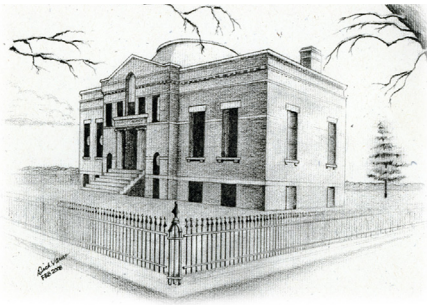




The Carnegie Courier

Newsletter of

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& The Mitchell Area Genealogical Society (MAGS)

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Sarah "Sadie" Ball Weller: A Century of Courage, Leadership, and Legacy

This article was compiled by Dr. Carol Ragle Weller, a great-granddaughter of Sarah "Sadie" Ball Weller. Carol is the granddaughter of Sarah's son, Sam F. Weller and his wife Edna Brasse Weller. Sam and Edna have a daughter named Corinne who marries Logan N. Ragle, the parents of Dr. Carol Ragle Weller.



Born in 1875, Sarah "Sadie" Ann Ball Weller was among the earliest pioneers to arrive in the Mitchell area of Dakota Territory. Over the course of her century-long life, she witnessed and helped shape a transforming nation. As a devoted teacher, community leader, and advocate for women's suffrage, Sadie left an enduring mark on both her hometown

and the broader movement for equality. Her story reflects the resilience of pioneer families, the struggles and triumphs of women seeking the right to vote, and the spirit of service that defined her generation.

Sadie arrived in Mitchell in 1881 at the age of six, traveling in the caboose of the first passenger train with her sister Mary Hellen (Nellie) Ball, age five, and brother William Reeves Ball, age three. This was the first train to carry passengers to Mitchell. Sadie, the eldest child, was born on January 13, 1875, in Hinsdale, Illinois. Her father, Thomas Joseph George Disrael Mangan Ball, of Scotch-Irish descent, was 23 years old, and her mother, Hedda Kristina "Hattie" Karlsdotter Carlson, Swedish, was also 23. Both were immigrants. Hedda died in Algonia, Iowa, during childbirth, leaving Thomas Ball with three children.

In 1879, Thomas J.G.D.M. Ball searched for a new home for his family. He went first to Rockport in Dakota Territory and then settled in Firesteel, Davison County. Settlers arrived at the confluence of the James River and Firesteel Creek in 1872 in anticipation of the coming of the railroad. When the railroad came through, Firesteel was deemed a flood hazard, so the railroad established itself in Mitchell. The 27 families of Firesteel relocated to the railroad site renamed for Alexander Mitchell, president of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad. In

August, 1879, the original town site of the Town of Mitchell was platted, and in the spring of 1881, the Town of Mitchell was incorporated as a village. South Dakota became the 40th state in the Union on November 2, 1889.

Tom Ball homesteaded a property southeast of Mitchell. There were hostile encounters with Native Americans and frequent prairie fires. During fires, they had to move their belongings to a plowed field until the danger passed. Tom Ball owned the first hardware store in Mitchell and built more than 200 houses to encourage settlement. The aim was to help Mitchell become the capital of South Dakota. He drove the first spike for the trolley that ran down what is now Rowley Street; land was available for development along the track and this was a way to showcase and aid in selling land tracts. He later worked at the Post Office for 16 years and eventually became Postmaster. He knew everyone!

Sarah received all her schooling in Mitchell in a four-room schoolhouse. She graduated in 1894 as part of Mitchell's first graduating class. In 1895, she attended Dakota Wesleyan University to study education. Her first teaching position was in Mt. Vernon, followed by Whittier Elementary School, where she taught fourth and fifth grade from 1897 to 1900.

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Sarah “Sadie” Ball Weller ...

Cont. from page 1

On January 12, 1888, Sarah was trapped at Whittier Elementary School during the infamous “Children’s Blizzard.” She was 12 years old and in the fourth grade. Four children remained at the school. The other town children had gone home, but those from the countryside stayed. The storm was so severe that snow reached the roof, and travel was perilous. Their teacher and the janitor stayed with them overnight. The next morning, Tom Ball and neighbor Mr. Rierson tied together lengths of clothesline to reach the school safely. They brought supplies—two comforters, a lantern, and sacks of food, all ready to eat. When the storm subsided, Mr. Ball returned to get Sarah. It was bitterly cold, so he wrapped her in a comforter to bring her home.

On September 5, 1900, Sarah married Charles Samuel Weller in Sioux City, Iowa. She remained a teacher until a substitute was found, as married women were not permitted to teach. Sadie and Charles had three children: Samuel Franklin, Alpheus S., and Amanda H. Weller.

