# South Dakota State Historical Society HISTORY NOTES

VOLUME 40, NUMBER 1 ANNUAL REPORT FEBRUARY 2025

### 2024: Honoring History and Embracing the Future

The Cultural Heritage Center was not open to the public in 2024, but the staff of the South Dakota State Historical Society certainly kept busy. The year 2026 remains our focus as renovations continue on the Cultural Heritage Center in preparation for our reopening and for the nation's 250th birthday on July 4, 2026. These two seemingly independent efforts support one another in important ways.

The director, museum director, curators, and foundation leadership went on the road and completed thirteen community listening sessions about the future museum. Beginning in late 2023, staff traveled to Timber Lake, and on to twelve more cities and towns in early 2024, ending at Sinte Gleska University in Mission, SD. Session attendees expressed interest in our design concepts and how we organized our collection to tell the state's stories. We also involved South Dakota university professors in a separate session. These historians teach the state's history, and we received insightful comments grounded on their decades of experience and scholarship. Furthermore, Trustee Francis Whitebird connected us with Lakota and Dakota cultural and language consultants so that exhibits successfully explain the meaning of the events they represent.

The previous museum exhibit was organized chronologically, ending in the late twentieth century. After thoughtful debate, and feedback from our sessions described above, we decided to have main exhibit galleries focus on important stories rather than chronology. Doing so resolves key issues. Specifically, visitors could get the false impression that American Indian history ended in 1890. Organizing the museum by topic allows space for American Indian artifacts to be in nearly every exhibit. It also allows for the curators to alter and change exhibits as our collection grows in the coming decades, avoiding a complete overhaul two decades from now. Furthermore, we are excited about an exhibit that will be visually engaging while encouraging and supporting visitors' thinking about history. We are aiming to open the new museum in the spring of 2026 so that we will be ready to celebrate for the nation's 250th birthday.

Speaking of America's 250th, Dr. Jones chairs America's 250th South Dakota Commission and is tying the Historical Society into the planning for 2026. The commission comprises cabinet secretaries from various state government departments and citizens from around the state. They have been recruiting partners and speaking to community groups about the coming commemorations. During 2025, the commission intends to do more to continue recruiting partners, grow public awareness, roll out community planning support, and promote state and national programs. So far, we've begun Walk 250 to encourage the public to get out to visit state parks and historic sites while appreciating the number 250 itself. We also have a nationally known author and poet writing a poem to commemorate the nation's 250 years. Going forward, you can follow the America 250 programs and events at the nation's website, America250.org, and the state's website, Americas250th.sd.gov.



Chief John Spotted Tail, a fifth generation descendant of Chief Spotted Tail (1823–1881), is pictured at Georgia Morse Middle School with James Newell, the descendant of a 19th-century federal official. Newell returned a collection of heirlooms to Chief John Spotted Tail. Artifacts were donated to the State Historical Society to share with the people of South Dakota. Photo taken May 14, 2024.

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### **Fully Staffed ARC Completes Numerous Projects**

The Archaeological Research Center in Rapid City ended 2024 fully staffed, with twenty-two employees in total contributing to its full-time and seasonal workforce over the course of the year. The contracts program conducted 138 Class III cultural resources surveys, fourteen of which required evaluative testing to determine National Register eligibility. Additionally, ARC archaeologists provided construction monitoring efforts for four construction projects. One large mitigative project in the historic community of Milltown in Hutchinson County kept a field crew busy over the summer and fall with survey, excavation, and monitoring tasks necessitated by a bridge replacement. Archaeologists completed projects for the South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT), South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, the City of Deadwood, and dozens of private contractors. These projects resulted in the preparation of 300 cultural resources reports, including both Class I record search letters and Class III survey reports.

