

The
Gary Interstate

Established Sept. 6, 1878; the only newspaper in the world solely interested in the welfare of Gary, SD and vicinity.

Owned and Published

By The

Gary Historical Association

A monthly newspaper with news of the past and present. September 2008 issue.

www.garysd.com

“The opinions in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the Gary Historical Association.”

Be informed of what is going on in your town!

**Gary Historical Association Tuesday, September 20, 10:00 am
at the Fire Hall meeting room**

Gary Community Club Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m. at the Fire Hall meeting room

Do you have an obit for anyone buried in Grandview Cemetery? Can you get a copy to us? We would like to do a short history of each one buried there. Thanks for your help.

From: Eliza

School for the Blind Ghost Story at Gary, South Dakota

Last Summer (summer 2003) two of my guy friends and I were looking for something to do on one of those long, hot July nights. We decided to go on a mini "road trip" (about 45 miles) and check out the School for the Blind in Gary, SD.

A little background: The School for the Blind had been built in 1899 and used as a school until it was relocated to Aberdeen in 1959 due to Gary losing its status as County Seat and basically becoming a ghost town. The school grounds have become something of a city park, the town being so small there was no need to lock up any of the school buildings. Aside from the age of the buildings, the really cool feature of the area is the underground tunnels that connect the buildings. You wouldn't want a bunch of blind kids wandering around outside, especially in a South Dakota winter.

Myself, Matt and Levi took our little road trip to Gary. I had brought the flashlight from my car and I had my dad's 1970s Nikon camera around my neck set to take pics in the darkest conditions possible. When we first got to Gary, what had started as a mischief-making trespassing spree took a slightly spooky turn for some reason. It might have been the speed at which the black, smoky clouds scuttled over the moon, or the creepy chorus of frog-croaks coming from God knows where.

At any rate, we decided to walk around the perimeter of the campus area before deciding which building to go into first. The moonlight was quite bright and reflected off the windows of the buildings, which, for some reason are 99% intact. When we got back to the front of the yard, we were discussing what building to look at first. I had toured the place in the daylight about two years before, and it had enchanted me so much I was excited to be back. Since I had been there, the guys were asking me about what was in each building. All of a sudden, I saw a black figure by the front door and stopped whatever I was saying and was staring so hard my eyes were

bulging, so the guys turned around and the shadow I had seen seemed to dissolve into leaf-shapes and blend into the shadows of the large trees. They asked me what I saw, and I told them it looked like a witchy woman's figure but it was cut out of the shadows, leaving a blacker shape than the rest of the darkness. That's the best way I can describe it.

The guys decided to start with that building. Levi was the leader, probably because he is very tall and skinny and we could see around him, I was in the middle, and Matt brought up the rear because he is fat and the slowest runner - just in case! We went around the side of the building and started up the narrow sidewalk to the side door. We were going at a good clip when Levi stopped cold and I almost ran into him. He was shining the light at a large tree that had grown straight up through the threshold of the door, blocking it to all but the thinnest person. It seemed like a pretty darn good symbol of unwelcomeness at the time.

We turned around and went to the other building. No one said a word until we were well into Building #1, which was pretty tame. We walked over a layer of books that had been strewn all over the hallway and stairwell. The building had been used for storage by different Gary municipal entities, so had a few rooms filled with microfiche and old books. We went to the second floor, peering into each room as we went by. The second floor (or the third, I can't remember) had the auditorium the guys wanted to see, so we played around in there for a while. After that, they decided they wanted to check out the underground tunnels. I couldn't remember how to get there from Building #1, so after we traipsed around in there for a while, we headed out the way we came. As we found the main stairwell back down to the wide hall that led to the front door, we noticed that there was a board going across the hall from one transom to another with books neatly lined up on it, like a library shelf. I thought to myself, oh that must have been there before and I didn't notice it because Levi had the light. Yeah, except Levi had to duck under it and he hadn't done that before. I said something about this, and the guys just said something lame like maybe we hadn't been down this hallway before, except that there is one main stairwell that comes out right near the front door, and that's the one we were using. Oh, well. Nothing too weird.

