

Historic Times

Summer History Club • Week of June 1, 2020 • Issue: 01



HAVE YOU MET SUSAN?

Name: Susan the Sleuth

Hobby: Investigating Our History

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

Favorite Summer Activity: Scavenger Hunts

Favorite Ice Cream: Old Fashioned Vanilla

Little Brother: Thomas
(He is always curious about what Susan is doing.)



What does "investigator" mean?

An investigator is a person who investigates.

What does "investigate" mean?

To investigate is to study and look for answers about something or try to find out more about something.

Investigators ask lots of questions.
Do you like to ask questions?

TOPIC OF THE WEEK: **RAILROADS**



Hi Friends!

Susan the Sleuth here, reporting from Dacotah Prairie Museum, you know, that big red building in Main Street in Aberdeen? I wish you could visit, but because of a sickness called Covid-19, the museum can't be open in the normal way right now. The people who work at the museum are bummed that we can't all be together and are REALLY bummed that history camp won't happen this year.

BUT...the GOOD NEWS is, they have a NEW HISTORY CLUB for kids and every week we can spend time having fun while learning awesome facts about our history. I'm very excited!!! Yahoooooo!

To learn about history, you have to be very curious. Are you curious? I thought so! It also helps to have a good imagination. If we use our imaginations, we can IMAGINE what it would be like if we could travel into the past. This week I'm going to imagine what it would be like to buy a train ticket at the depot in Aberdeen and travel to a different town. Which way would you go?



NORTH, EAST, SOUTH or WEST?

(Circle the Direction You Would Travel)

INVESTIGATE: Find a map of South Dakota at home and look for Aberdeen. Put your finger on Aberdeen. Now move your finger in the direction you chose. What is the first town your finger crosses?

Where did your imaginary train trip take you? _____

(Write the name of the town you found on the map on the line above.)

2020 Is A Year for Making History



HISTORY CAMP: Since its start we've only cancelled camp twice!

It has been a year to remember. From the start of 2020 with snowstorms and blizzards, to everyone's lives changing suddenly with Covid 19 starting in March, people everywhere have had to learn to adapt to new things in 2020, like the pioneers of many years ago.

The pioneers moved to the prairie, a place they had never seen or been before. They found few or no trees, and neighbors were miles apart if you lived in the country. If you lived in the city, constant noise from homes and businesses being built filled the air with new people moving in every day to start a new life. Like us, the pioneers lived in times that were full of change and history in the making.

The Museum started History Camp in 1996 as a way to keep students learning about history during the summer, and as a way to use what many consider an undiscovered treasure, Centennial Village. For one day, campers were able to go into the buildings and participate in old-fashioned activities that the pioneer children would have to do... hauling water, building a fire, going to school, eating home-made ice cream and others.

In the history of the Camp, there was only one year that it wasn't held, 2007....the year of the big flood. Museum staff had to take the summer to clean and care for artifacts from the collection that were damaged by flood water, hundreds of them, so camp could not be held.

This is only the second time in it's history that History Camp can't be held...social distancing being one of the most important reasons why. But, like many other Museums and businesses, the staff of Dacotah Prairie Museum started thinking out-of-the-box and put together a weekly history club program to serve as a virtual camp. You will still learn about the buildings, the history of our area and play games, just in a different way. Each week for nine weeks there will be a packet with a different theme that hopefully you will enjoy and use to learn some new things about this area. The Museum is also hoping that you and your parents will share photos (or selfies) of your historic discoveries. Send photos to: dacotahpraiiemuseum@gmail.com



THERE ...or...THERE

Where is the IRON HORSE?

People used to call the big iron engine of the train an IRON HORSE, because it pulled the train cars, like real horses pull wagons. This was a new & exciting way to travel!



What did iron horses eat?
Silly question! Iron horses were not alive and did not eat food. They burned coal or wood & heated water to make steam to get power to move.

