



# The Carnegie Courier

## Newsletter of The Mitchell Area Historical & Genealogical Societies

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www.mitchellcarnegie.org

July 2008

### Governor's Individual Award for History

The MAHS nominated President Lyle Swenson for the 2008 Governor's Individual Award for History. At the South Dakota State Historical Society annual meeting in May, the award was presented to Lyle Swenson. In 2007, Mitchell's nominee, Garvin Bertsch, received the award.

Lyle Swenson was one of four founding members of the MAHS in November 1988. He has faithfully contributed his efforts to build the Society which now has 151 members and many donors. Wherever Lyle goes, he receives inquiries about possible donations of historic items to the MAHS. He is the "identity" of the MAHS.

For many years the MAHS collections were kept in filing cabinets and in the limited space in the basement of the Mitchell Public Library at Third Avenue and Duff. When the City in May 2006 gave the vacant former Carnegie Library to the nonprofit MAHS, space became available to store extensive collections of print, photographic, and additional items relevant to Mitchell area history.

In November 2008 the MAHS will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. The other three founding members – Jim Hunt, Dorothy Malde, and Clyde Goin – continue as members of the MAHS. The many hours contributed by deceased members Helen Montgomery, Hazel Jordan, and Hazel Smith are also remembered with gratitude.



Lyle Swenson, MAHS president, holding the 2008 Governor's Individual History framed print, with at left Jeffrey Beuchler, president, Board of Trustees, SDSHS, and Jay D. Vogt, director, SDSHS, in Rapid City on May 3, 2008. (Photo by Jeff Mammenga)

### Lyle's Corner

Dear Friends of the Carnegie:

I would like to ask you to step back in time with me to a day when the Carnegie Library (now Carnegie Resource Center) was one of the places to go as a student. You may have gone there to meet that special girl or boy or just maybe even to study? As you entered you were always greeted by that special "Shh" from the librarian even if you hadn't spoken yet. Maybe you were in the younger set and headed down the winding creaking staircase to the basement to read one of the children's books, but in either event you most likely spent many hours listening and learning.

Back to today and you can enter the same building and experience some of those same sensations and sounds. Believe it or not, we have already begun our third year as owners of the beautiful old Carnegie Library, now the Carnegie Resource Center. After two great years of hard work by an all volunteer staff we are realizing that our dreams have come true in having a permanent home for the collection of the Corn Palace history along with history of the Mitchell area.

When the City Council turned ownership over to us they told us not to return for any funds and we have done that, but only because of the generosity of many people with their donations of money and items of historical significance. We have received grants that have assisted us in tuck-pointing the building, replacing bad wiring, installing ceiling fans, and painting to name a few. In addition the hundreds of volunteer hours put in by members of the Mitchell Area Historical Society and the Mitchell Area Genealogical Society have turned the Carnegie into one of Mitchell's true assets, one that makes us all proud.

Because many of you have donated your treasures, our collection of historical items has grown beyond our wildest imagination. We hope to continue to serve you by assisting you in researching the history of your families or businesses so that future generations will be able to look back and know Mitchell's history.

We are now at a very critical point in time as we have not been able to replace the leaking roof that we inherited. We have received nearly  
(continued on page two)

**Reader's Note**—To conserve space and ink, throughout this newsletter these organizations are referred to by these abbreviations

- + CRC—Carnegie Resource Center
- + MAGS—Mitchell Area Genealogical Society
- + MAHS—Mitchell Area Historical Society

## Lyle's Corner (continued)

\$50,000.00 in donations and grants to assist in replacing the roof, but the project we have planned has grown to approximately \$76,000.00. We want to replace both the original building roof as well as the flat roof on the 1960 addition. Also, we want to add insulation because the building has very little insulation in only one part of the building. We also want to replace the roof air-conditioner with a new more efficient unit installed on the ground to eliminate the problems resulting from a roof installation. We also need to prepare ourselves for any unforeseen issues that may arise once the construction project begins.

Lastly, because of the critical nature of these problems, we invite you to consider making a donation of any amount to our "REPLACE THE ROOF PROJECT" so that we can get this building sealed up without further damage. In return, our promise to each of you will be our continued effort to preserve this beautiful structure so future generations will be able to experience what you and I have. Our fervent desire is serve you in every way possible with the saving of Mitchell's history. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Lyle W. Swenson, President  
Mitchell Area Historical Society

## PROCRASTINATION

Here's a poem for those folks who fit the description.

Procrastination is my greatest sin;  
It causes me great sorrow.  
I really must stop doing it;  
By George, I'll start tomorrow.

