

# Upcoming Events

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

December 5, 6, 7 & 8 Carnegie Open House  
1-5 pm each day Decades of Toys

December 12 7:00 p.m. Christmas at the Carnegie  
& Gallery Dedication

January 20 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting

January 23 7:00 p.m. Traveling in Ostfriesland by Lin  
Strong

January 27 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting

7:00 p.m. MAGS Program: Beginning Ancestry Series  
Part 1: Menu Overview- Getting to Know Ancestry

February 17 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting

February 24 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting

7:00 p.m. MAGS Program: Beginning Ancestry 2:  
Navigating the Tree, Summary Card, and Profile Page

March 17 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting

March 24 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting

7:00 p.m. MAGS Program: Beginning Ancestry Series 3:  
Searching and Adding Information and Sources

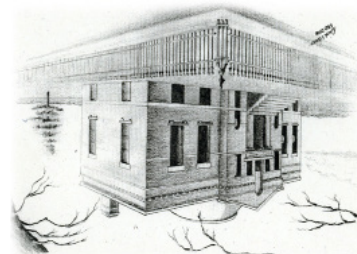
April 21 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting

April 26 all day – SDGS Annual Meeting in Pierre

April 28 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting

28 7:00 p.m. MAGS Program: Beginning Ancestry  
Series 4: Getting to Know Ancestry DNA

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



Volume XVII, Number 2

# The Carnegie Courier

Newsletter of

The Mitchell Area Historical Society (MAHS)

& The Mitchell Area Genealogical Society (MAGS)

www.mitchellcarnegie.com

Winter 2024-25

## In Loving Memory of Lyle W. Swenson

April 13, 1935- Pipestone, MN

July 16, 2024- Mitchell, SD

Lyle Weir Swenson was born in Pipestone, MN on April 13, 1935, to Weir and Marie (Warwick) Swenson. The family moved to Mitchell in 1943 and that became his home, although he was always proud of his birth city as well. He attended school in Mitchell, graduating in 1953. He joined the military, the SD National Guard in 1952 serving 8 years, attaining the rank of SFC and honorably discharged in 1960.

He married the love of his life, Irene Louise Munk on January 10, 1960, at the First United Methodist Church in Mitchell. They spent their honeymoon driving to Pierre in not-so-nice winter weather as Lyle was scheduled to test for the SD Highway Patrol the next morning. He ended up not qualifying for the Highway Patrol. Two children were born to the union of Lyle and Irene, Grace Marie in 1967 and Brian Keith in 1969.

Then in March of 1961 he was hired as a Deputy Sheriff for the Davison County Sheriff's Office. He served as deputy until 1964, and then was elected Sheriff and took office in January 1965. He would remain in that position for 32 years, often running unopposed. He retired in 1997, before taking the US Marshals job. In June 1967, he attended his first National Sheriff's Conference in Las Vegas. Irene was not too pleased with him being gone, as she was pregnant at the time and due the following month with their first child. That first conference started a forty plus year of service, learning, traveling and the making of many lifelong friends. He was always proud of the fact that he had met so many Sheriffs from all over the country as he felt these contacts could be valuable resources when needed. He achieved his highest honor as he became the first SD Sheriff to be nominated to move up the ranks (multi-year process) and become the President of the National Sheriff's Association in 1989.

He was sworn in at the conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, by the then current Mitchell Mayor Bud Williams. Irene



wanted to attend so badly but didn't want to fly, so after finding out there was no other way to get there, she reluctantly agreed to fly and was able to attend and enjoy the conference and the beauty of Hawaii. They were able to spend his year as President traveling throughout the country for meetings, getting to see more of the country and meeting more people along the way.

With a new President in the White House, Lyle was nominated by US Senator Tom Daschle to serve as US Marshal for the District of South Dakota. He was then appointed to the position by President Bill Clinton in 1997. He held that position until 2002, retiring after another change in political parties in the White House.

He is survived by his loving and devoted wife of 64 1/2 years, Irene; his children, Grace (Joe) Murphy of Mitchell and Brian of Lennox; three grandchildren, Adam Lyle of Lennox, Kaela Marie of Tea, and Killian Joseph of Mitchell; and former daughter-in-law, Julie Swenson. He is also survived by his siblings: Dale (Ruth) of Clarksdale, AZ, Sheila Keyman of Canton, Lowell of Antipolo City, Philippines, Paul (Diane) of Sioux Falls, and Genelle (Brett) Collins of Colorado Springs, CO; sister-in-law, Dolores Swenson of Litchfield Park, AZ; along with many cousins, nephews, and nieces. He was preceded in death by his grandparents; parents; brother, Elliott at birth; oldest brother, Sherrill; along with his aunts, uncles, and his father-in-law; and brothers-in-law, Kent Krause and Michael Keyman.



