

NEWS from the Center for Heritage Renewal

North Dakota State University

SUBJECT: Ringling Bros. Circus Monument

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The Ringling Bros. Circus Monument, located just south of Wahpeton, is featured in an authoritative website documenting historical monuments of the northern plains.

The circus monument is a stone replica of the center tent pole struck by lightning on June 10, 1897, while Ringling laborers were erecting the tent. Two of the workers, Charles Smith and Charles Walters, were killed by the falling pole. Their lodge brothers and fellow workers took up a collection to have the two men buried in Riverside Cemetery (also known as the Bohemian Cemetery). They also provided for the monument that stands yet today – and remains an object of pilgrimage by traveling circus workers.

Remembrance in Stone is the title of the website (URL = heritagerenewal.org/stone) established by North Dakota State University's Center for Heritage Renewal. A guide to historical monuments on the northern plains, *Remembrance in Stone* is intended both to showcase the research of NDSU History students and to provide information to heritage tourists in the region. Web pages feature individual historical monuments, providing location (including coordinates), historical background, photographs, and video clips.

“There are lots of Internet guides for travelers out there,” remarks Professor Tom Isern, director of the center. “The difference with ours is, we do the documentary and field research to make our features authoritative. And this circus monument in Wahpeton, it’s just a great human interest story.”

(For photos of the monument, download from the website. Please credit NDSU Center for Heritage Renewal.)

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