Sadie was very active in politics. She served as County Chairman of the Davison County Child Welfare Department. Volunteers went door to door canvassing the City of Mitchell to record names of children under six years old for measuring, weighing, and testing. At the time, there were 691 children. This was part of a federal government effort to improve child welfare. She also advocated for parks and recreation, raising funds for children’s facilities. The “Mothers of Mitchell” group, which she helped lead, raised money for public playgrounds. She supported the Red Cross and organized pageants and parades to fundraise for its work.

Sarah Ball Weller was a South Dakota suffragette and state represen-



This photo dated 1892 - The first Corn Palace Festival Dace.



This photo dated 06-07-16 - Suffrage parade in Chicago, IL

tative to the National Convention in Chicago, Illinois, on June 7, 1916. She marched in the “Suffrage Parade” that day despite the wind and rain. She was also invited to the Executive Committee of the Progressive National Convention on June 1, 1916, coinciding with the first session of the National American Woman’s Suffrage Association. On November 5, 1918, South Dakota passed women’s right to vote through a state constitutional amendment, becoming the 17th state to grant full suffrage. The federal 19th Amendment passed Congress on June 4, 1919, and was ratified in 1920, guaranteeing women the right to vote nationwide.

Sarah was also very active in Theodore Roosevelt’s political campaigns. Her husband, Charles Weller, served as Secretary of Agriculture for a year and knew Roosevelt well. Charles provided Roosevelt with hunting licenses for South Dakota. Later, Charles also bought and sold land. In later years, Charles and Sadie manufactured supplies for magicians and became among the best-known makers of rubber magician props in the nation. After Charles’s death in 1953, Sadie continued the business at home until she was 94. She made rubber eggs, balls, milk bottles, and ketchup bottles for magicians’ acts.



This photo dated 07-01-68 - Sadie's official "Order of Merlin" certificate.

In 1968, Sadie was awarded a membership to the "Order of Merlin" in recognition of her support of magicians.

In 1970, Sadie Ball Weller moved into the Firesteel Heights Nursing Home in Mitchell, where she celebrated her centennial birthday. Dakota Wesleyan University honored her 100th birthday alongside President Gerald Ford, Governor Richard Kneip, and Representative George McGovern. She died on April 6, 1976, in Mitchell, South Dakota, and was buried in Graceland Cemetery beside her husband, Charles Samuel Weller.



Sadie at 82

Sarah "Sadie" Ann Ball Weller's life spanned more than a century of profound change in South Dakota and the United States. From her childhood arrival on the first passenger train to Mitchell, to her role as an educator, suffrage advocate, and community leader, she embodied the perseverance and vision of the pioneer spirit. Her contributions to education, civic welfare, and the fight for women's rights ensured that her legacy lived far beyond her years. Remembered as both a witness to history and a maker of it, Sadie Ball Weller remains a lasting symbol of dedication, courage, and progress in Mitchell's story.

Native Speaker Coming in November

**Jean M. Nahomni Mani to speak at the Carnegie Resource Center
on November 13, 2025, at 7:00 PM.**



Jean M. Nahomni Mani

This program will commemorate the First Thanksgiving celebrated in the fall of 1621. The 3-day harvest feast was hosted by the Puritan Pilgrims to thank the Wampanoag Native Americans for helping them survive the harsh winter of 1620 where many Pilgrims suffered and died from disease and starvation. The Wampanoag had already suffered losses from disease and were wary of the newcomer. However, they helped the Pilgrims by showing them how to cultivate corn, beans, and squash, and how to fish and hunt.

The featured speaker will be Jean M. Nahomni Mani, a member of the

Dakota Hunkpati Nation located on the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation here in South Dakota. Jean works for the Great Plains Leaders Health Board which she coordinates the RCORP grant on Substance Abuse Disorder (SUD) and Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). Jean coordinates monthly support groups and presentations on awareness of SUD, OUD. She hosts the sharing of Dakota teachings as evidence-based support to promote sobriety and to learn coping skills for self, family, and the community. The support groups she works with include Dakota Woyawapi Omnicitye (book club) Community Support Group for craft and sewing classes for Dakota Ribbon Skirts. Jean also works with young women for the Isnathi Woehun (Coming of Age Ceremony) for instruction on family planning. In addition, she coordinates Dakota Naming Ceremonies that give community members a foundation of being positive and the courage to meet all challenges to establish a positive home environment.