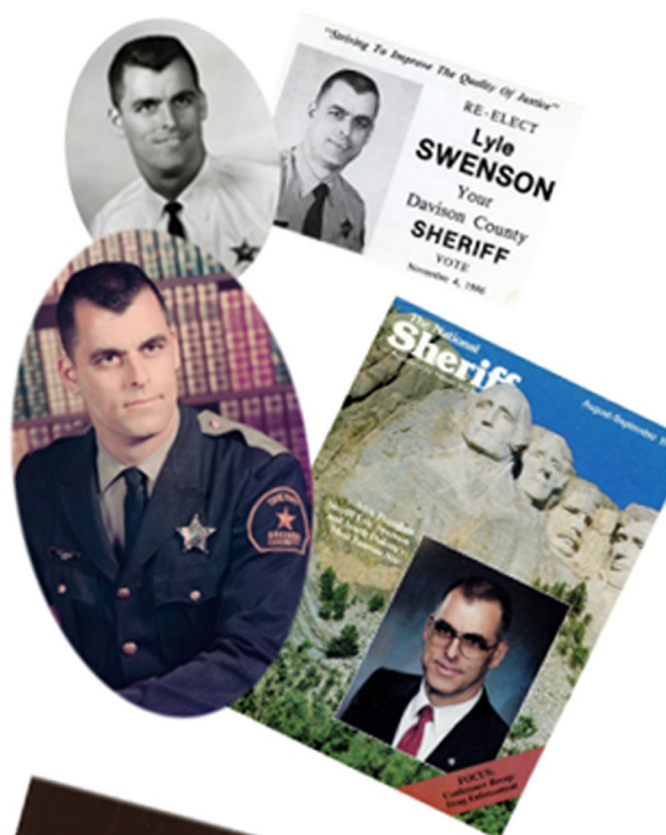
# Society Honors Swenson

Lyle Swenson along with a group of history-minded people created the Mitchell Area Historical Society corporation in November 1988 and then applied for 501 C (3) non-profit status.

Lyle served as its president from 1991-1993, from 2001-2003 from 2006-2020. In the beginning they called the Mitchell Public Library their home. In 2006 the City of Mitchell sold the old Carnegie Library building to the Mitchell Area Historical Society. Now there is more to do.

The building needed repair, maintenance and updating. Replacing the roof, tuck-pointing, new windows, drainage, boiler update and a computer network. Lyle would spend all day during the week at the Carnegie clipping newspapers and preserving history. Lyle served as Davison County Sheriff for 32 years, served on many boards and organizations giving him a terrific opportunity to meet and make friends with many. He had so much knowledge of Mitchell people, homes, buildings, and businesses...and a great memory.

He resigned as president on September 17, 2020. We really miss him. To honor Lyle, we are naming the gallery the Lyle Swenson Gallery.



LYLE SWENSON always stayed busy and had many passions in life, which led to a dedication of serving the public. Above is a collage of pictures showing Lyle's time as Davison County Sheriff. He served in that position for 32 years.

At left, Lyle proudly displays a piece of history he helped save from the Champney building in Mitchell.



# Here we go again

## Flooded for the second time in five years

In June of 2024, the Mitchell Area was drenched with 5 inches of rain in 2 hours; according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration this is classified as a 1,000 year storm. This storm dumped 7.9 inches of rain in a 2-3 day period. Much of the area was flooded. The Carnegie did not escape the deluge.

There was 17 inches of water in the boiler room; covering the gas valve on the boiler and reaching the outlets that were high on the wall. Thankfully the door leading to the rest of the basement kept the majority of the water in the boiler room; the rest of the basement suffered 2-4 inches of water.

This will likely necessitate the replacement of the boiler at an estimated \$50,000. At the City of Mitchell Surplus Budget meeting we were granted \$25,000 to help with the cost of replacing the boiler and other costs associated with that project. That leaves us \$25,000 short of replacement costs.

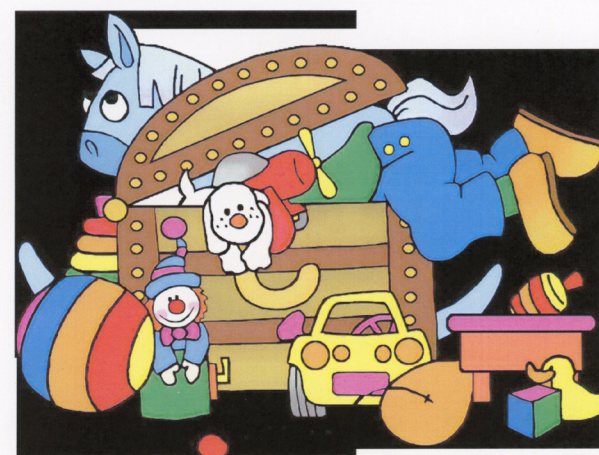
Any financial help in this effort would be appreciated.



WATER THAT FLOODED THE CARNEGIE BASEMENT really left a mess behind. You can see the water line, showing just how high the water was, which left the boiler inoperable. While the city gave some money to help with the project, the Carnegie still needs \$25,000.

