

History NOTES

Historical Society Experiences Year of Transition

This past year brought great change in preparation for the future. Spring saw the Historical Society staff move from our offices at the Cultural Heritage Center to other locations, and more importantly, move our collections to safer locations as we prepared for the renovation of the CHC. The Archives and Museum staff now work from the Northridge Plaza Shopping Center while the remaining staff are in temporary offices in the Becker-Hansen Building, home to the Department of Transportation. If schedules hold, we will move back into the CHC later this summer. While the museum will remain closed as new exhibits are completed, we intend to open most of the building to the public later this fall.

At the Historical Society's annual conference in Pierre, the Governor's Awards for history were presented to the following deserving people and organizations in recognition of their contributions: Rick Mills of Hermosa and the Railroad Museum won the Governor's Award for Outstanding Work in the Non-Professional Individual category; Brian Gevik of SDPB won in the Professional Individual category for his work on SDPB documentaries; the National Weather Service of South Dakota won the Organizational Award for making historical weather reporting available to the public; and David Wolff of Spearfish won the Schell Award for his article, "From Disaster to Prosperity: Four Fires that Changed Deadwood," which appeared in the Fall 2022 issue of the *South Dakota History* journal. The Trustees awarded two deserving teachers the History Teacher of the Year Award: Bob Wilbur of Roosevelt High School in Sioux Falls, and Maxwell Schaffer of Mount Vernon Public School in Mount Vernon. Finally, David Wolff was also awarded the Robinson Memorial Award for his lifetime of work ad-



Jerry Garrett of McGough Construction removes grout used to level the Cultural Heritage Center lobby.

vancing South Dakota's history. His books, articles, and service to the Society, as well as his time teaching at Black Hills State University, are a living demonstration of the Society's mission. After the awards were presented, attendees heard from nationally acclaimed author and South Dakota resident Joseph Bottum on the importance of place in history. His remarks were later published as "The Place of History" in *South Dakota History*, vol. 53, no. 2. We hope you can join us at this year's history conference, where the theme Y2K 25 will focus on how technology is changing how history is understood.

In July, Governor Noem created a state commission to prepare for the nation's 250th Birthday in 2026. Ben Jones was named the Chair of the effort and looks forward to organizing the state's celebrations and commemorations. By the end of 2023, all the Commissioners had been named and include members of the legislature, state government, and representatives from various walks of life around the state. The Commission's activities can be followed on the SD Boards and Commissions web site. As we begin 2024, consider the efforts in 2025. We want to be ready for 2026!

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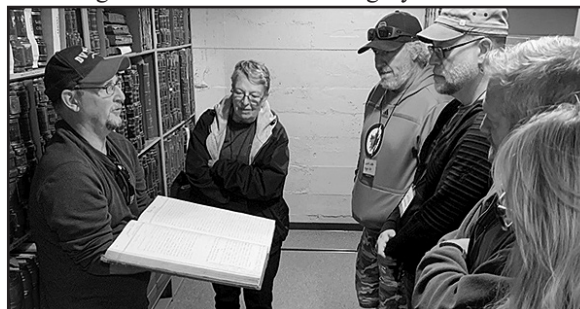
There were 1,500 copies of *History Notes* printed at a cost of 49 cents per copy.

ARC Hosts Successful Regional Conference

ARC archaeologists facilitated several outreach events in 2023, including hosting the 80th Annual Plains Anthropological Conference in October. The three-day conference drew over 300 archaeological and cultural resources management professionals to Rapid City. Unique conference offerings included tours to nearby archaeological and historic sites with free registration for tribal members and students. In addition, ARC staffed tables at two local career day and STEM events, co-hosted a Girl Scouts archaeology badge experience, and supported Dr. Linea Sundstrom for another year of excavations at Soapsuds Row at Fort Meade.

In 2023, the Archaeological Research Center contracts program conducted 65 Class III cultural resources surveys, 17 of which required evaluative testing to determine National Register eligibility. Additionally, ARC archaeologists provided construction monitoring efforts for five separate construction projects, including a multi-year effort in Pennington County. A total of 116 cultural resources reports, including both Class I record search letters and Class III survey reports, were completed. ARC archaeologists completed projects for the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT); South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the City of Deadwood; and numerous private contractors. Fourteen of ARC's 18 staff (including full-time and seasonal) conducted fieldwork this year.

