

## LOG CABIN

Local Newspaper February 12, 1926

These articles were found buried in columns of city events.

They were extracted by Eka Parkison

At the very interesting Fortnightly club meeting held Tuesday a matter was presented by Mrs. G. F. Schneider, chairman of the civics committee, that is deserving of attention. It was the permanent marking of points of interest in and around Rapid City while it is possible to obtain particulars at first hand. "The pioneers are fast going," said Mrs. Schneider, "and certain things of prominence in the history of this vicinity should be commemorated by being properly marked." She reported some progress by her committee, but would have to have help and backing before further progress could be made. She also referred to several things that had been previously mentioned and suggested how they might be preserved for the benefit of preserving, among these is the log building that has been given for the purpose. Mrs. Schneider said if it were restored to its original appearance, taking it from its present foundation replacing the roof with one similar to the original and then moving it to a suitable site, planting vines around it and placing a few rustic seats about it, it might be worth while. As a marker she suggested a large boulder upon which an inscription could be carved, the boulder having the double advantage of providing a place for the inscription and being too heavy for removal by vandals. During the discussion which followed it was suggested that a marker be placed in the old Evergreen cemetery east of town where the three men are interred who were killed by Indians in North Rapid, also that a marker be placed on the tree by the International hotel. Other points were mentioned and when put to a vote the club was unanimous in continuing the work.

As Mrs. Schneider is to be absent for a few weeks, at her request, Mrs. Charles Haxby was made chairman of the committee and another member was appointed to act on the committee during her absence. Later the committee was instructed to consult with others, notably pioneers, select points or objects worthy of marking or reclaiming and report to the club, when further action would be considered.

### **Will preserve City's Oldest Log Structure** Black Hills Weekly Journal 19 February 1926

At the meeting of the Fortnightly club this afternoon the Civics club, Mrs. Charles Haxby, chairman, will give a report of work accomplished looking toward the restoration of the log cabin on West St. Joe street. Several plans have been mentioned regarding a site on which to permanently locate the cabin, but none chosen. Last evening members of the civics committee, Mrs. Haxby, Mrs. C. E. Gray and Mrs. J. B. Gossage, went before the city commissioners and asked for the privilege of placing the cabin in Halley Park, stating that the Fortnightly club would bear all expense of moving and putting it in attractive condition. In placing the matter before the commissioners, the spokesman, Mrs. Gossage, mentioned the log cabin in Custer where they kept their curios, and the log cabin in Minneapolis, built by the father of Mrs. I. H. Chase, of this city which is pointed to with pride and veneration by the people of the city. The time is coming when she said,

a log cabin will be a curiosity even in this section and unknown to the next generation. It will be the aim of the Fortnightly club to make it a thing of interest and attractiveness, and later possibly to make of it a place where valuable curios and relics of early days may be kept.

Without a dissenting voice the commissioners donated space in Halley Park for the cabin and instructed the park committee to confer with the Fortnightly committee as to exact site.

The cabin mentioned was built in 1876 by Rufus A. Madison, and is the oldest building in the city. At present it is used as a barn, but as soon as possible it will be moved to its new site, placed on a cement floor, the roof restored, a marker will tell the passersby of its importance, and the exterior will be beautified by perennial vines.

The land on which the cabin in question is located was owned by John R. Brennan for many years, then by Mrs. Brennan, who expressed her willingness to give the cabin to the Fortnightly club when that club took up the matter of making of it a memorial. Later she sold the land to G. P. Bennett and C. J. Buell, who, upon solicitation of Mrs. G. F. Schneider, then chairman of the Fortnightly Civics committee, made the gift of the cabin permanent. At last week's Fortnightly club the civics committee was instructed to find out what could be done about a site and report at the next meeting.

#### **Uncover Log Walls in Tearing Down Old Store**

Local Newspaper 25 Feb 1926

*Not all Log Cabins were saved Ed.*

(From Monday's Daily)

With work of tearing down the building, formerly occupied by the Hill Jewelry store begun, another of the famous land marks of the early day Gate City of the Hills will soon be but a memory.

The structure is one of the two or three log buildings still in Rapid City and is the oldest. It was erected in the spring of 1877 by Charles Roberts who used it for a restaurant and bakery. Large numbers of now-pioneer residents of Rapid City who came here during the years following its construction took their first meals in the Roberts restaurant.

Mr. Roberts has been dead a number of years. Mrs. Roberts now Mrs. George Trimmer, lives at Hot Springs.