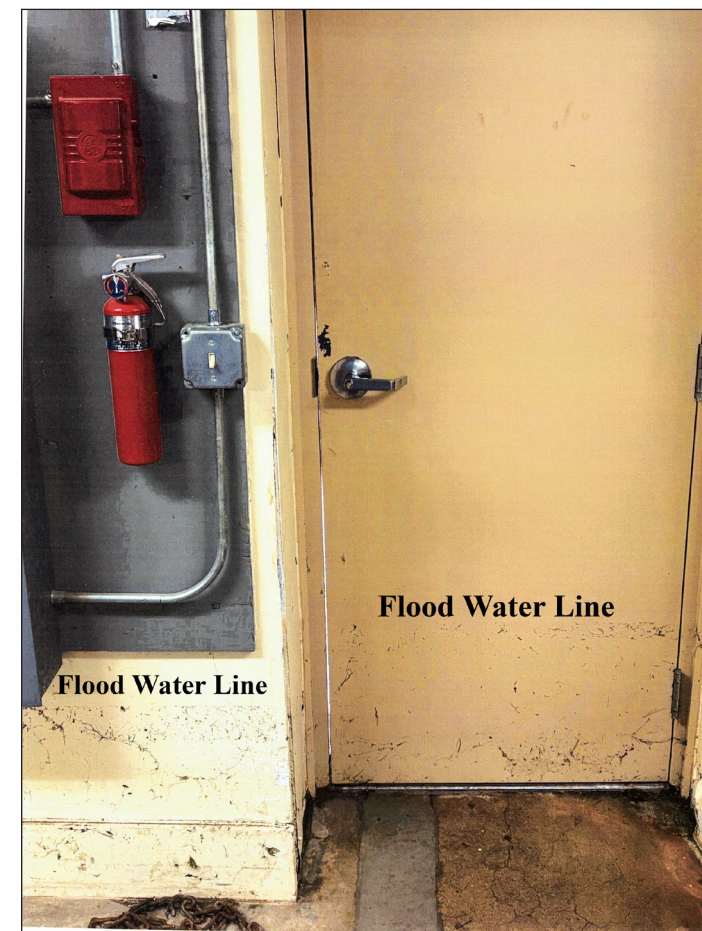
## Open House at the Carnegie Resource Center Exhibiting Many Decades of Toys

December 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th, 2024  
Open from 1-5 p.m. Each Day



Wheelchair Accessible on East side of the Building

119 West 3rd Ave. Mitchell, SD



WATER DAMAGE visible after basement flooded.

# Help us save area history

The work at the Carnegie remains all-volunteer, as it has from the beginning. Our working members have been in decline the last couple of years. We could use some additional helpers. Could you be a new volunteer? Following is a sample of the many tasks available at the Carnegie: writing for the newsletter; researching requests that come our way; filing; organizing donations; cataloging artifacts; researching grants that might be available; writing grants; maintenance of the building (includes cleaning duties); opening the building and greeting guests;

setting displays; clipping articles from the paper to add to the paper files.

Financially, we are barely holding our own. In the last year significant increases in several of our costs (electrical, water, gas, paper, copier fees, postage and computer safeguards) have stretched our budget.

Unforeseen repairs and maintenance like boiler damage due to flooding in the basement, deteriorating 70-year-old front steps, lift service calls due to malfunctioning, climate control system modifications, replacement of computers and computer server due to virus infec-

tion and malfunctioning have made the last year a challenge. At this point we have concerns about sections of the roof that will probably need repair as we have some interior damage appearing which needs to be fixed. Tuck pointing looks to be in the future again. Water damage is our enemy!


Thank you to all who have donated their time and/or money to keep the Carnegie moving forward. Without your help, we couldn't continue. The history stored at the Carnegie is, in some cases, irreplaceable to Mitchell and the surrounding 16 counties. We have over 23,000 paper obituaries. Some of the other resources available include: homesteading plat maps; immigration and settlement stories; county histories written by the citizens of that county; reference books; early Mitchell photos and history; extensive railroad history; newspapers as old as 1906; files on every Corn Palace featuring photos, playbills and news articles; school yearbooks; City Directories; 55 file cabinets

filled with information about service clubs, businesses, individuals, and other assorted topics. The 1903 building itself is a slice of history with its intricate woodwork and colorful stained glass.

Our patrons in the past have supported the effort to save the Carnegie building and its contents; for this we thank you! Ensuring the preservation of history is a needed service to our community; we are firmly committed to the task. Operating and preserving this history takes time and money. Loyal patrons of historic preservation, help is needed to keep the Carnegie operating. Additional volunteers to assist with the many tasks would allow even more services to be provided. Of course, financial help always seems to be needed. The Carnegie Resource Center can be reached in the following manners: 119 West 3rd Ave, Mitchell, SD 57301; info@mitchellcarnegie.com; 605-996-3209. The building is open Monday-Saturday from 1-5 p.m.

**“A generation which ignores history has no past --- and no future.”**

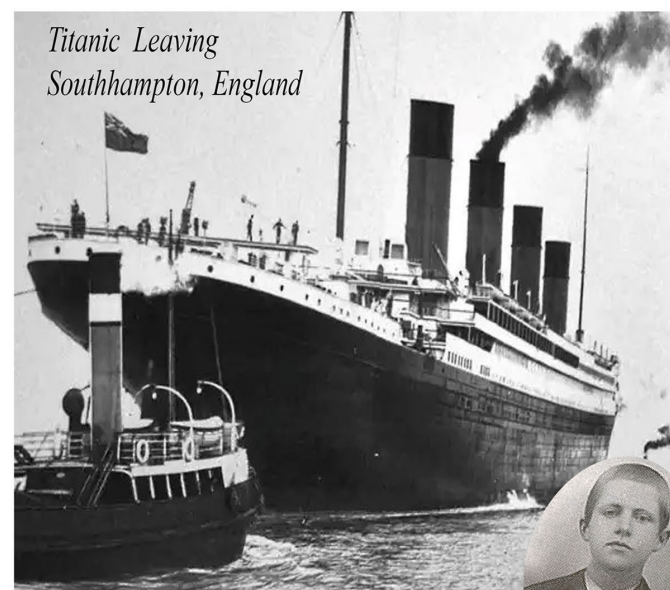
**- Robert Heinlein  
(an American science fiction author, aeronautical engineer, and naval officer)**



**Join Us for Christmas At the Carnegie**  
**When: December 12, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Featuring:**  
 \*Carols by the Mitchell Barbershop Harmony Chorus and Billy Kurken  
 \*Dedication of the Lyle Swenson Gallery  
 \*Cider and Christmas goodies will be served.  
 \*Admission is a cash donation or bag of groceries for the benefit of the Mitchell Food Pantry.  
 \*A mitten, scarf & hat tree sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution for the Salvation Army will be available for any who wish to donate.