The ARC's GIS team updated or added 575 site boundaries and 515 surveys to the statewide geodatabase. The team also completed 687 record searches for both in-house and external contract projects. Three new feature classes were created on ARC's geodatabase, for investigations, dimensional NRHP boundaries, and subsurface testing locations. These new datasets provide an easily accessible spatial component to the generations of site and report archives curated at the ARC. Records staff at the ARC processed 519 archaeological reports from private contractors, federal agencies, and in-house contract projects. Along with these reports, a total of 228 newly recorded archaeological sites were added to the database, and 228 previously recorded sites were updated with new information, including boundary modifications, revisits, reevaluations, and monitoring. Records staff also worked to clean up the database by identifying and removing sixty-one duplicate report entries. All these updates are critical to the maintenance of the ARC's online database platform, which is used by over 100 subscribers from federal, state, tribal, and cultural resource consultant offices.

In 2024, the ARC's mining review and compliance staff reviewed and provided comments on ninety-five permit

applications, including many gold and lithium exploration projects in the Black Hills. For archaeological work on state lands, the ARC reviewed and granted eighteen permits to contractors. Many of the forty-four burial reports the ARC fielded in 2024 involved behind-the-scenes research efforts and tribal consultation to protect confidential burial sites. The ARC also contributed to two joint repatriation projects, both of which were published in the Federal Register pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

Curation staff assigned a total of fourteen new accession numbers in 2024 and received a total of ten incoming collections. Artifact processing and cataloging workshops were held for University of South Dakota field school students at the Fort Meade Laundress Quarters field lab and at the university's lab in Vermillion. Additional archaeology outreach efforts were provided in collaboration with the Girl Scouts, and over 1,200 students had the opportunity to visit We the ARC's archaeology booth at the Rapid City Area Schools' Eighth Grade Career Fair. The ARC's interactive dig pit was cleaned and restocked at the Journey Museum in Rapid City, and staff contributed to this local museum's wildly popular Turtle Soup lunch series. Late 2024 outreach efforts will culminate in the May 2025 Annual History Conference in Deadwood. The conference theme highlights how historians uncover and attempt to solve mysteries of South Dakota's past.



Tony DeLuca of the ARC checks a muddy trench for evidence of historic features on a cold Deadwood morning. Photo: Katherine Lamie, Dec. 14, 2024

### **Renovation Improves Research for State Archives**

In 2024, the State Archives' focus was to continue assisting the public through remote research, site visits, and records consultations. While the renovations were taking place at the Cultural Heritage Center (CHC), the archives staff and collections were housed in offsite facilities. Staff were able to perform limited research requests and to assist researchers by phone and email. In the fall of 2024, staff moved back into the CHC and set up their workspaces. As part of the renovation, the conservation room was converted into a digitization lab, which meant the archives staff could move all their scanners and equipment into one room within the CHC. Digitization work was previously split between the Special Project Program at the Women's Prison and two staff working in a repurposed darkroom at the CHC. Now archives staff are together in one facility for the first time in forty years! Having the digitization and cataloging staff and equipment together improves productivity and morale. In other renovation news, the new archives storage annex is almost complete, and the shelves in the main storage and library are ready to receive the collections from the offsite facility. The State Archives plan to be open to the public by the summer of 2025.

In 2024, the State Archives:

- Received 142 new donations, totaling 182.45 cubic feet and 292,497 MB of records.
- Cataloged 191 new library books.
- Digitized 5,717 government images at the Special Project Program.
- Processed and made accessible 139.04 cubic feet of manuscript and government records.
- Processed 2.5 TB of digital collections for future preservation and public access.
- Reached 802 people this year through presentations, consultations, and site visits.

Archives Month was held in October with the catchphrase "We've Got Spirit." The intent was to raise awareness of the athletic collections available at archives throughout the state. Many archives hold athletic event programs, team photographs, and yearbooks that document these extracurricular activities. A poster was designed that featured images from the State Archives, Beulah Williams Library Archives and Special Collections, Black Hills State University Archives, and Dakota Wesleyan University. The State Archives also participated in national archives month events, such as electronic records day on October 10 and #AskAnArchivist Day on October 16.

The State Archives was responsible for organizing the 2024 South Dakota State Historical Society History Conference, "Embracing the New Millennium, 25 years since Y2K," on April 5–6. One hundred and fourteen people attended sessions such as Wet Plate Collodion Photography in the Modern World by photographer Shane Balkowitsch, The 1874 Black Hills Expedition: 50 Photo Sites, 150 Years by photographer Paul Horsted, and the Awards Luncheon with keynote speaker Jason Steinhauer. In addition, over eighty history conference attendees and members of the public participated in the evening '90s Trivia social event. The fun event challenged the attendees' knowledge on 1990s sports, TV theme songs, timelines of events, and movies.



