



The Carnegie Courier

Newsletter of

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

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Summer 2025

Exhibition of O.S. Leeland: Visual storyteller of early South Dakota

Presented by Mitchell Area Historical Society in collaboration with THE SONS OF NORWAY

*Dates: June 2025 –October 11, 2025
Celebration: July 12, 2025, with talks by Cynthia Elyce Rubin and Blaine Hedberg*

The first organized emigration from Norway to America started on the ship Restauration that set sail for America from Stavanger, Norway on July 4, 1825, bound for New York with 52 Norwegians aboard. It would take 96 days to arrive with 53 on board, including a baby daughter born to the wife of expedition leader, Lars Larsen. The "Sloopers" as they were called, left Norway in search of religious freedom and land. Emigration affected every community in Norway and many in America, including South Dakota.

O.S. Leeland (1870-1939) arrived in America in 1887 from Vest Agder, in southern Norway, following the footsteps of two sisters and one brother. After living with siblings in Michigan and North Dakota, he is found in the 1900 South Dakota census in Blaine Township, Jerauld County at the farm of his sister and brother-in-law Nels Sandstol.

Most Norwegians were farmers so how and where Leeland learned photography is a mystery. But by 1902, he was advertising his photographic services of "landscape, portrait and interior work" in a nearby town's newspaper, the Mt. Vernon



News. And on 10 October 1902, he advertised, "My photography gallery will be ready for business Tuesday. I will be here to serve you and my aim will be to please you. First class instruments, fine lights and up to date mounts, that will make you glad."

Leeland soon moved to the more prosperous neighbor town of Mitchell, which was thriving as a result of railroad development. One apparent symbol of Mitchell's prosperity was the annual fall agricultural festival that began as the 1892 Corn Belt Exposition. From an account in The Mitchell Capital of 18 March 1904, we learn Leeland formed a corporation, with local businessmen. This was the beginning of the Leeland Art & Manufacturing Company "organized some time ago for the purpose of operating photograph galleries and making stereoscopic picture holders."

Continued on page 2



This photo dated 3-31-31 taken in Mitchell, SD has a caption on the picture that reads, "GOOD BYE OLD 'MITCHELL': WATCH OUR DUST."

Introducing Cynthia Elyce Rubin, guest speaker

Cynthia Elyce Rubin, writer, lecturer, curator, and visual culture specialist, has organized traveling exhibitions, Southern Folk Art and Swiss Folk, for the American Folk Art Museum, NYC, and has written numerous books and exhibition catalogues, including Southern Folk Art (Oxmoor House); Siegmund Forst: A Lifetime in Arts and Letters (Yeshiva University Museum); ABC Americana from the National Gallery of Art (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch) with E. Morgan Williams, *Larger than Life: the American Tall Tale Postcard, 1905-1915* (Abbeville Press); with Håvard Mossige, *Glædelig Yule! Minner og hilsener fra det norske Amerika* (Vigmostad & Bjørke). She contributed to the *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Photography* (Routledge), and wrote the introduction for *America the Beautiful: The Monumental Landscape of Clyde Butcher* (Window of the Eye).

Her articles have appeared in numerous magazines, including *Raw Vision*; *Minnesota History*; *South Dakota Magazine*; *North Dakota Horizons*; *Postkortet*, *Norske Postkortsamlere*; *Image File*, journal of Curt Teich Postcard Archives; *Stereo World*, publication of the National

Stereoscopic Association; exposure, journal of Society of Photographic Education; *Vesterheim*, publication of Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum and the *Clarion*, journal of the American Folk Art Museum. A recipient of two South Dakota Humanities Research Grants and a Minnesota Historical Society Research Grant, she also served on the NY Council for the Humanities Speakers in the Humanities Program with "Postmarked New York: The Postcard in American Life." She was on the Board of Trustees at the Norwegian-American Historical Association, Northfield, Minnesota and has written more than 100 articles on Norwegian America as the travel editor of the Norwegian American Newspaper, based in Seattle, Washington.

She has lectured on the photography of Norwegian-American O.S. Leeland at the Dakota Conference, Center for Western Studies; Conference for Society of Photographic Education; and the Norwegian-American Historical Association Norge in Bø I Telemark, Norway; Decorah, Iowa, and Fagerness, Norway. She holds an A.B. from Vassar College, an Ed.M. from Boston University and a Ph.D. from New York University. See

cynthiaelycerubin.com.