Wheelchair Accessible on the East Side of the Building      119 West 3rd Avenue Mitchell, SD

# FROM THE ARCHIVES Local Connection to the Titanic Disaster



*https://www.amazon.com/Shop/titanic pictures framed*  
Photo of Olof Elon Osén from *The Daily Republic* 4/14-15/2012

By TOM LAWRENCE  
The Daily Republic

Olof Elon Osén was just 16, and apparently alone, when he died aboard the Titanic. Osén had left his native Sweden and was headed to Ethan for a new life in a new land when the huge ocean liner struck an iceberg and sank. He was one of more than 1,500 people who perished on the Titanic 100 years ago this weekend. Osén was from Ön, Hedesunda, Gästrikland, Sweden, and planned to join family and work on a farm near

Ethan, according to his nephew, who lives near Mitchell. Instead, the boy drowned or froze to death in the icy waters of the North Atlantic.

Osén's body was never recovered. A total of eight Titanic passengers were headed to South Dakota, according to encyclopedia-titanica.com. Half made it, half didn't. The bodies of the four who died were lost at sea.

The victims were Osén, who was bound for Ethan; George Henry Green, 40, of Surrey, England, who was en route to Lead; and father and son Johann Svensson, 74, and Johan Ekström, 45, of Reftete, Småland, Sweden, who were coming to Effington Rut, apparently an early name for what is now New Effington.

See TITANIC, Page A6

## TITANIC

Continued from Page A1

Research on the doomed ocean liner fills dozens of websites, some with miniature biographies of the victims and survivors. After talking to his nephew and reading the online reports, it's possible to create a sketch of young Osén's brief life and sudden, certainly terrifying death.

In Titanic records, his occupation was listed as farm laborer and his destination is listed as Mitchell, South Dakota, USA. He paid more than 7 pounds for ticket 7534, a third-class passage, and boarded the Titanic at Southampton, England, on April 12, 1912.

*“I wish they'd leave the Titanic alone. All those people are buried there.”*  
— Arlis Osén, nephew of Titanic casualty

That was a hefty price for a ticket then and now, the equivalent of more than \$800 today. Many of the tickets included rail passage to a final destination, which might explain why Osén was headed for Mitchell, although he planned to live and work near Ethan.

Osén was set to work on a farm owned by Nels Tilberg, of rural Ethan.

Sue Tilberg, of Ethan, is married to Tim Tilberg, the great-grandson of Nels Tilberg.

Tilberg's name in Sweden was Nils Peter Andreasson, but he changed it when he arrived in America on April 25, 1889. He farmed until his death on June 22, 1933, and the farm is still in the family's name, as his great-grandson Scott Tilberg lives and works there now.

“I had no idea,” Sue Tilberg said when told of the family ties to the Titanic. It is not mentioned in written family histories, she said, and none of the current generation had heard of it, as far as she knows.

### Hard times in Sweden

Olof Elon Osén's family was poor. His brother in Ethan sent him money for his fare and he also borrowed money from his father for the trip. Osén promised to send them money from his new job in America, according to an online account of his life, death and the aftermath.

His parents were Erik Olsson Osén and Erika Didia Andersdotter, and his siblings are listed as Erik, Berta, Olof, Einar, Addie, Judit, Östen and Elvin, according to encyclopedia-titanica.com.

Erik Gunnar Osén was the father of Arlis Osén, 77, a

retired farmer who lives about seven miles southwest of Mitchell.

Arlis Osén — the family dropped the accent over “e” the decades ago — said his father came to the United States in 1910, when he was 20 years old. He lived with his relatives on the Tilberg farm in rural Ethan. For a short time, his sister Bertha lived there as well.

Gunnar Osén, who didn't use the first name Erik in America, died in 1967. He rarely talked about his brother's tragic death, Arlis Osén said. But he did share a few details, and Arlis and wife Mary Ann have learned more over the years. A Swedish newspaper story on the death, which they had translated to English, helped provide more information.

The Osén family struggled in Sweden, Arlis said. Twelve children were born to Erik and Erika and three children died young. Eight of the nine survivors eventually came to America.

“My dad always said he came here because he didn't have enough to eat over there,” Arlis said.

The family worked as lumberjacks and floated fallen timber to a saw mill. It was hard, dangerous work. Elon, as the family called him, worked alongside his father and siblings.

According to the Swedish newspaper story, Elon was almost killed once when a boat he was aboard nearly capsized, an eerie foreshadowing of his eventual fate. That same story quoted one of Elon's sisters as saying Elon was very adventurous, and the family was therefore not surprised at his decision to journey to America.

*The Daily Republic*  
April 14-15, 2012

# FROM THE ARCHIVES

## Local Connection to the Titanic Disaster

Continued

Gunnar wanted to help his siblings, and sent money to pay for Elon's passage. But while the money would have paid for a trip aboard another, lesser ship, Elon wanted to travel on the glamorous Titanic. A talented fiddler, he played for tips while in England, awaiting a ship.

