



Emma Pell

Liubov Nikolaevna
(nee Ivanova) Degaeva
Russian revolutionary

1859 in Russia - Dec. 4, 1904
(44 years) Lot 963 2W

- In March of 1881, People's Will members (terrorist wing of the Populist revolutionaries in the late 19th century Imperial Russia) assassinated Tsar Alexander II.
- Liubov met Sergei Degaev (working as an engineer) in the summer of 1881 and she enrolled in midwife courses in August.
- In November 1881, Liubov married Sergei in St. Petersburg.
- Both Sergei and Liubov were involved in revolutionary activity in coordination with the People's Will and the Russian revolutionary underground.
- In late December 1882, the Degaevs are arrested. Both cooperate after their arrest and Sergei agreed to act as a double agent under secret police official Lieutenant Colonel Georgii Sudeikin.
- Sergei arranged for Liubov to go to Paris in November 1883.
- On December 16, 1883, Sergei assassinated Lt. Col. Sudeikin and fled to Western Europe.
- In 1886, the Degaevs emigrated to the United States. Liubov, as she had in Europe, worked as a laundress and cook.
- On September 4, 1891, the Degaevs become naturalized American citizens under the names Alexander and Emma Pell.
- In 1897, after Alexander completed his doctorate in mathematics, the Pells moved to Vermillion and Dr. Pell became USD's first professor of mathematics.
- Alexander and Emma Pell are featured in the March 25, issue of the *Volante*.
- The 1903 *Coyote* yearbook profiled Alexander and Emma and the class of 1904 dedicated the yearbook to the Pells.
- Emma died suddenly of an unexplained illness in December of 1904.
- She is buried in Bluff View Cemetery as "Mrs. A. Pell"

Continuation of Alexander's life in the next column.



Alexander Pell

Sergei Degaev
Russian revolutionary
and terrorist

Sept. 9, 1857-Jan. 26, 1921
(64 years) buried in PA

- In 1907, Alexander married Anna Johnson, a previous USD student 26 years his junior in Gottingham, Germany
- In 1908, the newlyweds moved for Anna's career to Chicago, Mount Holyoke and finally Bryn Mawr, PA.
- In 1911, Alexander retired after a disabling stroke.
- Pell died in January of 1921 at 64, and is buried in the Bryn Mawr Lower Merion Baptist Cemetery.
- "Sergei Degaev, "informer, agent provocateur, killer" had become Alexander Pell, "outstanding scholar, beloved teacher, warm friend and counselor to students, loving husband." Von Hardesty & Unruh
- In 1962, Dr. Anna Pell-Wheeler established an endowed USD mathematics scholarship in his honor which is awarded by the Math Department.

Thanks to . . .

- *Bluff View Cemetery Board*
- *Cemetery Tour Committee: Barb Campbell, Joni Freidel, Maxine Johnson, Wess Pravecek & Art Rusch*
- *Storytellers: Ilmira Dulyanova, Steve Gapp, Jeffrey Gray Lobe, Justin Mancini & Tom Sorensen*
- *CCHS Board: Erin Burrow, Ruth Bylander, Barb Campbell, Dan Christopherson, Joni Freidel, Doris Hodgen, Kevin Jacobson, Maxine Johnson, Wess Pravecek, Art Rusch, Tom Sorensen, Jim Stone & Judy Sullivan*

The mission of the Clay County (SD) Historical Society is to bring together those people interested in the history and prehistory of Clay County and adjacent areas.

CCHS Yearly Membership

\$25 Individual

\$40 Family

\$75 Institutional

\$250 Individual Lifetime



The Austin-Whittemore House
(home of the Clay County Historical Society)
15 Austin Street, is open on
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
from 10:00-2:00 and by appointment.
605-624-8266
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www.cchssd.org



The Clay County
Historical Society
presents

Spoken History Cemetery Tour

"and the Plot Thickens"

Monday, October 11, 2021
5:30 pm

Bluff View Cemetery
Vermillion, SD



James “Badman” Hogan

Clay County’s 1st lynching

About 1841- Feb. 26, 1866
(Mid 20s) Buried Below Bluff

- Hogan was known as a “desperado of the worst character, a bad man and a bad citizen.” He could not handle liquor, might have been a convict and was married to a 12-year-old.
- Some reports indicate he had been in the British military and a Union soldier with the 5th PA Calvary.
- On February 25, Hogan was out for revenge since someone burned down his cabin, and he lost everything.
- He detained a younger Burgess brother (prominent Vermillion family) held him over the flames burning his hair and face, forced a confession that his brother had started it. Hogan threw the boy against a log and that “left him insensible”.
- Revenge and whiskey with his navy revolver lead to attempted murder on the 18-year-old Burgess brother in McHenry’s store.
- He tried to shoot people in the street and the pistol failed again. It was wrestled away and locked up in the Land Office. Hogan demanded his gun back to “shoot Burgess”. After a tussle there, he was handed over to garrisoned Iowa soldiers and detained.
- About 8:00 pm, someone, presumably Hogan, yelled murder, murder, murder!
- Several people saw Hogan’s body hanging from a tree by the mouth of the Vermillion River at about 10:00 pm.
- The next morning, he was found hanging by a 1/2” bed cord, his hands tied behind his back and his feet were on the ground?
- The coroner’s jury determined it was *suicide committed with the aid of an unknown vigilance committee*.
- The Vermillion women took up a collection for a proper burial and he was buried underneath that same tree.

“Who was James Hogan? Was he:

- A. A victim of “so-called” justice (justice run amok)
- B. A troublemaker who brought it all on himself
- C. The first person lynched in Dakota Territory
- D. A and C
- E. B and C... You can decide this one for yourself.”

