

Historic Times

Summer History Club • Week of July 13, 2020 • Issue: 07



Name: Susan the Sleuth

Hobby: History Investigation

Loves: Learning about what life was like in Brown County, many, many, many years ago

Favorite Camping Activity:

Making (& Eating) S'mores!

Favorite Campfire Song:

"On Top of Spaghetti"

(Tune of On Top of Old Smokey)

Little Brother: Thomas



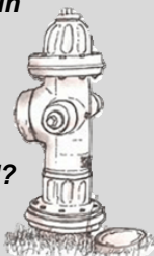
FIRE HYDRANTS

are very useful and it is important for firefighters to know where they are located in an emergency. We've hidden several hydrants throughout this newsletter.

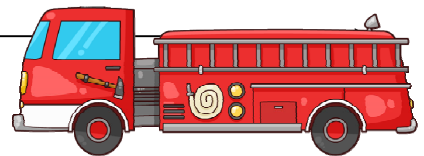
How many can you find?

Look carefully!

(Answer on page 9)



TOPIC OF THE WEEK:



Blacksmith & Fire Hall

Hello History Club Members!

It's Susan the Sleuth. This week, the big week seven of our Historic Times, is a very popular one with my little brother! Thomas is more excited than I've ever seen him! Both of the buildings we're talking about this week are his absolute favorites...though I don't know how you can have more than one "absolute" favorite. He is pretty young, so I guess he can have as many as he wants. Our topic this week is the Blacksmith's Shop and the Fire Hall.

But before we get to those fun buildings, you should know that another fun building is open again! The Dacotah Prairie Museum is open limited hours in July on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, 1-4:30 pm. You can come in and look at the cool exhibits...cool because they have air conditioning!! (Ha-ha, that's my Dad's joke.) The only exhibit that isn't open is the Frontier Town, because of cleaning issues, but everything else is, including the traveling exhibit on Tree Houses. Just do your best to social distance and if you want to wear a mask that's a great idea. If you don't have one, the Museum has some at the front desk you can use. I was excited to see all my favorite animals in the Wildlife Gallery. I heard they all got cleaned up during the closed time, Thomas is worried that he's going to have to take a bath as well!

IMAGINE: It's 1881 and your business or house catches on fire! What do you do? There are no telephones (not until 1886 at least), but there is a volunteer fire department in town. At the very beginning they didn't even have a fire truck (just a wagon they pulled behind them with several hoses wrapped around the middle). They would either hook a hose up to a hydrant that was sticking up out of the ground or pump water from a horse trough (something like a big tub that holds water for horses to drink). Someone had to run the pump to keep the water flowing through the hose. They had nothing like we have today, but at least it would help the fire from spreading and taking out most of the town!

2020 Is A Year for Making History

DEALING WITH CHANGE: Past Generations Saw Changes, We Do Too!

Sometimes change can be scary, like what happened last spring when schools and a lot of businesses suddenly shut down because of the virus Covid 19. We were told to stay home, wear masks, wash our hands, don't get too close to people and do school at home! There were lots of



changes, not being able to see your friends whenever you wanted....Birthday parties had to be celebrated differently. But now, slowly, things are changing again,

starting to return...not to normal but at least starting to re-open.

Even though lots of festivals have been called off during the summer including the DPM's History Camp, you can still learn about the buildings at Centennial Village and when the Village does open back up, you can be the tour guide and teach your family about what each of the businesses did, and if we still have a business like it in Aberdeen today. This virtual History Camp has three weeks to go, including this one. So, three more lessons about the buildings, the towns in and around the

county and, of course, the scavenger hunts. Everyone at the DPM hopes you've been enjoying these packets and will share them with your friends as you head back to school in the fall. You might even see Miss Mary and Miss Sherri as they come to visit your school and teach you even more things about our area history.

