

The Carnegie Courier

Newsletter of

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

Volume XVIII, Number 4

www.mitchellcarnegie.com

Winter 2025

A little history behind the Widmann Hotel

Dean Randall

Construction of the Widmann Hotel was begun in the fall of 1902 on the southeast corner of 1st and Main Street in Mitchell, SD (where Casey's is now) and completed in October 1904. There were 110 sleeping rooms on the second, third and fourth floors. 30 of those had a bath! There were two stairways to each floor as well as an elevator.

The heating and lighting plants were in the basement as well as extra rooms used by business enterprises and sample rooms. Two boilers furnished steam heat and hot water to each room in the hotel. They also furnished steam for the generators. These boilers also furnished heat for the Navin Hotel across the street

Fred Widmann was born in Wiesenberger, Germany on Oct. 1, 1846. He came to America in 1865 and eventually on to South Dakota in 1882. After tasting rather poor whiskey in several saloons he was able to buy a better whiskey and sell it for a good price. He built a building on Lawler Street and was soon making \$85 to \$100 a day. That's a lot of whiskey at 12 ½ cents a shot. With his new-found fortune he started buying land and thought he might try farming. He didn't care about that so he went back to the



↑Above: A photo of Fred Widmann's first building in Mitchell, SD located on Lawler Street. Featuring a billiard parlor, liquor store on the ground floor and possible hotel on the second floor.

→Right: A new article about the construction of Widmann's first building.

saloon business and bought lots in the city. The four lots that the hotel was on cost him a total of \$6,300.

Fred never managed the hotel himself. He always leased it out to several people and corporations over the years. For example, in 1913 one corporation paid \$595 per month for rent.

Continued on page 2

A NEW STONE BUILDING.

Fred Widmann Will Erect a New Building as Soon as Possible.

One of the first new buildings for the year erected in Mitchell will be a stone structure, which is to be built by Fred Widmann on his inside lot at the corner of Main and First street. Mr. Widmann expects to commence operations on the new structure at once. It will be built of Sioux Falls granite, with dressed stone for the front, the sidewalls being left for building on either side. The dimensions of the building are 27x60 feet, and will be converted into two rooms one of which will very likely be used for a saloon and the other will be for rent. Mr. Widmann also expects to make some improvements on his Main street property by the addition of a plate glass front and a tile floor. Fred says he will have the finest saloon in the state when he gets through with his improvements.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



↑Above: A collage of photos with hand written descriptions (some maybe cut off). This is the second building Fred Widmann built and leased out to several corporations over the years, on the corner of First and Main in Mitchell, SD (where Casey's is currently). Housed inside was a grand hotel, a cafe, a bar and possibly other business.

Widmann Hotel ... Cont. from page 1

Fred was first married around 1870 in Chicago. They had two children in 1877 and 1878 but then he divorced her about 1880. He then married Louisa Donner with whom he had six children. Louisa died in 1904 from

pneumonia. He and his son, Fred Jr., went to Germany in 1908 and while there he met and married his third wife, Mathilda Engels.

In 1906, Fred retired from business and seven years later he died at home at 400 East Third, Mitchell, SD on December 23, 1913.

The hotel is probably most famous for burning down! On April 14, 1950, a maid reported a fire on the

second floor to the desk clerk who quickly called the fire department. There were 46 guests who had to be awakened and evacuated. Fire Chief Asa Wheeler was out of town so Assistant Chief John Spry directed the firemen. With such a big building the concern was that the whole town could be destroyed. Mr. Spry called for help from thirteen towns around the area.

Eleven businesses were destroyed with the hotel with an estimated loss of \$500,000. The crowds watching the fire became very large and there are many people today who remember standing around watching it burn.

The tokens shown might have been used in the café, the bar, the cigar stand or the liquor store.

Some of the above found in "The History of Mitchell Hotels & Houses 1880-1972" compiled by Garvin Bertsch, Mitchell, SD.



FROM THE ARCHIVES



↑Above: The Cafe Widmann, photo dated 1931, about 19 years before the horrible fire that took out several other business in downtown Mitchell, SD in April of 1950.

←Left: Fred Widmann created token to (what we believe) be used in his businesses, like the bar, the liquor store or the cafe.