Cynthia will be joining us on July 12, 2025, at 6:30 pm at the Carnegie Resource Center in Mitchell, SD. She has many interesting tidbits about postcards in general and our local photographer, Leeland, to share.



Cowgirls and Cowboys were certainly part of the South Dakota landscape especially in Western Dakota.

Cynthia Elyce Rubin Collection

Exhibition of O.S. Leeland ... Cont. from page 1

Leeland went on to produce many types of photography, including stereographs, also called stereoviews, panoramic photos, real photo postcards and studio portraits. Not recognized during his lifetime, today he is becoming known as a visual storyteller describing with images daily life in early South Dakota. This exhibition will emphasize the region of Mitchell and will include examples from MAHS, Oscar Thompson (relative) and Cynthia Elyce Rubin.



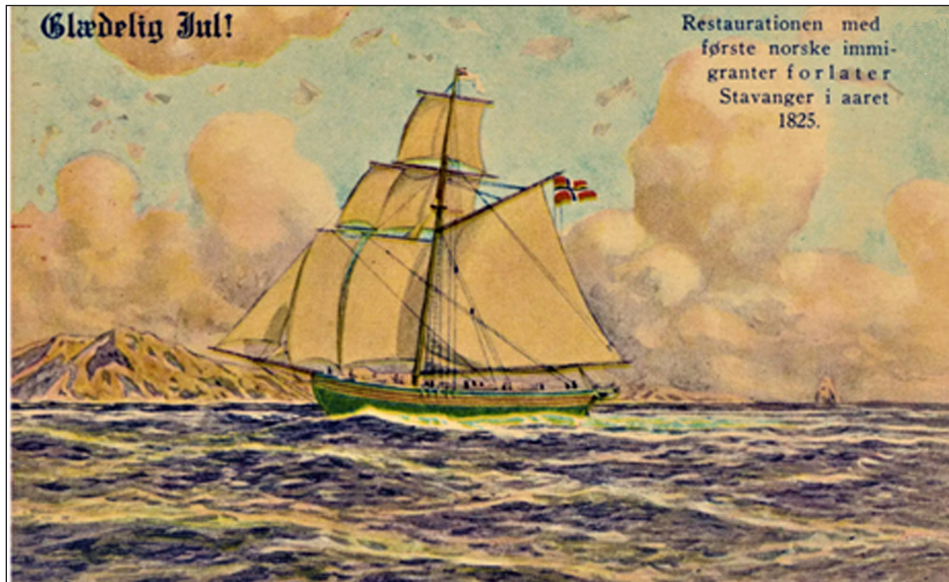
Interior view of the Leeland Art Co.'s Studio at 318 North Main, Mitchell, SD.

Welcome Our Guest Speaker: Blaine Hedberg

Our guest speaker on July 12, 2025, is Blaine Hedberg, President of the Westby (WI) Area Historical Society; former Executive Director of the Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library in Madison, Wisconsin, and primary genealogical researcher there for more than thirty years. Hedberg is an expert in Norwegian emigration and genealogy, specializing in immigrants who came to America before 1851, including the first organized immigrants from Norway in 1825. Hedberg was honored by King Harald of Norway with the Medal of St. Olav for his years of work with Norwegian genealogy, advancing knowledge of Norway abroad and for strengthening the bonds between expatriate Norwegians and their descendants.

Hedberg was born in Lake Preston, SD and for the past forty years has been working on a biographical directory of the earliest Norwegian settlers in Union County, SD. In his leisure he enjoys postcard collecting, buying, and selling old paper items, books, especially items with connections to Norway, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and the Midwest.

In anticipation of the 200th anniversary of Norwegian immigration celebrated throughout 2025, Blaine



Christmas card depicting Restauration at sea.

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

Hedberg will speak on "The Sloopers of 1825, the first immigrants from Norway", and will discuss this group using primary genealogical records and personal letters written by these immigrants.

In 1925 the Norwegian American community held a 100th anniversary of immigration in Norway in St. Paul, Minnesota. Mitchell resident and

photographer, Ole S. Leeland, took part in the event as an official representative of Mitchell. Hedberg will talk about the 1925 event; highlight several of Leeland's photographs from the event and show how the 1925 celebration shaped the present Norwegian American community and Norwegian ethnic organizations in the United States.



