



# The Carnegie Courier

Newsletter of

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

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Fall 2019

## A 60-year tradition at a new location

For 60 years, “Woolworth’s” Caramel Apples have been served up during the Corn Palace Festival on Mitchell’s Main Street. In 1959, the Woolworth’s store expanded and on September 23-26, 1959, they celebrated a grand opening and sold caramel apples for 10 cents in the front of the store at Third Avenue and Main Street during the Corn Palace Festival.

Gerry Franks, a Woolworth’s employee, began to dunk, twist and twirl apples in roasters of caramel each Corn Palace Festival for the next 33 years until 1992. For years she was assisted by Emma Noble, another Woolworth’s employee. In



1991, caramel apples sold for 65 cents.

When Woolworth’s closed its doors in 1993, Gerry, with corporate approval, donated the equipment and recipe to Mitchell Com-

munity Hospice. They kept the tradition alive and raised money for their cause. In addition to selling the caramel apples, Hospice asked people to consider buying a box of apples at the cost of \$20, in memory or in honor of a friend or loved one. A wooden apple with the friend’s name would be placed on the “apple tree” at the caramel apple stand. Hospice continued for eight years, selling apples from various locations, the Woolworth’s building, Main Attraction Mall at Fourth Avenue and Main Street and at the former Advanced Business Concepts at 305 North Main Street.

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## Badger Clark: His Life and Music for MAHS annual dinner

Join us on Monday evening, Sept. 16, for a very special program about “The Life and Music of Badger Clark” by Pegie Douglas, a South Dakota Humanities Council scholar who has composed songs and plays the guitar and sings to accompany the lyrics of Badger Clark’s poems.



Pegie Douglas

The occasion is the annual dinner meeting of the Mitchell Area Historical Society at Wesley Acres Senior Living to enjoy a delicious dinner and hear Douglas’ program. Tickets -- \$15 each -- are

payable in advance by Monday, Sept. 9, at the Carnegie Resource Center, 119 West Third Avenue, Mitchell. Wesley Acres is handicapped accessible with convenient parking. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. and the doors will open at 5:30 p.m. A reservation form is enclosed.

Douglas, who retired from her career in education and settled in Hill City, served as a volunteer at the Badger Hole, the home of Badger Clark, South Dakota’s first poet laureate. Douglas sings songs she has written and plays the guitar to poems she has drawn from “Sun and Saddle Leather” and “Sky Lines and Wood Smoke” as well as from the collection compiled and edited

in 2006 by Greg Scott, “Cowboy Poetry: Classic Poems & Prose by Badger Clark.” Mitchellites may recall the late Darryl Patten, Dakota Wesleyan University professor who impersonated in full regalia the unique Badger Clark.

In 2019, the South Dakota Country Music Hall of Fame selected as the CD of the year, “The Music of Badger Clark, Vol. II, by Pegie Douglas and the Badger Sett Band.” The CD will be available for purchase.

“The Western Way” magazine, the official publication of the International Western Music Association, highly praised the quality of the performance.

## Genealogy Corner

By **Beth J. (Vlasman) Walz**

Hello Everyone!

Thank you to Ethan Historical Society for allowing us to visit in June! It was a great night. In July, we had a discussion night. The topic was to be occupations; however, we never did get to that. A gentleman happened to come in with questions on adoption research. He has a very interesting story and has been working with DNA quite a bit. We learned some things from him that were very interesting, and we are going to try and help in some ways. This was a great night of learning!



Beth Walz

In August, Virginia Hanson, who works at the State Archives, presented a program on Preserving Family Documents. Thank you, Virginia, for a very informative night. If you haven't researched at the State Archives in Pierre, you are missing some great research opportunities.

The South Dakota State Fair is coming up Aug. 29 through Sept. 2. The State Genealogical Society will have a display and genie breaks located in the Arts & Education Building throughout the fair. The Genie Breaks are at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Aug. 29, 30, and 31; also, on Sept. 2 at 10 a.m. Check out the booth for topics.