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:

dacotahpraiiemuseum@gmail.com

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

KIDS: Make sure to have your parents help & per-



This is a REALLY OLD CAMERA



Railroad Word Search

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

railroad ties

switchman

fireman

flagman

spikes

passenger car

brakeman

fireman

engine

coal

conductor

engineer

pullman

grading

depot

dining car

caboose

culverts

bridges

rails



WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON PAGE 9



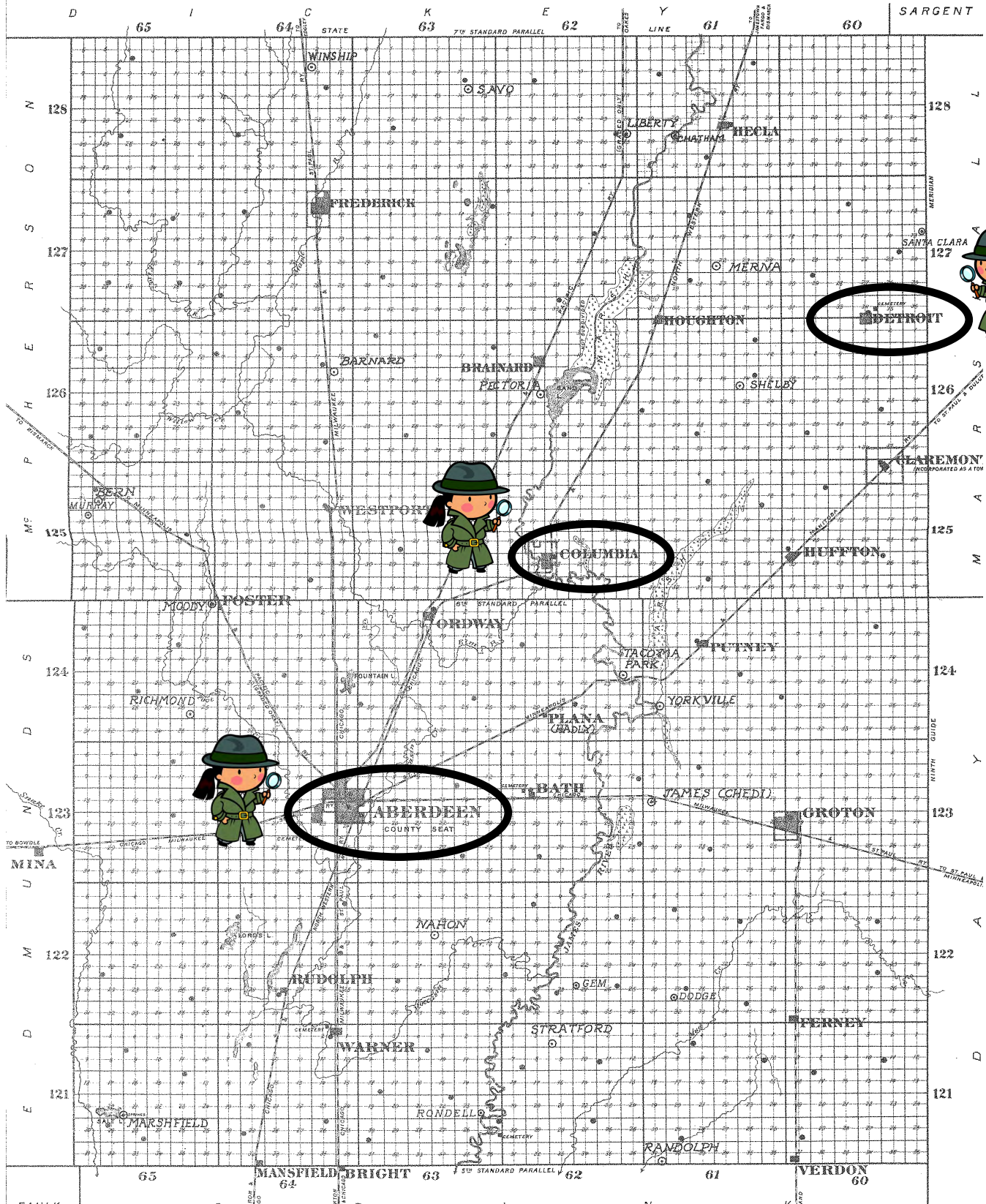
INVESTIGATE: Look at this really awesome old map of Brown County! I've marked the towns we are learning about this week: Detroit & Columbia. The four depots (from the Depot Hunt Treasure Map) and Centennial Village are located at Aberdeen. —Susan the Sleuth

BROWN CO.

SOUTH DAKOTA.

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

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





LET'S GET ACTIVE

You will need:

- **Sturdy Shoes**
- **Something to make a straight line on the ground...**
- **Good Balance**
- **Rules for Safety**

Ideas for making a straight line: Draw a chalk line 10-15 feet long on the sidewalk/driveway or ask your parents if they have a 2x4 board that could be laid down flat on the grass in your yard.

