

Rivers and Plains



Papers of the Fortieth Annual DAKOTA CONFERENCE

A National Conference on the Northern Plains

Compiled by Lori Bunjer, Harry F. Thompson, and Arthur R. Huseboe



The Center for Western Studies

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DAKOTA CONFERENCE

A National Conference on the Northern Plains

“Rivers and Plains”

Augustana College
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

April 25-26, 2008

Compiled by
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PREFACE

Entitled "Rivers and Plains," the Fortieth Annual Dakota Conference examined the varied historical and literary responses to river transportation and related issues on the Northern Plains. Held April 24-25, 2008, this was the second in a series on transportation, following the 2007 conference on railroads.

The Annual Dakota Conference: A National Conference on the Northern Plains is dedicated to examining contemporary issues in their historical and cultural contexts. It is a signature event of the Center for Western Studies, which provides programming in Northern Plains studies at Augustana College.

Travel on the Northern Plains by river allowed for communication and trade among villagers, such as the Oneota at Blood Run on the Big Sioux River, the Sioux on the lower Missouri River, and the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara on the upper Missouri River. Canoes and bullboats, technologies favored by indigenous peoples, gave way to the keelboats, mackinaws, pirogues, and steamboats used by Euramericans. Steamboat transportation on the Missouri River is largely responsible for the rise of mixed-blood societies identified by Dr. Herbert T. Hoover in *A New South Dakota History* as Missouri Valley Culture.

Thanks, especially, to featured humanities scholars Allison Hedge Coke, University of Nebraska at Kearney, and L. E. Bradley and Brian L. Molyneaux, both of the University of South Dakota. We are pleased to acknowledge the continued support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and additional support from Loren and Mavis Amundson, Tom and Elaine McIntosh, Richard and Michelle Van Demark, Mellon Fund Committee of Augustana College, Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission, and other donors. Thanks to each presenter and session chair, whose dedication to research and writing makes this conference possible. Please note that not all papers presented at the conference were submitted for inclusion here.

Harry F. Thompson, Ph.D.
Dakota Conference Director
The Center for Western Studies

JOHN EDMUND COLTON
Founder of Colton

Loren H. Amundson

John Edmund Colton was a seventh generation descendant of progenitor George Colton, who emigrated from England to Longmeadow, Massachusetts, in 1644. John's parents, Melzar and Melvina Colton, settled in Wisconsin. Both were teachers and his father also farmed. John was born in 1857. After receiving a teaching certificate in 1875, he taught for three years in Iowa. In April 1878 he chose to seek his fortune as a homesteader in Dakota Territory, and stopped at the end of the trail some 20 miles northwest of Sioux Falls City in Minnehaha County and filed a pre-emption claim to 160 acres of land on the NW ¼ in Sec 23. After he built an 8'x10' shanty, broke 20 acres of sod and spent ninety days on the property, as required by law, he returned to southern Wisconsin where he married Paulina J. Miller that November 28 in Rock County. The newlyweds returned to the area in March of 1879 and established their homestead on NE ¼ of Sec 27 and a timber claim homestead on SE ¼ Sec 27. Here they built a 16'x24' one room shanty, a barn and dug a well, all before son Charles M. was born in October. During the ensuing years, Melzer Glenn 1883, Frederick 1884, Ethel 1887, Ruth 1889, Hattie 1891, Aura 1894, Helen 1897 and Esther 1900, would be born.

Several of John Colton's siblings soon followed them to the area: brother William O. and his wife, Ellen; sister Mary; sister Melvina and her husband, F.E. Tobie. All were trained teachers who taught in the school system as it developed. The first school district was organized in 1879 with J.E. Colton elected president; he also served as supervisor for many years and for two terms as Minnehaha County Superintendent 1882-86. While superintendent, J.E. edited and published *The Minnehaha Teacher* for school personnel and patrons throughout the county. School was first taught in the fall of 1880 in a sod house on NW ¼ Sec 26 owned by homesteader Andrew Nelson, with Ellen Colton an early teacher. The first frame school house was built in 1884 some three blocks northwest of the sod house in "Original Colton." This sod house on the homestead was later purchased by Paulina Colton's father, and was located in the same block in "Newtown Colton" where a second and larger frame building was constructed in 1904 for District 62. Some high school subjects were taught in 1904-05 and a two year high school was established in 1907 but discontinued in 1909 for a few years due to lack of students. Seven students later became the charter high school graduating class in 1917. This frame building continued in use until a new brick school, also built on the same block, greeted students for the first time on Veterans Day of 1924 and operated throughout the history of Colton High School. The creation of Tri-Valley High School by Colton,

Lyons and Crooks in 1967 opened to a new rural school complex between Colton and Lyons, leading to gradual reduction in usage of the venerable building in Colton until it fell into disuse at the end of the century and finally planned for the wrecking bar in 2008.

Early in 1897 the Taopi Creamery Company was incorporated by J.E. Colton and seven other new area farmers and a building was soon constructed, fully equipped and opened for business June 16 on the J.E. Colton homestead at the northeast corner of Sec 27. To further accommodate the new business climate, then U.S. Senator R.F. Pettigrew assured J.E. Colton that he would look into the establishment of a post office for the budding community. The post office was named for Mr. Colton, through Pettigrew's efforts, and opened July 16 on the Colton homestead south of the creamery. Mail was first delivered from Sioux Falls.

J.E. and his wife Paulina platted a tract of land on their homestead in Sections 26 and 27 into blocks, lots, streets and alleys on January 18, 1899. The Plat of Colton, Minnehaha County, South Dakota dated January 25, 1899 was certified and recorded on the same day at the Minnehaha County Register of Deeds, thus the original village of Colton became a legal entity on that day. Pettigrew's influence assured that the hamlet would be named Colton. Colton's First Addition was also platted in 1899 and included street names and numbers. By year end there were already two stores and a blacksmith, and was putting on the appearance of a lively little village.

The Colton phone company was incorporated in 1901 with J.E. Colton as president until 1904 to lead its direction, aided by six other citizen board members. Throughout the 60 years the company grew from 17 customers to 450 patrons, and never missed paying a dividend. The Hartman Telephone Co. some ten miles southwest of Colton began in 1904 and was purchased by Colton in 1922. It was sold to the Sioux Valley Telephone Company in 1961, which still serves Colton citizens.

Also in 1901 J.E. Colton, ever mindful of communication as a means of selling his namesake community to the area, started a local newspaper. Three different people operated the paper until 1908 when he enlisted A.P. Amundson, also known as the "Boy Orator of Skunk Creek," to assume ownership and become editor and publisher of the Colton Courier, serving the community with weekly news and happenings until his retirement in 1949.

To assure medical care for Colton, J.E. recruited Dr. Peter Donald Bliss, a native of Renner, and member of a Norwegian family from Wisconsin that homesteaded in Dakota Territory in the 1870s. Peter received his medical education in St. Louis and came to Colton in 1900. It was an established fact that part of the reason he was recruited was that he spoke Norwegian; the language barrier was broken which

endeared him to Scandinavian patients and made him an instant success in his practice. By 1902 he had started a "town team" baseball squad and served as manager. He married a local lady, Rena Huntimer, and spent his career caring for and about Colton and area patients until death intervened in 1930 from diabetes. His wife Rena died in 1920, from influenza according to some family records, and in 1921 P.D. married his nurse, Mollie Berg. "PD" set high standards for future Colton health care, and were met by all physicians who followed him in medical practice throughout the twentieth century.

Regarding transportation needs, before Colton was founded at the end of the century, discussions had started about the need for a farm-to-market railroad. J.E. Colton and his friend Paul F. Sherman of Sioux Falls spearheaded a movement to build a new railroad from Colton to Madison. Incorporation started in 1902, continued as the year progressed and two years later, in April 1904, a third company was formed. Stockholders purchased shares and the South Dakota Land Company began laying track out of Sioux Falls in May 1904. The original intent was to build the South Dakota Central Railroad to Madison, a distance of 50 miles, and sell it to a large company for a profit. Twenty miles of rail were laid north out of Sioux Falls from Eighth Street on its way through future hamlets of Crooks and Lyons and across Skunk Creek into Burk Township where the grade steepened on its climb into Colton, reaching there before snow fell that November. A two story depot was built in Colton early in 1905 and a SDCRR excursion train, filled with Sioux Falls dignitaries, steamed into Colton on its maiden trip to mile 21 that summer, then the end of the line. Their hopes of extending the line to Madison were shattered when The Milwaukee Road, having decided that the SDC was coming, made an offer to Madison to build a railroad to Sioux Falls. This maneuver and action by the new competitor destroyed any hope the young railroad might have had to make a quick sale to a large company. As a result the forthcoming competition, SDCRR had changed plans earlier and headed north into Chester and on to Wentworth with Watertown as its eventual destination. The line reached Watertown by the end of 1907. Controversy arose later between J.E. Colton and President Paul Sherman, much of it due to a lasting disagreement between the two former corporation friends regarding the Farmer's Elevator site in Colton and location of a needed replacement stock yard for the SDC there. In the interest of harmony between these two stockholders Colton sold his SDCRR share to Fred Maytag. Railroad services were continued as the Great Northern line operated the line in receivership and discontinued freight and passenger service from Watertown to Wentworth in 1950. In 1980 The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad [BNSF] took over the Milwaukee Road line from Madison to Wentworth and the South Dakota Central line from Wentworth south through Colton to Sioux Falls.

Railroad services continue moving farm products to market from Madison to Sioux Falls today, thanks to the fortitude of J.E. Colton and other railroad pioneers and their successors!

Growth years continued until 1910 as the railroads [South Dakota Central and Milwaukee Road] changed the horizon. J.E. Colton's vision of a complete community was ushered in by organization of the Farmers Elevator in 1906. About the same time two lumber companies were located on the SDCRR line. J.E. Colton's close friend, Eurby Lifo, started the first livery business on the SDCRR railroad right of way in 1906-07 and later operated the Standard Oil bulk business until his death in 1929. A mill, erected in 1905 near the new railroad station, would become the home of Colton's automobile, The Western Flyer, built here for a short time. C.N. Peterson established the Colton Savings Bank; his career probably had more effect on the community than any other but J.E. Colton. C.N. Peterson's son, Clarence, who married Ruth Colton, joined his father in banking. They were the parents of late Marian Graff and her sister, Phyllis Schock, both of our community.

Three churches were built in Colton during this time: Methodist 1906, Baptist and Zion Lutheran in 1907. Among other businesses that location by 1907 were: Nelson and Sisson "Palace" meat market, Mork and Hagen shoe shop [where Opland later operated his shoe shop], Ole Stamm hardware, Langness and Johnson pharmacists, H.D. Seastrand watches, clocks and jewelry, Charles Erbe flour and seed, and the Colton Planing mill [Robert Lodmell with J.E. Colton a silent partner]. By 1910 Berdahl Implement was open as was the elevator on the Milwaukee road east of the new downtown.

But it would be the school that altered the last years of life for J.E. Colton. In 1909 Colton had discontinued the two year high school due to small classes. That fall J.E. Colton and Paulina, staunch supporters of education, rented a home in Mitchell and enrolled all of their daughters in Dakota Wesleyan [high school]. Mr. Colton would die there on December 17, 1910 at the age of 53 years. Paulina and children returned to Colton and youngest daughter, Esther, became one of seven members of Colton's first high school graduating class in 1917.

The population of Colton had grown to about 700 citizens by 1910 [nearly the same size now a century later]. Supplied by power from a small plant on the railroad right of way, owned by Gotfred Aga and Clifford Hall, electric lights came to Colton with the first light bulb lit in the post office just before Christmas that year. J.E. Colton would have loved to see the lights.

The J.E. Colton family had come full circle in the community that they had founded, loved and served throughout most of their lifetimes. Many of them are buried in the Colton Family Lot in Colton Cemetery. God Bless their memories.

SOUTH DAKOTA'S FIRST PRESIDENTIAL VISITOR

Grant K. Anderson

Foreign policy affairs concerned Republican President William McKinley as 1899 dawned. Americans were divided on questions of imperialism and the annexation of the Philippine Islands in the wake of the Spanish American War. A disciple of the power of public opinion, the Chief Executive endeavored to gauge it first hand. His elaborate train excursion crisscrossed nine Midwestern states over a two week period of October 1899. McKinley made "...frequent use of his lungs and general forces addressing the people" approximately 110 times.¹ A few of these were in South Dakota where he used his "...admirable gift of making brief, pointed, suggestive speeches" to constituents.² Large turnouts were common, for William McKinley was the first sitting President to visit South Dakota. He will "feel that he is on home ground and among particular friends," predicted a state journalist on learning of the trip.³

The President undoubtedly questioned the comment. Republicans had dominated politics since early settlement days, yet McKinley lost the 1896 South Dakota Presidential election by 183 votes. Governor Andrew Lee, a Fusionist, (Democrat-Populist), had strongly supported the President's call for troops at the outbreak of the Spanish American War. The First South Dakota Volunteers, a 1000 member National Guard unit, deployed to the Philippines late in 1898.⁴ When they remained there after the peace treaty was ratified to battle Filipino insurgents who sought home rule, Governor Lee wrote the commander in chief demanding his troops be sent home as he claimed their enlistment expired with the ratification of the treaty. South Dakota Senior Senator Richard F. Pettigrew vehemently opposed McKinley's foreign policy and labeled him an "imbecile" and "...among the most dishonored rulers of all time." The Senator said he wished to "go back and blot out the recent history of my country."⁵ Pettigrew had voted against ratification of the treaty ending the Spanish American War.⁶

¹ Minneapolis Journal, 6 October, 1899, 3. For background on William McKinley's used of public opinion see Morgan, H Wayne, William McKinley and His America (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1963), 435-436, 478-479.

² Minneapolis Journal, 6 October, 1899, 3.

³ Aberdeen Daily News, 30 September, 1899, 2.

⁴ Gould, Lewis L, The Presidency of William McKinley, (Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas: 1980), 184. Aberdeen Daily News, 26 October, 1899, 3.

⁵ H Roger Grant, "The Fighting Firsts: The First South Dakota and Nebraska Volunteers in the Philippines, 1898-1899," South Dakota History, Volume 4, Number 3 (Summer 1974), 320-322.

⁶ Thompson, Harry F, editor, A New South Dakota History, (Sioux Falls, South Dakota: Center for Western Studies, 2005). Additional information on Senator Richard F Pettigrew may be found on 197-198.

A heated debate raged over McKinley's Philippine policy. To suppress the Filipino uprising, he dispatched approximately 70,000 troops to the island in 1899 to replace the state volunteer regiments activated the previous year. Republicans lauded the move and called for United States annexation of the Philippines whereas Democrats and Populists opposed the move.

In 1900 the President would stand for re-election. Political fences needed to be mended and enthusiasm built for his imperialistic policy. Face to face contact became the weapon of choice.

Logistics of a route must be developed. A western type setter predicted "...invitations which are pouring into the White House from the west requesting a call from the president will materially increase the postal revenues, if nothing else," for President McKinley could not "...stop at one twentieth of the towns which were inviting him"⁷ A late September petition from the Sioux Falls Business Men's League urged the Chief Executive to see for himself the 40th state that entered the union a decade earlier.

Republican Representative Charles A. Burke would "...ply his vocation of spoils man at Washington," on South Dakota's behalf.⁸ The congressman visited the White House September 21. He successfully secured President McKinley's pledge to visit the Sunshine State. Aberdeen, Redfield, Huron, Wolsey, Mitchell, Canton, Parker, and Sioux Falls were mentioned as possible host cities. Tracks of at least four railroad companies would be utilized. "The itinerary is not official," Burke explained on September 23, but "it simply utilizes the probable course of the President through the Dakotas as is prepared by the White House employees from maps and time tables" available.⁹

Speculation, misinformation and falsehoods filled various newspaper columns. The *Moody County Enterprise* announced a multi-day visit with President McKinley arriving in Sioux Falls the afternoon of Saturday October 14 and "...if the project is carried out...the party will remain in Sioux Falls over Sunday the 15th, leaving for Sioux City on Monday."¹⁰ On the other hand, the *Madison Daily Leader* reported "Congressman Burke says President McKinley will swing around the circle in South Dakota. Bartlett Tripp says he will not. Which is the bigger man? We believe Mr. Tripp is."¹¹ The latter, a Yankton Democrat, did not believe William McKinley would visit South Dakota. Burke, himself, was a purveyor of misinformation. He telegraphed the mayor of Mitchell on October 2 that McKinley would definitely visit his community, along with Wolsey and Woonsocket. An October 7 wire reversed this as there were no track connections in

⁷ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 30 September, 1899, 6.

⁸ Madison Daily Leader, 27 September, 1899, 2.

⁹ Madison Daily Leader, 23 September, 1899, 2.

¹⁰ Moody County Enterprise (Flandreau), 28 September, 1899, 3.

¹¹ Madison Daily Leader, 26 September, 1899, 2.

Wolsey.¹² Likewise Parker thought they were awarded a presidential visit by "...doubling him back thus describing a path more winding than that the children of Israel made for the famous forty years wandering in the wilderness."¹³ Railroad officials rejected the route, "...as time is so limited and thirty miles of travel is saved by going over the Omaha to Sioux Falls."¹⁴ Later revisions employed the Milwaukee rails to bring William McKinley to Sioux Falls.

At least two routes, each reportedly official, appeared in the South Dakota media. Both agreed McKinley's first stop would be Aberdeen and his last, about thirteen hours later, would be at Elk Point. How he would get from one to another was open to conjecture. Only a week before the event would Congressman Burke be able to definitely state that the Presidential train would "come from Aberdeen...by way of Huron, Lake Preston and Madison to Sioux Falls and hence to Yankton and Sioux City, instead of by Mitchell and Canton as published as the official itinerary a few days ago" by a railroad company.¹⁵

August 10, 1899, the First South Dakota Volunteer Regiment departed the Philippines bound for San Francisco. They mustered out October 5 at the Presidio and boarded trains for the trip home. "This will be the first time a South Dakota regiment has returned from a foreign war," noted the *Aberdeen Daily News*.¹⁶ Governor Andrew Lee, who met the troops on the West Coast, characterized them as "...troubled about the country's motives toward the Filipinos."¹⁷ But the *Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader* detected "...a decided coolness among the boys toward Governor Lee and it was plain to see there was no bond of sympathy between them."¹⁸

Republicans plotted a presidential reception to bolster their cause. William McKinley, in a late September White House meeting with South Dakota congressmen, agreed to come to Aberdeen to welcome the "...entire First South Dakota regiment which should reach the city October 13 or 14, whichever day the president is to be there."¹⁹ "There was not a shadow of a doubt that the President consented to visit the state solely because of his desire to greet the regiment," reassured an *Aberdeen*

¹² Minneapolis Tribune, 10 October, 1899, 3.

¹³ Mitchell Gazette, 12 October, 1899, 4. McKinley traveled over the Great Northern from Lennox via Davis, but Parker residents would only see a 60 mile per hour blur if they went to Hooker's Crossing. Parker New Era, 6 October, 1899, 3.

¹⁴ Madison Daily Leader, 4 October, 1899, 2.

¹⁵ Madison Daily Leader, 9 October, 1899, 2.

¹⁶ Aberdeen Daily News, 10 October, 1899, 1.

¹⁷ St Paul Weekly Globe, 14 September, 1899, 8.

¹⁸ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 19 October, 1899, 6.

¹⁹ St Paul Weekly Globe, 26 September, 1899, 4.

special to the *Minneapolis Journal*.²⁰ The daily reported the boys “unanimously expressed a great desire to meet the president.” Congressman Burke’s private letter to a Sioux Falls resident cautioned, “one thing we must look out for is to see that the regiment is in Aberdeen by the morning of the 14th of October.”²¹ If not, arrangements must be made for McKinley to meet and greet the troops in Huron.

Civic pride drove the Aberdeen effort. Planning commenced at a special city council meeting October 4.²² At 5 PM the next afternoon a public citizens meeting appointed a 25 member executive committee to take charge of arrangements. General S. H. Jumper was chairman and Charles A. Fischer, secretary. Lead time was short. “To prepare in less than a week for such a demonstration as will be made is a stupendous undertaking,” in the words of the *Aberdeen Daily News*.²³ “In all its history Aberdeen has never had such an opportunity to impress itself upon the world,” boasted a *Daily News* column and the community meant to make the most of the opportunity.²⁴

A review stand was erected at the northeast corner of the city’s Interstate Grain Palace. Opposite, a grandstand for spectators appeared on the Masonic Temple grounds. “The lower row of seats will be about six feet above the level of the sidewalk and they will stretch back in ascending rows,” described a civic father.²⁵ A number of reserved seats in the stands may be secured in advance according to the same source.²⁶ Just south of Third Avenue a great arch of welcome spanned from sidewalk to sidewalk across the main street. Construction began October 10 on the 34 feet wide by 32 feet high structure. The word welcome appeared in large letters as well as a list of battles the First South Dakota Volunteers fought in during their 126 days in the Philippine combat zone. “The structure will be covered with white woven material in imitation of marble and will be one of the handsomest pieces of decorative work President McKinley will see on his western trip,” crowed a local editor.²⁷

The five blocks from Railroad Avenue to the Grain Palace was adorned with “columns set twenty five feet apart on both sides of the street and a few feet from the sidewalk.”²⁸ The great arch formed the

²⁰ *Minneapolis Journal*, 9 October, 1899, 2.

²¹ *IBID.*

²² *Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader*, 30 September, 1899, 4. Sioux Falls reportedly was upset their troops would be welcomed home first in Aberdeen. *Mitchell Gazette*, 12 October, 1899, 2.

²³ *Aberdeen Daily News*, 9 October, 1899, 3.

²⁴ *Aberdeen Daily News*, 7 October, 1899, 2.

²⁵ *Aberdeen Daily News*, 10 October, 1899, 3.

²⁶ *St Paul Pioneer Press*, 13 October, 1899, 3. Grandstand tickets sold for \$1 each. C B Collins purchased a block of 250 seats to resell in his Groton store. *Groton Independent*, 12 October 1899, 2.

²⁷ *Aberdeen Daily Press*, 10 October, 1899, 3. The arch was blown over by a strong wind Friday October 18. *Madison Daily Leader*, 24 October, 1899, 2.

²⁸ *Aberdeen Daily News*, 11 October, 1899, 3.

midpoint of the colonnade through which the honored guests would march. Across the street from Republican headquarters stretched a banner reading "From Plymouth Rock to the Philippines the grand triumphal march of human liberty has never paused," an oft quoted statement of President McKinley.²⁹

Money was raised for decorations "which will be both artistic and profuse."³⁰ Large stocks of bunting were quickly snapped up and telegraph orders went out for more. "Sixty hours of dismal rainy weather," broke the morning prior to the event.³¹ Elaborate plans called for all business and public buildings to be covered in red, white and blue paper. Business proprietors were urged to aid the street department in cleaning the city. "The reputation of our city...will be at stake as never before," proclaimed Mayor C. J. Huth.³² Owners were requested to rid their property of rubbish and weeds. Saturday forenoon the sidewalks must "be cleaned of all moveable signs, boxes, etc. and...no display on the sidewalk of goods, wares, or merchandise will be allowed," ordered the mayor.³³

Half a continent east, President William McKinley and his entourage departed Washington DC October 4 at 9 PM. His private train reached Chicago October 11 and Minneapolis the following day. President McKinley reviewed the 13th Minnesota Volunteer regiment just back from the Philippines and spent October 13 at Duluth and Fargo.³⁴ The President left Fargo, via the Milwaukee Road, bound for Wahpeton, North Dakota. It was there "President McKinley was aroused from his slumber at midnight and yielded to the demand for a speech." Despite the hour, "it was one of the best of the trip," in the words of the *Mitchell Daily Republican*.³⁵

Continuing on, the special passed through Ortonville, Minnesota and crossed the South Dakota state line. Every precaution was taken to see no accident befell the President. Railroad companies inspected their track along the route, replacing rails as necessary. Section crews monitored the tracks for two hours before the special arrived. Traffic was rerouted, a pilot car preceded McKinley's train by five minutes, and armed guards patrolled culverts and bridges.³⁶ Several members of the South Dakota

²⁹ Aberdeen Daily News 14, October, 1899, 2.

³⁰ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 10 October, 1899, 6.

³¹ Aberdeen Daily News, 13 October, 1899, 3.

³² Aberdeen Daily News, 8 October, 1899, 3.

³³ Aberdeen Daily News, 10 October, 1899, 3.

³⁴ Mitchell Daily Republican, 20 October, 1899, 2.

³⁵ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 10 October 1899, 5. The Milwaukee Railroad Company requested A B Kittredge accompany the President until the train was turned over to the Illinois Central in Sioux City, Iowa.

³⁶ Aberdeen Daily News, 10 October, 1899, 3.

congressional delegation boarded the train at Groton for the trip through the state.³⁷ The *Groton Independent* claimed one Thomas O'Connor shouted "come out here Bill," and President McKinley obliged and heartily shook hands with those assembled.³⁸ Aberdeen came into site at 8 AM. The Chief Executive was greeted by shrieking whistles and booming cannon. No vehicles were allowed on, or within a block of, Main Street. Fifty temporary marshals, under control of the Police Chief, worked crowd control. People had been steadily streaming into Aberdeen since Thursday afternoon. Excursion trains brought the curious from 200-300 miles in every direction. A local scribe found it "well nigh useless to attempt even an approximation estimate of the crowd size."³⁹ Reports of 20,000 to 50,000 found their way into print. Although immense, the crowd was described as good natured, patriotic and enthusiastic. "There has been much crowding and jostling," acknowledged one present, who found the multitude "devoid of anything approaching ill nature."⁴⁰

The Chicago & North Western depot received the First South Dakota Volunteer regiment in Aberdeen a half hour after the President's arrival. The 600 troops, led by Colonel Alfred S. Frost, marched nine blocks to the Milwaukee depot where their commander in chief awaited them. In the interim, the President, bareheaded and waving his handkerchief, reviewed 300 Grand Army of the Republic members who would serve as an honor guard for the First South Dakota. Aberdeen's municipal band led the five block parade to the Grain Palace followed by the GAR men, the volunteer regiment and 1000 school age children each waving a small American flag. The presidential party followed in a horse drawn carriage.⁴¹

McKinley ascended the reviewing stand with the honored regiment standing in formation on Main Street. The President confined his speech to welcoming home the First Volunteers from the Island of Luzon. He recited their deeds of valor while on the firing line from February to June.⁴²

Referring to their extended tour of duty, their commander in chief described that when "time came when every one of you were entitled to be mustered out of the service...you sent word that you would

³⁷ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 12 October 1899, 5. Senator James H Kyle, Congressmen C H Burke and John Gamble, C. H. Herried acting national committeeman from South Dakota, Commander Palmer of the State GAR and E. G. Kennedy of Eureka formed the state reception committee. Two representatives of each city visited joined prior to entering their community then yielded to the next city in line. It had been stated two days prior the group would meet the Presidential train at Milbank. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 10 October 1899, 5.