## Progress at the CRC

From December 1, 2007, through June 20, 2008, progress has been made to improve the building and grounds. Following are some of the projects completed:

- Cleaning and waxing of the original tile and ceramic floors on the main level
- Removal of loose plaster and debris from the lower level north storage room and tuck-pointing and sealing of the quartzite wall
- Installation of motion sensitive lighting in the main stairwell and at the front entrance
- Grading, weeding, seeding of lawn area
- Addition of fans under heating elements to improve heat distribution
- Organization of donated metal library shelving to accommodate collections
- Continued additions to book and archival collections
- Repair of additional donated display cabinets
- Upgrading of computers.

## Deadwood Funds Help Restore Carnegie

Whatever one's opinion may be regarding gambling, one must admit that the Deadwood funds (raised from gambling proceeds) have and will significantly help preserve the 1903 former Carnegie Library in Mitchell. In summer 2007, \$8,000.00 of Deadwood funds helped pay the over \$16,000.00 cost to tuck-point the exterior of the building. In summer 2008, \$15,000.00 of Deadwood funds will help pay the estimated \$75,000.00 price to replace the leaking roof, insulate the roof, and improve the air conditioning system. Appreciation is due the South Dakota State Historical Society

The MAHS needs to raise about \$25,000.00 additional money to pay the entire project cost. Fundraising efforts will continue since the project must be completed in 2008 not only to prevent further damage to the building but also to avoid expiration of the \$10,000.00 grant awarded for the roof project in 2007 by the Mary Chilton DAR Foundation.

## Grants Awarded to the MAHS

The MAHS has been awarded three grants since December 1, 2007. They are essential to enable continued progress on building repair of the CRC and upgrading of the computers.

MidContinent Communications (Midco)  
for upgrading of computers -- \$1,500.00

Mitchell Area Charitable Foundation -- \$2,000.00  
for insulation of the main gallery of the CRC

South Dakota State Historical Society Deadwood funds --  
\$15,000.00 for the roof replacement, insulation, and air conditioning project.

The MAHS greatly appreciates this vital assistance which enables progress on waterproofing and making more energy efficient the 1903 structure. This project must be completed in 2008 or risk loss of the 2007 Mary Chilton DAR Foundation grant of \$10,000.00 for the roof replacement. The \$10,000.00 bequest from the Edna Weller Estate is also critical to raising the necessary matching funds. Also important are the generous contributions received from alumni of Mitchell's high schools and other valued friends.

## Book Sale Held

The CRC held a used magazine and book sale on Saturday, May 7, to raise funds for the maintenance and expenses of the Center. Over 90 boxes of books donated. Appreciation is extended to donors of used books and magazines and to the buyers. Quality used books and magazines – in two bookcases on the main floor – are available daily for purchase at reasonable prices.

## U.S. Senator George McGovern – Speaker at the MAHS Annual Meeting

Over 100 MAHS members and guests were privileged to hear U.S. Senator George McGovern tell of his experiences as a U.S. Army Air Corps pilot in World War II when he spoke at the MAHS annual meeting on January 21, 2008. In his inimitable conversational style, Senator McGovern informed and entertained his audience about the realities of flying bombing missions over Europe at 10,000 feet in a plane with no heat, open windows, and no creature comforts during the eight-to ten-hour flights. He described the intensive German anti-aircraft fire that the U.S. planes encountered and the high possibility of being hit.

Following Senator McGovern's talk, Naomi Powers, an eight-year old violin student of Mr. Jay Reeve, charmed the audience with her playing of classical and other compositions. To the surprise and pleasure of Senator McGovern, Naomi, accompanied by Mrs. Minako Yamauchi, completed her program with a spirited rendition of the "U.S. Army Air Corps Song" as arranged by Joe Pekas, noted Mitchell musician.

Everyone enjoyed the delicious meal provided and so elegantly served by Ruby Tuesday under the management of Mitchellite Heath Dummer.

The January 2009 MAHS annual meeting will feature Bernie Hunhoff, publisher and editor of South Dakota Magazine, and students of Jay Reeve. Ruby Tuesday will again be the caterer, and the event will be held again at Wesley Acres.



Jay Reeve, Suzuki violin teacher, visits with his student, Naomi Powers and U.S. Senator George McGovern after Naomi's program.  
(Photo by John Airhart)

## Bequest from the Estate of Mrs. Sam (Edna Braase) Weller

The MAHS benefited in April 2008 from the generous gift of \$10,000.00 from Edna Weller who passed away on February 20, 2008, at age 106 after a brief illness.

Mrs. Weller and her late husband Sam were dedicated to preserving Mitchell area history. Of sound, clear mind and memory to her very last day, Mrs. Weller followed closely the progress made by the MAHS and MAGS volunteers to save the 1903 former Carnegie Library.

As one who valued education, Mrs. Weller was a graduate of UCLA in 1927 with a major in history. Among her many contributions to Mitchell was service on the Board of Education.

Mrs. Weller's generous gift for CRC maintenance and repair has made it possible to move forward this summer with the major roof replacement, insulation, and upgrade of the air conditioning.