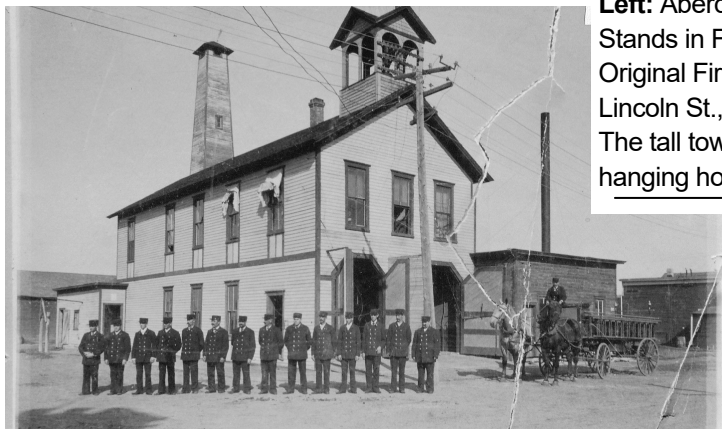
Thank you for sending in all the cool photos of you finding the buildings, exploring history and creating art.

Please keep them coming!!! Send photos to:

dacotahprairiemuseum@gmail.com.



Photo Above: Aberdeen Fire Department, ca. 1911, horse drawn fire wagon
Recognize the building behind them? See the other buildings? What has changed?



Left: Aberdeen's Fire Crew
Stands in Front of the
Original Fire House on
Lincoln St., ca. 1895
The tall tower in back is for
hanging hoses to dry

WOW!



SHARE PHOTOS!

SHOW US WHAT YOU ARE LEARNING!

We'd love to hear from you!

Are you enjoying history club?

Send pictures of your history club adventures to our email address:

dacotahprairiemuseum@gmail.com

(NOTE: Photos may be posted on our web page or social media pages.)

KIDS: Make sure to have your parents help & permission to send emails.

This is an old
"fire wagon"
...the "old"
version of a
fire truck.



Blacksmith and Firehall Word Search

Y H P H Q O Y D E M T W R J P U J F I G
H C O U O E M Q I U V T B T N J W O W R
A I U O M R L E M G A N V I L F B C W J
M W I H W P S P T A S U R D L A V B H O
M F Z A O N E E N A I T F D A P T E O M
E M B Y V S R R S M L Z T E J R D F L Z
R C G G M W E A T H D H S L T O R O Y B
G H Y Z R A A I B R O X Z G J N G R X L
P D P R S G G Q T C U E R L D N E G X I
I F B K O O F D W F E C G W J S M E J N
G P P Q Q N I D A F I H K D P V M L T H
Y L N O K W R E T T R R E S S F G B U V
E A Q J L H O D E H Q Z E L E S J F V J
C D P M L E N J R P S F D H M G E K C D
J D Y F R E G C F A I L V K Y E V I O Y
F E K A W L J B E N O Z Z L E D T X A V
O R W X U R R E D E N A T R G P R Q L V
T P R U S I Q N M S R P W C G J F A V Z
T X W O O N G F I R E H O U S E Q V N Q
B U Q N R G F O N S B E L L O W S K C T