My intention is to see you in a few days. Fun Times with the camera! Oscar Thompson Collection



When Leeland was producing his real photo postcards, homesteading had taken over South Dakota. Leeland liked to visit these pioneers on their land claims, and he produced what are termed "narrative postcards" or postcards that tell a prairie story. Read the caption and view the image. There is often quiet humor. "Our Honey Moon on the Claim" depicts a couple in front of a tarpaper shack in need of repair. Items are strewn around. The pet dog sits quietly beside them. In the image. In "Making button holes on the claim," we see a man shooting a gun at the man's jacket. How else would you easily make button holes without a sewing machine? In "The Water Wagon on the Claim" two women are seen carrying water to their shack. People power supplied the energy necessary for survival on the claims.

Cynthia Elyce Rubin Collection



Oscar Thompson and Cynthia Rubin Collection



Country Store in Western South Dakota by Leeland

Oscar Thompson Collection

Auto Careening 60 Miles an Hour Crashes Into Street Platform at Palace; Drinking Couple Badly Hurt

10-3-1931 ER-1



Careening down North Main street at a 60-mile-an-hour clip Percy Simson, Corsica, and Irene Peterson, Mitchell, were seriously injured when they crashed into a platform in front of the Corn Palace at three o'clock this morning.

The platform, a large frame structure blocking the street, and used for free street acts in the Corn Palace celebration, was pushed 14 feet by the impact, and was lifted four feet in the air as the Model A Ford roaster driven by Simson crashed head-on into the obstruction.

Had Been Drinking

Police learned that the couple had visited a roadhouse north of the city and had been drinking. Two companions of the victims, R. L. Dice, Corsica, and a girl, later were picked up by the police at the roadhouse.

The lone witness of the crash, J. L. Cahill, night watchman at the Green Spot, stood 20 feet from the platform when the crash occurred. Cahill told how he saw the lights of the car coming at a terrific rate of speed down the street.

As the car crossed the Omaha railroad tracks, Cahill turned to cover some vegetables in front of his stand. A moment later the car had crashed into the street platform, the impact bouncing four feet in the air, Cahill said.

Top Sheared Off Car

The entire length of the car plowed under the platform, and the windshield and top were sheared off just above the heads of the two passengers.

Cahill's first thought as the splinters flew into the air was that the occupants of the car had been killed. Miss Peterson began to scream and

Cahill summoned police and hospital aid. A group of 30 men lifted the platform so that the bleeding bodies could be removed.

Miss Peterson received a fractured skull and severe lacerations about the face and forehead. Simson suffered multiple cuts about the face and head. Attending physicians marveled that they were not both decapitated. Both are expected to recover.

Faces Prosecution

Charges of reckless and drunken driving were filed against Simson and he will be brought to court as soon as he is released from the hospital.

R. L. Dice, owner of the car, who was arrested at the roadhouse carried a bottle of liquor. He was arraigned before Judge Herbert in municipal court on an intoxication charge and fined \$25.

This article is from the Evening Republican dated 10/3/1931. It describes the Leeland photo. The caption on the photo reads, "HASTE IS WASTE."

FROM THE ARCHIVES

A Remarkable Photograph.

Professor Boys of London recently delivered an illustrated lecture in which he showed photographs of the Lee-Metford bullet as it passed through a quarter-inch sheet of glass. Just before the bullet touched the sheet the air wave cut a disk of glass about half an inch in diameter clean out. At the same time the glass around the hole was crushed into powder and driven back at an extremely rapid rate. The glass stuck to the bullet for a short time after it had passed through, the disk being driven out in front of the "bow wave." In this experiment the waves caused by the vibrations of the glass were plainly shown. A photograph of the bullet after it had cleared the glass by nine inches showed the remainder of the glass intact, but when the bullet had proceeded another sixteen inches the sheet of glass was seen to break and fall in fragments.

*Mitchell Capital Fri. April 24, 1896

A Strange Animal Friendship.

Sometimes animals which are by nature deadly enemies, such as dogs and cats, strike up a very strong friendship. I have known a cat adopt a puppy and nurse it tenderly, but as a rule they prefer to bite and scratch. A sculptor of animals, a Mr. Harvey, had two pets, a pigeon and a cat, who lived together in great friendship, and had their photograph taken while eating out of the same dish. The pigeon was named Pidgie and the cat was called Toddie. They ate, slept and played together, and when Pidgie died Toddie was nearly broken hearted, and would never again eat or drink from the dishes from which she and her little playmate used to eat together.—Home Notes.