ARC's GIS team was able to update the statewide geodatabase for archaeological sites and surveys, which included the addition of 1,085 sites and 1,680 surveys. Day to day, the GIS staff completed 728 record searches for both in-house and external contract projects. Additionally, GIS staff utilized new techniques for ARC field projects, including the use of red-relief imagery to al-



Mike Runge of the City of Deadwood's Historic Preservation Office gives a tour of the city's archives to attendees of the 2023 Plains Anthropological Conference, hosted by ARC. Photo by Megan Ostrenga Fabricius, 21 Oct. 2023.



ARC's Megan Ostrenga Fabricius, Records Archaeologist, talks with students at the 8th Grade Career Fair for Rapid City Area Schools in November. Photo by Lynn Griffin, 8 Nov. 2023.

low for easier interpretation of topographic features.

On the records and reports side, ARC staff processed 518 archaeological reports from private contractors, federal agencies, and in-house contract projects. Along with these reports, 252 new archaeological sites were added to the database and 359 previously recorded sites were updated with new information, including boundary modifications, revisits, reevaluations, and monitoring.

ARC's mining review and compliance staff provided comments on 82 permit applications in 2023, with eight field inspections conducted. For archaeological work on state lands, ARC reviewed and granted six permits.

Curation staff assigned a total of 20 new accession numbers in 2023 and received a total of 17 incoming collections. Two large collections from recent SDDOT site evaluation projects were digitally cataloged, adding over 2,150 new catalog record entries representing over 5,000 artifacts. One substantial collection, originally recovered in 1993–1994 from the City of Lead's Homestake Mine Open Cut Expansion, was transferred from the University of South Dakota to ARC's repository. Collection inventory and stabilization efforts began immediately but are ongoing for the 200-plus artifact boxes. The artifacts represent decades of daily life in the historic Lead neighborhoods that were damaged during mine expansion efforts. Full pieces of clothing were recovered intact from privy features, while an odd assortment of coconut husks were also found in the collection. Children's toys, architectural marble slabs, barrels, gambling tokens, and mining equipment have also been rediscovered during the collection upgrade.

State Archives Reaches Out

This year's biggest project was preparing for the Cultural Heritage Center renovation. Archives staff ensured that all collections were appropriately housed and labeled, before being moved to a secure offsite facility in March. In total, the State Archives moved 11,601 boxes of archival materials plus 22,000 special collections library books, 8,291 record volumes, 47 microfilm cabinets and 750 flat boxes. Once our temporary of-



Doane Robinson, the first state historian, was accidentally foldered and flattened during some enthusiastic collections processing. The State Archives encouraged friends to snap a photo with Flat Doane at their favorite historical site, archives, museum, library, or post office and share it on social media with the hashtag #FlatDoane. Doane traveled to many places in South Dakota, the United States, and Europe. Doane is pictured making an appearance in Wall Drug.

office space was set up, Archives staff began accepting research requests by phone, email, and mail. The Archives will continue to assist researchers remotely until the renovation is complete.

In 2023, the Archives:

- Received 153 new donations, totaling 81.7 cubic feet and 251,639 MB of records
- Cataloged 160 new library books
- Digitized 11,428 government images at the Special Projects Program
- Processed and made accessible 187.5 cubic feet and 127,159 MB of manuscript and government records

The Archives reached 1,463 people this year through presentations, consultations, and site visits. Archives staff gave 30 presentations across the state on topics ranging from genealogical research to records management, highlighting our collections and their research value. We also reached 9,600 people through our social media channels, raising awareness about our collections and services. Outreach efforts this year centered on Archives Month in October. Archives staff designed and distributed a poster to celebrate Archives Month, featuring postcards, postage stamps, and images of post offices from the

State Archives' collections. We also mailed postcards featuring Doane Robinson, the first state historian, to Historical Society members and records repositories across the state, and encouraged them to share photographs of Doane visiting their favorite historical site, post office, archives, museum, or library. #FlatDoane images were shared by 48 different individuals in 11 states and two countries. Other Archives Month events included a "Recently Accessioned Manuscript Collections" presentation by manuscripts archivist Matthew Reitzel, and History Trivia Night held at the historic St. Charles Hotel in Pierre.

