, 26 June 1919; *Milbank Herald-Advance*, 11 July 1919; *The Woman Citizen* 4 (23 Aug. 1919): 290. Now the Carnegie Resource Center, the library had been designed by Sioux Falls architects Wallace L. Dow & Son and built by contractor Andrew J. Kings in 1902. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 as a part of the Mitchell Historic Commercial District.

^{157.} *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, 17 Sept. 1919; *Madison Daily Leader*, 27, 29 Sept., 11, 30, 31 Oct. 1919; *Scotland Citizen-Republican*, 16, 23 Oct. 1919.

SUFF SPEAKERS TELL OF TRIALS

MEMBERS OF NATIONAL SUFFRAGE PARTY ADDRESS MITCHELL WOMEN ON BEHALF OF FRANCHISE.

An enthusiastic meeting was held yesterday afternoon at the home of Mrs. Frank Weller when the Mitchell Equal Suffrage Club and women interested in hearing what had been done in Washington during the past session of Congress to advance the National Suffrage Amendment went to hear Miss Mabel Vernon, Secretary of the National Woman's Party, and Miss Jane Pincus, of New York. They explained what the pickets in front of the White House had accomplished in calling the attention of the public to the fact that women are still asking for political freedom, and telling of the plans for work when Congress meets in December.

Says Women Must Work.

Miss Pincus, who has gone through a campaign in New York state and knows the expenditure of money, time and energy that women are forced to make in a state campaign, explained why women all over the country should concentrate their efforts in working for the national suffrage amendment.

"It is the only expedient, direct, dignified way for women to win their franchise," said Miss Pincus. "Why should we be forced to go out on the street corners night after night to beg men, many of them who do not understand our language, to give us this right of self government?"

"Through the work of the National Womens party, the question of suffrage has been changed from a state issue to a national issue. Through the pressure that the women brought on the national political parties in the last campaign suffrage was put in the plank of both political parties thereby making the question of suffrage a great political question."

Making Tour of Country.

Speakers throughout these two months while congress is not in session are making a tour of the entire United States. This tour will end with a national conference in Washington, on Dec. 6, 7 and 8.

Miss Vernon, the national secretary of the Woman's Party, told of

From the Archives

MORE STORIES OF THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT on the national and local levels, and how it impacted South Dakota. Both of these items appeared in The Mitchell Capital newspaper, spread apart by 20 years.

the work done by the suffragists in Washington to procure the passage of the national suffrage amendment as a war measure. She said in part:

"If the United States is to live up to the definition of a Democracy as it was given by President Wilson in his war message to Congress women must be enfranchised. The President said: 'We shall fight for the things we have always held nearest our hearts; for Democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government'

Can't Be Sincere.

"We cannot speak with sincerity or conviction to the other nations of the earth about self government while twenty million American women are denied that right. For that reason I am convinced that action on national woman suffrage will soon be taken by our congress, but the President must first give his word. It is because of this that we have concentrated our attention upon the President and have gone every day to the gates of the White House with banners asking his help"

Miss Vernon then gave a vivid description of the picketing of the White House. She said that the suffragists had broken no law in doing this since the constitution of the United States guarantees every citizen the right of peaceful petition for redress of grievance.

EQUAL SUFFRAGE CONVENTION.

The State Campaign to be Opened Here the Latter Part of the Month.

The State Equal Suffrage Association will convene in Mitchell Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 28 and remain in session until the 30th. The sessions will be held in the court house and the meetings will be addressed by two national speakers—Mrs. Carrie Clapham Cott, of New York city, and Mrs. Elizabeth M. Yates, the Frances Willard of Maine. Among the state laborers who will be present are the following: Mrs. Anna Simmons, state president the Suffrage Association, and Mrs. Emma A. Craumer state lecturer and organizer, both of whom are excellent speakers and have devoted considerable time to the work. Miss Grace Goodykoontz has kindly consented to sing several solos at the sessions and other music will be furnished. All the meetings are open to the public and the people generally are cordially invited to be present.

