

“Culture is a Human Right. To take away culture is to take away the identity of who we are.” ~Ebun Adelona

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community character of any place is created by the blending of the communities past, present and hope of the future. It can be seen, felt and appreciated in the community’s neighborhoods, the blending of various backgrounds and cultures, in our commercial areas and in the surrounding green that surrounds the town. It is our architecture, our way of governing, our neighborliness, our love of nature and the geography of our home. Hot Springs Community Character is who we were, who we are and who we want to be.

THE PLACE: Our Scenic Resources –

WATER - Our water is what defines us. It is what drew people here throughout human history. Our water is not only what defines us; it also plays a huge factor in the look and feel of our community. The town itself was constructed along the Fall River a snaking sometimes steaming ribbon of warm, clear, spring fed water that is the center of our town.

Over the years Fall River has been ditched, burned and manipulated and all but forgotten during the 1950’s through the 1980’s. During that time roads were expanded and walls pushed closer to the flow of the river. Flood protection projects were constructed in the river bed, channelizing, and building bigger stronger walls to rein in the waters in after the 1937 & 1947 floods. What we have been left with is a large section of our river that is surrounded by high concrete and stone walls that create a barrier between the water and the people who want to be close to it. Due to invasive species the river is just about void of fish, frogs and other aquatic creatures and has become a monoculture of cattails – a plant not native to the Fall River.

Plans have been developed to, as much as possible within the purview of the Army Corps of Engineers, return the Fall River into a more natural, beautiful river suitable for the centerpiece of our community. In 2010 a dedicated group of volunteers undertook this project and developed a river plan – creating areas of step pools, riffles and runs along with access for people to come and enjoy the waters. The future of the Fall River is in our hands and how we move forward from here will alter how we are perceived as a community – its physical beauty as well as its connection to the natural world. A first ‘great step’ would be to work towards implementing the ‘2010 River Plan’.

CANYONS, RIDGELINES & VALLEY

Hot Springs has developed in a long narrow valley snugged up against the Fall River and the railroad lines surrounded by red cliffs and deep green tree cover. The unique and strikingly beautiful valley gives Hot Springs a singular beauty not equaled within the Black Hills.

The railroad is now long gone but left behind traces of its glorious past and a legacy of old railroad beds that follow the Fall River through town and the bottom of the valley out to Maverick Junction and the Fall River Falls. To utilize these old railroad beds would allow visitors and residents alike to recapture what it must have felt like coming to Hot Springs, to those healing waters, on a rail car not so long ago. Creating walking, hiking or bicycling trails would not only provide recreation and connectivity to surrounding regions but would also allow a page of our history to be maintained and remembered.

The natural beauty of Hot Springs needs to be maintained and managed in a manner which is both safe regarding wildfires and falling rock yet retains the essential essence of the red rock against the green vegetation that we are so well known for. (See Emergency Preparedness Chapter)

ARCHITECTURE

In the earlier days of settlement wealthy people constructed gorgeous Victorian homes along the western ridgeline high above the river that looked out over the thriving town. Larger developments like the old school (now the Pioneer Museum) and the Veteran's Administration built grand red sandstone buildings on the eastern ridge. The ridgelines were the prime viewing locations to watch the development of a bustling downtown filled with old western Victorian architecture as well as monumental red sandstone structures.

These testaments to the original wealth of Hot Springs still stand as tribute to those early settlers and businessmen who came to Hot Springs and found utopia, creating bath houses and thriving businesses to support visitors from as far away as Minnesota, Wisconsin and Colorado who wanted to rest in this idyllic town. But they are not safe. Many of these unique and beautiful structures have fallen into disuse and disrepair and need to be renovated and refurbished back to their original splendor. As a community we must do what we can to help make the preservation of the buildings, of our heritage, a priority. We need to actively pursue grant funding for preservation, provide tax relief for people willing to invest in these building and penalize those who would rather retain it as dilapidated as a tax write off. Working with the Historic Preservation Commission, programs like the City's façade improvement program could be expanded and grown with help from State and private groups interested in saving our built history.

THE PAST – Historic Resources

GEOLOGICAL HISTORY

The Black Hills are the furthestmost eastern reach of the Rocky Mountains and connect to the Laramie Mountains to the southwest. Technically the Black Hills are actually mountains and not hills at all. The 100 mile long and 50 mile wide area that makes up the Black Hills are one of the nation's richest areas of minerals, with 182 identified varieties and vast geological interest.

