

A Campus Walk with Rabbit



Written by Evelyn Schlenker

Illustrations by Rebecca Gehm

A Walk on Campus with Rabbit



Old Main

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On a lovely early Spring day in Vermillion, South Dakota, Dr. Scott, a retired University of South Dakota (USD) professor, was walking his dog, Rabbit. The dog never did get a rabbit, but the name stuck.

As they passed Founders Park, he heard a familiar voice.

“Where are you going, Dr. Scott?” It was his young friend, Henry! He and his twin sister, Alexa, were playing with a ball.



Rabbit's taking me on a walk through the oldest section of USD Campus. Want to come with us?"

Alexa wanted to keep practicing, but Henry, always the curious one, already ran to ask his mom's permission!

A few minutes later, the group walked toward the south entrance to the campus along Yale Street. Looking at a large stone building in front of them Henry inquired, "Why does the National Music Museum say 'Library' on top?"



“The building was the campus library for almost 60 years!” Dr. Scott replied. “ Then it became a museum and art gallery.

It housed the W. H. Over Museum and the Oscar Howe gallery for 20 years. Afterwards, the music museum occupied the entire building. The National Music Museum has instruments from all different places and times! World class!” Henry repeated, “World class!”



Bored, Alexa had already run ahead. “Watch how far I can throw!” She wound up and threw the ball in a high arc toward a grassy lawn. Rabbit tried to chase after a squirrel, but luckily, he was on a leash.

When they caught up, Henry inquired about the large stone on the lawn with a metal plaque on top.

Dr. Scott mentioned, “ The plaque states that this is where the original “Science Hall” built in 1902 was located. A new Science Hall built in 1961, now called the Akeley-Lawrence Science Center, is on the west side of campus.”



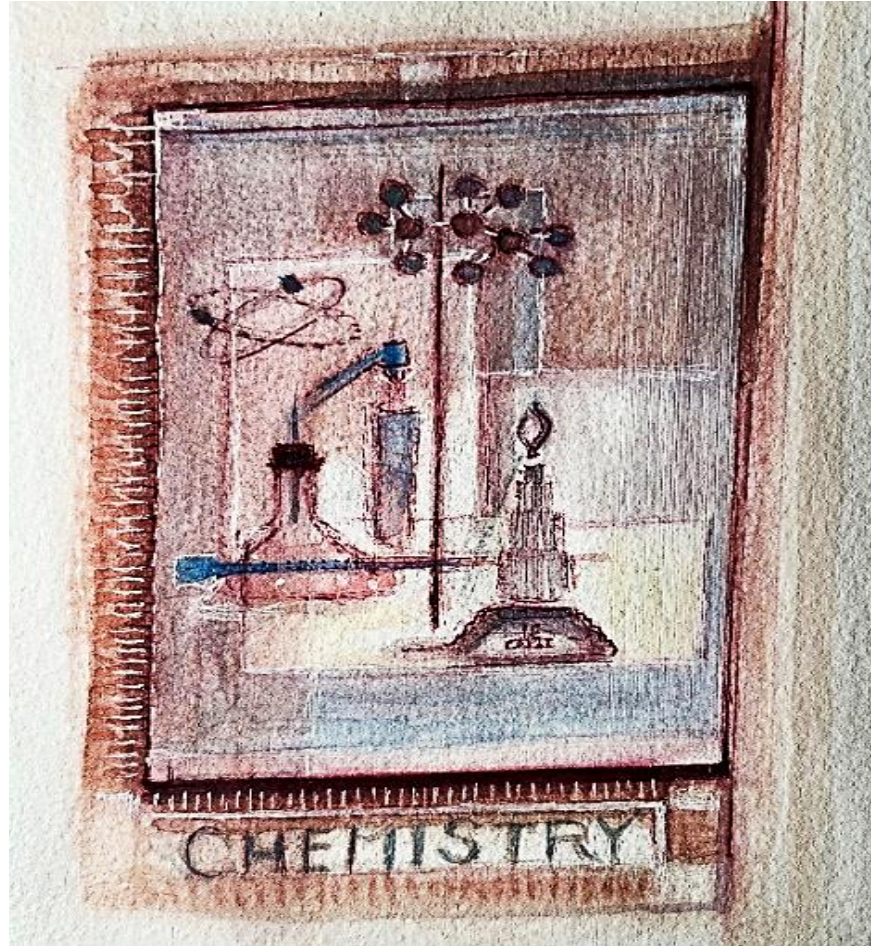
Rabbit at the stone with the chemistry building in the background.

