



The Carnegie Courier

Newsletter of The Mitchell Area Historical & Genealogical Societies

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June 2015

MAHS 2015 Annual Dinner Meeting

Monday, September 21, 6:30 p.m. at Wesley Acres

Cynthia Elyce Rubin, a longtime friend of Lyle Swenson and MAHS, has researched the life of O. S. Leeland, a noted photographer of South Dakota culture and scenes, and has collected many of his photographs and postcards. She will show them on the large, roll-down wall screen in the spacious Wesley Acres dining room during the MAHS annual meeting.

Alice Claggett, a resident of Wesley Acres and a MAHS member, is preparing what is reported to be her very delicious roast beef dinner with gravy and mashed potatoes, lightly glazed carrots, salad, and assorted pies for dessert. The reservation form is included in this *Carnegie Courier*. MAHS needs to receive reservation forms by Monday, September 14, 2015.

Cynthia has visited Mitchell on several occasions and keeps in touch with Lyle, passing on special “finds” that enhance the MAHS collections. Several pages of this newsletter would be needed to summarize Cynthia’s credentials and achievements, none of which have been mentioned by Lyle. Cynthia is a visual culture specialist, curator, author, and writer with an A.B. from Vassar College, an Ed.M. from Boston University, and a Ph.D. from New York University. Cynthia lives in Orlando; her website address is cynthiaelyce@earthlink.net.

For the past 15 years, Cynthia has collected images, photographs and postcards by Norwegian immigrant, O. S. Leeland (1870 – 1939). The late Clyde Goin, Corn Palace historian and a former owner of a postcard business, and Noel Hamiel, then editor of *The Daily Republic*, were the first to help her in the search. Cynthia has described Leeland as a “pioneer photographer in Mitchell...responsible for a rare chronicle of life in Mitchell and homestead life throughout South Dakota. He produced photographs, stereographs and real photo postcards, unique first-hand records of time and place that present an unvarnished perspective on daily life in the early 1900s.”^{a/}

Recently Cynthia was in Hamar, Norway, to attend the dedication of the Leet-Christopher School which had been saved by H. Richard Christopher of Letcher, South Dakota, dissembled and shipped to Hamar in 2008. There it was completely reassembled, furnished, and equipped to become a component of the Migration Museum which commemorates the Norwegian pioneers who settled in the United States. As Cynthia has said, the schoolhouse is still educating the many who visit it.

a. Rubin, Cynthia Elyce. “Pioneer Photographer O. S. Leeland and His Postcards,” p. 1. 2015.

Lyle’s Corner

Here we go again – newsletter time and I’ll bring you up to date on our steady progress. We are staying busy here at the Carnegie, trying to capture all of our area history, record it and organize it. We look forward to each item coming in to see what part it plays in our history. So keep bringing your treasures, either for us to keep or to make a copy for our archives.

Thanks are due the Archives of the SDSHS for the \$1000.00 grant which will enable us to transfer to CDs the 1976 oral history tapes that preserved the recollections of Mitchell’s early days by residents who were part of these events.

We have been contacted on several occasions to assist businesses to find local photographs to decorate their businesses. We feel honored that they have asked us for help and, more important, that we are able to fulfill their requests. Recent projects were the law offices of Morgan Theeler, LLP, 1718 North Sanborn Blvd.; Marlins Restaurant near the I-90 / Highway 37 intersection; Wells Fargo Bank at East Fourth and Lawler Street; and the Corn Palace for their remodeling project.

If you have not been in lately, you need to stop by and view the “Person of Interest” display which changes every month or so. This display features someone of our past who contributed a great deal to making Mitchell a better place to live. It becomes a learning experience for those involved in preparing the exhibit as well as for those who view the display. In addition, we have a Mt. Vernon display which I think you will find is very interesting. Part of that display involves the history of the Mt. Vernon Post Office, including pictures and equipment of the past. We thank the Mt. Vernon volunteers, Vicki Linke and Roberta Olsen, who not only collected the items but displayed them.

Research requests come to us from coast to coast by persons researching the history of their family or their family’s business. Usually we are able to assist in some way, but now and then we hit the proverbial stone wall and file the request for future reference in case we later come onto information.

Lastly, we have almost finished the construction begun last year to remedy water drainage problems on the east side and at

(Continued on page 2)

To the reader: To conserve space and ink, throughout this newsletter these abbreviations are used:

CRC - Carnegie Resource Center

MAGS - Mitchell Area Genealogical Society

MAHS - Mitchell Area Historical Society

SDSHS - South Dakota State Historical Society

Lyle's Corner (Continued from page 1)

the south entrance to the lower level into the boiler room. To assure that the building foundation does not dampen and that water does not pour into the boiler room from the deteriorated concrete stairs during heavy rains, we decided to "do it right" and replace the east side sidewalk, install drainage tile, and, with the City's cooperation, let the water flow north to Third Avenue to enter the storm drainage system. At the south entrance, new concrete stairs with water diverted to a sump pump will remedy that problem.

Two important reasons led us to end this water drainage problem. First, we know how essential a sound foundation is for the 1903 Carnegie building which has Oscar Howe's irreplaceable mural on the interior of the dome that caps this historic quartzite building which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Second, because the lower level of the CRC houses an ever-growing archives collection that needs to be stored in proper preservation conditions, this water control project was deemed essential.

I'll see you at the MAHS annual meeting Monday evening, September 21, 2015, where I guarantee an excellent program about O. S. Leeland, a noted South Dakota photographer, presented by my good friend, Cynthia Elyce Rubin.

Lyle Swenson, President, MAHS

SDSHS Archives Grant

MAHS has been granted \$1000.00 by the South Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board with support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to convert audio cassette tapes to digital media. The tapes were recorded in 1976 as an oral history project under the direction of Jim McLaird, Mitchell author and historian who was teaching at Dakota Wesleyan University. His students interviewed persons who participated in the early years of Mitchell's history. The late Clayton Berry, a MAHS member, copied the tapes in 1991 and prepared an index of the tapes.