As schedules and interests are always changing, we are looking for ideas for programs or discussion topics that may be of interest to our members. You can email your ideas to [info@mitchellcarnegie.com](mailto:info@mitchellcarnegie.com). Please put Genealogy or MAGS in the subject line.

We are looking forward to our next few seminars before the holiday break. On Sept. 9, Yvonne Haefner, current secretary of the Germans from Russia Heritage Society will be presenting a program on the Germans from Russia.

Interested in Beginning Genealogy? Oct. 7 is the meeting you should attend. We will begin with the basics and help you get started.

The MAGS program on Nov. 4 will be Online Resources presented by the members of MAGS. There will be no December meeting.

We hope to see you soon!

## Who, What, Where, When?



This section of the Carnegie Courier is dedicated to labeling our "unknown or partially unknown" photographs or items in our collection. We will list known information when possible. This darling picture is unidentified in our archives! We have absolutely no information. It appears to be a set of twins, however, it could be cousins close in age. If you have any information on this picture, please call us at 605-996-3209 or email us at [info@mitchellcarnegie.com](mailto:info@mitchellcarnegie.com).

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It was the hospice volunteers that started slicing apples in a bowl and pouring the caramel on top. This has become the favorite way to eat caramel apples in Mitchell during the Corn Palace Festival. In 1995, apples sold for \$1 on a stick or \$1.25 sliced and served in a bowl.

In 2001, there were no Woolworth's caramel apples. The Uptown Business Association (UBA) secured the equipment and recipe from hospice in 2002 and carried on the tradition of caramel apples, benefiting hospice and the UBA. The UBA became Mitchell Main Street and Beyond (MMSB), joined with the Carnegie Resource Center (CRC) and starting offering free delivery with the purchase of 10 apples (currently 5 apples). Businesses throughout Mitchell

accepted the offer. In 2009 walking tacos, chili cheese footlongs, pop and water were added to the menu.

For most of these years, MMSB and the CRC have enjoyed the air-conditioned comfort of selling apples and food from the Einstein's Costume Rental at 317 North Main Street.

Profits are split between the two organizations. This year the CRC will use their share of the profits to help preserve our building by replacing damaged exterior stones on the building.

This year the carnival rides and vendors are moving four blocks north to accommodate more and bigger rides by using the parking lots. So, we too are moving, come see us at our new location 511 North Main (inside The Back 40) and enjoy a caramel apple there or take some home.



# Firefighter Appreciation



The Mitchell Area Historical Society has honored our firefighters over the summer months at the Carnegie Resource Center with displays about firefighting and vintage firefighting equipment along with the 1895 banner won by the Mitchell Fire Department.

Lyndon Overweg kicked off the three-month event and spoke about the history, the present practices and the future of firefighting. The fire department parked its vehicles down Main Street and in front of the Carnegie for public viewing in conjunction with the First Friday event of June 2019.

The displays inside the Carnegie and the antique hose carts outside the building are still available for viewing until the end of August. If you haven't had a chance to come visit, please come down and look at the rich history concerning firefighters.



## Archives Room: Newspaper Collection

The picture above is one row of our newspaper collection, of which we have six. The collection is in our Archives Room, is now stored in archival quality boxes and has been labeled. This allows for easier use and safer storage. We are still missing some newspapers. If you have any prior to 2000 we would love them!