Until the siding was removed the building gave no hint of its log construction. Today, many people stopped in front of the structure and commented upon the huge number of changes in Rapid City which the logs have witnessed. They will now give way to a all-steel and concrete structure which Carl Rice is having built on the lot.

**City Topics – A Friendly Column by “A. G.” (Alice Gossage)**  
Black Hills Weekly Journal 12 March 1926

Plans are progressing on the rehabilitation of the old log building and it is hoped to have it in place within a short time. A fireplace will be built and many curios and mementoes placed within its walls. Already a number of valuable relics of the early days in the Black Hills have been secured and many more will be as soon as there is a place for them. The city park board has invited the Fortnightly civic committee to meet with them Saturday and select the site.

**Decide Location Cabin In Halley Park Today**  
Local Newspaper 12 March 1926  
(From Saturday's Daily)

Halley Park has been chosen as the site upon which the oldest building in the city is to be placed, the exact location being decided upon this afternoon by the city park committee and the civics committee of the Fortnightly club, the two committees meeting together at the park.

The log cabin will be placed at the west end of the park facing east, near the part used in winter for a skating rink. At present the west part of the park has been filled with dirt, leveled and sown to grass. Men are at work on the east part of the park with the intention that grass will take the place of the dandelion exhibit we have had heretofore. City Manager Soderstrum and other members of the park board are quite enthusiastic over the expected fine appearance of Halley Park this summer, and both committees are sanguine that the building will be an added attraction to the park.

Black Hills Weekly Journal 23 April 1926

It will be noticed that the old log cabin has got moved from its former location to its permanent one in Halley Park, and Mr. Cobb, the man who is to do the rehabilitation act has already commenced work with his fairy wand.

I understand that at least one gentleman stated that he was going to go to the city council with a protest against having the building remain in Halley Park, saying that it will hurt the abutting property. I am sure everybody having anything to do with the cabin would not wish to do that, but I think the gentleman in question is laboring under a misapprehension. The building is not going to look just as it does now. Instead, there is to be a new roof of “shakes,” better known as old-fashioned shingles, a good, solid door, new windows, and an old-fashioned fireplace built on the outside at the west end. I saw a picture of the log cabin the other day known as President Lincoln's childhood home with a fireplace attached that is just what the committee have planned for this cabin. The new Black Hills Memorial Art company has presented a native marble slab marker that is to be imbedded into the cabin, upon which is to be carved the words “Oldest House in Rapid City, Built in 1876.” Leading to the door from St. Joe street is to be a walk made of old-fashioned flag stones. Outside are to be the native Virginia creeper, sumac,

kinnikinnic, a few clumps of tiger, mariposa and gumbo lilies and inside curios of early days, many of which have already been offered for the purpose. Now, isn't that worth while, and won't we "point with pride" to it?

Black Hills Weekly Journal 21 May 1926

I have thought foolishly perhaps, that most people read The Journal – at least sometimes, but I have about come to the conclusion that I was mistaken. I heard yesterday that some people are blaming the city commissioners for spending the city's money "fixing up that old log barn in Halley's Park." Why, bless their dear old hearts, the commissioners may be to blame for a lot of things, and even City Manager Soderstrum may deserve some of the nice things said about him, but the city is not paying out any money "fixing up that old log barn." No not a cent.

In the first place the building was presented to the Fortnightly club, the civic committee of that club having taken up with a suggestion made in the columns of The Journal that it would be a nice thing to save that old house as it is the oldest building in the town. The Fortnightly club than presented it to the city, promising to "rehabilitate" it free of cost to the city, a promise which has so far been kept to the letter. Members of the club were assessed an amount sufficient to clean it and do the necessary carpenter work. The Lions offered to move it to its present location and they did. Then several business firms donated the needed lumber, hardware, shakes for the roof, windows and door. Mr. Cobb did the work and the Fortnightly club paid the bill. Now a fireplace is going to be built, the cost to be met by many old timers donating one dollar each for that purpose, and many have already paid their dollar. The fireplace is to be built soon, a flagstone walk put in, and shrubs planted – and the city's coffers will be just as full as they were before a thing was done to the "old log barn." I hope this is a clear presentation of the matter.