The grant to MAHS was one of others awarded from \$5,590.00 granted to the SDSHS from the "National Historical Publications and Records Commission, a branch of the National Archives. The SHRAB advocates nationally for the preservation and importance of the historical record with a chapter in each of the fifty states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The grant will allow the South Dakota board, led by the State Archives, to award \$4,000 in re-grants, perform four site visits and create an Archives Month poster.

"Now in its seventh year, the South Dakota SHRAB has awarded a total of \$21,000. Re-grant projects include providing funds to purchase archival supplies, convert cassette tapes to digital formats, and other activities that aid in preserving history. The current grants were awarded in May."

SDSHS, *History Notes, Vol.30, No. 2, Spring/Summer 2015*, p.6.

Woolworth Caramel Apples Fundraiser for the CRC

MAHS and Mitchell Main Street & Beyond will join forces to sell the traditional Woolworth caramel apples, walking tacos, and chili cheese foot-longs during Corn Palace Festival, August 26 through 30. As in past years, Brenda Olesen and Dan Hauser will generously host the event at air-conditioned, comfortable, and convenient Einstein's. To volunteer to polish apples, call Kathryn Crockett (996-2723) and to help in other ways contact Karen Pooley at kapooley@weisd.com or call 996-2233.

MAHS Programs – January to June 2015

The 2015 program schedule began with January and February devoted to describing the decorating process that results in new murals each year on the exterior of the Corn Palace. Dean and Wade Strand told of Dean's years of work to grow and develop the colored corn by hybridizing it to result in 13 different colors. Wade continues Dean's work. They reported that they use non-GMO corn because the kernels stay round and firm and do not dent when dried.

In February, Barb Young, with delightful humor, regaled the audience with her experience of decorating the Corn Palace. See the "Mystery Artists" article on page 9 of this *Carnegie Courier*.

Programs about wind energy presented a complete story from fabrication of the immense equipment through installation and operation of the wind towers. In March, Robert Tilton, chief engineer at Trail King Industries of Mitchell, told of their design and building of custom vehicles and trailers to transport the blades and all other components of a wind tower. Also in March, Ronald Jurgens, senior project manager of Carstensen Energy, described the process to plan a project, obtain leases, involve the community, consider environmental impact, arrange transport of wind tower components from GE, and, finally, install and operate the towers to generate power. The new project at Tripp, South Dakota, operates with 43 towers and was the example used during Mr. Jurgens' talk.

In April, Dan DeFries, head of the Wind Technology Department at Mitchell Technical Institute, explained how students are educated to enter the wind tower industry. They learn how to maintain the wind tower equipment to assure trouble-free operations with safety as the prime concern. The work is not for the faint-hearted.

In May, a capacity audience turned out to hear Vicki Linke, retired Mount Vernon postmaster, and Roberta Olsen, retired manager, tell the history of their beloved town. Vicki and Roberta added to their talk by preparing and displaying some of the items they have collected about Mt. Vernon.

In June, Jean Patrick, Mitchell author, in her informative talk about "Mt. Rushmore: Past and Present" drew from her four children's books: Who Carved the Mountain? The History of Mount Rushmore (2005), Face to Face with Mount Rushmore (2008), Mount Rushmore Memories (2011), and Four Famous Faces (2014). The books were published by the Mount Rushmore History Association. The South Dakota Humanities Council supported this program.

Quaker Genealogy Conference

Culminating a year of Quaker research, the Mitchell Area Genealogy Society sponsored the Quaker Conference in conjunction with the South Dakota Genealogical Society annual meeting on April 25 at the First United Methodist Church after registration at the CRC. The 40 participants were from the four corners of South Dakota and two from Wyoming. Three genealogical societies had information booths for attendees' interests during the breaks. Twenty-one attendees appreciated the availability of [Thee and Me: A Beginner's Guide to Early Quaker Records](#) by Lisa Parry Arnold, copies of which were sold at a discounted conference price.

Crista Cowan, the Barefoot Genealogist from Ancestry.com, entertained, enthralled, and educated the attentive group by using and expanding on the *Research Guide to Finding Your Quaker*



**Crista Cowen with
MAGS President James C. Hunt**

researcher needs a primary source. Cards created during the project can also be found online at both Ancestry and Family Search. After Mr. Hinshaw's death, two more encyclopedia volumes were published, the last being a comprehensive listing of all the records indicating the volume in which those records can be found. That index is now available at the CRC. Also available at the CRC are three binders of specific information on the closest three meeting houses (churches) - Mount Vernon, Aurora, and Harmony. The full set of Hinshaw's [Quaker Encyclopedia](#) is in the Sioux Falls Public Library.

Ms. Cowan expressed surprise at the large collection of records which local researchers have gathered pertaining to South Dakota. However, she added much information on how to find out about South Dakota Quakers going back generations in our family tree by revealing the secrets of where and how to locate the records.

Some questions MAGS researchers are now seeking to answer are more about local history of the Mount Vernon meeting. Although we have some information, there is still missing information such as "What happened to the meeting house at Mount Vernon?" If you have information regarding the three local meeting locations we would love to hear from you.

AnnaMarie Bosma

Genealogy Corner

In January and February MAGS held two work sessions to improve the organization of our genealogical files. Led by Karen Pooley, a new bookcase was erected to accommodate numerous family histories donated by family members.

Our March MAGS program was held at the Davison County Court House where Debra Young, Register of Deeds, reviewed records available in South Dakota and at the Davison County level. We thank Deb and her crew for a most informative and interesting evening.

Birth records over 100 years old are free of charge on the South Dakota Department of Health website at <http://apps.sd.gov/PH14Over100BirthRec/index.aspx>. Delayed records of births before 1905 are available at the State Department of Health for a fee. An informational copy of a birth record can be issued to anyone for \$15.00 if the name, birth date, and mother's maiden name are known.

Marriage records date back to 1890. An informational copy of a marriage record can be obtained by anyone for \$15.00; however, those before 1905 can be purchased only at the county where they are filed.

Death records date from 1905. Marriage and death records can be searched at the county level if one has a Research Card bought for \$5.00 from any genealogical society in the state. One can obtain a copy of a burial record beginning in 1921 for \$1.00/page; these are filed in the county where the burial occurred.

Grantor/Grantee Real Estate Records date back to the late 1870s and are open to the public. Copy of a record is \$1.00/page. Also available is a tract index (an index by legal description) which tells the date of purchase of property, the date sold, the price paid for the house and real estate, and restrictions placed against the property.