³⁸ Groton Independent, 19 October, 1899, 3.

³⁹ Aberdeen Daily News, 14 October, 1899, 8.

⁴⁰ Aberdeen Daily News, 16 October 1899, 3. Chicago and New York journalists expressed amazement at what Aberdeen had accomplished in so short a time.

⁴¹ Aberdeen Daily News, 14 October, 1899, 8. The school children were, reportedly, the President's "most enthusiastic admirers."

⁴² Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 14 October, 1899, 1.

remain until a new army could be formed to take your place."⁴³ McKinley closed his speech by reporting "I am glad to see the veterans of 1861 welcome the veterans of 1898," back home.⁴⁴ Governor Andrew Lee and several cabinet members also spoke briefly.⁴⁵

Many in the audience got to shake President McKinley's hand. A receiving line was established inside the Grain Palace. Priority was given to the returning volunteers, then the GAR members, school children and the general public.

Mrs. McKinley was ill and did not accompany her husband to the reviewing stand or Grain Palace. The special train was moved slightly to allow her to see the formation of the parade and most of the route. It was then switched from Milwaukee to Chicago & North Western rails for the next leg of the journey.⁴⁶

Just before the train pulled away at 11:30 a three year old girl standing on the platform, with the middle name of McKinley, sent the First Lady a bouquet of roses. Mrs. McKinley had the child taken to her. Both she and the president kissed her and were talking to the little one when the train began to move out of the station. The president caught her in his arms and carried her to the platform and passed her to a gentleman standing near the track after the train was well underway.⁴⁷

An hour and a half trip brought the special to Redfield. What was scheduled as a 5 minute stop turned into a half hour stay as "the people put the job on him so to speak." Mayor Pichard and C. E. Bostwick had travelled to Aberdeen the previous evening and joined the Presidential party for the trip to Redfield. The mayor spoke at length with McKinley and found him "well posted and greatly interested in South Dakota affairs."⁴⁸

A crowd of three thousand greeted McKinley at the depot grounds. Spectators stood "upon dry goods boxes, box cars, coal sheds and houses tops to catch a glimpse of their famous guest." The city council had taken charge of the reception and planned to give the whole day over to celebrating. Beside the depot a platform was constructed and the President consented to speak from there. His words were "emphatically expansion and were enthusiastically received," in the eyes of the *Minneapolis Tribune*.⁴⁹

⁴³ New York Times, 15 October 1899, 6.

⁴⁴ IBID., Newspapermen sent 25000 words over Western Union at the conclusion of McKinley's speech. Aberdeen Daily News, 16 October, 1899, 4.

⁴⁵ Oyos, Lynwood E, ed. Over A Century of Leadership: South Dakota Territorial and State Governors (Sioux Falls: Center for Western Studies, 1987). Governor Andrew Lee's administration is covered on 66-71.

⁴⁶ Aberdeen Daily News, 16 October, 1899, 4. Assistant Superintendent W A Gardner of the Northwestern railroad came to Aberdeen in his private car and had it attached to the Presidential train.

⁴⁷ Aberdeen Daily News, 16 October, 1899, 3.

⁴⁸ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 16 October, 1899, 6.

⁴⁹ Minneapolis Tribune, 15 October 1899, 2.

"There has never been a moment of time when we could have left...the Philippines without dishonor to our name," the President explained.⁵⁰ "To great applause he continued "in the Providence of God...this great archipelago was put into our hands and the American people never shirk duty."⁵¹ Speaking to the assembled school children McKinley announced, "We have been adding some territory to the United States. The little people will have to get a new geography book," he concluded.⁵²

Enthusiasm abounded as the President made his way back to the train. The ground was carpeted and ropes stretched from the platform to the locomotive. "Several succeeded in breaking through the line to shake hands or touch the seam of his garment."⁵³ A light rain began falling as the special pulled out well behind schedule.

The President arrived in Huron at 2:30 PM. The city, and all of "Beadle County were afire with enthusiasm," observed a daily that predicted "5000 to 10000 strangers will be in the city to greet the President."⁵⁴ The highlight of the reception was the large GAR presence. Posts from surrounding communities sent bodies of members to Huron so they could "pay their respects to their old army comrade."⁵⁵ The community was decorated as never before. The assemblage, many wearing McKinley badges of gold ribbon, cheered wildly as the honored guest mounted large speaker's platform near the railroad tracks. Six hundred school children shared the stage and overhead "...the largest American flag in the world, procured specially for this occasion," flew.⁵⁶

The featured speaker began by praising his hosts. "You [South Dakota] have been enjoying in the last twenty four months an unexampled prosperity. Good crops and fair prices have raised the mortgages and lowered the interest."⁵⁷ Shifting gears, McKinley explained, "I come here to make acknowledgement to the people of this state for its patriotism." He described the returning troops as athletes and continued "There is not a man, woman, or child in this glorious state...who is not delighted that the boys of the First South Dakota refused to accept the advice of the unpatriotic and stayed and upheld the flag."⁵⁸ He

⁵⁰ Minneapolis Journal, 19 October, 1899, 4.

⁵¹ Aberdeen Daily News, 16 October, 1899, 3.

⁵² Minneapolis Tribune, 15 October, 1899, 3.

⁵³ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 16 October, 1899, 6. Bartlett Tripp, specially invited by President McKinley, boarded the special at Redfield. Minneapolis Tribune, 15 October, 1899, 2.

⁵⁴ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 13 October, 1899, 3.

⁵⁵ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 12 October, 1899, 6. A later article put the number of school children at 1000. IBID., 19 October, 1899, 1. See also Schuler, Harold H, "Patriotic Pageantry: Presidential Visits to South Dakota," South Dakota History, Volume 30, Number 4 (Winter 2000) 339-345.

⁵⁶ St Paul Pioneer Press, 15 October 1899, 1.

⁵⁷ IBID.

⁵⁸ Aberdeen Daily News, 16 October 1899, 3.

repeated his assertion that the regiment refused to leave the Philippines until replacements were procured. This was a clear reference to Governor Lee's demand the troops be withdrawn since the treaty had been ratified.

The President returned to his railcar and the school children sang the "Star Spangled Banner" as the special gathered speed toward cameo appearances in DeSmet and Lake Preston.

DeSmet held fully 2000 well wishers as the Presidential train arrived at 3:30. McKinley acknowledged the crowd but did not speak.

The next stop was Lake Preston. "It was next to impossible to get definite information," on the President's schedule lamented the *Lake Preston Times*.⁵⁹ Barely two days before the event the local committee was told "...there would be an opportunity to see the president and probably hear him speak."⁶⁰ Nonetheless, a crowd of some 2000 congregated around the depot for hours on a cold and uncomfortable October day.

Patriotism was the central theme of McKinley's brief speech delivered from the rear platform of the train. He informed his audience "patriotism triumphs over mere politics. The speaker remained on the platform as the train departed having been switched to the Milwaukee tracks.

Several thousand farmers and residents welcomed William McKinley to Madison. He was escorted to a 12 x 16 foot speaker's stand on the east side of Egan Avenue near the railroad tracks. The President congratulated South Dakotans for the evidence of prosperity he discovered throughout the young state."⁶¹ Turning to his pet topic he heaped praise on the returning veterans and apologized to their parents for having had the opportunity to welcome them home first.

Darkness fell before Egan was reached. A resident there estimated the crowd at between 3000 and 5000. When the President was brought to the depot platform the crowd "cheered him to an echo."⁶² In brief remarks the chief executive explained, "We as a people never go to war because we love war." The audience was assured that the "little insurrection in the Philippines will be promptly suppressed."⁶³ As he spoke workers began the fifteen minute process of turning the engine and switching cars that came from the west to proper position to travel south. Trouble connecting the engine allowed some of those present an opportunity of shaking a presidential hand before he left for Sioux Falls.

⁵⁹ Lake Preston Times, 19 October 1899, 1.

⁶⁰ IBID.

⁶¹ New York Times, 15 October, 1899, 6.

⁶² Moody County Enterprise, 19 October 1899.

⁶³ IBID. Egan was a stronghold of Senator Richard F Pettigrew supporters.

An *Argus Leader* observation found "Sioux Falls has always been weak on decorations." But October 14, 1899, was an exception.⁶⁴ The core city was awash with red, white and blue bunting thanks to the personal lobbying efforts of every central city merchant by reception committeemen. Flags floated everywhere.

The day "broke with foreboding of a storm, the rising sun being hidden from view by dark rain laden looking clouds...and a chilly northwest wind."⁶⁵ Undaunted visitors streamed into the city beginning shortly after breakfast. "By noon it was estimated that several thousand strangers were in the city and the bulk of the crowd had not begun to arrive," said the *Argus Leader*.⁶⁶ Excursion trains of four railroad companies hauled numerous crowded coaches of the curious. If the rail companies had planned properly the crowd would have been larger. Not enough coaches were available on some lines and would be travelers were left at the depots. Had people known the excursions planned to return them home late that evening, rather than requiring an overnight stay, additional passengers would have boarded.

"The largest crowd ever assembled in the state," waited patiently and orderly for McKinley's announced 4 PM arrival.⁶⁷ Brass bands serenaded the throng and merchants found business to be "the largest since they located in the city."⁶⁸ Estimates placed 15000 people present to greet their President.

Three and a half hours behind schedule the McKinley special pulled into the Milwaukee Depot at 7:20 PM. Wild cheering and shrieking steam whistles met the President as he appeared on the platform of his car. "The crowd surged around him to get a better look", and "those close wanted to shake his hand."⁶⁹ Carriages awaited the presidential party and reception committee for a parade through crowded streets. Fireworks, roman candles and vast amounts of Greek fire illuminated the decorated business structures. A speaker's stand was reached at the southeast corner of Main Avenue and Ninth Street.

"The crowd was packed almost to the point of suffocation," about the stand described the *Argus Leader*. President McKinley took the stand to a deafening roar and faced "...a sea of humanity, swaying

⁶⁴ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 16 October 1899, 4.

⁶⁵ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 14 October 1899, 5. Snow flurries were forecast for early morning of the Presidential visit. St Paul Pioneer Press, 14 October 1899, 4.

⁶⁶ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 14 October 1899, 7. A New York World correspondent traveling with the President found much to praise in the Sioux Falls event.

⁶⁷ Minneapolis Journal, 13 October 1899, 3.

⁶⁸ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 18 October 1899, 3. This estimate was made by Associate Press reporters accompanying the President. The Argus Leader described them as used to estimating crowd size,

⁶⁹ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 16 October, 1899, 2.

back and forth."⁷⁰ It was several minutes before the crowd quieted enough for H. H. Keith to introduce the featured speaker.

President McKinley delivered a half hour oration "straight from the shoulder," characterized as "clean cut, unequivocal and striking."⁷¹ The Chief Executive apologized for his tardiness in arrival and explained he got behind schedule when the troops were late in arriving in Aberdeen. Great applause met his claim this "was the only time in the history of that regiment that it was ever late."⁷² He explained American sovereignty had been extended over the Philippines and his administration would protect that sovereignty against all enemies. "When that is assailed there is never any division among the American people," he claimed.⁷³

A ten minute informal reception took place at the Dakotah Club. As he spoke his special train had been switched to Great Northern tracks for the journey south. The hour long stop in Sioux Falls was the second longest in South Dakota—only Aberdeen consumed more time.

Fifteen hundred people greeted the presidential train when it stopped in Viborg to take on water. Lanterns illuminated the depot platform. McKinley appeared at 9:30 PM but loud cheering and fireworks noise prevented him from speaking.⁷⁴

Yankton was the next destination. A multi city planning committee from Yankton and twelve area communities worked rapidly to "get up a record breaking welcome and jollification," for the President.⁷⁵ The former territorial capital was decorated as never before but the 10:30 PM arrival time made the decorations difficult to see in the darkness. A carriage delivered the President to the speakers stand at Third and Walnut Streets. Despite the late hour, a crowd variously reported to 5,000 to 10,000 awaited him.

The President's twenty minute speech "did not even allude to the Philippine question, imperialism, or trust," lamented the *Yankton Press and Dakotan*.⁷⁶ Aware that Yankton was a stronghold of Senator Richard F. Pettigrew and free silverism, William McKinley kept his remarks quite general. He spoke highly

⁷⁰ IBID.

⁷¹ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 16 October, 1899, 4.

⁷² IBID.

⁷³ St Paul Pioneer Press, 15 October 1899, 11. The Sioux Falls Western Union office sent 24,000 words of newspaper specials after McKinley's speech. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 16 October, 1899, 4.

⁷⁴ Viborg Enterprise, 19 October, 1899, 1.

⁷⁵ Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 13 October 1899, 1.

⁷⁶ Yankton Weekly Press and Dakotan, 19 October 1899, 1. Rebels in the Philippines and copperheads at home will have no mercy his audience was assured. Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader, 14 October 1899, 4.

of South Dakota and appreciated the warm reception residents had given him.⁷⁷ It was past 11 PM when he departed for Vermillion.

Organizers there planned for a late night event by placing lights around the depot. Two rows of lights, 10 to the row, were strung on either side of the track to illuminate the rear observation deck from which the President would speak. His audience numbered about 1500 people in *Vermillion Plain Talk* words. Praise was again lavished on the returning troops.

Elk Point was the last South Dakota community to welcome President McKinley. Well past midnight the special pulled into the depot. The President, speaking from the back platform, told those assembled, "Only a warm hearted people...would have remained standing on their feet as long as you have...to give a welcome."⁷⁸ He thanked state residents for their gratitude and wished them well. His train exited South Dakota and spent a quiet Sunday on a siding in Sioux City, Iowa.

"A vast amount of good will come to South Dakota as a result of the visit," predicted an opinion molder.⁷⁹ The excursion "...demonstrated to the President that the people of South Dakota since 1896 have grown to love and admire him," observed another.⁸⁰ A hundred thousand residents reportedly heard McKinley's orations. "There was more expansion in his Minneapolis speech than in his Chicago speech," claimed the *Minneapolis Journal*, which reported more expansion statements in his South Dakota speeches than in any other.⁸¹ "Partisan feelings were flung to the winds," announced the *Redfield Press*.⁸² The trip "had a clarifying effect upon the political atmosphere," of the state in the eyes of the *Aberdeen Daily Press*.⁸³

Not so, declared the Fusionists. Supporters of Senator Richard F. Pettigrew and Governor Andrew Lee, and anti-imperialists, viewed McKinley's South Dakota visit as merely a campaign appearance. "He is the consummate political performer and a smooth trimmer," according to Thomas Ayers in the *Vermillion Plain Talk*.⁸⁴ Labeled "the power behind the South Dakota gubernatorial chair", Ayers claimed McKinley was

⁷⁷ *Minneapolis Tribune*, 16 October 1899, 6. Enthusiasm was reported as lacking but the impression McKinley made was highly favorable.

⁷⁸ *Redfield Journal*, 26 October 1899, 3. The official itinerary called for the train to reach Elk Point at 8:15. *St Paul Pioneer Press*, 1 October 1899, 11.

⁷⁹ *Aberdeen Daily News*, 17 October 1899, 3.

⁸⁰ *Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader*, 16 October 1899, 1.

⁸¹ *Minneapolis Journal*, 19 October, 1899, 4.

⁸² *Redfield Press*, 19 October 1899, 1.

⁸³ *Aberdeen Daily Press*, 18 October 1899, 2.

⁸⁴ *Vermillion Plain Talk*, 19 October 1899, 2. The paper was edited by the private secretary of Governor Lee. *Minneapolis Tribune*, 10 October 1899 6.

artificial and "did not get the heart of the people."⁸⁵ Like most journalists of a similar stripe, the Plain Talk used no prefixes with William McKinley's name to show contempt.⁸⁶ His speeches were "a mass of glittering generalities or sensationalism," and "canned or set," howled the *Madison Daily Leader*.⁸⁷ "...Had people not gathered to see the returning soldiers his receptions would have been small and ice indeed," claimed the Lake County daily.⁸⁸ Another report, attributed to Senator Pettigrew, said only 2500 were on hand in Sioux Falls to listen to McKinley.⁸⁹ W. G. Kidd, editor of the *Dakota Ruralist* claimed the Aberdeen reception attracted a crowd "no larger than a good circus day crowd," of about three thousand.⁹⁰ He also painted those assembled as cold and undemonstrative.

Congressman Robert J. Gamble, of Yankton, condemned the Aberdeen event as a partisan rally. President McKinley's assertion that the First South Dakota Volunteers chose to remain on duty until replacements arrived was "...coldly received by the regiment but was wildly cheered by the politicians and office holders," screamed the *Plain Talk*.⁹¹ A *Mitchell Gazette* piece branded the President's claim "...something like the warden of a penitentiary thanking a prisoner for staying while authorities chose to keep him." The troops extended service was a violation of their enlistment agreement shouted anti-imperialists.

The day he visited South Dakota the *Sioux Falls Press* carried a two and a half column article headed "Plain Words to the Chief Executive On His Visit to South Dakota."⁹² Purportedly written by Richard F. Pettigrew, the piece was quickly reprinted by the state's Fusionist journalists. It appeared so "that you may avoid experiences calculated to embarrass you before our people," explained the author.⁹³ Questions were raised about relations between the President and the First South Dakota Volunteers. The author contended the statement volunteers refused to leave Luzon first appeared in McKinley's August 28 Pittsburg speech. "It will avail you nothing to stoop to such low demagogory as this before our volunteers,"

⁸⁵ *Vermillion Plain Talk*, 19 October 1899, 4.

⁸⁶ *Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader*, 10 October 1899, 4.

⁸⁷ *Madison Daily Leader*, 13 October 1889, 2. See also 30 September 1899, 2. The *Daily Leader* reasoned McKinley's visit would hinder, not help, his South Dakota popularity.

⁸⁸ *Madison Daily Leader*, 19 October 1899, 4.

⁸⁹ *Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader*, 18 October 1899, 4.

⁹⁰ *Madison Daily Leader*, 21 October 1899, 2. The *Ruralist* claimed to have photos showing the Aberdeen grandstands were only two thirds filled as McKinley spoke. An adjoining block was covered with 300 chairs that no one occupied.

⁹¹ *Vermillion Plain Talk*, 19 October 1899, 2.

⁹² *Vermillion Plain Talk*, 26 October 1899, 3. A South Dakota Populist editor warned McKinley if he talked politics in South Dakota he would not be spared because he was the President. *Sioux Falls Daily Argus Leader*, 29 September 1899, 4.

⁹³ *IBID.*

the piece warned 'unless you wish to confirm in them the opinion that you are much too small a man for the position you occupy.'⁹⁴ The article closed by encouraging the President to speak freely to state residents while assuring McKinley they felt at liberty to speak frankly to him. A companion piece took the President to task over his Philippine policy. He was a "blatant demigod," and an "office seeking politician," claimed the *Press* which labeled McKinley's other western speeches "taffy".⁹⁵

In the wake of William McKinley's visit many South Dakota editors rose to his defense. They were ashamed and angry that Fusionists would show such disrespect to their honored guest. Most editors expressed pride and honor that the President took time to visit their state. He was held in high regard for his efforts to bring South Dakota into the Union and hasten the recent return of prosperity.

The first presidential visit to South Dakota consumed sixteen hours plus, yet it contributed to large Republican gains in the 1900 state elections. McKinley, narrowly defeated in 1896, was the presidential choice of 56.7% of South Dakota males who voted in the 1900 election. Richard F. Pettigrew, and Andrew F. Lee, along with the Fusionists in general, were swept from power in the state. October 14, 1899, the day the President came, was truly a historical day in South Dakota; one that was never forgotten by those who participated.

⁹⁴ IBID.

⁹⁵ Vermillion Plain Talk, 19 October 1899, 1.

RIVERBOATING WITH ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Miles A. Browne

Today a young man built like Abraham Lincoln, would probably be recruited by college coaches to be a power forward on the basketball team, or a tight end on the football team. Abe had grown tall and had developed exceptional strength. He was coordinated; fleet footed and was recognized as the best all-around athlete in the county. In sporting terms he was a five-star laborer. It was a time when strength was the prime ingredient for farm work. Abe was able to plow a field, split rails, bring down century old trees, slaughter hogs and dress them down. At seventeen years he got a job working for James Taylor.

The Taylor farm ran along Anderson Creek where it joined up with the Ohio River. In addition to his farming, Taylor was in the ferrying business. One of Abe's jobs was operating the ferryboat across the hundred feet of Anderson Creek waters. Spare time was hard to come by, however, Abe found the time to build a small flat-bottomed boat. One day two travelers approached Abe and requested if he would transport them and their baggage to an on coming steamer. When his passengers scrambled aboard the steamboat they threw two silver half-dollars into the boat. Abe was astounded that he had earned a dollar for such little effort.

In the fall of 1828, James Gentry, the leading merchant in Gentryville, Indiana, needed a hired hand. He wanted a boatman to take his products down the Mississippi to New Orleans. Gentry hired Abe to join his son Allen to form a crew of two. Their first task was to build a flatboat. Cutting down giant oaks and poplars, they then hewed the logs into planks, which they joined together to make a flatboat. It had a cabin for shelter with oars at the bow and stern.

When they started their journey on the Ohio, in early January of 1829, they became part of the great American highway—the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys. One half of the nation's commerce traveled their waters. Cities and towns were founded and prospered along their banks: Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Memphis and New Orleans. "Everyday the nineteen year old boatman learned more about the vast 'Father of Waters'. He learned to handle the bends and sweeps of the river with quick, sure tug of the oars."¹

An English man, John Baille, went down the Mississippi several months before Abe. In his diary he described huge flocks of wild turkeys on the shore. He wrote of days when, "we have no view save the

¹ Richard Kigel, The Frontier Years, Walker and Co., N.Y., 1986, p. 104.

interminable forest." The passengers tasted wild turkey at many a meal. Baille judged them to be "the most flavored birds I have tasted." In the South he was impressed by the giant cottonwoods and sugar trees which were embraced in Spanish moss. He described it as "...dark and somber festoons, adding a funeral aspect to the dreary view, quite in character with the deadly malignity of the climate." He noted the differences between the Ohio and Mississippi. The Ohio was "moving slow and placid" while the Mississippi "sweeps along with a fierce and tempestuous current."²

Drifting southward Abe and Allen had the opportunity to visit with fellow boatmen. An Indiana settler recalled the stories he had heard from flatboat crews: "These river-men brought us strange accounts of countries in the far south. They told us of magnolia, cypress and live-oak, and the fields of cane and cotton, and the large and populous plantations which they visited on their route, where the overseer would buy almost a whole boatload of supplies. They had also seen the Negro slaves, men and women working on plantations and the guards armed with guns and whips, who watched the hands at labor. They told us in an undertone that this was very hard to look at, that it was wrong, but the law allowed these things."³

Abe and Glenn drifted by and visited southern river towns. In the Baton Rouge vicinity they anchored at a river plantation. During the night seven slaves from a nearby plantation invaded the flatboat seeking to steal the cargo. The crew, swinging homemade oaken clubs, defended Gentry's goods. Although they were injured they were able to drive the invaders away.

First light found the flatboat covering the last few miles to New Orleans. Reaching the "Crescent City", they were amazed at what they saw. The port was overflowing with activity. Hundreds of flatboats were tied up and were being unloaded by freemen and slaves who loaded the produce into carts and wagons; produce that came from Missouri, Indiana and Illinois. Waiting square-rigged sailing ships, when loaded, would carry the products to ports around the world.

After their business was settled, the young men toured the city. It was the first city they had seen. They marveled at the elegant homes with painted sides and intricate grillwork enhancing their porches; the impressive Cathedral of St. Louis was a far cry from the humble churches they were familiar with back home in Indiana. The streets they walked were shared by citizens from around the world. New Orleans was also home to over 200 slave markets where blacks were bought and sold like cattle.

² *Ibid*, pages 103, 104.

³ Richard Miller, Stockpole Books, Mechcainsberg, PA, 2008, p.183.

The New Orleans Argus in the December 27, 1828, edition advertised: "Virginia and North Carolina slaves for sale. 29 Virginia slaves of both sexes to be sold cheap for cash. 43 Virginia slaves, women, men, girls, boys may be bartered for sugar or to be sold on a liberal credit, say for one or two years. 24 North Carolina slaves of both sexes to be sold for cash or on short credit. John Clay, 44 Graves St."⁴

On his return to the bare bone life in Indiana, Abe had twenty hard earned dollars in his pocket. But, the money was not his to spend. According to the law and custom of the time he had to turn over all his earnings to his father, Tom Lincoln.

The spring of 1831 Abe was on his own. He had come of age. Now, his laboring wages would be his and not his father's. Abe's independent travels carried him to central Illinois and the Springfield area. There he met up with businessman Denton Offut who was seeking a crew to transport a cargo of live hogs, corn, and barreled pork to New Orleans. Offut had a problem—he did not have a flatboat. Abe and two companions, John Hanks and John Johnson, set out to build one. The construction took a month. When the spring-time rivers receded the crew set off on the waters of the Sangamon heading for the Illinois and Mississippi rivers.

They were barely underway when the craft encountered a dam at New Salem. About halfway over the flatboat got stuck and began filling with water. A New Salem crowd gathered to watch the unfolding crisis. Abe acted quickly! Under his direction, the crew moved part of the cargo ashore. Next they moved the remainder of the goods forward to balance the flatboat. Abe was able to borrow a hand drill and bored a hole in the bow with let the water out. After the hole was plugged the craft was freed and they were on their way.

Abe, now a veteran river man, navigated the heavily loaded flatboat over known waters to New Orleans. He once again walked the streets of the "Crescent City". One morning in their rambles they passed a slave auction. A vigorous and comely mulatto girl was being sold. She underwent a close up inspection at the hands of the bidders. They pinched her flesh and made her trot up and down like a horse to show how she moved, and in order, as the auctioneer said, that the bidders might satisfy themselves whether what they were offering to buy was sound or not. The whole thing was so revolting that Lincoln moved away from the scene with a deep feeling of unconquerable hate. "⁵

⁴ Kigel, op. cit., p. 104.