wagon wheel ring

fire hydrant

horseshoe

pumper truck

fire house

bellows

nozzle

hammer

helmet

water

anvil

ladder

forge

metal

apron

hose

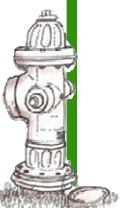
iron

ax

coal



CHECK YOUR ANSWERS on page 9





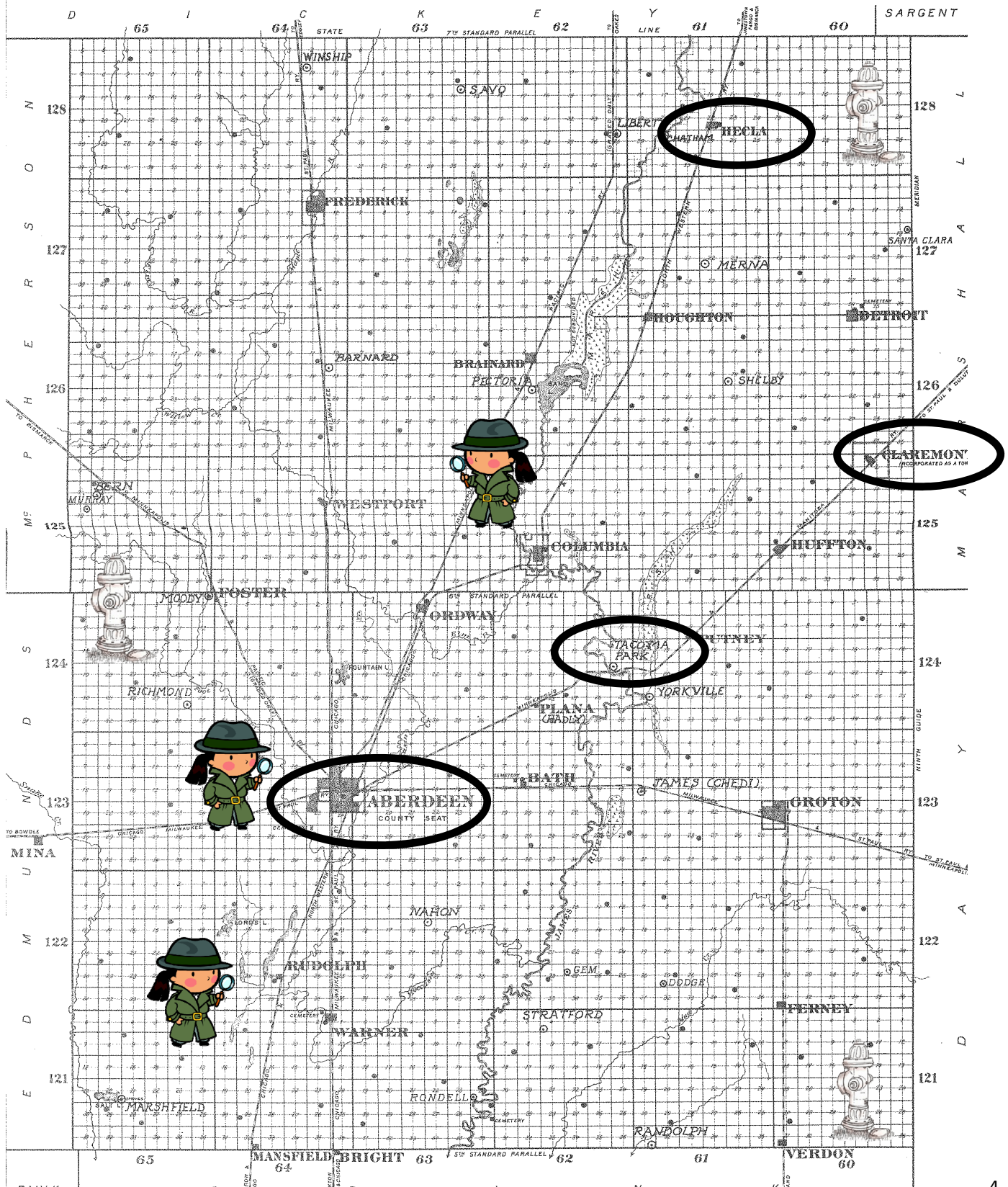
INVESTIGATE: Look at this really awesome old map of Brown County! I've marked the places we are learning about this week: Hecla, Claremont & Tacoma Park. I've also marked Aberdeen, where Centennial Village is located at the Brown County Fairgrounds. —Susan the Sleuth

BROWN CO.

SOUTH DAKOTA.

BY W.P. BUTLER, MAP PUBLISHER, ABERDEEN, S.D.