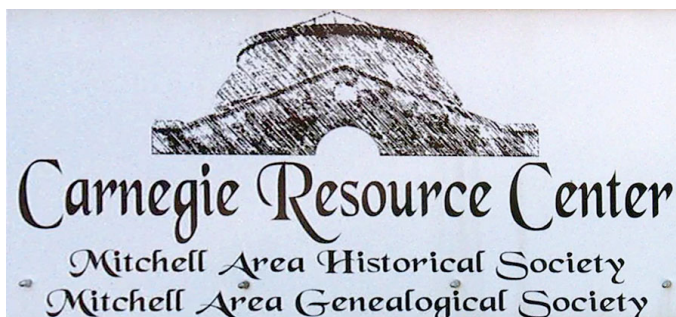
RENEW, REMEMBER & RECONNECT

The Mitchell Area Historical and Genealogical Societies would like to extend a heartfelt *thank you* to all who have supported our work this past year and throughout previous years. Your interest and involvement help preserve our community's stories and make our continued efforts possible.

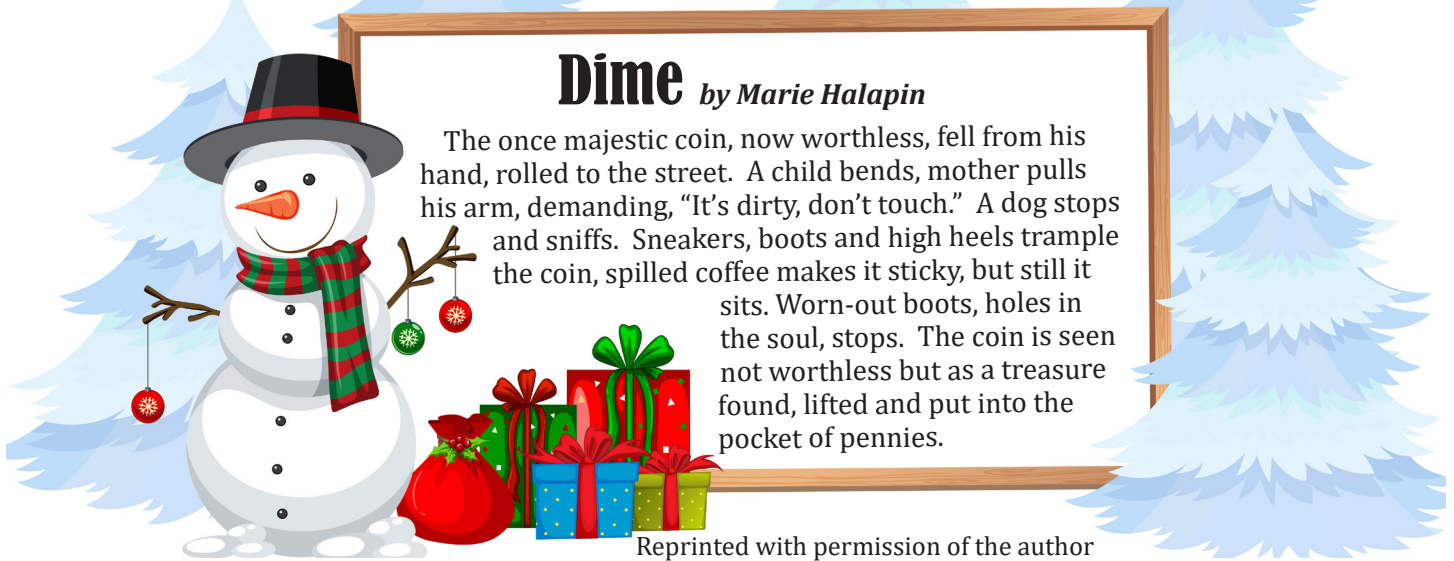
As we begin a new membership cycle, we invite you to renew your membership for the upcoming year. Enclosed, you will find the membership forms to make renewal and donations simple and convenient.

Thank you for being a valued part of our historical and genealogical community! If you have any questions or wish to update your information, please feel free to reach out.

