



# CO-OP CONNECTIONS BUSINESS

## SPOTLIGHT

### Mead Cultural and Education Center

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The Mead Cultural Education Center (MCEC) in Yankton is home to the Dakota Territorial Museum and the Yankton County Historical Society (YCHS). It is housed in the historic Mead Building that was constructed in 1909 under the direction of Dr. Leonard C. Mead.

The MCEC has three permanent exhibits, and they also feature traveling and summer exhibits. Their permanent exhibits are *Yankton State Hospital: Minds, Methods & Medicine*; *Journey Forward: Connection Cultures*; and the *Children's Transportation Museum*.

The 2021 summer exhibits are currently on display now through August 31st. These exhibits are *Lincoln And The Dakotas* which features *The Mask of Lincoln* Smithsonian Institute poster exhibit,

*The Linden Graber Motorcycle and Scooter Collection*, and *Fall In! Soldiering In Dakota*.

The Mead Cultural Education Center is involved in the Yankton community, and they put on events throughout the year. June is kids month with free admission for children and crafts every Saturday of the month. Check their website [meadbuilding.org](http://meadbuilding.org) or their Facebook page [facebook.com/MeadCulturalCenter](https://facebook.com/MeadCulturalCenter) for a list of their upcoming events.

#### MEAD BUILDING AND DAKOTA TERRITORIAL MUSEUM HISTORY

The Mead Cultural and Education Center not only houses the Dakota Territorial Museum, but the Mead Building is an exhibit in itself. It was originally part of the women's ward for the Dakota Hospital for the Insane (now named the Human Services Center). The building is

#### Summer hours:

Monday - Friday 10am-4pm

Saturday - Sunday 12pm-4pm

#### Admission:

Adults: \$8, Seniors: \$5,

Children 5-17: \$5

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a beautiful, grand facility that was used until the 1980's.

Dr. Leonard C. Mead designed the building following a formula of square feet and direct sunlight that was used at the time as a mental health treatment before medication.

The Mead Building is built out of solid concrete, which was a new concept at the time. The Western Portland Cement Plant in Yankton was able to supply concrete directly to the state hospital campus.

Before becoming a doctor, Mead had aspirations of being an architect, therefore, he took great care in designing the building. He requisitioned over 300 pieces of art for the hospital campus, and he created a beautiful environment in the hopes that he could help at least one patient feel at peace.

A famous example of this philosophy is the grand marble staircase in the entrance of the Mead Building. It is worth a visit to the Mead Building just to see the solid



Far left: Marble staircase in the Mead Building entrance  
Left: Outside entrance of the Museum  
Below: *Children's Transportation Museum*  
Far Below: Hydrotherapy display in the *Yankton State Hospital: Minds, Methods & Medicine Exhibit*

marble staircase, and it is a very popular photo spot!

The Dakota Territorial Museum first opened in June, 1936 under the direction of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 2012, the YCHS took on the challenge of saving the Mead Building which would become the current home of the Dakota Territorial Museum.

#### **PRESENT DAY TO THE FUTURE**

The Mead Building sat empty from the 1980's until 2012 when the YCHS began the work of saving the building through a multi-year, multi-million dollar renovation. In 2018, the MCEC opened to the public, but the renovation is still not complete. There is still 10,000 feet of exhibit space to design, and MCEC director Crystal Nelson said they are working on two more permanent exhibits that will be ready in 2023 and 2025.

When asked about the museum's goals for the future, Nelson said, "The direction we're taking post Covid has a lot to do with addressing systemic racism and how we can utilize the cultural center as an avenue in which to tell everyone in this region's history collectively - no matter what ethnic background."

Nelson explained that there is a nationwide trend where museums are no longer just acting as a warehouse for historic objects. Museums are working to understand

## **THERE IS A NATIONWIDE TREND WHERE MUSEUMS ARE NO LONGER JUST ACTING AS A WAREHOUSE FOR HISTORIC OBJECTS.**

how negative events happened and then seeing what can be done to either avoid history repeating itself or make repairs going forward.

#### **MCEC SERVICES AND VISIT INFO**

MCEC offers research services, and they encourage people doing genealogical research or research on the history of this region to let them know at [research@meadbuilding.org](mailto:research@meadbuilding.org). The research team at MCEC utilizes their extensive regional collection, and they have helped high school students with history projects to retirees putting together their family's genealogical story.

MCEC also has spaces available for rent for weddings, baby showers, or any event you have in mind. Contact [info@meadbuilding.org](mailto:info@meadbuilding.org) for inquiries.

By partnering with the Yankton Chamber of Commerce, MCEC is a Yankton Welcome Center location for the northside of town.

Learn more and keep up to date with MCEC at their website [meadbuilding.org](http://meadbuilding.org), Facebook page [facebook.com/MeadCulturalCenter](https://facebook.com/MeadCulturalCenter), Instagram page [instagram.com/mead\\_cultural\\_center](https://instagram.com/mead_cultural_center) or by phone at (605) 665-3898.

If you'd like to get involved with

the MCEC, the best way is to become a member. As a member, you receive free admission and access to many more perks. You can also sign up to volunteer at the Museum. The Mead Cultural Education Center's goal is to get our regional community involved in and excited about the Museum so they can remain an active part of the community and to share history for many years to come.