- POST OFFICES
- CORPORATE LIMITS
- PLATTED TOWNS
- SCHOOLS (LIST NOT COMPLETE)



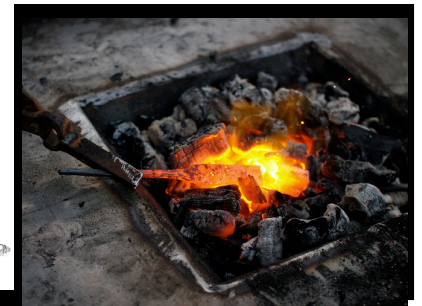
FAMILY MEETING TOPIC: **Make a Fire Plan**

BENEFITS OF FIRE: If you lived before 1930, chances were pretty good that you heated your home with fire. That could be by burning wood, but most people used coal. If you were lucky, you would have one big central furnace that would heat all of the rooms of your house at the same time. But, that kind of furnace, along with all of the duct pipes carrying the heat, would cost a lot of money. Most people chose to use smaller stoves to heat up individual rooms. Remember, the kitchen had a dedicated stove that kept that room plenty warm in the winter and possibly the summer, unless you had a summer kitchen (a second kitchen in a detached building for cooking in warm weather).

FIRE SAFETY IS NOT A NEW CONCEPT: Because fire is basically alive, it can get out of control very easily. If a wind suddenly blew down the stove pipe, embers from the fire could blow out into the room and catch things on fire very easily. Sometimes embers came out the chimney and caught the roof on fire. (Most people used wooden shingles on their roof). If you lived out in the country, there probably wasn't a fire department close by to come and save your burning home. What was most important was that everyone got out safely.

DO YOU HAVE A FIRE SAFETY PLAN? Does your family have a fire plan for your home? If a fire starts, where do you go? How do you get out, a window or door? Where do you meet after you get out? How do you call for help? Do you have fire extinguishers? How about smoke and fire detectors? When were they checked last? If you don't have a plan or if it's been a little while since you've gone over it, now is a great time to do so.

BE LIKE THE PIONEERS: The pioneers had a fire plan, so make sure you know what to do in case there's a fire in your home.



Snack Idea: *Blacksmith's Forge S'mores*

Summer is a great time for camping and campfires. Here is a fun variation on traditional S'mores...

YOU WILL NEED: • Chocolate Graham Crackers

• Marshmallows

• York Peppermint Patties OR Reece's Peanut Butter Cups

• Long-handled Toasting Fork



Toast your marshmallow over the campfire & assemble your snack as you would traditional S'mores.

Never try to start a campfire by yourself! With your adult's help, make sure to follow safety rules around the campfire and be careful not to poke your neighbor with the toasting fork!



A Visit to Centennial Village:



Blacksmith & Fire Hall



Photos: Blacksmith & Fire Hall buildings at Centennial Village

The Blacksmith Shop in any town was one of the more important businesses, especially before cars were invented. So much of what the blacksmith did would help the farmer, the businessman and even the railroad to continue with their work.

Pioneer villages and towns had many sounds; one was the clink, clink of the blacksmith's hammer pounding on the anvil. Pioneers watched and warmed themselves by the fire as he forged or made hinges, hooks, nails and wheelrings. Most people got around with wagons or buggies, and if you look closely at the wheel, the hub and spokes are made of wood, but everything is held together with a metal wheel ring. And it wasn't one size fits all like tires on cars today! It all depended on who made the wood part of the wheel and what they used to form the wood rim. Everything was custom made back in the pioneer days. Yes, you read right, the Blacksmith even made the nails you would use to build buildings, they were known as square nails and he would need to make them by the hundreds...different sizes and lengths. But his real specialty was horseshoes. Horses hooves needed to be protected, just like today, so a part of the hoof is hol-
lowed out and a metal horseshoe is nailed in place so the

hoof doesn't crack and hurt the animal. Like any shoe, however, they can wear out and need to be replaced.

Most people moving out to this part of the country were farmers and they needed a plow. The Blacksmith was the shop to go to...both to buy the plow and to bring it in for repairs or for sharpening. In fact, any metal tool would eventually need sharpening and that included knives you might need in the kitchen. So, during a typical day, a Blacksmith might start out by making nails, then sharpen some farm equipment, put new horseshoes on a couple of horses, repair parts of a wagon, etc. His job had a lot of variety...unlike someone who worked at a store.