Both organizations are in the
Carnegie Resource Center
 119 West 3rd Ave, Mitchell, SD.
 Email: info@mitchellcarnegie.com
 Phone: 605-996-3209.



Please enjoy and ponder this 74-word story as we approach the holiday season.



MAKING THE CARNEGIE MORE WELCOMING — ONE SINK AT A TIME!

The Carnegie Resource Center is a treasured historic landmark in our community, built in 1903. Like many buildings of its era, it was constructed without many of the modern conveniences we rely on today. While updates have been made over the years—including the later addition of indoor plumbing—the building still lacks several amenities essential for current use.

As the Center has grown to host a wide variety of programs, meetings, events, and community gatherings, the need for additional improvements has become clear. One significant challenge is the absence of a kitchenette with a sink and running water. Currently, water must be carried in by staff or collected from the bathroom sink for basic needs such as making coffee or tea. Drinking water must be purchased in bottles, and after events, staff often take dishes and supplies home for cleaning due to the limitations of the bathroom sink.

A small kitchenette with a functional sink and cabinetry would greatly enhance the usability of the facility, improve sanitation, and provide a much better experience for the many groups and individuals who rely on the Carnegie Resource Center. This simple addition would allow us to better support community meetings, social

gatherings, educational programs, and special events—many of which involve food and beverages.

We had initially expected to secure funding for this project; however, that opportunity did not come to fruition. We are now reaching out to individuals, businesses, and organizations who value the Carnegie Resource Center and its role in our community. The total cost for the kitchenette unit and necessary plumbing is approximately \$10,000.

Thanks to the generosity of two early supporters, we currently have a \$2,000 matching grant in place—meaning your contribution can go twice as far toward making this improvement a reality.

Your support will help us preserve the historic character of the Carnegie Resource Center while ensuring it remains a functional, welcoming space for all who use it. Thank you for considering our request and for supporting the continued vitality of this important community resource.

♥♥ **Donations may be sent to:**

Carnegie Resource Center, 119 W. 3rd Ave., Mitchell, SD 57301 or check the webpage for a donation button at www.mitchellcarnegie.com

Thank you for your support.

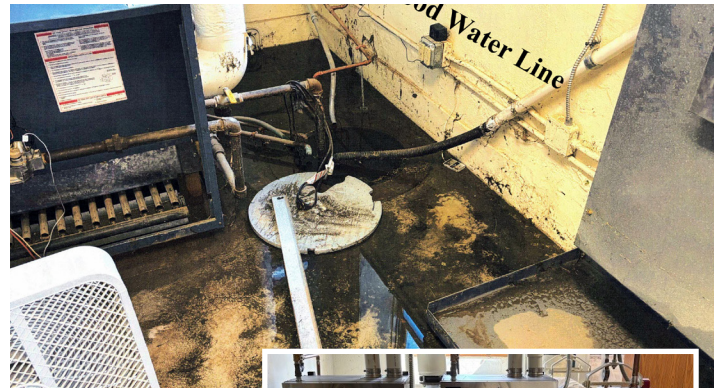
Carnegie Boiler Room News

*From the facilities dept.
November 2025*

On June 20, 2024, the clouds opened up and gave everyone in Mitchell an unusual amount of rain, some 9-10 inches fell over a short period.

This caused unusual flooding over most of the city causing many sump pump hoses to appear in gutters all over town. The Carnegie Resource Center was not spared as the storm drains at 3rd and Rowley could not handle the amount of water from the immediate area. This brought the flood line up to our front steps and worst of all brought some 4 feet of water into our outside stairway that leads to the boiler room.

As luck would have it, the fairly new steel door did hold but was sprung. Our sump pump had nowhere to remove the water as the yard and storm drain were flooded. This put about 18 inches of water in the boiler room, but a closed door saved the rest of the basement from this severe flooding and only let about 2-3 inches in the rest of the basement.



↑ Above: Boiler room damage from the flooding of Spring 2024.



→ Right: New high efficiency boiler units installed Spring of 2025 by Krohmer Plumbing.

The 18 inches of flood water in the boiler room flooded the boiler covering the gas valve and other electronic controls. After much clean up and drying we were able to bring the old 1950 vintage boiler back to life and crossed our fingers we could make it through the winter of 2024. Our hopes were fulfilled as the boiler did make it through the winter of 2024, but we knew a replacement would have to be installed for next winter.

