

The focus of this contest is to allow the community to tell their stories, share their individual histories, and share with our visitors why everyday places in our region become much more through memory. The contest's purpose is also to make people aware of historic places and events and to help preserve them. We hope to make people aware that we are all historians and have an impact on the historic record in the way we remember and tell of people, places, and happenings. "Meaningful Places" is intended as a fun way for the community, and especially a younger generation, to make a deeper connection to the museum in this digital age.

Secondary to this contest exhibit, the museums decided that collecting the stories and their accompanying photos and videos would be relevant to help capture a moment in the community in 2010. This collection of entries would come from a wider perspective than just museum staff and would support our mission to, "enhance the experience of learning for our community, its families and visitors through collection, preservation, and interpretation of history." In no way was this contest thought up to be an, "image rights grab."

Why do we ask for the rights of your submitted images? This is our policy for any photograph or artifact accessioned into the museums' collection. Our purpose is not to take away your rights, but to protect ourselves in the future from lawsuits. As with any donation to the museum, the artifact or object becomes legally ours through a deed of gift. This legal document allows us to protect our collection and also ethically obligates us to care for each object in perpetuity. The legal wording for this contest comes from our deed of gift contract, and therefore applies similarly to any object, artifact, or photograph collected by the museums.

Why do we need the rights to your image? In accepting an image into our collection, we need the ability to be able to use it in the future. We follow the accepted standards of the American Association of Museums, an internationally-respected organization that sets museum ethics policies and collection management standards, which advise against accepting pieces into museum collections that have restrictions. Just as we will not accept an artifact into our collection with a condition that it must remain on exhibit or can only be used in a certain context, we cannot accept images with stipulations, either. For example, we may want to use the image in an exhibit 50 years from now. Finding the original author of such image to receive permission to use it in the exhibit, and repeating this process for the over 50,000 images in our collection becomes impractical, if not impossible. We also pride ourselves in being an accessible research facility, and having the rights to an image allows us to make it available to researchers who will be looking for as yet unknown subjects in the future.

Although the image becomes part of the Siouxland Heritage Museums' photo collection, your name will remain associated with the image. Each and every object in the collection has a file which includes the donor (photographer), how the object came to be at the museum, and the history of the object.