Many of the above records can also be found at the CRC. Andie Sindt maintains a database and clippings of births and marriages. Charlotte Nicholson maintains obituary records. Also, all Davison County cemetery records are available. Lyle Swenson photocopies articles in local newspapers and then clips and files them to make them easily accessible for reference. Submit your research request and we will try to find the answers.

Andie always is in touch on the Internet. Following are some of the items she has found especially interesting:

- If any sibling or sibling-in-law of your ancestor received a military pension, especially a widow's pension, consider obtaining the records widows needed to prove their marriage to the serviceman in addition to his service and need. Family members were frequently the ones who provided testimony, particularly to the marriage.
- If a document indicates that three individuals are siblings and are all children of one person, remember that they might not share the same set of parents. A record indicating that Tom, Susannah, and George are children of Johann Schmidt does not necessarily mean that they share the same mother.
- Have the houses been renumbered in the city where your ancestors lived between the time they lived there and today? Have any streets been renamed? *(Continued on page 12)*



Postmaster Tom Ball drives the first spike for the Mitchell Street Railway line which ran from the Milwaukee Depot on the south to the Omaha Depot on the north. The photograph is by Lawrence E. Stair at the present intersection of Rowley and Eighth Avenue, looking north on Rowley. Mr. Ball was the speaker at the event which was attended by 300 people. Although the railway started operations in 1914, the spike was not driven until August 25, 1915. The railway was built by O. E. Cassem and associates and closed after two and a half years.

west of Firesteel. Ball and the other settlers tore down their humble dwellings and moved to Mitchell. Ball arrived in time to assist in driving the first stake in the surveying of the Mitchell town site. A few years later he married Anna Carlson, a relative of his late wife.

Tom Ball's chief accomplishment in life was as a home builder in Mitchell where he built at least 150 houses. He sold them to honest persons with low assets. Of no consequence to him was that he realized a very small profit from each sale. Probably all that prevented his becoming a millionaire was that he thought there was always someone who needed the money more than he did. These modest houses are monuments to the life of Thomas Ball.

For 20 years Tom Ball trod the streets of Mitchell as a mail carrier. He was one of two men who covered the entire town in a buggy with Franz Brandt as his driver the entire period. On November 16, 1913, he became Mitchell's Postmaster and held the position until his death. He received the appointment because he was active in the Democratic Party, which was headed by John D. Lawler. After Mr. Lawler's early death, his widow moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Until Tom Ball passed away, each year he sent roses to Mrs. Lawler in gratitude for his appointment as postmaster.

In 1884, he purchased the Merchant Hotel (later named the Mitchell Hotel) at 114 South Main Street. Within a year he sold the hotel for \$4,000.

Ball chose as his homestead a location two miles south of Mitchell. He built the first hardware store in Mitchell, throwing up a shack of rough lumber and tar paper at First Avenue and Main Street. He stayed in the hardware business for two years, and, after engaging in farming and real estate for six years, on March 20, 1882, he entered the postal service as chairman of the Civil Service, a position he held for 31 years.

Ball was a member of the Mitchell Comrades of '79, a group of 16 men who came to Mitchell from the Firesteel village. Founded in October 1879, all of the members were bachelors and included F. M. Hammer, A. M. Hammer, J. O. Walrath, T. J. Ball, G. A. Johnston, J. T. Morrow, J. K. Smith, J. J. Devry, Ed Devry, H. G. Smith, Dr. W. E. Crane, H. L. LaDue, J. F. Kimball, A. J. Waterhouse, J. W. Beattie, and J. J. Merriam. Several reunions were held, the last on December 15, 1915.

One of Ball's good deeds was during the Blizzard of 1888 when he and his neighbors gathered clotheslines and tied them together to make a guide rope to Whittier School where his daughter, Nellie, and other students were marooned with the janitor and a teacher. The rescuers brought comforters, lanterns, and food.

Another good deed was when he conducted Mitchell's first funeral which was for a Negro. One morning a black man was found dead in the rear of a saloon. It was considered an alcoholic death. That day an improvised coffin was procured, the Negro's body placed therein and loaded onto the town's dray and taken to a nearby hill. The founders of the town followed the

(Continued on page 5)

Thomas J. Ball 1851-1916

Thomas Joseph Ball was born in St. George Parish in Dublin, Ireland, on May 17, 1851. The rector of the parish, the Reverend George Barton, who baptized him, gave him his parish record of birth when he sailed for America by himself at age 13. He landed at New York in 1864 where he learned the trade of plumber and steam-fitter. He also lived in New Jersey and Massachusetts before drifting into Canada in 1870. There the Dominion government gave him a 160-acre grant of land, a portion of what is now the city of Winnipeg. When he returned to the United States in 1871, he sold the land for \$160. First he sought adventure in Chicago, later moving to Hinsdale, Illinois. Seven years later he migrated to Algona, Iowa, and lived there for one and a half years where his wife, Hedda Carlson, died and he had to care for three children. On March 8, 1879, he arrived at the Firesteel village site in Dakota Territory and settled with his children as early members of the thriving community. In September 1880 the Milwaukee Railroad announced that it would establish its location at Mitchell, three miles

Tom Ball (Continued from page 4)

dray and gathered around the newly made grave as the coffin was lowered. Ball, who came from a Christian family and had witnessed soldiers' funerals, stepped forward to speak. He said, "Men, bare your heads." Then he recited from memory the service intended to be read over the body of a soldier. "God made him as you and I," and then added, "There is wool on his head, he is the Lamb of God, cover him up. Amen."

On August 9, 1916, Ball came to work at the Post Office, greeting and joking with all the employees as he usually did. One of the employees noticed a special delivery for Mitchell Wholesale Fruit and Grocery and told Ball that the special delivery person was absent. Ball replied, "Never mind, I will take it down because I need to talk to Ed Leehan," who was president of the company. As the postal employee filled in some papers for the special delivery, he heard a groan from the other room. He found Postmaster Ball on the floor. Others ran to the veterinary office to use the phone to call Ball's son, Dr. William Ball. Since he was not in his office, Dr. C. S. Bobb came to the Post Office, but Postmaster Ball had died of a heart attack.

