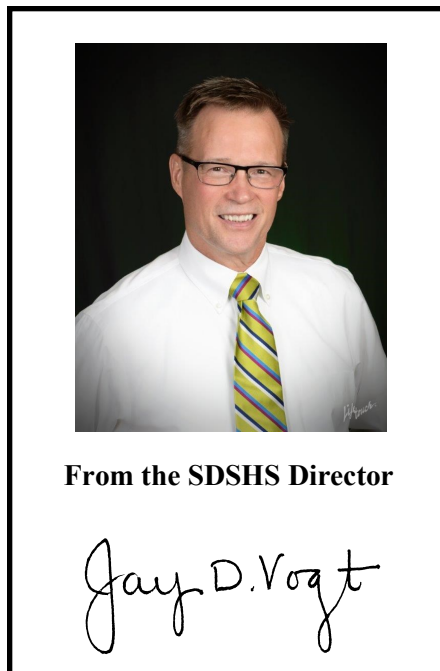


## State Historical Society celebrating Ingalls Wilder's 150-year legacy

**T**uesday, February 7, 2017, marked the 150 anniversary of the birth of Laura Ingalls Wilder, perhaps South Dakota's most famous author. We hosted an event featuring Wilder authority William T. Anderson for an audience at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center and broadcast live through the Dakota Digital Network to De Smet, Wilder's little town on the prairie. Wilder died three days after her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 10, so 2017 also marks 60 years since her death.

**M**any of us "know" Laura Ingalls Wilder through her "Little House on the Prairie" series. We either read the novels as children or had them read to us. Of the eight original books in the series, four take place in South Dakota. I believe South Dakota's romance with winter and blizzards comes from Wilder's depiction of the season in "The Long Winter" of 1880-1881, one of the worst winters in history. Others may think of Wilder through the "Little House on the Prairie" television series, starring Michael Landon and Melissa Gilbert.

**T**he first book in the South Dakota State Historical Society's biography series was "Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Writer's Life" by Pamela Smith Hill in 2007. In 2014, the Society pulled off a publishing coup by issuing "Pioneer Girl: The Annotated Autobiography," edited by Pamela Smith Hill. This was the first and only authorized publication of Wilder's auto-



biography which she completed in 1930, and it has been a run-away best seller. As a follow-up to "Pioneer Girl," the Society is releasing in May, "Pioneer Girl Perspectives: Exploring Laura Ingalls Wilder," edited by Nancy Tystad Koupal, director of the South Dakota Historical Society Press. This anthology includes nine essays by leading Wilder scholars, an interview, a speech by Wilder and an introduction. Visit [pioneerproject.org](http://pioneerproject.org) for more information.

**T**he theme for this year's State Historical Society's history conference is "Laura Ingalls Wilder: A 150-Year Legacy." The conference is being held in

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## Field Reports

The Dalesburg Scandinavian Association works to preserve and promote the heritage of Dalesburg Lutheran Church and the Dalesburg Community in and around Vermillion. Among the events the association has coming up is a Swedish Pea Soup and Pancakes Brunch on Saturday, April 16.

Current officers of the DSA include: President — Ron Johnson; Treasurer — Connie Richards; ASI Liason — Lorraine Carlson; Membership — Ron Johnson; Officers At Large — Carol Shubeck and Brendyn Richards; Website — Jeff and Barb Erickson; and Ex Officio — Pastor Martens.

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The Historic Homestake Opera House in Lead, as a fundraiser, will be hosting the comedy stage play "Lend Me a Tenor," presented by the Gold Camp Players Community Theater, on March 3-5.

Tickets to the performance are \$15 for adults, \$10 for HHOH members and \$5 for students 17 and younger. Tickets are available online at [homestakeoperahouse.org](http://homestakeoperahouse.org) or by calling (605) 584-2067.

The HHOH held an Online Collectables Auction Feb. 4-6, selling many collectables from storage at the facility. Most of the items were from the Lead area, including old Homestake Mining Company buildings, old City of Lead buildings and the old Central School.