Safety Rules: Do not use anything unsteady that might cause you to trip! Lay boards FLAT on the ground, DO NOT make a raised balance beam. NEVER walk on real train tracks!!



Walking the Rails....SAFELY!

Almost since the beginning of History Camp, the day ends with walking on the rails. If you have been a camper in the past, you might remember this challenge. Here is a fun way to try your balance at home, while staying safe. It is IMPORTANT to note: The train tracks at camp do not have real trains traveling on them. You should NEVER walk on real railroad tracks. Trains move fast and can take a full mile to stop because they are so big and heavy! We must stay out of their way!

For this activity, you will be making your own "rail" in your yard. See the ideas above about using sidewalk chalk or a board for walking on. Make sure your line is straight and flat on the ground.

Give the challenge a try and if you have the time, have your parents take a couple of pictures. We'd love to see you and share your fun with others!

RULES OF THE CHALLENGE:

PART 1: First, walk forwards down the rail, being very careful not to step off of the line. You almost look like you're walking on a balance beam. If you do step off, you must restart at the beginning.

PART 2: This part is for Champion Balancers! Go back to where you started and walk on the rail backwards! Same rules as before, no stepping off the rails...and if you do you have to start over. (Note: If you fall, start again at Part 2/walking backwards, no need to repeat Part 1)

Susan the Sleuth says:

BE SAFE! Remember, NEVER walk on real railroad tracks!



SNACK TIME IDEA: Use pretzel sticks to make railroad tracks that you can eat! (Just don't try walking on them.)



Above: Railroad Depot Building at Centennial Village

At Right: A View Inside & Large Stove. Just imagine, buying your ticket at the counter & waiting for the train to come with other passengers on the long benches. In cold weather, you might pick a seat near the nice warm stove!



Visit to Centennial Village: The Railroad Depot

At the end of Main Street at Centennial Village, you will find a beautiful two story house and the Railroad Depot, complete with a set of railroad tracks out front and a 28 ton caboose out back. Since this week's subject is railroads, this will be our focus. There are two distinct parts of this depot, the ticket and telegraph office with the waiting room and the back loading and service areas. One is for the public and the other to load and unload freight. (Freight is 'stuff' that is loaded on the trains to be sent to a different place.)



This building wasn't always here, it actually started off in Nahon and was a Minneapolis & St. Louis depot for many years.



Photos: Does it look like the same building? Old photo above, current photo below.

But, times changed and as more people bought cars and trucks...the railroad wasn't used as much and line by line, it closed down till only one railroad company was working in our area, which is now the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF).

This building sat abandoned for many years; a farmer used it as storage for his grain. But when he didn't want or need it any longer, he asked around if any club or organization might want it. The Centennial Village board stepped in and said they were looking to put in a railroad depot at the village and they would love to have it. The board raised the money to not only move this huge building from the original location to Aberdeen, but to restore all the wood inside of it, taking it back to the look of when it was used in the late 1800's to the middle 1900's. Can you imagine what it looked like as the big moving truck pulled this down the road? It was a sight!

Notice in the waiting room, one long wooden bench runs against the entire outside wall. That would be where you would sit and wait to get on your train... or perhaps you were meeting someone getting off the train. It could seat many people. The big cast iron stove was closer to the center of the building and that was the best place to sit in the winter.

Visit to Centennial Village: The Railroad Depot (CONTINUED)

You'd be nice and warm by the stove! Behind the open wood wall, the employees had a lot of jobs: sell tickets, answer questions, take care of baggage (suitcases) or freight that might come in, send and receive telegrams by Morse Code, and know at all times where all of the trains are along the tracks. In the early days, the town's mail came in and went out on the train. They were very busy!

In the back or east part of the Depot was the freight room that was in charge of the 'stuff' that was sent or shipped on the trains. This included the things we've mentioned plus... the milk cans. Farmers would make it down from their farms as early as possible with their milk can filled with fresh milk. They wanted to get it to market before the heat of the day would sour it. Most Depots had a place where they would keep ice and put the cans in the ice till the train came and they could load it in the ice car. There were no refrigerators in the late 1800's and that was the only way to keep the milk cold so it would last longer.

There were usually doors on both sides of the freight room. That way you could unload from the train on one side and if you were picking up freight, you could load it up on the other side. The floor of the room was usually the same height as the wagons.

