

Custer County Historical Society Monthly Program

Lois Wells – Program Director

Rachel Nepper -- Recorder

“Thunder Over Dakota”

Mr. Dusty Dustman– November 5, 2016

Following the 15-minute refreshment period, Lois introduced Dusty Dustman. He had been a math teacher in California. In 1959 when Alaska had been admitted to the Union, he found an interest in American history because of Secretary Seward purchasing Alaska and the town of Seward in California being named for him with a museum and his house in Dusty's home town. That interest in Seward led to interest in Lincoln and then the Civil War. He planned to research the battles of the Civil War – one a year and spent 15 years on the Battle of Gettysburg. The first battle was huge – General Lee thought he saw a calvary unit but it was an entire army. The 2nd day battle was the most costly in lives. He first talked about when the Civil War began (shooting in 1861) but went back to the forming of the Constitution, discussed slaves not being counted, and then to 1832 and the Missouri Compromise, and then letting states decide whether they would be slave or not (1854 - KS/NE). The South pushed the envelope and South Carolina established a new form of government. Dusty asked what the Civil War was about and it was about more than one thing – slavery, states' rights, preserving the union. The Civil War was called a number of ways – War Between the States, War of Northern Aggression, and War of Southern Rebellion.

Confederacy invaded Pennsylvania for money/tribute/ransom and rail transportation and forage for animals and soldiers. Several mistakes were made and added up to the defeat of the Confederacy at Gettysburg. The number of deaths has been upgraded from 650,000 to over 900,000 (both north and south under reported). It was almost a 50/50 split on N & S casualties. The number of men involved in Pickett's Charge was 12,500. Federal Command strength at Gettysburg was approximately 90,000; Confederate Command strength was also 90,000. Only man to win two Medals of Honor – Civil War- was Tom Custer (brother to George Armstrong). A man named Wilmer had the war started in his yard and he then moved to Appomattox; so the war ended where he lived also. Dusty had topographic maps to show views of the battlefield. He spoke of the

various commanders (Hooker, Meade, Farnsworth, Custer, Trimble, Pettigrew, and Jeb Stuart). Dusty went into more detail regarding General Custer after the Civil War and how his star faded. He thought as an Indian fighter he might gain notoriety and go into politics. Dusty answered several questions after his presentation. He had a number of books from his own library for people to peruse.