Black Hills Weekly Journal 10 June 1926

As special promoter of the fireplace for Rapid City's historic cabin I sent one of the circular letters asking for \$1.00 to Zach Holmes, Los Angeles, and received in return not only the one dollar asked for but a nice letter and a \$10.00 check, which pleased me very much. Among other things Mr. Holmes said, "We surely enjoy reading the Journal every week, and no wonder, as I read the first number and have been a subscriber ever since. I have been much interested in reading about the 'historic cabin' and want to help the good cause along." Mr. Holmes enclosed several pictures and newspaper clippings, among which was one showing the Los Angeles coliseum during the Easter Sunday sunrise service when 60,000 people were present. He also enclosed a picture of their home in Los Angeles, showing Mr. and Mrs. Holmes standing on their "front porch."

### **City's Oldest Cabin Now Open to Public**

Rapid City Daily Journal and Black Hills Weekly Journal 27 Jul 1927

After many delays the "oldest building in Rapid City" rehabilitated by the Fortnightly club and others, is now open to the public, with Mrs. McGee, who lives across the street from Halley Park, as care taker. The marker, presented by Mr. Crilley of the monument company, is in place, and within a short time another one will be placed on the wall inside the building. A list of donors to the expense of putting the building in shape will also be in place soon. A book in which visitors may inscribe their names is now in evidence.

### **City Topics – A Friendly Column by "A. G."**

6 August 1926

The latest relation to the fireplace in the Rapid City's historic cabin is a letter from Mrs. Lucena Trissler Holloway of Pacific Grove, Cal., in which she encloses her dollar for the fireplace. She says she thinks the plan a fine one and is glad to be one of the 100 old timers to contribute to its erection.

When speaking of the fireplace in my first paragraph I intended to say something about the old showcase we have secured and Stein Bangs has promised to make a rustic birch wood standard for it to rest upon. John C. Haines has given some plate glass for its repair, and we will soon be ready to install the relics already given. Charles Sherman has promised some valuable ones that were his father's. Another feature is to be the collection of pictures of early day settlers, and those who have contributed to the upbuilding of Rapid City. They are to be mounted, properly numbered and named, arranged on the wall in one side of the room, covered with glass, so that they cannot be disturbed. I got the idea once when I was in Perkin, Ill., where they had worked out something along this line in their courthouse. I had thought of it in connection with our courthouse where there certainly would be room enough, but the real place is in the cabin and the work will be begun shortly. Pictures of the oldest residents, prominent people and those who have contributed to the making of Rapid City what it is will be gladly received. I have a large number I have been saving for many years for some purpose, though I didn't know just what.

### **City Topics – A Friendly Column by "A. G."**

Local newspaper 12 November 1926

At the Fortnightly meeting Tuesday afternoon, Mrs. Charles Haxby gave a report on the financial side to the rehabilitation of the oldest log building in Rapid City, which was very interesting. She gave the amount contributed by the Fortnightly members and the amount of donations by business firms. The Lions paid for moving the building and it was rebuilt by Ray P. Cobb. M. E. Nystrom built the chimney and fireplace, all the expense for which being borne by \$1.00 gifts from Black Hills pioneers. Mr. Crilley, of the Monument works has donated a stone upon which an inscription is to be placed. Mrs. Haxby was liberal in her expression of courtesy to those who helped in any way to preserve this historic cabin and in turn she was given a vote of thanks for her liberality in

presenting to the Civics club the \$50 she received as prize money for her essay on "What is the Best Thing My Club has Done for the Community This Year." It was also voted to place the money in an upkeep fund for the building, it being suggested that as the years go by various little things will need to be done to keep the cabin in repair, and without a special fund for the purpose rehabilitation might again become necessary.

**Two Interesting Relics Added to the Pioneer Cabin List**  
Gate City Guide 26 Oct 1928

Mrs. Charles Haxby has recently added to the collection of relics of early days in the Pioneer cabin in Halley park two articles of more than passing interest. One is the almost complete stock of an old fashioned Kentucky squirrel rifle, an arm that long antedated the time of the Black Hills settlement. The barrel, fore-end and ramrod are missing but the check piece, "set" triggers, guard and hinged receptacle for the tallowed bullet patches are intact. That this stock was part of an elaborate and costly weapon in its day is evidenced by the carving and brass and silver inlaying and that it was valued by its owner may well be surmised from the initials "R. G." plainly visible.

This reminder of old times was found in the ruins of a cabin in South canyon some years ago by Donald McDowell, who kindly contributed it to the pioneer collection before leaving for California.

The second relic referred to is the first city warrant issued by Rapid City, bearing date of October 3, 1883. It is signed by Fred E. Stearns as mayor, countersigned by A. C. Tucker as auditor, and on the back is endorsed "Presented for payment and not paid for want of funds." Signed "R. B. Hughes, City Treasurer". A later endorsement reads "applied in full on taxes of Charles Hayward." This warrant was issued to Franklin Z. Hicks, city justice.