Towns depended on the Depots for almost everything: getting food to town, selling crops, supplies, getting people from one place to another, bringing and taking mail, getting messages to people with telegrams. When a town lost its Depot, that usually started its decline and eventual closing.

Behind the Depot, is a huge 28 ton caboose, sitting on a short rail line. This was donated to Centennial Village by the Burlington Northern Railroad soon after the Depot was moved in. One thing that surprises most visitors, is how high up the car is off the ground, and just how big the wheels are. During the old days, every train had a caboose that served many purposes...from keeping an eye on the wheels so they didn't heat up and catch fire, to making food for



Above: The freight room door which faces the tracks

At Left: A milk can waits to be loaded on the train

Below: Centennial Village Caboose Car



the crew and a place for supplies that might be needed. But, because trains are now completely connected to computer systems, all of those things are monitored so you won't see a caboose as the last car of the train any longer.



"I'll take two tickets to Centennial Village, please!"

What does depot mean?

The depot is the train station, the place where the train stops so that people and supplies can get on and off of the train. It is also the place where tickets were sold.

Family Road Trip Idea:

Columbia, SD, First Town in Brown County



The area we call Brown County was claimed by France in 1682 as a result of early exploration. Brown County was purchased from France as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 at a cost of about 3 cents per acre.

The earliest Europeans were explorers and fur traders along the rivers. In about 1822, Colin Campbell is said to have established a trading post by the Elm River, south-west of Frederick. He carried metal knives, cookware, and beads and traded with the Indians for furs.

In 1839 explorers Joseph Nicollet and John Fremont came northward through the James River area, recording their findings. The earliest settlers to stake claims were Clarence Johnson, William Young and his young sister, Hattie who settled in what is now the town of Columbia in the summer of 1877. Johnson was believed to be the first settler in Brown County to break sod. Because of the good north/south traffic on the James River and the east/west traffic

on the Fort Sisseton Road, Byron Smith built a store at an area near where the river and the road met, and the town of Columbia was begun. The first white child to be born in Brown County was James Linboe, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Linboe, born in a dugout near the Smith store in the summer of 1879.

In the spring of 1880, before Brown County was organized, Columbia was the only town in the area. At that time, the nearest railroad was in Watertown and all land claims had to be filed in Fargo. The town was established in June, 1879 when a party of settlers lead by Byron Smith arrived at the junction of the Elm and James Rivers. They brought two oxen wagon loads of lumber intending to build a store. It is believed that the name for the new town was chosen because of the popularity of the patriotic song, "Hail Columbia".

When Columbia was platted, it was the Brown County seat, however, after a long on-again, off-again struggle with the citizens of Aberdeen, the county

Road Trip: Columbia, SD First Town in Brown County (Continued)

seat was moved to Aberdeen. When Columbia's future looked bright, plans were made to establish a University. Citizens thought that the excellent transportation on the James River would make it an ideal spot for the school.

By 1882, the James River dam had been completed, and Lake Columbia was formed. Boating was a popular pastime with the pioneers, and the settlers who lived along the River recognized its value for transportation and communication. In 1881 the side-wheeled steamboat, the "Nettie Baldwin", began traveling to LaMoure, ND on a daily basis when weather permitted. Scheduled stops were made in Pectoria, Eaton, and Port Emma.

By 1882, the "Nettie Baldwin" was joined by another steamer, the stern-wheeled "Fannie L. Peck". Both made the six hour trip daily with passengers and freight. The one-way ticket was \$1.50 and round trip, a dollar more. While traveling, you could treat yourself to ice cream, cake and a sandwich for a quarter. These steamboats operated until 1886 and brought coal, lumber and merchandise to an area where they were badly needed and otherwise unavailable.

Columbia's Grand Hotel stood four stories high and was built by Charles B. Peck and M.R. Baldwin. The hotel was "luxuriously furnished in mahogany furnishings with 52 bedrooms, spacious parlors and dining rooms and excellent service." In 1896, the hotel was razed and shipped to Redfield, SD where it was used in the construction of Redfield College.

INVESTIGATE: As you drive into Columbia today, you will notice on all of the welcome signs, it says "First Town in Brown County".