On the evening previous to the convention, Monday, a gold medal contest will be given and conducted by Mrs. Jeffries, of Ft. Pierre, superintendent of contest work, is sure to be interesting and entertaining. Further particulars of the suffrage convention and of the contest will be given later.

The Mitchell Capital, September 17, 1897
Chronicing America

The Mitchell Capital, November 1, 1917
Chronicing America

Woman suffrage ... cont. from page 4

women have been so occupied in caring for the sick or else trying to keep their own families well.”

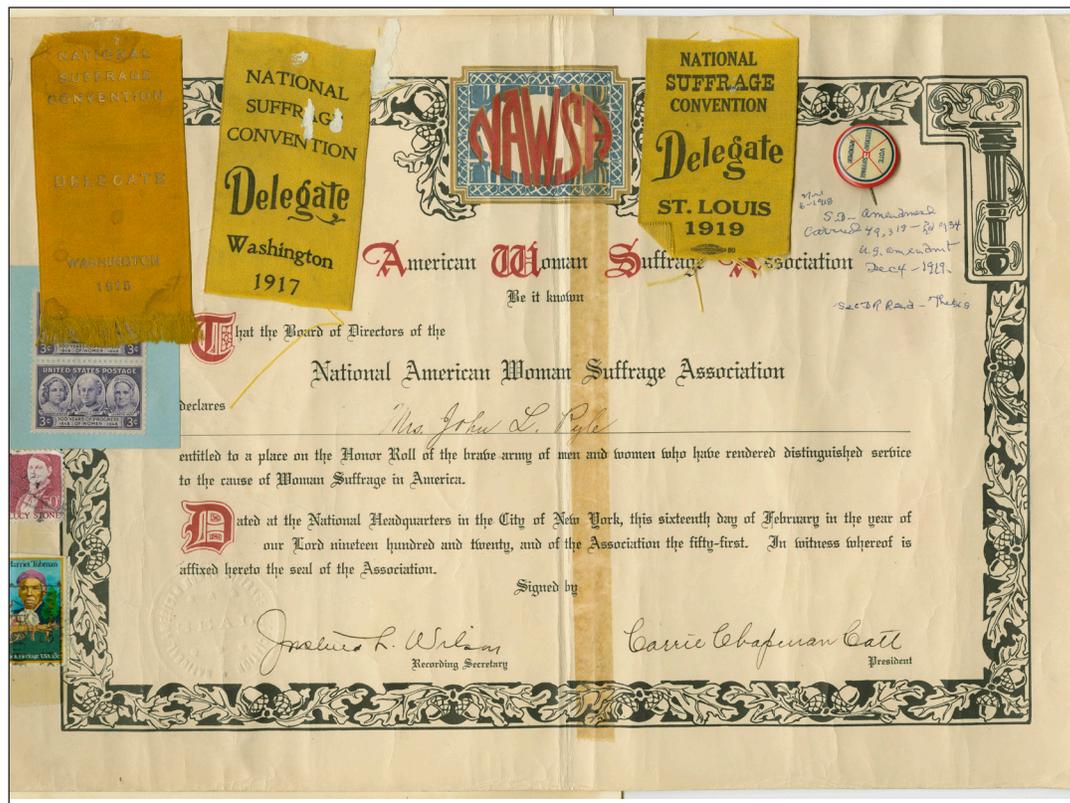
On 5 November 1918, South Dakota became the 17th state to grant women suffrage, and on 4 December 1919, South Dakota became the 21st state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment barring discrimination in voting on account of sex.

The Nineteenth Amendment was certified to the U.S. Constitution on 26 August 1920.

Myra Weller went on to chair Davison County’s chapter of the League of Women Voters (LWV) and joined South Dakota’s Non-partisan League Party but divorced her husband in 1921 and moved to live with her daughter in Oklahoma.