He used the extra money to upgrade his ticket and travel aboard the Titanic, according to the Swedish newspaper story and Osen family lore. His close friend Emil Ljung, who was also headed to America, thought that was a waste of money and didn't come along, choosing to take a less-glamorous and cheaper ship.

On the doomed voyage, Osén had a traveling companion: Alfred Ossian Gustafson, which may have been spelled Gustafsson. He was listed on the same ticket as Osén and was reported as also having perished in the sinking, his body never recovered.

Gustafson, 19, was from Karlby, Finland. His destination was Waukegan, Ill. He embarked at Southampton, England, on the same date as Osén.

Both were third-class passengers aboard the ship, which has been romanticized in films, TV shows, books and memorials in the past 100 years. Its centennial this weekend has spawned numerous accounts in all forms of media.

### 'Leave it alone'

The Titanic was traveling at 22.5 knots, near its top speed, when it struck an average-size iceberg at 11:40 p.m. Sunday, April 14, 1912. By early the next day, the ship was beneath the waves and headed for the ocean floor.

The ice tore a gash nearly 250 feet long in the side of the ship, which was 882 feet long. The massive ship had room in its lifeboats for 1,178 people, but nearly twice as many, 2,208, were aboard.

Many of the lifeboats left the ship only half full. There were 472 lifeboat seats not used, according to published reports.

While some died when the Titanic slipped to the bottom of the sea, most died in the water, reports state. The temperature was 31 degrees on that brisk spring night when Osén and others died. Some drowned, and others died of hypothermia as survivors watched in horror from lifeboats.

Third-class passengers were particularly vulnerable. According to published reports, there were 706 third-class passengers on board — 462 men, 165 women and 79 children — and only 178 survived the disaster: 75 men, 76 women and 27 children.

Osén wasn't one of them. His hope for a new life in America ended in the dark of a still night in the North Atlantic 100 years ago.

His family wasn't sure of his fate for several days, according to the Osen family history. At first, they hoped he was on a different ship, as he had originally planned. Then, they received word that he was listed as a survivor.

A few days later, they learned he was considered dead and his body lost at sea. Mary Ann Osen, the mother of three, said she can imagine the pain his family felt.

"It just gives you the shivers thinking about it," she said.

According to the Osen family, Elon's mother reportedly was plagued by nightmares, dreaming of her son's body on an iceberg, surrounded by sharks.

Arlis Osen said he knows his dad was always saddened when he thought about his brother's sudden, tragic death.

"It bothered him a lot, I think," he said. "But he was the man of the house. He didn't show any emotion. That was the way with that generation."

In November 1912, seven months after his son's death, Erik Olsson Osén suffered a stroke that left him 50 percent incapacitated, according to a letter.

A private Titanic relief fund, the Mansion House Fund, paid 875.52 Krona, the Swedish currency, to Erik and Erika, and they received 1,366.50 Krona in damage claims from the White Star Line, the owner of the Titanic, on Aug. 20, 1914.

That's the equivalent of approximately \$12,000 in today's money, although Arlis Osen said he was told the family received only a small settlement for the loss of their son and his possessions.

The sinking and loss of life will be retold time and time again this weekend in movies, documentaries and news reports, but Arlis and Mary Ann Osen said they don't plan to watch a lot of it.

The disaster was featured in the Oscar-winning movie "Titanic" in 1997, which has been re-released in 3D. While millions of people have seen it, Arlis and Mary Ann Osen have not and Arlis doesn't plan to do so. Mary Ann has a copy, she said, and may watch it when her husband isn't home.

Arlis said it's not a romantic tale of the sea to him. It's deeply personal.

"And it was bad," he said. "They lost a son and a brother."

Arlis also thinks explorers and people fascinated with the Titanic should stop visiting the site of the ocean liner, which is in two pieces deep below the surface.

"I wish they'd leave the Titanic alone," he said. "All those people are buried there. It's their burial place. They've got their souvenirs. Leave it alone."

*The Daily Republic*  
April 14-15, 2012

The mass exodus of some 1.3 million Swedes to the United States, often young and healthy men and women, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was due to the economic and social circumstances in Sweden. Minnesota Historical Society <https://www.mnhs.org/swedishamerican-migration>



<https://www.infoplease.com/atlas/europe/sweden-map>

# A successful project finally completed

The 70-year-old front steps into the Carnegie building just kept deteriorating and patch jobs did not work anymore. New front steps now adorn the Carnegie Resource Center. Contractors Shane and Noah Taylor did an excellent job getting the old steps ready to install the new set, and then getting that concrete job completed. They were able to protect the original

outside form of the steps that was laid in 1903; the red granite is easily visible when looking at the east and west sides of the steps.

Bailey Metal Fabricators will design, make, and install the new railings. Bailey's are graciously donating their talent, materials and effort to add the finishing touch to the new steps. The result is a very impressive and ser-

viceable entry into the historic 1903 building.

This project was made possible in part by a grant from the Mitchell Area Charitable Foundation, partial donation of cement from Mitchell Concrete, discounts from the contractors, and money donations from various individuals. Thank you, donors and contractors.



THE CARNEGIE STEPS before finally being restored to good condition.



THE CARNEGIE STEPS after successful completion of the restoration process.