New additions to the South Dakota Digital Archives this year include the Jane Breeden Collection of records related to the South Dakota women's suffrage and temperance movements, the Henry J. King Collection of steamboat images, and the Abbie Whitey Collection of Black Hills images. There are currently over 71,000 photographs, 1,288 maps and 14,000 documents available on the South Dakota Digital Archives. Eight of these images were selected by Ken Burns and Florentine Films for use in *The American Buffalo* documentary, which aired on 16 October 2023, on all PBS stations.

In other news, the State Archives received a grant from the National Historical Publica-



This photograph of a pair of James "Scotty" Philip's buffalo in the bull fighting ring at Juarez, Mexico, with a group of South Dakota "matadors," January 1907, was included in the documentary *The American Buffalo*, a production of Florentine Films and WETA Washington, D.C. directed by Ken Burns.

tions and Records Commission (NHPRC) in 2023 to conduct strategic planning for the State Historical Records Advisory Board, which facilitates cooperation among historical records repositories and serves as a state-level review body for NHPRC grants. A strategic planner assisted the board in gathering information about the training needs of archivists in the state and the types of repositories where they work. The new SD SHRAB strategic plan is available on the Archives' website (history.sd.gov/archives/SHRAB.aspx).

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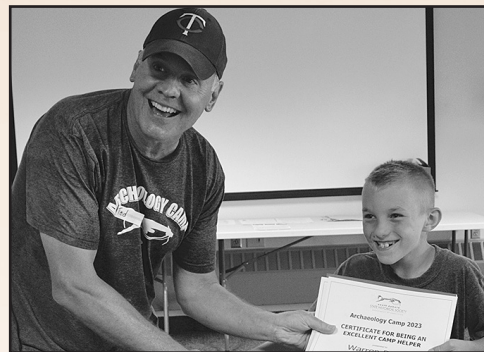
Preservation Carries on in Face of Change

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) continued to identify, record, and preserve South Dakota's historic properties in 2023 in the face of change. In March, SHPO staff moved into temporary workspaces in the Becker-Hansen building. In June, Ted Spencer, State Historic Preservation Officer since 2020, retired after ten years with SHPO. Since his retirement, Jenna Carlson Dietmeier has served as Interim State Historic Preservation Officer and Review and Compliance Coordinator for SHPO.

Since 1996, SHPO has managed the Deadwood Fund Grant, a program funded by a portion of the gambling revenue generated in Deadwood for projects that retain, restore, or rehabilitate historic properties in South Dakota. In 2023, six applications were approved in Butte, Minnehaha, Yankton, Clay, Sully, and Jackson Counties. The approved grant awards totaled \$100,000, with a match of \$219,353.61 for a total contribution of \$319,353.61 towards brick-and-mortar preservation efforts within the state. Applications approved in 2023 include foundation stabilization, window restoration, plaster repairs, and painting on private and public historic structures.

The State Property Tax Moratorium is an eight-year moratorium on the property tax assessment of certified improvements on properties listed in the State or National Registers of Historic Places. In 2023, six projects were certified in four counties, representing a total private investment of \$9.959 million in certified improvements. Properties included three residential structures and three commercial establishments, with certified improvements ranging from repointing masonry to repairing storm windows to plumbing and electrical work.

SHPO staff also worked with property owners, local preservation commissions, consultants, and the National Park Service to nominate 12 historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places in 2023. Listing in the National Register is primarily honorific but allows the property owner to apply for various financial incentives to preserve the property and ensures that the property is considered in state and federal planning processes. Properties listed in the National Register in 2023 include three burial mound sites (one each in Brookings, Minnehaha, and Marshall Counties), a bison kill site (Hand County), Zion Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Jerauld County), Brookman House (Clay County), William C. and Anna Krueger Barn (Edmunds County), Royal Center School



After eight years as Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer and two years as State Historic Preservation Officer, Ted Spencer retired on June 8, 2023. His last act as SHPO was to present certificates of participation and appreciation to the participants of the 2023 Kids' Archaeology Camp. Photo by Liz Almlie, 8 June 2023.

(Meade County), Homestake Mining Company Hydroelectric Plant No. 2 (Lawrence County), Galena Creek Schoolhouse (Custer County), Volga Hospital (Brookings County), and the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Lake Preston (Kingsbury County). Additionally, 32 new properties were listed as contributing to the Cathedral Historic District in Sioux Falls following the expansion of the district's boundary.

