

## Community of Hisega Celebrating 100th in 2008

It all started in 1908 when Doane Robinson, then the head of the state history department, organized a party of 17 young people, mostly from South Dakota's state capital of Pierre. The goal was to visit the Black Hills on the Rapid City, Black Hills and Western railroad for a ten-day outing.

The first campers stayed at Hisega from August 8-18, 1908, and the October 1908 issue of *Dakota* magazine included a story by Robinson about the expedition. "The total cost from leaving home until returning thereto was \$13.75 for each member of the party, an expense certainly not prohibitive to the ordinary purse," he wrote.

The young people camped beside one of the 33 bridges spanning Rapid Creek between Rapid City and Mystic. They slept in tents, swam in the creek and fell in love with the sound of rushing water, the tall pines, the warm August days and the cool, clear nights.

They named the place Hisega, creating a name from the first initials of the first names of six of these young campers. They were

**H** - Helen Scroggs, of Beresford, South Dakota.

**I** - Ida McNeil of Pierre, South Dakota, Doane Robinson's secretary and later the owner of the Pierre radio station for 40 years. Personal anecdotes say she was the designer of the state flag.

**S** - Sade Robinson of Pierre, sister of State Historian Doane Robinson.

**E** - Ethel Brink, a University of South Dakota student.

**G** - Grace Wason of Marshall Minnesota, niece of Doane Robinson.

**A** - Ada Pike of Marshall, Minnesota, friend of Sade Robinson.

Impressed by the rugged beauty of the canyon, the group made plans to return the next summer.

Before the summer of 1909 arrived, Doane Robinson persuaded 50 other people, primarily residents of Pierre, to put up \$100 each to build Pierre Lodge at the previous year's campsite. Each of these original incorporators was entitled to two weeks at the lodge each summer.

During the twenty years the Pierre Lodge was operated as a private inn, several of the original incorporators decided to build private cabins. For some years the only access to the community was the railroad line commonly referred to as the Crouch Line. By 1930 a one-lane dirt road had been hollowed out between Highway 44 and Hisega.

In 1929 Carl and Jessie Sanders acquired the Pierre Lodge property through lease, purchasing the lodge in 1937. For many years this well-known Hills couple operated the Triangle I Lodge as a commercial inn along with their ranch only a mile away. People came from all over the U.S. to enjoy the warm hospitality, good food and scenic atmosphere.

In addition to improvements on the original thirteen-bedroom lodge, they built an annex and maintained an additional 21 cabins.

For the balance of the 1930's local traffic remained steady over the Crouch Line, especially for Sunday picnics and fishing trips. The railroad was a vital link during World War II, but the last passenger train ran in late 1947, and the last freight was brought down from Mystic in February 1948. The railway was

taken apart and replaced with a road.

In 1969 the Triangle I Lodge was sold as a private dwelling to local entrepreneur Hoadley Dean and his wife Ruth of Rapid City. They changed the name to the H-Bar-D Ranch Lodge and provided the nucleus around which the summer cabins and a growing number of permanent homes maintained their identity. Over the years they hosted scores of guests and promoted tourism in the Black Hills. Later their son Kip Dean operated the H-Bar-D as a fishing lodge and a bed and breakfast.

Cheryl Rudel bought the lodge in 2000 and named it Hisega Lodge, hearkening back to when a family by the name of Patton operated a combination lodge/store by that name across the creek from the Triangle I.

Cheryl added to the improvements at the lodge and turned it into a year-round operation. Many residents of Rapid City recall weddings, family gatherings and company Christmas parties during Cheryl's residence at the lodge.

Current owners Kenn and Carol Duncan bought the lodge from their friend Leedel Williamson in 2007, and they continue the Hisega traditions of hospitality and friendship.

Several of the homes at Hisega are still owned by families who have returned to the community year after year. This quiet and beautiful place makes its mark on all who visit it, and the spirit of the original campers lives on at Hisega.

**Carol Duncan compiled this history from excerpts of Rapid City Journal stories and other local writings.**