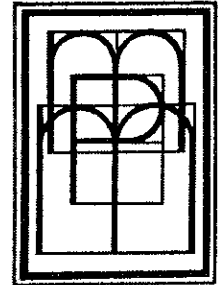
**Pioneer Cabin Repaired**  
Rapid City Daily Journal 10 Nov 1965

In contrast with the way this log cabin was first built, Dwight Young, with the chain saw, and John Atkinson are repairing the old log hut at Halley Park. The timbers being used to replace the original logs are from an old structure being torn down in north Rapid City. The gaps between the logs will be caulked with cement, but the original caulking was of a clay mixture.

*This cabin still stands in Halley Park in 2010. The relics have been moved to the Journey Museum. The sign at the site says that the cabin was built by Rasmus "Pap" Collins.*

SAM, THIS ARTICLE WAS SENT TO  
YOU BY JERIL T. @ PARK & REC.

Minnilusa Historical Association  
222 New York Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
(605) 394-6099



7/7/05

To: South Dakota State Historical Society  
From: Reid Riner, Minnilusa Historical Association  
RE: Proposal to Move Rapid City's "Pap" Madison Cabin

#### Background

The "Pap" Madison cabin is and has been for quite some time, the oldest known structure in Rapid City. It is certainly among the oldest standing structures in the Black Hills, dating back to the city's founding in 1876. Rufus or "Pap" Madison built the cabin at the corner of Fifth and Rapid Streets (the center of original six-block town site). Madison came to the area in late 1875 or early 1876 and was present when the town site was laid out on 2/25/1876. The Lakota in the area regularly raided the settlement and in one such raid killed Madison's dog and demolished his wagon. By August the raids had increased, resulting in the loss of considerable stock, other property and settlers lives. On the 25<sup>th</sup> all but 19 of the 200 settlers left for Ft. Pierre. The 19 that stayed, including Pap and town founder John Brennan, built a blockhouse for protection just west of Madison's cabin. After the initial conflict of the late seventies, Pap and Henry Bliss located a claim of 160 acres southwest of the original town site and began farming. Hap sold his farm in 1889 and in 1892 moved to Everett, WA. John Brennan acquired the cabin and the lot on which it stood from Pap - he would later pass it on to his wife.

The Fortnightly club focused its attention on the cabin in 1926, intending to convert it from an "eyesore" to a point of pride for the community and memorial to the city's founding and "the old days". The well known club (represented by Alice Gossage) went before the City Commissioners and obtained approval to move the cabin to the city-owned Halley Park. Mrs. John Brennan donated the

cabin to the city. The Lion's Club then stepped in and spearheaded the project to move the cabin. It arrived in Halley Park later that year, badly dilapidated and neglected owing to its use as a barn. Among other repairs, it immediately required a roof as it was practically without one. It was refurbished by a volunteer that "understood the construction of log cabins" using materials donated by local hardware stores and was described at the time as "a complete model of the early days, shake roof, home made door with latchstring fastening, flat limestone fireplace (the original did not have a fireplace) and flagstone walk. R.B. Hughes, teacher, historian, writer, entrepreneur and editor among other occupations and avocations wrote the inscription memorialized in a plaque at the cabins base:

*I was built in the olden golden days,  
when this was an unknown land:  
My timbers were hewn by a pioneer,  
with his rifle near at hand.  
I stand as a relic of 'seventy-six,  
our nation's centennial year,  
That all may see as they enter the hills  
The home of a pioneer.*

R.B.H

The cabin was used as a museum for many years by the Historical Association but increased vandalism made it necessary to remove the valuable artifacts and furnishings. These items are now in the Minnilusa Collection and on display in the Journey Museum. The Association continued to work for another building in Halley Park to house an historical museum and by 1938 had succeeded in getting the parks other structure built as a WPA project with private support. This building, with several additions, housed both the Minnilusa and Sioux Indian Museum Collections side-by side up until the construction of the Journey Museum. This building is now in use as the Higher Education Center, West River.

The cabin was again renovated in 1990 by the Boy Scouts of troop 55 under the supervision of David Hanson in fulfillment of his project requirement for the rank of Eagle Scout. Materials were provided by the Rapid City Parks Department with historical assistance by Minnilusa's Bob Pressler and Fern Crouch.



