

Custer County Historical Society Monthly Program

Lois Wells – Program Director

Rachel Nepper -- Recorder

“A Black Hills Diary”

Mr. Reid Riner – February 6, 2016

Following the 15-minute refreshment period, Lois introduced Reid Riner, Director of the Minnilusa Historical Society, and Pioneer and Journey Museum in Rapid City. His presentation was based on a diary that he had received. This diary was written by Walter C. Gooding who had come to Dakota Territory in the 1860's to 1880's as a clerk. This was the first trader with significant documentation on the history of these times. Mr. Riner researched the information contained in this diary and told how he corroborated dates and locations with other historic information. Mr. Gooding was at Fort Abraham Lincoln in Dakota Territory (now ND) in 1872 to 1891 but he had journeyed to outlying locations to trade (had been to Deadwood and the new Ft Meade by Bear Butte). Mr. Riner discussed the various forts in the area with slides. He discussed the various historic personages that Mr. Gooding met in the course of his doing business. (General Sheridan, General Sturgis, Major Snyder, Senator Simmons, Mr. Harmon, Charlie Reynolds (commenting that he had a premonition of the Little Big Horn and had given all his belongings away before), Fred Snow (he was an ambulance driver for the Custer Expedition in 1874 and had said that Custer was a poor shot and he, Snow, was the one doing most of the shooting attributed to Custer), Captain Reno, Sitting Bull, Captain Beard, and Charles De Rubio (who he spent some time explaining how this Italian nobleman, who had belonged to Garibaldi's redshirts and had escaped from Devil's Island for trying to assassinate Napoleon III, fought in the Civil War, had ended up in Dakota Territory). The audience enjoyed the historic slides and interesting talk by Mr. Riner.