Quotes were requested from three trusted sources and Krohmer Plumbing was awarded the project in May of 2025. The old boiler was removed, and two new high efficiency condensing boilers were installed and ready for the winter of 2025. These two boilers are networked together so they alternately share the load unless it gets very cold then they both join the battle. From an efficiency standpoint we will have moved from a system that was 50% efficient to 96% which will save quite a lot in our utility bills from now on.

Thanks to donations and some savings we will be able to almost cover the \$45,000 cost of removal and installation but further donations will be much appreciated to return our meager savings back to where they were.

I have included two photos, one showing the before pictures of the boiler and flood line and the completed system ready for winter.

I want to thank everyone that donated to this project as it will keep us able to retain and keep the history of the Mitchell area.

Mel Pooley, Facilities

**Join Us for Christmas
At the Carnegie**

**When: December 11, 2025,
at 7:00 p.m.**

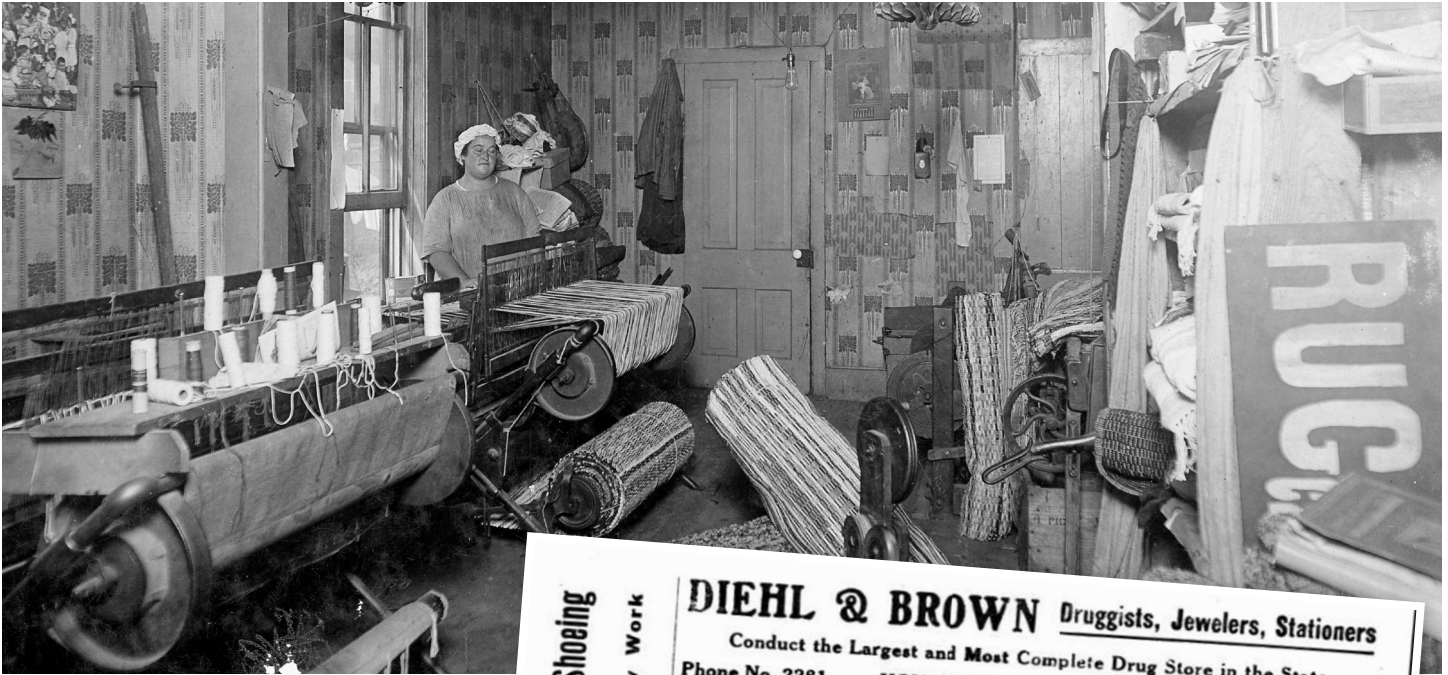
Featuring:
*Carols by the Mitchell Barbershop
Harmony Chorus and Billy Lurken