The area was formed during the Cretaceous Era when there was a domical uplift that exposed at least 22 identifiable layers of geologic formations back to the Pre-Cambrian Period. The uplift was marked by volcanic activity in the north and in the southern end exposure of Precambrian granite, pegmatite and metasedimentary rocks.

More than 26,000 years ago, large Columbian and woolly mammoths were trapped and died in a spring-fed pond near what is now the southwest edge of Hot Springs, South Dakota. For centuries the bones lay buried, until discovered by chance in 1974 during excavating for a housing development, when earth moving equipment exposed South Dakota's greatest fossil treasure.

Fortunately, through the work of local citizens, the Mammoth Site in Hot Springs was preserved. Today it is the world's largest Columbian mammoth exhibit, and a world-renown research center for Pleistocene studies. Now enclosed and protected by a climate controlled building, the sinkhole and the in-situ exhibit of mammoth bones attracts visitors year round. The bones are displayed as they were discovered, in the now dry pond sediments for an "in-situ" exhibit. Walkways allow visitors a close-up view of the fossils. To date, 61 mammoths have been identified, along with the remains of a giant short-faced bear, camel, llama, prairie dog, wolf, fish, and numerous other plant and invertebrate fossils. [From <http://mammothsite.com/history/>]

Embracing the unique features of our geologic history and spreading awareness regarding the special natural behind the red rock canyons, our conglomerate rock and variety of fossils and minerals can bring more people to our community to explore and be amazed at what we take for granted as 'home'.

ANCIENT PEOPLES HISTORY

There is a continuous record of evidence from ancient and prehistoric times to the present of the Black Hills' spiritual significance to the various indigenous peoples who once lived or still live in the vicinity.¹⁵ There exists a range of rock art dating back over 5,000 years, into the Archaic Period, with some of the finest drawings scattered in the sandstone hills surrounding Hot Springs. These ancient peoples were of three types: Hunters with a living based almost solely on the Bison, hunters and gatherers or semi-horticultural groups all of whom often used the area in and around Hot Springs for encampments.

INDIAN HISTORY –

Prior to the European trappers and pioneers entered into the history of the southern Black Hills, the native Indians were the first peoples to find the warm waters of the Hot Springs area and they revered them as being healing and spiritual. The Indians' use and appreciation of the waters and

the surrounding environment lead the Fall River valley to be held as a place of peace and healing even between various tribes.

The tribal history in this sacred land is their own and not easily interpreted by peoples outside of their culture. To learn more about the native peoples, their lives, their ways, their trials and the impact of colonization, please check into these books and documents recommended by the CAIRNES Museum and the Journey Museum.

“The Home of the Bison (Full Text): An Ethnographic and Ethnohistorical Study of Traditional Cultural Affiliations to Wind Cave National Park”, Wind Cave Park website.

“The Lakotas and the Black Hills: The Struggle for Sacred Ground”, by Jeffrey Ostler, 2011

Synopsis: “The Lakota Indians made their home in the majestic Black Hills mountain range during the last millennium, drawing on the hills' endless bounty for physical and spiritual sustenance. Yet the arrival of white settlers brought the Lakotas into inexorable conflict with the changing world, at a time when their tribe would produce some of the most famous Native Americans in history, including Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse. Jeffrey Ostler's powerful history of the Lakotas' struggle captures the heart of a people whose deep relationship with their homeland would compel them to fight for it against overwhelming odds, on battlefields as varied as the Little Bighorn and the chambers of U.S. Supreme Court.”

“Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West” by Dee Brown and Hampton Sides, 2007, First published in 1970,

Synopsis: “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee generated shockwaves with its frank and heartbreaking depiction of the systematic annihilation of American Indian tribes across the western frontier. In this nonfiction account, Dee Brown focuses on the betrayals, battles, and massacres suffered by American Indians between 1860 and 1890. He tells of the many tribes and their renowned chiefs—from Geronimo to Red Cloud, Sitting Bull to Crazy Horse—who struggled to combat the destruction of their people and culture.

Forcefully written and meticulously researched, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee inspired a generation to take a second look at how the West was won.”

