

It's important to commemorate, remember our past — all of it

I recently returned from the American Association for State and Local History meeting in Richmond, Virginia. The theme for the meeting was “Commemoration: The Promise of Remembrance and New Beginnings.” Remembrance is commemoration, and, as such, our responsibility is to mark and search for the meanings of the achievements and afflictions of the people who came before us. However, history is not just about significant anniversary after anniversary. Although celebrating those major events is important, it should not drive our work. In fact, last year we commemorated the centennial anniversary of the State Capitol.

Nevertheless, what prompted the theme of the AASLH Richmond, VA, meeting was the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War (1861-1865). Here in South Dakota, we tend not to discuss the Civil War. Much of our history focuses on the development of the Dakota Territory (also celebrating its 150th anniversary, 1861-1889) and the war's impact on the region after the surrender of the South. However in the South, the Civil War remains a blue/gray, north/south, them/us type of history. Many Civil War historians are caught-up in the military aspect of the war and can recount minute details about battles, equipment, officers and soldiers, uniforms, etc. We see the influence of this history in the number of preserved Civil War battlefields. However, fewer individuals are social historians and study the impact of the war on families, farming, industrial-

From the SDSHS Director



Jay D. Vogt

zation, slaves (known as enslaved workers, I discovered), and free workers (white and freed slaves). For example, how did the war affect the development of Dakota Territory?

The problem with “celebrating” the American Civil War is similar to “celebrating” the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The arrival of the Corps of Discovery in the West meant great changes for the American Indians who lived here. For them, the changes eventually resulted in the creation of tribal reservations and a dramatic adjustment in their way of life. As for the Civil War, “the South will rise again,” harkens to a white-dominated South. The valiant

See “Vogt,” Page 2

Field Reports

Deborah Gangloff has been named the new executive director and administrator of the Dahl Fine Arts Center in Rapid City, the Rapid City Arts Council has announced. Gangloff was most recently director of the Days of '76 Museum in Deadwood. She is a former assistant director of the Adams Museum and House in Deadwood.

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The board of directors of the South Dakota State Railroad Museum in Hill City is proud to formally announce the establishment of the South Dakota Railroad Hall of Fame, as well as the first group of inductees.

According to SDSRM board president James Grimes, “The Railroad Hall of Fame is a symbolic as well as tangible tribute to the men, women, organizations, and railroads that have made unparalleled contributions to the development of our state, and our nation.”

Recognition in five categories will be awarded on an annual basis to a person or organization that exemplifies a dedication or service to railroading and railroad preservation activities in South Dakota.

The five categories and inductees are as follow:

Railroad employee (active or retired) – George A. (Alex) Huff, Dakota Southern Railway

Railroad employee (posthumous) – Jerome M. (Jerry) Drager – Chicago and North

See “More,” Page 2

More Field Reports

Continued from Page 1

Western Railroad

Friend of Railroading – Mildred Fielder, historian and author

Friend of the SDSRM – South Dakota Wheat Growers Association

The Paul Redfield Railroad Preservation Award – Lynn A. Anderson - C&NW, DM&E

“An untold number of individuals and businesses have honored us as a State, and as a Museum with their time, dedication, and contributions to railroading and its history – this is really a small thing in the big scheme of things that we will do to honor them,” said Rick Mills, executive director of the Museum.

The initial class of the Railroad Hall of Fame inductees were introduced during the SDSRM’s gala event at Sylvan Lake Lodge on Oct. 22.

U U U U

A new “Turn of the Century” exhibit opened in late October at the Codington County Heritage Museum in Watertown. The exhibit describes how life was changing in the early 1900s, and highlights some prominent Watertown businesses at that time. The exhibit also features the Watertown School District, which was formed in 1879.

The Fall Members Meeting of the

Codington Country Historical Society was held on Oct. 20. The featured speaker was Bernie Hunhoff, editor and publisher of South Dakota Magazine, and also Minority Leader in the State House of Representatives. Hunhoff’s presentation, “Stories from the Road,” was about his interactions with interesting people and places he has come across in his travels, both as a journalist and a politician.

U U U U

The Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center in Fort Pierre is hosting its annual Tribute Dinner on Nov. 12. This year’s honorees include: Kenny Badger — Past Rodeo Great; The Tope Sisters — Rodeo Cowgirls Great; Gary Zilverberg — Rodeo Cowboy Great; Darrel and Marlene Griffith — Ranch Cowboy Family; The late E.W. Weiset — Rodeo Promoter; and Korkow Rodeo’s “Slippery” — Rodeo Animal Athlete. To purchase a \$30 ticket, contact the rodeo center at (605) 494-1094.

U U U U

Rober Kolbe of Sioux Falls, a photographer, historian and member of the South Dakota State Historical Society board of trustees, was awarded the Zoom Zoom Award at the recent 19th annual West River History Conference in Rapid City. Named for the favorite phrase of conference founder Herb Blakely, the award is presented annually for outstanding support of local history. Kolbe is president of the Minnehaha County Historical Society and is in his third term on the SDSHS board. His books include “Minnehaha County Historical and Biographical Sketches” and “They Captured the Moment — Dakota Photographs: 1853-1920,” co-authored with Brian Bade of Rapid City. Kolbe is currently working on a book illustrated with stereographs of the Black Hills Gold Rush from 1875 to 1879.

U U U U

A locally-produced variety show served as a fund-raiser in October for the Historic Homestake Opera House Society in Lead. The “Les Karas Champagne Variety Show,” produced by Les Karas of Deadwood and Sarah

Carlson, director of the Historic Homestake Opera House, served as a tribute to “The Lawrence Welk Show” and featured the talents of volunteer singers, musicians and actors. The opera house was nearly destroyed by fire in 1984, but extensive and ongoing restoration work has made it possible to house live performances on its stage. More recently – thanks to grants from the South Dakota State Historical Society’s Historic Preservation Office, Deadwood Historic Preservation and the City of Lead – a restored women’s lounge, a brand new sound system, and a renovated stamped concrete courtyard entrance have been completed.

U U U U

St. Joseph’s Indian School in Chamberlain has broken ground on a \$3 million addition to the Akta Lakota Museum and an alumni center. Officials said the addition will provide more climate-controlled space for the museum, which opened in the mid-1990s. The addition will also feature a medicine wheel garden to promote healing and reconciliation.

U U U U

Winter hours begin in November for the Adams Museum in Deadwood. The museum will be open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. MST Tuesday through Saturday, and will be closed for winter holidays. The Historic Adams House is closed through March for extensive cleaning. The Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center will be open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday or by appointment; it will also close for winter holidays.

U U U U

A fun and informative new exhibit has opened at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. “Our South Dakota: Big Land/Big Ideas/Big Heart” creates a whimsical and fun environment for informally learning all about our great state. Geared to appeal to a K-6th grade audience and families, the exhibition features many hands-on activities. Four major themes – comparisons, landscapes, big ideas, and community – run throughout the exhibition. Museum hours are 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. CST Monday through Saturday and 1-4:30 p.m. Sundays and most holidays. The museum is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s and Easter.

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Continued from Page 1

Southern troops fought for sovereignty so they could maintain their system of slavery. Where does this leave African-Americans? In light of the great strides made in civil rights for minority people, doesn’t celebrating the Civil War seem out of place?

Yes and No. As we work to collect, preserve, interpret and promote our history, we need to be cognizant of the multiple layers and different perspectives of our history. As we do, we need to provide the context that history allows us in giving us a more objective perspective of our history. It is important to commemorate and remember our past, warts and all. jdv