A Blacksmith needed a forge, usually a round heavy metal piece on three or four legs that would hold burning coals. It had a billows that he could use to pump air to make the fire burn very hot. He had to heat up the metal until it started to become soft so he could use his heavy hammer to hit it and shape it. Once the metal was hot, he took it over to his very heavy anvil and used the various surfaces of it to help shape the piece. Sometimes he would use the flat top and other times the curved cone sticking out of the front.

It took strong arms, a good eye and lots of patience, not to mention being able to stand the heat, to be a Blacksmith, and a town couldn't get by without one.

Visit to Centennial Village Continued: Blacksmith & Fire Hall



The Fire Hall Building is one of the few that were actually built new at Centennial Village. While the outside can't compare to the wood siding and glass windows of the others, it does hold some pretty special treasures...and one that you're probably not expecting.

Back in the mid 1980's, the Fire Department was looking for a place to put two very special but very old trucks... they still worked but were outdated and newer trucks were bigger and perhaps better. These "treasures" were Aberdeen's very first ladder truck and pumper truck. The Fire Department along with the Village Board held several fundraisers and finally raised enough money to build one of the largest buildings in the Village. Around the same time, there was a wooden sculpture located along Sixth Avenue in town that had some problems and needed a home. To accommodate the sculpture, the builders raised the building about four feet by placing several rows of cinderblocks under where the wall was going to start. This way, all three treasures would have a safe place to be indoors.

You probably remember seeing or hearing about a big fire at the Malchow's Furniture Store building on Aberdeen's Main Street last year. It burned down on a Saturday night and the flames could be seen for miles! The Fire Department kept that fire from spreading to any of the other buildings on Main Street and made sure everyone got out safely.

Every town is very dependent on their Fire Department. Smaller towns that can't afford to pay the firemen and women to 'work' at the station will have volunteer departments. Volunteer fire departments respond to fire calls in the same way, but it might take a little longer for the volunteers to make it to the firehouse to get their truck and equipment because they are coming from their homes or places of work when the siren is sounded. A



Above Left: Historic Fire Trucks at Centennial Village

Above: Some fire stations have a fireman's pole which helps firefighters get downstairs faster when responding to a fire call.

Below: Aberdeen Fire Department "Engine #1" ca. 1889

few minutes can make all the difference in how bad the fire becomes.

Every town on the prairie, almost as soon as it was started formed some kind of fire department...usually a smaller volunteer group with perhaps not much more than a pumper with a hose attached. A town couldn't be without one, otherwise once a fire got started, it would just keep on going and going, like some of the wild fires you might have heard about that took out whole towns in California and other western states just a few years ago.



Visit to Centennial Village Continued: Blacksmith & Fire Hall



A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE THREE “TREASURES”:

Treasure #1 Pumper Truck: These trucks tell quite a story about Aberdeen’s fire history. The smaller truck was brought in during the early 1900’s and you could hook up four different hoses to it and the water came out the water cannon on top of the truck with huge force! That could easily reach the top of a two story building and put a lot of water on the fire very quickly. Please note that there are no doors and no windshield or roof for this truck. Also, no seatbelts but according to the people at the Fire Department, it didn’t go over 12 miles per hour!

Treasure #2 Aberdeen’s 1st Ladder Truck: The second truck is Aberdeen’s very first ladder truck, and until the town purchased it, no building in town could be built over two stories tall. It’s from a company in Germany and there are very few examples left! If you look closely at the very long wooden ladders on the top of the truck, you can still see the char marks where they were placed against or very close to a burning building. After this truck came to town, The Citizens Bank Building was built, six stories tall....and the Sherman House was expanded to five stories.