Although Thomas Ball and his family were members of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, his funeral service was held at his residence at 800 West Third Avenue. The pallbearers, all '79ers, were A. L. Hammer, F. M. Hammer, J. O. Walrath, J. T. Morrow, J. K. Smith, and George A. Johnston. Anna Ball died January 1, 1957, and is buried beside her husband at Graceland Cemetery. *Karen Pooley and Kathryn Crockett*

Mabel O. Woods
1882-1973

In 1880, the pioneer Willard Clifford and Clarissa Emily Fraser Woods family moved from Iowa to Badger Township in Davison County. On November 9, 1882, their daughter Mabel (one of six children) was born. In 1883, Mr. Woods sold his pre-emption in Davison County and the family moved to neighboring Aurora County to settle four miles west of Storla in Belford Township where Mabel grew up.

As a young woman, Mabel taught in Aurora County in the primary grades at Kidder. When she decided to study nursing, her mother was opposed, saying that nursing was too hard. However, Mabel was determined to become a nurse.

After completing nurses training at Asbury Hospital School of Nursing in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Miss Woods was Superintendent at Deaconess Hospital (Community Hospital) in Brookings, South Dakota, from 1919 to 1923. A major portion of Miss Woods' life was spent as Administrator of Methodist State Hospital and Methodist School of Nursing in Mitchell from 1923 to 1947. Miss Woods received many honors as recognition of her achievements during her career. Among these, in 1932 when she was president of the South Dakota Nurses Association, she and the state association were honored for having had the greatest percentage membership increases in the nation. Another honor was in 1943 when the new brick addition was built to expand the student nurses' home, which was

then rededicated as Mabel O. Woods Hall. Upon her retirement in 1947, the Methodist Hospital Board of Directors named her Superintendent Emeritus.

Miss Woods was honored as Miss Mitchell in 1960 to recognize her amazing record as administrator and superintendent of the Methodist Hospital.

Miss Woods' love of children was exemplified by her adoption of Fannie Ann, a ten-day old baby when her father first brought her to the hospital. Final adoption papers were signed on Fannie Ann's third birthday. Fannie Ann married Jack Mee in Ames, Iowa, and they have a daughter, Jacqueline Ann, born in 1954.



Miss Woods presents, in 1957, the first Mabel O. Woods Award of the Methodist Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae to senior nursing student Ardis Chapman (center). Miss Chapman was selected on the basis of scholarship, nursing ability, and character. Person at left is not identified.

Kathryn Crockett, a MAHS member, recalls with pleasure the close friendship of her mother, Priscilla Cohrt (Mrs. Albert C.), with Miss Woods. Kathryn and her sister, Alberta, and their mother often visited Miss Woods and Fannie Ann at their attractive brick cottage on the Methodist Hospital grounds. Fannie Ann was a beautiful, brunette, curly-haired little girl. Miss Woods was a gracious, dignified, and handsome woman.

Miss Woods passed away on December 13, 1973, at the age of 91, at the Methodist Hospital and is buried in the Plankinton, South Dakota, cemetery. She was truly one of the persons who were key in the development of quality medical care in Davison County.

Karen Pooley

John R. White
1850 – 1945

In 1937, at age 87, John White, in his handwriting, described his life. Thirty years after his death at age 95 in 1945, three granddaughters met to talk about family history. One of them, Mary Alice (White) Allbough, had found among her grandfather's papers the handwritten account. The family had it published in December 1976 and included many family photographs in the 45 pages. *a/*

John Richard White, born on April 22, 1850, was the son of Augustus E. White and Margaret Ann (Bundy) White, a Quaker family in North Carolina who married in the Quaker Little Meeting House on August 31, 1849. Augustus ran a country store near Belvedere, but in 1854 he moved his family to Baysville, Indiana. They continued their Quaker faith, living on a small 40-acre farm in Henry County about two miles from the Richsquare Meeting House and School. They lived in a two-room log house. Thirty acres had been cleared for farming with ten left for birch, sugar maple, poplar, and black walnut trees. In the Richsquare School, John met Exum White, son of the neighbor Thomas A. White family. Exum ("Ex" for short) became John's closest and lifelong friend.

The Augustus White family (two sons and a daughter) prospered in Indiana. However, in 1864 John's parents died of typhoid fever. The orphans were age 14 (John), seven (Robert), and two (Laura). The Thomas A. White family accepted John who was happy to be with their nine children which included "Ex." John describes his home in these words: "Just a word more in reference to my new home – it was a Christian home - as was my own. From boyhood in my mother's arms, I was a regular attendant of church. When I was old enough to enter Sunday School, I was not sent – but my parents took me to Sunday School. In the Thomas White home the same rule prevailed. On Sabbath we all attended Sabbath School and Church. On Thursday or rather 5th day morning at 11 o'clock was mid-week meeting. No matter what the work on hand, whether plowing corn, digging potatoes or mowing hay, all work stopped in time to put one of the teams on to the spring wagon or carriage and get to the meeting at the appointed hour. Thomas and Lydia, his wife, were interested and active members not only of the local church but were useful and much used members of the larger organization of the quarterly and yearly meeting." *b/*

John describes his grammar, high, and college education in enthusiastic terms and with appreciation and respect for the quality of the instruction. He valued the small Earlham College in Iowa and wrote: "This suggests what I consider is a great advantage the student of the smaller college has over the large university. It is this closer contact and the more intimate acquaintance with the members of the faculty and the student body as well, from which we get inspiration and uplift not obtained in the classroom alone. An intimate acquaintance with my instructors that admitted me into their homes as well as to their classes, I prized as a great privilege and benefit to me." *c/*

At Earlham, he met Miss Mary Willits from LeGrande, Iowa. When he was accepted to teach at the Friends Academy

in LeGrande, he boarded at the Willits' home. He and Mary preferred a home wedding, but pledged their vows on August 26, 1875, in church, the public invited. He stated, "We were not married by a minister, but pledged our own marriage vows to each other according to the Friends ceremony. We had a full meeting house as witnesses." *d/*

By 1884 John and Mollie (Mary's nickname) had three children: Everett, Marie, and Walter. Following the "Go West, Young Man" precept, John left his beloved teaching position at the Friends Academy because "the teaching profession ... did not give promise of meeting the needs of an increasing family." *e/* Following is his account of how he was drawn to settle in 1879 at Firesteel on the James River in Dakota Territory.