*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

In Search of Deddrich

Family history of the Lamotte Rug Weavers at the Mitchell Rug Factory

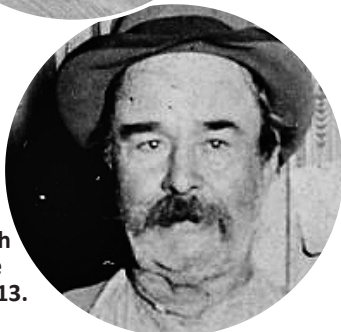


↑Above: A photo of Susan Lamotte working at the Rug Company in Mitchell, SD circa 1913.

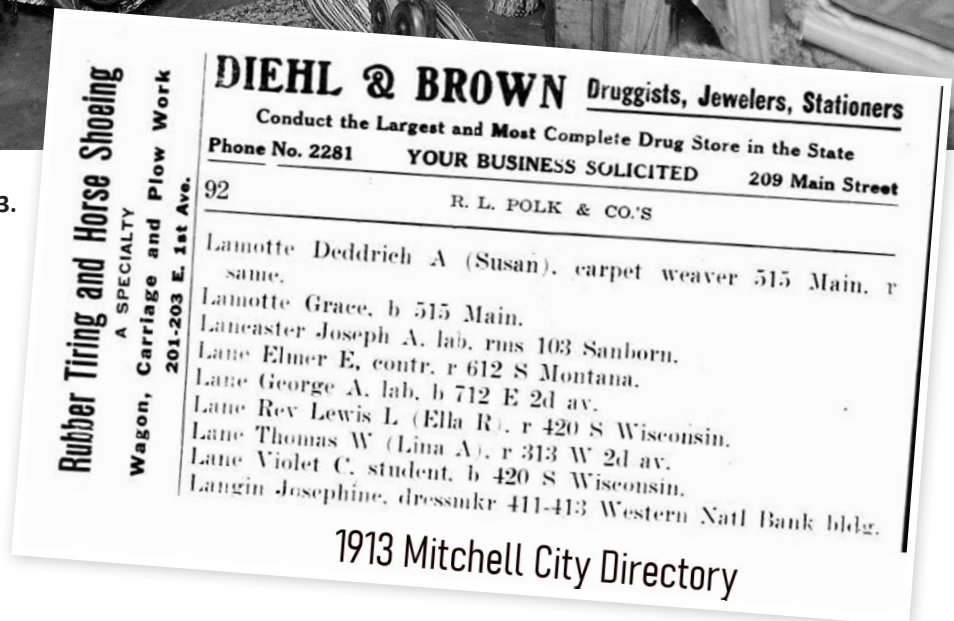
→Right: A scan of a Mitchell City directory circa 1913, featuring the the Lamottes being listed in the area.



Susan
Lamotte
circa 1913.



Deddrich
Lamotte
circa 1913.



Karen Pooley

Retha Albertz has a picture of her grandparents, Deddrich and Susan Lamotte. On the back it only says Mitchell Rug Factory, but she wanted to know more. We searched our records and online and found the following... On the 1860 and 1870 census he

was living in Clinton, Iowa with his parents, Alexandrer & Rosette Lamotte. By 1880 he is living with his wife, Susan Thompson and lists his occupation as well driller. By 1900 he is in Cedar County, Tipton Iowa with his wife and five children, Clara, Rosetta, Albert, Sarah and Mary Grace.

On September 4, 1906 he filed Homestead Papers for the NW1/4 11-04-20 in Stanley County, South Dakota and on October 17, 1907 an affidavit was filed by John Fischer that the quarter of land had been abandoned and he had never lived there nor improved it nor farmed or grazed it.

He is listed on the 1910 census still living in Stanley County. The 1913 Mitchell City Directory lists him and wife Susan as carpet weaver at 515 Main where they also live (probably upstairs or in the back). Daughter (Mary) Grace is also listed with the same address. On October 14, 1942 Mary Grace files for a belated birth certificate from the Iowa State Department of Health- Division of Vital Statistics.