Treasure #3 Native American Statue: The third treasure in the building is a very special statue that used to be on display along Sixth Avenue and Dakota Street, just in front of where Burger King is today. This one of a kind statue was hand carved in 1981 by traveling artist, Peter Toth, who had a dream of creating one Native American statue in each of the 50 states. He choose Aberdeen to represent South Dakota and after he picked out the tree he wanted here in the city, he had it transported to Nicolette Park on Sixth Avenue and started the process of carving the Native American Face.

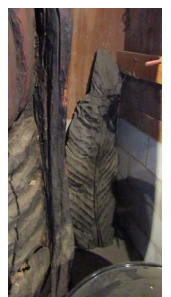
When he was done, the city built a round pedestal and set the statue in place. It was up for almost 10 years, in the snow, rain, sun, wind and temperature changes, and all of those things created a beautiful color or patina on the outside. However, people started to notice cracks forming and when the statue was examined more closely. When it was actually lifted up, it was discovered that the entire middle was gone! Termites had been feasting on the wood for many years. It was too unstable to be left outside in the wind. Some wanted to cut it apart and put it in the landfill...but a group of residents came together to save it and working with the Centennial Village Board, found a safe home for it in the Fire Hall, after all the bugs had been killed, of course! It’s still there today, secured to the east side of the building and safely out of the weather. In order to fit it in, one of the top feathers was carefully taken off and is stored right behind the statue.

All three items are truly one of a kind treasures!

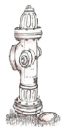


Truck Photos: Pumper Truck Photo on Left, Ladder Truck Pictured on the Right

Wooden Statue: “Trail of the Whispering Giants” Statue by Peter Toth, Photo at bottom right shows the feather that was removed to fit the statue in the building



Brown County Ghost Town of the Week



“Tacoma Park”

TACOMA PARK was built as a resort and served as one from 1890 to the 1930s. In 1895, the Farmer’s Alliance established the Tacoma Park Association which helped the site become a popular entertainment spot for the region.

Lots were leased for 99 years, and many homes were built in the shade of the tree groves. By 1914, the resort had become so busy that a store and post office were built. The Great Northern trains ran hourly to and from Aberdeen during the height of Tacoma Park’s Chautauqua and carnival seasons.

The Populist Party sponsored many meetings in the hall on the park grounds. Large open-air meetings drew thousands of people, and visitors came from a large area by team, train, and early automobile. Summer fare was abundant with carnivals, Chautauqua, nightly dances and summer theater, complete with food stands and a merry-go-round.

There were many buildings at the park over the years including a dance pavilion, a baseball park grandstand and even a racetrack.

The hard times of the Depression years, recurring flooding of the river, and improvements in automobile travel contributed to the demise of Tacoma Park. There are still a few cabins and houses along the north side of the park but due to high water surrounding it, we don’t recommend visiting this site right now.



Top: Tacoma Park Club at the Tacoma Park Grandstand, ca. 1920

Above: Carousel with Tent Cover at Tacoma Park

Below: Dance Pavilion Building, Tacoma Park



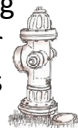
What is a Ghost Town?

No, it’s not a town with ghosts!
A ghost town is a town that has had all (or almost all) of the people leave and move away. It may or may not have buildings left.

From Page 3
Word Search Answer Key

Word search grid with circled words: TACOMA, PARK, GHOST, TOWN, DEPRESSION, FLOODING, RIVER, AUTOMOBILE, TRAVEL, DEMISE, CABINS, HOUSES, NORTH, SIDE, HIGH, WATER, SURROUNDING, VISITING, SITE, RIGHT, NOW.

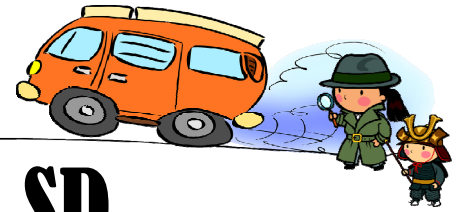
SEARCH FOR Pennies from PAGE 1
ANSWER: There are 20 hidden fire hydrants.