⁵ William Herndon and Jesse Weik, Abraham Lincoln, Appleton and Company, 1905, p. 66, 67.

In addition to slavery, Lincoln's two flatboat trips influenced his views in two other areas—the value of labor and worker rights. Prior to his river boating, he had spent years working in forests and farmlands; these experiences solidified his appreciation for labor. In a speech in Cincinnati in September 1859, he stated: "Labor is the great source from which nearly all, if not all, human comforts and necessities are drawn." On his way to his presidency he told a Pittsburgh crowd that "labor is the true standard of value." The right for workers to strike was expressed by Lincoln on a number of occasions. In commenting on a Massachusetts shoe workers strike he declared: "I am glad that there is a system of labor where the laborer can strike if he wants to. I would to God that such a system prevailed all over the world." His advocacy for worker rights might have been influenced when he was bound by law to fork over his hard earned wages to his father.

Lincoln's flatboat trips profoundly influenced his lifelong negative opinion about slavery. The flatboat events he remembered the most and which had the power to make him "miserable" were his visits to the New Orleans slave pens and auctions. It was not the raid by slaves on the flatboat when he had to fight for his life. For some men, if not the most, the attack would have been the most remembered and opinion driven incident. He over rode that crisis and built a deep feeling of empathy for the victims of slavery that he had encountered on his trips to New Orleans.

In later years Lincoln took a number of river voyages on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers—not on flatboats but on steamboats. Following a trip he wrote a friend: "By the way, a fine example was presented on board the boat...a gentleman had purchased twelve Negroes in different parts of Kentucky, and taking them to a farm in the South. They were chained six and six together...in this condition they were separated forever from the scenes of their friends, their fathers, and mothers, and brothers, and many of them from their wives and children, and going into perpetual slavery, where the lash of the master is proverbially more ruthless and unrelenting."

Lincoln's feelings toward the victims of slavery were enhanced because of his river journeys. Those feelings moved him to assert: "I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just position in the world, it enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites." Slavery was the only thing that he hated. It was first fueled in the slave markets in New Orleans. His sentiments towards slaves were fervent and real and were expressed when he stated: "There is no reason in the world that the Negro is not entitled to all the rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness...in the right to eat bread, without the leave of anybody else, which his own hands earn, he is my

equal...and the equal of every living man." Lincoln extended to slaves the promises of the Declaration of Independence, which he had adopted as his political foundation. He reported that he "never had a feeling that did not spring from the sentiments embodied by the Declaration of Independence."

During the course of the historically important Lincoln-Stephen Douglas debates, his political reliance on the Declaration's "all men are created equal" was put to a stern test. There were instances when he waffled. Douglas claimed that Lincoln stood up for Negro equality in one area of Illinois, but in another part of the state, for political reasons, he would declare there must be a "superior" and "inferior" race.

The last of seven debates was scheduled for October 15, 1858, in Alton, Illinois. Lincoln traveled there on the Mississippi aboard the steamboat *City of St. Louis*. The voyage down the Mississippi might have stirred memories of other river trips such as his two flatboat journeys to New Orleans. It was there that Lincoln first experienced the inhumanity of the slave pens and auctions; especially the sight of a frightened young girl being paraded in front of, and pinched by, her potential owners. It was in the "Crescent City" that he came to understand slavery's legacy included the importation of thousands of people of color and forced them into one of the most horrific, degrading lifestyles imaginable, and that it had led to the absolute denigration of the human spirit.

Perhaps he recalled an 1841 steamboat trip down the Ohio. In an 1855 letter to a friend he wrote that there "were on board, ten to a dozen slaves, shackled together with irons. That sight is a continual torment to me; I see something like this every time I touch the Ohio, or any other slave border...it has, and continually exercises the power of making me miserable."

The Mississippi River trip to Alton gave Lincoln the time to review the content of the previous debates. He had to recognize that he had not been the man who had said, "If slavery is not wrong then nothing is wrong." And in a speech, just a few months before, he had asserted: "If the Declaration is not the truth, let us get the statute book and rip it out!" When the crowd shouted, "No! No!" he continued, "Let us stick to it then!" In the Alton debate Lincoln firmed his will and decided to stick to the "truth" of the Declaration. He left the *City of St. Louis* a changed man.

In his final arguments at Alton, Lincoln revisited his moral and political roots. Gone were his comments about "inferior" and "superior" races. "It was Lincoln's defense of the Declaration of Independence that made his Alton speech unique. He correctly stated that the Declaration of Independence was the crux of the controversy between the two candidates. Those who gathered on the banks of the Mississippi, who listened and watched, saw a different man on the platform, one whom no one

had seen since the early stages of the campaign, a free man clothed no longer as a politician beholden to the electorate, but as one beholden to none other than his own convictions of what was right, of what was ethical, of what was moral. At this juncture Lincoln came of age. In this debate, more than any other, Lincoln, speaking before a hostile audience, held up the Declaration of Independence as his nation's best hope."⁶

He argued that the difference between the two camps was that one side believed that slavery was wrong, while the other did not. "That is the real issue", he concluded, "an issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. These are the two principles that are made, the eternal struggle between right and wrong...one of them asserting the divine right of kings, the same principle that says you work, you toil, you earn bread, and I will eat it. It is the same old serpent, whether it comes from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his nation, and to live on the fruit of a neighbor, or whether it comes from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race of men."

At Alton, "he spoke with the same courage and convictions that he would later display as President. He spoke as a statesman...one sees the Lincoln of the First Inaugural Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg Address, and his last public address in which he called for the extension of suffrage to African Americans. In the debate, one sees the signs of the greatness that is to come."⁷

NOTES:

Quotations attributed to Abraham Lincoln are drawn from The Lincoln Encyclopedia, ed. Archer Shaw, The Macmillan Co., N. Y., 1950.

⁶ Timothy S. Good, The Lincoln Douglas Debates, McFarland and Co., Inc., Jefferson, North Carolina and London, 2007.

⁷ Ibid preface, p. 4.

**UPSTREAM METROPOLIS:
THE MISSOURI RIVER SYSTEM AND THE MAKING OF GREATER OMAHA**

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This presentation is based upon material in Lawrence H. Larsen, Barbara J. Cottrell, Harl A. Dalstrom and Kay Calamè Dalstrom, *Upstream Metropolis: An Urban Biography of Omaha & Council Bluffs* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007) and other work on the history of metropolitan Omaha. The title, "Upstream Metropolis," is derived from the meaning of "Omaha," the name of the Omaha tribe, and has been translated as "upstream people." Rivers were an important part of the heritage of the Omaha Nation, and the history of what became a metropolitan area of more than 800,000 people is closely linked to the Missouri River and its tributaries.¹

If one includes its North and South Platte tributaries, the Platte River is the Missouri's longest tributary, and its valley became part of the route to the Rocky Mountain fur trade, and later part of the Oregon, Mormon, and California trails. By the late 1850s, the Platte and South Platte valleys led prospectors, merchants, and other persons to the mining boom country around Denver that became the nucleus of Colorado.² In the following decade the Platte valley became the path west in the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad and in the twentieth century the advent of cars and trucks made the Platte valley the route of the trans-continental Lincoln Highway (U.S. 30) and later Interstate Highway 80. Of course, commerce is at the heart of today's globalization, and when we see a mile-long Union Pacific freight train laden with containerized shipments pass through Omaha, we are reminded of the importance of the Platte valley in the development of the city, state, and nation. In short, it is difficult to conceive of the founding

¹ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 10-11, 445-446. In the present essay, citations of *Upstream Metropolis* will, as appropriate, include references to pages in that book's annotated bibliography which will guide readers to specific literature. (For example, pp. 445-446 have references to writings on the native peoples of the Greater Omaha area.) Robert Kelley Schneiders, *Unruly River: Two Centuries of Change Along the Missouri* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), is a very readable and informative work on the Missouri River. Chapter 4 is especially germane to this essay. James L. Knott, M.D., FACP, *Gateway to the West: A History of Council Bluffs, Iowa*, Limited First Edition (Logan, IA: Perfection Press, Inc., 2007), a valuable addition to the literature on Council Bluffs, gives extensive coverage to the Missouri River's role in shaping the area's development.

² An outstanding treatment of the Platte valley as part of the overland trails is Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline Via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, *Publications*, Vol. XXV, 1969). This book is also valuable for understanding the emergence of "jumping off points" for overland travelers—a process that gave some frontier settlements, including Council Bluffs and Omaha, big boosts in their early development.

and evolution of what became the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area without the context of the confluence of the Platte and Missouri rivers. Physical geography is but one element in shaping the human experience, but it is often a fundamental ingredient in urban development.

The Platte meets the Missouri just south of Bellevue, Nebraska, in the southern part of the eight-county Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area. At a location in what is now the northern part of the metro, probably near today's town of Fort Calhoun, Nebraska, Lewis and Clark in August 1804 met with Otoe-Missouria Indians at a place that William Clark labeled the "Councill Bluff." In time, the name, "the Council Bluffs," came to be applied to the stretch of roughly thirty-five miles along *both* sides of the Missouri from the mouth of the Platte upstream to the probable site of where Lewis and Clark conferred with the Indians.³

In the thirty-five years before the founding of Omaha in 1854, the Missouri River system did much to shape the white presence in the Council Bluffs area. In 1812 or 1813, Manuel Lisa, a St. Louis fur trader, established a trading post on the Nebraska side of the Missouri in what became Washington County in the northern part of metro Omaha. Then, in the autumn of 1819, the U.S. Army's Yellowstone Expedition commanded by Col. Henry M. Atkinson established Cantonment Missouri on the river flood plain in the same immediate area. Also arriving at this time were soldiers under the command of Maj. Stephen H. Long, who the following year would explore the plains region. Long's contingent arrived at the Council Bluffs aboard a steamboat, *The Western Engineer*, the first steam vessel to reach this far up the Missouri.⁴

As the name, "Yellowstone Expedition," suggested, the purpose of Col. Atkinson's mission was to establish a U.S. presence much farther upstream in the Missouri basin. However, by the winter of 1819-1820, government fiscal exigency led to a decision to leave Atkinson's units at the Council Bluffs. In June 1820, the troops at Cantonment Missouri had the dubious distinction of being the first group of whites in the area of what became Greater Omaha to experience a Missouri River flood. This destroyed their bottomland encampment. The post was immediately rebuilt on the top of a river bluff and was named Fort Atkinson. This fort, then the most westerly U.S. Army post, was located at the eastern edge of modern Fort Calhoun, Nebraska. It has been restored, and the fort with its visitor's center is well worth a visit. In the

³ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 15-16; Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, p. 122; *Omaha World Herald*, May 23, 2002, online edition (article by Michael Kelly); Knott, *Gateway to the West*, p. 38.

⁴ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 15-18, 447; James C. Olson and Ronald C. Naugle, *History of Nebraska*, Third Edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 39-49, and 451 (bibliography). Since the publication of the first edition of James C. Olson's *History of Nebraska* in 1955, this work, including its fine bibliography, has stood as the premier introduction to the history of the Cornhusker State. The plight of Cantonment Missouri is told in Sally Johnson, "Cantonment Missouri, 1819-1820," *Nebraska History* 37 (June 1956), p. 132. See also Michael L. Tate (compiler), *Nebraska History: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995). Whatever the topic, this book is a user-friendly tool for any student of Nebraska history.

1820s the Missouri River flowed just below the bluff where the fort was situated, but today the river is some three miles to the east—illustrating the river’s capacity to make drastic shifts prior to the mid-twentieth century dam construction. Given the military needs of the 1820s, Fort Atkinson was closed in 1827 and a new post, Fort Leavenworth, was established above the confluence of the Kansas (Kaw) and Missouri rivers, near the jumping off area for travelers on the Santa Fe Trail in what would become metropolitan Kansas City. In any event, the Missouri River system did much to shape the fate of Fort Atkinson.⁵

By 1823 Manuel Lisa was dead and the trading post known as Fort Lisa had been relocated downstream to a site called “Bellevue.” In its heyday in the 1820s and 1830s Bellevue was a transfer point in the trade linking St. Louis, eastern North America, and Europe with the Rocky Mountains via the Missouri and Platte rivers. In the 1830s Bellevue also became a government Indian agency and a center for missionary work with native people. The Missouri River nurtured Bellevue as it developed into a nucleus of white settlement well before the formal opening of eastern Nebraska to settlement in 1854.⁶

By the late 1830s there was increasing activity along the east side of the Missouri valley in the Council Bluffs. In 1837, the U.S. Government relocated Potawatomi Indians and a few other native people from the lower Great Lakes to western Missouri and later by steamboat to southwestern Iowa. Against the river bluffs where Council Bluffs, Iowa, would emerge, the Army briefly maintained a small detachment of troops to protect these Indians, and the Jesuit, Father Pierre Jean DeSmet, operated a mission for a few years. Alcoholism plagued the Potawatomie in this new location, and between 1843 and 1848, they moved to northeastern Kansas where some of their tribe already lived.⁷

As the Potawatomie left the Council Bluffs, the Mormons in their exodus from persecution in Nauvoo, Illinois, arrived after a trek across southern Iowa, encamping on both sides of the Missouri River beginning in June 1846. Of all the European-Americans who had thus far had a notable presence in the area, the Mormons were the first *not* to arrive via the Missouri River or its valley. Their ultimate destination was an as yet undetermined place in the far West, but it was obvious that in continuing their journey they would use the Platte valley route, already part of the Oregon Trail. In 1847 their destination became clear

⁵ Larsen, *et al*, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 17-18, 447; Olson and Naugle, *History of Nebraska*, Third Edition, pp. 43-45.

⁶ Larsen, *et al*, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 18-24. Two works by Richard E. Jensen, *The Fontenelle and Cabanné Trading Posts: The History and Archeology of Two Missouri River Sites, 1822-1838* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1998), and “Bellevue: The First Twenty Years,” *Nebraska History* 56 (Fall 1975), are particularly valuable for understanding the trading prelude to the early development of the metro Omaha area as is David J. Wishart, *The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840: A Geographical Synthesis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979).

⁷ Larsen, *et al*, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 25-29, 446.

after Brigham Young led a group of Mormons to the Great Salt Lake valley, and for the next generation the Platte valley became a vital part of the Mormon Trail. Critical to the Platte-North Platte valleys as a route west is the fact that they led to a break in the Rocky Mountains in southwestern Wyoming. Various points in this part of the continental divide which was devoid of rugged mountain passes in turn became part of the Oregon Trail, the Mormon Trail, the California Trail, and rail and modern highway routes extending west from Omaha.

Until 1854 the west bank of the Missouri was Indian country where permanent settlement for persons other than the military, missionaries, and licensed traders was unlawful. Accordingly, the U.S. Government did not permit the Mormons to remain at their encampment called "Winter Quarters" in what is now the Florence section of Omaha. This reality bolstered the development of an encampment in Iowa called "Miller's Hollow" and subsequently "Kanesville" in the area of the former Army post and where Father DeSmet's mission had been located. Kanesville in the late 1840s and early 1850s became the supply point for the Mormon outpost in the Great Salt Lake valley and the jumping off point for Mormons bound for the new Zion. In December 1846, Iowa entered the Union and at mid-century the California gold rush tremendously augmented Kanesville's function as a supply and jumping off point. The Platte valley, readily reached from Kanesville, became part of the California Trail. By 1853, most Mormons in the area had responded to Brigham Young's call to come to Utah Territory, and non-Mormons predominated in Kanesville, renamed "Council Bluffs" that year. "Council Bluffs" was now much more geographically delineated.⁸

The American presence in California, Oregon, and Utah was making a trans-continental railroad a necessity, and in November 1853 a railroad survey across Iowa for the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, part of the Rock Island Railroad system, identified Council Bluffs as a crucial point on such a line. Working on this project was Grenville M. Dodge, a young civil engineer who went on to become a highly successful champion of a Platte valley route to the West and ultimately the chief engineer in the building of the Union Pacific Railroad.⁹ Almost 500 miles east of Council Bluffs at the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan was the rapidly developing city of Chicago—"Nature's Metropolis" as historian William Cronon has called it.¹⁰ Chicago was an emerging railroad hub, and western railroads would be vital to the city's future. One great sign of this future pointed across Illinois and Iowa toward the Platte valley and onward to the most desirable crossing of the continental divide.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 29-33, 447-448.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 38, 50, 68, 449.

¹⁰ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991.)

In the wake of the creation of Nebraska Territory in 1854, entrepreneurs in Council Bluffs, Iowa, founded Omaha on the Missouri's west bank. Steamboats linked Omaha and other newly-founded Nebraska towns to St. Louis, but the completion of a railroad to St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1859 heralded a gradual decline of the steamboat age and the dependence of Omaha and Council Bluffs upon St. Louis. In August 1859, Abraham Lincoln visited Council Bluffs, and a meeting with Grenville Dodge probably did much to make him aware of the area's strategic location in the development of a railroad to California.¹¹ As president in November 1863, he issued an executive order which resulted in Omaha becoming the starting point for the Union Pacific Railroad. Two years before the golden spike was driven at Promontory Summit in 1869, the Chicago and North Western Railroad had linked Council Bluffs to the east. Lines running up and down the easy terrain of the Missouri valley had joined Council Bluffs to Sioux City and St. Joseph. Just after the golden spike ceremony in Utah, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific was finished to Council Bluffs, and by the end of 1869, the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad provided Council Bluffs-Omaha yet another link to the Windy City and points east.¹²

In March 1872, the Union Pacific linked Omaha and Council Bluffs with a bridge which, though a far less dramatic accomplishment than the driving of the golden spike, truly ended the last gap in the first trans-continental rail route. A legal battle between Council Bluffs and Omaha over which city was the lawful eastern terminus of the Union Pacific brought a victory in the U.S. Supreme Court for Council Bluffs, but in the long run both cities shared in the largess resulting from the railroad's presence. By 1903, ten trunk railroads served Omaha-Council Bluffs, making the Upstream Metropolis one of the world's great rail centers.¹³

Physical geography, especially minimum grades, was basic to the configuration of this network. Lines serving what railroad scholars call "the Omaha gateway" used not only the Missouri and Platte valleys, but also the valleys of the Boyer River and Mosquito Creek, Missouri tributaries in southwestern Iowa.¹⁴ The flood plain adjacent to Council Bluffs and the narrower flatlands along the Omaha side of the Missouri became great railroad yards. Likewise, the flood plain west of downtown Council Bluffs was platted into residential areas which housed many railroad employees. In the 1920s the construction of the Griffin Wheel Company and a huge icing facility of the Pacific Fruit Express Company, a Union Pacific

¹¹ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 42-45, 51, 57, 58, 449; Schneiders, *Unruly River*, p. 58.

¹² Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 57-70, 449-451.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 103-106, 118-119, 454-455.

¹⁴ The *Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide*, Seventy-Sixth Edition (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1945), p. 142, illustrates the use of the Boyer and Mosquito valleys as railroad routes.

subsidiary, were railroad-related enterprises built on the flood plain at Council Bluffs. In 1930, the Omaha Municipal Airport (now Eppley Airfield) began operations on the Missouri flood plain, northeast of downtown Omaha.¹⁵

From the 1880s the Missouri River provided the Council Bluffs-Omaha area with a reliable supply of water, and in recent years Omaha has also tapped the Platte River for its water needs. Regrettably, for all too long, Omahans, like other people, used rivers as sewers. Until the late 1960s huge amounts of waste from meat-packing plants in South Omaha were dumped into the Missouri River.¹⁶

Of course, the relationship of the people of Omaha and Council Bluffs with the Missouri River has been both good and bad. A June 1877 flood cut across an omega-like loop of the Missouri just north of Omaha, leaving about three square miles of Iowa land on the Nebraska side of the river. The resulting ox-bow lake, known initially as Cut-Off Lake, now Carter Lake, adjoins the town of Carter Lake, Iowa.¹⁷ For many years, this parcel of the Hawkeye State detached from the Iowa mainland was a haven for illegal gambling establishments.¹⁸ When the spring of 1881 released the people of Dakota Territory from *The Long Winter* memorialized by Laura Ingalls Wilder and in O.E. Rolvaag's novel, *Giants in the Earth*, the flood waters that proved so destructive at Yankton and Vermillion, Dakota Territory, rolled on to engulf the lowlands of Omaha and Council Bluffs. These waters also created another ox-bow lake south of Council Bluffs. Named Lake Manawa, it would provide recreational opportunities for people of the metropolitan area.¹⁹ For many years, ice for packinghouses and other purposes was harvested from Carter Lake and

¹⁵ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 190, 192, 197, 461, 463.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-149, 190, 339; Harl A. Dalstrom, *A. V. Sorensen and the New Omaha* (Omaha: Lamplighter Press, Douglas County Historical Society, 1988), pp. 177-199. On the use of the Platte River as a partial source of water for metro Omaha, see, for example, Metropolitan Utilities District, "Your 2000 Water Quality Report."

¹⁷ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, p. 7; <http://www.cityofcarterlake.com/history.html> This internet reference includes H.W. Becker's interesting July 1977 essay, "The Forming of Carter Lake."

¹⁸ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 287, 471; *Lincoln [Nebraska] Star*, Oct. 6, 1955, p. 6.

¹⁹ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 118, 153, 375; Herbert F. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, rev., preface, and new chaps. by John E. Miller (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2004), p. 181; James W. Savage, John T. Bell, and Consul W. Butterfield, *History of the City of Omaha Nebraska and South Omaha* (New York: Munsell & Co., 1894, reprint Evansville, IN, Unigraphic, Inc., 1976), p. 146; William E. Ramsey and Betty Dineen Shrier, *Silent Hills Speak: A History of Council Bluffs, Iowa* (Council Bluffs: Council Bluffs Public Library Foundation, 2002), pp. 299-309, 422; Frank W. Smetana, *A History of Lake Manawa, 1881-1981* (Council Bluffs: Lake Manawa Centennial Committee, Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce, 1981); Knott, *Gateway to the West*, pp. 405-433. Arthur R. Rusch, "Vermillion, South Dakota – Before the Flood of 1881" and Robert Kolbe, "Missouri River Flood of 1881," presentations at the Fortieth Annual Dakota Conference, The Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD, April 25, 2008, show the importance of the 1881 flood in southeastern Dakota Territory.

Lake Manawa. Residential areas developed adjacent to both lakes, and Lake Manawa is now a state park.

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The creation in 1934 of the Omaha District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, made Omaha a center of federal work in flood abatement and other activity in the upper Missouri basin. In 1943, the Missouri River flooded Omaha's airport, its surroundings, and the Lake Manawa area. The April 1952 flood that put downtown Pierre and much of Fort Pierre, South Dakota, under water brought an evacuation of the extensive residential area in the Council Bluffs lowlands. In a huge job of piling sandbags atop levees, the people of Council Bluffs and Omaha, with the help of the Army Corps of Engineers, won a close battle.²¹ In subsequent years, the dams on the Missouri that had a profound impact for both good and ill in Montana and the Dakotas would do much to spare places like Omaha and Council Bluffs from flooding.²² However, the exceptionally wet summer of 1993 demonstrated that flooding on the Missouri River below Gavin's Point Dam was still possible.²³

In the late nineteenth century, residents of the Missouri flood plain west of Council Bluffs, like other settlers in some of the nation's lowlands, suffered from "fever and ague."²⁴ Much more durable was the flooding of what otherwise would be one of the Missouri River's least significant tributaries: Indian Creek, or as the Mormons called it, "Old Lousy." Occasional summer storms would dump heavy rainfall over the hills north of Council Bluffs. Indian Creek, which descends from the bluffs to the flood plain, would engulf the area along its path, leaving great deposits of mud. For years, the issue of what to do about Indian Creek tended to arise around election time. Specific plans for diversion or channeling divided townspeople, and the expense of implementing a particular plan was prohibitive. Not until 1936, as a result of a city bond issue and federal New Deal assistance, would the menace of "Old Lousy" be significantly abated. In 1951

²⁰ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 116, 456; Ramsey and Shrier, *Silent Hills Speak*, p. 309. Ice harvesting was a routine seasonal activity for many years. For example, see *Omaha Daily World*, Jan. 12, 1888, p. 2; *Omaha Sunday Bee*, Feb. 6, 1916 (article by A.R. Grom, magazine section); *Evening Nonpareil* (Council Bluffs), Jan. 25, 1915, p. 6, Jan. 15, p. 5, Jan. 21, 1924, p. 7.

²¹ History – Omaha District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, <https://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/html/pa/pahm/history.htm> Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 310, 311, 375, 473; Liz Rea, *History at a Glance* [detailed timeline for Omaha-Douglas County, Nebraska] (Omaha: Douglas County Historical Society, 2007), p. 98. Ramsey and Shrier, *Silent Hills Speak*, pp. 421-436; Knott, *Gateway to the West*, pp. 81-83; Schneiders, *Unruly River*, pp. 164-165; Harold H. Schuler, *Pierre Since 1910* (Freeman, SD: Pine Hill Press, Inc., 1998), pp. 145-149.

²² Knott, *Gateway to the West*, pp. 83-89.

²³ Rea, *History at a Glance*, p. 135.

²⁴ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 104-105, 455.

a project to relocate the stream's lower reaches and outlet was finished. Nevertheless, run-off from heavy rains remains a problem.²⁵

On the Nebraska side of the Missouri, the multi-pronged Papillion Creek system became a growing threat as Omaha expanded westward into its drainage area. June 1964 brought flood fatalities, and dams were built later to control the run-off of the Papillion or "Papio" as local people call it. However, growth of the city has continued to diminish the area of soil that can absorb water. Hence, reconciling urban and rural land-use to the Papio system remains a contentious question in the greater Omaha area. This is particularly true insofar as it divides urban development advocates from farmers and other rural landowners in the upper reaches of the Papio north of Omaha in Washington County.²⁶

Over 200 miles of Interstate Highway 29—from northwestern Missouri through western Iowa to southeastern South Dakota—utilizes the Missouri valley. On the flood plain at the south edge of Council Bluffs, 1-29 and 1-80 intersect and this area has witnessed considerable economic development. Following Iowa's legalization of pari-mutuel betting, a dog-racing track was opened in 1986 near this intersection. Iowa approved casino gambling in 1989, and in 1995 a slot machine casino opened at the dog track; in 1996 two river-boat casinos, with easy access to Omaha, were opened on the Missouri's left bank. Basic to this story is the fact that such gambling was unlawful in Nebraska and remains so. Further relaxation in Iowa's gaming laws brought the addition of table games at the dog track-casino as Iowa moved away from limiting casinos to river-boats. During the river-boat phase of Iowa's gambling odyssey, the Missouri River was essential in bringing casinos to the city.²⁷

The relevance of the river to casino gambling potentially took a new turn when in December 2007 the National Indian Gaming Commission ruled that the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska had the legal right, subject

²⁵ Ibid., p. 250; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Review Report on Flood Control for Indian Creek Iowa (Omaha: U.S. Army Engineer District, Corps of Engineers, April 1961), copy in Council Bluffs Public Library, special collections; Knott, *Gateway to the West*, pp. 91-97. Much printer's ink was consumed on the Indian Creek question over the years. For example, see *Council Bluffs Globe*, March 13, 1884, p. 4 (editorial); *Evening Nonpareil* (Council Bluffs), June 12, p. 7, June 15, p. 5, June 20, p. 4 (editorial), June 24, p. 5, July 1, p. 6, Dec. 23, 1919, p. 10, Jan. 27, 1920, p. 3.