Jean has degrees from Arizona State College, Mesa Community College, Eastern Arizona College, and a diploma in Secretarial and Office Management from Mitchell Technical College. Using her educational studies, Jean has developed interests in writing story books for children and mystery novels for adults. Her books relate to Dakota and Native American characters and culture. In addition to writing for children and adults, Jean loves reading books of every genre. Among her many other interests and talents, Jean is also a Northern Plains Traditional Dancer who participates in Powwows throughout South Dakota and other venues.

This is a special program for all ages to learn about our Native American culture, past, present, and future. You will also be excited to listen to Jean share her art and personal interest in creating dance costumes and writing stories. Come for an interesting evening of learning, fun, and sharing the culture of the South Dakota Nations.

EXCITING NEWS!

From the South Dakota State Historical Society
The new South Dakota Digital Archives is
NOW LIVE HERE:

<https://histstd.access.preservica.com/portal/en-US>

**MAKE SURE TO UPDATE
YOUR BOOKMARKS!**

The old digital archives site (<https://sddigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/>) was **no longer active** as of July 1.

The State Archives team is excited to announce that the newly renovated research room will reopen for in-person research. The Research Room will be open by appointment only, with two sessions each day, Monday through Friday.

The morning session runs from 9:00 AM-12:00 Noon, and the afternoon session runs from 1:00 PM-4:30 PM. Researchers are welcome to pick any combination of sessions, as suits your needs. Once you have a date and sessions picked out, just let us know and our staff will confirm availability and add you to our schedule.

The use of appointments allows staff to ensure that all our researchers will have access to individual support and specialized equipment as necessary. Appointments also allow staff to pull records from our storage spaces prior to your visit, ensuring that you can be as productive as possible.

Call (605-773-3804) or email (StateArchives@state.sd.us) today to schedule an appointment!

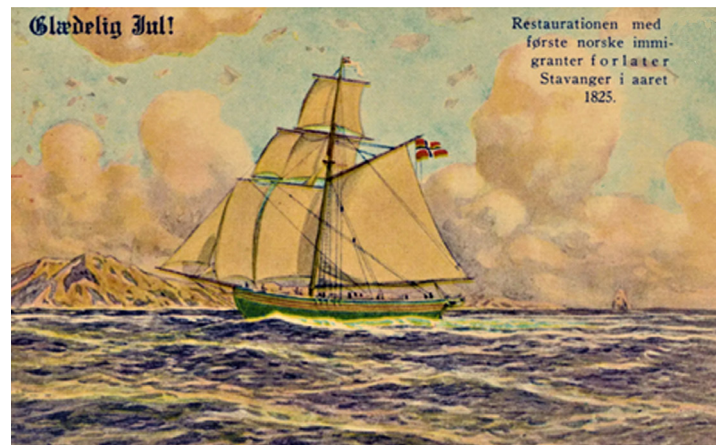
What Is a Sloop?



On July 4, 1825, a courageous group of 52 Norwegians set sail from Stavanger, Norway, aboard the Restauration, a single-masted sailing vessel known as a sloop. After traveling 6,000 miles, they landed in New York on October 9. These immigrants became known as “Sloopers,” named after the kind of ship they sailed. Upon arrival, their number had grown to 53, as a baby was born during the voyage to the ship’s captain and group leader, Lars Larsen Geilane, and his wife, Martha. This journey marked the first organized migration from Norway to North America.

The voyage was not without excitement and danger. At one point, the Restauration drifted into the port of Funchal, Portugal, without raising its flag. Distracted after sampling some wine found floating in the ocean, the passengers failed to hoist their colors. Mistaking the unidentified ship for a threat, local officials prepared to attack. Fortunately, the flag was raised just in time. The American consul befriended the group, and after several days of care at the consulate, they continued their journey.

When the Restauration reached New York, the newcomers were eager to settle in their new homeland. However, the 39-ton, 54-foot vessel was deemed severely overcrowded under American law and was immediately impounded by local authorities. Cleng Peerson—remembered as the “Norwegian Pathfinder to America”—had already gone ahead as their advance agent. With help from Quakers and other sympathizers, and after a pardon granted by President John Quincy Adams, the Sloopers were able to continue their journey. Peerson led them to their first settlement in Kendall (now Murray Township) in Orleans County, New York. Although hardships forced many to move on, some remained, while others followed Peerson to Fox River Valley, Illinois, home of the second Norwegian colony in America.” <https://crossings.norwegianamerican.com/2025-history/>



Christmas card depicting Restauration at sea.