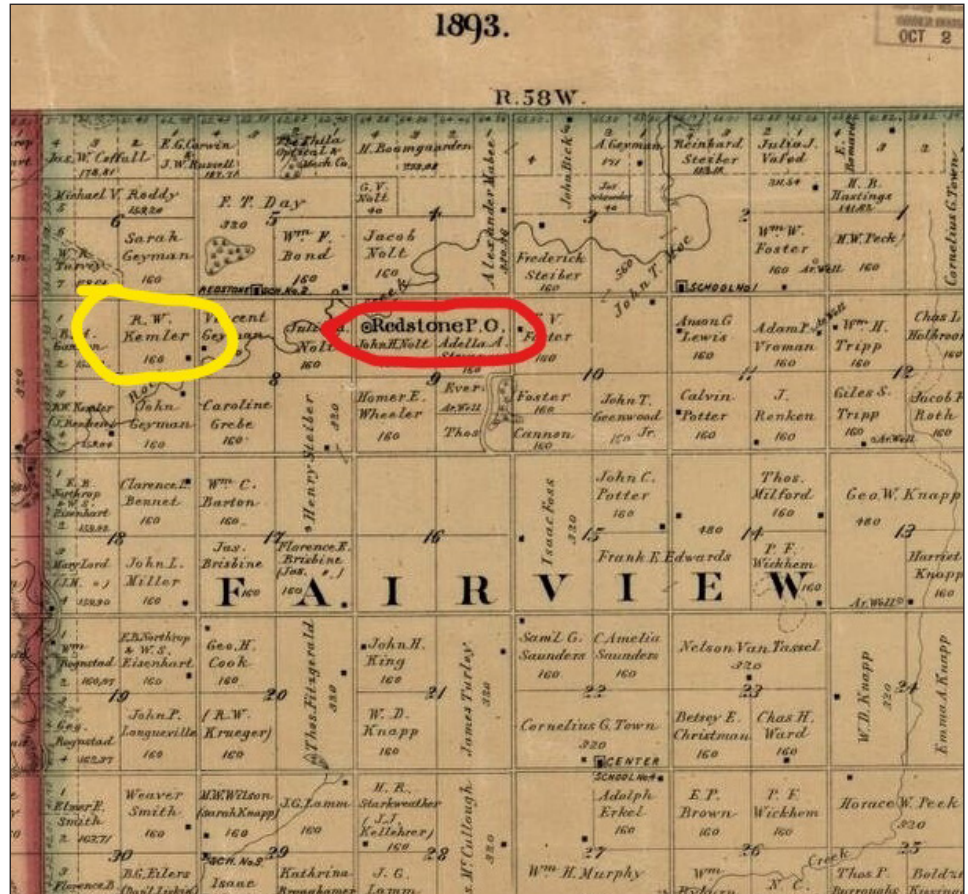
# Sidonia Kemler and Red Stone Post Office

written and/or transcribed by Dean Randall

On Tuesday, April 8, 1884 Sidonia Regina Kemler wrote to her parents, Mr. & Mrs. Augustus Kemler in Dubuque, Iowa. She detailed some of the events of the trip to Dakota Territory and what she did when she and her brother Richard (and maybe others) got to Alexandria, D.T. and out to their claim. A transcript of the letter is below along with a copy of the envelope. It is postmarked Red Stone on Apr. 10 (Thursday) as the mail only came and went on Mondays and Thursdays.

Red Stone was a small post office established on 6 June 1879 in Davison and Hanson counties were long horizontal counties. By the time of this letter the counties changed to their current dimensions and the post office was in Hanson County, Section 8, T104N, R58W. That puts it about 11 miles north and 1½ miles west of Alexandria. Later in 1899 the post office was moved to Section 22 into another home.

The first postmaster was John H. Nolt and the office was in his home. John and Julia Nolt owned the NE ¼ of Sec. 8 as well as the NW ¼ of Sec. 9. [A sidenote to John Nolt – later in 1884, on October 28, a tornado took his house, barn, haystacks and tools. Bedding, clothing and mail from the post office were strewn over three miles of Hanson county. No lives



The picture is of Fairview Township in Hanson County. The red circle indicates the location of Red Stone and the yellow circle shows a quarter of land owned by R. W. Kemler.

were lost in Hanson County but apparently there were lives lost farther southeast.]

Sidonia Kemler was born 17 Apr. 1857 in Dubuque, Iowa, one of eight children of Augustus and Mary Ann (Walker) Kemler who came from Germany and England respectively. Sidonia never married and died 17 July 1924 of apoplexy at age 67 in Dubuque.

Richard Kemler was apparently the first one to settle here as he was granted his land patent on 22

Mar. 1888 for the SE¼ of Section 7, T104, R58. (Currently the Red Stone Cemetery is located there.) He was married to Sarah and had a son Clarence born in 1886 and a daughter born in 1892, both in Hanson County.