"Thos. Scholfield, an old resident of LeGrande who built and operated the LeGrande Mills for years but had sold out his interests some years past, went in the summer of 1879 to Dakota Territory and looked up a mill site on the James (Jim) River just east of the present city of Mitchell. In the fall of this same year, I went to Dakota and went in with Scholfield as a junior member of a partnership to erect a flour mill on this site. The advance guard of the great western flow of civilization was no longer the covered wagon, but the locomotive. The Chicago & Northwestern and the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railroads were now pushing their lines in to Dakota. We were ahead of the rails of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul and hauled the first lumber that went into the construction of the mill dam, from Yankton, 75 miles south of us. The following spring the trains got into Mitchell. Lumber yards were immediately opened up, the first by F. E. Moses and we purchased the first car of lumber he received. I built a house on the bank of the river near the mill and moved the family out. *f/*



White's Mill on the east bank of the James River near Mitchell

"The mill was completed the following year. It being the first mill in that part of the country, the settlers came in with their wheat for miles around – many, a full day's journey to get to the mill. They would camp over night and return home the next day. We had to run the mill day and night to take care of the business. *g/*

(Continued on page 7)

John R. White (*Continued from page 6*)

“In a few years the country settled up. Steam mills were built in some of the towns along the railroad, and our business was not so rushing. In 1886 the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad built into Mitchell. I induced them to put in side track and stockyards on one corner of my land and a half mile east of the river. I sold my interest in the mill to Scholfield and built a grain elevator and coal sheds at this siding. Later a store and post office came in and the station was called Riverside. h/

“For the next few years I was engaged in the grain and coal business. In the meantime three more boys had been added to the family: Walter, Ralph, and Robert and were now of school age. Being long on boys and short on girls, I went to increasing my farm activities. Buying more land, raising more stock, milking more cows. I finally owned 920 acres and rented a school section of the state. Of the 1500 acres, I farmed about one-tenth of it. The rest was grassland, fenced into pastures, or kept for hay. i/

“I believe if about this proportion of grass and cultivated land had been maintained throughout the state and the adjoining plains, we would never have had any ‘dust bowl’ to contend with. I well remember the expression of one of the speakers at a Farmers Institute in our county, when some of us were agitating the stock and dairy business. He said, ‘When this prairie sod is turned over by a plow, it is wrong side up.’” j/

Since the two main ties of John White to Mitchell for this article are in connection with his Quaker ancestry and the White’s Mill, the rest of his life will be briefly summarized.

He and his family continued to move west – to Murdo, Faith, and finally, to southern California. He always engaged in business – hardware, banking, housing, apartment developments, etc. Mollie died in June 1918 and is buried at Grace-land Cemetery in Mitchell. His equally beloved second wife, May Taylor (married to John on March 31, 1921), k/ passed away in 1929 and is buried in California.

John White’s closing sentence at age 87 in 1937 was “This is a pretty good world to live in, and this is a pretty good time to live in it. And I will add, but the BEST is YET TO BE!” l/

a. White, John Richard. John R. White, Quaker Pioneer, 1850-1945. Caldwell, Idaho, 1976.

b. Op. cit., page 4.

c. Op. cit., page 7.

d. Op. cit., page 11.

e. through i. Op. cit., page 14.

j. Op. cit., page 39.

k. Op. cit., page 26.

l. Op. cit., page 29.

Kathryn Crockett and Karen Pooley

Jungle Stories: The Life of Delmar Strunk, From the Fields of South Dakota to the Jungles of Burma

by **Randall M. Dewitt**

In World War II, Delmar Strunk, now 93, served in the China-Burma-India theater as a member of the famed Merrill’s Marauders. Randall Dewitt is a Mitchell resident who studied World War II history at Dakota Wesleyan University. He met Strunk in 2009 and accompanied him in 2011 during his Honor Flight to Washington, D.C.

Merrill’s Marauders went far behind Japanese lines, marching almost 1,000 miles through the Himalayas in 1944. When Strunk’s unit disbanded in August 1944, of the 3,000 men who started only about 130 were in good enough condition to continue in combat.

Dewitt’s book was recently published in February and is available in digital format, paperback, and hard cover. In 2014, Dewitt wrote A Small Town Contributes, a collection of World War II stories about residents of Platte, South Dakota.

Needed: Volumes of South Dakota History

South Dakota History Collections and Report was published in hard cover from 1902 through 1982. MAHS needs to complete its set, if possible, by obtaining these volumes:

1910, Volume 5; 1914 - 7; 1916 - 8; 1918 - 9; 1920 - 10; 1922 - 11; 1924 - 12; 1928 - 14; 1951 - 25; 1952 - 26.

Published by the South Dakota State Historical Society Press, South Dakota History is a soft cover quarterly begun in 1970 and continued today. MAHS needs Volume 14, No. 2, Summer 1984 and Volume 4, No. 1, Spring 2011.

Let us know if you have any of these items that you plan to donate now or in the future to MAHS. They are kept at the CRC in the west wing to be used for research at the CRC.

Mitchell Mayors

1881	A. J. Labarre	1940	Walter Dixon
1882	C. S. Burr	1946	Damon Clark
1885	F. A. Huggins	1952	Richard Ellwein
1886	C. W. Taylor	1956	Robert Graham
1887	T. F. Mentzer	1958	Martin Osterhaus
1889	George A. Johnston	1962	Charles Klingaman
1890	A. M. Bowdle	1966	Arthur C. Rew
1892	R. D. Welch	1968	Dr. Wayne Unzicker
1894	I. W. Seaman	1972	Martin Osterhaus
1896	Thomas Fullerton	1974	Robert Phillips
1900	E. B. VanAlstine	1980	Paul F. Tobin
1902	George A. Silsby	1986	Leonard B. Williams
1906	O. L. Branson	1994	Donald Dailey
1908	A. E. Hitchcock	1998	Alice Claggett
1916	J. E. Wells	2006	Louis Sebert
1920	Dr. E. V. Bobb	2012	Kenneth Tracy
1924	J. E. Williams	2015	Jerald L. Toomey
1928	George Fredericks		

Happy 50th Birthday to the Pillsbury Doughboy! He has a tie to Mitchell.