“Anti-Indianism in Modern America - A Voice from Tatekeya's Earth” by Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, 2007

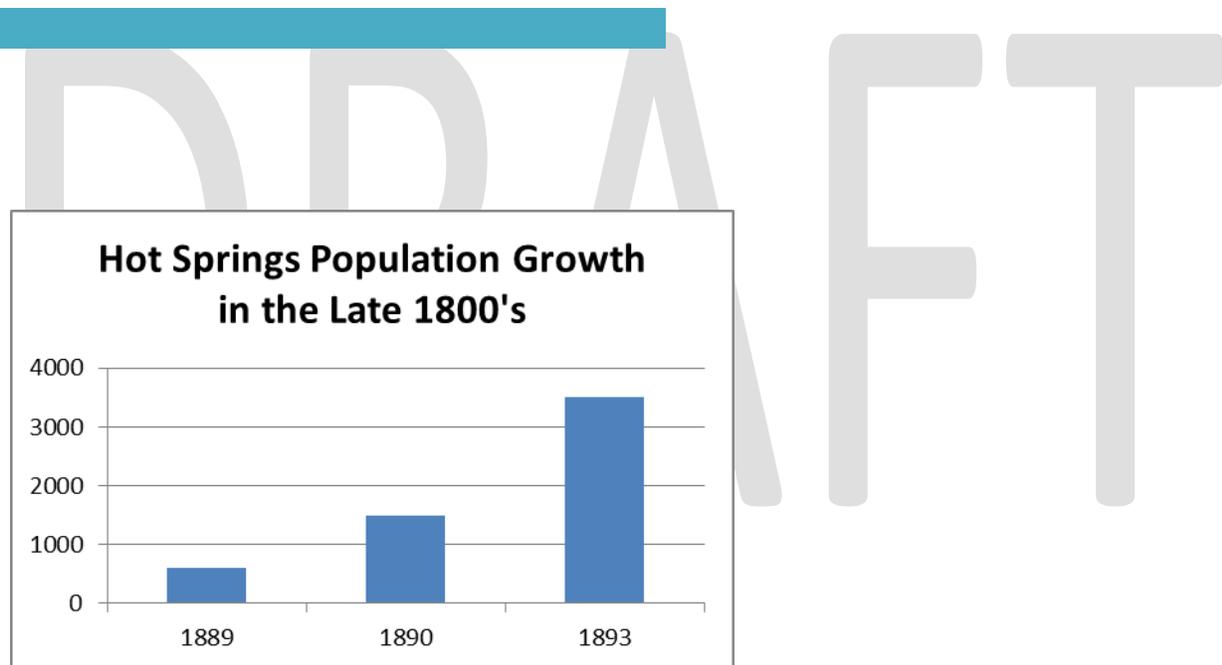
Synopsis – “In this powerful and essential work, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn confronts the politics and policies of genocide that continue to destroy the land, livelihood, and culture of Native Americans. Anti-Indianism in Modern America tells the other side of stories of historical massacres and modern-day hate crimes, events that are dismissed or glossed over by historians, journalists, and courts alike. Cook-Lynn exposes the colonialism that works both overtly and covertly to silence and diminish Native Americans, supported by a rhetoric of reconciliation, assimilation, and multiculturalism. Comparing anti-Indianism to anti-Semitism, she sets the American history of broken treaties, stolen lands, mass murder, cultural dispossession, and Indian hating in an international context of ethnic cleansing, “ecocide” (environmental destruction), and colonial oppression.

Cook-Lynn also discusses the role Native American studies should take in reasserting tribal literatures, traditions, and politics and shows how the discipline has been sidelined by anthropology, sociology, postcolonial studies, and ethnic studies. Asserting the importance of

a "native conscience"--a knowledge of the mythologies, mores, and experiences of tribal society--among American Indian writers, she calls for the expression in American Indian art and literature of a tribal consciousness that acts to assure a tribal-nation people of its future."

PIONEER AND INDUSTRIALIST HISTORY

Surrounding the current Hot Springs location ranchers had settled and drove their cattle onto the surrounding range and tall grass prairies and bankrolled investment in the small town of Minnekahta. Minnekahta (named for the warm waters that dotted the valley) was fully established by 1879 and in 1886 was renamed Hot Springs. By 1890 the town was bustling with merchants, saloons and an active railroad station. Fred Evans, and other entrepreneurs, embarked on a plan to make all of Hot Springs in a health spa and began advertising the area.