In addition to the monetary bequest, the MAHS received \$342.00 in memorial contributions which will be used to frame the *Sioux Seed Woman* print which was given to the MAHS by the Oscar Howe Memorial Association at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. The MAHS with the approval of Dr. Carol Ragle and Lucinda Marcello, granddaughters of Mrs. Weller, felt this would be fitting since Mrs. Weller was an admirer of Oscar Howe's work and knew him and his family when they lived in Mitchell.

Additionally, Dr. Ragle presented an incredible collection of items about Mitchell's history which Mr. and Mrs. Weller had collected over many years.

The gratitude felt by MAHS and MAGS volunteers is, as Lyle Swenson expressed, "immeasurable."

### Clyde and Mary Goin Corn Palace Collection

The MAHS has an extensive display of Corn Palace memorabilia housed in the CRC. Many of the items were collected by Clyde and Mary Goin and include photographs (publicity 8" x 10" glossies), souvenirs that were sold at the Corn Palace, and a wide range of other mementos. The collection in the spacious gallery on the east side of the central main gallery depicts the great variety of entertainment and other features of the Corn Palace since 1892, the year of the first Corn Palace in Mitchell. The huge tool box and implements used by A. J. Kings, contractor who built the first Corn Palace, are part of the collection, as is the approximate 4' square scale model of the first Corn Palace built by A. J. Kings' grandson.

On December 21, 2007, three generations of the Goin family were present for dedication of the Clyde and Mary Goin Corn Palace Collection and the placement of a plaque at the entrance to the east gallery.

CRC volunteers have mounted an impressive display that intrigues visitors to the CRC. Also available are colored postcards of the Corn Palace depicting design themes used to decorate it over the years. A visit to this collection is an important supplement to a visit to the Corn Palace.

## Girl Scout Display

The Girl Scouts followed the boys in March with a well-rounded display in the west room of the CRC. Becky Riggs and Tracy Haag, Girl Scout leaders, coordinated setting up the display. Seven display cases housed badges, camp equipment, pictures, a flag, and other memorabilia. Five manikins were dressed in Girl Scout uniforms, each representing a different level of scouting.

The Nyoda Girl Scout Council, formerly located in Huron, has merged with the Dakota Horizons Council and is now located in Sioux Falls. The program is changing to keep pace with the girls of today. The CRC thanks Linda Holmes, Mitchell Girl Scout chairperson, and leaders Becky Riggs and Tracy Haag for a job well done.

To all past and present Girl Scout Leaders:

### The Time You have Spent

The time you have spent as a volunteer,  
 Be it half a lifetime or just a year.  
 Will have its effect in such far reaching ways,  
 It can never be measured in hours or days.  
 But we want to say thank you for doing your part,  
 For giving your hand and giving your heart.  
 Thanks for the smiles when you wanted to weep,  
 For the camping trips when you couldn't sleep.  
 For carpools and nosebags and sit upons,  
 For lighting the way to the outdoor johns.  
 For running and phoning and meeting and waiting.  
 For hiking and swimming and roller skating.  
 But thanks more than ever for years to come,  
 When someone remembers the job you've done.  
 And memories brighten a young woman's face,  
 In some other time and some other place.

---author unknown



Girl Scout Uniforms (Photo by Lynette Higgins)



Boy Scout badges and memorabilia (Photo by Lynette Higgins)

## Boy Scout Exhibit

February is Boy Scout Month. The CRC invited the two Mitchell Boy Scout troops to hold their February meetings at the Carnegie. Both troops accepted and held their meetings separately.

To honor scouts, a display of patches, badges, uniforms, handbooks, a history of Scouting, and other memorabilia greeted the scouts and their leaders. Beginning with the donation of scouting memorabilia of the late L. B. Williams, Jr., many former Boy Scouts from the Mitchell area donated or loaned scouting items for display. The earliest item was a 1911 Boy Scout Handbook. (Boy Scouting started in America in 1910.)

Whether or not they were scouts visitors reminisced about past experiences with scouting. Former scouts recalled their scouting years, especially memorable campouts, cooking experiences, or weeklong camps. It was interesting to hear their memories. The fellowship was amazing with smiles seen all around.

Scouting has changed over the past 98 years, but the ideals and spirit of scouting have stayed steadfast.

## Stones

Beginning with this issue of the *Carnegie Courier*, "Stones" becomes a regular feature. A close-up picture of the date stone or a similar distinctive stone on one of Mitchell's buildings will be published and readers will be asked to identify which building bears the stone and where the building is located (street address, if any). Correct identifications will be entered into a drawing. Send your entry by October 1, 2008, on a postcard to CRC-STONES CONTEST, P.O. 263, Mitchell, SD 57301 or bring your entry to the CRC at 119 W. Third Avenue, Mitchell, SD. The winner will receive a gift certificate to Fanny Horner's Eating Establishment.