*Mitchell Capital Fri. Sept 14, 1906

PHOTOGRAPH PIKE'S PEAK FROM A BALLOON 1,000 FEET ABOVE SUMMIT

Colorado Springs, Colo., May 6.—

Manager C. W. Sells, of the Pike's Peak Cog railway, has signed a contract with G. R. Lawrence, of New York city, to have three photographs of Pike's peak taken from a balloon at the height of from 1,000 to 1,500 feet above the summit.

Mitchell Capital Fri. May 24, 1896

FAIRBANKS HAS LOST HIS BEARD

Photograph Taken in Peking
Shows Former Vice President
With Shaven Chin.

Washington, Nov. 10—Former Vice President Fairbanks has shaved off his beard.

This means almost as much as if some vandal had shaved the Washington monument off the White Lot. The Fairbanks beard has been as much a part of the Washington facial topography as the monument is a part of the map of the capital.

The news came in the form of a photograph of the ex-vice president taken in China. The photograph pictures a group of officials standing on a veranda in Peking. In the middle is Fairbanks. There is no mistake about him. He is slender, like a lily, and he wears his familiar frock coat.

It is Fairbanks. But the brush is gone. He has preserved merely the flowing mustache. A more than retreating chin is exposed to the merciless gaze of the beholder.

*Mitchell Capital Thur. Nov 11, 1909

Caramel Apples Fundraiser

The Carnegie Resource Center will again team up with Mitchell Main Street & Beyond to sell caramel apples during the Corn Palace Festival August 20-24.

The money raised will be used for roof repair!



City Directories needed!

We are still searching for City Directories to fill out our collection.

We are missing 1944, 1946, 1947, 1949, 1951, 1952, 1954, 1956, 1959, 1962, 1968, 2015 thru 2025.

Please think of us if you have any directories that need a new home.

In our effort to be a resource center for the area, we find that these are very valuable resources.

We Need Your Support!

Mitchell Area Historical received a subsidy grant from the City of Mitchell designated for the boiler that sat in 17" of water last summer. However, another source of funding that MAHS had hoped would help with the costs did not come through. Another \$25,000 is needed to get this job completed.

MAHS recently learned that we are looking at major roof repairs on the 1903 Carnegie Library building. Another very large money item. The organization is currently looking for ways to fund this project. Any help

with these projects would be greatly appreciated. Please keep us in mind. Thanks to all who have helped keep the Carnegie Resource Center an important part of Mitchell.



To DWU for including the Carnegie Resource Center in your "Day of Service."

To the Garden Club for sprucing up our flower beds and some general lawn care.

To Amy Fill from the Oscar Howe Gallery in Vermillion, SD for her presentation at the 110th Birthday Party that celebrated Oscar Howe held on May 13, 2025.

To the Chamber for bringing a group of young business leaders to tour the Carnegie.

To Cynthia Elyce Rubin for sharing her knowledge and collection about O.S. Leeland.

To Blaine Hedberg for agreeing to present a program on July 12, 2025, as part of the Leeland Exhibition.

To Sons of Norway for helping with the Leeland Exhibition.

Upcoming Events

Mitchell Area Genealogical Society (MAGS)

And Mitchell Area Historical Society (MAHS)

June 1 – Oct 11 Leeland Exhibition

June 16 – 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting

June 23 – 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting

June 28 – 7:00 p.m. MAGS Program: Preserving Your Ancestor's Textiles and Handmade Treasures

July 4 – Independence Day!

July 12 – 6:30 p.m. Speakers on Leeland Photography

July 21 – 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting

July 28 – 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting

28 – 7:00 p.m. MAGS Program:

10 Ways AI Can Help you

Find Your Elusive Ancestors

August 18 – 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting

August 25 – 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting

August 25 – 7:00 p.m. MAGS Program:

The Picture Bride Era: The Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 between U.S. and Japan

August 27-Sept 1 – South Dakota State Fair – SD Genealogical Society has a booth and workshops

September 15 – 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting

September 22 – 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting

22 – 7:00 p.m. MAGS Program

Fruit of the Earth: Using Deeds to Uncover Your Ancestors

October 11 – 7:00 p.m. "Norwegian Night" –

Celebration of the 1st Landing of Restauration in New York October 11, 1825

October 20 – 7:00 p.m. MAHS Meeting

October 26 – 6:00 p.m. MAGS Meeting

EXPLORE A GLIMPSE OF SD LIFE IN THE EARLY 1900'S

through the eyes of a local photographer, O.S. Leeland,

at the Carnegie Resource Center from June to October 11, 2025.

Open Monday-Saturday, 1-5 pm located at 119 West 3rd Avenue.

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