Archivists Sara Casper, Matthew Reitzel, and Nicole Hosette (not pictured) visited the Sicangu Heritage Center/Great Plains Art Center in Mission, SD on September 24 and viewed the Claes Jacobson Photo Exhibit.

### **Donor Generosity Highlights SDHS Foundation's Year**

As we reflect on 2024, we are deeply grateful for the support of our donors. Last year, your generosity funded educational programs, the annual history conference, History Talks events, historical publications, and digital collections, as well as significant projects such as the museum renovation.

The annual SDSHS history conference is supported by donors, including the Agnes Whitlock Land Trust and Verna Kay Bormann, who sponsored the keynote luncheon with author Jason Steinhauer. He discussed his book History, Disrupted and explored how social media and the internet are changing what we know about our history.

In May, the descendants of Major Cicero Newell repatriated a collection of heirlooms to a descendant of Lakota leader Chief Spotted Tail. The Foundation staff played a crucial role in facilitating the donation. Call us to learn how you can preserve your heirloom treasures for future generations. Learn more at www.nytimes.com/2024/11/28/ arts/design/spotted-tail-repatriation.html.

Thanks to the support of Cindy Eilers, the restoration of the Cehupa/Gunderson Winter Count was made possible. This rare artifact, notable for its distinct blue pigmentation, was sent to the Midwest Art Conservation Center for restoration. We continue to seek support to protect other valuable artifacts.

In 2024, we completed the final fifteen interviews for our statewide oral history project, thanks to the efforts of interviewers David Flute, Tena Haraldson, Cara Hetland, Ben Jones, Jack Marsh, Tony Venhuizen, and coordinator Nancy Tapken. These interviews, funded by our donors and in partnership with SD Public Broadcasting, illuminate the lives and careers of individuals like Steve Cutler, Dan Garry, Tom Geraets, Steve Hildebrand, Loila Hunking, Harvey Jewett, Steve Kirby, Jon Lauck, Dave Munson, Larry Pressler, Kevin Schieffer, Peter Stavrianos, Tony Venhuizen, Dave Volk, and Francis Whitebird.

In 2024, we shared the first architectural renderings of the Cultural Heritage Center and Museum's exterior and interior. As the center nears its completion, the museum and Foundation staff are dedicated to progressing with the museum's remodel, with plans to open in the summer of 2026. The museum's progress is thanks to generous donations, including a major contribution from T. Denny Sanford and a significant pledge from the Great Plains Education Foundation. Our goal for 2025 is to secure sponsorship for the primary exhibit areas before publicly unveiling the campaign details.

On January 14, 2025, Governor Noem initiated the start of South Dakota's 100th Legislative Session. Last year, the legislative planning committee partnered with the Foundation to help organize, record, and serve as the fiduciary partner. We thank the following donors for their support: Karen Schreier and Tim Dougherty, BNSF Railway Foundation, Altria Client Services, LLC, POET, LLC, and South Dakota Realtors.

Additionally, we funded several other projects last year, and send a special thanks to Foster Rentals, John Fowler, Michael Lewis, Larry and Diane Ness, South Dakota Community Foundation, Deadwood Historic Preservation, Chuck and Bonny Schroyer, and Fred and Pam Lillibridge for their leadership gifts.

All of these efforts are made possible through the generous contributions from the people of South Dakota, as well as our many new and long-time members, donors, and Heritage Store customers. Thank you for your ongoing support and we look forward to connecting with you in 2025. www.sdhsf.org/donate / (605) 773-6003



Cindy Eilers receives a private viewing of the Cehupa/Gunderson Winter Count by museum curator Katy Schmidt. Thanks to Eilers's support, the winter count underwent restoration at a conservation center. This gift honors her mother-in-law, Mary Rae McInnis Anson, who had a keen interest in education and South Dakota history along with a deep respect for American Indians. A winter count is like a picture calendar used by some American Indian tribes on the Great Plains to record an important or unusual event that happened each year.