²⁶ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, p. 341. For a useful account of the issue of flood control on the Papillion Creek system, albeit from an upstream perspective, see Bennington Centennial Book Committee, *Bennington, Nebraska, 1892-1992* (Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1992), pp. 22-27. For examples of the Papio controversy in later times, see *Omaha World-Herald*, July 19 (article by Nancy Gaarder), July 26, 2004 (article by Gaarder) [foregoing citations from online edition], Dec. 13, 2005, p. B6 (editorial), Jan. 9, 2006, p. B6 (editorial), May 10, 2007, p. B3 (article by Gaarder), May 21, 2007, p. B6 (editorial).

²⁷ Larsen, et al, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 379-393, 477; Harl A. Dalstrom, "We've come a long way . . ." Council Bluffs and Gambling, 1983-2003," paper presented at the Northern Great Plains History Conference, Bismarck, North Dakota, Oct. 29, 2004.

to an accord with the State of Iowa, to establish a casino on a five-acre parcel of land that the tribe owned in Carter Lake, Iowa, the flood-created Iowa enclave on the Nebraska side of the Missouri. Unlike the Council Bluffs casinos, an Indian casino would not pay local or state taxes. For this and other reasons the prospect of such a casino has caused consternation on both sides of the river, although some Carter Lake residents saw advantages to the possible development.²⁸

For many years Omaha's riverfront, like the waterfronts of many cities, was devoted to industrial use. In 1971 Mayor Eugene Leahy created a Mayor's Riverfront Development Committee. Leahy, working with planners and architects, popularized the idea that the riverfront should be an enjoyable place. As historian Janet Daly-Bednarek points out, this initiative came in the wake of the rapid decline in Omaha's meat-processing industry and reflected a new direction in urban planning which sought to make cities more attractive and "livable."²⁹ In the 1980s, the development of a Central Park Mall (now the Leahy Mall) in the eastern downtown area not far from the river reflected this direction. Immediately south of the Interstate 480 bridge, linking Omaha and Council Bluffs, the Heartland of America Park, completed in 1990, and development of the adjoining ConAgra corporate campus are popular strolling places that take advantage of their close proximity to the Missouri River.

Just to the north of the 1-480 bridge, the first decade of the twenty-first century brought the transformation of Omaha's riverbank from a smelter, a barge terminal, a scrap metal yard, and other once utilitarian land uses into a walkway with an adjoining upscale restaurant, the regional National Park headquarters, condominiums, and the campus of Gallup University, an educational center for business executives. For many years, Omaha's leaders have sought a distinctive symbol for the city—something like St. Louis's arch—and this may have been found in an artistically-designed pedestrian bridge over the Missouri River near the National Park headquarters. This bridge, scheduled for completion in November 2008, may spur riverfront redevelopment on the Council Bluffs side north of the 1-480 bridge.³⁰

²⁸ *Omaha World-Herald*, Jan. 17, pp. A-1-2 (article by Tim Elfrink and Tom Shaw), Jan. 18, pp. A1-2 (article by Elfrink and Shaw), Jan. 19, pp. B1-2 (article by Paul Hammel), B6 (editorial), Jan. 27, pp. A1, 4 (articles by Shaw and Elfrink), Jan. 31, pp. B1-2 (article by Elfrink) Feb. 1, 2008, pp. B1-2 (article by Elfrink and Shaw); *Sunday World Herald*, Jan. 27, 2008, pp. A1, 4 (article by Shaw).

²⁹ Janet R. Daly-Bednarek, *The Changing Image of the City: Planning for Downtown Omaha, 1945-1973* (University of Nebraska Press, 1992), pp. 41, 187-188, 210-222, 224, 227-231; Larsen, *et al*, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 345-347, 349, 474.

³⁰ Larsen, *et al*, *Upstream Metropolis*, pp. 399-400, 409-413; *Omaha World-Herald*, July 20, pp. A1-2 (article by C. David Kotok), Sept. 26, 2007 pp. A1-2 (article by Karen Sloan), March 27, 2008, p. A1 (article by Kotok); *Sunday World-Herald*, Jan. 21, 2007, p. W1. For quotation from Mayor A.V. Sorensen, see *Omaha World-Herald*, Jan. 15, 1968, p. 1.

How humans have interacted with their river environment is a basic part of the history of Omaha-Council Bluffs. As we are ever more aware, the relationship between people and their natural surroundings is far from static and is often beyond local control. Accordingly, we may anticipate that our relationship with the Missouri River system will remain critical in the development of Greater Omaha.

RIVER NAMES: OUR FIRST SIGNPOSTS

Thomas J. Gasque

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Placenames are “Signposts to the Past,” says Margaret Gelling in the title to her important study of geographic nomenclature in England. Every name on the landscape points back to an earlier time, and to know the story behind the name is to know something of the history of the place that bears the name. But signposts may also be literal signs, showing the way along a road, letting travelers know where they are and how far they have to go to reach a destination. Signposts are especially important if the road goes through miles of sameness.

For late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travelers in what is now South Dakota, the road was the Missouri River, a vast interstate highway from St. Louis to the far northwest. There were no literal signposts to show the way, but travelers noted the positions of islands, bluffs, and tributary streams. And most of these were named. Because islands constantly shifted and bluffs were cut away, the rivers and creeks entering the big river were the most constant features. Frequent travelers knew and early maps usually showed the names of these tributaries. There are problems, however, since these names changed almost as often as street names in a Latin American nation.

The result of these changes is that the state’s namescape is layered with old names, and it is my intent in this report to peel back a few of these layers. I will limit myself to some of the earliest travelers and to those streams presently identified as “rivers” that empty their waters into the Missouri River between Sioux City, Iowa, and the quartzite border with North Dakota.

Early travelers did not carefully distinguish between a “river” and a “creek.” Even today, the distinction is rather arbitrary. Most of us would agree that a river is a large stream. But how large is large? At its mouth, a river may be miles wide and pour out millions of gallons of water. At its source, however, it is usually a mere trickle. I have looked across the vast Mississippi River at New Orleans and have stepped across the same stream as it comes out of Lake Itasca in Minnesota. When Lewis and Clark entered the Missouri River near St. Louis, they faced a great stream. After following the river for more than a year, Lewis found what he assumed to be the beginning. He wrote that one of the men, Hugh McNeal, “stood with a foot on each side of this little rivulet and thanked his god that he had lived to bestride the mighty & heretofore deemed endless Missouri” (Moulton 5: 74). Where Lewis and McNeil were standing, by the way, near Lemhi Pass, is far from the actual source, and the name *Missouri*, by Lewis’s own edict (Moulton 4:

437), begins much farther downstream at the confluence of the Jefferson, the Madison, and the Gallatin Rivers.

If a large stream is a river, then, for most of us, a small stream is a creek. It is impossible, however, to set forth a rule that makes a consistent distinction. At the boundary between large and small, it is a matter of arbitrary convention whether the stream is a river or a creek. Also, while “river” is by far the most common term in the United States for a “large” stream, words for smaller streams often depend on the region. In New England, for example, “brook” is the dominant term; in parts of New York settled by the Dutch, it’s “kill”; and in the Southwest, “arroyo” or “wash” may serve the same function (Campbell 337–45). The difference among these terms is much more cultural than geological—or hydrological.

A number of present-day “creeks” in South Dakota were once “rivers,” and one former river is now a draw: *W. G. Draw* in Fall River County. Despite its size and its usual dry condition, it was once known as *Skum River* (WPA 523).

Many of the Missouri River tributaries, large and small, had French names, more often than not labeled rivers. The English word *river* is borrowed from French *rivière*. There is no straightforward equivalent in French for English *creek*. In the early days of European travel on the Missouri, in the last third of the eighteenth century, most of the travelers were French speaking, and in French *rivière* was a commonly used generic for all flowing bodies of water. The distinction between large streams and smaller ones came into usage later (Lapierre).

Scattered across the state are a number of once-upon-a-time rivers that have simply changed their generics from river to creek. Among these are *Antelope* (Lyman County), *Ponca* (Tripp County), *Rapid* (Pennington County), *Redwater* (Lawrence and Butte Counties), *Spearfish* (Lawrence County) and *Split Rock*. Others that were once rivers changed both generic and specific: *Black River* became *Black Pipe Creek* (Todd and Mellette Counties), *Pedani River* is now *Marsh Creek* (Kingsbury, Miner, and Sanborn Counties), *Tyler’s River* is *Medicine Creek* (Hughes County), *Nixon River* is *Snake Creek* (Faulk and Spink Counties and others in between), and *Centinel River* is *Tall Prairie Chicken Creek* (Stanley County). What is now *Spring Creek* in McPherson County has had several river names: *Pond*, *Bourbese*, and *Spring*, as well as the more familiar *Stone Idol*.

I have relied on several sources for the information for this presentation. Volume 1 of *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, edited by Gary Moulton, is an atlas which includes not only the maps that Clark created but also those drawn earlier by John Evans, a Welshman, who, along with a Scotsman named James Mackay, traveled to the Mandan villages north of present-day Bismarck, North Dakota, in the

early 1790s. Evans and Mackay were in the employ of the Spanish government, but Evans was also supported by a Welsh nationalist organization who hoped to find evidence for the long-rumored tribe of Welsh Indians, descendants of an expedition supposedly led by Welsh Prince Madoc (Wood 42–43). Lewis and Clark had procured a copy of Evans's map in St. Louis and had it with them as they traveled up the river (Moulton 1: 6–7). I have also relied extensively on the journal entries, mostly by Clark, in the other volumes of the Moulton edition. For names collected by the explorers Joseph, N. Nicollet and John C. Frémont, I have used Nicollet's magnificent 1843 map and the accompanying journals and notes edited by Edmund C. and Martha Coleman Bray. For lists of names, two sources are indispensable: the 1941 WPA collection titled *South Dakota Place Names* (revised by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve in 1973 as *South Dakota Geographic Names*); and the national database of geographic names collected and maintained by the U. S. Board on Geographic Names and available for searching on their website. The WPA book also attempts to explain the origin of the six thousand or so names it contains, but unfortunately there are a number of discrepancies between the names in this collection and the names collected by the Board on Geographic Names.

For the rest of this presentation I will take you on a virtual voyage up that interstate highway known as the Missouri River. This great stream, 2,315 miles long, was called by the Lakota *Mnišōša* [m-NEE-SHOW-shah], or "turbid waters" (Vogel 45). Sometimes the word *Missouri* is said to mean "Big Muddy," but according to recent studies (Lance 281-90; McCafferty 31-45), the word is clearly from the Illinois-speaking Peoria Indians and means "People Who Have the Big Boats," or "Big-Canoe People." Thus the name used for the people precedes the name of the river. The Peoria, who lived at the mouth of this stream, called the river itself *Pekitanou*, which does mean "muddy."

As we begin our tour up the Missouri River from Sioux City, we immediately encounter the **Big Sioux River**, a name which announces that we are entering the country dominated by those people

¹ This distance is measured from the junction with the Mississippi River to the junction of the Jefferson and the Madison Rivers at Three Forks, Montana. The Gallatin, third of the three forks, meets the newly named Missouri just yards downstream. If one adds to this the longest branch to the Jefferson River, which rises just west of Yellowstone National Park, the total length is 2,540 miles. By contrast, the Mississippi River, from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Itasca in Minnesota, is 2,340 miles.

² The recorded form is from Marquette's 1873 journal, *8EMESS8RITA* (the symbol *8* represented *w* or *oo*) or *weemeehsoorital weemihsoorita* (McCafferty 118-19). The name came from the Illinois speaking Peoria Indians and is not the name the Missouri Indians (a Siouan language group) would have called themselves at that time. (McCafferty 118). They called themselves *Niutachi* /nyu-tah-chee/ "those who died in the water" OR "those who build a town at the entrance of a river" (Lance 286).

generally called Sioux, a convenient term for the several groups more accurately called Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota. The adjective “big” serves to distinguish this stream from another river some miles downstream, the Little Sioux River. The Big Sioux has had a number of names, including “Second Sioux,” “Tchankansandata,” “Calumet,” and “Riviere Croche.” The name “Sioux River” is one of the earliest documented names, found on John Evans’s map. Lewis and Clark, who had a copy of Evans’s map, used this name. Clark spelled it *S-E-O-U-E-X* (one of the twenty-seven different ways he spelled this word), and noted that there is a waterfall some seventy-five leagues from the mouth, a fall of nearly two hundred feet in two large and several small pitches. He also says that a creek comes in from the east which flows through a quarry where “the red pipe Stone is percurd, . . . a place of Peace with all nations” (Moulton 2: 497). *Calumet*, which may be a translation of *Tchankasndata*, or “pipe with wooden stem,” is one of the names that appear on Nicollet’s map. The name acknowledges the pipestone quarry. Nicollet’s map offers other names for the Big Sioux River, based on his use of Dakota informants. One of these is *Rivière de Croche*, or “Crooked River,” a reference to the great S-curve that the river makes in the city of Sioux Falls. According to Martha and Edmund Bray (102), this name refers to the river from the falls to its source, and *Tchankasndata* is limited to the lower part of the river, from the falls to the mouth. Nicollet also gives the more familiar name of the river, *Sioux*.

The second river in our travels is the **Vermillion River**, a river which has had many names, some of them quite mysterious. Evans’s map clearly labels this river *R au Kenvill*. The letter *K* is clear, but Raymond Wood thinks that this name should be Renville (199). The problem with this is that there is no evidence to my knowledge that any of the Renville family, who figured significantly in the middle years of the nineteenth century, were here as early as the 1790s.

When Lewis and Clark arrived at this point on September 24, 1804, Clark called the river *White Stone*. It was at the mouth of this river that several of the party paused and spent a day walking nine miles to the hill known as Spirit Mound, supposedly occupied by little creatures who would do great harm to

³ The Ojibwa referred to their enemies as “snakes,” using the general Algonquin word *Nadowa*. Their chief enemies were the nations to the east; those to the west, the Dakota, were the “little snakes,” the diminutive suffix *-si* added to *Na-dowa*, hence *Nadowasi*. The French used only the suffix and pluralized it in the French manner, hence *Sioux* (Buechel 3).

⁴ The usual word for “pipe” is *yhynupa* (in the transcription used by the Colorado University Lakhóta Project 183), pronounced chā-NOO-pah (ā is nasalized). The literal meaning—“wood,” “two”—refers to the fact that pipe stems were made by cementing two grooved pieces of wood together.

anyone who approached the hill (Moulton 2: 50 4–07) Sergeant Ordway, one of the enlisted men who kept a journal, calls the river “white Stone or little peoples River” and later in the same entry calls it “the River of little children” (Moulton 9: 44). In September 1806, on the way down the Missouri, Clark calls the same river *Redstone* (Moulton 8: 346), a name closer to the present name *Vermillion*.

Nicollet ignores all of the Lewis and Clark designations and uses both the familiar *Vermillion* and the Dakota *Wasshesha* [wass-SHAY-shah], which means “red paint.” The reference is to the mineral which the Dakota used for paint, possibly red ocher, a form of hematite, or limonite, a low-grade brownish yellow iron ore (Bates and Jackson 233, 296). The supply of this valuable material, once found along the banks of this river, was apparently exhausted by the time of European exploration. The French called the clay “*vermillon*,” and it was a valuable trade item. The present name of the river, well established by the 1830s, is essentially a translation of the Dakota name.

Next is the **James River**, a long, narrow stream which starts in North Dakota and after a tentative northern course makes an abrupt turn to the south and runs for a total of 710 miles before reaching the Missouri River just east of Yankton. Because of its great length, yet narrow width and shallow depth, it is sometimes called the world’s “longest unnavigable river.”

The earliest documented name for the river was *Rivière au Jacques*, variously spelled, *Jacques* being the French form for *James*. “R au Jaque” appears on Evans’s map of the 1790s. Who Jacques was is uncertain, but the best candidate is Jacques D’Eglise, who was active on the Missouri River in the early 1790s as far north as the Mandan villages. If the James River was in fact named for D’Eglise, there are no records to indicate that he had any doings on his namesake stream (Nasatir 48-49). The WPA study of South Dakota placenames states with confidence but no proof that Pierre Truteau named the river in 1794. Because the name was on Evans’s map, Lewis and Clark were aware of it, and from the vantage point of Spirit Mound said they could see the timber at the mouth of the River Jacque (Moulton 3:11). Clark once called it the *Yeankton* River (17), the only instance of that name I have found. It was at the mouth that they first encountered the Yankton Sioux. Nicollet, as usual, supplied the Dakota name, *Tchan-san-san Wakpa*, which means “whitewood river,” perhaps because of birch trees in the upper reaches or more likely because of bleached dead trees somewhere along its course.

In the 1850s a new name for this river surfaced, a situation that I spoke of a few years ago at this conference (Gasque). The name is *Dakota*. There was no historic precedence for this name, but it became clear in the 1850s that when Minnesota became a state the left-over territory which would be

created would be called Dakota Territory. Since many territories and states of the Midwest had been named for major rivers (Ohio, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kansas, Iowa, and Minnesota for example), it was reasonable to continue this pattern. Since the major river name, *Missouri*, was already taken, Congress made it a condition for territorial status that “the river in said territory heretofore known as the ‘River aux Jacques,’ or ‘James river,’ shall hereafter be called the Dakota River” (*General Laws* 27). While some maps of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continued to use the name *Dakota* in addition to *James*, the name has not caught on. In 1906, the Rand McNally Company asked the U. S. Board on Geographic Names for a decision, and on January 2, 1907 the name *James* was approved (BGN Files). Unknowingly, the Board went against an act of Congress, and the situation has never been resolved.

As we journey upstream after passing the mouth of the James, the next river comes in from Nebraska, the **Niobrara River**. The name comes from the Omaha word *niubthata*, meaning “wide river” (Moulton 3: 48n). At least as early as 1785, the river was known to French travelers as “L’e au qui court,” which means “the river that runs” (Wood 80) or “the river that rushes” (Moulton 48n). Clark writes, “this river Comes roleing its Sands ... into the Missouris...” (Moulton 3:46). On Evans’s map, that name appears along with an English translation, “Rapid R [that wanders].” The concept, “river that runs,” is remembered in the little community of *Running Water*, on the South Dakota side near the mouth of the Niobrara.

Lewis and Clark passed the “Que Courre” river on September 4, 1804, adding a parenthetical explanation to “que courre”: “rapid” (Moulton 3: 48), but they had little to say otherwise. Nicollet’s map has as the main name for the river the modern designation *NI-OBARRAH* (in upper case letters) followed by *Eau qui court R.* in parentheses.

Next we encounter the **White River**, whose name has remained more stable than most. The only name on Evans’s map is *White River*. The same is true for Lewis and Clark. Nicollet’s map gives the Lakota—or perhaps Dakota—name, *Mankizitah*, followed by its English translation, “White Earth River.” The name clearly describes the silty quality of the river, washing soil down from the Badlands. The WPA placename study claims that an early name was *Smoky Earth River*, a translation of a Sioux name, “given because of a phenomenon of prewhite days, when twisting columns of smoke arose from the surrounding hills and gradually blanketed the entire valley” (WPA 154). This assertion is not documented.

After the White, we meet the **Bad River**. According to the WPA study, this is a translation of Lakota *šíya* [SHEE-cha], which means “bad” in a general sense. The story is that a band of Lakota were camped on the bank and a cloudburst sent a raging torrent down the river, drowning many of them. The river was thereafter known as “bad” (WPA 145). Evans’s 1796 map calls the river *little missurie*. Lewis and

Clark were aware of this name but decided to name the river Teton because it was here that they first encountered the Teton Sioux. Nicollet labels it "Shichah or Bad R.," with "Teton R." in parentheses.

An article by David Harmon provides a reasonable explanation for the name "Little Missouri" to be applied to this stream. The tributary now known—and known for a long time—as *Little Missouri* enters the Missouri River in western North Dakota. Just downstream from there the Missouri, which has been heading east for many miles, makes a dramatic turn to the south. That turn was often called the "Great Bend," or the "Big Bend." Back in South Dakota, just downstream from the Bad River, the Missouri suddenly makes a large loop, only a mile or so across and twenty-five miles around. The Lakota called it *Kajmi-yica*, meaning "curled river bend" (Buechel 131, 275). The feature appears as *Karmichigah Bend* on Nicollet's map; the French called it the "Grand Detour"; and we know it today as the "Big Bend," giving its name to one of the six Missouri River dams that were built in the 1950s and 1960s. Early travelers confused the "Big Bend" and the "Great Bend" and at least one of Evans's informants told him that the South Dakota river was the "Little Missouri."

The next river as we move upstream is the **Cheyenne River**, so named because it comes out of the territory claimed by the Cheyenne nation. Evans calls it "R de CHYEN". Lewis and Clark also use this name but initially misunderstand the word, assuming it is the French word for "dog," *chien*. As a result, they at least twice call the river "Dog River" (Moulton 3: 133, 144). The river barely makes it onto Nicollet's map, on the extreme western edge. Here appears the label "SHAYEN R.," but slightly upstream from there we find this notation: "Washteg or Good R." *Washtë* [wash-TAY] is the Lakota word for "good" (Buechel 552). Perhaps this is in contrast to the Bad River, just downstream, but since *washtë* can also mean "beautiful," there is likely a recognition that far up the Cheyenne River is the tributary known as *Belle Fourche*, French for "beautiful fork." This clear-running north fork contrasts sharply with the silt-filled south fork, or main branch of the Cheyenne.

Two more rivers remain before we reach the North Dakota border. First is the **Moreau River**. It is not clear where this name comes from, but likely a French trader by that name is so remembered. The WPA study is specific but not informative, saying that Monsieur Moreau was a trader whose home was at the mouth of this river and who for some reason was stabbed to death by his Cheyenne wife (WPA 150). Evans's map calls it "R au MORROW," and a name that shows up on some maps, "Owl River," is allegedly a translation of a Lakota word, but *Moreau* is not a translation of *owl*, as sometimes is claimed. Lewis and Clark say that the Arikara call it the *Sur-war-kar-ne* (or *Sar-war-car-nar*, but give no translation, and

Moulton's notes are silent on the matter (3: 148–50). There is a Moreau River in Missouri, which Moulton suggests "is probably named for one of several Frenchmen named Moreau residing in Missouri" (2: 274n).

The **Grand River**, with a name meaning "large" in French, is not especially large, so it is curious how this river came to be so named. This was, at the time of exploration, the home of the Arikara, or Ree Indians, who were more sedentary and agricultural than the nomadic Sioux. Because they raised corn, among other crops, it was natural that the name "R au Corn" came to be applied to it; this was the name that appears on Evans's map. The only name that Lewis and Clark use is *We-tar-hoo*, which Moulton (3: 153n) suggests may be the Mandan *witahu* 'place characterized by oaks,' although this was still in Arikara territory. Both Sergeants Ordway (Moulton 9: 78n) and Gass (10: 52n) mention the river, but seem to confuse it with a smaller stream just two miles upstream, the present Oak Creek, which Clark calls the *Maropa River* (3:150). As for the Grand River, none of the party uses the present name, which evolved later as a descriptive name.

We have now almost reached the North Dakota border, and this completes our virtual boat trip up the old Missouri River. The variety of names each of the tributaries carried in the early days of exploration would have made navigation difficult, but since most of the travelers were aware of the options they would not have been confused by the variety of signposts along the way. But these names also can tell us much about the people and values of a time long ago, and in that sense they are truly "signposts to the past."

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⁵ The indexes to several volumes of Moulton's edition confuse South Dakota's Grand River with a river of the same name in Missouri. The comprehensive index (volume 13) sorts out some, but not all, of this confusion.

⁶ Many streams of historical importance have been neglected in this paper. Two streams in the southeastern part of the state, for example, Emanuel Creek and Choteau Creek, were called, respectively, "Wananri River" and "Nawizi River" on Nicollet's map.

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BECOMING LILLIE HAYS: LETTERS FROM A MISSIONARY WOMAN

Kelly Ann Goertzen

"This Missouri river is unlike any river you could dream of. it is very broad and in some places shallow. The channel owing to the sand & wind's [sic] is continually shifting. it is never two days in the same place. we were two days high & dry on a sand bar. and sometimes a boat will be on one for weeks after a journey of six days."

These are the words of Lillie Hays the first time she encounters the Missouri River. As an intern at the Center for Western Studies, one of my assignments was to transcribe letters from a missionary woman. When thinking of transcribing letters from the nineteenth century, I have always thought it would be boring learning about some old, dead white guy. But then Dr. Thompson gave me a collection of letters from a missionary woman to her best friend and the first image that popped into my head was that of Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman. Although the letters are not those of Jane Seymour, I was not disappointed. Since September, I have had the privilege of transcribing Lillie's letters and entering into her world where buffalo roam and Custer has yet to take his last stand. Throughout my transcriptions, I have been able to get into Lillie's head and I believe literally become her.

Who is Lillie Hays? Through her letters, which begin in 1874 and end around 1876, but for the purposes of this presentation I will only use her first three letters, I have learned that she is a young vivacious woman who left civilization for the dangerous western lands. More specifically she is 24 years old and from Pittsburgh. She had a hard life but wants to put her talents to good use. As a result, she joins Bishop Hare in Dakota Territory to help at the Indian Missions. At first she is stationed at the Yankton Agency, but *"at her own request Bp. Hare sent her to this the furthest as well as most dangerous Post in the Mission field, the Cheyenne Agency."* At the agency, she meets a variety of interesting people including military soldiers, a young and very available missionary man, and numerous gossiping women. Her duties at the school include teaching the boys to read and write but also she teaches the women how to sew. But her true aspiration is to start a school for girls. Throughout her letters to her friend Nan in Ohio, she paints a picture of herself as an adventurous woman who is not afraid of a little danger.