SHPO's three review and compliance staff also stayed busy in 2023, reviewing and commenting on proposed large-scale and small-scale development across the state. SHPO staff responded to 1,559 requests in 2023 through our online Electronic Review & Compliance (ERC) system. Such proposed development represents billions of dollars of investment in the state.

SHPO also hosted the South Dakota State Historical Society Annual History Conference in April. Eighty-eight registered attendees enjoyed presentations on the theme of "Great Faces, Great Places – History Makers in South Dakota," an evening social reception, and the awards luncheon.

Governor Noem again proclaimed May 2023 as Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month in South Dakota. SHPO engaged in directed social media posts during the month of May, held an essay contest for fourth-grade students, and hosted a kids' Archaeology Camp. In 2023, SHPO received 209 essays (almost 100 more than in 2022) on the topic of "This Place Matters" from students representing 26 different schools in the state. Additionally, 20 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders participated in a three-day immersive archaeology camp co-hosted by SHPO and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Museum Remains Viable Despite Cultural Heritage Center Remodel

The South Dakota State Historical Society's Museum staff led several visible projects on behalf of the organization.

As reported last year, the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation took contributions for the Jay Smith Internship program in memory of the Museum's longtime leader who passed away. Ryan Moore became the first Jay Smith Intern. As part of his duties, Ryan assisted staff in clearing the galleries for renovation of the Cultural Heritage Center so that contractors could pack and transport collections to a temporary location.

Last year, Split Rock Studios won the contract bid with the state to design the new exhibit. We are gratified that Split Rock's former firm, Deaton Studios, designed the old exhibit. Museum staff continue to work heavily in that process.

History staff went on the road in 2023. First, we identified locations throughout the state to host select collections while the CHC undergoes renovation. These "History on the Road" collections were featured in Spearfish, Sioux Falls, and Yankton. Second, staff participated in statewide "South Dakota Share Your Voice" community input sessions during the fall. Staff listened to South Dakotans share what makes their communities South Dakota: responses included fossils, prairie potholes, and (in every session) plain old-fashioned neighborliness. These ideas and encouragements were used as we met with consultants to develop new exhibits. Further input is coming from tribes, linguists, and academics.

In addition to "History on the Road," the Museum also took 360-degree images of our galleries as they existed before the closure of the CHC. Now visitors to the Society can access the first part of our gallery from the



Museum exhibit team composed of staff and contractors visit the construction site of the Cultural Heritage Center under renovation. Pictured (L to R) Corey Christianson, Katy Schmidt, Dan Moeckly, Kate Cravens, Margaret Lee, Amanda Wambach, Catherine Forsch, and Carrie Petersen. Taken 19 Oct. 2023.



Objects used in either the construction of the Cultural Heritage Center in 1989 or, like this helmet, used in the 2023-2025 renovation are being added to the Society's collections.

comfort of their homes. More of the gallery will be added to the portions already posted. "Proving Up" and "Changing Times" will arrive as virtual tours in 2024.

In addition to the work related to the renovation, the Collections Management Committee met regularly to consider a total of 521 objects for all actions: permanent collections, incoming loans, outgoing loans, conservation, education collection, and more. Collections assistant Corey Christianson was promoted to Registrar to reflect her work managing the Society's data about the collection. Over the years, the Society has had a Registrar as needed. Education kits went to over 100 venues in 2023. The program saw an increase in new users, bringing kits to schools and venues across the state. A special thank you to Cindy Anson Eilers whose support will allow the Cehupa Winter Count to be conserved at the Midwest Art Conservation Center in Minneapolis.

Finally, staff began visiting local museums across the state. This initiative begun in 1968 remains important to the Society today and allowed us to visit 51 workers at 25 museums. If we did not make it to your museum yet, look for us in 2024 as more visits are planned.

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Research and Publishing Welcomes New Staff, Wins Awards, Awaits Renovations

Award-winning publications, staff turnovers, and a move to temporary quarters highlighted 2023 for the Research and Publishing program and the South Dakota Historical Society Press.

