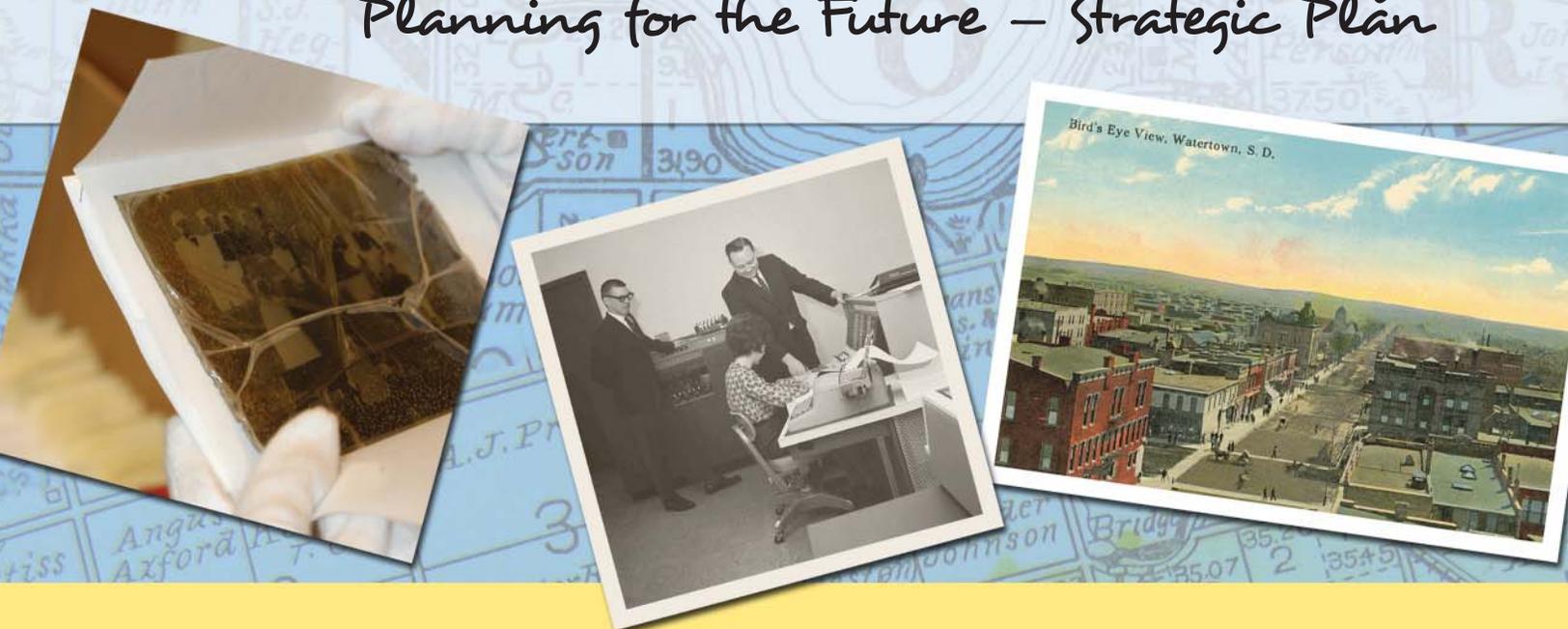


# South Dakota

## Documentary Heritage Planning for the Future – Strategic Plan





## Introduction

The State Historical Records Advisory Board, or SHRAB, is part of a nationwide effort to connect federal, state, and local repositories in order to preserve the nation's documentary heritage. As part of its mission to preserve historical records, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) encourages each state and territory to have a historical records advisory board to lead and coordinate records preservation activities in its area. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), part of NARA, has encouraged each board to create a strategic plan and update it regularly, and administers grant funds for that purpose.

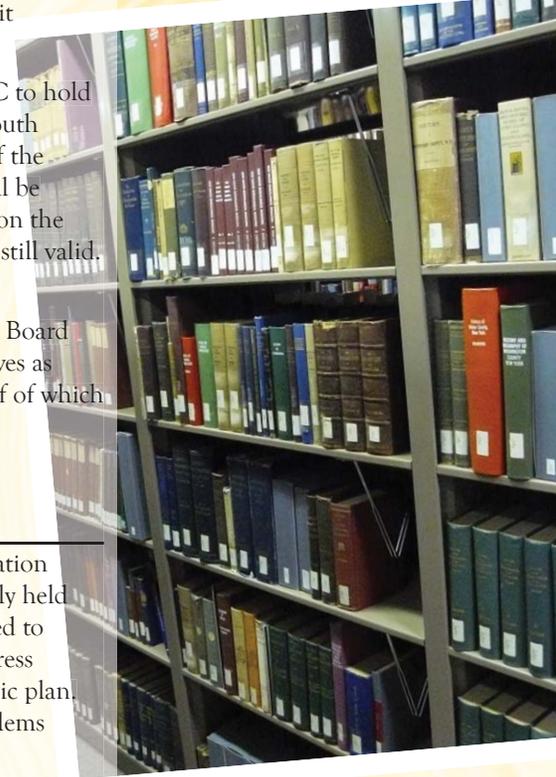
In 2000-2001, the South Dakota SHRAB received a \$20,462 grant from NHPRC to hold a series of public meetings, to prepare a strategic plan for historical records in South Dakota, and to create a *Guide to Historical Repositories in South Dakota's*. A copy of the guide is available on the State Archives web site where updates and additions will be made regularly. The SHRAB reviewed the plan that was in effect in 2006 based on the information from the 2000-2001 survey, and found that the goals and issues are still valid. Additional areas of concern that needed to be addressed were also added.