Where is this stone located? (Photo by Don Boyden)

## Fundraising from Mitchell's High Schools Alumni

Thanks to the fundraising idea of Pam Weller Korsgaard (MHS 1947) and her husband Ross, the MAHS has written most of the alumni of MHS and Notre Dame to seek donations to fund preservation of the 1903 Carnegie Library in Mitchell.

The response has been encouraging, largely because of the fond memories that so many cherish of their hours at the library, even when they were being "shushed" by the stern librarians. With the original woodwork, tile floors, and gorgeous old oak library tables that are still part of the scene, it is easy to slip into the happy thoughts of yesteryear. The MAHS is very appreciative of these many gifts that have launched the restoration of this special building.

President Lyle Swenson and CRC volunteers welcome your visit at the CRC whenever you come to Mitchell. The Carnegie is also a fine place to present programs at your alumni reunions and to peruse the annuals and other photos and memorabilia in the exhibit about the schools in the west wing of the building. Call Pam Range at 996-3209 or 770-7322 to make reservations or to arrange for appointments other than during the regular 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. hours Monday through Saturday.

## Remembering Methodist Hospital and Its Nursing Program

From May through July 2008 the entire main gallery of the CRC featured an extensive display of memorabilia, photographs, and written material related to the Methodist Hospital and its school of nursing. Items ranged from old medicine bottles to bed pans as well as an antique wooden wheelchair and a blood separator (centrifuge).

The Methodist State Hospital was established in February 1918, and the school of nursing opened in March 1918. In 1954 "State" was deleted from the name of the hospital to avoid confusion regarding its ownership or use (not a mental institution). In 1923 Miss Mabel O. Woods was appointed as administrator. The next 23 years of the history of the Methodist Hospital are directly tied to her devotion, tireless efforts, and knowledge of successful supervision and administration. Even in the Depression years, the hospital and school of nursing continued to grow. After years of prosperous growth, the Methodist Hospital closed on December 31, 1991. The nursing school ended in 1978.

At the May 19, 2008, meeting of the MAHS, Joan Hiles, R.N., and an alumna of the nursing program, presented an informative talk about the hospital and its nursing program. Other nursing school graduates added reminiscences to Mrs. Hiles' recollections.

On June 14, 2008, the Methodist State Hospital cornerstone, which was saved by the nurses and was placed on the southwest area of the CRC lawn, was rededicated during the annual meeting of the Methodist Hospital Nursing alumni as a permanent remembrance of the valued hospital and respected nursing program of Mitchell.

As a gesture of gratitude to MAHS and MAGS, the Methodist Nursing alumni presented a gift for the CRC of \$500.00 on June 17, 2008. The gift is an important addition to the funds needed for the 2008 roof/insulation/air conditioning project. Thank you!



Rededication of the Methodist State Hospital 1918 cornerstone. Methodist Hospital Nursing School alumnae Sheila Letcher (left) and Joan Hiles with Lyles Swenson at the CRC (Photo by Lynette Higgins)

## Genealogical News

The MAGS hosted a workshop and the South Dakota Genealogical Society's spring meeting on April 26, 2008. Genealogists will go through rain, sleet, or 14 inches of snow to get to a workshop! In spite of inclement weather, the workshop was well attended. The presentations given by Garvin Bertsch and Jim Olson were well received. (Those who had heard them speak before commented that they were the best they had ever heard from them.) Jim had returned from Norway just days before the workshop, and his travel experiences had enriched his research program. Lyle Swenson spoke about using resources at the CRC for research, and Gaye Van Eps spoke about using resources at the LDS family History Centers for research. Thank you to the speakers for a job well done and to Jon Airhart, owner of Fanny Horner's Eating Establishment, for the delicious food provided for the day.

The SDSGS started their meeting at the noon break and reconvened after the workshop ended. They are making plans for their booth at the State Fair. Election of officers was held, and the Genealogist of the Year Award was presented to Anna Duncan of Flandreau, South Dakota. Affiliates from around the state described the projects their groups are developing.

MAGS is striving to make the CRC "the" place to research the Mitchell area. The CRC was given two microfiche readers and a microfilm reader, and now wishes to acquire microfilm and microfiche materials. Members who have MAGS materials stored in their homes are asked to bring them to the CRC so they can be available to all. The collections of MAHS and MAGS housed in the CRC comprise a great asset for the Mitchell area.

MAGS will present a class on launching family research using online and other resources starting September 6, 2008. The four sessions of the class will be held from 10-12 every Saturday in September. Watch for details and signup at the end of August.

