

FOR RELEASE: March 25, 2010

CONTACT: Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, (605) 773-6000,
Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us

State Historical Society Revisits 1910 Federal Census for South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. – One hundred years ago, South Dakota had 135 communities and a population of nearly 584,000.

Those are just a couple of facts the South Dakota State Historical Society discovered when it reviewed South Dakota's 1910 federal census.

"With the 2010 federal census under way, the State Historical Society research staff thought it would be interesting to see what South Dakota was like in 1910," said Chelle Somsen, State Archivist. "The 1910 census provides valuable data for both genealogists and researchers."

The 1910 census featured 32 fields of information. They included name, sex, color or race, age, marital status, number of years married, number of children, place of birth, parents' places of birth, citizenship status, language spoken, trade or profession, education, and home ownership status.

"It's interesting to see how South Dakota has changed in 100 years," Somsen said. "For example, Lead was the third-largest town in the state in 1910."

Other statistics of interest include:

- The total population of South Dakota was 583,888 in 1910, an increase of a little more than 182,000 from 1900
- South Dakota had only 13 cities with more than 2,500 inhabitants and 222 towns with populations less than 2,500 in 1910
- The number of inhabitants in the larger cities included Sioux Falls (14,094), Aberdeen (10,753) and Lead (8,392). Not surprisingly, South Dakota counties with the largest populations were Minnehaha (29,621), Brown (25,867), and Lawrence (19,694)
- Of 583,888 South Dakotans counted in the 1910 census, 96.6 percent were white and 3.4 percent were listed as American Indian and other races
- There were 317,112 males and 266,766 females; 50.5 percent of males age 15 or more were married, compared with 63 percent of females 15 or older
- The average family had 4.5 members

- The native population in 1910 (those born in the United States) for South Dakota totaled 483,098 inhabitants, with 53.4 percent of them born outside of South Dakota and coming from states such as Iowa (75,815), Illinois (32,360), and Wisconsin (31,210)
- A little more than 100,000 South Dakotans were born in foreign countries, with many immigrating from Germany (21.4 percent), Norway (20.8 percent) and Russia (13.1 percent)
- The 1910 census listed 77,644 farms in South Dakota. Two-thirds of those farms either had total acreage between 100 to 174 acres (28,396) or 260 to 499 acres (24,811)
- The average farm had 335.1 acres, valued at an average of \$34.69 per acre
- Of those farms that reported, 91.2 percent had horses, 83.8 percent had cattle and 61.1 percent had swine

For more information on the 1910 census or services available from the State Historical Society-Archives, contact the office by phone at (605) 773-3804 or by e-mail at archref@state.sd.us . The archives is open Monday through Friday and the first Saturday of each month from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. CDT.

-30-

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism and State Development and strives to help the state meet the goals of the 2010 Initiative by enhancing history as a tool for economic development and cultural tourism. The society 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.