

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Essay Contest – “This Place Matters”

For the 2021 Archaeology & Historic Preservation Month, the South Dakota State Historical Society sponsored a statewide essay contest for all students in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the year in which South Dakota history is taught. The purpose was to enable students to achieve a better appreciation of their historic resources, the stories they tell, and why they should be maintained.

Students were asked to write a 100-400 word essay using this year’s theme of “This Place Matters.” It could be about any South Dakota location that is at least 50 years old, why it is a favorite place for them, and why it should be saved. It did not need to be a historic site.

There were 176 entries received. The participants were from 29 schools in 25 towns from across the state. Entries were judged on quality of writing, content and theme, and originality of thought. The names of the winners and copies of their essays, as submitted, are below.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Marlee Hayes of McIntosh School in McIntosh

### **“Bullhead Powwow Grounds”**

#### **Bullhead Powwow Grounds in Bullhead**

*The place that means the most to me is the Bullhead Powwow Grounds. The powwow grounds are located in Bullhead, South Dakota, which is on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, and is home to about 370 people. The buildings, walls, and bleachers at the powwow grounds are painted white. The grounds were established by Clayton Brownotter Sr. in the 1960s. Beside the powwow grounds are many trees that run alongside the Car Bridge River.*

*The Bullhead Powwow grounds is my favorite place, because I have made many memories here. My favorite memory is when I started dancing at the powwow when I was three years old. The dance I do is called the Jingle Dress Dance. This is my favorite dance, because it represents the power of women. Someday I want to do the Fancy Shawl Dance. Everyone in my family supports me even if I lose the dance competition. Another reason why the powwow is my favorite, is because I am one of the princesses. I enjoy meeting other princesses who come from other towns to participate in the powwow. We also make many different kinds of Native American dishes to serve. I am lucky that my grandma and other elders to me how cook these great dishes. The Bullhead Powwow Grounds is a sacred place to many. I love meeting new people, dancers, learning how to cook, and being able to take part in my favorite dance. If the powwow grounds were not here, I would not have this opportunity.*

*The Bullhead Powwow Grounds should be preserved, because it was built in the 1960s. It is a sacred place to me and other Native Americans. During the powwow they have special dances that honor Veterans. I am honored to dance and learn new things about my culture. I've made many memories at the powwow grounds and I can't wait to make more. This is a special place to my family and many other Natives. I feel the Bullhead Powwow Grounds should be preserved because it is a huge part in my Native American culture.*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Wilkes Flatten of Jefferson Elementary School in Watertown

### “This Place Matters: The Crocker Hills”

#### The Crocker Hills, Crocker

*My eyes are closed. I am standing on top of the rolling hills. It is very quiet, blue skies, fluffy white clouds, grass blowing in the wind and water flowing through the gulch. I am in the Crocker Hills of Crocker South Dakota and I am taken back in time to a place that matters to me.*

*I blink! I see covered wagons, cowboys on horse back and children running across the prairie hills, realizing that some of these settlers could have been my family establishing their homestead in the Crocker Hills, a place that matters to me and realizing that soon four generations of the Flatten Family will be calling these hills in Crocker, South Dakota = HOME.*

*I blink! A hundred years ago, and I see my Great Grandpa Floyd being born and growing up in the town of Crocker, South Dakota. It is a brick building. It is called home, it is called the Flatten Grocery Store and also called the Crocker Post Office. I see him selling groceries at the Flatten Grocery Store and handing the mail to the families of the 57217 zip code. A place that mattered to my Great Grandpa Floyd.*

*I blink! I see my dad, Dustin, running on those same gravel streets of Crocker, South Dakota. Playing baseball and basketball with his three sisters. I see him learning to hunt wildlife with my Grandpa Denny and throwing a fishing line into the running water of the gulch of Crocker Hills, Crocker, South Dakota. A place that mattered to my Dad, Dustin.*

*I open my eyes. I am on main street Crocker, South Dakota. I walk to the headstone marking the spot where the Flatten Grocery Store and Crocker Post Office once stood. I see flags of all the military branches waving in the wind, honoring veterans like my Great Grandpa Floyd that served. My Dad grabs me and lifts me up on his shoulders. I pick apples from the trees that were planted by my Great Grandpa Floyd and Grandpa Denny. A place that matters to me!*

*We drive on that gravel road that my Great Grandpa Floyd, my Grandpa Denny, and my Dad Dustin played on. The winding road leads me to one of the highest points of the Crocker Hills, where a cemetery is located. I look to the East and see a body of water, with several ducks on the water. It is very quiet, blue skies and grass blowing in the wind. I turn around again and I see them turning the coffin of my Grandpa Denny and the smile on my Dad's face. My Dad whispers to me that people are buried facing the West, but he wants my Grandpa Denny facing the East, so he can enjoy the beautiful sunsets and the wildlife of the Crocker Hills, a place that matters to us!*

*I blink! It is July! I see the smiles of the Flatten Family, all 100 of us. We are having our yearly family reunion in the same exact spot where the Crocker Grocery Store and Crocker Post Office were. We are playing baseball! We are laughing! Crocker, South Dakota. . . this place matters to me!*

3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner: Zada Storm of Lennox Elementary School in Lennox

## **“Living in the Country”**

### **My Grandparents Farm in Lincoln County**

*My grandparents farm is my favorite place to be in South Dakota because there's lots of nature there, like trees and plants. Also, because there are lots of farm animals and wildlife.*

*Their farm is located in Lincoln county three miles south of Lennox, it is surrounded by corn fields, beans fields, and a big pasture with a creek.*

*When I am at the farm there are lots of things to do. There is a huge beautiful tree where my treehouse is. It has a metal ladder that leads to the slide. When you're up in the treehouse you can read, listen to music, and in the evenings you can sit and watch the sun go down and that could be the end of a perfect day. At the farm there are lots of things you can do, like spending time in the barn, and watching the cows. You can go sledding on the snowy hills, go fishing, jump on the hay bales, feed baby calves, play on the swing, catch butterflies, and play with my dog Jack. Also, you can plant food and flowers in the garden, and play sports like softball and basketball. My grandparents barn has a lot of history. My favorite thing to do at the farm is to play with the baby kittens in the hay loft of the barn.*

*Our family barn was built by my great great grandpa Christopher Jibben. The original barn got destroyed in the Davis tornado of 1928, but then after the tornado he re-built it on his farm. Later, it got moved from Davis to my grandparents farm by Lennox. The Davis tornado destroyed half of the town and 125 people were injured, some people died. Christopher first built his barn for his horses. Today in 2021 we still do have the barn. After it was used for horses it was used for milking cows. Later it was used for pigs, and now it is used for cattle. But this year we are going to sell most of the cows and get some horses.*

*This barn tells a good story about my familys history and about the rich history of the tornado and thats why it sould be preserved. My grandparents farm is a beautiful place where you are never bored and if anyone would come there they would know the exact same thing. That's why I chose my grandparents farm.*