Sidonia bought a quarter of land in Miner County SW¼, Sec. 31, T106, R58 and was granted a patent on 21 May 1889 (just a few months before South Dakota became a state).

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***This letter was in the envelope postmarked from Redstone.***

Redstone, [Tuesday] Apr. 8/84  
[1884]

Dear Ones at Home:

I will try to write a letter to you, though I must do so with a lead pencil, as we have no ink; Richard [brother] had two or three bottles burst in the cold weather.

We reached McGregor [Iowa] about 2 o'clock, and the waiting there until 11½ o'clock at night was very tiresome. The waiting room there is small, very dirty, and it was crowded with a rough-looking company of men, women, and children. There were some filthy Indians also, but they had a room to themselves.

We went to a pleasant hotel and had a good supper there in the evening. We had a good chance to see the town, but there is nothing hardly to be seen in it. We sat in the parlor of the hotel, and I tried to get some music out of the piano, but it was worse than our old one.

We stayed there until 10 o'clock their closing up time, when we went over to the depot, and such a looking place as it was! We could hardly find room to sit, and



This envelope contained the Kemler letter. It bears the postmark of the Red Stone Post Office.

children were lying around on the floor on quilts, while the mothers seemed to be almost worn out. It was sickening in the hot, close room, so we went into the baggage room, and walked back and forth to keep warm.

The [train]cars were full all the way, some had to stand. It was nearly 6 o'clock [p.m. the next day] when we arrived at Alex, [Alexandria, D.T.] an hour behind time.

We had supper at the Lawler

House [in Alex]. I might have persuaded them to go right out [to the farm/homestead], but Richard said there would be nothing to eat, and I did not feel as though I could bake and get supper for us after riding out there. It was half past 11 o'clock when we arrived at the end. As our baggage had not come, I had to go to work making biscuit and bread and parching coffee, and Saturday night, I was very tired.

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This would have been about 7 or 8 miles north of where Richard's claim was.

Apparently things didn't go well for the Kemlers or they just got tired of being on the treeless prairie or they missed relatives back in Dubuque. At any rate they

were all back in Dubuque early in the 20th century. Richard, known locally as 'R.W.', was in the real estate business there the rest of his life. He died 22 Jan. 1918 at age 57.

The mail went from Red Stone to Hazleton to Mitchell where it was put on the train and headed

to Iowa. This train would have been the Iowa-Dakota division of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad.

The post office (the spelling was changed to Redstone, one word, on 1 Dec. 1895) was discontinued 15 Jan. 1903 and the mail went to Fulton.



**Continued from Page 5**

It was very stormy and cold, but Mat was going north, so Uncle and Della rode up with him, as she was very anxious to get home. Adam was here a while Saturday evening. The roads are very bad, part of the road is deep water. You would be surprised to see the slough in front of the house, it extends to the cattle yard. Kitty did not know me at first, but soon made up, and is as much of a pet as ever.

There was about six inches of snow here on the 1st of April, and some of it still remains. Most of Alex. is a mud-hole. Uncle Albert stayed at Andrew's Sunday night, and went with him to Alex. yesterday.

They were at Robert Cummings's in the evening, and stayed all night at Grace's. They got here for dinner today. Della is happy at present. Andrew looks first rate. We were very fortunate in having such fine weather to come out; it has been very cold and stormy since our arrival.

It is beautiful moon-light, tonight. It did not look home-like to me here. Richard has torn up my bed-room taking out the partition, and has put my bed in the north room up stairs. It is a great change from the warm room at home. Of course I have taken cold, but I feel pretty well. My wrist pained very much for a while, but is better now.

I have not tried washing yet. Richard had done a large wash last Monday [a week ago yesterday], six shirts for Mat. Besides



The picture is of the Lawler House located in Alexandria. The Lawler House is referenced in the body of the Kemler letter.

other things, and they look very well.

***[This was the main body of the letter, it continues in the top margins and on three sides, overlapping parts of the main letter.]***

Mrs. Pickering had a baby this winter. Richard brought out the baggage, last night, all right, bread-stuff somewhat smashed. Butter is 15 cts. a lb., meat (shoulders), 13 cts. corned-beef 10 cts. Richard's pigs are splendid; I could hardly believe they were his, they were so large.