Lillie Hays is a remarkable woman and from her and her letters I have learned three important lessons. The first is that although transcribing is fun, the work can be difficult at times. My first challenge was finding the order to the letters. Some did not have dates on them while others had some pages mixed within other letters. My next challenge was putting the pages of the first letter into correct order. At first,

this proved difficult but after a while, it was actually really fun. Once the pages were in order, I was ready to tackle transcribing. Yet, this too proved to be a challenge. After photocopying the letters, I sat down ready to learn more about this woman. I always thought my professors' handwriting was bad, but they have nothing on Lillie Hays. As I was going through the letters, I found a couple of words that I could not quite make out, so I just simply circled them to come back to. However, by the end of first letter, about a third of the letter was circled. But do not worry, I persevered and by my last draft, only a few words were circled. Another issue which I encountered was her use or rather lack of punctuation. To the say least, Miss Hays would never pass an Augustana English course. She had so many run-on sentences that I did not know where one ended and the next one began. Also, Lillie was not the best at correctly crossing her t's and dotting her "l's." I came up with some pretty interesting words and phrases in the letters. However, I quickly began to pick up on her quirks and began the process of getting inside her head.

One of the most frustrating events is when the letter continues but you do not have the last pages. I always get so immersed into the letter that when it stops abruptly I feel a little saddened. It is almost like a piece of history is lost forever. For instance, as I was working on the second letter, I realized that the letter just ended after page three. I searched the rest of the letters and found a portion of a letter that I thought just might fit. The only problem was that this portion also did not have a conclusion. After analyzing the text and handwriting, I came to the conclusion that it had to be the next part of the letter but it was still frustrating not to have the ending to the letter. However, on the flip side, I have experienced finding "history." For instance, letter three ended much like letter two did, abruptly in mid sentence. Frustrated, I continued to search through the rest of the letters hoping to find the fourth letter and to get more information. But what I found though was the missing portion of the third letter with a conclusion. After analyzing the paper and handwriting, I concluded that the new portion had to be the end of the first letter. I cannot tell you how excited I was to find the ending. I bombarded Dr. Thompson in his office telling him the good news. It was in this moment that I realized I had crossed over to the dark side: I had become a historian, because who else would get excited about finding a missing page?

Another difficulty when working with these texts is that I had no idea what some of these words meant. As a result, I learned how to use the materials around me to help solve these problems. For example, Lillie writes about the Cincinnati Commercial and how Mr. Swift "devours" it. At first I thought that it had to be a donut or some sort of candy; but as I was working on a different collection, I found papers with the words Cincinnati Commercial on them. Guess what it is not a candy bar, it's a newspaper. Throughout my work on these letters, I used many sources from the archives to aid in my research.

The second lesson I learned was that living in the west was not the fantasy that Hollywood has made it out to be, but rather it was a dangerous place to live. When thinking about the old west, the first thing that comes to my mind is a cowboy, of course he looks like the one off of my cowboy calendar, and he is swaggering down a tidy main street, flashing his perfectly white smile at all the nicely dressed women. But Lillie's letters allowed me an insight into the real old west. Lillie's west is not gently rolling plush green hills dotted with vibrant wildflowers, but rather "*one can ride miles and never see a tree-not even a blade of grass. You never saw a dusty river.*" Her description continues with "*The nearest white man's dwelling is three miles from this and there are hundreds of Indians all around this Mission House.*" Apparently Dakota Territory is nothing like the civilization she left behind.

Besides her surroundings, one of the first things Lillie talks about is the military post. Now when I think about military posts, I think of dashing young men dressed in clean uniforms waltzing with the fine young ladies. Lillie did ensure my beliefs to a certain degree when she wrote, "*they were certainly the most pleasant I have spent for years. We rode out every evening and there were ever so many parties made for my benefit.*" Yet, by the end of the third letter, she painted me a completely different picture of life on the plains. In the third letter, she recalls the darker side of life at the military posts and surrounding areas. "*The government,*" she writes, "*has issued an order to all the commanders of Military Posts in the west to stop all such parties. to burn their provisions & wagons. destroy stock and take the men prisoners.*" She continues, "*The Indians expect [or report] a big fight between the party and Indian.*" An exciting part of her picture of the west is her account of General Custer. She wishes that he would leave the Indians alone for they are "*ugly enough just now and this business will stir them up more.*"

Following this, she paints an interesting picture of the Indian. In her first letter, she is a bit paradoxical. She writes, "*The Indians here are the most savage on the river,*" but then she counters herself when she says, "*but they are very friendly toward missionaries they come into our house and seem perfectly at home you should see the magnificent costumes in which they strut about.*" Her paradoxical view of the Native Americans does not change throughout her letters. In her third letter she relates a "strange practice of the Indian." She writes, "*when an Indian gets angry at any one or feels badly at any thing "cante xica" as they say- He does not kill the person who has offended him but goes out and kills the first white man he meets. This is really true.*" Yet, even as she relates this tale, she does not seem to be horrified, but rather the event is just an everyday occurrence.

The third and final lesson I learned while working on these letters is that women of yesterday are not so different from the women of today. As I was going through these letters, I did not know exactly how

attached I would get to these letters. I thought I would enjoy them for their historical value, but in the end, I realized that I was the person in the letter.

The connections I made between Lillie and myself may at times seem a little farfetched but all are very relevant. The first connection I made is that Lillie and I are actually quite similar. She is 24 and itching for adventure and I am 22 and also itching for something new and exciting. In my mind, I see her looking similar to me although she is a bit shorter and I am the prettier one. But we both have that mischievous smile and independent spirit. She thought that the Dakota Territory could be the answer to her need for adventure, as did I when I came here as a freshman in college. But here is where our differences emerge, she came out here to help people and I just wanted to find a cowboy.

Upon moving to the Dakota Territory, Lillie hoped to find a wonderland, but instead she found that *"The wind storms are terrible and the dust is blown off the land in such clouds that sometimes the river is not visible for a day. You can never tell whether it is going to rain or not. The clouds blow away just when you think they are coming right toward you. But when it does come there is a perfect deluge."* When I came out here, I, too, hoped to find a wonderland, my own little ponderosa with Little Joe. But what I found were terrible wind storms, never knowing if it would rain or not, no skyscrapers, and I have yet to find Little Joe.

Although these examples may seem shallow, others throughout her letters prove that women of yesterday are very much like their daughters of today.

One of my favorite connections is a typical woman stereotype: our nasty need to gossip. Throughout her second letter, all she does is gossip. Yes, she is relating events and telling about people to her friend, but as a fellow gossip, I know one when I read one. At first, I was appalled at all the people and stories she wrote about, but then I checked my email sent box and realized that my emails looked oddly familiar. Her favorite topic is people's character, especially her roommate's. She wrote, *"Miss L is about forty, is fleshy and is very short is also untidy. And as we room together I spend a great deal of time putting things straight. She is not good tempered but good other ways."* Let's just say that I am glad we are not roommates. Later in the letter she recalls one of her visits to a school. Here she gives details about every woman there. I am sure there would have been more but letter is missing its final pages.

The next connection I found is another stereotype. Apparently, women love to shop and women in 1874 were also addicted to it. When she isn't gossiping, Lillie implores her friend to go shopping for her. She writes, *"Nan will you do a little shopping for me. You can send by mail. Send me two sets of hoops- you cannot get these for love or money here. I want two sets of the best kind."* The list continues with

neckties and strict instructions of how to package and send the materials. Once again I looked at my own life and realized that I had made a similar request to my mother this week about buying me chocolates that one can only get in California. At this point, I was getting a little freaked out by all the connections but nothing is as interesting as the next connection.

So far, Lillie and I share a love for gossip and a love for shopping. Now we move on to my favorite topic: men. Now I have always known that women talk about men but I did not know that we still talk about men and seek advice in the same way. This realization took me for a surprise one week as I was working on the letters. For instance, I was transcribing her second letter, when I read this, "*Mr Swift the missionary is about twenty-six and is thoroughly good and honest.*" She continues with, "*But Mr. S. is horribly ugly and is like all geniuses horribly untidy & you know that is a great cross to me.*" Now you have to understand, here is a woman who is young, but getting past marriageable age, and alone in the "wilderness." And probably the only single man that she has contact with is Mr. Swift. He is young like her and his life's passion, like hers, is working with Native Americans. But he is ugly and untidy, so what is a lonely girl to do? Ask her best friend for advice.

Now the strange thing about this whole scenario is that the same week that I was transcribing this letter I too sent my friend this same type of message via facebook. Although the "slang" was different, the meanings were the exact same: here is this guy, here are his good attributes and his bad, what should I do? I do not know what advice Nan gave but I do know that my friend gave me good advice. Apparently, women of any age still need their friend's approval and assurance that they are making the right decision.

Another similarity that I found between us is our ability to get really upset when people do not write us back right away. In letter three, she writes, "*I have written several letters to you. but have not as yet heard from you*" and then in letter one, "*answer immediately for at the very earliest I cannot get an answer before a month- and if there is any delay it may be three months. Do send me a photograph of yourself and if you have any newspapers to spare send me one occasionally.*" I know that when I email somebody and they do not reply within at the most twelve hours, I get a little annoyed. I definitely do not think that I could have survived waiting three months for a single package.

The last similarity between us is our ability to be the most random people on earth. I am quite known among my friends and classmates as the most random person ever, but I think I met my match with Lillie. In her third letter, she jumps from the dark subject of the Indian-White conflicts around her area to talking about the beauty of the weather and how she wishes that Nan were with her. She writes, "*but goes out and kills the first white man he meets...so that travelling especially at night is rather risky business.*"

However I have been out to ride several times but did not get in until after dark. I wish you were here to enjoy the beautiful weather- it is cold but so dry and clear that one does not notice it." What? One moment people are killing each other here but it really is a nice place to live. In that moment, I realized that I had found my twin.

By reading these letters, Lillie allowed me to enter her world, one which is centuries apart but yet so similar. What I love about these letters is that to her they are just a tale of everyday life, but what she does not know is that they hold little secret treasures for historians. For instance, in her third letter, Lillie writes about General Custer and his expedition into the Black Hills. At the time, all Custer is to her is a Civil War veteran but she does not know that this General Custer will become an infamous American legend.

The letters have challenged me. They have expanded my mind, touched my heart, and tried my sanity and patience. Transcribing the letters also opened up a new hobby to me: letter writing. Over the past few months, I have been diligently writing my cousin who is serving in Iraq. As I write my own letters, I wonder if someday these letters will end up in an archives somewhere where some young, aspiring historian will find the letters and transcribe them and in her own time and way become Kelly Goertzen, like I have become Lillie Hays.

TWO WOMEN ON THE EAST SIDE OF SIOUX FALLS

James Gremmels

During the twenties, thirties, and forties, the east side of Sioux Falls was not quite a "salad bowl," for the only mansion was the large Dickenson house on the northwest corner of Tenth Street and Cliff Avenue. The upper middle and lower upper classes lived on the west and south sides. On the east side the predominantly one, two, and three bedroom modest frame homes housed John Morrell workers, skilled laborers, clerks, public employees, day laborers, a few professionals, and those at the bottom who lived in shanty towns; we called them Hoovervilles. There were a large number of Syrians, many of whom did well, and two African American families.

East of the river were the railroad yards, the large John Morrell meatpacking plant, the tenth street viaduct, a junk yard underneath it, four lumber yards, the Girton Adams ice house, two large groceries, a number of penny candy stores, two drug stores, and assorted smaller businesses, such as a shoe repair shop, a couple of hardware stores, a few gasoline stations, and about one-half dozen bars.

The east side drugstore was a block from my house and for the teenagers it was a meeting place. Of course, it had a soda fountain with ice cream sodas, malts, sundaes and fizzy drinks. The entire south wall was a rack of pulp magazines, comic books, and newspapers. I bought my first Superman, Batman, Captain Marvel, and classic comics from that rack. I always bought for a dime the Sunday New York Daily News on Friday, so I could read the comic section before Sunday. If you bought something from the fountain, the owner would let you take one of the works off the rack and read it, if you put it back.

Library Park, that covered a city block had the East Side Fire Station and a branch of the city library on the southwest corner, swings, teeter totters, a large sandbox, a shallow swimming pool, three feet in the deepest end, affectionately called the frog pond, a dressing room facilities, a clay tennis court, and a platform for city band concerts. Drake Springs, the first large public swimming pool was built in the late thirties. The first Howard Wood complex with a cinder track, lighted football field, and professional baseball diamond entertained thousands until it was moved. The St. Louis Cardinals' farm club, the Canaries, played there in the summer.

John Greenleaf Whittier was the largest K-8 grade school in town, the only one on the east side. There were six other K-8 schools that covered the rest of the town. In addition to Whittier were three feeder schools, Franklin, Bancroft, and Riverside. Howard Wood once said that Whittier gave him more athletes than he knew what to do with. The red brick Whittier school between 5th and 6th streets and Indiana and

Fairfax Avenues brought all of us together. My principal, Mayme Stapleton, is one of the influential and colorful women I wish to talk about. The other will be my grandmother.

My grandfather, as did my mother and two uncles, graduated from Whittier. The first school was a two story Dakota granite building opened in 1883. A duplicate called Hawthorne was erected also on the north side. To accommodate for the rapid growth, two wooden, two classroom country schools, were moved in to help deal with the large enrollment. My mother said that when she was there in 1911, they had names for them: "John," "Greenleaf," and "Whittier" for the larger school. When the original Whittier was torn down to be replaced by the present building, they used the Dakota granite to build the beautiful retaining wall on the 6th Street side. The main school was finished in 1923. When I was a student, I spent my 2nd and 3rd grades in the "John." Today the school has been expanded into Whittier Junior High School.

When I enrolled in kindergarten in 1932, Mayme Stapleton had been the hard love principal for nine years. She retired in 1944, one of the longest tenured principals, twenty-one years.

Born in Ireland, Mayme's father moved to Sioux Falls in 1871 and operated a very successful harness business. He is described in the "History of Dakota Territory" as "one of the prominent Masons of the city and also an influential factor in local politics, his popularity and the trust reposed in him by his fellow citizens being indicated in the fact that he served as democratic county commissioner in this republican stronghold for about nine years." His large Victorian-like home, at 503 South Dakota Avenue, just south of First Lutheran church, where Mayme and her husband lived, still survives.

Thanks to Carla Williams, a librarian at the Sioux Falls City Library, I located a pristine 1899 Sioux Falls High School "Class Book" at the Pettigrew Museum. In her portrait, Mayme looks somberly at the camera with her piercing brown eyes. As advertising editor, she did an outstanding job securing forty-eight ads, sometimes ten to a page, a single page from such familiar businesses as Pay's Art Store and Fantles. There were lawyers, dentists, and doctors. Columbia Engraving of Chicago, Illinois had a full page ad with the comment that "The half-tone plates in this publication are made by us." Mayme certainly fulfilled her task.

Of the thirty-three graduates she was not one of the ten honor students. In a political survey of the class she was probably one of the five democrats. An article in the class book delightfully mentions that "no one who crammed for the teacher's examination will ever forget it. Most of the class took the examination and passed successfully. The court house on that day echoed and re-echoed to many voices, which must have astonished its dignified walls."

In a section identified as "The Class Prophecy," Mayme was identified as belonging to the "big five." This quintet had become so attached to each other during school life that they couldn't become detached afterwards, and consequently no fellow could marry one of them without having to board them all; and as none of their admirers had an income big enough for that, none of the quintet had been asked, and so all were compelled to paddle their own canoes. Their dress and establishment indicated prosperity and I was handed their business card on which was printed, "The Ladies Social Supply Company," "Lulu, Hunter, Pres.; Edna McGarraugh, Sec.; Mamy [sic] M'Kee, Treas.; Carrie Arneson, Business Manager; Josephine Skoyen, Designer. Dealers in Taffey, Soft Soap and Style." I asked if scrubbing soap was meant, and was told it was the social anti-friction article and would do me lots of good, so I laid in a supply. I also remarked that they seemed rather limited, and was told that twenty-eight kinds of taffy, thirty-two of soft soap and forty of style, constituted 100 per cent of their trade to suit all notions of people and that the demand exceeded the firm's supply so that the profits were "perfectly splendid."

The paper cover of the annual was a beautiful mauve with Class Book at the top and Sioux Falls High School at the bottom. Just above that was the date, 1899, surrounded by a laurel wreath. Two scepters enclose the Latin motto that can be translated into "Let Love Bind Us Together." I like to think that Mayme chose to spend her professional life as teacher and principal at Whittier with the less privileged because of the motto and her political affiliation.

As the principal of Whittier, it was appropriate that the halls had floors of brown battleship linoleum because she was the admiral in command. Often she would be in the hall to see that no one talked when changing classrooms. Her office, whose large plate glass window over looked the upper playground, had a supply closet where a conspicuous rubber hose hung just inside the open door. I always doubted she ever used it, but it symbolized her power.

Her punishments generally were imaginative and effective. On one occasion when some young men grabbed screaming young women and threw them down an ice slide to the lower playground, she came out of her office and ordered the ring leaders into her office. We knew we were in a bit of trouble because she put on the pince-nez glasses she wore on a velvet ribbon around her neck. Her first words were, "One of you has a Smith Brothers cough drop in your mouth. Spit it out!" We laughed because it was true. Disarmed, we listened closely to her short speech on incivility. On another occasion our eighth grade music class decided not to sing when Miss Hammock raised her baton because she had not given us the picnic she had promised. In tears she went down to the principal's office. Immediately Mayme came back with her. Her first act was to have Harlan Johnson, Donald Pyn, Virgil Shelquist, and Jimmy

Gremmels stand. Then she said, "You are the only students who have been in the class for nine years. Shame on you. Now Miss Hammock let's hear them sing the song." Masterfully she had quelled the rebellion.

One last example where she participated in a disciplinary action occurred from an incident in Miss Erickson's fourth grade room. I had a bad habit of sitting on my left foot when I read. She wanted both feet on the floor. Finally exasperated she said that after school I was to go to Mayme Stapleton's office and sit on my left foot on an oak bench in the foyer. Mayme ignored me as she went about her business in and out the door. Finally, near five o'clock, she stopped and turned to me, "Jimmy what are you doing here?" I said, "Miss Erickson sent me here." "Why?" she inquired and I replied, "Because I was sitting on my foot." "You're sitting on your foot now," she retorted. "Go home." Today, I think she had a good laugh because she probably had contacted Miss Erickson for information about me. Never did I sit on my foot again.

Mayme Stapleton established tradition at Whittier. One was the oral arithmetic test. Every year she would come into your class and administer the test. She would appear with slips of paper that she would pass out. Then she would say, "Take out your pencils and write your name in the upper right hand corner, and number one to ten. Now put your pencils down." She would then read a question that got progressively more difficult as you grew older—a question such as, "If you went to the store with a quarter and bought eleven penny gum balls, how much money would you have left." After a short pause, she would say, "Now pick up your pencils and write the answer. Now put your pencils down." Invariably, the tests would come back the next day with a red number. What an interesting way to check on your students and teachers.

Mayme required that each teacher put on an hour long convocation for the school. As you grew older, you enjoyed watching the grades come into the auditorium—first the kindergarten students with their napping pads on up to the eighth graders, who had the back wall. The quality varied because some teachers were better directors than others. I remember being the Clown of Cockle Doodle-Do and also Sam Huston in a series about historical figures. You dressed the part.

Special convocations were held with outside talent. The Christmas program, probably no longer PC, had the choir march into a darkened auditorium, holding lighted candles, and singing "O Come All Ye Faithful." Lucky we didn't burn the place down. Mayme loved to have the captains of the city championship basketball and track teams present the trophies to her for the trophy case. Always the auditorium was packed for graduation where the choir and orchestra would perform.

Art Huseboe discovered Mayme listed in the 1934 EDDA, as an "extension and special student." She started in 1929 and received her BA in English in 1936, Magna Cum Laude. I suspect she never saw a student she had not met in Shakespeare, Dickens, or Mark Twain. She had graduate work at the University of South Dakota and the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Mayme retired in the spring of 1944 and died at McKennan Hospital December 3rd of heart failure. Her husband, Benjamin T. Stapleton, district manager for Mutual Life Insurance of New York, always drove his Cadillac on the play ground and picked her up at five o'clock. He spared no expense for her funeral in the Episcopalian church across from the Miller funeral home. The casket cost \$1590.00, the marble vault \$135.00 and with the extras a total of \$1801.65. "A capacity crowd attended the services" and it was reported that "the floral tributes were many and beautiful." Appropriately Mayme was buried on the east side at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.

One of Mayme Stapleton's stalwart supporters in the Whittier Parent Teachers Association was my grandmother, Amy Gremmels, whose husband Charles, three children, and two grand children graduated from Whittier. She worked closely with Mayme and loved to tell the story about serving on the convocation committee. Myron Floren, a very young accordionist, had been contacted to perform. When he was about to go on stage to a packed auditorium he froze. Amy had to give him a push onto the stage.

Her house, where I lived too, was on Indiana Avenue bordered by 6th and 7th streets and Franklin Avenue. In this block were nineteen houses inhabited by blue collar workers from Morrell's, three carpenters, a traveling salesman, a retired grandmother, a widow who ran a boarding house, and next door, a railroad engineer for the Illinois Central Railroad (a bit unusual). Most of the inhabitants had modest means, but lots of children, about thirty-five, up to the age of eighteen. Five of the young men, who were drafted into World War II all returned, one with a Combat Infantryman's Badge and another with a Silver Star. I like to attribute their survival and success to the intensive rubber gun wars we had in our neighborhood—good basic training.

Her political actions were simple. She did what she could at every level; local, state, federal to promote the general welfare and not some special moneyed interest or single moral issue. In particular, she constantly supported public education as the best means to serve the common good. She believed that an excellent school system is as important to a democratic society as water and air to the planet.

Her German parents homesteaded just north of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She remembered and survived the Blizzard of '88. At sixteen she took a six weeks course at Mankato Normal School to earn certification in order to teach country school. After teaching for five years, she met my grandfather while

working a summer job at a large Sioux Falls department store called the Beehive. After their marriage they moved into my great grandfather's large house on the east side, only one-half block from the K-8 John Greenleaf Whittier grade school, one of eight large schools that sent their graduates to Washington High School that had an enrollment of over two thousand. Each of the grade schools was named for a famous American author. Whittier was companion to Longfellow and Lowell, the so-called "School Book Poets." Of course, there were also Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Franklin, Irving, and Emerson, but no Poe or Thoreau or Whitman (probably a bit too radical).

Coming from the prairie, Amy knew where all the edible foods were. Every spring we would drive the country roads and find the wild asparagus. On Labor Day we would go to the Big Sioux River north of Baltic and pick the wild plums and grapes. She would make jam and distill the grapes into a delicious table wine. During pheasant season she would walk the fields with my grandfather and me. When we got home with our gunny sack full of birds, she and I would go down in the basement to clean them while my grandfather was upstairs listening to his Philco radio. She'd dip each bird in a bucket of boiling water, and I would pick off the feathers, while she butchered them. Canning the breasts and legs, she provided us with pheasant throughout the year. When we finished, she fried the livers, gizzards, and hearts in butter—a fine repast. In the fall when cabbages were cheap, I helped her slice and salt them in a very large Red Wing crock that we put in our basement cold storage room with the other food stuffs.

A very close friend of Mayme Stapleton, the legendary principal of John Greenleaf Whittier, my grandmother often served on special parent/teacher committees that ranged from selecting convocation programs to visiting troublesome classes. Every year my grandmother invited my teachers to a special dinner party in their honor at our house. Always I had to be on my best behavior. Always she took the teacher's side no matter what the circumstances. Would that teachers today had that kind of solid parental support.

For over seventy years she was a neighborhood activist involved in everything from belonging to local card clubs (she played a wicked hand of bridge) to serving as an election judge in the 6-2 precinct located in the east side city library attached to the East Side Firehouse.

When I was in fourth grade she held a neighborhood block party to help re-elect Harlan Bushfield for governor. I remember climbing a ladder to fasten a large Bushfield banner between our house and our neighbor's, the Whelings. Even the blue collar democrats were coerced by her into coming to see the candidate. Bushfield easily carried 6-2 and was re-elected governor of South Dakota.

At the east side neighborhood level my grandfather and grandmother worked together. In those days they would be considered "ward bosses" who granted favors to the underprivileged—in this case, the immigrant Syrians; Assams, Haggars, Hassans, Ogdies, Yesdas and others. Often in trouble, the patronage given to them, naturally gained their votes at election time. My grandmother helped them get city laboring jobs, my grandfather spoke on their behalf at parole board hearings, and often helped them secure loans (my grandparents sometimes cosigned) to set up their businesses. Today they are some of the most prominent businessmen in town. The Haggar grocery store was the Lunds of Sioux Falls and Oddie Heavy Construction Company became one of the largest and most profitable in town.

As a stalwart figure in the neighborhood, my grandmother became the person people would come to for help. Vividly I remember one hot summer evening sitting on our front screened porch, when Mr. Meldrum, perhaps the richest man on the east side, who owned a grain elevator down by the Great Northern tracks, came over to seek my grandmother's assistance. His only son, a prominent lawyer, had crashed his airplane and was killed. Mr. Meldrum asked my grandmother, "Would you tell my wife that Robert died?" When I got up with my grandmother to go across the street, she said, "Jimmie, you better stay home." Not a child who would always obey, I decided to follow them in the darkness and to hide in the lilac bushes on the south side of their screened porch. I can't recall the conversation between my grandmother and Mrs. Meldrum, but I will never forget Mrs. Meldrum's anomolous scream that to this day whenever I think about that scream, I feel "zero at the bone."

My wife and I often took advantage of Gram's generosity. Our summer canoe trips in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area would not have been possible without her offer to babysit our three young sons. All of them recalled how she played with them for hours in their sand pile. My grandmother loved to tell stories about how she improvised during those early years of depravation out on the prairie. She recalled a joyous Christmas when she received her only gift, an orange in her stocking. My young sons were amazed how she could create a world using sticks and stones and wild flowers to form communities in the sand. My youngest son, Paul, remembers the occasion when he was trying to lift a rock loose without much success. Always playful, sometimes devilishness, Gram said to him, "You better leave it alone because there are witches that often hold on to their favorite rocks and we wouldn't want to anger them." To this day Paul laughs when he's picking large rocks in his fields, for fear he might release a witch.

To the very end of her ninety-three years my grandmother continued to be of assistance to her family, friends, and neighbors. Indeed, she became a legendary figure and there is much more that could be written about her. This brief sketch but scratches the surface.