The South Dakota SHRAB was created in 1997 under statutory authority of the Board of Trustees of the South Dakota State Historical Society. The State Archivist serves as chairman of the SHRAB, and the board includes at least six other members, half of which must be professional archivists.

## Strategic Plan

The strategic plan includes a summary of issues facing historical records preservation throughout South Dakota, including public and private records, records currently held by repositories, and records that have not yet been collected. The plan is intended to focus energies on the most important issues, and to provide a framework to address them systematically. SHRAB members chose four issues to include in the strategic plan. The section for each issue includes a narrative explaining the issue and the problems connected with it, and goals that the board developed to address the issue.

Since the SHRAB has no direct authority over records or repositories, and no funding beyond limited funds to continue holding meetings, the goals are directed toward encouraging, supporting, and coordinating activities of the repositories and people who actually care for the records. Their cooperation is essential to the success of this plan, and the South Dakota SHRAB is both dependent on, and grateful to, the many individuals and institutions that have committed to help in this endeavor.



## Issue 1: Access

Access to archival collections was identified as a major issue for South Dakota's archives. Full access to historical records includes the ability of the public to physically see and consult records upon request in a reasonable time, availability of descriptive tools such as catalogs, indexes, and finding aids, and the provision of reference services for researchers.

From the information that was gathered from the survey many repositories reported no access to their collections. Of those that reported, the majority lacked indexes or finding aids, while a select few had guides to their entire collection. Those that have indexes or finding aids, for the most part use card catalogs or typewritten registers. Numerous repositories reported having no staff available to provide access to collections. Only a few repositories have collection records in online catalogs or information about holdings on the World Wide Web.

This lack of access to historical records indicates that the following needs to be addressed:

- the need for improved description at the repository level, especially finding aids;
- the need for improved description at state and national levels by cataloging collections in SDLN and OCLC, and providing more information on the Internet;
- the need to effectively network to improve access to collections across the state of South Dakota;
- the need for increased staff knowledge of access and descriptive tools;
- and the need to respond to researchers at many different levels

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**Goal:** Encourage collection sharing and other methods to enhance physical access to historical records.

*Initiative:* Encourage repositories without staff or research facilities to work with other institutions, so that collections can be used by researchers without compromising their security.

*Initiative:* Encourage repositories with limited staff to create an "instrument of gift" agreement for formally transfer materials and establish provenance for their collections.

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**Goal:** Encourage the provision of reference services for all researchers, regardless of the level of technological ability.

*Initiative:* Through the "Guide to Historical Repositories in South Dakota", provide contact information to the public for each repository in the state, including contact name, address, phone number, e-mail address, web site URL, and business hours.

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**Goal:** Encourage the use of and improve the quality of descriptive tools used to access collections, such as finding aids, inventory lists, and catalogs.

*Initiative:* Offer regional workshops in the creation and use of finding aids. The SHRAB may sponsor workshops itself, or work with repositories to sponsor workshops.

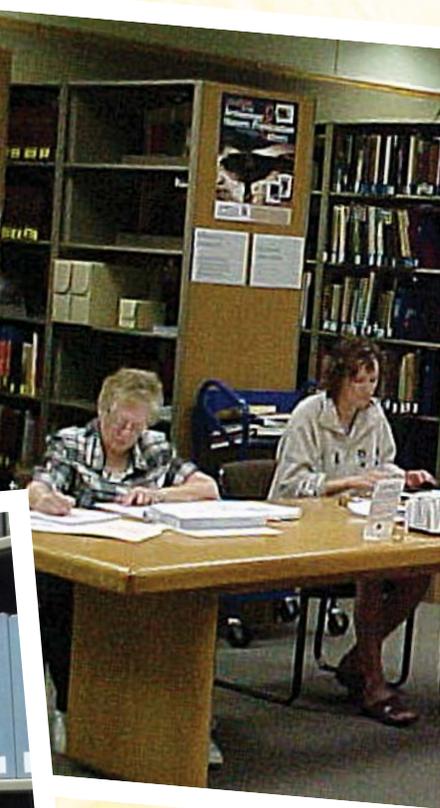
*Initiative:* Recommend minimum guidelines and best practices for the creation of finding aids for use in South Dakota. Guidelines may include the number of fields in a finding aid, copyright statements and other legal restrictions on collections, and information about descriptive tools.