It may seem a far stretch to link the popular Pillsbury Doughboy to Mitchell. However, through Eleanor Jerusha Lawler (1887 to 1991), the daughter of John D. Lawler (1855 to 1896), one of Mitchell's founders and a prominent citizen who died suddenly in Sioux City at the age of 40, the link was established. Mr. Lawler had married Ella Marie Sturgis, the daughter of Major General Samuel Davis Sturgis, famed Civil War Union General. Ella was accustomed to and enjoyed the delights of high society. Therefore, as Mr. Lawler's widow, Ella decided to move to Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1896 and took with her Eleanor and the three younger children. Eleanor was about eight and one-half years old.

In Minneapolis, Eleanor in 1911 married John Sargent Pillsbury II, a member of the family that founded and owned the flourishing Pillsbury Flour Company.

Eleanor, who lived to be 101 years old, was asked by her son, John (1902-2005), what she would like to receive as a 94th birthday gift. She responded that she would like at last to visit Mitchell where she had spent her early childhood.

The "rest of the story" is primarily from the recent interview of Valerie "Val" LaBreche, a Mitchell resident who clearly recalls the visit during which she was the Chamber of Commerce representative.

Another excellent source is the September 10, 1981, article in *The Daily Republic* by Karen Iverson who described the August 31, 1981, visit to Mitchell by Mrs. Pillsbury, her son George S. Pillsbury, a Minnesota State Senator, and his brother John, two of their sister's grandchildren, and John's son and family. At a reception in Mitchell, in addition to Val, the party was greeted by Mitchell officials including Mayor Paul Tobin, First National bank president Herman Lerdal, Oscar Howe Art Center director Margaret Quintal, Friends of the Middle Border Museum director Bill Anderson, and Dakota Wesleyan University president Dr. James Beddow. U.S. Senator James Abdnor sent special greetings.

Places visited by Mrs. Lawler were the site of her home at the southeast corner of East Fourth and Lawler Street, diagonally across the intersection from the Louis Beckwith home at the northwest corner. When she visited the Oscar Howe Art Center (now the Carnegie Resource Center) at 119 West Third Avenue, Mrs. Pillsbury was presented a print of the Oscar Howe painting, "The Wood Gatherer." At the Friends of the Middle Border Museum, the Beckwith home, which is preserved on that site, led to vivid recollections by Mrs. Pillsbury. Lunch followed at the Holiday Inn.

Published in *The Daily Republic* article is a photo of Mrs. Lawler, her son George, and Mrs. Sam (Edna) Weller, in the Beckwith home. Mrs. Weller's husband was the grandson of Thomas Ball who sent roses every year to Eleanor Lawler, the widow of John D. Lawler, in gratitude for Mr. Lawler's obtaining the appointment of Ball as the Mitchell Postmaster.

According to Val, at the Beckwith house Eleanor wanted especially to see the pantry. Val said that Grace Beckwith was

Eleanor Lawler's very close friend and playmate and Eleanor remarked that Grace's brothers would lock Eleanor in the Beckwith pantry when they didn't want to play with her. Eleanor also noted that the paint in the pantry was as it looked when she was a child. Also, none of the children were allowed in the parlor. Eleanor said that during her visit, at age 94 she was finally able to enter the parlor. Hence, she finally outranked the Beckwith boys since they were not in the parlor. While visiting the rest of the Beckwith house, Eleanor commented that it looked very much as she remembered it.

After lunch, the visitors returned to the Mitchell airport to return home.

If space permitted, much more could be written regarding the 94th birthday trip of Eleanor Lawler Pillsbury to her childhood home. According to her son, George, later in September his mother was "still glowing over her trip" and that it had "boosted her spirits."

So, thereby is how the Pillsbury Doughboy is tied to Mitchell through Eleanor Lawler Pillsbury. The following information is taken from a website accessed by MAHS volunteer Andie Sindt on April 5, 2015.

THE PILLSBURY DOUGHBOY

The Pillsbury Doughboy got his start on the road to fame in Chicago. He has since become an icon of American advertising known around the world. In 1965 a small group at the Leo Burnett advertising agency sat around the table surrounded by cans of dough trying to create an advertising and marketing campaign for Pillsbury's refrigerated dough account. Rudy Perz, a copywriter at the time, popped open one of the cans and envisioned an image of a doughboy popping out. The "spokes critter" was dubbed "Poppin Fresh," personifying the product's freshness and quality. Perz's first inclination was to animate the Doughboy with illustration, but changed his mind after seeing the stop-action motion technique used in the credits of "The Dinah Shore Show," which he liked better. The ad agency's founder, Leo Burnett, thought the character was a great idea, as did Pillsbury. More than 50 actors auditioned for the voice of the Doughboy. Paul Frees, the voice of Boris Badenov in "The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle" among others, was chosen. His first words were, "Hi! I'm Poppin Fresh, the Pillsbury Doughboy." followed by "Nothin' says lovin' like bakin' in the oven, and Pillsbury says it best." When Frees died in 1986, Jeff Bergman, the voice of Charlie the Tuna, took over. Currently, JoBe Cerny portrays the Doughboy. Within three years of his debut in 1965 in a crescent roll commercial, the Doughboy had an 87 percent recognition factor among consumers.

Through the years, the Doughboy advertising has changed slightly. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, he was seen as a helper, friend and instructor to family cooks. The Doughboy has been featured in numerous commercials over the years, and is very versatile. He has been an opera singer, a rap artist, a rock star, a poet, a painter, a ballet dancer, a skydiver and

(Continued on page 9)

The Pillsbury Doughboy (Continued from page 8)

**Poppin' Fresh -
The Pillsbury Doughboy**

skateboarder. He has also been seen playing the harmonica, accordion, bugle, electric guitar and violin. While computer technology has changed the way the Doughboy is created, his motions have been programmed in as they were when he was made as a plaster and foam rubber bendable puppet. The initial doll cost \$16,000 to develop, and he had five bodies and 15 heads to create numerous looks and positions in the ads. Prior to its computerization, it took 24 individual shots for every one second of commercial for the Doughboy's

stop-motion animation, which was originally done by Cascade Studios in Hollywood. From the beginning, he has been dressed in a chef's hat bearing the Pillsbury logo as well as a white neckerchief, and he still is considered a teacher and friend to cooks of all kinds.