<https://utvandremuseet.no/en/2025/restauration>



Replica of the Restauration

<https://www.norwegianamerican.com/the-restauration-sets-sail-again/>

The story of the Sloopers reminds us of the hardships endured by countless immigrants in a land with unfamiliar laws and language. It required immense courage and resilience to adapt to their new lives. Even if you are not of Norwegian descent, their journey enriches the larger American story. As President John F. Kennedy once said: “Everywhere immigrants have enriched and strengthened the fabric of American life.”

The legacy of the Restauration continues today. On July 4, 2025, a replica of the emigrant ship set sail from Norway, retracing the same 200-year-old voyage to New York. Fifty-two passengers are expected to arrive on October 9, 2025—the exact date of the original landing. You are invited to hear more about this remarkable three-month journey at the Carnegie Resource Center on Saturday, October 11, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. We hope to see you there.

Why Genealogy?

A recent article on why genealogy is important stated that there are many reasons why people start to search for their family histories. Keep in mind that the answer to one question often brings another question to answer. The following are some of the reasons why many people start the journey:

Validate Family Stories – To determine if family stories about their ancestors are true.

Famous People – To find out if they are related to someone famous.

Historical Event – To gain a better understanding of an ancestor's involvement in a famous historical event.

Trace Medical Conditions – To assess the risk of getting certain medical conditions that tend to run in families.

Trace a Family Inheritance – To determine genealogical proof of a family connection for potential heirs.

Trace Land Ownership – To settle questions of land ownership by providing proof of descent.

Trace a Family Portrait – To see why someone bears a strong resemblance to an ancestor in an old family portrait.

Find Birth Parents – To determine the birth parents of an adopted child. Alternatively, to find children given up for adoption.

Proof of Paternity – To determine the biological father of a child.

Religious Tenet – To satisfy the tenets of the religion. The most notable example is the Mormon Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).

Community History – To document a community history by understanding the families that founded and influenced the community.

Historic Studies – To provide insight into history through the scholarly study of a famous family, such as a royal family.

Heritage Societies – To provide proof of lineage to qualify for a heritage society.

Preserve a Close Relative's Legacy – To learn more about a parent, grandparent or sibling after their death.

Preserving Family Traditions – To preserve knowledge of ancestors who contributed to family traditions, such as a family recipe book.

Preserve Family Culture – To allow families that have migrated to another country the opportunity to preserve some of the culture of their old country.

Resolving Family Trees in Bibles – To understand the names written into an old family Bible.

Understand Family Letters/Diaries – To gain context around an intimate glimpse into an ancestor's experiences and feelings.

Understand a Namesake – To learn more about the person you were named after.

Settle Ownership of a Heirloom – To help resolve disputes over the origin of a family heirloom.

Reconnect with Family – To find and reconnect with living relatives.

Family Legacy – To fulfill a desire to pass on a legacy to future generations.

The Philosophical Side of Genealogy – Genealogy is not a new activity and it is not isolated to any one culture. It bridges across all cultures and all eras. At its root, genealogy satisfies basic human curiosity. These needs can be summed up in three fundamental questions:

• **The Past** – Where do I come from?

• **The Present** – Why am I here?

• **The Future** – What is going to happen to me?

Chances are many of your ancestors had to overcome considerable personal hardship in their lives. The knowledge that your ancestors had great inner strength can be a powerful motivator for anyone trying to understand their place in the world. If it were not for them, you would not be here today reading these words.

Genealogy is history on a personal scale. It helps satisfy a deep need to understand how we fit into the broader world around us. Genealogy is more than just a collection of single-family threads passing through time. It truly is a journey of many lifetimes woven together from the past, the present and (from our perspective) the future. *Source: <http://www.genealogyintime.com/>*

In honor of Veterans – The Great World War



Photo by Linda Oster

This plaque sat in the northwest corner of Hitchcock Park imbedded in a large rock a few feet from the "The Old Mill Stone" that was used at White's Mill on the Jim River. It says, "This tablet erected and this grove dedicated by the CITIZENS OF MITCHELL in memory of those of DAVISON COUNTY who made the supreme sacrifice in the GREAT WORLD WAR FOR DEMOCRACY 1917-1919"

The names listed are: "Howard Barton, John Curtis Berry, Lloyd A. Bishop, Severson Brainard, Peter V. Brethorst, Raymond S. Calkins, Emil H. Carlson, William H. Coacher, Wilber T. Derr, Leroy George Fox, Harold W. Gage, Harry A. Hansen, William M. Jordan, John W. Kempton, Carroll B. West, Emil Laurson, David McConnell, Clarence McCune, Ray L. McLean, P.H. McManamen, Father C.E. O'Flaherty, McKinley Pound, Emil Rosenquist, Edward Schmidt, Oliver L. Scott, Arthur Earle Shale, William B. Shepard, Lester L. Slagel, R. Carroll Thompson and Carroll B. West."