We headed to building #3, which seemed like somewhat of a dormitory. This building had evidence of parties by trespassers. In the upstairs rooms, there were a few shoes, socks, some Playboys from the 80s, old-style beer tabs, and plenty of sunflower seed shells on the floor. The halls had some spray painted lame small-town graffiti on them, but nothing seemed to be vandalized badly. We finished looking into each upstairs room, then went back to the main level and did the same.

We had left the basement for the last, cause we knew the tunnel was there. The stairwell to the basement was obstructed by a used tire, an old water heater had been thrown off to the side. We walked over a piece of plywood and then realized we were in the tunnel. The walls had smoothly curved inward like a funnel. The tunnel had a rounded top and straight sides. It had a handrail and some small pipes ran along the ceiling. There was a bare lightbulb every so often, which surprised me because you wouldn't think blind kids would need light, but I guess the teachers needed it.

We were walking very slowly down the tunnel because every footstep made a loud crunch in the cement passageway. About 30? feet in, the tunnel branched off into a Y. Guessing by the aboveground layout of the campus, the right branch went back the way we came, to Buildings #1 and #2, and we weren't sure where the left branch would go, since the only building we had seen out that way was an old half-collapsed boiler building. Just before the Y junction, Levi stopped and paused, about to ask us which way to go. All of a sudden, we all cocked our heads and

looked up and to the right, like dogs or cats tracking something. About 2 seconds later, we were all tearing out of the tunnel like the devil was after us.

Adrenaline was working pretty good for me because I was right on Levi's heels and he's tall and thin with LONG legs and I am short and chubby! Once we were just about back to the car and Matt had caught up with us, we tried to gather our wits. I didn't want to plant any ideas in Levi's head, so I asked him first what he experienced. He said he had felt some sort of breeze or something pass by him and then he heard music coming from the right tunnel branch, at which point he wished to hear no more and made a quick exit. I then told Levi that I only started listening when I saw him stop and cock his head. I was VERY specific on what I heard because I have studied music for many years and a lot of things leave an aural imprint in my brain which I can replay anytime. I heard a small chorus of children singing a playground lullaby, like the nanny-nanny-boo-boo rhythm, but it sounded more like that nursery rhyme "it's raining, it's pouring, the old man is snoring..." it sounded like three or four kids of that age where the male voice is not very distinguishable from the female, around 5-6 years old.

By this time, Matt had caught his breath and he wanted to leave. I pestered him about telling us what he heard / saw because he was the last in the tunnel. He said, "yeah, thanks to you guys who shoved me into the wall so hard it knocked the breath out of me and I was stuck there!" Well, it stands to reason that Matt would have been in the way since he was last, but I distinctly remember pivoting on my foot and blasting off straight out of the tunnel, no obstacles in my way. If Matt HAD been in my way, I probably would have bounced off him since he has 200+ lbs on me. There is, also, no way Levi could have shoved him since Levi weighs even less than me.

It took almost the whole ride home (and several cigarettes) to convince Matt to talk about his experience. We knew he had seen something, cause he was so shaken. He finally told us that it made him sick to think about it, but he had seen a girl at the Y junction of the tunnel. He didn't hear any music, but saw a girl (we assume she was glowing because Levi and the light were many yards away in the other direction by then). I pressed for details, and Matt said the girl appeared to be 5-6 years old, looking straight at him, had just below the shoulder length hair in fat ringlets held back with a headband or ribbon, a dress with a low waist that ended about mid-shin and I believe a peter-pan type shaped collar and slightly puffed sleeves. I know all this cause I pressed for details on her outfit to try to establish a time period. From this, I am guessing around the nineteen-teens to nineteen-thirties for the girl.

Anyway, I know this story doesn't seem scary to you, but it left an impression on those of us who were there! I promise you, go to the Gary School for the Deaf just once during the daylight even and the place will haunt your dreams. Not in a scary way, but in a sad way, like it's lonely and wishes you would visit. That place has been in my dreams all the time since I first went there over 3 years ago. Thanks for your time.

The Church of St. Peter, Canby
Fall Festival, Sunday, September 14, 11:30 to 3:00 p.m.
Down Memory Lane
By
Bernice Jensen

Dear Friends,

First Day of School



Last month I wrote about my three oldest children's first day of school. In 1963, I changed my name to Jensen and two years later, our family was blessed with twin boys, James and Joe. They were born 2 months premature so they were a great concern. I was so grateful for my daughter Paula, sister Betty, my father who ran errands for me, the moral support from my mother, and our pastor and his wife, the Steffenhagens.