Between 1889 and 1893 there was a population explosion in Hot Springs as the town grew at a dizzying pace. Various publications and reports touted the wonders of Hot Springs with statements like these:

"I am more favorably impressed with Hot Springs as a health and pleasure resort than any other place I ever visited. It is far ahead of Colorado Springs." ~ Dr. J.A. McKiveen, Chariton, Iowa

"I think Hot Springs is bound to be a great health resort. The waters are excellent; the climate and scenery are greatly to its advantage: cannot say too much." ~ Dr. George F. Jenkins, Keokuk, Iowa, President of the Keokuk Medical School

"The medicinal properties of the Hot Springs of Dakota are truly wonderful, and must become more and more appreciated as their virtues become better known. So far as my personal observation goes, they are remarkably efficacious in the cure of rheumatism (particularly sciatica), nervous prostration, insomnia, bowel and bladder troubles and various kinds of skin troubles and all kinds of female troubles. The scenery is picturesque; the air invigorating and delightful and the class of people who throng there are superior." ~ "The Hot Springs of Dakota – the Great Health Resort of the Northwest", by S. D. Cook, Sioux City, Iowa, 1888

"You take these springs as commonplace. In Europe they build million dollar palaces to house them. Your springs are ideal in temperature. They are close together. No time should be lost in developing this national health resort!" Dr. Perry Nichols

"Hot Springs, South Dakota, lying at the south of the Black Hills, is destined to become, for at least that population lying between Chicago and San Francisco, the greatest health resort in the United States.", "The Black Hills Illustrated", 1904, George P. Baldwin under the Black Hills Mining Men's Association.

Even with statements such as these, the construction slowed and the health resort industry peaked during the 1900-1930's. Mechanisms of the decline have been linked to wars, a tough economy, the Polio outbreak, the development of the automobile and road networks and a growing medical field that dissuaded patients from the use of 'primitive' cures instead promoting their more modern medicine.

What this boom in industry left Hot Springs with is a one of kind sandstone based downtown district with intense development all along the river (and the spring sites) So many other western towns found the quickly built wood structures had little lasting power but those of Hot Springs do.

Historic Resources TODAY

HISTORIC DISTRICT

In addition to these properties Hot Springs has a historic district that is listed on the National Register. Created in 1974, the Hot Springs Historic District was developed for *'the preservation of the historical, archeological, architectural and cultural heritage of the City of Hot Springs and is to promote the use and conservation of such property for the education, inspiration, pleasure and enrichment of the*

citizens of Hot Springs, the State of South Dakota and the United States.’ Hot Springs Code of Ordinances Chapter 29- Historic Preservation District Ordinance. The district contains 92 historically significant commercial buildings, 33 residential structures and 15 accessory structures (i.e. garages, root cellars, barns etc.).

[MAP]

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Hot Springs has a number of historic properties listed on the US Department of Interior, National Park Service, and National Register of Historic Places. Most recently, in 2011 the Battle Mountain Sanitarium aka the VA Medical Center was listed as a National Historic Landmark – the highest historic designation available within the US.

Property Name	Address	Significance	Style	Period	Date Added to Register
Hot Springs High School	146 N. 16 th Street	Architecture & Engineering	Tudor Revival	1925-1949	1980
Governor Leslie Jensen House	309 S 5 th Street	Person, Architecture	Queen Anne Victorian	1875-1899	1987
Historic Log Cabin Camp	1246 Sherman Street	Event		1925-1949	2004
Petty House	201 N. 3 rd Street	Architecture & Engineering	Queen Anne Victorian	1875-1899	1999
State Soldiers Home Barn	2500 Minnekahta Ave	Architecture & Engineering	Agricultural	1925-1949	2009
Phillip Wesch House	2229 Minnekahta Ave	Event		1875-1899	1984
Battle Mountain Sanitarium (National Historic Landmark Designation)	53 Acre Campus + All Buildings	Architecture, Architect TR Kimball & Engineering	Mission/ Spanish Colonial Revival	1900-1950	2011

CEMETERIES

We have three significant cemeteries within the city boundaries of Hot Spring: Evergreen Cemetery run by the City of Hot Springs, the National Cemetery on the VA campus and the SD State Soldiers and Sailors Cemetery on the State Veterans Home Campus.

Evergreen Cemetery: *On June 3, 1887 the Hot Springs Star reported the following: “The Cemetery Committee should be highly commended for their choice of location. Like everything else in this beautiful land of ours, it is a pleasant, abiding, restful place for our loved*

ones, situated, as it is, elevated above the valley, on an undulating slope to the east, interspersed with evergreen pines and a profusion of grass. The eye of the beholder is attracted to the perfect natural beauty and grandeur of the spot." The Evergreen Cemetery was opened in 1887 and was so popular that people were disinterred and moved into the new cemetery. The oldest known date of death is 1882. Two noteworthy internments: South Dakota Governor Leslie Jensen (09/15/1892 – 12/14/1964) and US Congressman Eben Wever Martin (04/12/1855 – 05/22/1932)

The State Veterans' Home Cemetery: Located behind and west of the State Veterans Home Administration Building this small and pioneer style cemetery was created to provide a final peaceful resting place for many South Dakota veterans who passed through Hot Springs. The cemetery is fenced and has a center monument dated to 1915. The earliest burials date back to 1894 and include many wives of men buried in the National Cemetery on the nearby VA campus because women were not accepted early on.