### COAL FAMINE IMMINENT FROM MITCHELL WEST

Mitchell, S. D., Jan. 6.—The country west of Mitchell is short of coal. At Plankinton, Mount Vernon, Oacoma, Vivian, Presho and Draper there is not coal to last more than a week, and it is being given out in small quantities. Mitchell dealers who have a line of yards out that way, have from 75 to 100 cars of coal each on the way from the east, but can receive no assurance from the railroads when it can be delivered.

The fuel situation in Mitchell is embarrassing the electric light plant, which has been short of coal for three weeks and has to depend upon the local supply. This has run short and the company has been forced to shut down on the day service to save its fuel for furnishing lights at night. The company has seven cars on the way, but in three weeks they have been moved only 50 miles by the railroads.

*The Mitchell Capital (Mitchell, South Dakota) · 6 Jan 1910, Thu · Page 2*

### FARMER FINDS GOLD IN A POST HOLE

Mitchell, S. D., Nov. 10.—Although Mitchell will probably never become the mecca of gold seekers, evidences of gold have been found on the farm of John F. Yahne, four miles southwest of the city, and he is taking steps to ascertain the advisability of obtaining the valuable metal in a scientific manner. A week or so ago while Mr. Yahne and his sons were digging post holes on his farm they struck a strata of sand some two feet below the surface. A sample was sent to Denver to a reliable assayer and the report received here Thursday shows that the sand contains sufficient gold to yield \$1.20 a ton.

*The Mitchell Capital 11 Nov 1909 Thu Page 1*

# July OGSA Conference and January 2025 Zoom

By Beth Walz

Moin! – Most common greeting in Ostfriesland. The OGSA (Ostfriesian Genealogical Society of America) held its meeting in Mendota Heights, MN (Minneapolis Area) in the Minnesota Genealogical Society offices. The 3-day conference consisted of training sessions, research sessions, history sessions, and great fun!!!

Are you having issues trying to find your ancestors in Germany? I had issues trying to find locations and family in Germany. After attending a conference where Linn Strong presented information on Germany, I had a chance to talk to her after the conference. WOW! So much I didn't know. If you look at the map of Germany, the highlighted portion is an area called Ostfriesland (see picture).

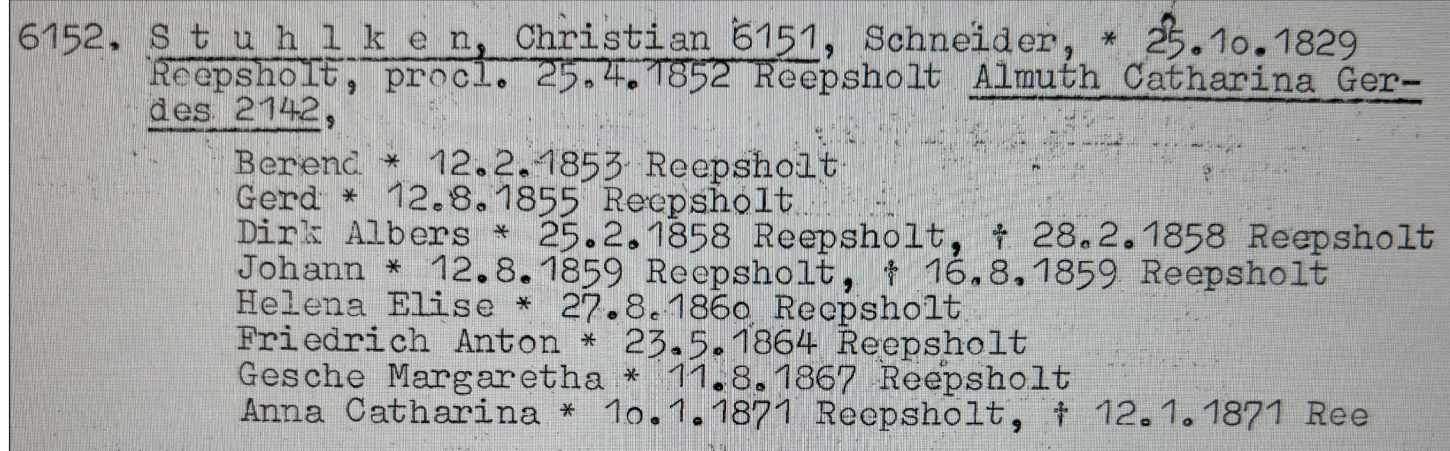


The churches in this area have put together books called ortssippenbüch-ers. Each church has their own book (or books). Most of the churches in this area are Reformed or Lutheran. There are only a couple of Catholic

churches.

Ortssippenbüch-ers contain records of the births, deaths, marriages, descendants and ancestors of the people that lived in this area (see picture). This is one of the entries in the Reepsholt ortssippenbüch-er. It is the record of my great, great, great grandfather. If your family is from this area, I highly recommend attending a conference or at least giving the OGSA a call to find out if your ancestor's town is located in this area.

January 23, 2025 - We will be hosting a Zoom presentation by Lin Strong, President of OSGA, entitled Traveling in Ostfriesland. The presentation is stories and archive advice from over 25 years of traveling to Europe & Scandinavia.



## Caramel Apples fundraiser

Again, this summer the Carnegie Resource Center teamed up with Mitchell Main Street and Beyond to continue the Woolworth Caramel Apple 65-year tradition.

What started in 1959 when the Woolworth five and dime expanded their store, is continued today during the Corn Palace Festival. In 1959 the caramel apples on a stick sold for ten cents, and today a caramel apple sells for \$5.50.

