



PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE KEY CITY AND THE BLACK HILLS THAT MADE IT

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP KIT

Dear Community Members:

Two years ago, I decided to undertake a project to document the history of Sturgis and the Black Hills. The reason was simple. Finding local history was difficult as there was no recent proper work on the subject, nor was there was no central database. It was more like finding a needle in a haystack, but much of the hay was fake.

So, I started to dig through the historical sources, scouring newspapers, articles, even popular books, in order to start compiling the foundation for a database. I also started looking at what other cities in the Midwest were doing in order to not only preserve their history, but to promote it. Some cities, like Deadwood and Medora, took to creating an entire historic atmosphere that have become huge tourist destinations. Others, such as Bismarck, has seen a boom in historical tours, as well as larger discussions and showcasings of their history.

I also started to start writing a number of articles, as well as sharing history where I could. Through this background research a few things became exceptionally clear.

1. People don't know a lot of the local history, but want to find out more. The most common comment I've received is, "I didn't know that," or some form thereof
2. History is exceptionally popular. The first story I posted on our Facebook page was on January 21. It reached 28 people. Today, we are reaching over 28,000 people a month.
3. History has the potential to bring communities together. The great majority of responses I've received have been positive. It's a shared past that people can relate to.
4. People crave it. The biggest tourist sites in the Midwest are based on history. Historic tours are expanding to additional cities. Historical dramas and documentaries are blockbusters, all because people want more history.

What this all suggests is that right now is the perfect time to invest in our own local history. That is what Historical Sturgis is all about, providing an accessible and interactive manner in which to engage it in. We are set to begin expanding the work we currently are doing, which includes podcasts, videos, demonstrations, tours, and a whole lot more. But to get there, we are looking at local support.

Sincerely,
Dustin White

BENEFITS OF SPONSORSHIP

As a business owner, I understand that when sponsoring an event or organization, the hope is to eventually receive something in return. A sponsorship is much like an investment, and a good investment should pay back dividends, or at least the equivalent. With that in mind, we wanted to create a sponsorship package that would be a benefit for many years to come. We see Historical Sturgis as a long term investment in the community, and thus sponsorships will have a long lasting impact, as well as benefit.

Engaged Visitors:

A center part of this project is to create a self-guided historical tour. It will utilize an online database, printed pamphlets, and eventually signage. Such a tour will keep people in town and engaged. And studies show that the longer people stay in town, the more likely they are to frequent local establishments.

Increased Foot Traffic:

The potential to increase foot traffic is two fold. First, the tour, as well as expanded history, will help bring people into town. Taking the tour is free, and family friendly, which is what many are looking for. Especially during the off season. History is also a big seller. Entire economies are built on just historic tourism. Second, many of the businesses in town have some sort of interesting and unique history attached to them, and thus the tour will direct them to those establishments.

Building Community:

A big complaint in many of the towns throughout the Hills is that there is nothing to do. After tourist season ends, this becomes even more true. This project would help alleviate a bit of that in a few ways. First, the tour would give individuals something they could do on their own. And since there is a lot of history to explore, this tour will keep growing and thus continue to be something that can be explored.

Second, another main component of this project will be demonstrations, talks, and other presentations. These events will occur throughout the year, and will be things that the community can enjoy. It will give them something to do.

It will also bring people downtown. In Sturgis, and many other of the towns that dot the Hills, after the summer, a lot of the businesses do close. But there are still many that stay open, but are forgotten about. As a business owner, that's something I hear a lot, "I didn't know this was here," and I've been told by other business owners that they get the same reaction. This project would help address that by helping to build community engagement.

Wholesome, Long Lasting Advertising:

Advertising has changed drastically in the last couple of decades. Traditional advertising has struggled with the rise of social media. More and more people are going online to get their news, entertainment, and to interact. Which means you have to get creative.

Sponsors will get ads in all of our material, both online and in print, and all of it is wholesome, family friendly work. These ads will be long lasting. An add in one of our stories will remain with that story, period. Ten, twenty years down the road, that ad will still be there. And with the stories we do, they are continually bringing in new traffic.