Family Road Trip Idea:

Hecla & Claremont, SD



Above Left: Herman Hubert's first car on Hecla's Main Street

Above Right: Farmer's Festival, Hecla Main St., Oct. 15, 1910

Below: North Side of Hecla Main St., Postmarked Oct. 25, 1931

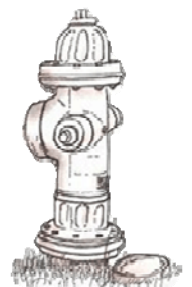
Bottom: Homes on 3rd St., Hecla, Looking North

HECLA: The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Company named Hecla in 1886. The name "Hecla" is attached to a volcano in Iceland, but is not thought to have been the source of the town's name. This little frontier town was already well settled on the prairie by the time the railroad came and it grew rapidly. The first school was later transformed into a theater and the depot was built beside a restaurant, the Diamond E.

By the turn of the century, Hecla supported a large business district, an opera house, a weekly newspaper, two churches, and an industry – a cement block factory. The town was served by two artesian wells in the early days and had a city light plant by 1910.

Beginning in 1887, a physician always lived in Hecla. During the typhoid epidemic of 1887, with the help of able-bodied men who kept four livery teams at his disposal night and day, the doctor lost only two patients. This was noteworthy, considering that more than three hundred area people contracted the disease.

In 1903, law offices opened and by the following year, cement sidewalks were 8 feet wide along Main Street. Two chemical wagons were purchased for the fire department. The town was far



enough away from any larger center so that it continued to grow during the next years, adding business and supporting two banks.

Family Road Trip Continued: Hecla & Claremont



Left: Birdseye View Claremont, ca. 1905

Above: Claremont, ca. 1927

CLAREMONT was settled mainly by newcomers from Minnesota and Michigan and was platted for a town in 1886. The completion of the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad (later the Great Northern) from North Dakota to Aberdeen provided the site. The initial buildings of the new community were moved there from Detroit, seven miles to the northwest, which had failed to receive a railroad connection. Railroad officials named the frontier town for a picturesque village in New Hampshire.



Claremont exploded with new settlers in its first year, establishing over 24 businesses. New businesses included a real estate office, an insurance office, a lawyer, and a physician. Dr. Willard E. Dinsmore arrived in 1886 and became an institution in the area. He was responsible not only for medical services, but also for the first artesian well and a water tower and city park. His office, built in 1889, still stands at the center of town across from the First State Bank building, also built that year.

A quote from the American News (1916) reads: "In the past twenty years the population of Claremont has remained at 400. While not a large town, it is a thriving and active community center that has withstood the ravages of the recent depression (1890s) to a remarkable degree and shows every sign of being one of the first smaller towns to stage a genuine comeback."