MAGS meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the CRC. All are invited to join the group, whether a beginner or professional genealogist. Members are available to help with your research problems during scheduled hours at the CRC, or call 996-3209 or email your questions to [rangep@mitchellcarnegie.org](mailto:rangep@mitchellcarnegie.org)

## CRC Lawn and Flowers

Now that tulip season is over, petunias donated by John Bush, owner of James Valley Nursery, have replaced them for the summer. He also sprayed for weeds – a major help to CRC volunteers. James Schneider, retired manager of UBC, has taken on the lawn mowing job. For two years Steve Kracht performed this vital work. In 2006, the Mitchell Garden Club designated the CRC as Commercial Yard of the Year. In 2007, the Mitchell Chamber of Commerce City Beautification Committee recognized the CRC for its greatly improved appearance. Now let's keep up the good work.

## Wanted: Dead or Alive!

Remember the old western movies with a poster of a wanted outlaw tacked on the front door of the sheriff's office? Well, MAHS isn't looking for any outlaws, but copies of Mitchell City Directories are needed. If you have copies for any of the years listed below and would be willing to donate them to the CRC, your generosity would be greatly appreciated. To contact the CRC, please call (605) 996-3209 or write to: CRC, 119 West Third Avenue, Mitchell, SD 57301.

These are the missing years:

**1932 - 1936, 1938, 1941, 1943, 1944, 1947, 1949, 1951, 1952, 1954, 1956, 1962, 1968, and 2003.**

The city directories have proved to be invaluable aids to research people and businesses from Mitchell's past. As more people learn about the CRC, more will request historical and genealogical information.

In addition to this request for Mitchell City Directories, past volumes of school annuals would also be appreciated. Annuals from the following schools are needed:

Mitchell Sr. High School	Mitchell Technical Institute
Notre Dame High School	Ethan High School
Dakota Wesleyan University	Mt. Vernon High School

## MAHS 2008 Meetings

At each MAHS meeting, members and guests hear speakers on a wide range of topics. Following are the presenters and their topics that enriched the meetings during the first six months of 2008:

**January:** U.S. Senator George McGovern (see article on page 3 of this newsletter). To complement Senator McGovern's topic about World War II, the CRC displayed six kiosks loaned by the SDSHS which depicted the impact of World War II on South Dakotans.

**February:** Tom Berg described the Sears-Roebuck Alhambra design house he has preserved and lives in at 416 East Fourth Avenue in Mitchell.

**March:** Don Simmons, director of the George and Eleanor McGovern Center, discussed the historic impact of war.

**April:** Gayle Van Genderen and Marge Coler described the extensive efforts of Plankinton volunteers to preserve one of the last remaining railroad hotels in the United States.

**May:** Joan Hiles, R.N., told the history of the Methodist Hospital and its Nursing School (see page 5).

**June:** Author Mike Randall read from his recently published book [Becoming Human, a Servant of the Map](#).

At most meetings, audience members added to the information brought by the speakers. Audio and visual equipment and a Knabe grand piano are available for program use.

## Volunteers Are Needed!

Are you looking for something interesting to do with your spare time? Staffing the Carnegie is not only interesting but it is fun. If you have only one day a month or a few hours on a certain day, scheduling can be arranged. MAHS and MAGS hire no employees. Volunteers, unless such professionals as electricians or plumbers are needed -- staff the CRC and do all the maintenance, organizing of archives, arranging displays, etc. The tasks are many and varied. If you have time and talent to spare, please let Karen Pooley (996-2233), Kathryn Crockett (996-2723), Pam Range (770-7322), or stop in at the Carnegie, which is open from 1 to 5, Monday through Saturday.

You will find that you can have a real sense of achievement by helping preserve this historic building and by helping make it a useful historical and genealogical resource for the community.

## A Word about Money

### Thanks for Your Generosity

The MAHS and MAGS wish to thank all who have so generously contributed to our organizations. We've sold Mitchell 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary throws, solicited donations from Mitchell High School and Notre Dame graduates, and sold caramel apples during Corn Palace Week. We continue to sell historical books, seek grants, and request donations of money, goods, and services. Those sending money to "subscribe" to the *Carnegie Courier* are especially appreciated since we do not charge for subscriptions.

### Don't Feel Pressured to Give

We want everyone to know that our organizations are not about money. They're about all of you and your Mitchell area ancestors. It's about our town and our history. We want and need financial support, but we want you to feel comfortable giving when and how much you please. Both Boards of Directors want you to know that you should never feel pressured to give money. We may ask, and we hope you'll contribute, but you should always feel comfortable saying "not this time." We're just happy you are interested in what we do.

### Paying for the *Carnegie Courier*

We need to find a way to pay for the production and mailing costs of the *Carnegie Courier*. The time, equipment, and most of the production costs are donated. Since each issue is pretty expensive, we are starting a "Volunteer *Carnegie Courier* Subscription Program." That's a funny way of saying that we would appreciate a donation each January and July to help pay for the newsletter. If you've already given generously to our organizations, thank you! If you haven't yet found a way to contribute, this would be a nice way and a good time to do so. If a contribution doesn't fit your budget right now, that's fine, too. You'll still get the *Carnegie Courier* twice a year.