Today, alas, her homesteading generation is long gone, but obviously there are other nurturing places. After living fifty-one years in the small town of Glenwood, I am struck by the large numbers of women who display many of the virtues I see in my grandmother. Not always in the forefront, although more and more becoming visible, they keep our community moving in the right directions. Without their influence and dedicated service, we would all be living in a much less attractive place.

Tom Brokaw thinks his father's World War II generation is the greatest one, but I believe the World War I generation might be even greater. They got through a terribly brutal war, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and the New Deal experiments. My good fortune was to be raised by two people of that generation, my grandmother, Amy Gremmels, a rock-ribbed republican in what was once Abraham Lincoln's Grand Old Party, and my grade school principal, Mayme Stapleton, a democrat with a strong social commitment.

GENEALOGY CAN BE CHALLENGING AND REWARDING

Karen J. Hayes and Robert E. "Bob" Hayes

I am presenting this paper but all the many hours of hard work and time is credited to my daughter, Karen Hayes. Karen started out with the Family Tree Maker software program which can be purchased at reputable computer outlets. She has accumulated information from a multitude of sources and followed trails to many dead ends. This did not discourage her and she quite often found alternate routes to find her objective. When this happens she is challenged to go even farther.

I have always been interested in genealogy before I knew there was such a word. I grew up with my grandfather, John Hayes, until he passed away when I was 14. I had many cousins who lived in South Dakota and the surrounding area as there were 14 siblings in Grandfather Hayes' family who produced about 32 children and many grandchildren. I knew the Hayes family was Irish Catholic and my great grandparents were from County Wexford, Ireland. Their children were all born and raised in Apple River, Jo Daviess County, Illinois. Of the 14 siblings, 7 of them eventually moved to the Black Hills and were buried here; 5 in Hill City, 1 in Keystone, and 1 in Belle Fourche. I was fortunate to know 2 of my grandfather's brothers. My grandmother, Johanna (Murphy) Hayes, was born in Vinegar Hill near Galena, Illinois. She passed away when I was 2 years old so I never really knew her.

In the summer of 1947 a friend of mine and I took a trip to New York City. On our return trip we spent a night in Apple River. George Hayes, a cousin of my father whom I had never met before, took us by the wings and showed us around. We visited a tavern (they didn't call them bars) and he introduced us to the other patrons. Men kept peeling off the bar, one at a time and greeted us with a brisk handshake. Their last names where all White and George assured me they were all relatives. I learned much later that my great-grandmother was Eleanor (White) Hayes. All of these Whites had to have been 1st and 2nd generation nephews of Eleanor's.

Quite often schools were named after a family, many times because it was built on family property. It is a matter of record that some of the White and Hayes Families attended the "White School" in the Apple River area. This makes it sound like it might be segregation.

George Hayes also took us to the cemetery in Apple River and we visited the grave of my great grandparents, Patrick and Eleanor (White) Hayes.

I received another lesson in Hayes family history many years later after I was married. My family and I were moving from New York City to Grand Junction, Colorado. We were having some car trouble and

made a stop in Apple River, Illinois for a few days. We stayed at the home of Bob and Irene Troy. Bob was the son of one of my grandfather's sisters. He was born in the late 1880's and lived his entire life in Apple River. As a small boy he remembers his grandfather, Patrick Hayes, relaying a story to him.

Patrick left his wife and several small children on the farm in Illinois and walked to California in search of a fortune during the "Gold Rush." He was gone for about two years as is evidenced by the gap of children born into the Hayes family during that period of time. He apparently became discouraged with his failure to "strike it rich" and headed for home. He took a ship out of San Francisco to Panama and walked across the Isthmus of Panama to the Atlantic side. From there he boarded another ship for the final leg home. He became shipwrecked in the Gulf of Mexico. Fortunately, he survived the wreck and eventually arrived home in Apple River, some two years later. After hearing this story I concluded that I might not be here to present this paper if Patrick had not survived and returned home. My grandfather was born several years after Patrick's return. My comment has often been, "Patrick returned home to do what he knew best, to farm and sire children." As mentioned previously, there were 14 siblings as well as two children who died in infancy

I did not know very much about my Mother's side of the family. She did not talk much about her family for various reasons, some of which were revealed to me after her passing in 1983. She was born Gladys Roberts in West Union, Iowa in 1904 and the family moved to a homestead near Wall, South Dakota when she was about four years of age. The old homestead is now occupied by Roberts Prairie Dog Town on the northern rim of the Badlands. Two of her brothers were born in Iowa and three younger brothers were born in Wall. One sister died when she was a young girl. I was several years old before I knew I had a grandfather, Charles Roberts. My mother and I would often visit James and Mae Alburn in Wall. I recall sitting on James' lap when I was a youngster eating bread with sugar and syrup on it and calling him Grandpa "Si." He was my other grandfather in addition to Grandpa Hayes. I learned that my mother lived with the Alburn family for a period of time. When I was old enough to understand, it was explained that Charles Roberts estranged himself from my mother and family because she married a Roman Catholic. My Grandmother Roberts died several years before my mother was married.

It was many years after I left home, married and was raising my own family that I learned that Charles Roberts belonged to the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan was active in the Black Hills in the 1920s during the time my parents were married. In addition to its more publicized opposition to Negroes, the Klan also opposed Catholics. My mother must have known about his association, but she never told me.

That was the extent of my interest in genealogy and I was slow to really get serious. Lorraine (Judson) Griffin got me interested in joining the Rapid City Society of Genealogical Research, Inc. I really became more serious about genealogy when Karen introduced me to the Family Tree Maker. We started to fill in the blanks on our computers and go beyond.

Genealogy Trip

During the latter part of July and the first part of August in 2007, Karen and I took a genealogy trip. We took off from Keystone, drove over 3300 miles and returned to Keystone 14 days later. Our trip took us to areas in eight different states. We visited more than twenty-five cemeteries starting with Keystone and ending with the cemetery in Crawford, Nebraska. Our objective was to locate grave markers of our relatives and record names and dates. Both Karen and I took photographs of headstones with digital cameras to insure we were getting good photos.

Another objective was to search for information from additional sources which included courthouses, libraries, historical societies, churches, etc. Karen did a tremendous amount of homework in advance of our trip so we had a plan at each location we visited.

Day One. Our first stop was Wall Cemetery, in Wall South Dakota. We drove on to Pierre and then along the Missouri River. The next stop was the St. Placidus Cemetery located in Grant Township in Buffalo County, north of Gann Valley. The church is often referred to as the Duncan Church. Years ago this area supported a small community and the Wide Awake School. All that remains is the church and cemetery which are still active and serve this farming community. Three of the Hayes siblings, including our grandfather John Hayes, as well as family friends from Jo Daviess County, Illinois, homesteaded in this area in 1885. These various families became interrelated. We intended to stay in Wessington Springs and go to Gann Valley the next day. Unfortunately, it was dark and not knowing that SD 34 bypasses Wessington Springs we missed the community and spent the night in Mitchell. I had previously been through Wessington Springs when the highway went through the center of town.

Day Two. We took in the Mitchell Cemetery and later the Corn Palace. My grandfather's older brother Richard and his wife Mary are buried in Mitchell. They also homesteaded in Buffalo, County. There must have been some bad years in Buffalo County because Richard Hayes, his wife, and John moved to Hill City in 1892. John was still single. Richard and Mary's first daughter was born in Hill City. They later moved back to the original homestead in Buffalo County where they spent the remainder of their lives. Mary Jane (Cain) Hayes and my grandmother Johanna Murphy were first cousins, so my generation

has oodles of second and third cousins. Fortunately the Family Tree Maker is able to calculate all of these intertwined relationships.

Karen had never been to the Corn Palace, which she enjoyed. We continued east and spent the night in Stewartville, Minnesota just south of Rochester. Southern Minnesota was impressive because of its greenery, specifically the tall trees along the highway.

Days Three and Four. We took Highway 52 which took us into Iowa and to Burr Oak, the first community we visited in this state. Although this community was not on our original list of destinations, we followed the road signs to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum. Burr Oak was one of the stepping stones of the Charles Ingalls family and they lived in this area for a couple of years running the local hotel, which now houses the museum. The director of this historic site was quite excited that I represented the Keystone Area Historical Society that featured the memorabilia of Carrie Ingalls, their next to youngest daughter.

I also was quite surprised to learn that this area of Iowa was Amish country. We saw numerous horse and buggies and tracks along the highways. Some roads had wider shoulders to accommodate the buggies. It was very common to see buggies parked in driveways of homes instead of automobiles.

We visited cemeteries in Ft. Atkinson and Eldorado. We also checked at a church in Eldorado, but did not find any concrete information. We reached West Union, the birthplace of my mother, Gladys Roberts. We spent two nights in West Union which turned out to be quite fruitful. In West Union we got good information at the cemetery, Fayette County Courthouse, and West Union Historical Society. We also called on a Congregational Church where we struck out. No information is sometimes helpful and often we were referred to another source.

Days Five to Eight. We continued on to Oelwein, Iowa. It did not take very long to get good information at the cemetery in Oelwein and we continued east heading to Dubuque. We could not help but observe and enjoy the beautiful country and green valleys. I never saw so much corn (as high as an elephant's eye) in all my life. There was an abundance of corn and soy beans in all of the eight states we visited. We drove through Dubuque which appeared to be a very old, quaint, and a metropolitan city. We took numerous photos because it was different than what we are accustomed in the West. This is where we crossed the Mississippi River to go into Illinois. Forty seven years ago in 1961, Barbara and I and our two little ones crossed this same bridge going the opposite direction when we were transferred from New York City to Grand Junction, Colorado. Karen and I made it to Galena, Illinois our home base for the next four nights.

This area is referred to as the Tri-State Area which has a common point with Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. This area was a large lead producing area some fifty years ago. The ore was galena, which is a lead sulphide (PbS). Of course I was interested in the mining history, but this was not our purpose and objective for this trip.

One objective was to attend the annual Furlong family reunion. They are distant cousins as our families married into each other several generations ago. My great-great-grandmother was named Margaret (Furlong) White, but we have not established relationship with the Furlongs through her. We attended the reunion in Hazel Green, Wisconsin at noon on Saturday. I have communicated with members of the Furlong family for several years and have always had an open invitation to their reunion so we made it this year. This was very rewarding because we are in the process of exchanging information and photos. A daughter of Leo Hayes (Catherine Schwenn) also attended the reunion. Leo Hayes was a cousin of my father. I met Catherine in 1947 when she was a little girl in Apple River, Illinois. The Leo Hayes family lived on the original homestead of Patrick and Eleanor Hayes. The road leading to the existing home has been renamed Hayes Road. Jo Daviess County renamed a number of roads after the families that originally homesteaded the area if their descendents still own the property. I had to take a picture of this road marker.

We spent four nights in Galena and we had an agenda for each day. We visited about a half dozen cemeteries in Jo Daviess County and in southwestern Wisconsin. One of the highlights was the cemetery in Apple River where my great grandparents, Patrick and Eleanor Hayes, and many of the Hayes relatives are buried. Another highlight was the Vinegar Hill Cemetery where the great grandparents on my grandmother's side are buried, Dennis and Ellen Murphy. The cemetery was rather difficult to find even if it is very close to Galena. We were told the directions were well marked, but this was not so. Vinegar Hill was once a little community with a church, residences and I assume a business section. The cemetery is the only evidence left of what was once a thriving community.

A real emotional part of the area was Sinsinawa Mound in the southwestern corner of Wisconsin. On the south side of the Mound is the Motherhouse of the Sinsinawa Sisters, founded in 1847. They are noted and famous for their fine bakery goods (especially their cinnamon bread and caramel rolls). They advertise they are committed to study, education, spirituality, and the arts. They offer programs and retreats. Persons from many spiritual traditions are invited to experience intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic awakening. It is located on 450 acres of lush woodlands, orchards, vineyards, fields, and gardens. Sinsinawa Mounds was founded by the Venerable Father Samuel Mazzuchelli in 1844.

The architecture of the buildings built in the 1800s and early 1900s reflects the Italian heritage of Fr. Samuel. The sisters and other Mazzuchelli supporters are working and praying for Fr. Samuel's canonization. The latter is the formality of recognizing and declaring a person as a Saint.

We were only at Sinsinawa Mound a short time and did not recognize the significance of the religious aspect of this institution. We were there to visit the cemetery and were anxious to move on to other locations. I can't begin to express the emotional feeling to stand at the foot of the grave of the parents of Dennis Murphy. They were great-great-grandparents to me and great-great-great-grandparents to Karen. I will never forget the moment.

We visited the cemetery in Shulsburg, Wisconsin with a cousin, Lucille Herbst. Lucille's mother was a twin sister to Leo Hayes who was mentioned earlier. I have known Lucille for many years because she and her siblings made many trips to the Black Hills in the late 1930s and 1940s to visit the relatives.

Days Nine to Eleven. After spending four days in the Galena Area we drove to Greenville in the southern part of Illinois, which was a very long drive. We spent almost eight hours in the library in Greenville. Karen kept finding so much information in the library and I was in charge of photo copying. At 20 cents a copy our bill came to \$45.00 before we left the library. By the time we reached the Pleasant Mound Cemetery it was getting close to dark. We were both in the cemetery with flashlights trying to locate markers and take pictures. When some of our family learned of our escapade in the cemetery after dark they thought we were idiots and completely nuts. We were not bothered because we knew all these folks were dead. We decided that we did not do this cemetery justice and we decided to spend another night in Greenville.

We hit the cemetery very early the next morning and finished our work and headed west. We drove through St. Louis and I took pictures of the famous arch while we were on the move. I would have enjoyed visiting the arch, but again, this was not our objective. We still had a lot of ground to cover. We drove through a portion of Missouri and arrived in Clarinda, Iowa, which is located in southwestern Iowa where we spent the night.

Day Twelve. We soon learned there was a significant amount of history in Clarinda. This was the birthplace of Glen Miller and his childhood home is now a museum. We spent a considerable amount of time in the Page County Museum. Karen spent time collecting genealogy information and I toured this wonderful museum. We visited the Clarinda Cemetery and Memorial Cemetery east of Clarinda. From here we drove on to Council Bluffs where we spent the night.

Day Thirteen. We visited a large cemetery in Council Bluffs and struck out. We did visit a beautiful new and large library in Council Bluffs. I believe the cost was in excess of \$4 million.

We drove on to Silver Creek, Nebraska. We thought we had combed the cemetery fairly well but we could not find Barbara's grandparents. We gave up and decided to move on. We visited with a gentleman at the cemetery who said the names sounded familiar but he could not remember at the time. I left my card; we gave up and decided to move on. A few days later I received a note in the mail that he had located the graves.

The next stop was in Jewell County, Kansas. We stopped in Burr Oak and visited a couple of cemeteries. We did not have any luck. Some old-timers told us about a flood which destroyed a cemetery many years ago. We drove on and visited a cemetery in Salem, in the dark. There is no evidence of a community at this location. This was just another ghost town. We drove on and spent the night in Phillipsburg, Kansas.

Day Fourteen. This was the last day of the tour. We left Phillipsburg early Sunday morning and our first scheduled stop was Chadron, Nebraska. Being a railroad buff I was overwhelmed with Alliance. This is a rendezvous for the many coal trains coming out of Wyoming for both the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroads. It was obvious this location was very important to both railroads.

We made arrangement to meet George and Charlotte Cummings at the Chadron Cemetery. We took photos, had a nice visit, before we left and visited our last cemetery in Crawford. We arrived back in Keystone late Sunday evening.

We can't thank and say enough to thank all of the people we met on this trip who were so cooperative and helpful in our mission.

A trip of this magnitude could have resulted in many wild goose chases and dead ends had we not started with a plan. We set out with specific goals of visiting areas that our ancestors had resided in and attempting to gather additional information to fill in some of the blanks. Prior to embarking on this event, many years were spent collecting and organizing the information we already had ready access to in order to "get a picture" of our ancestors. Some of the sources we used were:

Pre Trip (By Karen Hayes)

1. Work done by previous relatives on both sides of family
2. Funeral announcements
3. Obituaries

4. Notes on photographs
5. Old letters
6. Oral history
7. Address books
8. Trips to the LDS Family History Libraries (Salt Lake City)
9. Headstone pictures
10. Local area histories
11. Cemetery records
12. Land records – homestead maps, etc.
13. Purchased *Family Tree Maker* software to organize all the data on the computer
14. Subscription to *Ancestry.com* to have access to on-line census records, military, records, Social Security benefits, previously published family trees, etc. This is an example of a web site that has some free access as well as varying levels of access based on your subscription choice.
15. *USGenWeb.com* is a good site for a variety of projects in each of the states
16. *USGenWeb Tombstone Transcription Project* is a massive undertaking to compile cemetery records and tombstone pictures from all fifty states. Information is broken down by state and county and then by cemeteries located in those counties.
17. *Familysearch.org* is the LDS site that is continually growing.

During the trip we were able to explore a number of other resources:

Mitchell, South Dakota

Cemetery records—some cemeteries are already mapped out and can demonstrate who is buried near whom, most often relatives. Can get dates and clues of other people to research.

El Dorado, Iowa

Church records—Ran across a pastor who was willing to stop mowing his lawn and go across the street to gather some old church records, looking for a birth /death record for the Roberts family. It was not fruitful, but someone was willing to go out of their way to help look.

West Union, Iowa

Cemetery groundskeeper—opened up the cemetery burial records and pointed us in the right direction to find headstones. His family historically maintained the cemetery and he was able to provide a history of the cemetery.

Historical Center / Genealogical Society – local area volunteers who were willing to donate time to run a historical society. Found a collection of maps, books, biographies, and collections of information on various surnames. For a small donation, we had access to previously gathered information on various surnames. Able to copy any/all information that we wanted. Found copies of birth certificates, marriage licenses, newspaper articles, obituaries, local histories, etc. Our names were also later placed in their newsletter with the surnames that we were there researching. We have since been contacted by a local individual who may be researching the same family.

Courthouse records – gained access to the vault that held all of the Fayette County historical records. We were able to view the actual marriage, birth, and death records dating back to 1880.

Fayette County, Iowa

Having trouble finding a cemetery in Fort Atkinson, Iowa. Ran into a local beauty shop to ask for directions. Several “locals” stated that if we were interested in local families we needed to talk to the area historian. Instructed to go down to Huber’s Store and ask for Bill, the town elder and local historian, who knows everyone who lived in the area. Bill was out at the time, but owner of the store gave us the information to contact his brother who has spent a lifetime doing genealogy and tracing history in the area at a later time.

Jo Daviess County, Illinois

Tombstone inscriptions—did a lot of leg work in the many cemeteries in the Tri-State area. Found references to previously unknown children, in-laws, birth places, etc. that were noted on tombstones of our relatives. Published cemetery records often do not disclose all of the information displayed on a stone.

Family reunion—much information can be gathered by networking with other branches of the family. Shared information can often corroborate previously believed information or provide additional clues to follow. Exchange of pictures, and additions to descendent information.

Historical / Genealogy Library—access to old newspapers, land records, local histories, etc. Not enough time in the day to take advantage of it all. Need to live in the area to be able to take advantage of the limited hours that the records are available for public access.

Greenville, Bond County, Illinois

Historical Library—Genealogy section—In addition to family tree and cemetery records we found a surname file that documented local individuals to contact about ancestors who had lived in the area.

Clarinda, Page County, Iowa

City Hall Records—documented burial records including who purchased burial plots.

Historical Museum—along with many local histories, a very organized card file organized by surname. We met a woman who was a member of a special group, Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness (RAOGK). RAOGK is a global volunteer organization. With over 4000 volunteers in every U.S. state and many international locations, they have helped thousands of researchers. Their volunteers take time to do everything from looking up courthouse records to taking pictures of tombstones. All they ask in return is reimbursement for their expenses (never their time) and a thank you. Volunteers have agreed to do a free genealogy research task at least once per month in their local area as an act of kindness.

Silver Creek, Nebraska

Searched through the entire cemetery looking for a particular headstone with no luck. A groundskeeper was there mowing the grass. We left him our card. Several weeks later he wrote and confirmed that he had located the graves that we were looking for.

Jewell County, Kansas

Oral History—On several occasions we have searched for the graves of several ancestors in this county with no positive results. Just by chance, we stopped and asked directions from the lone person that we found in a small town. He happened to be the “president” of the historical society. He informed us that a flood wiped out the town in the late 1880s and that its present location is about 3 miles west of the original location. The cemetery that we were searching in was established after the flood. This is information that we have not been able to find in any other documented source, but it certainly would account for our inability to locate the graves.

Conclusions

The results of any hobby, sport, business, or any endeavor depends on how serious one might be and how much time one wants to spend. If you want to be a good golfer it might be wise to take lesson from a good instructor, play the game often, and have a goal to improve your game.

To tabulate genealogy it is necessary to have a good road map. We have chosen the Family Tree Maker. There are other programs and some may be better. Karen has purchased supplemental information such as CDs, books, etc. She continually makes use of the Internet to obtain census records, cemetery records, etc. as well as contact individuals “cousins” who are researching the same families.

Karen has dedicated herself to spend a considerable amount of time and expense with family genealogy. She has explored many sources of information and many come to a dead end and it is often necessary to follow a different road.

Individual and family photos are a real asset to family genealogy and these photos can be scanned into the Family Tree Maker. Whether or not you are tabulating genealogy, it is important that you continually identify family photos. We have many boxes and albums of old and very interesting photos, but no certainty of the identities of the people. Please do your ancestors a favor and label your pictures now and store them in a safe environment.

Our experience with genealogy has been fun and enjoyable. We have met distant family members and met people who were very congenial, cooperative and willing to give us information. This helps make genealogy all worthwhile.

In dedication to the centennial year of service of Hi-Line Bridge...

BRIDGING THE SHEYENNE VALLEY: RISE OF THE HI-LINE

Mark Huber

Building bridges to provide more efficient transportation over gullies and valleys have often pushed the architectural abilities and contemporary technologies of mankind. Such was the case in rural North Dakota, where the Northern Pacific Railway designed and constructed the "Hi-Line" bridge at the turn of the 20th century; a 3,858 foot-long steel railroad bridge that stands 154 feet above the Sheyenne River at Valley City, ND.¹ Designed to serve as a vital link that would avoid the steep gradients in and out of the Sheyenne River Valley, this steel juggernaut has impacted rural North Dakota in positive ways as well as negative, and the controversy over her construction has many times been dismissed in the shadow of her economic benefit to the railroad. Hi-Line Bridge remains one of the longest and most frequently used bridges for commercial rail freight in the United States and remains historically, economically, and socially significant to this day.

The Midwest has long been an area of large-scale commercial transport, and throughout the latter half of the 19th century, the main mode of transport was via rail. As rail was laid throughout the Dakota region, many small town settlements and cities grew up as a result, and one of those cities was "Second Crossing", which has become present day Valley City, ND.² Named in 1872 for being the second location in which the railroad crossed over the Sheyenne River,³ "Second Crossing" (now Valley City) lies at the bottom of the Sheyenne River Valley. The valley itself extends 63 miles from Lisbon, ND to Baldhill Dam located approximately 20 miles north of Valley City, giving little recourse in circumventing this dip in North Dakota terrain.⁴ When building rail lines through North Dakota, Northern Pacific would have no choice but

¹ "Valley City's Bridge Erected 38 Years Ago," *The Dakota Press*, 4 April 1947, 1.

² Jeffries, Glenn T. "The Hi-Line Bridge: It's Importance to Valley City, North Dakota and the Nation," (Masters Dissertation, University of North Dakota, 2007), 1.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway" *North Dakota Department of Parks and Recreation*. Available from Internet, <http://www.parkrec.nd.gov/byways/find/sheyenne/index.html>. Accessed 1 April, 2008.

⁴ Jeffries, 1.

to navigate through the valley itself, which made the trip very difficult for trains that were pulling heavy cargo.

As Northern Pacific laid rail westward through North Dakota, they built a bridge at a lower point in the valley that crossed the Sheyenne River five miles eastbound of Valley City at Alta Peak.⁵ Originally known as the "Low-Line", this bridge crossed the river at a lower point of the Sheyenne Valley, creating steep uphill grades in which to move the long, heavy cargo trains that Northern Pacific typically operated in the area. With long freight trains that pull rail cars weighing anywhere from 30 to 140 tons each, the steep grades in the Sheyenne River Valley created a cumbersome and expensive obstacle for trains to traverse.⁶ As the grades east and west of Valley City increased, so did the uphill weight of the trains that they were pulling, which necessitated the use of "pusher" engines to move trains in and out of the valley.⁷ The added expense of these engines, which needed to be fueled and housed in Valley City, as well as the delay in train operations that erupted as a result of this excessive uphill path from the Low-Line, convinced Northern Pacific to consider the possibilities of building a new bridge that would cross the Sheyenne River at a higher point; one that would also eliminate the steep gradients that were costing the railroad both time and money.⁸

Rail transport was big business in the early 1900s, and when new rail was being laid, communities became interested in where it was going to go. As such, in March of 1906, rumors began to float around that Northern Pacific was in the planning stages of building a new component to the rail lines in the Sheyenne River Valley.⁹ A bridge, bigger, longer, and taller than anything anyone had ever seen or constructed before, was to be built over the river. Created with the goal of providing a smooth and level line for Northern Pacific trains to cross the river without needing pusher engines to battle the steep and costly gradients, this project became known as the "High Bridge" Project, slated "for the use of through freights"¹⁰ and designed to change the direction of the (then) current rail line ten miles east of Valley City.¹¹

⁶ Each freight car weights approximately 30 tons when empty and approximately 140 tons when carrying a full load. Similarly, each locomotive will weigh 120 to 240 tons each.

⁷ Burris, Suzanne. Curator/Archivist, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Jeffries, 6.

¹⁰ "Not Looking for Site," *The Valley City Time Record*, March 1906.

In essence, Northern Pacific was dramatically changing the direction of their freight trains coming through Valley City by creating a “cut-off” point ten miles east of town, and redirecting train traffic from the old Low-Line Bridge that went down into the Sheyenne River Valley to the new “High Bridge” that would pass over it.¹² However, this was a project that required something few people are ever willing to give up; land.

