

Oldest Artifact

During this activity your students will learn about the Rebecca Goodwin Bonnet which is the oldest preserved artifact at the Siouxland Heritage Museum. Each student will research their family's oldest known artifact and document its history.

Rebecca Jane Howard Goodwin Bryant was the first white woman in the early settlement of Sioux Falls. She and her husband came to the area on May 22, 1858 when Sioux Falls was a true frontier outpost. They left Sioux Falls on April 25, 1859. During their eleven-month stay, the Goodwins participated in the building of Fort Sod. Mrs. Goodwin made the Fort's first flag.



Courtesy Siouxland Heritage Museums

After leaving Sioux Falls, the Goodwins moved to California. Their first and only child, a girl, was born in 1863 - shortly before the Goodwins divorced. Reportedly afraid that Mr. Goodwin would take the child away, Rebecca moved with her six-week old daughter to Carson City, Nevada. She established herself there and operated a boarding house. She also married E.G. Bryant and bore another daughter.

Rebecca Goodwin Bryant's bonnet, shown above, is at the Siouxland Heritage Museum; the bonnet is the earliest preserved artifact of Sioux Falls history and the oldest item in the Siouxland Heritage Museum. Rebecca Goodwin Bryant's written account of her time in Sioux Falls and the story of the bonnet she bought from a Native woman is found at the following [website](#).

Process:

Activity

- Introduce the activity by showing the information about the Rebecca Goodwin Bonnet on the following [website](#).
- Read the article and discuss the importance of preserving artifacts and history.
- Each student should research their own family's oldest artifact. (Will require out of school time)
- The students should design a poster (or PowerPoint presentation) that has a photo of the artifact. They should also document the following information.
 - Describe the history of the item
 - Include the approximate age of the item
 - Describe how the family acquired the item
 - More
- [Antiques Roadshow: Teacher's Guide](#) – Study of material culture (objects and artifacts)