## Minnilusa's Association with the Madison Cabin

The Minnilusa Historical Association (dba Pennington County Historical Association and West River Historical Association) has long had an association with the Madison Cabin. The Brennan families, the cabin's last private owners, were supporters and benefactors of the Association. John Brennan's granddaughter, Helen Wrede, serves as a Director on the Association's board. R.B. Hughes, the writer of the cabin's 1926 inscription, also was an early supporter and benefactor of the Association. His grandson also now serves on Minnilusa's board. In fact, most of Rapid City's notable families, founders and early personalities have connections to Minnilusa.

The first museum in the cabin was established, furnished and run by the early Association. The very items displayed in that cabin are now in Minnilusa's collection at the Journey Museum. For almost sixty years, the association operated the Pioneer Museum in the WPA building in Halley Park, right alongside the Madison Cabin.

## Benefits to the Community

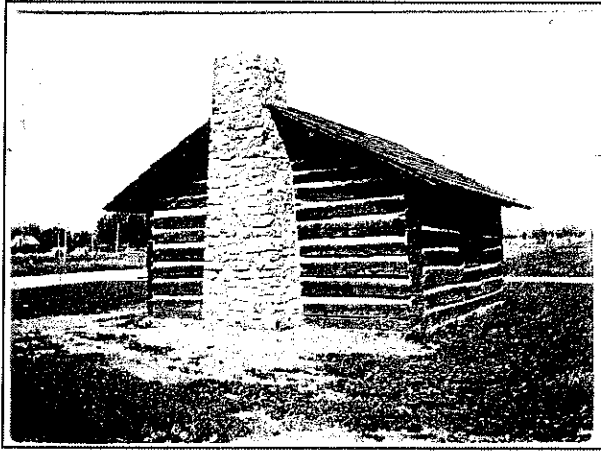
The benefits of moving the Madison Cabin to the Journey Museum location are manifold. Specifically, the move would:

- Provide a place of focus for Rapid City and Black Hills History;
- Enable the cabin to be used for living history displays, and workshops;
- Create signage for the museum - conveying the building's intent and use without the objectionable aspects of "more signage";
- Ensure that the cabin would be seen and experienced by more people;
- Create an excellent area for many youth programs now lacking space in Journey;
- Allow the appearance of cabin to be upgraded to be historically accurate;

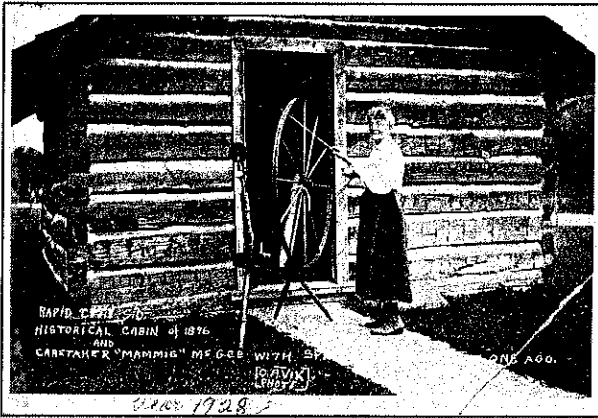
- create space for display of many Minnilusa Pioneer items, appropriate for the setting and time period, now in storage and
- generate Publicity for Rapid City historic preservation efforts

Minnilusa asks that the Historical Society consider this proposal and report an opinion on the project to the Rapid City Historic Preservation Commission. Thank you for your consideration and feel free to contact me with any questions (605) 394-6099 or (605) 574-2345 at home.

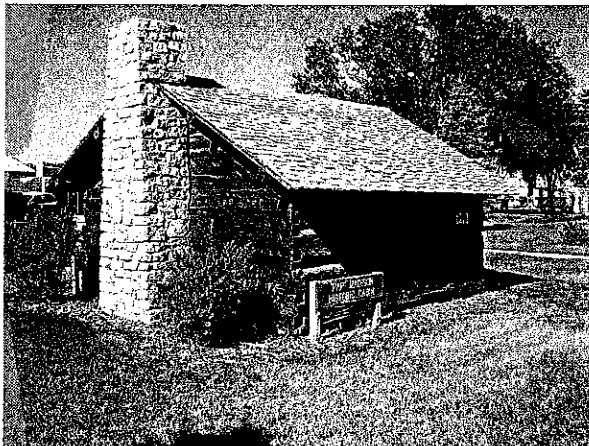
Appendix A, Photographs



*Cabin as it appeared shortly after it was moved in 1926 to Halley Park*



*Cabin in use as a Museum, 1928*



*Cabin as it appears today*