As of 1998, the Doughboy received 200 fan letters a week, and Pillsbury received 1,500 requests for autographed photos. Other indications of the character's popularity include first place in "Marketing Evaluation, Inc." as the most recognizable and favorite spokes character (1996), a favorite food product character among consumers in "Cartoon Q" survey (1996), first place in *Advertising Age* "Whom Do You Love?" contest (1987), and "Toy of the Year" according to *Playthings* magazine (1972), just a year after his release as a seven-inch vinyl doll. The Doughboy has become a global icon whose smile and cheery disposition transcend language and cultural barriers everywhere.

Sources:

Iverson, Karen, Republic Women's Editor, "Girlhood home revisited at 94," *The Daily Republic*, September 10, 1981.
LaBreche, Valerie, interviewed by Kathryn Crockett, April 25, 2015.
Genealogy research by Andrea Harmes-Sindt.

Kathryn Crockett

Membership Renewal

If you do not find your name on the membership list on page 11 of this newsletter, please use the renewal form enclosed to send your support for the MAHS and MAGS. Your support is much appreciated and necessary.

"Mystery Artists" of the Corn Palace

Oscar Howe, the designer of murals for the Corn Palace from 1948 through 1971, and Cal Schulz, who did the murals from 1977 through 2006, are familiar names. But the two artists who together contracted to decorate the Corn Palace from 1972 through 1975 are self-styled "Mystery Artists" since they have only very occasionally been mentioned in publicity about the colored corn murals on the exterior of the Corn Palace.

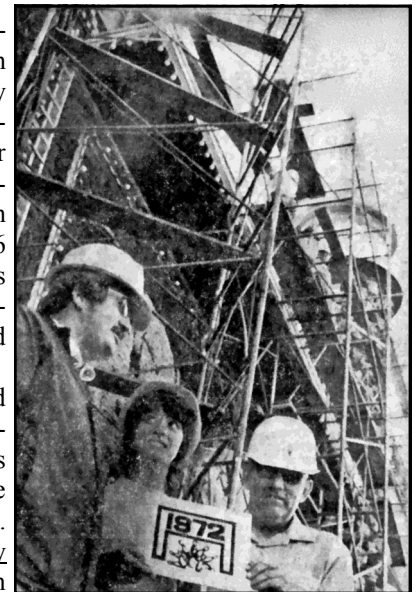
On Monday evening, February 9, at the MAHS meeting, Barb Young told of the responsibility she and Don Durfee jointly undertook when they contracted in 1972 to do the murals after Oscar Howe resigned. Barb was then the Mitchell High School art teacher and Don taught art at Mitchell Junior High School. Barb said that they had no instruction and that their work place was in the basement of the Armory, now City Hall, and that it was damp and "stinky" even then. The process was that she and Don select a theme which they would submit to the Corn Palace Committee for consideration. If the theme were approved, Barb and Don would then do small drawings to carry out the theme. These drawings had to be projected on eight-foot wide heavy sheets of roofing tar paper to fit the dimensions of the murals, one of which was 23 feet long by 8 feet high.

The contract terms provided that cancellation could occur if either party decided not to renew annually. As of December 31, 1975, the city cancelled the contract with Barb and Don. The 1976 decorations were the ones done for 1975 which commemorated the United States Bicentennial.

Two booklets were cited by Barb during her presentation to MAHS as good sources about the Corn Palace decorations. [A Year By Year History of the World's Only Corn Palace](#), compiled by the Mitchell Chamber of Commerce, printed by the Educator Supply Company, Mitchell, South Dakota, and copyrighted in 1950 by the Chamber.

The other booklet was [World's Only Corn Palace, A Treasury of Rare Historical Photographs of One of America's Finest Examples of Folk Art](#), published in 1992 by Dakotaland Postcards and Souvenirs, Inc., P.O. Box 552, Mitchell, with design by George Castaldo. Printing was done by Kina Italia in Milan, Italy.

Kathryn Crockett



Don Durfee (left) and Barb Young are shown with Corn Palace custodian Don McDaniel in front of scaffolding during installation of murals. *The Daily Republic*, July 14, 1972.

The War of the Worlds

From The Heritage Herald, the newsletter of the Lake County Historical Society in Madison, South Dakota, we present below a copy of page 11 of the October 2014 issue. On the evening of October 30, 1938, Orson Welles dramatized for radio the “War of the Worlds” which generated panic throughout the nation. The Madison Daily Leader, on October 31, 1938 described the event with the article which the Lake County Historical Society quoted in their October 2014 issue. Lyle Swenson checked The Daily Republic newspapers in the MAHS collection and found no mention of the “War of the Worlds”. Were Mitchellites not listening to the Welles broadcast or did they wisely deduce it was all a hoax?

OLD TIME RADIO

Before there was television, there was radio. During radio's golden years, extending from the 1930's to the early 1950's, it was quite common for the young and the old to gather around and tune into their favorite programs. There were no radio stations in Lake County at the time, but some of the stations whose airwaves reached the region included WNAX in Yankton, WCCO in Minneapolis, and WHO in Des Moines. Besides the music and the news, talented actors entertained their listeners with live stage performances from programs that included adventures, dramas, comedies, mysteries, and westerns. Dragnet, The Shadow, Amos and Andy and The Lone Ranger were just a few of the listener's favorites. Seventy-six years ago, during the evening of October 30, 1938 - the night before Halloween - one of the most famous broadcasts in the history of radio hit the airwaves. The dramatization titled the “War of the Worlds” was so realistic that it produced mass panic throughout the country. How did listeners in Lake County react to the program? The day after the program Madison Daily Leader printed the following article:

Please, Mr. Welles, No More, You Win...But You're Too Hard on the Nerves

For the best radio acting of the year, hang the medal on Orson Welles. And then, in the best interests of all concerned, pension him off for the remainder of his life with a promise never to go near a microphone again.