### **Museum Lends Effigy, Gains Spotted Tail Artifacts**

The renovation of the South Dakota State Historical Society's headquarters—the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre—inspired extraordinary comings and goings in 2024.

The coming was the magnificent gift of items belonging to Spotted Tail, a renowned nineteenth century Lakota leader. Spotted Tail gifted items including a headdress, a beaded suit of clothes, a powder horn, arrows, and more to Rosebud Indian Agent Cicero Newell as a mark of friendship. Because of their friendship, Newell wished after death that he might meet Spotted Tail. That friendship spans the time since, as Newell's descendant, James Newell, returned the items to Spotted Tail's descendant, Chief John Spotted Tail. After much consultation with spiritual leaders, elders, preservation professionals, and others about where the objects might go, Spotted Tail chose the South Dakota State Historical Society. Spotted Tail and Newell gave the collection in a stirring ceremony witnessed by several sections of eighth graders from Georgia Morse Middle School in Pierre on May 15, 2024. This collection will help the Society tell the story of cross-cultural friendships that can span generations.

The going was lending the Society's iconic logo inspiration, the Great Horse Effigy, to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's temporary exhibit Knowing the West. Since the place where visitors normally view the effigy is under renovation, this was an excellent opportunity for more people to see it. Our first step was to arrange an appraisal of the effigy, and through that process, the appraiser discovered a signature cut linking the effigy to Joseph No Two Horns. Once the effigy arrived in Bentonville, Arkansas, Historical Society Curator of Collections Katy Schmidt installed the treasured artifact. The effigy helped to bookend the exhibit with a No Two Horns winter count at the beginning and his effigy at the end. As of the end of November, 16,579 visitors saw the effigy. The exhibit concluded on January 27, 2025 and Schmidt returned to retrieve the effigy. We look forward to the return of the effigy and are glad that we were able to share this remarkable artifact.

One task of historical organizations is to mark and observe historic events. The South Dakota Legislature convened for its 100th session on January 14, 2025, and there are many activities planned to observe this milestone, including a reunion of legislators who have served over the years. The Society assembled a commemorative book through the South Dakota Historical Society Press and created and curated an exhibit to celebrate the anniversary. The artifacts related to the legislature are largely gavels and pens but also include samples of the capitol stone, aluminum soda cans, and political ephemera documenting election campaigns. In addition to highlighting objects, exhibit panels discuss the capitol, the legislative process, public service, and the changing demographics of legislators across these 100 sessions. When you are at the South Dakota Capitol this spring, check out this exhibit to learn why this 100th session comes in the state's 136th year!



Museum director David Grabitske with Chief John Spotted Tail at the official donation ceremony on May 15, 2024, at the Georgia Morse Middle School, Pierre. The items were donated to the people of South Dakota ensuring that the legacy of the Lakota people endures for all present and future generations.

### **State Historic Preservation Office Undergoes Changes in Leadership**

Garry Guan was officially appointed by Governor Kristi Noem as the new South Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and began his position on September 24, 2024. Mr. Guan came from Hawaii, where he served as the State Historic Preservation Archaeologist IV & Oahu Island Lead Archaeologist. Katie Wasley became the new Archaeological Review & Compliance Coordinator on November 25, 2024. Wasley has been with the office since October 2020, serving initially as the Historic Preservation Assistant and most recently as a Historic Preservation Specialist.

While the leadership at SHPO underwent changes, their work continued. SHPO staff worked with property owners, local preservation commissions, and the National Park Service to place eight properties in the National Register of Historic Places in 2024. These listings are primarily honorific but allow property owners to apply for various financial incentives to preserve their property and ensure the property is considered in state and federal planning processes. Properties listed included three burial mound sites in Brookings and Marshall Counties, Beseda Hall and Sokol Park in Tabor, the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association building in Rapid City, the DeRouchey-Hageman Barn and Farmyard near Gettysburg, the Conde Municipal Building, and the Turton Jail. Significant updates were also approved to existing National Register of Historic Districts in Geddes and Buffalo Gap.