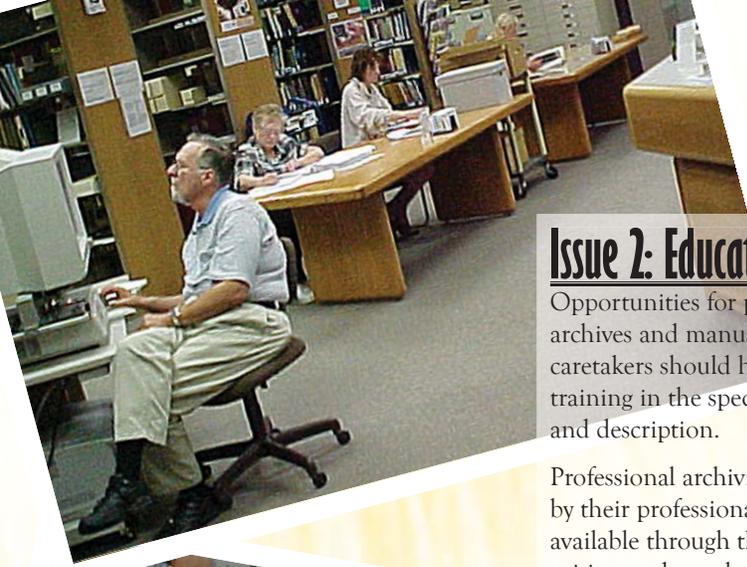
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**Goal:** Encourage the creation, automation, and reformatting of descriptive tools and finding aids for South Dakota's manuscript collections in online catalogs.

*Initiative:* Offer regional workshops by SAA or other content providers in the creation of online catalog records and web sites, either free or at a minimal cost to participants.

*Initiative:* Maintain and update the "Guide to Historical Repositories in South Dakota", and encourage all South Dakota repositories to continue adding information to it.





## Issue 2: Education & Training

Opportunities for professional education, development, and training in all areas of archives and manuscripts collections administration are limited in South Dakota. Record caretakers should have regular access to education in archival theory and practice and to training in the specific areas of preservation, storage, appraisal, and archival management and description.

Professional archivists and librarians have access to workshops and seminars sponsored by their professional associations. Although some education and training programs are available through these associations, especially the national and regional organizations, tuition and travel expenses often preclude attendance by individuals from South Dakota. For those in non-professional or docent positions, in which institutional support is non-existent, these expenses pose a substantial disincentive. In addition greater awareness must be developed, not only among the general public, but also with public and elected officials at all levels of government to increase public awareness and appreciation of the importance of archives and historical records.

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**Goal:** Encourage professional archivists to attend conferences and workshops on archival topics as often as possible, and to seek post-graduate training, archival certification, and advanced degrees.

*Initiative:* Gather and disseminate information about regional and national meetings and training programs.

*Initiative:* Encourage archivists who have attended recent meetings or courses to share their experiences with colleagues through local presentations and talks.

*Initiative:* SHRAB should sponsor at least one workshop or training session each year.

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**Goal:** Encourage and coordinate programs sponsored by archives and other repositories to increase public awareness of the importance and value of historical records and encourage archivists in South Dakota to communicate and coordinate with colleagues who preserve records.

*Initiative:* Board members will publicize Archives Month at their own institutions through exhibits, displays, posters, or press releases.

*Initiative:* Assist staff at archival organizations in planning archival programs and workshops.