The twins first day of school was very ordinary, they had the brothers and Paula in school. Getting them to the years of school was a job. Jim was the leader and Joe would say sure; not to cause a conflict. Joe was the oldest by 15 minutes and this upset James. He wanted to be the oldest. He would beg me in anguish, Mom, I am the oldest, aren't I? I said no, Jim, Joe is the oldest. Well just say I am, can't you just say I am the oldest so I can tell my friends I am the oldest. No, Jim, I can't.

When he started school he was very upset to say he was the youngest twin. This was terrible. They would walk around with their arms over each others shoulders and talk about what a good life they have, climbing trees and jumping off the barn. One day they were parachuting with one of their friends. One of their friends came in and said Jim was knocked out. They said they jumped off the picnic table. One of the neighbor ladies came over and said Jim and Joe were jumping off the barn and the old livery stable we used for a garage. They would play in the sandbox and put rocks up their nose and oh yes, to the doctor we would go. When we were in the doctor's office, a child cried and screamed. A lady and her child sat close by. The child asked his mother what was wrong. The mother replied, the doctor is cutting off his nose! Jim's eyes got so big! Do they cut off my nose if they can't get the rock out? I whispered the lady doesn't know what she is talking about. Jim went through pain. They rode a dust mop and broom and went through my flowers. What are you doing?? Combining oats. The flowers were ruined but I said good job boys. Their grandfather Schaefer was a big part of their lives.

Brian was born two years later. A joy of a baby as he was so good. The twins were not too happy about this new brother. They would ask him, looking over the bassinet, why did you come here to live? Why didn't you go to some other home? When he got big enough to walk, they would play and not include him. He would just wait till they got their blocks or farm set up and Brian would kick it over. They would tell him to get your own brother.

It wasn't long and Brian was three and Joe and Jim were six and the time came for school to start and the twins would enjoy their first day of school. I dressed them in coordinating outfits of green with a green string tie. They came home in the afternoon telling me that boys wear jeans to school not dress pants and they didn't want to dress alike. They picked out what they wanted to wear the next day.

Three years passed and soon Brian would start school. In those three years it was hard to keep him home; he would run away looking for the school house till he found it, went in and sat down with the first graders. I got a call about the little boy in the first grade class that insisted he should be in school. He was just a few days lacking the legal age of September birthdays. After some discussion Brian was accepted in the first grade and he was one happy camper. He made his own friends and was a busy little boy. He and his brothers had a lot of fun when they came home. We had moved to a new home, a much bigger home and they loved it, playing in the attic, in the trees, and a big garage and they loved the neighbors and Gary.

It is hard to believe Joe and Jim are 43 years old and Brian is 40. Why does time go so fast?

I would say to all young parents, enjoy your children, and take the time to enjoy them. I didn't, I always thought I was too busy. Today is a busy time but today I have great- grandchildren. The grandchildren and the great grandchildren are a great joy to me.

MEMORIES FROM THE HEART

By Betty Schaefer McCormick
Just a few "Memories from the Heart".

If you live in Gary and have your abstract handy, the Gary Historical Association would appreciate a list of the owners of the legal description that you live on starting with the railroad to present. We would like to do this for the whole town. Thanks for your help.

South Dakota School for the Blind

Gary, South Dakota

Some information obtained from Preserve South Dakota, Winter 2003

2002 Places in Peril

The first South Dakota School for the Blind is a collection of nine buildings on 37 acres, which for more than 60 years served as the state's rehabilitation facility for blind children. In 1894, local publisher Doane Robinson came upon the idea that the state needed a facility to educate its blind children, and advocated its establishment in Gary. A few years earlier, Gary lost the county seat to nearby Clear Lake, (in an election) vacating the old wood-frame courthouse building then owned by the City of Gary. Under Robinson's guidance, the city proposed giving the building to the state if it would establish the school in Gary. However, the legislature and other officials did not want to house such a facility in a wood frame building. Therefore, a deal was struck in 1899 whereby the city would construct and donate to the state a new brick building, and in return the state would establish the school for the blind in Gary. The building was completed, dedicated and opened for enrollment on March 1, 1900.