“Hey, look!” said Henry, pointing at a nearby brick building. “It says ‘Chemistry’! My cousin studies in the lab there! When we visited, we could watch, but weren’t allowed to touch anything.”

Dr. Scott mentioned, “The old building caught fire in 1957. There was a lot of damage, including to the front window. A replacement for the window is the mural made of little tiles.”

“Is that an atom on the mural?” asked Henry.

Dr. Scott replied, “That’s right! There also is a Bunsen burner and the molecules that make up propane, a gas used to heat houses. The building is now called Pardee-Estee Laboratories after two well-known USD chemistry professors.”



The tile mural.

Alexa kicked the ball around a garden located in front of the Chemistry building.

The metal arch at the entrance said, "Shakespeare Garden". Alexa started dribbling near a statue at the back of the garden and said, "Who is this?"

"That's William Shakespeare, a famous writer", answered Henry.

"The original plan was that every plant in the garden be one mentioned in something Shakespeare wrote. However, over time plans for the gardens changed." added Dr. Scott.



Henry pointed to the building near the chemistry building. “Is that a church?”

“That’s Danforth Chapel,” Dr. Scott responded. “A place for worship, meditation, or just peace of mind. They also hold weddings and funerals there.”



The Danforth Chapel

After a friendly fellow let the kids into the building, they were bathed in shining, bright and geometric patterns as the colored sunlight danced across the room through the many stained-glass windows.

Even Alexa stopped for a minute and said, “Wow!”



Rabbit, not interested, pulled Dr. Scott away toward a large planter in front of the next building. The kids ran to catch up. “Is that a military fort, or maybe a castle?” Henry asked.

“Close. That building was called the old Armory, originally used for gun storage and Military Science. It had a gym on the first floor and a basketball court on top. Now it’s an office building called Belbas Center.”



Belbas Center.

Alexa pointed ahead at a beautiful large Sioux Falls quartz building with white towers. “Look at that amazing building over there. It says, ‘Old Main’. Is it the oldest building on campus?”



“Almost. The first “Old Main” was built in 1883 and burned down in 1893. The building we see was rebuilt. In the late 1960’s it was not used very much. Became too dangerous.”

Alexa asked, “Do you remember when the new building was built?”

Dr. Scott laughed heartily, “Not quite, but I do remember our community came together in the 1990’s to save the condemned building. We pulled it off because so many wanted to save it! Inside are offices, classrooms, and the Oscar Howe gallery. Oscar Howe was a world renowned Native American artist and university faculty member.”

Rabbit tried to climb the stairs to the entrance, but Dr. Scott steered him away.



Dr. Scott and Henry at the entrance to Old Main.

Continuing the walk, Dr. Scott pointed to a smiling bronze statue. Alexa kicked the ball, pretending to pass it to the statue. She read what was on a plaque “Doc Farber” and asked, “Was he a medical doctor?”

“Nope”, Dr Scott replied. “He was a long-time faculty member here, an excellent teacher, mentor, scholar, and organizer who taught at the building in front of us - Dakota Hall.” Rabbit was pulling hard on his leash to get Dr. Scott’s attention.

Alexa posed next to Doc Farber proudly, and Henry followed, also copying Dr. Farber's confident stance.



Alexa and Henry with the Doc Farber statue.

Suddenly, Rabbit seized the moment and took off after a bunny! It darted under the bushes next to East Hall. Rabbit scurried after it, with Alexa and Henry scampering behind. The dog sniffed and rustled all around but gave up by the time they reached him.

Henry returned the leash to Dr. Scott. "What an interesting tower up there! I bet this building is the oldest."

"You're right!" Exclaimed Dr. Scott, catching his breath. "The building was constructed in 1887 by Wallace Dow, the same architect who designed both Old Mains.

East Hall was a women's dormitory and now houses a few departments such as history, philosophy, and Native American studies."



Rabbit going after a bunny near East Hall.

Continuing to walk south, Henry pointed to a four columned white limestone building that had a sign “College of Law”.

