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Custer Guidon Program at Cultural Heritage Center on Oct. 6

PIERRE, S.D. – Local historian Bill Markley will present a program about an artifact in the Museum of South Dakota State Historical Society's collection thought to be one of seven guidons (GUY-dons) from the Battle of the Little Bighorn at 2 p.m. CDT on Sunday, Oct. 6th, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The presentation, entitled "The Question of Authenticity and the Custer Guidon," is based on an article Markley wrote for *True West* magazine in May. There is no fee to attend the program.

A guidon is swallow-tail flag that military companies carried as formation markers and rallying points, and they were often sources of pride for soldiers who wished to ensure their company flag was not captured in battle.

Markley's presentation will trace the known history of the guidon in the collection of the State Historical Society, while sharing compelling evidence to suggest that the piece is original and just one of three guidons known to exist today.

"We are very excited to bring Mr. Markley to the Cultural Heritage Center to speak about the guidon," commented Jay Smith, museum director. "It is a remarkable story that weaves together important aspects of museum work from research to collection preservation from an event that occurred more than 137 years ago to present day."

Markley moved to Pierre in 1976 to work for the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and he has immersed himself in local history as well as participating in Civil War and Western frontier reenacting. Markley worked on the films *Dances With Wolves*, *Son of the Morning Star*, *Far and Away*, *Gettysburg* and *Crazy Horse*.

Markley has written three nonfiction books -- *Dakota Epic: Experiences of a Reenactor* during the filming of *Dances With Wolves*, *Up the Missouri River with Lewis and Clark* and *American Pilgrim, A Post September 11 Bus Trip*. He has written for South Dakota Magazine, Roundup, True West and Wild West.

Deadwood Dead Men, Markley's latest book, is a fictional account of Deadwood's earlier days and the solving of a string of murders that started with Wild Bill Hickok. Markley and his wife, Liz, live in Pierre, where they raised two children.

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.