By the mid-1920s, Jessie Lewis and her husband had returned to Louisville, Kentucky, where both had been born and raised. For the first election in which all U.S. women had the opportunity to vote, November 1920, former SDUFL—and new LWV—president Mamie Pyle, representing the Republican Party, became the state’s first woman presidential elector. She carried the state’s then five electoral votes to the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C. to formally elect Warren G. Harding president.

Article SOURCES: Newspapers; the Mary “Mamie” Shields Pyle Papers, Archives and Special Collections, University Libraries, University of South Dakota,



Vermillion; and Rozum and Lahlum Equality at the Ballot Box.

Molly P. Rozum is Ronald R. Nelson Chair of Great Plains and South Dakota History at the University of South Dakota. She is a native of Mitchell and grew up on 600 East 6th Street, the youngest daughter of Leo J. Rozum and Virginia Dugan Rozum. She is the co-editor with Lori Ann Lahlum of Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for women on the Northern Great Plains published by South Dakota Historical Society Press in 2019 and the author of Grasslands Grown: Creating Place on the U.S. Northern Plains and Canadian Prairies forthcoming from University of Nebraska Press.



ABOVE: NAWSA Certificate of Service (Mrs. John L. Pyle), 2 Feb 1920, Gladys Pyle Collection, Archives and Special Collections, University Libraries, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

LEFT: Mary (Mamie) Shields Pyle (1920), Presidential Elector, Archives and Special Collections, University Libraries, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

Tornado information updated, corrected

In the Summer 2020 issue of the Carnegie Courier, there was a photo and explanation from the National Weather Service website that stated the picture was one of the oldest photos of a tornado but then went on to talk about a tornado in Kansas.

This picture entry is either mislabeled or certainly misleading.

That picture is from a tornado that hit Howard, S.D., on August 28, 1884. The text given in the caption is about a tornado that hit Garnett, Kan., on April 28, 1884. Listed are the correct pictures with the correct information.



“Stereograph view of a tornado as it passed just northwest of Garnett, near Central City, A. A. Adams took the photograph from a street corner near the United Presbyterian Church. It is reported to be the first photograph of a tornado.”

<https://www.kansasmemory.org/item/23681> Photo was taken on April 26, 1884 in Kansas.



This is also said to be the oldest tornado picture on several web sites but it seems that this is incorrect information. The photo was taken near Howard, SD on August 28, 1884, by N. Robertson/Robinson of Howard.. (Photo Courtesy of NOAA Photo Library and information from 1873-1963 Sanborn County History).

Since this photo was taken in August and the Kansas photo was taken in April, the Kansas photo is the oldest known picture of a tornado.

Carnegie building suffers water damage

Organization asking for members' help to alleviate, correct issues

The historic Carnegie building sits at West 3rd Ave. and Rowley St. in Mitchell, SD. It has served the Mitchell community since 1903. Today it houses the Mitchell Area Historical and Mitchell Area Genealogical Societies. As with many historical buildings, it needs much TLC. During the last several years, wa-

ter leaks have plagued the building both inside and out. Efforts to repair the issues are very costly. Any contributions to help in the effort would be greatly appreciated and can be sent to Mitchell Area Historical Society, 119 West 3rd Ave., Mitchell, SD 57301.