Northern Pacific Railway sent their representative, Mr. Darby O’Malley, to Valley City on April 25, 1906 to secure right-of-way authority to the land that would ultimately be selected and subsequently used for the Hi-Line Project.¹³ An area rich in agriculture as well as land to which Northern Pacific had no right to at that point, many people declined the offers from the railroad to purchase their land despite the best efforts of Mr. O’Malley to sway them. For many, 75 dollars per acre simply was not enough when one landowner had cited that he previously sold part of his land for \$450 per acre.¹⁴ Moreover, land, it would seem, was worth far more to these owners than money could ever buy when two prominent and influential men in the history of Valley City would also decline offers from Northern Pacific.

The original project slated a trench to be excavated on the land owned by a man by the name of Andrew Schilling. Planned to be 300 feet wide by 30 feet deep for a distance of one mile, Schilling was unwilling to sell his land to be developed by the railroaders of the west, even if it were to mean renewed industry and outside interest for Valley City.¹⁵ Similarly, Dr. George McFarland, who served as President of the State Normal School that is now Valley City State University, owned approximately 20 acres of land north of Valley City, and felt that 75 dollars per acre was, quite simply, too little reimbursement for the land that he would lose.¹⁶ So, having no other recourse or options as well as not settling for “no” as an answer, Northern Pacific Railway and Mr. O’Malley secured rights to the land they needed to construct the bridge in true unilateral fashion.

¹¹ “The N.P. Cut-Off,” *The Valley City Times Record*, April 1906.

¹² Jeffries, *Ibid.*

¹³ “Condemnation Proceedings,” *The Valley City Times Record*, May 17, 1906.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Jeffries, 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Darby O'Malley and C. T. Delamere, the engineer that Northern Pacific assigned to the Hi-Line Project, were able to secure the land grants of only half of the lands that they needed to build bridge.¹⁷ In response, Northern Pacific filed condemnation proceedings in April of 1906 against the lands that they still needed to build the bridge, which were subsequently approved.¹⁸ By this time, Northern Pacific had already made extensive plans and investments in the Hi-Line Project as well as weighed the economic benefits of building a bridge that would reduce the land gradient in the Sheyenne River Valley to less than 1 percent, and with political and financial support from the Federal Government through the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862, there was more than enough political muscle to advance this project despite protests from the local landowners of Valley City.¹⁹

The excavation needed to build Hi-Line Bridge was nothing short of extraordinary. C. T. Delamere estimated that the project site would encompass a 9.4 mile area surrounding Valley City as well as to move a total of 1,250,000 cubic yards (or approximately 70 acres) of earth on which to build the bridge that was to span over 3,500 feet.²⁰ This project included moving earth over the 9.4 mile area from the city of Alta through Valley City²¹ as well as bringing in 14 million pounds of steel and large amounts of gravel from Minnesota from which to make the concrete piers that the bridge would stand on.²² Materials began to arrive in the early summer of 1906, and with no shortage of labor from Winston Brothers, the company awarded the construction contract by Northern Pacific, work began on what would become one of the longest railroad bridges in the United States.²³

¹⁷ "Condemnation Proceedings," *The Valley City Times Record*, May 1906.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The Library of Congress, *The Statues At Large Of The United States of America, Pacific Railroad Act, Chapter 120: July 1862*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1862), 490. The Northern Pacific Railroad was chartered by President Abraham Lincoln in the summer of 1864 for the purposes of advancing the Transcontinental Railroad Project in tandem with the Union Pacific Railroad. The Hi-Line Bridge was to serve as a connection for Northern Pacific without having to detour into Sheyenne River Valley, and therein Valley City.

²⁰ "Work Began Saturday," *The Valley City Times Record*, August 1906.

²¹ "Will Take Year," *The Valley City Times Record*, August, 1906.

²² Burris, Suzanne. Curator/Archivist, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company.

²³ Jeffries, 8.

Ground was broken for the Hi-Line Project on June 30, 1906, and the first phase of moving the earth between Alta and Berea, ND began.²⁴ This feat of moving such a vast amount of land became even more impressive taking into account that modern earth-moving utilities were not invented or available at this time, and most of the grade work was accomplished by teams of horses and mules attached to scoop shovels that would move the earth accordingly.²⁵ A steam shovel was also hauled from Jamestown to Valley City to expedite the process, able to remove earth at a rate of about ten to twelve trainloads per day.²⁶ Work was steady and efficient; Northern Pacific wanted to complete this project as soon as possible to bring the bridge into service so they could abandon the old Low-Line that was costing the company both time and money each time they needed to push another train out of the Sheyenne River Valley. Crews were able to continue work on the project until North Dakota winter conditions forced all crews to suspend activity at the project site due to the cold temperatures that made using either the teams of horses or the steam shovel impossible.²⁷

As work continued on the Hi-Line Project, the effects of her construction were already being realized throughout the county as well as the state. The Dakota region has long been an area of vast agricultural production, and during the summer and fall of 1906, North Dakota saw a record-setting production of wheat. With such a large volume of wheat to be harvested and pay that could never match what the Winston Brothers were offering to work on the Hi-Line Bridge, farm help became scarce as men from across the state came to work for the railroad.²⁸ Although the agricultural economy did suffer due to men choosing to work on the Hi-Line Project, this added labor helped to expedite the removal of earth in and around the Sheyenne River Valley, which brought crews closer to finally erecting this massive bridge in the spring of 1907.

With the new roadbed graded down to 0.4 degrees and the remainder of the earth removed from the project site by July of the following summer, Winston Brothers and their crews were able to begin

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ "Winter Stalls Bridge Work," *The Valley City Times Record*, October 1907.

²⁷ Ibid. Steam shovels during this time required vast amounts of water to operate, and crews built a pipeline extending from the project site to the Sheyenne River in order to maintain an adequate supply.

²⁸ Jeffries, 8.

constructing the support for the bridge of rail that would break all records of that time.²⁹ Construction of the pilings for Hi-Line Bridge commenced in April of 1907, and as work across the river began, twenty-four pilings were dug into the land both around the river as well as under her water to support the concrete piers that would hold the trestles.³⁰ Crews worked on the bridge as much as possible; no holidays were taken, nor did any of the crews take Sunday off. Work on the pilings for the bridge was then completed, with the last one being set into place by July 4, 1907, giving Hi-Line the support for where she could now stand.³¹

Construction of the viaduct began two days later on July 6 with Northern Pacific quickly sending additional employees to help with the project by July 12.³² Materials for the bridge were shipped to the project site via temporary rail laid and that was spurred off from the old Low-Line, hauled by work engines known as "donkeys".³³ These "donkey" engines, in addition to bringing in construction materials, also hauled a travelling crane that was used to put the girders for the bridge into place.³⁴ The solid steel girders used for this project were manufactured by the American Bridge Company in Pittsburg, PA, and weighed anywhere from 19 to 35 tons each, bringing the total weight of this bridge to approximately 14 million pounds in steel alone.³⁵ As the Hi-Line Project gained more interest from the Valley City residents throughout her construction, Northern Pacific began focusing more of their efforts on completing the bridge, which would bring people and their families from all parts of the country to participate in the building of this monumental project.

The Hi-Line Viaduct was not the only major project that Northern Pacific had in the works at this time. As the railroad extended their lines into lands that had similar problems as the Sheyenne River

²⁹ Burris, Suzanne. Curator/Archivist, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company.

³⁰ "Hundreds Had a Look at N.P Trestle," *The Valley City Times Record*, October 10, 1907. The number of pilings used for this project was more than typically used for standard bridges, but due to the loose soil in the area that tends to hold enough clay to make the ground unstable, added support was needed to ensure the bridge would stay standing.

³¹ Ibid, Burris.

³² Ibid. By the time Northern Pacific sent their additional work crews, the total number of people employed with the project was around 160 people.

³³ Jeffries, 9. "Donkey" engines were slow train locomotives that were used to haul materials from the cut-off point at the Low-Line junction to the project site.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Jeffries, 10.

Valley, more efforts were taken to reduce the gradients of places typically unvisited by train. Such was the case with a similar project that Northern Pacific had in progress east of Buffalo, NY, where their crews were excavating a passage through a hill to extend a set of double tracks they already had laid. However, as work on the Hi-Line Bridge and her completion began to look more promising, Northern Pacific pulled their crews from the project site in New York on July 12, 1907 and reassigned them to completing the Hi-Line Viaduct, effectively abandoning the Buffalo Project all together.³⁶ More men began to arrive to work on the bridge, and as they did, they brought their families with them, adding to the population of both Barnes County and Valley City and giving local merchants an increase in demand and sales of their products. Similarly, the children of these families would begin to attend the public schools, transforming Valley City from a small, rural and nearly desolate area into a medium sized city that still continues to thrive today.³⁷ As more men showed up to work on the bridge, Northern Pacific focused their efforts on completing it as soon as possible and practical, and as work continued throughout the winter of 1907, crews did not break for sub-zero temperatures this time around. The bridge would soon stand, much sooner than anyone could have ever anticipated.

Work on the bridge was steady throughout the winter of 1907 and the spring of 1908, and by May 8, Hi-Line Bridge, one of the largest viaducts ever constructed, was standing freely and unassisted.³⁸ Although she was formally opened for service on May 12, 1908, several additional phases of work needed to be completed to secure the bridge on her foundation, and by that fall, all phases of work were complete a mere thirteen months after ground was broken at the project site.³⁹ With a span of 3,740 feet across the Sheyenne River and standing 154 feet above the river, the bridge was constructed for a cost of nearly \$600,000 and was later painted at a cost of \$8,200.⁴⁰ Hi-Line Bridge stands on 30 support towers constructed out of steel and concrete, and is held together by approximately 380,000 field rivets.⁴¹ With the

³⁶ "Concentrate Force on N.P., *The Fargo Forum*, 1907.

³⁷ Jeffries, 10.

³⁸ Burris, Suzanne. Curator/Archivist, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* The bridge was repainted in 1962 by Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad at a cost of approximately \$150,000.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

bridge constructed and in place, Hi-Line was ready to carry passengers over the Sheyenne River for the first time.

With the new Hi-Line open for operation, the first train carrying F. W. Gilbert (General Superintendent of Northern Pacific) and J. E. Craver (Division Superintendent at Fargo) housed in a private railroad business car being pulled by Engine Number 2344, crossed Hi-Line Bridge on May 12, 1908 for the first time.⁴² Soon, with all remaining pusher engines begin taken out of Valley City by May 20, the fledging railroad began to realize the benefits of their investment. Completed at a total cost of about \$1.5 million dollars, which was extraordinary in the early 1900's, the renewed interest in railroading from the local college students as well as no longer needing to push their trains out of the Sheyenne River Valley gave Northern Pacific much needed attention.⁴³ Now, with a nearly level roadbed in which to transport cargo east and west throughout North Dakota, it was not long before Hi-Line Bridge became an important part of transcontinental transport throughout the United States, and remains as such today.

The Hi-Line Bridge is, in her own right, an express way; she expedited travel throughout the Sheyenne River Valley, and now, instead of trains coming through Valley City, they were now traveling above it. Trains no longer stopped at the Valley City depot, and after the bridge was completed, those that came to work simply left. Valley City was no longer a major stop on the Northern Pacific line; it was just another town that dotted the rural Midwest that few people would know about.

Hi-Line was known as "what would be the most magnificent feat of engineering on the Northern Pacific System...with possible exception of the Cascade Tunnel in Washington", and has brought a significant historical sense of pride to the citizens of Valley City.⁴⁴ Although she was only designed for express freight, more passenger trains began to utilize the Hi-Line depot instead of routing them through the depot in downtown Valley City, making for a problem in the economic boost that was in danger of disappearing if passengers never stopped in town.⁴⁵ Valley City filed a law suit against Northern Pacific, and in a decision that was landmark for its time, District Court Judge Charles Amidon ruled in favor of the

⁴² Jeffries, 14.

⁴³ Jeffries, 13.

⁴⁴ Jeffries, 14.

⁴⁵ Jeffries, 15.

city, ordering all passenger service to return to the old downtown depot immediately.⁴⁶ However, this did little to spur any more interest in passenger service along Northern Pacific's old line. Quite simply, more people than ever were interested in the new Hi-Line Viaduct, and because people preferred to travel this route instead of going through Valley City, the old downtown depot fell into disrepair, and has subsequently been demolished. The citizens of Valley City have taken elements from the old depot and have constructed what has become the Rosebud Visitor's Center, which houses the offices of the Chamber of Commerce, the Valley City/Barnes County Economic Development Corporation, the North Dakota Winter Show, as well as several others.⁴⁷ Much of the center is dedicated to the preservation of the old downtown depot that was once used until Hi-Line Bridge was built, and although no trains come through Valley City anymore, it is a testament to the all encompassing impact that the bridge has had on the area that can still be seen today.

After the downtown depot was abandoned by all through train traffic, Northern Pacific proceeded to abandon the old Low-Line that brought trains through Valley City, and began to exclusively use the new Hi-Line and her bridge for all trains travelling over the Sheyenne River Valley. After Low-Line was abandoned, Valley City purchased the right-of-way to the land on which the line was built from Northern Pacific, making it one of the only cities in American history to purchase land back from the railroad.⁴⁸

With Hi-Line Bridge being vitally important to moving supplies both east and west, she has been under armed guard several times during past conflicts to protect her against sabotage.⁴⁹ Protected during World War I, World War II, as well as the Gulf War and throughout the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2002, the bridge is now under video surveillance to further prevent any disasters from happening to a bridge that has quite literally stood the test of time.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ "Text of Judge Amidon's Ruling in the N.P. RY. Case," *The Valley City Times Record*, June 12, 1912.

⁴⁷ Valley City, ND. "About Us." *Rosebud Visitor's Center*. Available from Internet, <http://www.valleycitynd.org/RosebudVisitorsCenter.html>. Accessed 3, April, 2008.

⁴⁸ Jeffries, 15.

⁴⁹ "Company H Detail Arrives to Guard N.P. High Line," *The Valley City Times Record*, April 3, 1917.

⁵⁰ "Valley City High-Line Among Bridges in N.D. Under Guard," *The Valley City Times Record*, December 8, 1941. N.B. Hi-Line Bridge has never been threatened or damaged, and remains stable to this day after eleven spans of pile trestle were constructed to halt any possible movement into the river bed.

Hi-Line Bridge will celebrate her centennial year of service on May 12, 2008. Constructed one hundred years ago as a solution to unpredictable North Dakota terrain, the bridge is seen as a monument of strength and stability to the citizens of Valley City. The Valley City Public School District has adopted the bridge as their mascot, and possibly remain the only "Hi-Liners" in the United States today. Five to eight freight trains pass over the bridge daily as cargo makes its way across North Dakota on a railroad line which is now nearly level due to the Hi-Line Project. Hi-Line became famous for her unprecedented size as well as the outstanding technological innovations that enabled her construction. In the same way, the bridge has had the profound impact that many of our Interstate hi-ways have on small towns in the Dakotas today.

What was designed as a solution later became a problem; people were no longer visiting Valley City, and they simply saw it from a distance as they passed over Hi-Line Bridge. The beauty and majesty of the Sheyenne River Valley was lost as people quickly travelled over it instead of descending through it. After the bridge was built, there was no longer any economic incentive for people to stay, and the population declined to what it is today.

Much like any other large scale construction project, High-Line Bridge is indicative of the inherent problems these projects create for communities like Valley City in rural town America. Seen as a necessity, the bridge was to revolutionize rail transport in North Dakota, and ultimately, the bridge accomplished this. Yet for as many problems as she solved, Hi-Line created problems that many small and struggling towns throughout the Dakotas are dealing with. Valley City, overall, is a healthy community with a stable population, but shortly after Hi-Line went into service, the future of the city was in question. Many factors can be attributed to the survival of Valley City, but Hi-Line is not one of them. Her fame is not to be diminished, yet her effects are not to be forgotten. The railroad is largely responsible for many of smaller towns in the Dakotas, and in what can only be considered a cruel irony, that very railroad is also responsible for them as they disappear when they abandon rail lines that have been previously laid. This inherent problem with railroading has no easy answer, yet the railroad has been vitally important to the Dakotas since the first track was laid. The great paradox of dependency on the great railroads that can create towns as fast as they can abort them will continue to shape the Dakotas, and will forever be etched in our minds in the form of the Hi-Line Bridge.

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**AFTER THE MOST SEVERE YEAR OF DROUGHT AND DEVASTATION
THE FIVE-COLLEGE APPEAL TO HOMESTAKE MINING**

Arthur R. Huseboe

Many stories have come down to us out here on the Northern Plains from the men and women who lived in South Dakota during the Great Depression and the Dust bowl years of the 1930s. In their own way these men and women constitute a “greatest generation” because of their resiliency and courage in the face of overwhelming forces aligned against them. The people of each of the drought-stricken states have their stories to tell. South Dakota folks, of course, have their share. I was born and grew up here in Sioux Falls during the Depression and so the first decade of my autobiography is replete with recollections of life as the son of a nurse and a carpenter who managed to beat the odds and survive. My family could have written the manual on how to survive in South Dakota when income is low, rains are rare, summers are extremely hot and winters intensely cold. As an infant I spent many happy summer hours in a water-filled zinc tub under the Chinese elms in the back yard. Winters, as I recall, were spent indoors in the warm house my father had built for us on West Avenue.

I couldn't have known it at the time, in the early 1930s—1931 through 1937 and 1938—but the college where I would teach one day, and where I would, in fact, be employed for a half century of my life, that college—Augustana—was going through unimaginable struggles in order to survive. The story of that survival, and that of the four other private colleges in the state, is an important part of the patchwork of tales that that make up the story of these northern plains in the fourth decade of the 20th century.

The context for the struggle of Augustana and its four sister colleges, Dakota Wesleyan, Huron College, Sioux Falls College, and Yankton College, is the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Depression had struck the people of the Northern Plains with double force. Not only did they suffer with all regions of the United States when the stock market fell from a price index high of 26 points in 1929 to less than 7 in 1932, but the Northern Plains people were simultaneously visited by a prolonged drought that throughout the 1930s completed the destruction of the economy of the rural West.

While scholars disagree as to some of the causes of the Great Depression, certain factors are generally accepted. The prosperity that the United States had enjoyed throughout the 1920s was not shared by farmers and most workers, and so the country's capacity to produce became greater than its capacity to consume. Added to this condition was the widespread availability of easy credit, an encouragement to installment buying and stock market speculation. To make matters worse, during the

"Dirty Thirties," as those years came to be called, the value of farm products plummeted, sagging to its lowest level in 1932 and 1933, before returning to its pre-1925 level with the onset of World War II in 1942. The value of building permits, for example, plummeted even more drastically by 1933 and 1934, losing 90% of their 1925 value. Unemployment rose at a comparable rate, from 4% nationally in 1929 to 25% in 1933 and 1934. Our own state, South Dakota, led the nation in the percent of the work force on relief, 40% in 1934.

This stark picture of a nation in the throes of an economic and social disaster could be embellished almost endlessly. Suffice it to say, the people of the Northern Plains were faced with a calamity that would challenge their will and ingenuity to the utmost. Their first response was to produce more to make up for lost income. Farmers on the western prairies and plains had enjoyed two decades of prosperity from 1900 to 1920, but when the government withdrew price supports for wheat and when foreign grain production began to revive after WWI, the farmers' share in the nation's economy fell rapidly. Their response was to plow up more land, much of it marginal, and to increase production of cereal grains. In South Dakota alone, as Lynwood Oyos points out (*A New South Dakota History*, 2005, p. 230), "Land used for crop production increased from 16,441,000 acres in 1924 to 19,003,000 in 1929, " a jump of 2 ½ million acres. "By placing more acres in production, many farmers cultivated sub-marginal land, endangering the delicate ecological balance" (p. 236) and thus unwittingly contributing heavily to a disaster of epic proportions, when an unprecedented drought in the early 1930s and the dust storms it produced utterly destroyed the economy of the Great Plains and the prairies of the West.

The stories of the suffering of South Dakotans are seemingly endless. A friend of mine who grew up as I did during the Dirty Thirties but who was a farm boy is Dr. Leland Lillehaug. He, too, is an Augustana alumnus with a half century of teaching here, so his words can be trusted. He tells a most instructive story about his father, coming in from the field after picking the last row of corn by hand, and sticking his corn hook into the wooden side of a wagon. That was the fall of 1929. But the next summer, 1930, marked the beginning the great drought, starting with the second driest July on record. Father Lillehaug did not take the corn hook down for the next seven years, so bad were the corn crops.

In 1931 and 1932 more than 10,000 farm foreclosures in South Dakota marked the beginning of a statewide economic collapse. And throughout 1933 and 1934 great dust storms raged across the plains, and in some years the hordes of grasshoppers followed, devouring whatever crops had managed to struggle into existence.

Private higher education in South Dakota felt these heavy blows, as did all sectors of the economy. Because the five private 4-year colleges in the state drew most of their students from near at hand, their enrollments were more affected and their sources of funding fell precipitously. In Sioux Falls in the winter of 1932-1933 Augustana College learned with dismay that because of the depression and the drought its parent organization, the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America was considering closing the doors of all of its colleges, except St. Olaf and Luther. Augustana College was on the list of those to be shut down (Donald Sneen, *Through Trials and Triumphs*, 1985, p. 94). Augustana's appeal to the NCLA, to reconsider this Draconian measure was approved, but the Church's financial support was cut in half thereafter (Sneen p. 94).

In his history of Augustana College, Professor Donald Sneen sums up the emergency measure that had to be taken immediately if the college were to survive the shock of the wholesale farm foreclosures in 1931 and 1932 and after and the drastic cut in synod support coupled with the start of the Dust Bowl era:

"Retrenchment became the necessary watchword," wrote Sneen. "In 1932, the Augustana faculty, which had been forced to wait the last three months of 1931 without pay, had to accept a 10 percent reduction in salary. In addition to tightening their belts economically, teachers also agreed to carry heavier class loads. With the critical shortage of cash, tuition was difficult to collect and donations to the college were small. A barter system was occasionally arranged to pay tuition and fees." (Sneen, p. 94).

A new president arrived at Augustana College in time to begin the 1932-33 school year. He was the Reverend Clemens M. Granskou, a Webster, SD, native son, an Air Force veteran, a former missionary and educator in China, and formerly president of Waldorf College. Granskou found himself faced with an accumulated deficit of \$15,235 and an enrollment that had fallen from 497 to 410. Very early in his first year as president, it appears, Rev. Granskou was in communication with the presidents of the four other independent four-year colleges in the state, and together they submitted an appeal to Superintendent B. C. Yates of Homestake Mining Company in Lead for a \$50,000 grant to be shared equally by the four colleges throughout 1934. It was an act of desperation, it would seem, since such an appeal had not been tried before.

The answer to the proposal was positive. Homestake's executives met on the matter and approved the proposal, to be paid in installments of \$2,500 to each of the colleges upon proof "that equal aggregate amounts have been received in cash from new subscriptions obtained congruent to January 30, 1934." In other words, these would be matching grants, dependent upon equal amounts being raised by

each college. Homestake, operating at the far western end of the state and criticized by many for exploiting the mineral resources of the state, had, surprisingly, agreed to support five small colleges in the east whose very existence might well depend on that support.

Much of the correspondence relating to the five-college proposal and the response of Homestake Mining Company is to be found in a slender file in the Archives at the Center for Western Studies at Augustana College, labeled simply "Homestake Mining Company." In his letter of acceptance in that file, dated the day after the grant was announced, President Granskou expressed his gratitude very simply: "This gift comes at time when our incomes are sorely depleted on account of extenuating circumstances, and it will thus enable us to carry on...." (to Guy N. Bjorge, Assistant General Manager, January 31, 1934.) And in early March he wrote that the Board of Education of the NLCA had voted \$12,500 to be used as a match. There was more good news in the Granskou letter of March 5, 1934: the Board of Education of the Norwegian Lutheran Church had voted to permit a campaign among the South Dakota congregations in order to raise funds to support Augustana College in its time of great need. "Thus we are assured (Granskou wrote) not only of the amount to meet the gift but also a considerable margin to enable us to carry on during these critical times." The generous grant from Homestake, he concluded, "will not only be of direct assistance to us but will also enable us to secure other funds which otherwise might not have been available." By the end of the summer, President Granskou could report that the college had matched in full the \$10,000 gift from Homestake. To do so meant counting the payment made by the Norwegian Lutheran Church, by individual congregations, and by gifts from individuals. There had also been a shortfall that had been made up by faculty members who had cancelled portions of their salaries for the months of January, February, March, and April. Their total was \$2,131.20.

In the midst of the fund-raising efforts by the colleges, a small firestorm was ignited when the Aberdeen *Dakota Free Press* published in March 1934 an editorial excoriating the five colleges for accepting "filthy lucre" from an institution that does not pay its share of taxes, violates the state constitution, and maintains a lobby to "bludgeon and cower" the legislators. Why should such colleges, asked writer Alice Lorraine Daly, "deceive the young and pretend to be guardians and teachers?" President Granskou's response to the Homestake's attorney, upon receiving a clipping of the Daly editorial, was to note that "the sentiment through the state is entirely the reverse of Miss Daly's editorial," that he—President Granskou—appreciates not only the gift but "the humane way which this company has always manifested in dealing with its employees." And he pointed out that a number of editors have already replied to the *Dakota Free Press* piece. The controversy would continue, and take on new dimensions in the future when the mining

company attempted to enlist the colleges in a campaign to oppose increases in the ore tax. For the most part, the colleges demurred, preferring to let their constituencies determine their own place in the debate.

Meantime, Homestake, already North America's wealthiest gold mine, hit it rich once more when the Roosevelt administration raised the price of gold from \$21 to \$35 an ounce. Homestake's stock shot up from a pre-Depression price of \$50 a share to \$430 a share. The mine was able to expand its operations substantially over the next several years, until the government took yet another step, this time—in 1942—labeling gold mining as a nonessential industry as far as the War effort was concerned. Before that event, the state legislature passed a 4% gross tax on ore in 1935 and a 6 % tax in 1937. Thereafter the amounts awarded to the five colleges were much reduced.

The optimism of President Granskou's reports throughout the summer of 1934 was no doubt matched by reports from the other four colleges. All four met the fund-raising goals and received the full \$10,000 that had been promised. But the unprecedented drought of that 1934 summer and fall undercut the worth of the funds raised. The drought was worse even than the previous one, and the almost helpless and hopeless condition of the five colleges is expressed eloquently in the September 6, 1934, letter to Homestake from the current president of the five-college association, George W. Nash, of Yankton College. To Edward Clark, President of Homestake, Nash wrote as follows:

“Last year the Homestake Mining Company gave to the five associate colleges of South Dakota a grant of \$50,000 on condition that this amount, \$10,000 to each institution, should be matched with aggregate other gifts. Each member college met the conditions of the Homestake Mining Company and through the generous help accorded was able to serve helpfully hundreds of boys and girls who would otherwise have been forced out of college.