**Again, thank you all for supporting  
your volunteer staff so well.**

## My Grandfather's Watch

The year was 1905. Freight handlers in the Freight House of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad in Mason City, Iowa, were informed that the railroad company was going to extend its service to the West Coast. If any of these young men wanted to advance within the company, they would have to move to either Aberdeen or Mitchell, South Dakota. The final route had not yet been decided.

M. F. Boyden, my grandfather, was one of the freight handlers. Buoyed by the thought of advancement with the railroad, he talked it over with his wife Mary and they decided to accept a position in the Mitchell Division. On April 9, 1906, he, his wife and their nine year old son, Carl, my father, stepped off the train at the foot of Main Street in Mitchell. It was rainy and cold, and the street was a quagmire of mud -- not a very inviting environment for starting a new chapter in their lives. But, nevertheless, they were now residents of Mitchell. Grandfather's first assignment was as the brakeman on the freight run from Mitchell to Rapid City. Later his run was extended to include Mitchell to Canton. As the years passed, Grandfather advanced within the company to trainman, freight conductor and eventually to passenger conductor.

One of the most prized and necessary possession a railroader, especially a conductor, has is his watch. Since the train moved on the conductor's signal, this instrument had to keep extremely accurate time.

My grandfather had such a watch -- a Hamilton. It had one very unique feature -- two hour hands. One was black as are the minute and second hands, and the other hour hand was red. The two hour hands were fixed at an hour apart. The reason for the two "hour hands" was to allow the conductor to read the "red" hand when the train was traveling in the Mountain Time Zone and the "black" hand when it was in the Central Time Zone. This eliminated the necessity of manually changing the hour setting whenever the train traveled from one time zone to another. These watches were made specifically for railroaders whose runs took them across two different time zones.

So concerned was my grandfather about the accuracy of his watch that he and my grandmother would come to our house after church on Sunday, presumably to have dinner with us, but it was really for grandfather to tune to a radio station in Bismarck, North Dakota, to check his watch against the station's time at noon. I asked him why he had to listen to that particular station. His reply was, "It's the closest station that uses Naval Observatory Time, the most accurate time available." He had his watch ready to correct the time, but seldom, if ever, did his watch need correction. As I said, conductors were sticklers for accuracy of time.

Grandfather worked for the "Milwaukee Road" for 55 years, retiring at age 83. I would imagine that during those years he wore out more than one watch, but I would bet anything each one of them had two "hour hands". I hope his watch or watches have found safe homes and are proudly displayed by their present owners.

By Don Boyden, D.D.S.

## Items for Sale at the Carnegie Resource Center

### Carnegie Building drawing by Dick Vance

- Note Cards - \$2.95 each or set of four for \$6.50
- Framed Prints, 5 x 7 - \$19.95, 8 x 10 - \$29.95,  
11 x 13 - \$44.95

### 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mitchell Throws

- Depicting historic buildings of Mitchell.
- All woven cotton, 55" x 72", made in USA - \$50.00

### Books Available

- *Images of America – Mitchell’s Corn Palace*, by Jan Cerney, 128 pages, soft cover. Arcadia Publishing Company - \$20
  - *Free to Speak His Mind – W. R. Ronald, Prairie Editor and an AAA Architect*, by Elizabeth Evenson Williams. 132 pages, soft cover. Pine Hill Press, Inc. 1999. Cover design by Noel Hamiel - \$15 \*
  - *75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, June 7-8-9, 1956, 75 Years of Progress, Mitchell, SD 1881-1956*, by the Diamond Jubilee, Official Souvenir Program, 76 pages, soft cover - \$10 \*
  - *Mitchell Rediscovered, 1881 – 1981, Centennial Souvenir History, Mitchell, SD, July 15-19*, by Michelle Bittner, Helen Montgomery, Louise Smith and Mary Weinkauff, Chairman of Mitchell Centennial History Committee, 1980. 92 pages, soft cover - \$10
  - *An Historic Sampler of Davison County*, by Robert F. Karolevitz, 1993. 192 pages, hard cover - \$30
  - *Souvenir Davison County Court House, Including a Brief Davison County History*, dedicated Labor Day, Monday, September 6, 1937, Mitchell, SD. 32 pages, soft cover - \$3 \*
- Jerry’s Journey*, by Jerry Harmon and Gayle E. Edinger, 1996, 120 pages, soft cover - \$10 \*

\* Denotes limited supplies

### Monographs compiled by Garvin Bertsch

- The History of Mitchell Drugstores and Pharmacies, 1880-2004*. 28 pages, soft cover - \$10
- *Mitchell Rotary Presidents – Biographies, 1918-1947*. 45 pages, soft cover - \$15
  - *The History of the Mitchell Banks and Their Notable Presidents, 1880-2006*. 44 pages, soft cover - \$15
  - *The History of Mitchell Hotels and Houses, 1880-1972*. 47 pages, soft cover - \$15