Deddrich died in 1918 and is buried in Colorado.

Throughout our search there were different spellings, Deddrich A. Lamotte, Deed A. LaMotte, Diedrick Albert Lamotte, Deidrick A. Lamott, Dedrick A. Lamotte, Debrick Larmott, D.A. Lamotte, Deedrich Lamott, Deidrich A. LaMott, Deed A. Lamott and Deidrick A. Lamotte.

Rhetha was happy to learn more about her family.

IOWA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH—DIVISION OF VITAL STATISTICS
BIRTH CERTIFICATE D 153 1 6 6 0 8 2

(Explanation) In past years many birth records were not filed in the time of birth as provided by statute, due to the neglect of those charged with the duty of filing said records. This affidavit is provided to take care of such cases and may be executed by the person who has the best knowledge of the facts of the birth. NOT ACCEPTABLE IF SIGNED BY THE PARTY FOR WHOM IT IS MADE.

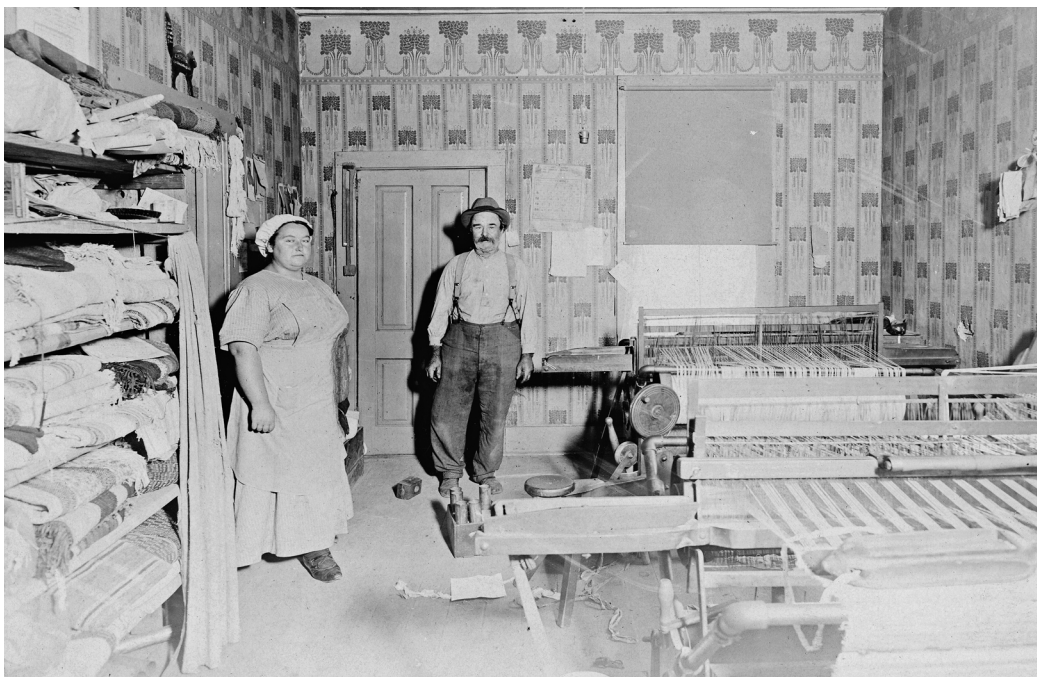
AFFIDAVIT
I, Rozetta Reilly, being duly sworn, depose and say that I am 46 years of age; that I have known the person named 46 years; that I reside at 1527-E. 54th St. in the COUNTY OF Cedar STATE OF Iowa; that the answers given to the following questions are true and correct as I verily believe.

FULL NAME OF CHILD: Mary Grace Lalotte CITY OF Tipton
PLACE OF BIRTH: COUNTY OF Cedar TOWNSHIP OF Maple STREET Maple
Sex of Child: Female (To be answered only in event of plural births) Number in order of birth: 54 Legitimate: Yes Date of Birth: April 21, 1897
Name of physician, midwife, or other person attending at this birth: Mary Harris Full Maiden Name: Susan Thompson
Father: Diedrick Albert Lamotte Birthplace: Iowa State or Country: Cedar County, Iowa
Mother: Susan Thompson Birthplace: Iowa State or Country: Cedar County, Iowa
Color: White Age at time of this birth: 50 Years Color: White Age at time of this birth: 43 Years
Occupation at time of this birth: Will Driller Occupation at time of this birth: Housewife
That the facts of my knowledge for answers given above are as follows: I am a sister of the above child, was living at home at the time of birth, and know the statements given above are true and correct.