Above Photo: Columbia, SD school and students



Top Photo: Early travel on the James River by river boat
Above: Columbia's Grand Hotel had 52 bedrooms



INVESTIGATE MORE ON YOUR OWN:

GET OUT A DICTIONARY OR LOOK ONLINE
FOR THIS VOCABULARY FROM THE STORY:

- | | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------|
| - Break Sod | - Platted | - Land Claim |
| - County Seat | - Mahogany | - Steamboat |

FIND A MAP AT HOME AND LOOK

FOR THESE PLACES MENTIONED IN THE STORY:

- | | | |
|-----------------|--|----------------|
| - Frederick, SD | - Fort Sisseton | - Redfield, SD |
| - LaMoure, ND | - Pectoria (Look for Pectoria on Map p. 4) | |



From Page 3
Railroad Word Search Answer Key



SUSAN THE SLEUTH SEARCH FROM PAGE 10
ANSWER: Susan appears 18 times in this newsletter

Brown County Ghost Town of the Week

“Detroit”

Town Existed: 1883-1886

Post Office Closed: 1906

Interesting Facts:

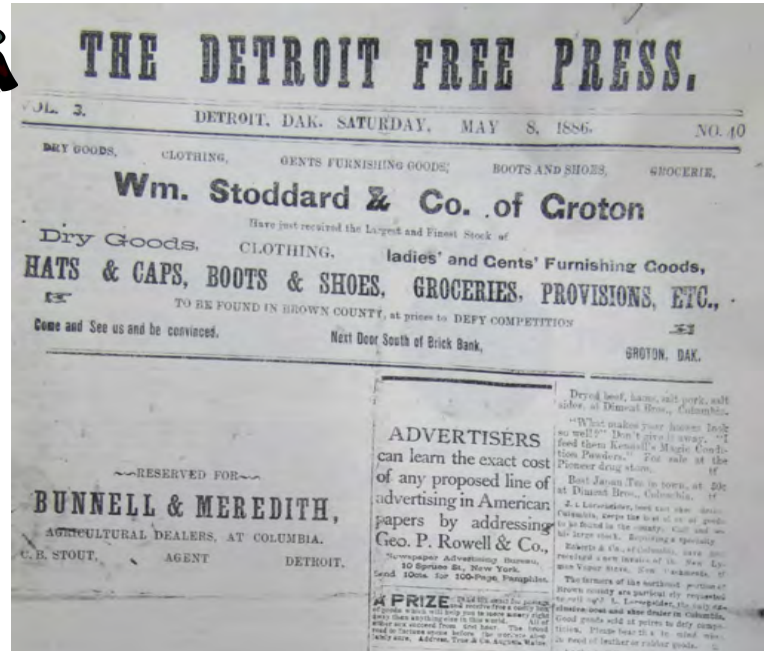
1. Detroit was a true SOONER TOWN; a town built on rumor and anticipation of the arrival of the railroad. Its post office opened five months before the land was even open for claims! A general store and hotel were quickly opened. As soon as lumber was gotten from Columbia, a church was built and dedicated as the “Father Hedger Methodist Church” in honor of the father of two of the town’s promoters. The next year, a school, a drugstore, a blacksmith shop, and a town hall were built.

2. The town had its own newspaper, “The Detroit Free Press”, which was printed in Columbia.

3. Even as the town grew, the only way to get there was on a prairie road following a proposed (but not built yet) rail line to Groton. In the end, nearby Claremont and Hecla became “railroad” towns but Detroit never got a railroad line built to their town as they had hoped. After only three years, the town of Detroit no longer existed. The store moved to Claremont, and many other buildings were also moved, some to nearby farms.

INVESTIGATE: Where was Detroit? See Map on page 4!

“Hmm...
Where did
it go?”



Above: Front Page of Detroit Newspaper from May 8, 1886

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.