January 2023 began with the departures of managing editor Cody Ewert and associate editor Abby Wright. Cody accepted a position with the Montana Historical Society Press. He had moved back to his home state in late April 2022 and worked for us remotely. Abby left in search of leadership opportunities not afforded by our small team. Craig Walters joined us in late May as

associate editor, after almost a decade teaching eighth-grade language arts. Slater Sabo became managing editor in July. And Taylor Blumer joined us as marketing director/associate editor in January 2024. Finally, accounting assistant Sarah Dozier accepted a position with the federal government in late January 2024. We miss her already.

In May, SDHS Press published the fourth volume of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pioneer Girl Project, *Pioneer Girl: The Path into Fiction*, edited by Nancy Tystad Koupal. Other spring books included *Bighorn Visions: The Photography of Jessamine Spear Johnson* by Tempe Javitz and *Sacajawea: Mystery, Myth, and Legend* by Candy Moulton. SDHS Press released three books in September, in time for the South Dakota Festival of Books in Deadwood. These included the illustrated children's book *Bob Marshall: Defender of the Wilderness* by Linda Elovitz Marshall, *Unrepentant Dakota Woman: Angelique Renville and the Struggle for Indigenous Identity, 1845–1876* by Linda M. Clemmons, and *Football for Fun: The Story of Coach Stewart "Fergie" Ferguson* by Bill Bell and Peter Oltchick. *Football for Fun* won the American Writing Award in the sports category. Several 2022 publications also earned awards: *American Ace: Joe Foss, Fighter Pilot* by Hector Curriel won a Spur Award from the Western Writers of America, and *A Place for Harvest: The Story of Kenny Higashi* by Lauren Harris and illustrated by Felicia Hoshino was a Spur Award finalist.

Two of the four *South Dakota History* journal issues for 2023 featured special topics. The fall issue (vol. 53 no. 3) looked at the



SDHS Press Managing Editor Slater Sabo takes questions during a presentation at the West River History Conference in Lead in Oct. 2023.

legacy of Wounded Knee 1973. The winter issue (vol. 53 no. 4) offered three articles on topics associated with Laura Ingalls Wilder. Research and Publishing staff also produced three issues of the *History Notes* newsletter, including the Annual Report.

Staff members attended numerous conferences and gave presentations at most of them. These included the SDSHS Annual History conference, the South Dakota Department of Education History and Civics Summit, the Western Writers of America annual conference, the South Dakota Festival of Books, the Northern Great Plains History Conference, the South Dakota Library Association annual meeting, the West River History Conference, and the South Dakota Indian Education Summit. In addition, we hosted monthly "History Talks" presentations by SDHS Press authors, SDSHS staff, and a few authors of non-SDHS Press books about South Dakota. Recordings of these are available on the SDHS Foundation YouTube channel.

In April, the Research and Publishing offices and shipping room moved to the basement of the Becker-Hansen building while the Cultural Heritage Center renovations take place. Anticipating how many copies to bring of each of the 85 books we have in print was quite an endeavor! Luckily, our stash of books in the CHC remains accessible, enabling us to fill several large book orders. We are grateful to our many loyal readers. They inspire us to continue producing high quality journals and books on the rich history and culture of South Dakota and the Northern Great Plains.

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY DONORS, 2023

The South Dakota State Historical Society is pleased to receive donations of books, manuscripts, photographs, artifacts, and services. The Society thanks the following individuals and organizations for contributing to the preservation of South Dakota's heritage through their generous gifts to the archives and museum collections.

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Volunteers help to preserve and interpret South Dakota history as they greet, guide, research, and perform other vital tasks for our organizations. We thank the following individuals for sharing their time, talents, and treasures with us at the Cultural Heritage Center, Foundation, Archaeological Research Center, various archaeological sites, and other venues related to special projects. It would be impossible to exist without their dedication.

