

Questers: partners in preservation

We owe a big thank you to the Rushmore Memories Chapter 1147 of Questers International. The chapter applied for a grant to restore two small stained glass windows in the Valentine McGillicuddy house. Rushmore Memories was awarded the grant and the windows were restored by Commercial Doors & Specialties.

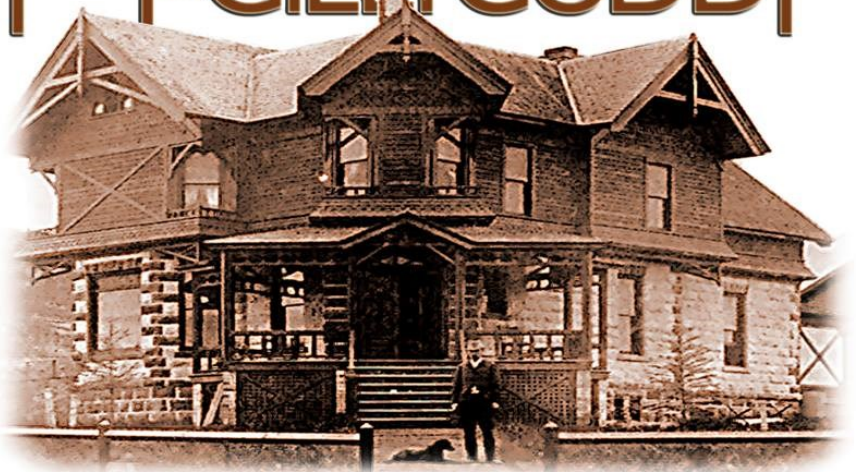
Questers was founded in 1944, when Elizabeth "Bess" Bardens bought a blue syrup pitcher at an antiques store and placed it on her office desk. Intrigued by the interest in the pitcher and its history, she formed a discussion group, which became the first Questers chapter. It was a place where members could learn about collections.

Chapters meet once a month, usually from September to May. Each meeting's focus is on a collection, historic story or historic site, often presented by a Quester member, local collector or other expert. Each state has a board of directors, and a state convention is held once a year.

All chapters are part of the Questers International organization. A yearly Quester International Convention enhances the experience for members with tours and speakers. The popular tours highlight the convention host city's unique history and historical sites, along with emphasis on local Quester preservation and restoration projects. Today there are chapters in 41 states and 2 provinces.

Questers donate funds to the preservation and restoration of artifacts, existing memorials, historic buildings, landmarks, and educational purposes. Its projects help preserve historical buildings, sites and artifacts for the benefit of the local and global community.

VALENTINE MCGILLYCUDDY



The home. The man. The life.

A Rapid City Cultural & Historic Preservation Project

February 2021

A first-hand account

As a child, Clara Bangs Lobdell lived in the house with her grandparents in 1917. This is Part I of her account.

My grandparents, William "Billy" Hall, and his wife, Anna, rented the house from 1902, (when) the doctor left Rapid City, until my grandmother died in 1919.

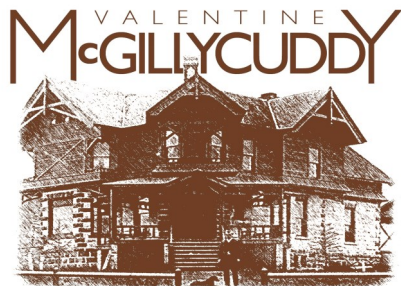
(Dr. McGillicuddy) and my grandfather, who started as a carpenter and became a builder and contractor, were very good friends.

The house was set diagonally on the corner of Eight and South Streets, and when built it was probably close to the edge of town. It was set up on a high foundation, but there was not a full excavation, only a furnace room, I think, but I was never in that area.

When you entered the front door, there was an entryway, and I think a closet, then a short hallway to the foot of the stairs. The stairs were sort of curving, and had a window facing Eighth Street. This window had nine panes, all of them of stained glass except for the center, which was clear or frosted. The window sill was very wide, because of the stone walls, and my cousin Fran and I would climb on the window sill and look through different colored panes and tell each other, "I see a blue man," or red or whatever.

Downstairs, after passing the foot of the stairs, one came into the "living
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A Restoration Project of Historic Rapid City Inc.

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Historic Rapid City Inc. is a 501(c)3 corporation. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

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If you would like to give stock or other securities to the project, contact Michelle Sterkel or Sandra Shaw at RBC Wealth Management. They can explain the best way to do that. The telephone number is 605-343-7720. Donations are tax deductible, and the capital gains are not taxable.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Protecting the past in uncertain times

The covid pandemic has changed the world as we know it, possibly forever. We will eventually get back to some kind of normal, but it will be a different normal.

I think of old TV shows like *Mayberry* and I long for those days. Graduations, family events, weddings and, yes, funerals, where we could hug, shake hands and even kiss the people we love are no longer safe.

Historic Rapid City lost a dear friend, Brian Fisher. Brian was the DJ for our annual Valentines Dance for about the last five years. I spoke with him right before he went into the hospital. We discussed having to cancel the dance in 2021. He was disappointed, but he understood. We talked about an open house with an ice cream social at the end of the summer. We ended the call with promises to meet for coffee when it was safe ...