Since 1996, SHPO has managed the Deadwood Fund Grant, a program funded by a portion of the gambling revenues generated in Deadwood for projects that retain, restore, or rehabilitate historic properties in South Dakota. In 2024, ten applications were approved, totaling \$142,000 in awards. Properties receiving awards include the Brown County Courthouse in Aberdeen, the Split Rock Bathhouse in Garretson, the Farr House in Pierre, the Vermillion Carnegie Library, the First National Bank building in Dell Rapids, the Papineau Trading Post in Geddes, the Dakota Theatre in Yankton, 123 N. Main Street in Mitchell, the A. H. Brown Library in Mobridge, and the Rapid City Carnegie Library. Projects approved included repointing, structural stabilization, gutter repair, and façade restoration. Grants were awarded to private and public historic structures.



**Stockgrowers Association, Rapid City** (*above*) The Stockgrowers Association building, with its iconic sign, was one of eight properties put on the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Office in 2024. Staff photo taken on Sept. 20, 2024.

#### Dakota Theatre, Yankton (left)

The Dakota Theatre in Yankton received a Deadwood Fund Grant through the State Historic Preservation Office in 2024. Staff photo.

### **Research and Publishing Celebrates Pioneer Girl's Tenth Anniversary** MAKES EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING INROADS

A major anniversary, inclusion of publications in state and national K-12 educational endeavors, and a move back to our newly renovated Press Suite marked the highlights of 2024 for the Research and Publishing program and the South Dakota Historical Society Press.

November 17, 2024, marked the ten-year anniversary of the publication of Laura Ingalls Wilder's Pioneer Girl: The Annotated Autobiography, annotated and edited by Pamela Smith Hill. In the decade since its publication, this New York Times bestseller has sold 200,000 copies and is currently in its 17th printing. This is a remarkable number of copies sold for a nonfiction history book from a small nonprofit press. Pioneer Girl has been translated into Japanese and has three follow-up volumes: Pioneer Girl: The Revised Texts, Pioneer Girl: The Path into Fiction, and Pioneer Girl Perspectives.

Also noteworthy in 2024 was the inclusion of Donald F. Montileaux's Tasunka in nationally marketed educational materials (publication forthcoming in 2026) and the statewide distribution of Marian Hurd McNeely's The Jumping-Off Place, S. D. Nelson's Greet the Dawn, and Chris Browne's The Monster Who Ate the State by the South Dakota Department of Education.

January 2024 began with the departure of accounting assistant Sarah Dozier, who accepted a position with the federal government. We happily welcomed Jessica Zuber as inventory manager in April 2024. This position covers the same responsibilities but has a new title, inventory manager.

SDHS Press published an array of fascinating books in 2024, beginning with Dick Termes: Black Hills Artist and Visionary by Craig Volk, the first biography of the justly famous South Dakota artist. Little Pasture on the Prairie includes ten years of selected articles from Eliza Blue's syndicated column of the same name. A Phantom Storm: Sitting Bull, America, and the Ghost Dance by Norm Matteoni examines the role played by the media and the military in the tragic murder of Sitting Bull and the massacre at Wounded Knee, consequences of their duplicitous and incorrect insistence that the Lakota leader was responsible for the rise and spread of the Ghost Dance movement. Children's picture book Georgia Jipp: Blizzard Pilot, written by Laura Beth Dean and illustrated by Jeanne Bowman, tells the story of a young South Dakotan's bravery throughout the winter storms of 1949, flying over 150 mercy missions. Black Hills History Tours: The Gold Rush is the first in this series by David A. Wolff. It offers a perfect balance of historical background and precise directions. Rose Lane Says offers eighty columns written by Rose Wilder Lane from 1942 to 1945 for the Pittsburgh Courier, the largest circulating black newspaper of its day. Edited and annotated by David T. Beito and Marcus Witcher, the book features an introduction to Lane, black newspapers, and the wartime discussions of race, liberty, and equality that Lane frequently addressed. In conjunction with the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra's production of the opera "Giants in the Earth," SDHS Press published a reprint of the epic novel by O. E. Rølvaag, with a new introduction and annotations by Allan C. Carlson. The book is available in a special edition limited-run hardcover as well as in paperback.