Average enrollment at the school was 30 – 35 students per year; however, it reached a high point of 60 students in 1958. The school provided special educational services not before offered in the state. The school was nurtured by the local community and was a vital part of the social and economic environment in Gary.

The beautiful Neoclassical and Classical Revival designed complex includes classrooms, administration offices, a dormitory, a gym/auditorium with a stage, barns, boiler building and a playground with a unique water fountain in an old flower garden. In 1961, the school was moved to Aberdeen. Although vandals, weather and vermin have taken a toll on the structures, none of the buildings have been altered and most are considered structurally sound and in good condition.

As most of us know, from that time on the complex has been in private hands. First it was used as a private home for elderly people. It then was bought as an investment by private citizens. It would seem that instead of taking care of their investment they let it go by the wayside, waiting for someone to come by and pay the big price. Yes, there were interested parties, but as the offers came in, greed took over and the owners thought it was worth more yet. During this time, the City of Gary did mowing and cleaning of the property. They never sent a bill. Just tried to be the good guys. The taxes on the property were never raised on the property to correspond with the so called "real value". As time went on, the owners also thought that the city should have been protecting their property from vandals etc. We probably should have continued mowing

their grass also. Does the City of Gary fix your property and keep it in good condition? Does the City of Gary mow your grass? No they do not, and nor should they have been responsible for the former school for the blind property. If you own the property, then it is your responsibility to take care of it.

We as the citizens of this community should encourage the Gary City Council to enforce the ordinances that they passed. It is time that the owner of the former school for the blind to be made to take responsibility for their actions or have it cost them the fines that they deserve. Encourage your council person to take responsibility and see to it that they enforce the ordinances that pertain to the school for the blind property. Don't be sitting there feeling sorry for a property owner that can afford to obey the law and doesn't because of a bad attitude.

Gary Historical Association Newsletter from the President

Our July 19, 2008 meeting was held on that date at the fire department meeting room.

The new front door for the Jail House/Information Center has been installed. We will also be stocking the information center with three new brochures that Travis Baer developed for us.

These were printed by the DNB Bank. They have several old pictures of Gary. There is also a pamphlet on the railroad and one on what we have at our museums for the visitors to see. These will be free to the public. Jeff Nothem has also completing the electrical system for us.

We are also working with others in town to put permanent signs at the east and south edge of town that will give a WOW effect for those that drive by. We want them to remember Gary, SD. The sign by the Catholic Church is complete.

The cemetery histories are going well. We're getting contributions of obits from individuals in the community as well as alumni. It will make a great history presentation when it is done.

We are also putting our best foot forward to help this community make the Lac Qui Parle Creek a real asset for the community.

The "Knob Hill" trail and picnic area are making progress. Did you know that one of the oldest oak trees in the area is at the top of that hill? Recreating some of the past and making it an asset to the community is our endeavor. We hope that you will enjoy it when finished. Carolynn Webber has donated the steel to make the bridge going from the park area to the Knob Hill area. Do you remember the bridges that used to go across the creek way back when? Just ropes, boards and sticks.

We have received donations of \$625 so far for marking some of the unmarked graves at Grandview. Donations were given by E.M.S., Cliff Viessman and Gopher Sign. Darren and Jessica Houseman have also indicated that they will donate six markers from Clear Lake and six markers from Canby funeral homes. These will be small markers that will probably be set flat in concrete at each of those sights. We will work with the City of Gary and Mike Nosbush on this. We thank them all for their help with this project.

This was our annual meeting, so we had election of officers. Those elected were as follows: Roger Baer, President; Ray Wiese, Vice-President; Will Stone, Secretary, Pat Denelsbeck, Treasurer and Travis Baer to a three year term as director.

Eldeen Baer was chosen the Outstanding Senior Volunteer for Yellow Medicine County.

We need to get the monument and flag pole at the museum site moved to a better location and we will need new steps going into the post office at the park.

Our next meeting will be on August 12, 7:30 pm at the fire hall.

Roger Baer, President, Gary Historical Association

MY PRAYER

I do not ask for any more, than all of this that I own now,
I do not ask for treasures rare, or any more to me endow.