Hot Springs National Cemetery: Created in 1907 as a burial place for veterans who died while in care at the Battle Mountain Sanitarium. The traditional white marble cemetery contains 1,482 internments and heralds a 32 foot tall sandstone obelisk erected "*In Memory of the Men who Offered their Lives in the Defense of this Country*". The earliest burial was in the first year – in May 1907 and the last burial was in May 1963. In 1964 the cemetery was closed to new burials. The cemetery is the final resting place of one of the nation's recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor – Lt. Charles Russell (Civil War) Company H, 93rd New York Infantry, Spotsylvania, VA, May 12, 1864. The National Cemetery was listed on the *National Register of Historic Places* in 1974.

SANDSTONE ARCHITECTURE

Most of the sandstone architecture was constructed between 1890 and 1910. All the town's major early buildings were built of stone from the Evans Quarry, which was of course owned by Fred Evans. The stone is the Early Cretaceous Fall River sandstone, the type section of which is of course Evans Quarry. Experts from outside the region may better know the Fall River sandstone as the Dakota Sandstone.

*"The Fall River sandstone provides relatively uniform blocks and is relatively soft, allowing the carving shown in many of the structures. The availability of this stone and the prosperity of Hot Springs in the late 1800s combined to produce a remarkable town of sandstone architecture."*²

The earlier buildings were fashioned in the Romanesque Revival style being massive in size, with archways, deep set windows and towers. A few great examples of the style are the

State Home Administration Building (1890) the Evans Hotel (1892) and the County Courthouse (1891).

When the Battle Mountain Sanitarium was constructed in 1907, architect Thomas Roger Kimball blended the new Mission style with Spanish Colonial Revival to create the stunning red clay tiled roofed structure we know today. The city's Post Office is also constructed in the Spanish Revival style. *(See Chapter on History & Preservation)*

THE RIVER AND SPRINGS

There are purported to be over 80 springs within Hot Springs and the closely surrounding region, all with their own unique mineral makeup, warmth and feel, making this area of the United States *"a location with advantages that cannot be found elsewhere. Advantages provided by nature, so rare in combination, that they are only duplicated in only a few instances the world over."* Medical Report⁴. Water from those springs and the river that flowed with a blend of their varied mixtures is what created Hot Springs as a community and as an oasis for health and wellness within the Black Hills.

(Insert water profiles – chemical analysis)

MAMMOTH SITE

In an area of the country rich in mineral and fossil finds, the Mammoth Site is renown worldwide as the best site in which to study and learn about mammoths. The Mammoth site is a museum and paleontological site in Hot Springs where a building has been constructed over a one of a kind find. The building protects the ongoing exploration and excavation of various types of plant and animals remains – with a large number of mammoth remains - that have been preserved in a karst sinkhole that developed during the Pleistocene Era (26,000 years ago). The first mammoth bones were found on a construction site in 1974. In 1980 the site was designated a National Natural Landmark.

THE Future – Its People

CULTURAL RESOURCES – SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Any community is truly defined by its people – past and present. Those various different and uniquely American people who helped create the Hot Springs we know today were the Lakota and Cheyenne, the pioneer and rancher followed by the settlers and industrialists.

Each group left their mark on the area – the native Indians left their reverence of nature, the ranchers and pioneers that unrelenting spirit and the industrialists the built elements of our town.

Today the character of our people is diverse incorporating people from our native roots as well as new immigrants to the areas from all over the US and world. Our people show a great independent spirit, a neighborly friendliness and an unflappable resiliency not often found elsewhere.

NEEDED PHOTOS

- Battle Mountain Sanitarium
- Governor Leslie Jensen House – 309 S 5th Street
- Log Cabin Tourist Camp – Sherman Avenue
- Evergreen Cemetery
- National Cemetery at VA
- State Soldier's Cemetery
- Sandstone Architecture
- Quarry photos
- River and springs (a few with steam)
- Mammoth Site
- Houses along the ridgeline
- Red rock canyon/valley
- Lakota historic photos
- Evans historic photos
- Water historic photos
- State home historic photos
- Portraits of people from different backgrounds who live here: Lakota, longtime residents with roots back to the 1800's, new 'immigrants', rancher roots (the cowboy) etc.

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