

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Aug. 12, 2014

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

Illingworth's Custer photo collection now part of South Dakota Digital Archives

PIERRE, S.D. – A photo collection documenting the Custer Expedition is now available online from the South Dakota State Historical Society.

This year marks the 140th anniversary of the Custer Expedition to the Black Hills. From July 2-Aug. 30, 1874, the U.S. Army mounted an expedition, led by Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, from Fort Abraham Lincoln near present-day Mandan, N.D., to the then-uncharted region of the Black Hills in present-day South Dakota. The mission of the expedition was to find a suitable location for a fort in the area, to find a route to the southwest United States and to investigate the possibility of gold mining in the Black Hills.

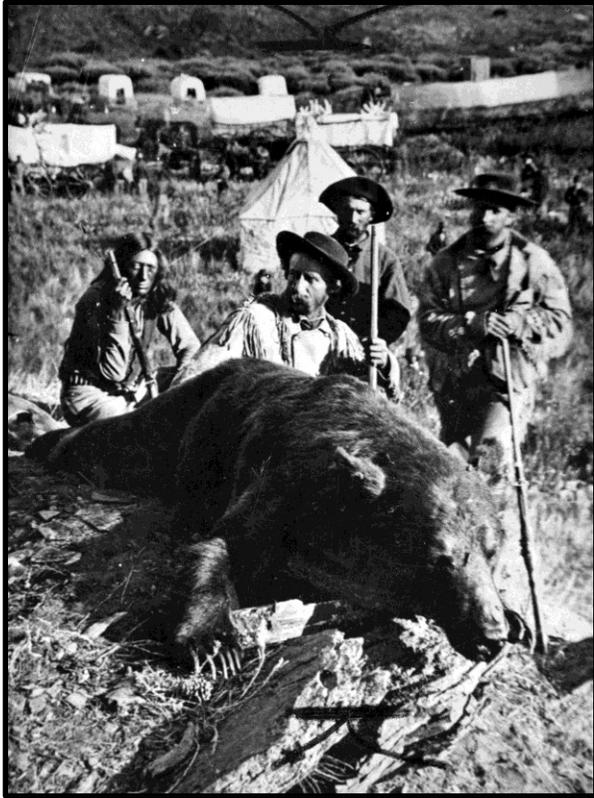
The entire 1874 expedition was photographed by English photographer William H. Illingworth, who was a photographer based in St. Paul, Minn. Illingworth had previously been the photographer on the 1866 Captain James L. Fisk expedition to Montana Territory.

Illingworth was hired by Capt. William Ludlow at the rate of \$30 per month to photograph images of the Black Hills and the members of the 7th Cavalry. He produced approximately 70 photographic plates for the U.S. Army, including images of Custer's wagon train, rock outcroppings, peaks and valleys, and Custer with his prize hunting trophy, a grizzly bear.

Many of these images remain today with the South Dakota State Historical Society-Archives at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. They can be found on the South Dakota Digital Archives, an online resource of over 50,000 digital photographic images and government and manuscript records from the archives holdings, at <http://sddigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/>.

The photograph digitization project is funded by private donations and grants. Those interested in sponsoring a photograph collection should contact the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit fund-raising partner of the State Historical Society, at (605) 773-6001.

State Archives staff is available to help assist with research and can be reached at (605) 773-3804 or archref@state.sd.us. Archives hours are 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. CDT Monday-Friday and the first Saturday of each month. For more information, visit www.history.sd.gov/Archives.



Editor's Note: The attached photo shows Lt. Col. George Custer, center, with his prize hunting trophy from the Black Hills, a grizzly bear. (Courtesy South Dakota State Historical Society-Archives)

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.