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SDHS Foundation Reaches Out

‘The Lion’s story will never be known as long as the hunter is the one to tell it.’ In 2023, we took this statement to heart and dove into action by interviewing individuals for the statewide oral history project. The goal was simple – share South Dakota’s history through the voices of those who lived it,

and let the Lion tell the story. Interviewed in 2023 were Don Barnett, Mark Barnett, Frank Brost, Margaret Denton, Marcia Donnan Mitchell, Tim Dougherty, Rich Garry, Gary Hanson, Homer Harding, Lars Herseth, Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, Russ Janklow, Julie Johnson, Kay Jorgensen, Kitty Kinsman, Kevin Kneip, Nancy Kneip Paprocki, Dave Knudson, Nancy Tystad Koupal, Dean Krogman, Judith Meierhenry, Mark Mickelson, Patricia Miller, Robert Miller, Mickey Miller, Mary Lynn Myers, Larry Piersol, Pamela Roberts, Rolly Samp, Lee Schoenbeck, Ann McKay Thompson, Janelle Toman, Ron Williamson, and Steve Zellmer. We thank our interviewers who helped to bring the stories to light: Marci Burdick, Noel Hamiel, Tena Haraldson, Ben Jones, Ginger Thomson, Tony Venhuizen, and Kevin Woster. The project would not be complete without the work of our video partner, SD Public Broadcasting.

Another highlight of our year was a presentation given at the annual history conference by Joseph Bottum, who enlightened the crowd with his thoughts on understanding history. “History is not sets of blue glass bottles and China dolls in local museums, but the lives of those who washed those bottles and held those dolls.” Bottum’s moving presentation was digitally recorded and will be available in March at youtube.com/@southdakotahistory thanks to the SD Humanities Council.

A special thank you goes out to Verna Kay Bormann! She took the Foundation’s wish list and made projects come to life.



Foundation board member, Tony Venhuizen, interviews Frank Brost for the State Historical Society and Foundation Oral History Project. Brost is the longest-serving Chief of Staff, serving eight years of the Gov. Mickelson/Gov. Miller administration from 1987-1995.

Because of her generosity, the Press will publish four books in 2024, the State Archives will be able to digitize two special collections, the oral history project will continue, and key operational needs will be supported.

We also extend our gratitude to donors of the SD Community Foundation, Mary Chilton DAR Foundation, Tim Forsch family, Ruth Jones and Jane Page, J.M. Kaplan Fund, Inc., Chuck and Bonny Schroyer, and Darwin Sletten for their leadership gifts.

In November, the Foundation board and officers were elected. Retiring from the board are Sue Gates and Linda Lea Viken. The officers in 2024 are Tony Venhuizen (President), Val Simpson (VP), Patricia Miller (Treasurer), and Eric Jennings (Secretary). New board members are Laura Armstrong, Casey Derflinger, David Johnson, Marcus Mahlen, Bill Peterson, and Nathan Sanderson.

Our work would not be possible without the generous support from the people of South Dakota and the many new and long-standing members, donors, and Heritage Store customers. We thank you all and look forward to serving you in 2024.

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Doing History Well Serves the Public Well:

A STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OUR PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES



by
Dr. Ben Jones,
Director & State
Historian

Arguing about what history means is what historians do.

So, it is not unusual to see historians coming up with different explanations about the same thing. What a past event means will continue to be subject to interpretation. In a nation living out the First Amendment, where “Everyman is His Own Historian,” such an environment produces a public good because it facilitates the finding of truth for anyone who seeks to know more or distrusts the history others produce—especially when, maddeningly, “experts” look at the same event and explain it differently.

Whereas the public generally understands that the scientific method begins with a hypothesis, they tend not to realize that history, from the Greek *historia*, “inquiry,” is similarly rooted in asking questions. Doing so lets the past speak on its own terms and diminishes present biases skewing our perceptions.

If, as we know, one’s place in the world is determined by one’s past, then historical understanding is central to understanding ourselves and our choices. Since we also know that people of the past, to differing degrees, made their own choices, their choices must be understood on their terms, not framed within ours. Certain historical debates have great importance not only to professional historians but to the public. That sense of accountability for open discussion, for making our artifacts and records available, for well-told and well-argued historical writing, for high quality interpretation of artifacts, for widen-

ing preservation opportunities to all, and for preserving the state’s cultural sites while welcoming important debates, is not only our statutory mission, but our professional calling.

Therefore, despite the current fashion to view the past through the lens of today’s political concerns, the South Dakota State Historical Society affirms that history done well does just the opposite: historical work properly begins with a question, endeavors to find relevant evidence, and crafts explanatory narratives and exhibits informed by sources and leavened by our own humility and respect for those of the past, who were imperfect human beings and, if only in that way, just like us. Striving to always do such work, we hope to perpetually enjoy the public’s confidence that we are preserving the records of the past and presenting history based on a fair and well-supported understanding. We can do no less.