This year we sold nearly 3,000 apples and netted over \$5,000 for each organization. This money will be used for projects at the Carnegie. In addition we sold caramel apples during the downtown Halloween trick or treat on October 26, 2024.

## Hackers love the Carnegie

Haven't heard from us lately – No Fall Courier – No programs – No notices – No emails – No correspondence. We were seriously hacked twice since June. All computer-related activities came to a halt. Much effort and expense went into fixing these issues; we are currently free of viruses and hope to remain that way. This problem has caused us to look at a higher level of protection which is costly. Our estimate for additional protection against viruses is around \$250.00 per month. Do we have a donor that would sponsor this cost or part of this cost? Please contact the Carnegie if you are willing to help with this new expense.

Thank you for your patience concerning any computer-related activities that we couldn't do, such as sending Thank You's and responding to inquiries that required information stored in the computer files.

# 'The Ku Klux Klan in South Dakota'

by Arley Kenneth Fodness  
Book Review by C.R. Weller

This well researched book is an inside view of the comings and goings of a controversial organization in a different historical period in South Dakota. We can't judge these locals from a time gone by; this is a part of the history of those times. We bring ideas from our historical past to our future; unfortunately, some ideals in the purity of their beginnings become corrupt in their middle and endings.

The KKK purported Americanism and democracy in a land of immigrants who were leaving countries of suppression in religious and financial freedoms. On page 16 of the book Fodness states, "Good people are sometimes captive to terrible ideas. One of evil's charming guises is innocence. This innocence is the crime."

South Dakota was innocent, mostly settled by northern, white Europeans who had no connections to color. The Irish and Eastern Europeans were the underdogs, the indentured servants, slaves of the time. SD people had no history of the "white race."

This book delves into details, the beginnings, the ideals and the historical prejudices through time that sprung up in hysterical, loathsomeness toward our fellow man, leading to murder and the celebration of those despicable deeds.

Six Civil War veterans trying to cheer themselves up at Christmas in 1865 gave birth to a social group. What to name the group? They settled on the name Ku Klux



## THE KU KLUX KLAN IN SOUTH DAKOTA

ARLEY KENNETH FADNESS

Klan; It was derived from "Kyklos," a Greek word for a band or circle, that they had remembered from college days. They mutilated the word to be Ku Klux. "Klan" was added because these young men were of Scots/Irish decent and they liked it. They were penniless and had no plans. Their intention was to have fun and lift the spirits of their neighbors. The pranksters first dressed in crazy costumes, but eventually settled with the readily available sheets and pillow cases, including draping their horses. In the South the "childish" pranks became ghost stories, scaring the population. As the number of people

in the group grew, it didn't take long until the pranks became much more than pranks. This organization changed from its original intent and developed quickly in the South after the Civil War in an effort to maintain the kinds of people in their population during the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877).

Towns in South Dakota were mixed, for and against, the KKK in 1924. Mitchell refused to let them have a meeting in the Corn Palace, but three crosses were burned around the city in support of the KKK. The book lists other towns and the activities of the Klan in those towns.

Prohibition gave the KKK something to pursue to advance their cause of protection for the population. 1925 was the zenith year of membership nationally with over six million members and five million dollars in assets and cash.

Famous South Dakota names were involved with the beginnings of the KKK in 1924. South Dakotans joined because of the socializing and exuberance of the group; they did not look at the details of the philosophy. The Klan gave large, public donations to Protestant churches and their members, thus making the churches part of the KKK movement. Klan members decked out in their robes would attend services and make themselves very visible. Dakota newspapers were varied in their support. There was bullying in the churches and papers depending on the report and connections in the community.

The Klan waned through 1927-1930. South Dakotans were more worried about keeping their farms viable. By 1933, the Klan was finished in SD. However, in 2019, sparks of the KKK showed up at the Sturgis Rally in lapel pins or flyers thrown in yards. There are other hate groups still active in South Dakota.

We were not taught the negatives of the historical drama of our past. The winners paint the "Bigger Picture." Large swatches of darker drama have played out underneath our noses. This book helps to explain the details of the KKK in South Dakota with open eyes.

A book worth reading.

# Blizzard of 1888 hits Mitchell fast, furious

## SAVED FROM THE STORM,

### Or the Tale of the Lost Overshoe.

The editor of the REPUBLICAN started home about 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, going out east Third street to Mr. Dodge's corner without much difficulty, the wind being in his rear. At that point he essayed to cut diagonally across the prairie to his home on the corner of Fifth and Burr, but was confronted by drifts and buffeted by the driving wind and fine snow so that progress was actually impossible. He then decided to tack back, find a fence running north and ride it to Fifth street. He struck a fence that lasted the depth of one lot, at the end of which there was nothing but blank space and blinding snow, and he backed up again to Third street, and sought shelter for a few moments under Pete Ward's hospitable roof to catch a breath.

He then held a council of war with himself and decided that the best thing he could do would be to get back down town and stay over night. By this

time the wind was at its height, it was impossible to see a foot ahead, and the snow was getting deeper and deeper. The fugitive struggled along for a block, as he supposed moving due west, now floundering in a drift to his waist, and now astride of a friendly fence, unable to see an object on either side to mark his whereabouts. For a moment the whirling snow cleared up and the writer was surprised to find himself on the corner of Second and Langdon streets, in front of the residence of that thrifty citizen, J. Thunnissen. He had got turned around on the corner by the Baptist church and had gone due south one block, instead of toward Main street, as he supposed. This was hint enough even for the editorial mind that the longest way around was not the shortest way home, and as the shades of night were falling fast, he bethought him to get under shelter. Reaching the front door of the Thunnissen residence a stout rap brought the head of the house, who cautiously opened the door an inch and stuck his nose through the crack.

