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“Scotty Philip’s Buffalo Herd” photo display at Cultural Heritage Center

PIERRE, S.D. – “Scotty Philip’s Buffalo Herd” is the new photo display in the Education Room of the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The display, expected to be up through the end of the year, features 11 images, found in the archival collections of the South Dakota State Historical Society and online at the South Dakota Digital Archives.

James “Scotty” Philip was a Scottish-born rancher, businessman and politician commonly known as “The Man Who Saved the Buffalo.” He purchased buffalo from the estate of Fred Dupree, who had rounded up five bison calves in the 1880s when buffalo were on the brink of extinction.

Philip prepared a specially enclosed pasture for the buffalo on his ranch along the Missouri River located north of Fort Pierre. At the time of Philip’s death in 1911 there were approximately 1,000 head of buffalo on the ranch.

“Scotty Philip’s herd was one of the most photographed groups of buffalo in North America,” says state archivist Chelle (pronounced SHELL-ee) Somsen. “These particular images are held in the State Archives photo collections and many are viewable online at the South Dakota Digital Archives.”

The South Dakota Digital Archives, an online resource launched in January 2012 by the South Dakota State Archives, an office of the State Historical Society, provides researchers digital access to unique historical records.

There are currently over 63,000 photographic images from throughout the state available for viewing by visiting history.sd.gov/archives and clicking on the link to the “South Dakota Digital Archives.”

The Cultural Heritage Center is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. CDT and Sundays and holidays from 1-4:30 p.m. There is no fee to view these images, but standard admission fees apply for visitors wanting to go into the museum galleries. Admission fees are: Children (17 and under) and society members -- free; Adults -- \$4; and Seniors (60 and over) -- \$3. Special discounts apply for AAA Members. There is free admission to galleries for all visitors the first Sunday of the month.

The Education Room is occasionally rented or in use. Visitors may want to call ahead to confirm access to the display.

Editor's Note: Photograph of Scotty Philip's buffalo herd near Fort Pierre taken by P.H. Kellogg in the mid-1900s. (Photo courtesy South Dakota State Historical Society-Archives)