A GROWING AUDIENCE

A look at the numbers:

Social Media

Weekly Average Stats:

Reach: 7,000

New Likes: 30

Website

Monthly Page Views: 13,680

Unique Visitors: 6,540

Increasing by 3,000 views a month

The first article posted on the Historical Sturgis Facebook page went up on January 21, 2021. It reached just 28 people. Our most recent article that was posted on May 6, 2021, has reached 10,323 people. In January, our website, HistoricalSturgis.com, was reaching just about 60 people a month. Today, it's nearing 14,000 a month, and climbing quickly.

Over the last 4 months, we've been ramping up the work we are doing, with the release of new articles coming much more quickly. Each month is seeing an exponential growth.

I expect this trend to continue through the summer, as a not only new articles will be produced, but also more multimedia sources including podcasts and videos. I will also be leveraging another website that I run, MidwesternScout.com, which has a potential reach of over 50,000 monthly page views, and has a readership that spans across the Midwest, Canada, and portions of the east coast.

PLANNED PUBLICATIONS

While much of the world is now online, there is still a place for printed publications, especially for the older generations. The eventual goal is to publish a series of books, but we have to walk before we run.

Starting off, pamphlets as well as maps will be printed and distributed that showcase specific aspects of local history, as well as give people a source to discover this history on their own. Landmarks will be included on the maps, so that for those who prefer something printed can also participate in the self-guided tours.

A historical journal will also be produced, starting off with a yearly issue, with the goal of becoming a quarterly publication. This journal will include articles relating to the history of the Black Hills, as well as historical projects that people can try at home.

Special, short publications will also be produced that look at specific pieces of history. Some of these will deal with historical events, while others will be how to guides that look at a historical process, or a historical trade.

Specialized works are also in the works, such as a historic cooking book that has not only recipes from the late 1800s and early 1900s, but the techniques used to make those meals.

Finally, reproductions are also in the works. There are works from the late 1800s that have a bearing on today's society, but are hard to find, and those that can be found are difficult to read and navigate through. The reproductions that this project will produce will seek to restore these works back to their original grandeur.

Besides written works, I'm also working on recreating and reproducing historical images, as well as posters from the turn of the 20th century. Some of these will be faithful reproductions, while others will be recreating images to show how the times have changed.

MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

The best sort of history is that which engages. To do that, a multi-faceted approach is ideal as it allows a wider variety of people to participate. For this project, I am bringing in a number of historic trades, entertainment, and knowledge in order to help people dive into history and become immersed.

Over the last couple of years, I've been pulling together sources, working with others, and drawing from my own background in order to create a project that encompasses a large swath of history. As the project grows, so will the items that we offer. To begin, we will have a focus on a number of aspects:

Woodworking:

The craftsman was an integral part of early cities. The Black Hills were filled with local woodworkers who could craft whatever product you would need. To capture that history, I'm building an 1880s workshop that will be used to demonstrate, as well as teach, how woodworking was done by the pioneers, and how those methods are still viable today.

This workshop will also be used to teach people the basics of woodworking, and how to get into it on a budget. In this way, they will be able to find a bit of that self-sufficiency that the Hills' early pioneers brought with them.

Cooking:

Some of the first establishments set up in any new town were eateries. For pioneers traveling, the chuck wagon became an essential part of the convoy. Simply, people need to eat. And that hasn't changed at all, people still need to eat.

What better way to facilitate that than by creating cooking classes based on historic principals that can also be adapted to the modern age. These courses I'm developing revolve around cast iron cookware, particularly the dutch oven. A piece of cookery so important that the Lewis and Clark Expedition refused to ever part with theirs. The end goal again is to help people find a bit of self-sufficiency like our early pioneers had.

Entertainment:

When the first pioneers arrived in the Black Hills, it was during the vaudeville era. Stage shows would travel throughout the country, bringing entertainment to the masses. It would help bring to fruit Hollywood, and house hold names like Harry Houdini. It would help birth Spiritualism and the seances and performances that came with that, as well as the performances that debunked those same seances.