I was very much provoked to find all that cake in the satchel. Richard had two cakes left yet uncut.

Shall we send a box home with

Uncle for future use?

Did Grandpa hear the will read?

Mat. finished the old cream pitcher this winter. He and Richard have lived on very few things. I gave Richard that \$20. He borrowed some money and has to pay 20%. What do you think of his offering his place for sale?

The mail goes and comes on Monday and Thursday. They talked of running two trains this week; they had to add two cars at Sanborn [Iowa] and still some had to stand. It is getting cold in here.

Give my love to friends, and write soon. Hoping you are well, I remain your loving daughter, Sidonia R. Kemler.



## Cleaning Chickens

by

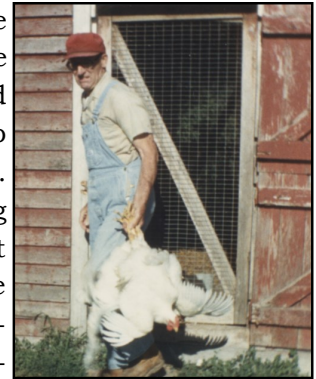
Helen Wegehaupt Geidel

We raised broiler chickens for food on the farm. Each spring we would purchase about 100 or 150 baby chicks from the hatchery. The grandchildren loved to hold and play with the baby chicks when they came to visit.



Waiting for Grandma to hang the chickens

As the chicks grew and the children visited they had to chase the chickens to catch them. I would tell them to stop chasing them as “it makes their meat tough”. When Elmer retired in the 1980s, he would catch the chickens with the help of the grandchildren. They really thought that was fun! They brought the chickens to me. I tied their legs to the clothes line with twine and cut off their heads so that they would bleed out.



Chickens are caught



Cutting off the head

The next step was to have scalding water ready to dunk them in so that the feathers could be plucked. The grandchildren complained because the scalded chickens smelled so bad.



Hanging on the clothesline

Then the chickens needed to be washed and all the pin feathers (the very beginning of a feather) removed. Next, it was time to gut the chickens and cut into serving pieces. Finally, they were packaged for freezing. Family, neighbors, and friends would come to help and all would have food for the freezer.



Plucking the feathers



Cut into pieces ready for freezing

## Upcoming Events

All are held at the Carnegie and begin at 7:00 unless stated otherwise

**Aug. 19** - 6:30 p.m. MAHS Program - Visiting Aurora County Historical Society

202 W 4th Street, Plankinton

**Aug. 26** – MAGS Business Meeting

**Sept. 9** - MAGS – Yvonne Haefner from GRHS Germans from Russia

**Sept. 16** - MAHS Annual Dinner @ Wesley Acres 6:30 p.m.; Pegie Douglas The Life & Music of Badger Clark

**Sept. 19** - MAHS Business Meeting

**Sept. 23** - MAGS Business Meeting

**Oct. 7** – MAGS Program - Beginner's Genealogy by Members of MAGS

**Oct. 17** – MAHS Business Meeting

**Oct. 21** – MAHS Program - Will Funeral Chapel

**Oct. 28** – MAGS Business Meeting

**Nov. 4** – MAGS Program – Online Resources for Genealogy by Members of MAGS

**Nov. 18** - MAHS Program – KMIT

**Nov. 21** – MAHS Business Meeting

**Nov. 28** – MAGS Business Meeting

**Dec. 5** – Christmas at the Carnegie

## NEEDS & WANTS

The following items are still needed at the Carnegie to help with research.

Any Newspapers found prior to 2000. (We have a few gaps in our collection.)

Mitchell City Directories – Especially any older than 2000. County Atlas for the Counties of Aurora, Beadle, Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Douglas, Clay, Hutchinson, Jerauld, Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Miner, Sanborn, Turner, Union & Yankton.

We would also like County Farm Directories or Plat books. County History Books for any county in South Dakota.

Church History Books for the surrounding counties.

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