William M. Jordan, John W. Kempton, Emil Laurson, David McConnell, Clarence McCune, Ray L. McLean, P.H. McManamen, Father C.E. O'Flaherty, McKinley Pound, Emil Rosenquist, Edward Schmidt, Oliver L. Scott, Arthur Earle Shale, William B. Shepard, Lester L. Slagel, R. Carroll Thompson and Carroll B. West."

Each corner has a depiction of war. A war ship is in the upper left-hand corner; a bi-wing airplane in the upper right-hand corner; men in trenches in the lower left-hand corner & men firing a cannon in the lower right-hand corner.

The final motto says, "THE RIGHT IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN PEACE."

Language Fun!

“Everybody smiles in the same language” by George Carlin (American comedian and social critic).

<https://textappeal.com/cultureshocks/16-inspirational-quotes-about-language/>

Following are some Norwegian sayings and phrases that make a lot of sense. Let us enjoy the beauty of language and the messages that are represented. From site 70+ Norwegian Idioms and Sayings

Norwegian	Translation	Meaning
"Å være på bærtur"	To be out berry-picking	To describe someone who does not know what they're talking about or don't know what they're doing
"Å ta det for god fisk"	To take it as good fish	To believe something someone said without doubting them

https://www.reddit.com/r/norsk/comments/11hcfaz/70_norwegian_idioms_and_sayings/?rdt=43282

Norwegian	Translation
"Uff da"	is an exclamation or interjection that expresses dismay, surprise, or relief. It's often used in the Upper Midwest and is sometimes spelled "oof da".

https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=d90a51759e2b0159&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS861US861&sxsrf=AHn8zrZkC507pyEVTfITD5Dvo_iGAHLYfw:1742486323457&q=Funny+Norwegian+words&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=

Norwegian	Translation	Meaning
Å være pling i bollen	To be a ping in the bowl.	To be empty-headed/stupid (from the “ping”-like noise an empty bowl makes when you tap it).
Å få blod på tannen	To get blood on your tooth.	To become inspired / driven to do something.
Man skal ikke skue hunden på hårene	You shouldn't judge the dog on its hairs.	You shouldn't judge a book by its cover.
Is i magen	Ice in one's stomach.	Stay in control, play it cool.
Å være på bærtur / på viddene / ute og sykle	Berry-picking / on the moors / out cycling	To describe someone who does not know what they're talking about or is lost (either literally or in a conversation).
Det er aldri så galt at det ikke er godt for noe!	It's never so bad that it's not good for something.	The Norwegian version of “When God closes a door, he opens a window”
Å skrive noe bak øret	To write something behind the ear.	To make a mental note of something; to make sure to remember something.
Å snakke rett fra leveren	To speak directly from the liver.	To speak plainly/truthfully without sugar-coating.
Det er helt Texas!	That's completely Texas!	That's crazy! (inspired by old Wild West movies.)

<https://www.theintrepidguide.com/funny-norwegian-phrases-and-idioms/>

Upcoming Events

*Mitchell Area Genealogical Society (MAGS)
And Mitchell Area Historical Society (MAHS)*

- October**
- 11** 7:00 p.m. "Norwegian Night"
– Celebration of the 1825,
1st Landing of Restauration in New York
 - 13** Last Day of Leeland Display
 - 20** 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting
 - 26** 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting
 - 26** 7:00 p.m. MAGS Program:
10 Ways AI Can Help You Find Your
Elusive Ancestors
- November**
- 13** 7:00p.m. Program: Traditional Dakota
Teachings with Jean M. Mahomni Mani
 - 17** 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting
 - 24** 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting
 - 24** 7:00 p.m. MAGS Program – Discussion
Night – Bring your Challenges and
Roadblocks
- December**
- 11** 7:00 p.m. Christmas at the Carnegie

WOOLWORTH CARMEL APPLES

The Carnegie Resource Center teamed up with Mitchell Main Street & Beyond to carry on the tradition of Woolworth Caramel apples during the Corn Palace Festival. The tradition goes back to 1959 when the Woolworth Store expanded and they celebrated with caramel apples on stick for 10 cents.



We sold 3,212 apples, on a stick or in a bowl for a gross profit of \$20,450.

Our share of the profits will help pay for the new high efficiency boilers installed at the Carnegie in August. Mitchell Main Street and Beyond will spend their profits on the downtown Art Walk.

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