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## More Field Reports Continued from Page 1

Current officers of the Clay County Historical Society board of directors in Vermillion include: President - Dan Christopherson; Vice President - Gloria Hensley; Recording Secretary - Lisa Johnson; Membership Secretary - Ruth Bylander; Treasurer - Caitlin Collier; Past President - Maxine Johnson; Lifetime Director - Ann Severson; Elected Directors - Erin Burrow, Barb Campbell and Art Rusch; CCHPC Representative - Jim Stone; Executive Director - Wess Pravecek. State history officials were saddened to hear of the January passing of longtime CCHS member and Lifetime Director Cleo Erickson.

The Austin-Whittemore House is open for tours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or with an appointment.

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The Center for Western Studies in Sioux Falls recently achieved what officials called a “major mile-

stone” when, for the first time since being established by the Augustana University board of trustees in 1970, the center was included in the company of its peers — other university-based western studies centers — at a major scholarly conference. CWS Executive Director Dr. Harry Thompson was invited to speak in a panel session on the topic of “The Centers of the West: Making Western History Relevant to the Public” at the 56th annual Conference of the Western History Association in St. Paul, MN. In his remarks, Thompson described the varied and successful ways CWS reaches out to its constituency, from traditional programs to social media.

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The prize of a recent fund-raiser for the South Dakota State Railroad Museum in Hill City was a \$5,000 trip for two to San Francisco and the Napa Valley of California, where the winners would ride the famous Napa Valley Wine Train. Up to 1,000 tickets were sold at \$50 each.

Shores of Silver Lake;” the first school of De Smet attended by Laura and her sister Carrie and the infamous Nelli Oleson; and the 1887 final home of Charles and Caroline Ingalls, as well as a replica of the Brewster School where Laura first taught. Another site just outside De Smet is the Ingalls Homestead where the cottonwood trees planted by Pa Ingalls still stand and features hands-on activities. Over three weekends in July, the community of De Smet puts on a pageant based on one of Wilder’s books, and this year they are featuring “The Little House on the Prairie.” Other buildings and sites in De Smet are associated with Laura Ingalls Wilder.

**I**mbolden you to rediscover Laura Ingalls Wilder: read her books or one of our Pioneer Girl Project books, attend the history conference, or visit De Smet. Wilder is an important part of South Dakota’s history. jdv

## Five projects receive Deadwood grants

Historic preservation projects in Arlington, Delmont, Faulkton, Madison and St. Onge have received matching grants from the South Dakota State Historical Society.

The grants are awarded through the State Historical Society’s Deadwood Fund grant program. Funding for the program is from Deadwood gaming revenue earmarked by state law for historic preservation projects throughout the state. The program is administered by the society’s State Historic Preservation Office at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

The following projects were the most recent to receive grants to supplement their work:

- Arlington: Arlington Community Museum, also known as the Arlington Masonic Temple, built 1907-1908, \$2,378 grant awarded for roof replacement;
- Delmont: Thomas Lenehan House, or The Onion House, built 1902, \$20,000 grant awarded for structural and roof repair of onion dome tower;
- Faulkton: Pickler Mansion, built 1882-1894, \$10,700 grant awarded for structural stabilization;
- Madison: Herschell-Spillman Steam Riding Gallery, also known as the Prairie Village Carousel, built sometime between 1901 and 1920, \$20,000 grant awarded for wood and mechanical restoration; and
- St. Onge: Anderson-Ridley Barn, built 1902, \$3,437 grant awarded to repoint mortar on the barn.

Deadwood Fund grants are awarded twice a year with grant application deadlines of Feb. 1 and Oct. 1. They are reviewed at the spring and winter meetings of the State Historical Society’s board of trustees. For more information on the Deadwood Fund grant program, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at the Cultural Heritage Center, 900 Governors Drive, Pierre, SD 57501-2217; telephone (605) 773-3458; or website [history.sd.gov/Preservation](http://history.sd.gov/Preservation).

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Sioux Falls, April 28-29. We will celebrate Wilder’s legacy and learn more about this incredible, influential American writer. She is not only a pioneer in the settler sense, but she is a pioneer among women authors. The contributors to “Pioneer Girl Perspectives” are the speakers at the conference. We are expecting the conference to be extremely popular, and I encourage you to register early. Visit [history.sd.gov](http://history.sd.gov) and click on “history conference” to learn more and register online.

**A**s the heart of Wilder country, De Smet, South Dakota, has several important Wilder sites. The Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society owns and operates Surveyor’s House from Wilder’s “By the