This project will bring those sorts of performances back to life, and introduce a new generation to the entertainment that the early pioneers would have enjoyed, ranging from historical magic performances, to seances and explanations of how they were conducted.

These shows will be based on my nearly two decades of performing as a magician, and research into early magic acts, and spiritualism acts.

Future Projects:

With support, we intend to continue to make the Historical Sturgis project to expand to include additional classes and workshops that cover other aspects of pioneer life that can provide wisdom and skills today. These will include things such as gardening, buck skinning, hunting, and even things like shoe making. The goal is to have this project encompass the entire life of a pioneer, while also teaching practical skills for today's life.

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Community Sponsor - \$100

- * Business listed on sponsor page, and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article

Silver Sponsor - \$250

- * Business listed on sponsor page and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article
- * Business listed in select printed material

Gold Sponsor - \$500

- * Business listed on sponsor page and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article
- * Business listed in select printed material
- * Special event inclusions and in promotional material

Platinum Sponsor - \$1000

- * Business listed on sponsor page and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article
- * Business listed in select printed material
- * Special event inclusions and in promotional material
- * Logo on advertising material
- * Banner displayed at events, or logo included in presentations
- * Shout-out during online and live presentations when applicable

Palladium Sponsor - \$2500

- * Business listed on sponsor page and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article
- * Business listed in select printed material
- * Special event inclusions and in promotional material
- * Logo on advertising material
- * Banner displayed at events, or logo included in presentations
- * Shout-out during online and live presentations when applicable
- * Special historical presentation at your business for online use
- * Listing in all print material

Lifetime Sponsor - \$20,000

- * All of the above perks, extended through the lifetime of your business
- * Special event in your business' honor
- * Dedication in larger online and print material, such as future books and/or documentaries
- * Dedication in historical journal

PROPOSED EVENTS: 2021-2022

For the 2021-2022 season, the goal is to start off strong. I have a number of programs in the work, both live events as well as online videos. This summer will be focused largely on online material, including the launch of both a woodworking channel and a cooking channel. A podcast and historical video series are also in the works.

Live events are set to kick off this fall, and continue through to next spring, where the hope is that we will have enough support to launch a new gardening project. New events will be added as frequently as possible, but here is the current line up.

September 2021

Drinks and History

Our first planned series is a set of talks on Pioneer Women of the Old West. Figures such as Poker Alice and Calamity Jane will be mentioned, but lesser known characters, such as Sarah Campbell will get presentations as well. This series will be a recurring series.

October 2021

In the Spirit of Houdini

Harry Houdini is possibly the best known magician this world has ever seen. This presentation will be two fold. First, a historical magic show based on Houdini's own routines. This will be a show directly out of the early 1900s.

Second, we will take a deeper dive into who Houdini was, and his impact on history. This presentation will mix history with magic.

The Seance

A historical seance, with a Houdini twist. A spiritualist routine will be demonstrated, and as Houdini would often do, the entire thing will be explained.

November 2021

The Dunninger Series

Continuing with the magic theme, November will kick off with one of the most highly regarded mentalist, and an act based on his own performances will be presented.

A Time of Thanks

A history of Thanksgiving on the Frontier will be explored in this presentation. Historic meals will be discussed, and cooked.

December 2021

Christmas on the Frontier

A continuation of our Thanksgiving program. This will look at how Christmas has been celebrated in the Hills. Historic meals will be discussed and cooked.

Pictures with Santa

We skip the modern Santa, and go for a historic one. Family fun activities will be held and photos with Santa will be offered.

January 2021

Working with Wood

A hands on approach to 19th century woodworking. We will look at the tools of the trade, and how they were used. This will be the beginning of a series on woodworking.

Additional Programs

New programs will be added as frequently as possible, while other will be reoccurring, such as the Drinks and History series. The goal is to have at least one event a month, with additional online videos and series being released as well.