

DID YOU KNOW.....

A look back at early area history as found in the archives of the Enderlin Historical Society and Museum ..... by Susan Schlecht

Following are the final excerpts from a paper entitled *EARLY HISTORY OF SHELDON, RANSOM COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA* prepared by **Ed Pierce** and read at the **Old Settlers' Picnic at Sheldon, ND, in July 1906**.

Mr. Pierce seems to have some strong opinions about the saloon business as he finished his 1906 speech with the following information: "Prior to 1890 the village averaged four open saloons, paying to the town a revenue of about \$83.00 per month in all, and to the county about twice that amount. Their average sales of whiskey, beer and other intoxicants, as near as can be ascertained, were about \$3,600 per month."

"The cost of regulating them appears in the Marshal's salary which was then \$60.00 per month, a night man or deputy half the time at the same salary and the Village Justice's office was worth about \$70.00 per month. It is not clear that any person living today is any better off for the existence of these institutions for 10 years, nor would they be had they continued."

Mr. Pierce ended his speech with the comment, "The first Old Settler's Reunion was held on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1906, and it is hoped that it may be followed by a hundred equally enjoyable."

**Sue's comments:** North Dakota joined the union in 1889 and Constitutional prohibition of alcoholic beverages was instigated, meaning ND joined the union as a dry state, explaining Mr. Pierce's comments about the institutions (saloons) being in existence for only 10 years – from Sheldon's founding until statehood in 1889. It wasn't until 1932 that the prohibition clause of the state Constitution was repealed by the electorate and in 1936 the sale of liquor was again legalized, this time by referendum.

Check the following website of the State Historical Society of ND for more information on ND history. [www.nd.gov/hist/chrono.htm#1889](http://www.nd.gov/hist/chrono.htm#1889)

Watch for more history next week!