Welles almost caused a nationwide riot last night with his radio dramatization of H.G. Welles' “War of the Worlds.” The story told how men from Mars invaded the eastern seaboard, wiped out whole cities with “death rays” and poison gas, and in a truly Buck Rogers manner set out to wipe the United States off the map. It was all very realistic.

The program began with a “news flash” of a huge comet falling on Trenton, N.J. wiping out that city. That, apparently, is where a good many people tuned in. And from this point on the radio story grew more vivid and more horrifying. Actual names of towns were used, adding much to the realism of the dramatization. It got so bad that residents of New Jersey, New York, and other seaboard states actually packed up their belongings and headed for the interior. Hospitals were deluged with nervous cases. Telephone lines were jammed with calls, and telegraph facilities were clogged. All because the end of the world was near.

And radio news broadcasters after the program devoted a good bit of their time to reassuring the United States it was just a play, and all in fun, and would everyone just act as if nothing had happened. As if nothing had happened, indeed!

Madison itself did not escape from the terrifying “news” of the invasion of Martians. The program probably reached a 90 per cent audience in Madison and vicinity last night. Those who weren't tuned in to the program at first received telephone calls from others, telling of the awful calamity that had struck the United States.

Neighbors dashed to homes close by. Everyone was wondering if everyone else was listening to the program and was it true? Bridge parties were disrupted. Those who had relatives in New York or in that vicinity were terrified to think of them being killed by the Martians. Mothers who were visiting rushed home to be with their children when they died. And some residents got into their cars and left the city, wanting to spend their last moments with relatives who lived elsewhere.

Walter Smith, Madison, apparently wanted to be assured of a comfortable cot in the local hospital when the Martians struck Madison. Police were called to the hospital last night, right after the program, where it was said Smith was trying to break in. He was arrested and arraigned this morning on an intoxication charge.

And in homes whole families were grouped around the radio, half-believing but afraid to believe what they heard. No radio program at any time - and we include the Duke of Windsor's farewell address and the recent news flashes from the European crisis - probably stirred an audience so much as the one last night.

So please, Mr. Welles, we know you're good and here's the medal. Now please stop broadcasting. And if you must broadcast, don't do it just before bedtime.

Note: To listen to the recording of the War of the Worlds or other old-time radio shows, type the words “old time radio shows” into the search engine of your computer. You will discover quite a number of free programs to choose from.

2015 Mitchell Area Historical Society Members

Membership support is vital to the continued success of MAHS. The following persons are 2015 members of MAHS and MAGS whose dues were received by May 15, 2015. Special appreciation is extended to the many persons for their generously contributed. You truly encourage us to keep working hard to make the CRC an increasingly valuable repository and research source of Mitchell history and genealogy. Inform us of any needed corrections by calling 996-3209 or email Pam@mitchellcarnegie.com.

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Genealogy Corner (Continued from page 3)**A few Google search tips:**

There's a lot more you can do with Google than just search the Internet. Perhaps you would like to see search results from just one web site instead of searching the entire Internet. To do this, go to <http://www.Google.com> and enter the word "site:" followed by a colon (:) followed immediately (with no spaces) by the web site's address. Next, add a space and then the word(s) you wish to search for. For instance, since I spend a lot of time searching for Ostfriesland, Germany, I would search as:

site:ostfriesen.comsearchterm . Notice the web site's address is given without the letters "http", without the colon, without the slashes and without "www." Or if you want to search the South Dakota Genealogical Society website to see databases the society has for Davison County, you would go to <http://www.Google.com> and enter A:site:sdgensoc.org "Davison county". Google has a translator for words, passages, and web pages from 80 languages. Google automatically detects the language of text you enter, or you can specify languages to translate from and to. You can also upload a document to translate, see a virtual keyboard with characters from the language, and hear your translation pronounced. But remember, just because the process is automated, not all translations will be perfect.

Andrea Harmes-Sindt

Program Schedules

MAHS and MAGS programs are at 7:00 p.m. at the CRC, 119 West Third Avenue unless otherwise noted. Admission is free and all are welcome. MAHS programs are on the third Monday and MAGS programs are on the first Monday.

MAHS 2015 Programs

- July 13 Dr. Adrian Hannus and Dr. Alan Outram, archeologists at Augustana and Exeter Universities respectively. "Update on Archeology Progress"
- Aug. 17 "Mitchell, the Intelligent Community," Julie Brookbank, MTI marketing director, and persons from the Mitchell Committee
- Aug. 26 Woolworth Caramel Apples at Einstein's, 317 North Main Street, during Corn Palace Festival, Wednesday, August 26 through 30
- Sep. 21 Annual dinner meeting, Cynthia Elyce Rubin, "O. S. Leeland, Norwegian Immigrant Photographer," 6:30 p.m., Wesley Acres, 1115 West Havens
- Oct. 19 Randall M. Dewitt on World War II veteran, Delmar Strunk, member of Merrill's Marauders
- Nov. 16 Brett Selland, "The History of Ruskin Park"
- Dec. 10 "Christmas at the Carnegie," The Barbershop Harmony Chorus and Wanema Wiczorek, pianist

MAGS 2015 Programs

- July 6 Bring a family treasure to show
- Aug. 3 To be announced
- Sep. 7 Helping at the SDGS booth at the State Fair
- Oct. 5 Mona Zirpel. "Writing the History of the Zirpel Family"
- Nov. 2 AnnaMarie Bosma will discuss her work with DNA
- Dec. 10 "Christmas at the Carnegie," The Barbershop Harmony Chorus and Wanema Wiczorek, pianist

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4	Thomas J. Ball (1851-1916)
5	Thomas J. Ball (continued) Mabel O. Woods (1882-1973)
6	John R. White (1850-1945)
7	John R. White (continued) <i>Jungle Stories</i> , Randall Dewitt, author Needed: Volumes of <i>South Dakota History</i> Mitchell Mayors
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- (1) You want to receive the *Carnegie Courier* newsletter by email, or
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Look for the Mitchell Carnegie Resource Center on Facebook and at www.mitchellcarnegie.com.

**The Carnegie Resource Center is open
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