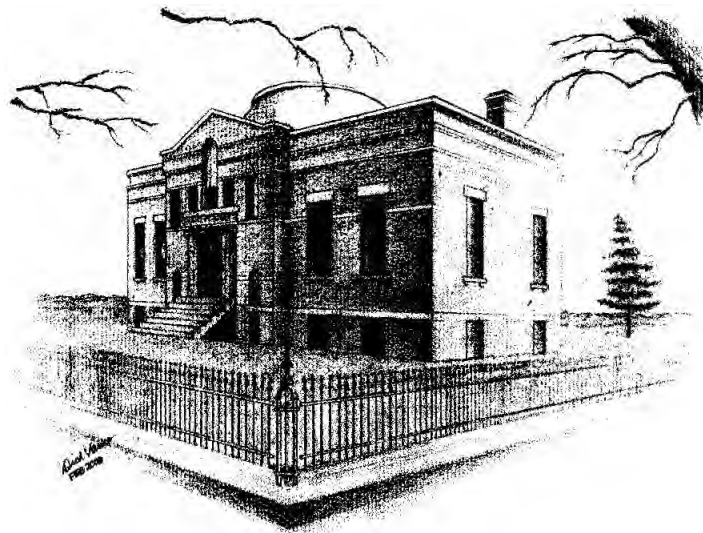
### Colored photographs by Dean Randall

of the Oscar Howe dome mural “Sun and Rain Clouds Over Hills”.

## Richard Vance: Policeman, now Artist!

Mitchell has a new resident artist – Richard Vance – who has done excellent detailed drawings of the CRC and of The Depot. The CRC is the former Carnegie Library, built in 1903, of South Dakota quartzite and on the National Register of Historic Places. The Depot is a restaurant, still bordering the railroad tracks at the south end of Main Street, which was the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad.

Mr. Vance is a retired policeman who returned to Mitchell and has allowed his talents to evolve. Note cards and drawings are available for purchase at the CRC. Fifty percent of the proceeds are donated to the MAHS by the artist.



THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY  
MITCHELL, SOUTH DAKOTA  
The 1903 Carnegie Library by Richard Vance





## When the Circus Came to Town

by Stan Johnson

The year was 1934, and the news of the time was "The circus is coming to town!" I don't remember whether it was the Barnum and Bailey Circus or whether it was the Ringling Brothers Circus that was going to make a stop in Mitchell, South Dakota. They would back the circus train onto the old Omaha siding on North Main Street in our town of Mitchell, South Dakota.

I was nine years old at the time, and my brother Eldon was almost three years younger, six years old at the time. We had a cousin Percy who lived in Mitchell and was right between us in age. Times were hard. None of us could really afford tickets to the circus, but we did talk our folks into letting us spend the night with Percy so that we could go to watch the circus unloaded.

We were up early the next morning. After eating the big breakfast Aunt Myrtle had fixed us, we jumped on Percy's old bicycle and headed for the train depot. My brother rode on Percy's carrier on the back of the bicycle, and I stood up and helped peddle. When we got there, the circus hands were in the process of unloading the big circus wagons. Horses pulled the wagons with chains as the hands walked on the ground. When they reached the ramp, they brought an elephant that pushed his head against the front of the wagon to ease it down the street. Then the workers hitched some horses onto the wagons and took the wagons out to the circus grounds. We decided to see what was going on at the circus grounds, so we headed out on Percy's old bike. The circus had been set up in the big hay field that belonged to Oscar Cassem.

We had just stopped when this huge man came over and said, "Would you boys like to earn some tickets to the circus this afternoon?" We all said, "Yes!" He looked us all over, and then he told Percy and me to go over and help the men who were unrolling rolls of canvas that would make the top of the Big Top. Then he told Eldon to get one of the buckets and bring get water from the water-wagon to water the elephants. Afterwards, Eldon said, "Those elephants could suck up water faster than I could carry it." After what seemed like a long time, he finished watering the elephants. Then the hands give him a broom and told him he could help wash the wagons. So he had plenty to do while Percy and I helped unroll those heavy rolls of canvas. There must have been fifteen or twenty of us working on unrolling all of that canvas. Then using finer ropes, we laced the pieces of canvas together and there was the Big Top! Next, the workers hitched elephants to the ropes that raised the Big Top all the way up to the four huge poles. They moved so slowly and cautiously. When they had reached the top, they unhitched the elephants and tied the ropes to the great big poles. Their work was done for now.