Brian loved Rapid City and its history. We miss him terribly.

Work on the house has come to an almost complete stop. We have taken baby steps in an effort to move forward and stay safe.

The two small windows in the stairwell on the west side of the house have been restored. Thanks to a grant from the Questers International, we hired Commercial Doors & Specialties for this restoration. It is the same company that recreated the front doors.

The color and number of stained-glass panes were taken

from a story written by Clara Bangs. After Valentine McGillicuddy moved to California in 1902, he rented the house to Clara's grandparents. They lived in the house from 1902 to 1919.

In 1917, when Clara was a child, she and her mother stayed in the house for about six weeks. She later wrote a description of the house as she walked through it in her memory. This account has and will be invaluable to the restoration in other parts of the house.

Her story was given to us by her daughter, Gayle Opie, who also gave us a number of items that were in the house. In a future newsletter, Gayle will talk about how these items came into her possession. We are pleased and grateful for the return of these items to the McGillicuddy house.

In lieu of our annual Valentine's Dance, we are putting together an online auction. We will keep you informed as to when that will happen per social media, the newspaper and the television. We also will watch how the vaccine is doing and will possibly hold our Ice Cream Social/Open House and the end of summer.

Jean Oleson Kessloff
President
Historic Rapid City



This photo shows a burial crew from the U.S.S. Unalga, which had been dispatched in 1919 to help the flu victims along Alaska's coast. We can't be certain, but the man at the center, in the vest could be Valentine McGillicuddy.

At 70, McGillicuddy aided Alaska flu victims

There's a chapter in Valentine McGillicuddy's life that hasn't had a lot of attention. But the story deserves a retelling, especially in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic. In 1919, during the Spanish Flu pandemic, Dr. McGillicuddy traveled the Alaskan coast with a Public Health Service team to aid the villages devastated by the disease.

The deadly virus, which turned up at Fort Riley, Kan., in March 1918, killed as many as 50 million people worldwide.

By 1919, McGillicuddy was 70 years old, an age when most people

are comfortably retired. However, he wanted to serve his country in any way possible. The previous year, the Public Health Service sent the doctor to help bring the influenza outbreak under control in mining districts of California and Utah.

The pandemic was slower to arrive in Alaska, but it did arrive. In April 1919, the Public Health Service again called on Dr. McGillicuddy. He sailed aboard the USS Marblehead with a contingent of surgeons and nurses to visit the Aluet villages hit hard by the pandemic.

The team found whole villages wiped out by influenza, with the

corpses of the dead in cabins and along trails. Many who perished froze to death because they were too weak to chop firewood.

About 50 miles inland, in a village called Igarochauk, they encountered no living people. Instead, they met packs of starving dogs. After chasing off the animals, the team went searching for survivors and burying the dead.

According to "McGillicuddy: Agent," a biography by Julia B. McGillicuddy, Valentine's second wife, one encounter was especially chilling. Entering a cabin alone, Dr. McGillicuddy could hear the sound of nibbling, gnawing and chewing.

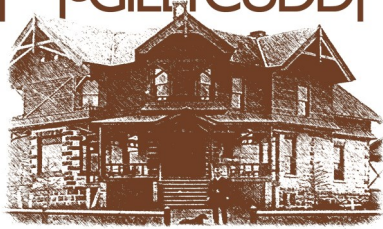
"He opened the door and discovered, on the floor, the body of a man, his head in the paws of a huge Malamute dog. Disturbed in its feast, the animal sprang at the intruder and set his teeth in McGillicuddy's left hand. With his right hand the Doctor grabbed the infuriated beast by the throat and shouted for help. The coastguardsman standing outside rushed in. A shot sprawled the snarling animal on the floor. His bloody jaws relaxed their hold on the Doctor's hand."

After two months in the north, McGillicuddy returned to San Francisco aboard the Marblehead.



USS Unalga underway in an Alaska ice field in 1919. (NOAA Photos)

VALENTINE McGILLYCUDDY



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1015 12th Street
Rapid City SD 57701

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room.” That was sort of the center of the downstairs. To the west was the dining room. There was a big double sliding door between the living and the dining rooms.

From the dining room, one went thru a butler’s pantry which had at least one swinging door which would whack anyone (who was) on the wrong side when someone else came thru. There was no glass in those doors, I guess. The butler’s pantry had glass doored cabinets for storing china, and I

suppose drawers for (linens) and silvers. I guess there was only one swinging door, next to the kitchen, because there were “portieres” of strings of bamboo sections, small and about one or one and a half inches long. These were strung in a pattern with colored glass beads, and (they) fascinated little kids who liked to handle and twist the strands, which of course broke often.

There was a bowl in one of the cabinets where dropped beads were kept, but no one ever repaired them as far as I know.

A sincere thank-you to those who have helped

We want to thank the many people, organizations and companies that have supported and continue to support our work. The list includes:

- **Rapid City Self Storage**
- **Kieffer Sanitation**
- **Hamilton’s Concrete & Landscape**
- **The Questers**
- **Elizabeth Gianturco**
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Just tear this out, fill it out and send it in. You can help us in a number of ways, from pulling nails to writing a check to simply letting the community know you understand and support this important historic preservation project.

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