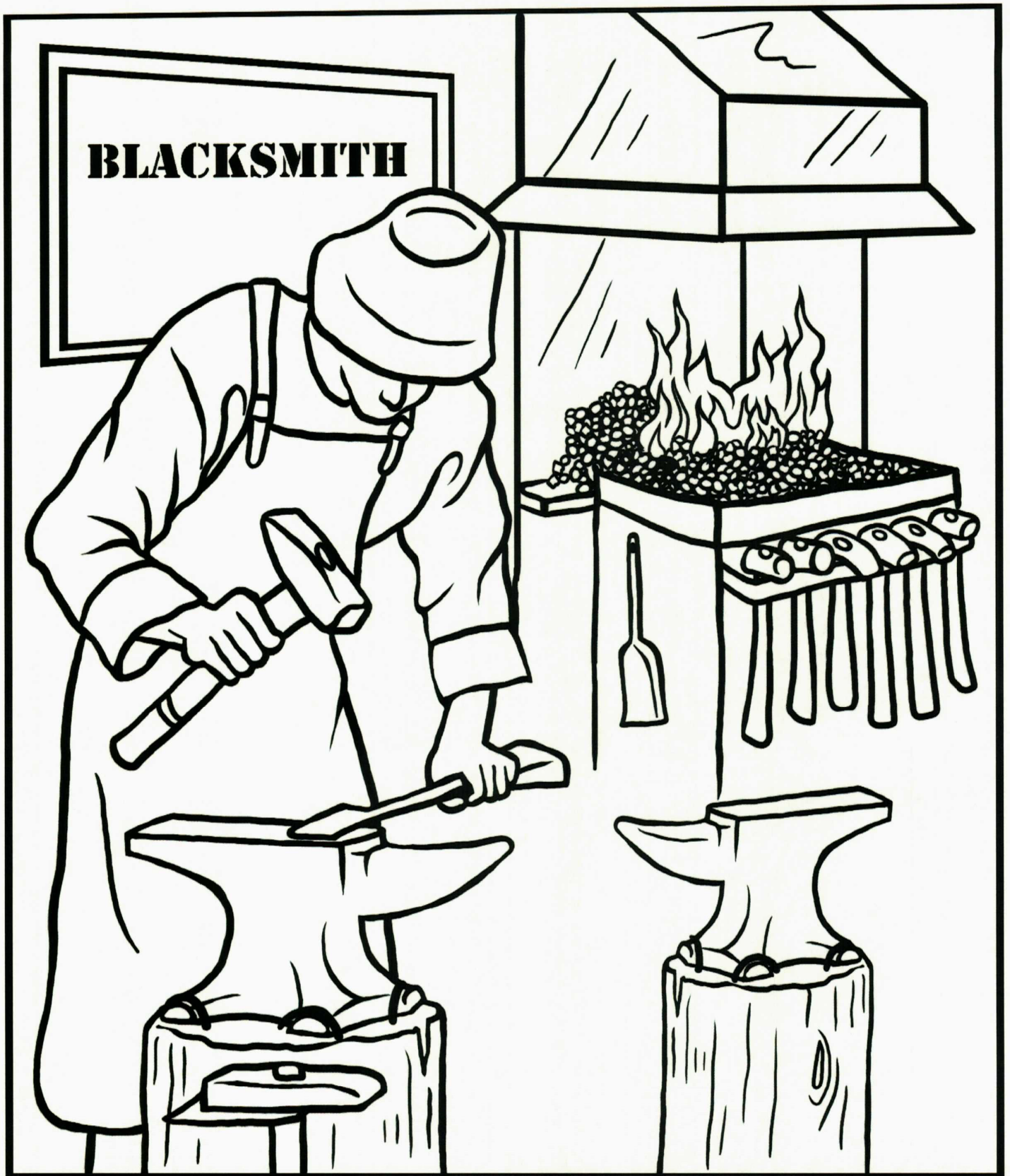
Below Left: "Four Elevators" in Claremont, ca. 1912

Below: Great Northern Railroad Snow Plow, Claremont Water Tower & Elevators, 1909

Bottom: New Claremont Schoolhouse, built in 1913 for \$22,000, first graduation held in 1916



Name _____



SCAVENGER HUNT MAP

WEEK. WE WILL SHARE WHERE THE X'S ARE, BUT YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO FIND MORE!

IN THOUGHT THAT SINCE WE WERE TALKING ABOUT TREASURES, AND ONE OF THEM WAS A STATUE, THIS WEEK LOOK AROUND THE AREA AND SEE WHAT STATUES YOU CAN FIND TAKE YOUR PICTURE WITH! WE'LL START BY GIVING YOU THREE LOCATIONS, ALDRICH PARK AND THE STATUE FOR TWO CITY MULES, THE STATUE ON TOP OF THE BROWN COUNTY THOUSE, AND THE STATUE OF ANDREW MELGAARD IN THE PARK NAMED AFTER HIM. FIND AS MANY AS YOU CAN, THEY MIGHT BE RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE!

SE TAKE A PICTURE WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AND SEND IT TO: DACOTAHPRAIEMUSEUM@GMAIL.COM #LOCALHISTORYISFUN