Next came a wagon with the canvas to make the sides of the Big Top. Shorter poles were put around the outside of

the Big Top. Then these sections of canvas were unrolled and put around the outside edge of the Big Top. After we got all of them in place, I looked and I had never been in any place so big. Then came a wagon bearing large beams which we helped carry in while the men set them in place. The seats were placed upon the beams. Then at last came the skirts which we helped place in front of the lowest seats. When he had finished, I looked at all those seats in this great big tent. I was amazed and happy that I had had some small part in helping it all to happen. By this time other workers were putting down material that made three big rings.

Then Percy and I and our crew began helping put up some smaller tents where people would be able to see the tigers, lions, monkeys, and other animals I had never seen even in pictures. In one of the tents they pulled in some kind of a pipe organ, and a man climbed up and played it for a little while to entertain the people as they made their way into the Big Top. I think I could have stood there and listened to him play it all afternoon.

The man who had hired all of us came and told us that we were one of the best work crews he had ever found. He complimented us on how hard and fast we had worked. He said, "I am not only going to give you tickets so you will sit in the front rows of the center section but also a ticket for a sack of popcorn and a bottle of pop."

We were so excited. I don't remember if we even ate dinner, but we did end up on the curb on Main Street when the parade came up the street. My brother Eldon pointed out all the wagons he had washed and the elephants he had watered. In a little while we heard music, and then we saw beautifully dressed cowboys leading the parade while waving big American flags. Then came wagons with lions or tigers, monkeys, and other animals. Another wagon carried a band on top playing music. Other beautiful wagons carried people who rode on top and waved at the crowd. Next came a clown on stilts. He was nine or ten feet tall and dressed up like Uncle Sam. He waved at everyone and tossed candy to the children. Some of the clowns had big paddles and really made a lot of noise when they swatted each other. One man had a dog that walked on its hind legs. He was such a pretty dog. We had never seen anything like this, so we were a little disappointed when the last wagon and clown passed by.

We three climbed back on Percy's bicycle and headed back out to the circus grounds. We walked through the tent to see the smaller animals that were not in the parade. When the man began playing the calliope, I could have stood there all afternoon just listening to him. In a little while we made our way into the Big Top and took our reserved seats by the center ring in the front row.

We had never before seen so many people in one place. Then the circus band began to play the national anthem as a lady carrying the American flag rode in on horseback. We could see scarcely an empty seat. We watched dogs, the big bear, and the monkeys do their stunts. The elephants walked on their front feet, and then one walked on its hind feet and carried a young lady on its trunk. The cowboys and cowgirls rode by so fast in

Continued on Page 10

their beautiful costumes, and the horses had such beautiful saddles. Then there were the trapeze stars who would swing and fly through the air catching each other. We held our breath in awe. All too soon the circus was over. Our boss thanked us for coming and bid us farewell. We made our way out of the tent and got on Percy's bike one more time and rode back to his house.

When our folks came to town to pick us up later that evening, we had so much to tell them. I will never forget the day when the circus came to town. Today they no longer put up the Big Top, but they play in places like the Corn Palace and sports arenas. Today young fellows like us wouldn't be able to do the things we got to do and really fully enjoy the day that the circus came to town.

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For more information, call:

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Newsletter of the Mitchell Area Historical  
And Genealogical Societies  
119 West Third Avenue  
PO Box 263  
Mitchell, SD 57301

## Return Service Requested

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## July 2008 Newsletter

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### Future Events at the Carnegie Resource Center

Regular monthly meetings are at 7:00 p.m. at the CRC. MAHS meets on the third Mondays; MAGS meets on the fourth Tuesdays. Visitors are welcome.

**June through September:** Display of school annuals and Memorabilia.

**July 21 (Monday):** 5:00 p.m. meet at the CRC to carpool to the Carnegie Library in Armour. Call 996-2723 to advise whether you prefer to drive or be a passenger.

**August 21:** Meet at 5:00 p.m. at the CRC to carpool to the Hanson Wheel and Wagon Company in Letcher. Call 996-2723 to advise whether you prefer to drive or be a passenger.

**August 20-24 (Wednesday – Sunday):** Help sell Woolworth Caramel Apples during Corn Palace Week. Let Karen Pooley (996-2233 or 996-5330) know when you can help.

**September 21 (Sunday):** Celebration of Oscar Howe at the CRC – 3:00 p.m. Professor Wayne Knutson – “Oscar Howe, The Man” Professor John A. Day – “Oscar Howe, The Artist”

**November:** Twentieth Anniversary of the Mitchell Area Historical Society

**December:** Christmas at the Carnegie

**January 21, 2009 (Monday, 6:00 p.m.):** MAHS Annual Meeting at Wesley Acres. Bernie Hunhoff, publisher and editor of South Dakota Magazine, will be the speaker; music by Jay Reeve string students; dinner catered by Ruby Tuesday. See December newsletter for more information.

**Carnegie Resource Center is open  
Monday - Saturday, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Call 605-996-3209 for additional times.**

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