"I'm snowbound and would like to get in out of the storm," said the editor, as he removed an icicle from in front of each eye.

Visions of book agents, peddlers and burglars in disguise must have flashed through the old man's mind, for he scowled a forbidding scowl, shook his head and growled, as he closed the door with a slam:

"You no come in."

This was discouraging to a fellow who had been bucking snow and fighting the wind for an hour, but he struggled across the street to the Grant residence, where a warm welcome was extended, and where he was made perfectly at home for the night, in spite of the fact that Mrs. Grant is just getting up from a four weeks illness. For this courtesy and hospitality to an unexpected caller, the writer cannot sufficiently express his gratitude and appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Grant and their interesting daughter.

As to friend Thunnissen the editor of the REPUBLICAN desires to extend his thanks, also, for his warm-hearted hospitality, and to assure the cautious old man that had he admitted his caller, the Thunnissen strong box would not have been robbed, nor the Thunnissen larder very much depleted, nor the Thunnissen spare room very badly upset. But may the Lord have mercy on his alleged soul. For all he knew the man who wanted to get in out of the storm might have been at the point of exhaustion, and unable to get a foot further.

An inventory of damages by the writer disclosed the loss of one No. 9 overshoe, partially worn, and which will rest in its snowy tomb until the robins nest again. As an offset, on starting out this morning from the Grant residence, the editor found a No. 8 shoe, red-lined and run down at the heel, which served to help out until he could get home and get reinforcements.

The Mitchell Capital  
January 1888



We were still a Territory when this storm hit Mitchell on January 3, 1888. From November 1887 through January 1888, ice storms and sub-zero temperatures afflicted a wide area of the plains including the Dakotas. Sources say that the December snowfall measured up to 40 inches. Winter wasn't done with us yet. January 12, 1888, started as a normal winter day but quickly changed into a killer blizzard known as the "Children's Blizzard" that resulted in 235 deaths, many of them children, trying to get home from school. This photo was taken looking north up Main Street from First Avenue; the building on the left is the former Long Horn Bar that was torn down. The Veteran's Memorial Park is now on the corner.

## SHORT BUT TERRIFIC.

### The Storm of the Twelfth of January, 1888,

### Beats the Record of Atmospheric Disturbances.

[From Friday's Republican.]

The genuine blizzard which prevailed yesterday afternoon and last night was unparalleled in its ferocity, though of short duration. The following are some of the individual experiences so far as heard from:

The teachers and children of the city schools were ordered not to leave the buildings by members of the board of education, and some thirty remained on the west side and fifteen on the east. Provisions were sent to them, and they passed the night very comfortably. Quite a number got home early in the afternoon, the janitors or some of their parents seeing them safely through. Superintendent Kratz went home sick about 10 o'clock yesterday forenoon, before there were any signs of a storm, and was unable to give matters his personal attention. He was obliged to call a physician twice during the afternoon and evening in spite of the storm.

Miss Nelings remained alone at the west side school, and did her best to care for the children in her charge, but a few of whom belonged in her room. Capt. Beddoes and Mr. Sage who came for his children, and did not venture out again also spent the night in the building.

Miss Prime and the janitor looked after the children on the east side last night most faithfully.

Dr. Geo. P. Dix, who has not been off his bed for six weeks, became alarmed at the absence of his son, Ed., and in spite of his attendants got out of his room and went over on Main street to look for the boy. He was taken home with difficulty by two or three of the REPUBLICAN force, and it was ascertained that Ed. was safely ensconced at Capt. Ahern's.

The Mitchell Capital  
January, 1888

H. B. Rogers was looking for two of his children this forenoon, who were also at Ahern's, having gone there from the west side school.

George Hunter went out to the fair grounds to look after his stock and had to stay there all night, but managed to make himself comfortable.

District Attorney Hannett started home once, but got bewildered, and the first he knew he was back at the Alex Mitchell hotel. He made a second attempt and got through after a hard struggle.

A telegram was sent from Ethan this afternoon for a physician to attend Mrs. Asa Dodds, who was out last night, and froze both her feet.

The biggest drift is at the court house corner.

The reception of the business college has been postponed.

A rumor was prevalent about noon that another big storm was on its way, but up to a late hour this afternoon it had not arrived.

The peculiar thing about the snow was that it drifted worse on the south

and east sides of a building, although the wind was from the northwest.

Grant Crary did some valiant work on north Main street last evening, where he ran across a German on his way home from school with two children, and who was completely lost in the drifts.

Miss Page and Paul drove in this afternoon expecting to attend the Merry-makers party, not knowing it had been postponed. The stock at Butte farm is all right.

The thermometer registered 28 below this morning at the Alex. Mitchell west door, but arose during the day.

It's hard to down those fellows. The 79ers say it is the same kind of a storm they had in October, 1880.

H. E. Gates, of Kimball, was on the freight which left Wolsey on Wednesday and got stuck about nine miles from here yesterday. This morning he got tired of waiting and walked down the track to this place, having had just two meals since leaving Huron Wednesday noon. There are seven section men beside the train men on the freight, who are also on short rations.