STATE OF Iowa On this 14th day of October, 1942, before me came Rozetta Reilly, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing certificate, and she made oath that the information given in this instrument subscribed by her is true and correct to the best of her knowledge.

My commission expires: Do not write below these lines
Signature: L. B. Cooney Iowa County Registrar
OR Signature: John H. S. M.D., M.P.H. Date: 10/14/42

↑Above: A scan of Mary Grace's delayed birth certificate. She was a daughter of Susan & Deddrich Lamotte.



↑Above: A photo of Susan & Deddrich Lamotte working at the Rug Company in Mitchell, SD circa 1913.

Sadie Spinks Rites Monday

Funeral services for Sadie Spinks, 80, Mitchell will be Monday at 2 p.m. in First Lutheran Church with the Rev. M. Franklin Pudas officiating. Burial will be in Graceland Cemetery. The body will lie in state from 7-9 p.m. Sunday at Milliken Funeral Home. Family prefers memorials.

Mrs. Spinks was born at Tipton, Iowa Oct. 11, 1891 to Mr. and Mrs. Deedrich LaMotte and died Thursday. She married J. M. (Bobbie) Barrington Spinks at Mitchell in 1920. She was a member of the Degree of Honor and First Lutheran Church.

Survivors include two children, Mrs. Charles (Dorothy) Christian, Sioux Falls and Mrs. Milton (Rhetha) Albertz, Mitchell; seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by three sisters, a brother and her husband.

↑Above: A scan of Sadie Spinks's obituary, February 25, 1972.

She was also a daughter of Susan & Deddrich Lamotte.

Looking for information of your family, stop by The Carnegie Resource Center!

Upcoming Events 2025-2026

Mitchell Area Genealogical Society (MAGS)

And Mitchell Area Historical Society (MAHS)

December	11	7:00 p.m. Christmas at the Carnegie
January	17	2:00 p.m. Early Life of the Settlers & Homesteaders on Dakota Territory Discussion Audience Members are Encouraged to Share pictures and stories
	19	7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting
	26	6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting
	26	7:00 p.m. MAGS PROGRAM – "Show & Tell" Night Family Heirlooms & Memorabilia
February	14	2:00 p.m. Valentines Day Party
	16	6:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting
	23	6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting
	23	7:00 p.m. MAGS PROGRAM – Surviving the Online World of Genealogy – James Tanner
March	16	6:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting
	21	2:00 p.m. Jeanne & Bill Pattison (Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus) Sharing Cruise & Store Memories
	23	6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting
	23	7:00 p.m. MAGS PROGRAM – Open Night to Explore Our Resources
April	01	7:00 p.m. Cindy Grieg Sharing about Jewish Ancestors
TBA		20th Anniversary of The Carnegie Resource Center

FUTURE HAPPENINGS AT THE CARNEGIE RESOURCE CENTER!



January 17 • 2:00 PM

Stories of the Dakota Territory:

Settlers & Homesteaders

Step back in time with Lelia Kentmeister as she leads a discussion on the early life of the settlers and homesteaders who shaped the Dakota Territory. Bring your family stories, photographs, and artifacts to share. All ages are welcome!



February 14 • 2:00 PM

Valentine's Day Party

Prizes will be awarded to couples with the most interesting stories of romance. Bring photos, wedding attire, keepsakes, and other treasured memories to share with friends and neighbors.



March 21 • 2:00 PM

Meet Mr. & Mrs. Santa: Behind the Beard!

Ever wondered what it's like to be a professional Santa? Mr. and Mrs. Santa, department-store Santas since 2005, are visiting to share their funniest, jolliest stories. Expect laughter, jingles, and a hearty HO, HO, HO!

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

