The history of Black Hills State University as a public educational institution begins with an act passed by the Dakota Territorial Legislature in 1881 and a provisional appropriation of building funds in 1883: If Spearfish and surrounding communities could obtain at least forty acres of land and hand over the deed to the Territorial government, the legislature would fund the construction of a school, "the exclusive purpose of which (would) be the instruction of persons both male and female in the art of teaching and in all the various branches that pertain to a good common school education."

The name of the institution has changed many times over the years and at times it has had more than one name:

- 1883 - Dakota Territorial Normal School
- 1885-1922 - Spearfish Normal ("Dakota Normal" and "State Normal")
- 1941 - Black Hills Teachers College
- 1964 - Black Hills State College
- 1989 - Black Hills State University
Film shot in 1913 shows students and faculty marching out and lining up in front of the main campus buildings of the time.

**Known Facts about the Film:**

(Left) Fayette L. Cook, President of Spearfish Normal from 1885 - 1919 is easily identified in the 1913 film.

(Right) President Cook in 1916. Cook served as President Emeritus from 1919 until his death in 1922.

**Viewing Formats:**
- Digital Learning Library
- YouTube
- Watch PBS
(Left) The Normal School administration building is one of the buildings seen in the 1913 film.

(Below) On January 13, 1925, a fire destroyed the old administration building.

(Below) What remained of the building was demolished.

(Left) The stone doorway is all that remains of the old Spearfish Normal School administration building.

The portico was preserved and moved to a spot near the BHSU track.

Twenty-Eighth Annual Catalog of the State Normal School: Spearfish, SD, 1913-14
Activity: Narration Exercise

The 1913 film introduces many interesting questions; why were the elementary students, the student teachers that were teaching the elementary students and the faculty gathered in front of the school? Why was the camera focused above the adults (concentrating on the building) during the first part of the film? There were sawhorses in front of the building; was this a dedication, the first day of school or an open house? There are many unanswered questions that will probably never be answered.

This historical film lacks a component which is necessary for the true account of this event; there is no narration, script or description available. To reinforce the importance of the written account of history, the students will develop a fictitious narration for the film or a section of the film.

Process:

- The class should view the Black Hills State University: 1913 video.
- Discuss the known history of the video and the importance of written history, whether it is recording the contents/date on a photo, cataloging a family video or writing a description of a historical video.
- Place students in groups of 4.
- Each group should have a computer to view the video.
- The students should write a timed, fictitious narration for the video. (SDPB Specials: Many documentaries are available at this site with example narrations and interviews.)
- Creativity should be encouraged. (Music, research the event, etc.)
- Each group should read their narration to the entire class with the video playing on a large screen.
- NOTE: The narrations completed by each group should be clearly marked fictitious and reference this activity.