Mitchell Area Historical Society has participated

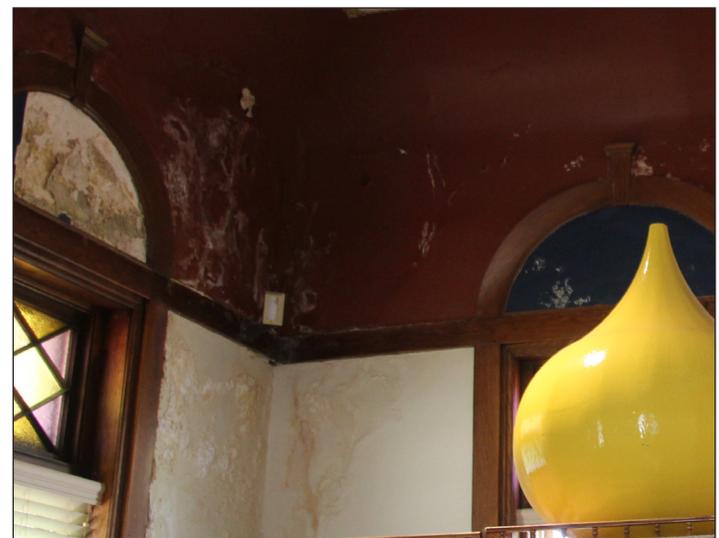
in selling "Woolworth's Caramel Apples" for several years during the Corn Palace Festival scheduled in 2020 for August 26-30. In the past MAHS used their share of the profits for various projects at the Carnegie Resource Center; this year our share will go for repairs on the building. We have received grants

to help defray the cost but still need additional revenues. We have large expenses ahead and could use your help to keep this landmark of Mitchell in good operational condition. Feel free to stop by and look at the state of the building. Thank you in advance for any help you can contribute.



INTERIOR DAMAGE TO THE CARNEGIE RESOURCE CENTER IS EXTENSIVE. Clockwise from above left: The east wall of the gallery has damaged plaster and water pooling behind the paint; Water has also pooled behind paint on the west wall of the gallery room; Paint and plaster have been flaking off the walls of the Weller Room; The northwest corner of the West Room has been severely damaged by water leaking through.

See more photos of damage on page 15.





WATER REALLY AFFECTED THE CARNEGIE RESOURCE CENTER IN MITCHELL THIS YEAR. Clockwise, from left: Water damaged the stone on the outside of this window ledge on the south side of the file room; The stone has been damaged on the northwest corner at the entrance of the building; Many walls inside the building have been heavily damaged by water, especially the northwest corner of the west room; the windows are separating from the stone on the northside of the main entrance to the building.

Woolworth Caramel Apples needs your help

Despite the world's uncertainties, Mitchell's annual Corn Palace Festival is scheduled for August 26-30.

While some may understandably make the health decision to skip the event this year, everyone can participate in one tradition that's been held annually since 1959 — Woolworth's Caramel Apples.

They're sold each year during the Corn Palace Festival to benefit both the Carnegie Resource Center and Mitchell Main Street & Beyond, but this year a little differently.

You can personally enjoy a caramel apple for \$4 each, maybe buy some for your friends (free delivery for an order of 5 or more in the Mitchell area).

If you'd like to spread the love, you may sponsor a case of apples for our community's essential workers — first-responders, teachers, nurses, doctors, anyone and everyone you can think of who could use a sweet pick-me-up during another day of the pandemic.

The cost is \$300 for a case of 80 or \$4 an apple. We'll deliver and let those workers know you appreciate them. We're organizing a list of people and businesses willing to accept donations, so you can donate to that general list, or you can tell us a specific group you'd like to send apples, such as all Mitchell High School faculty members.

In addition, the Mitchell

School District, will also be benefitting from all apple sales this year. We will be donating the first \$1,000 of our profits to the district for items such as hand sanitizer, face masks or anything else needed to help keep our schools clean. Carnegie profits will be spent on interior repairs.

Finally, we'll be selling apples on site at the Back 40 during festival week but in a shortened time frame this year — Wednesday, 5-7 p.m.; Thursday, 2-7 p.m.; Friday, 2-8 p.m.; Saturday 2-8 p.m. and Sunday, 2-5 p.m.

If you're interested in ordering apples and/or sponsoring for essential workers, call 605-202-5658.

Recognition of law enforcement postponed until 2021

The Carnegie Resource Center planned to honor the law enforcement community this year, including a display of over 300 patches belonging to our president, and former Davison County Sheriff, Lyle Swenson.

As time goes on and COVID-19 continues to be around, we will wait until next year to recognize the work of these essential workers.

*Carnegie Resource
Center
119 West Third Avenue
Mitchell, S.D. 57301*

