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Dakota Datebook

(Continued from Page 7)
a petition proposing the creation of a new county named Arkansana carved from the northern half of Williams County. Where the name Arkansana came from remains a mystery, perhaps unsolved because the question of county division went down in defeat at the November election.

Disappointed, but not defeated, the residents of northern Williams County would try again successfully two years later in 1910.

This time a name for the new county would be determined through a contest. The winning entry came from George Gilmore, a Williston attorney. Gilmore proposed the name Divide County. The Northern Continental Divide runs through the region. The county divides the United States from Canada. It divides North Dakota from Montana. And most importantly, the new county was a product of its division. Thus Divide County was both born and christened. Governor John Burke officially proclaimed the county's existence on this day, December 6, 1910.

But the battle was hardly finished. Those who had worked together for the creation of a new county now found themselves in a two-year bitter struggle over the location of the county seat. Crosby considered itself the logical choice as it had been one of the first towns to appear in what became Divide County. Noonan, a thriving community, considered itself a strong candidate while Ambrose, the terminal line for the Soo Line railroad branch from Flaxton, was the largest town of the three contenders and the most centrally located.

But when county commissioners met in 1911 to determine the

location of a temporary county seat, Ambrose found itself outmaneuvered. When it became obvious that the commissioners would not budge, Noonan's commissioner, A.H. Makee, demanded that Mac Colgan, representing Ambrose, throw his support to Noonan. If Colgan refused, Makee, Noonan's representative, would counter with a motion giving the temporary site to Crosby. When Colgan refused to support the motion for Noonan, Makee followed through with his threat, giving the needed support for Crosby to win the temporary county seat.

Eager to take advantage of this early victory, Crosby immediately began making plans to build a courthouse; hoping this would encourage future voters to select Crosby as the permanent county seat. Along with vigorous newspaper campaigning, the strategy was seemingly successful. In November of 1912, Divide County voters selected Crosby as the county seat.

Pearl Harbor
by JIM DAVIS

ON THIS DATE: December 7, 2023 – Recently a very special flag arrived at the North Dakota Heritage Center, one which symbolized a day which changed the lives of a generation of North Dakota's young men and women forever. This flag had flown over the USS Arizona Memorial and had been presented to the North Dakota Chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association. On this day, sixty-six years ago, the calm blue waters of Pearl Harbor became a nightmare of explosions, burning oil and the cries of the dying.

Scattered throughout the Hawaiian Islands in 1941 were the men and women who had traveled far from their North Dakota homes and joined the ranks of the Army,

Navy and Marines as the winds of war were sweeping Europe and Asia. Some were on the ground as Marines, like Floyd Graff from Stanley, while others were aboard ships, such as Agnes Shurr, on-board the Hospital Ship, the USS Solace or Richard Hauff, stationed on the USS Arizona but all of them witnessed the carnage created by that surprise attack. "It was a long time ago and I have not forgotten," stated George Mock, serving on a submarine docked at Pearl Harbor, who witnessed the men leaping from the sides of the exploding ships into the burning waters to save themselves only to die later of their burns. Records indicate that there were twelve men from North Dakota on the Arizona at the time it exploded and sank in eleven minutes.

But America was also fortunate on this day, as the cautious Japanese commander, Admiral Yamamoto, refused to press forward on his advantage and although heavily damaged, the US fleet was not destroyed. Pearl Harbor signaled the entry of the United States into World War II and many more of North Dakota's sons and daughters would witness combat during the next four years as the war raged on.

With little in the way of ceremony, the flag, one of many which has flown over the USS Arizona, but one which carried so much meaning for those who survived this day in 1941, was presented to the State Historical Society of North Dakota for preservation. In May of 2007 there were but four remaining members of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association- Agnes Shurr, John Martin, Harold Bruschwein and Clem Lonski and they elected to retire their charter. Time has hurried by and several more generations of men and women from North Dakota have served their county in times of conflict but there are still those few who can vividly recall this day, "December 7th, a day which will live in infamy," but they may rest assured, America has not forgotten.

Mother and Son Reunited
by DAVE SEIFERT

ON THIS DATE: December 8, 2023 – Vernon Hagstad was a real estate broker in Honolulu, Hawaii. He was also adopted.

His efforts to find his birth mother eventually led him to Minot, ND. He appealed to the "oldtimers" there for any information about his mother, Hannah Hanson. His hard work paid off.

On this date in 1939, Vernon was reunited with his mother.

Mrs. John Hargrave of Makoti, ND had given young Vernon up for adoption to the Hagstads, in 1908, thirty-one years ago. At the time, she was Hannah Hanson, the mother of three children. She told Vernon that her fourth child was just too much for her at the time.

It took Vernon thirty-one years, but he finally met his birth mother.

"Dakota Datebook" is a radio series from Prairie Public in partnership with the State Historical Society of North Dakota and with funding from the North Dakota Humanities Council. See all the Dakota Datebooks at prairiepublic.org, subscribe to the "Dakota Datebook" podcast, or buy the Dakota Datebook book at shop-prairiepublic.org.

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in Bowbells



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in Bowbells



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