Dr. Scott said, “This building was built in 1908 for the Law School that started in 1901. Next to it was the McKusick Law Library, built much later.

Now the big limestone building is home to the College of Arts and Sciences. The McKusick building houses the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders or the study of hearing and speech problems.”

Henry chimed in “ My grandpa went to this building. He has bad hearing problems. Grandma was getting sick of having to speak louder or him ignoring her. Now he has hearing aids. Big improvement all around!”



McKusick and Arts and Sciences.

Alexa and Rabbit were ready to get going. The group was now on Clark Street, passing by a beautiful entrance to Slagle Hall, the administration building.



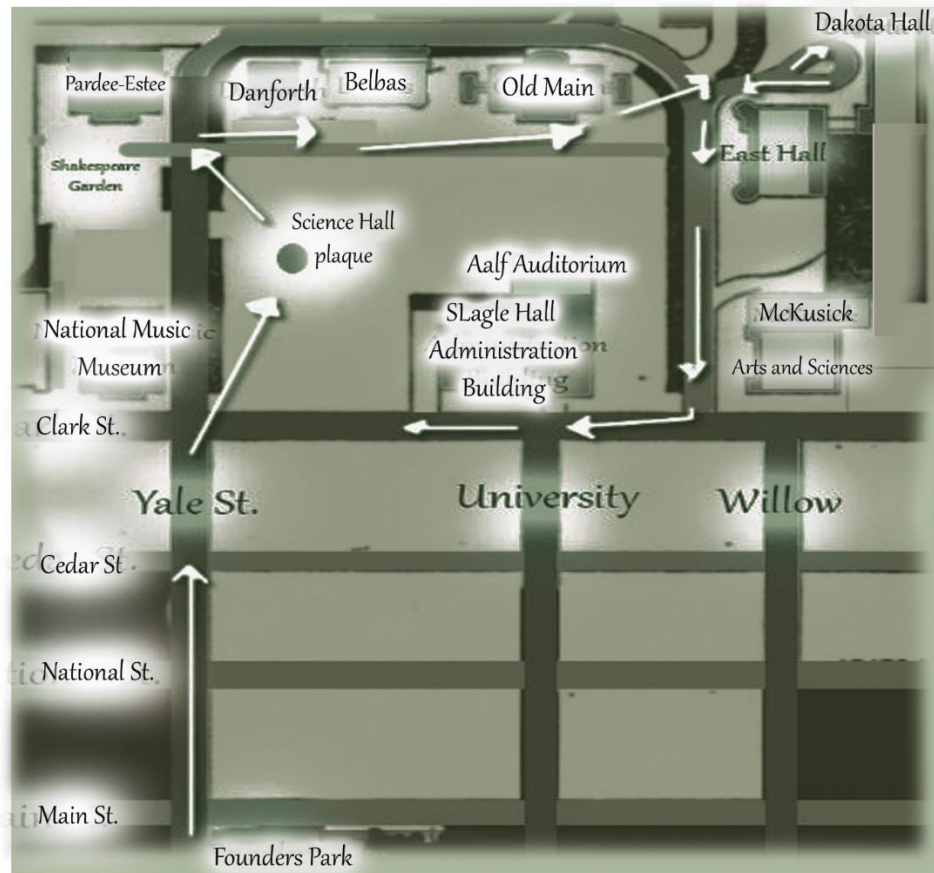
Slagle Hall.

As the group reached Yale Street, Dr. Scott remarked, “As you see, the historic buildings on campus served several purposes over the years. It’s great that they are preserved.”

Henry agreed, “I had no idea about these buildings. It was interesting to see how the bricks and stones were used to build them. When I get home, I’ll tell our parents what we saw!” “World class!” exclaimed Alexa.



A map showing the route Dr. Scott, Alexa, Henry, and Rabbit took to and around the University of South Dakota campus.





Rabbit.

The activity that is the subject of this book has been financed with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

Preparation, printing, and distribution of this Clay County Historic Preservation Commission publication have been partially funded with federal funds from the National Park Service Department of the Interior through the South Dakota Historic Preservation Office. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, the U. S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, or handicap in its federally assisted programs. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 367127, Washington, D.C. 20003-7127.

Published by Pressing Matters, 2024