Chicago, Milwaukee & St Paul Depot Fire 1911 Video



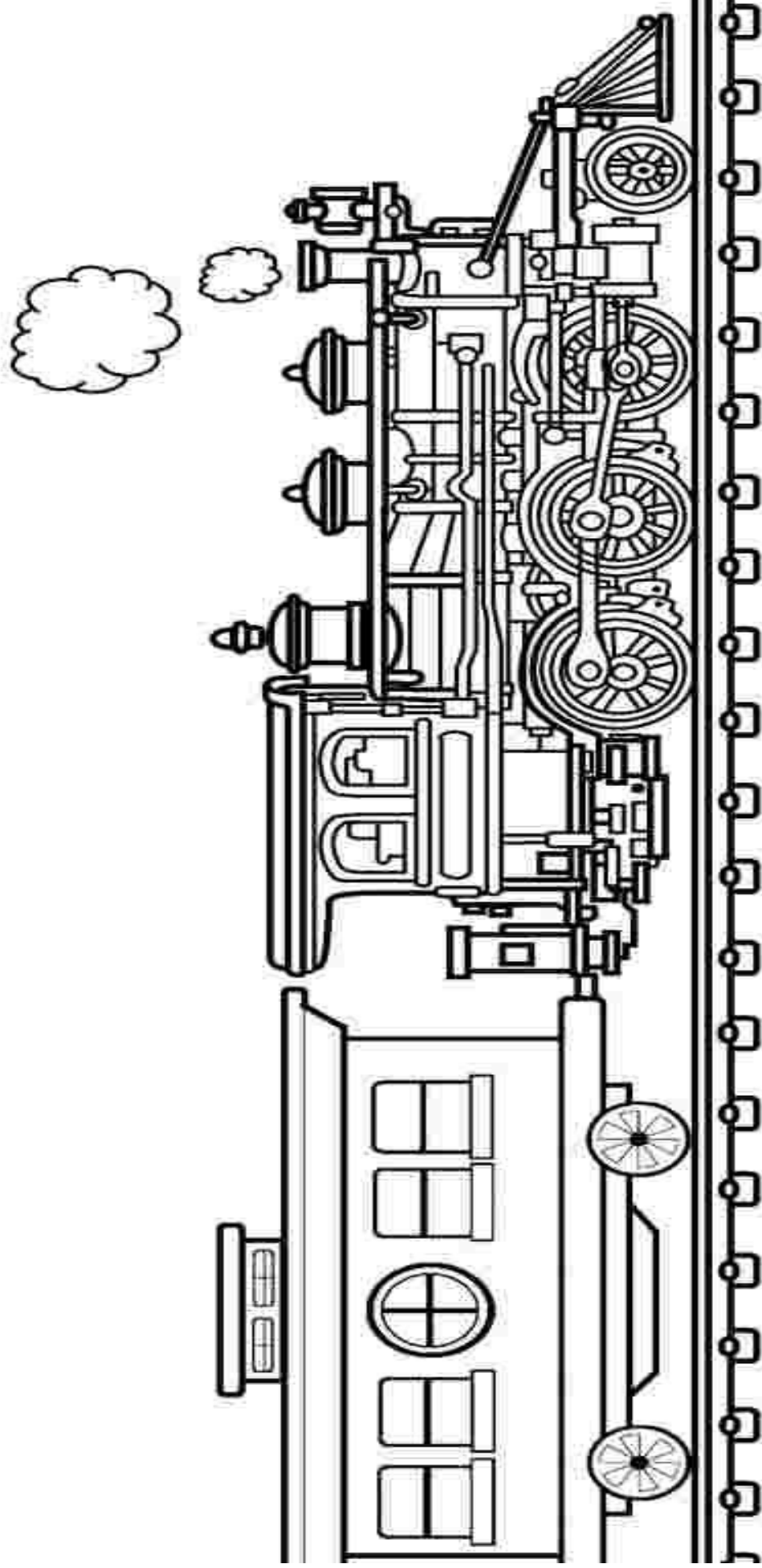
INVESTIGATE: If you would like to find out more about railroad history in Aberdeen, or if you'd like to learn about one of the biggest fires in our early town's history, look for **Dacotah Prairie Museum's YouTube channel online.**

A couple of weeks ago, Curator of Education, Sherri Rawstern, uploaded a video talking about the big fire at the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad's third depot building in Aberdeen. It's quite a story and has some amazing fire pictures. If you like it, please let us know!



How many times does Susan the Sleuth's picture appear in this newsletter? Count and write your answer here:
(Make sure to check every page! Answer on Page 9)

Name _____



The train has arrived at the depot! Find some crayons at home and color this engine and train car.

SCAVENGER HUNT MAP

CAN YOU FIND ALL 4 DEPOTS IN ABERDEEN?

X MARKS THE SPOT! PLEASE TAKE A PICTURE WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY IN FRONT OF AS MANY DEPOTS AS YOU CAN AND SEND IT TO: DACOTAHPrairieMuseum@gmail.com
#LOCALHISTORYISFUN