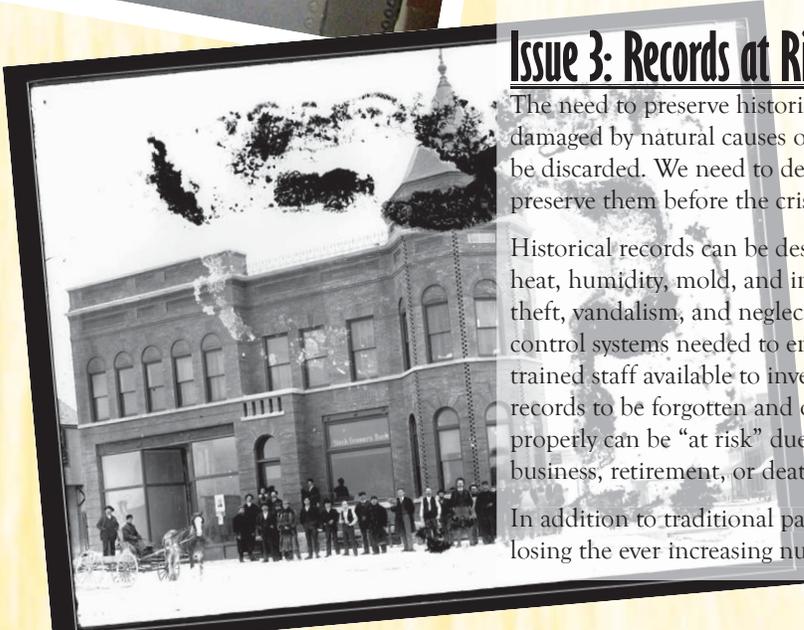


## Issue 3: Records at Risk

The need to preserve historical records often is not apparent until they have already been damaged by natural causes or neglect, or brought to attention because they are about to be discarded. We need to develop ways to identify important records and make plans to preserve them before the crisis point is reached.

Historical records can be destroyed or damaged by natural factors including water, fire, heat, humidity, mold, and insects. They can also be destroyed by human factors such as theft, vandalism, and neglect. Few repositories in South Dakota have security and climate control systems needed to ensure long-term preservation of valuable records and few have trained staff available to inventory and catalog records in storage, making it easy for those records to be forgotten and overlooked. Even records that are stored and maintained properly can be "at risk" due to the creator or caretaker's lack of interest, going out of business, retirement, or death.

In addition to traditional paper records archivists are also challenged to address the risk of losing the ever increasing number of records in electronic formats.



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**Goal:** Encourage cooperation among repositories to identify records that are not being cared for, or at risk of being lost or damaged, and develop plans to preserve them and make them accessible to researchers.

*Initiative:* Maintain, update, and expand the “Guide to Historical Repositories in South Dakota” with accurate information on staff and facilities, so that potential donors can be directed to appropriate repositories, and archival staff will be able to identify where strengths and gaps exist in archival holdings.

*Initiative:* Encourage cooperation and communication between archival repositories to ensure that all aspects of South Dakota’s history are collected by some institution, and so that institutions don’t duplicate efforts.

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**Goal:** Encourage responsible collecting by helping repositories meet archival standards to help ensure that repositories will be able to maintain their collections into the future.

*Initiative:* Support and sponsor meetings and workshops for staff and volunteers, to help them improve skills and knowledge.

*Initiative:* Encourage cooperation among repositories and institutions so that a single individual or organization isn’t left with a burden of maintaining historical records that are beyond their resources.

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**Goal:** Encourage collaborative approaches among repositories to address the challenges and opportunities posed by information technology.

*Initiative:* Raise awareness about electronic records and create interest by sharing information on projects that can serve as models for others.

*Initiative:* Support or sponsor workshops or sessions on best practices and emerging technology for the management and preservation of born digital/electronic records.



## Issue 4: Funding

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For the majority of repositories in South Dakota, funding is either non-existent or inconsistent with needs for identification, solicitation, and preservation of historical records. Access to these records is also compromised because of this predicament. For those few repositories that have consistent funding, budgetary constraints limit their ability to expand services beyond current levels. Plans to address the other three issues in this plan are also dependent on finding additional funding sources.

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**Goal:** Seek funds to continue meetings and projects of the South Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board.

*Initiative:* Prepare a proposal to seek additional funding from NHPRC to pay for costs of regular South Dakota SHRAB meetings.

*Initiative:* Prepare a proposal to seek funds from NHPRC, and find a source for matching funds, for a regrant program to provide small grants to local institutions through the SHRAB.

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**Goal:** Provide leadership and support in developing funding strategies to ensure the preservation of South Dakota’s documentary resources.

*Initiative:* Collect and disseminate information about grants and other funding opportunities related to preservation of historical records.

*Initiative:* Encourage development of grant proposals to NHPRC by providing information about the program, and previewing proposals to assist them in meeting requirements.

*Initiative:* Through SHRAB meetings, discuss and encourage joint grant projects and partnerships that can involve multiple institutions, including institutions in neighboring states.



## **Mission Statement**

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The South Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board (SDSHRAB) advocates for the preservation of historical records, educates the public and records caretakers about the importance of the historical record, and leads the historical community in preserving, promoting, and providing access to the state's documentary heritage. To accomplish this mission the SDSHRAB investigates and reports on the state of historical records in South Dakota; develops statewide plans for records preservation activities; determines priorities for historical records projects; coordinates cooperation between repositories; and reviews grant proposals submitted to the NHPRC by South Dakota institutions.

## **Credits**

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Photos are courtesy of South Dakota State Archives and University of South Dakota.

Sponsored by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

For further information about the SDSHRAB visit the website: [http://www.sdhistory.org/arc/arc\\_shrab.htm](http://www.sdhistory.org/arc/arc_shrab.htm)