The year's award season kicked off early with a Western Heritage Award in the Photography Book category from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum for Tempe Javitz's Bighorn Visions: The Photography of Jessamine Spear Johnson. SDHS Press also won two of the coveted Spur Awards from the Western Writers of America: Candy Moulton won Best Biography with Sacajawea: Mystery, Myth, and Legend and David C. Beyreis won Best Western Short Nonfiction with a South Dakota History article, "'Those invaluable but greatly abused members of the community': Dogs and Difference on the Great Plains in the Fur Trade Era." Unrepentant Dakota Woman: Angelique Renville and the Struggle for Indigenous Identity, 1845–1876 by Linda M. Clemmons was named a Spur Award Finalist in the Best Biography category. Illustrator Jeanne Bowman's work in *Georgia Jipp*: Blizzard Pilot received a bronze medal for best illustrations from the Moonbeam Awards for Children's Literature. Bob Marshall: Defender of the Wilderness, a 2023 children's picture book by Linda Elovitz Marshall and illustrated by Jeanne Bowman, earned a gold medal in the environmental book category in the same competition. The Schell Award for best article appearing in South Dakota History went to Istvan Gombocz for "'A Menace to Peace and Progress': Unexplored Newspaper Reports and Testimonials Pertaining to the Ban of the German Language in 1918."

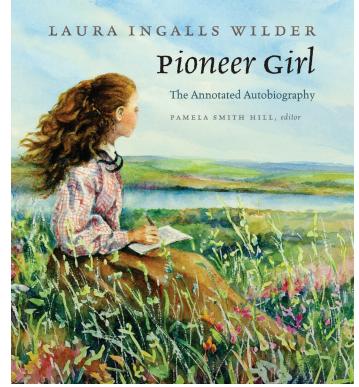
Two of the four South Dakota History journal issues for 2024 featured special topics. The fall issue (vol. 54 no. 3) examines the World War I service of South Dakota farmer Alfred Dahlin through the extensive collection of his artifacts held by the South Dakota State Historical Society. The winter issue (vol. 54 no. 4) commemorates the 100th session of the South Dakota State Legislature. 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 American Society for Ethnohistory annual conference, 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's YouTube channel.

In October, the Research and Publishing staff returned

to its newly renovated office suite in the Cultural Heritage Center. Reintegrating our shipping room from three offsite warehouses to one is a continuing challenge but progress is steady.

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.



November 2024 marked the ten-year publication anniversary of Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Pioneer Girl: The Annotated Autobiography*, which remains SDHS Press's best known and highest selling book. Three additional volumes complete the Pioneer Girl Project: *Pioneer Girl: The Revised Texts* (2021), *Pioneer Girl: The Path into Fiction* (2023), and *Pioneer Girl Perspectives* (2017).

#### 2024 Honor Roll of Donors and Members

Through the loyal support of donors and members to the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation and State Historical Society, we are able to fund the work of preserving and presenting the rich, diverse history of our state. For this we say, **THANK YOU!** You help us to Keep History Alive!

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T. Denny Sanford

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Megan Ostrenga Fabricius and Lynn Griffin updated the ARC's interactive dig pit at the Journey Museum in Rapid City. The pit has seen a lot of hands-on activity since its installation in 2014. Photo by Katherine Lamie, April 9, 2024.

Paisley Carter won the 2024 Student Essay Contest with her essay titled "If Barn Walls Could Talk." Pictured are Paisley (center) with her social studies teacher Janna Mix (left) and SHPO staff member Katie Wasley (right). Photo by Katie Carter, May 10, 2024.



Katie Wasley instructs a camper on how to use screen excavation to look for artifacts at SHPO's Archaeology Camp (June 4–6) held in Pierre. Staff photo, June 6, 2024.



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# Save the Date

The May 2025 History Conference in Deadwood will uncover the hidden life stories of Fort Meade military laundresses and prominent South Dakotans alike, the tenacious efforts required of the Remembering the Children Rapid City Indian Boarding School research team, and the firsthand accounts of dustcovered discoveries in the archives. Add a dash of murder, mayhem, and "Legacies of Conquest" ... and this conference experience is not to be missed!

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