Dakota’s First Lynching by Gregory J. Nedved



Elmer Sidney Jordan

USD West Hall arsonist

Dec. 1, 1884-Aug. 18, 1946
(63 years) Lot 1019 1W

- Born the youngest of 11 children, parents were Thomas (immigrant from Ireland) and Nancy (Thompson). They were the first family to settle in Clay Country (1820). Siblings included Mary, Ira, Elcy, John, Charles (C.E), Julia, Dr. Peter, Dr. George, Harry, and Frederick.
- Elmer attended elementary school in Vermillion and enrolled in the preparatory music program at USD.
- In mid-late June of 1905, two unsuccessful fires were discovered at the city hall and county courthouse.
- On Tuesday, July 4, at 3:45 am, a whistle tooting aroused West Hall residents who ignored it as a holiday celebration. The delayed response and wind resulted in the total loss of the building (\$20K).
- In 1906, Jordan converted at a Methodist revival meeting and confessed to burning the dorm in addition to the previous attempts. This resulted in the arrest of his accomplice, Richard Brueschweiler,.
- “Mutual Improvement Society for the Removal of Ugly Edifices” was the reason for the arson.
- In April of 1906, Brueschweiler (his father was a former USD music professor) and Jordan were sentenced to five years of hard labor in Sioux Falls.
- In March of 1907, a Vermillion petition was circulated to request an early release. The “incendiaries” served three years and three months.
- During 1910-11, Elmer was at home with his parents while reenrolled in the USD College of Music
- On October 25, 1916, Elmer married (Mattie) Louise Smith of Troy, AL. They had no children.
- His 1917 draft registration card indicated his address as 205 Prospect, short, slender, blue eyes and light yellow hair with glasses (nearsighted).
- Soon after their marriage, Louise and Elmer moved to New Orleans where he taught strings and piano.
- Employed as a building contractor in 1925, the couple lived in Memphis, TN.
- In 1932 , the Jordans moved to Los Angeles and Elmer taught music until 1941, the outbreak of WWII, when he took up defense work.
- He died in Long Beach, CA, at 63.

WHERE SHOOTING OCCURRED



Ozzie Arvil (O.A.) Kirby

Murdered Peter Olson over NE/SD land dispute

Jan. 30, 1882 - May 1961
(79 years) Lot 422 1W

- Born in Greene, AR, to George Washington and Philadelphia (Tratham), the 2nd of eight - John, Maud, Marlin, Charles, Chloe, Arlis, and Erna.
- In 1907 at 25, Kirby arrived in SD and opened a dry goods store in Vermillion.
- He married Mabel (Graham) Spence on February 20, 1908, in Neleigh, NE.
- She had a daughter Gladys Spence, whom Kirby adopted, and then Mildred (Croghan) and Maurice “Bud” were born.
- In the 1920 census, he was the merchant and owner of a men’s clothing store.
- Mabel died in January of 1927.
- In 1928 , O.A. married Lucille Kircherville from TX who was more than 20 years his junior.
- The 1930 census has the Kirbys operating a boarding house with lodgers at 630 Main Street and O.A. was still a clothier.
- By 1940, O.A. continued as the proprietor for clothing retail and Lucille was attending USD for her Master’s.
- On October 24, 1940, O.A. lost a long-contested NE & SD Missouri River land dispute in a circuit court ruling.
- On October 25, 1940, Kirby shot and killed Peter Olson, an attorney who won the land dispute.
- In late October, Kirby attempted suicide with a tiny knife hidden in his shoe seam.
- When the circuit court convened in March, there was difficulty obtaining jury members. Thirty-one were questioned and none accepted
- The 20 day trial was presided over by Judge C.C. Puckett and temporary insanity was the defense.
- “Nearly overpowering” interest in fancy chickens, fine hunting dogs and land supported his insanity plea.
- On April 4, 1941, Kirby after the 20 day trial was found guilty and Judge Puckett imposed a 10 year sentence.
- In the 1945 SD census, Kirby was listed in the SD Penitentiary in Sioux Falls.
- In May of 1961, O.A. died in Omaha, NE, where his son, Maurice resided.



(Charles) Lester Lloyd

Kidnapped by Bank Robbers

Dec. 16, 1896 - June 6, 1995
(98 Years) Lot 1034 1E

- 2nd son of four, (John, Dwight and Adaline), Lester was born to John and Elizabeth (Hilton) in Chandler, Charles Mix County, SD
- He was raised at Academy, SD, and graduated from high school there.
- Les attended the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, where he was a member of the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity.
- Later, Les served two years in the U.S. Army during WWI.
- On June 24, 1924, he married Gladys Fralich in Academy. They had daughters, Marilyn and Janice.
- He worked at the Citizens Bank & Trust Company in downtown Vermillion for 16 years.
- On January 26, 1933, while Les was working, four heavily armed and unmasked men held up the bank.
- Three employees, M.J. Chaney (bank president), Maude Sloan, and Lester along with three customers were in the bank. It was later speculated the robbers were John Dillinger and his gang members.
- Most of the bank’s money was in a “time lock” safe and Les was unable to open it, so the robbers took the available \$2800 and forced Chaney, Lloyd, and Sloan out to their car with IA license plates.
- The outlaws forced Chaney in the car, then Lloyd and Sloan onto the running boards to deter gunfire from being aimed at them. They headed east on Main Street and north on Dakota Street before stopping on the edge of town. Although they had threatened to shoot Les because he hadn’t opened the safe, they released all three and headed north on Hwy 19.
- In the 1940 census, Lester is listed as the Clay County auditor.
- From 1959-1979, Lloyd served 20 years as the Vermillion City Treasurer and retired at 82.
- Gladys died on March 13, 1991, in the Dakota Hospital.
- Les died in a convalescence home in Madison, SD, where his daughter lived.