

OSHKOSH PAINTER ASKED TO ATTEND BLACK HILLS FETE

Gustave Behncke Was Member of Party of 30 Men Which Visited Region Looking for Gold

Deadwood, S. D.—(U.P.)—An invitation to attend the annual summer fete in August of the Days of '76 is being extended by the committee to Gustave Behncke, 83, Oshkosh, Wis., who is believed to be the last surviving member of the Gordon Stockade party which visited the Black Hills in 1874.

The aged man was "discovered" by William Zwickey, Rapid City (S. D.) postmaster, while the latter was on a visit to Wisconsin last summer.

The Gordon party reached the site of the stockade on Dec. 23, 1874, just 59 years ago. Behncke was taken out of the Black Hills when soldiers removed all members of the party because the land belonged to Indians and no treaty had been made.

BURIED PICK, PAN

Behncke returned to Wisconsin and has lived in Oshkosh since about 1881, Zwickey said. The aged man told of numerous experiences in the Black Hills, one being the camping occasion during which he buried a gold pick, pan, and other materials. He said he believes he could find them now.

Behncke expressed a desire to return to the Black Hills for a visit.

The party of which Mr. Behncke was a member included 30 men of various types and trades from throughout the United States. In the group were farmers, merchants, brewers and others, all of whom were seeking gold. The party left Sioux City, Ia., in the spring of 1873. The Black Hills territory mentioned above was settled by the Sioux Indians and after being taken out of there by a Lieutenant Sippley, the group of 30 men were sent to Fort Laramie in Wyoming.

During their stay at Fort Laramie the men met with many and varied experiences. There were Indian raids and at night one could watch the Indian fire signals from hilltop to hilltop as the redmen watched the fort. From that place the little band of gold seekers followed the old Mormon trail that led into Utah. Mr. Behncke resides at 123 Mt. Vernon street.)