I only wish to offer thanks, for the beauty things on earth,
For many things on Nature's land, to which has been given birth.

I'm thankful for the many flowers, and all the trees with graceful spread,
Which give us shade in summer time, and golden leaves in autumn shed.

I'm thankful for the birds that sing, at the very break of dawn,
And for the lonely crickets chirp, when the sun's last rays are gone.

I'm thankful for my many friends, who live within our country town,
And thankful for the painted clouds, when the evening sun goes down.

So many things I'm thankful for, why would I need to ask for more,
And for the fragrant smell around, when the summer showers are o'er.

I only wish to thank you, Lord, for all these things of beauty rare,
And thankful Thou hast given these, it is the substance of my prayer.

--By Mrs. Marietta Thomas

Selma Remembers From the Gary Interstate 1985

Back in the old days.... When such things as hot running water classy bathtubs were still waiting for some pokey inventor to invent them. Brother Ben says it's bad enough to have to take a bath in a washtub without having to pump the water for it.

Words I have tried to live by.... To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the art of living. Don't mind criticism. If it's untrue, disregard it. If it's unfair, don't let it irritate you. If it's ignorance, smile. If it's justified, learn from it.

The Golden Age.... When you look in the mirror and your face wears a frown; When you'd rather stay home than go into town. When you don't feel quite right with skirts above the knee. When you'd rather sit down than take a long walk. Still when you think of the past years, you really are enjoying your own golden age.

Landmarks are memories.... Another one has been torn down in Gary, the Carter house. Dr. Pinard came to Gary in 1914 and lived in that house for many years until he built the Eugene

Steele house. The Jack Matthews family also lived there. He was mayor of Gary for many years. L.A. Humbert had a photography studio there. The telephone switchboard was also there for many years.

A Gary pioneer mother.... She grew up in a district out of Oslo, Norway. She came to Gary in 1884, married and had three children. She knit stockings for people in Gary. As a mother, she taught her children love of country, and respect for truth and love of God. Her fortitude and courage were the greatest of her heritage.

The Fitzsimmons place.... This farm was south of Gary where Dale Bandel now lives and was known to the early day Gary people as the Fitzsimmons place. It was their summer home. Many gala festivities were held out there. The yard was decorated with Japanese lanterns. I can see Mrs. Driving into Gary in one of the first cars with her dog to buy him an ice cream cone.

From the files of the Gary Interstate from long ago----- Local news and ads 1920 era

Editor was Charles E. Cobb.

Uncles Sam- "His Mark"

In ancient times, when few people could write, seals were designed for stamping papers such as treaties, deeds and agreements. All kings, nobles, and heads of important families had seals. Emperors, popes, cardinals, and public officials wore signet, or signing rings, for stamping wax seals. The cities and nations adopted seals. They usually had some animal on them, a motto, and other devices connected with the history of the family or state.

Soon after the Declaration of Independence was signed a committee of congress was appointed to select a design for a colonial seal. Jefferson, Franklin, Adams and a dozen other men had suggestions, and twenty or more designs were rejected. It was 1782 before our seal was adopted. This is what it is:

On a circular disk appears the bald-headed American eagle with spread wings, tail and feet. One claw holds an olive branch in green, the other a bunch of silver arrows. The olive branch signifies peace. The arrows are for war. It bears the motto, E Pluribus Unum meaning "many in one."

Last Thursday was the 42nd anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Banwarth. A number of their children and friends thought it would be the proper thing to have a little celebration in honor of the event, and accordingly a number of them met at their home in the evening. The young couple was presented with a set of silver knives and forks, to help them remember the occasion. A very pleasant evening was spent.

Information has recently reached the Government Savings Organization that swindlers are going about the country peddling worthless "oil well" and "oil land" stock, in exchange for War Savings Stamps, Treasury Savings Certificates and Liberty Bonds.

In some localities these slickers seem to vary their procedure by offering stock in so called "industrial concerns", which according to the smooth salesmen are on the eve of making more money than the government mint could turn out in a month. "In some instances, names of prominent men given as backers of the enterprise and although the men whose names are used may never have heard of the enterprise," says Ray C. Teuscher, Associate Director, "this fact in no way deters the promoter from gathering in Uncle Sam's securities. Warn your friends to beware of the fake or worthless stock concern.