“At the close of last year, realizing the difficulty we were having in amassing our funds, I came to you with the story of our trouble.

“Now, after the most severe year of drought and devastation that the State of South Dakota has ever known, I come to you as the representative of these colleges with a new appeal for aid. Last year we pointed out that while all the states round about South Dakota had made economic recovery ranging from 3% to 77%, South Dakota had suffered a loss of more than 40% with torrid heat in the month of May that burned our small grain crop and with a more extreme visitation of heat in July that destroyed the corn, we are indeed destitute in South Dakota. Sons and daughters of parents on relief are crying out

for education. Hundreds of them are standing at our doors clamoring for admission and we are helpless to aid them unless we can secure further help from the Homestake Mining Company and other friends.

"Will you, in this most terrible year for agricultural South Dakota, recommend a further contribution for our support. If you can possibly make the amount this time \$100,000, with \$20,000 allocated to each of the five colleges—Augustana College of Sioux Falls, Dakota Wesleyan

University of Mitchell, Huron College of Huron, Sioux Falls College of Sioux Falls, and Yankton College of Yankton—you will thereby render a service to South Dakota people and its educational program that will rank as one of your noblest benefactions.

"I feel confident that Superintendent Yates and Mr. Chambers Keller will endorse this appeal and I hope that you and the officers of the Homestake may give it your immediate attention.

"Assured that you will want to help us and hoping that I may have word from you soon, I remain,

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

George W. Nash

President Associated Colleges of South Dakota"

When Homestake made no response, the five-college association wrote again, on December 15, 1934, with the signature of President Earl A. Roadman of Dakota Wesleyan added to that of President Nash. The amount requested this time was \$10,000 for each college, half of the September proposal. And this time the writers were even more insistent, if that is possible. They stressed the moral and social problem of great consequence brought about by the drought. Young people, out of work and penniless, "are accepting the conditions of menacing idleness." At least 500 other impoverished youth have come to the five colleges and have been enrolled because "No president was willing to send them home to idleness, temptation, and the dangers of social revolt."

Perhaps it was this last threat of "idleness, temptation, and the dangers of social revolt" that moved the hearts of the Homestake management once more. At any rate, a grant of half the amount asked for was approved, and by January of 1935 at least one president could report that his college's \$5,000 share had been matched. President Granskou wrote that the Carnegie Corporation of New York had donated

\$5,000 to the college, the result—Granskou suggested—of the incentive provided by the Homestake grants, now totaling \$15,000 per college.

Support for the five colleges by Homestake continued, but in smaller amounts each year, finally concluding in 1940 with the granting of an amount of \$1,500 to each of the five colleges—for a total of \$26,000 each or \$130,000 for the consortium. In reality, the gift had accomplished much more, because of the matching requirement. There were subsequent appeals in December 1940 and September 1941, but the urgency of the Great Depression and the Dirty Thirties had lessened substantially. President Granskou's appeal in 1940 was that in these troubled times, "Americans needed to return to the fundamental foundations of decency, honesty, sobriety, self-reliance, and individual initiative." The church colleges in South Dakota are positioned, he argued, to render service in laying the right foundations for the future stability of America. By March 1942, the presidents of the five colleges would be writing their final letters to Manager Guy Bjorge of Homestake. Now, of course, there was a new enemy for Christian higher education to face, the stresses and strains looming because of the outbreak of WWII. J. L. McCorison, president of Yankton College, wrote that "winning the war is our first concern but that keeping intact "our cultural heritage" is equally important."

Homestake, however, was about to suffer the cruelest cut of all, and no amount of appealing by the colleges could ever again prevail with their management. As Professor David Wolff points out in his chapter "The Black Hills in Transition" (in *A New South Dakota History*, p. 312), "In 1942 the War Production Board labeled gold mining as a non-essential industry and ordered its suspension. The board anticipated that the 2,200 miners would move to mining areas that produced strategic metals, such as copper in Butte, Montana. An estimated 1,600 workers did leave Lead as Homestake and other mines closed, but most went to the Pacific coast and the more lucrative war-manufacturing industry. Some odd jobs remained in Lead. For instance, in 1944 and 1945 the company made hand grenades in its machine shop."

So ends the chapter in the history of our state that might be labeled "The Year That Homestake Saved Five Christian Colleges from the Twin Destructive Forces of Drought and Depression." Nobody else in the state could have given so much help in such a timely way. There ought to have been statues erected on the five college campuses of Manager Guy Bjorge perhaps or President Edward H. Clark. But as far as I can learn, what they and Homestake Mining did has been completely forgotten.

**THE HOMESTAKE MINE MEETS THE HOPE DIAMOND:
ANOTHER OF DEADWOOD'S 1001 TALES**

Lillian Johnsson

From the palaces of Scandinavia to the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London, and the gems in the Sultan's Palace in Istanbul, I have been very lucky to see some spectacular jewels. As a result, an interest in the stone's stories and legends developed, along, of course, with an interest in the people who were associated with the stones. So, it was only natural when Richard Kurin's new book came out that I would read: "Hope Diamond: The Legendary History of a Cursed Gem."

Where and when did the Hope Diamond story start? A French gem merchant made several voyages to India to the diamond mines between the years 1631 and 1668. He bought a deep, steely blue diamond on one of those trips. It weighed 45.52 carats. It was about one inch in width and one inch across and one-half inch in depth. In 1668 he sold this diamond to Louis XIV of France. It was from this stone that the Hope Diamond was later cut.

From this point on, the diamond becomes involved in world affairs as royalty change, wars are fought, revolutions are staged, and, of course, a few shady characters and a couple of "possible" thefts.

In 1792 after the French Revolution, the diamond disappears from history. It doesn't reappear until September, 1812. That's possibly because Napoleon issued amnesty for all war crimes, in his effort to recover the French Crown Jewels. But no one seemed to be sure where the Blue Diamond really was all that time.

In 1823, George IV of England bought the diamond from a well-known jeweler. George died in 1830 in heavy debt. William IV who followed him needed money as a result. The Hope family was willing to pay for that rare blue diamond.

Who was this Hope family who could afford to buy jewels from a king? They were a family of merchant traders and bankers in Amsterdam for many generations. They were incredibly wealthy and had a pre-eminent diamond collection. They also provided major loans for national governments. When Napoleon decided to sell Louisiana, it was Hope and Company and Baring of London who made the loan to the United States to finance the Louisiana Purchase. (Thankfully the story doesn't get into Lewis and Clark.)

The Duke of Brunswick supposedly bought the Hope Diamond from the estate of Henry Thomas Hope in 1850 (remember that year). When Brunswick died he left his collection and estate to the City of

Geneva. And we have another mystery. There was no record found of him purchasing the Hope Diamond. So, how did he actually get it? No one knows.

In 1850 another important event happens in this tale. On April 2, 1850, Tom Walsh was born in Tipperary, Ireland. He was a farmer's son. As a lad of 12 he was apprenticed to a millwright and became a jack-of-all-trades carpenter. Tom came to America when he finished his apprenticeship in 1869. He worked for a while in Massachusetts. Then at the age of 22, he and his sister, Maria, went west. They landed in Golden, Colorado. In Golden, Tom went to work for the Colorado Central Railroad.

The Colorado Central was a U. S. railroad company that operated in Colorado and southeastern Wyoming in the late 19th century. It was originally founded in the Colorado Territory in the wake of the Colorado Gold Rush to ship gold from the mountains. It eventually expanded from its initial Golden to Denver line to form a crucial link connecting Colorado with the transcontinental railroad and the national rail network. Tom, as a carpenter, worked for the Colorado Central building bridges. It was in Golden that he caught "the mining fever."

After prospecting in Colorado, then Arizona and finally back to Central City, Colorado, gold was discovered in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Tom arrived in 1874 in Custer and then in 1876 moved into the Deadwood area.

While Tom did some prospecting in the Deadwood area, he soon found that his skill as a carpenter brought in more money. According to his daughter's biography, a good deal of the buildings on Deadwood's main thoroughfare were the handiwork of Tom Walsh. Somewhere along that street he had a carpenter shop along with living quarters. His daughter Evalyn's biography also states that Calamity Jane called him by his first name. Tom was also acquainted with Swill Barrel Jimmy, Antelope Frank, and Sheriff Seth Bullock. It was probably hard not to know these persons. She states Tom rode with the volunteers who went after the "redskins"—her word—who murdered Preacher Smith on August 20, 1876.

Trying to trace Tom Walsh in Deadwood was not easy. Watson Parker in "Gold in the Black Hills" writes the Congregational Church held services in a carpenter shop sometimes. He didn't say who's carpenter shop.

But I'm getting a little ahead of the story. In the spring of 1876, Tom ran into a prospector who had just arrived from the Hills. He was ragged and dirty with a matted beard, and looked as if he could use a good meal. So, true to the Code of the West, Tom invited him to share his lunch. The two men became friends and every time the prospector came into Deadwood, he stopped to see Tom.

Evalyn's biography calls him "Smoky Jones." So I went looking for Smoky Jones. Couldn't find him. However, there was a Smoky Jones. All of Deadwood and the miners in the Hills knew Smoky Jones. He was the one who, every evening when the call "oh joe" signaled the end of the work day, he ended the call by howling like a timber wolf. This mystery was further solved when I received Tom Walsh's biography from the American Mining Hall of Fame. It was the same Smoky Jones.

One day Smoky came into Tom's shop and showed him a specimen of rock. He told Tom it looked like a rich strike possibility. By this time placer mining was starting to give way to hard rock mining. Smoky wanted Tom to become his partner and help him develop his mine.

Smoky was his friend but Tom wasn't sure about that rock. So, he decided to consult some of his Colorado mining friends about the deal. They told him to have nothing to do with it. Their reason was "it's a slate formation and even if there is a little gold there, it is only a freak. No mine can be worth fooling with what is not a true fissure vein into granite"

So, on the advice of his Colorado friends, Tom declined Smoky's offer of a partnership, only to find out later that Smoky's claim had become a part of the Homestake Gold Mine.

Tom Walsh left Deadwood for Colorado sometime in 1877. He left with somewhere between \$75,000 and \$100,000 and it is reasonable to suppose he made most of that as a builder. He landed in Leadville, Colorado. Leadville? Wasn't that the home of the Unsinkable Molly Brown? He met and married Carrie Bell Reed, bought the Grant Hotel, sold it, and moved to Denver. By now he had a better knowledge of mining and decided to move to Ouray, Colorado where there were "barren" silver claims. Here, in 1881, Walsh recognized a rich telluride vein in an old tunnel on the Gertrude claim.

In 1886, Tom's daughter, Evalyn Walsh, was born. She grew up living in miner's shacks and hotels, knew the instability and uncertainties of a prospector's life and, according to her, grew up with "homicidal maniacs, nice women and prostitutes, Chinese and some Indians." That was only slightly exaggerated. At Evalyn's age of ten, Tom Walsh told her, "Daughter, I've struck it rich." By then the Camp Bird Gold Mine was producing \$5,000 per day in ore.

In 1897, the Walshes moved to Washington, D.C. and became property owners and friends of politicians. They were friends with Presidents McKinley, Harding, and Taft. Tom was named U. S. Commissioner to the Paris Exposition and they lived for a year in Paris.

On their return to Washington, D.C., Tom built an \$835,000 mansion at 2020 Massachusetts Avenue, making it one of the most expensive in Washington, D.C. It was sold in 1952 and now houses the Embassy of Indonesia. It is said to be haunted by the ghost of young Evalyn.

In 1902, Tom sold the Camp Bird Mine to a London syndicate for \$5.2 million cash, plus ore, plus stock and a share of the profits.

Then in 1908, Evalyn met and married Edward Beale McLean, better known as Ned. Ned was handsome, charming, and rich beyond measure. He was the son of the family who owned the Washington Post and Cincinnati Enquirer newspapers.

Evalyn remained a wild Irish miner's daughter and Ned became a rich alcoholic. That eventually destroyed him. They led a wild and reckless life among the Jet Set.

In 1910, Pierre Cartier owned the Hope Diamond. He knew that mystery and curses made good selling stories. Cartier decided that all the "ill luck" which followed the diamond was in fact a curse. And he knew the perfect person for this diamond. Ned McLean spent \$154,000 and gave the Hope Diamond to Evalyn.

Gabriel blew his trumpet for Tom Walsh in 1910, the same year. Was Cartier right? Did the diamond really have a curse?

After 1923 things did not go well for the McLean family. Political scandals like the Teapot Dome touched them. The Washington Post was losing money and was later sold. Debts were piling up from the extravagant lifestyle.

Ned and Evalyn separated in 1929, and eventually divorced. Ned died in 1941 and Evalyn died on April 26, 1947. After her estate was settled, Harry Winston, a well-known jeweler, bought the Hope Diamond. If you recognize his name, it's because he is the jeweler who lends jewels to the stars at the Academy Awards Show.

In the mid 1950's, the Smithsonian was actively seeking to enhance their national jewel collection. They wanted the Hope Diamond. Negotiations with Harry Winston took over a year. But the Smithsonian finally had complete and full ownership. The Hope Diamond, now on display, was recognized as a National Treasure by Jackie Kennedy in 1962.

In case you might wonder whatever became of Smoky Jones, here is another of the Deadwood Tales, from Watson Parker's "Gold in the Black Hills."

The plaintive penetrating lone-wolf howl of Smoky Jones was a sound calculated to raise the hackles and chill the blood. It was dearly loved by all. Jones one day made his pile in the mines and departed for the East. Several months later, a shaved and polished stranger appeared who passed unrecognized—until one night at the Gem Theater, in the applause, from the back of the room came an old familiar howl. There was rejoicing! Smoky Jones was back!

With that, I'll leave you with something Tom Walsh said when someone asked him about turning down Smoky's offer for a partnership. With a rare kind of Irish pride, he said he would never forget the biggest, most expensive blunder he had ever made.

But was it?

OMAHA I: A CITY LOST IN TIME

Tom Kilian

At this conference, we have been encouraged to address the role of rivers, streams, and bodies of water in the early history of our region. No one questions the importance of these in shaping the events of our past. I have come to think of rivers as the "roads" of the past—roads in the sense that, if one followed them, they led somewhere. Indeed, they were the only natural roads in the era of prehistory.

River roads were important to early people because they provided the necessities of life: first of all: water, for drinking, washing, bathing. Streams provided food, in that there were fish, clams, crabs, and other edibles like turtles in the water. The water attracted many edible land animals—deer, antelope, buffalo, and elk and many small animals, who reliably would come to drink. There were wild birds: ducks, geese, cranes, prairie chickens, grouse, and many smaller birds, to supply meat, eggs, bone, and feathers for many uses. The larger animals provided not only food but hides and horns and bones to make clothing, weapons, and many household tools as well as teepee walls, storage bags, ropes, and many other products.

There were wild fruits, such as: plums, chokecherries, grapes, buffalo berries, and acorns and hazelnuts to be found in the low valleys and the entrances of small tributary creeks. There was wood, necessary for making fires to cook, to temper pottery, to harden tips of spears and arrows, to make teepee poles, drying racks and wigwams, and very important to provide warmth in the winter. There was wood to make battle-axes, bows and arrows and to make biers on which to raise the dead.

The river valleys offered protection as well. One could get down in the water if need be until the blowtorch heat of a prairie fire had passed over. Shelter could often be found in natural caves and under ledges in the stream banks or in thickets of plum and cedar or willow in the valleys. These offered protection against the driving rain and hail of the summer tempest or the bitter blasts of winter. These valleys offered far better protection from the weather than could be found up on the open prairie.

All of these reasons were of far greater importance to the Native people than the ability to travel on the surface of the water. These early people tended to travel in small bands—perhaps two to three or four dozen people. They were very unlikely to carry watercraft with them because of their weight and bulk. And, under the best of terms, bullboats and dugout canoes required materials and a great deal of time to build. Travel by early area people was far more likely to be across streams—fording—than to use them for up and down stream transport.

Many people today assume that rivers and streams were used mainly for transportation. This was true—from the white man's view of their usefulness. Rivers were needed by them as a low cost means of shipping men and materials over distances. They were the main avenues for freight and passenger transport; they supported commerce and the military. Yet the first white men—the explorers and trappers and frontier vagabonds—made the very same use of the streams, as did the Native Americans.

For the Native Americans, travel on the rivers was accomplished by rafts of logs, by canoes made of hollowed-out logs, and with bullboats, an invention that more nearly resembled a large kettle or wash tub than a boat. It was nearly round and made by stretching a buffalo hide over a framework of tough, pliant wood. Bullboats were nearly identical to similar vessels found along the coast of western Britain and Wales which has given rise to the notion that the method for their construction was brought to America and taught to the Native people by early visitors from the British Isles. The bullboats from both locations, when compared, are nearly identical. I believe the early Omaha and Ponca people who lived in this immediate area before the Sioux used the Sioux River and the Splitrock in these ways.

Think of rivers and streams as roads or paths to follow—as guides for direction around the country. We are interested today in the movements of the Omaha and Ponca peoples in this area, in prehistoric times, before written records were made. This would be about 300 or perhaps 400 or more years ago. These people traveled along rivers and streams for the reasons outlined above. The role of streams in their lives helps us understand where and how they moved about.

The bases of our knowledge for thinking this way are found in the oral histories of the Omaha people, as recounted by their elders and carefully recorded and interpreted in the reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

The accounts of the traditions reported by the Elders are contained in the Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. The report was reproduced in a volume entitled *The Omaha Tribe*, by Alice C. Fletcher, the Thaw Fellow of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University and by Francis La Flesche, a prominent member of the Omaha Tribe. It was published by the University of Nebraska in 1972.

The old people told of the movements of the tribe along the east side of the Big Sioux River, through several locations. In one important location, the Omahas established a village at a site of keen interest to us.

The report states that the Omaha, having reached the Sioux River "...where, on the banks of a small stream that flows in from the northeast, they built a village."

"It was while they were here, that a disastrous battle took place and, as a result of which, the village seems to have been abandoned, after the dead had been gathered and buried in a great mound".

"After the great battle on the Big Sioux, the Omaha seemed to have turned (moved) slightly southward but remained on the east side of the Missouri." War parties of the Omaha roamed over the area and engaged in fights with the Arikara whom they first encountered just west of the Missouri.

"About the time of these events, the Omaha seem to have returned to the Big Sioux and to have built a village at a point where the river makes a loop, at a point where a small stream enters from a canyon...which has two cliffs, like pinnacles, standing at the entrance...Q"

"When they built this village,...the Omaha were living in bark houses...they had not yet adopted the earth lodge."

"The continued forays of the Omaha made the Arikara seek peace and it was at this village at the mouth of the canyon that peace was made among the Arikara, the Cheyenne, the Omaha, the Ponca, the Iowa and the Oto..."

There are perplexing features of the accounts of the time elapsed and the sequence of events surrounding the sojourn of the Omaha living near the Sioux River. However there is less doubt as to the location of their village or villages.

The loop in the river can only be the loop that flows around Sioux Falls. When placed in association with the mouth of a small stream that flows into the Sioux from the northeast from a canyon of two stone cliffs or pinnacles, the stream could only be the Split Rock or Eminija, as it was called by the Santee. There is no other stream flowing into the Sioux from the northeast out of such a stonedided canyon, as it appears today near the Garretson Palisades.

There are repeated references to a great battle that took place at this village site, presumably with the Sioux. The dead from this battle were said to have been buried in a "great mound".

The presence of a large mound—among many—on the Shafer farm is further corroboration and we are led to the reports in the Forty-first Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1919-1924, as reported by Jesse Walter Fewkes in 1928. The report states that William E. Myer of the Smithsonian Institution spent a month in October 1921 exploring 30 mounds on the Split Rock, now known as the Eminija Mounds. (The actual number of mounds is probably 38.)

The largest mound was 110 feet across at the base and 10 feet high. Myer described finding an elaborate burial pit in this mound, 12 by 14 feet and several feet deep which contained the remains of about 50 humans. The entire pit had a coating of white calcined bone and had been lined with fur. There was

evidence that this site had been occupied by the Omahas somewhere between 1725 and 1775. It is now known that the burial was intrusive for the mounds themselves have been dated as Woodland from about 300 to 500 AD.

This burial site could hardly be a coincidence, given the description of the Omaha Elders of the village as being on a stream flowing into the Sioux from the northeast, from between stone cliffs, such as are upstream a few miles.

So we have a description of the site by the early Omahas (which is confirmed by our knowledge of the physical features of the site) and we have a mound in which the dead from the "great battle" were laid to rest. The site appears to be one of the real historic interests, which should be studied, recognized and marked.

This entire discussion has its roots in the imagination and vision of a remarkable resident at the junction of the Split Rock and the Sioux River. The man was the late Aaron Shafer, a farmer who purchased the land and moved to the site in 1945. The Shafer farm contained the site of the original site and log cabin of Eminija, a town site laid out by the Dakota Land Company of St. Paul in 1857 and also the largest group of Indian mounds in South Dakota. The Shafer home was located on the edge of the high west bank of the Split Rock.

This is the mound group upon which Aaron's son, the late Wendell Shafer and his wife, Eva, placed a conservation easement to insure their future integrity. There are historic markers describing the mounds along the present highway #11 for those interested in the history of the area.

Aaron Shafer was a keen intellect—an intuitive thinker, part visionary and part poet. He had a pervasive interest in all aspects of local and natural history in the area. He knew of the nearby veins of Pipestone along the Split Rock. He knew of the layer of yellowstone volcanic dust near Corson. He knew of the silver claims near Garretson and of the shark's teeth in the Split Rock sand bars. He knew and loved the native plants. He had his personal names for all of the notable spots in the neighborhood. His home and grounds held a trove of valuable artifacts he had collected on the history of the area.

In visiting with Mr. Shafer some years ago, he described his conviction of the existence of a large Omaha village on an alluvial flat—now a farm field—bordered on the west by the Split Rock and on the south by the Beaver Creek, which flowed in from the east. He described it as an important site at which the Omaha and the Ponca peoples decided to form their own separate tribes and to go their separate ways.

Why did Aaron Shafer believe this? How did he come by this idea? It seems likely that Mr. Shafer came in contact with the accounts of the traditional history of the Omahas and Ponca related in the Bureau

of Ethnology reports. Their descriptions of their village locations would have fired his curiosity and led him to the conclusions that most people would reach if they knew the local landscape. The Omaha Elders were describing a location probably on his farm!

There were artifacts of weapon points and tools and pottery shards and bits of bone and shell in the area and especially on the surface of another large group of 32 Indian mounds located along the eastern edge of this flat field. These mounds give testimony to the long use of the area by native peoples and many predate the Omahas and Poncas. These mounds were examined by Dr. Adrien Hannus of the Augustana Archaeological Laboratory during the summer of 1972 and were named by him as the "Beaver Creek" mounds. Hannus received a radio carbon dating of 440 AD, +-90. These mounds were visited by Dr. Dale Henning, an archaeologist from Luther College, Dr. Hannus and myself in the summer of 1991. For reasons unknown, these mounds have been referred to locally as the "Ponca" mounds.

Finally with all of this information—the accounts of the Omaha Elders and the evidence on the ground—it appears likely that the Shafer farm was the location of the Omaha/Ponca village—which we may fancifully call "Omaha I". Placing the parts of this puzzle together may be the nearest we will ever come to certainty. I am inclined to believe Aaron Shafer's conclusion that this was the site of the Omaha/Ponca village at which they decided to separate two tribes. For, we can conclude from the accounts of the Elders that the events actually occurred and from their description of the village site and our knowledge of the physical features of the site, it appears to have been at the Shafer farm. Here, the Omaha and Ponca first became separate tribes. Here the Omaha tradition for a peace ceremony began which ultimately spread throughout the central United States among many tribes. Here came into existence the tribe for whom the present city of Omaha (Omaha II) was named. There seems little likelihood that anyone else can offer more reasonable conclusions.

It is time that scholars take a more serious interest in the Shafer farm as one of South Dakota's most valuable historic sites, for it contains the well known Eminija Mounds group, the town site of Eminija, laid out by the Dakota Land Company of St. Paul, at the same time as their visit to Sioux Falls, in 1857. It contains the Eminija Stage Station site, the Beaver Creek Mounds group and the probable village site where the Omaha and the Ponca became separate tribes. The farm could be regarded as a historic park.

“OMAHA-COUNCIL BLUFFS, THE KAWSMOUTH, THE COUNCIL BLUFFS, AND THE STEAMBOATS”

Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell

Without doubt, the 1863 decision to build the eastern link of the first transcontinental railroad, the Union Pacific Railroad, west from Omaha was what gave the city's leaders an opportunity to cement a position of dominance in Nebraska. Yet, Omaha had not started out as a railroad town. Rather, like numerous other places along western rivers, Omaha began as just another river town dependent on steamboat transportation.¹

In 1959, historian Richard Wade authored a book in which he claimed that between 1790 and 1830 six frontier cities in the upper Ohio River Valley acquired the same kind of urban amenities as many older established places east of the Appalachian Mountains. Only one of the new towns, Lexington, Kentucky, was away from navigable water. Four were on the Ohio River—Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, Wheeling in Virginia, Cincinnati in Ohio, and Louisville in Kentucky. The fifth, St. Louis, Missouri, was on the Mississippi River, twenty miles below the mouth of the Missouri River.²

Just as the Ohio River cities, the recent development of the steamboat, coupled with a subsequent rise in commercial activity, led to a rapid growth cycle in St. Louis. A conversion to efficient high pressure engines from inefficient low pressure engines, plus the use of light construction materials, made steamboats, large ones over two hundred feet in length, a practical means of transportation. St. Louis served as a commercial breaking point. Large steamboats operating on the Ohio and lower Mississippi Rivers easily reached St. Louis. Above St. Louis on the narrower upper Mississippi River, smaller steamboats serviced the Illini Country and ran all the way to the head of Mississippi River navigation at St. Paul. And, with ever greater frequency, steamboats ventured up the always difficult to navigate Missouri River.³

¹ Lawrence H. Larsen, Barbara J. Cottrell, Harl H. Dalstrom, and Kay Calamé Dalstrom, *Upstream Metropolis: An Urban Biography of Omaha and Council Bluffs* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007). This paper includes material from both *Upstream Metropolis* and a current project that deals more directly with the Missouri River, Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell, “Steamboats West: The 1859 American Fur Company Missouri River Expedition.”

² Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

³ See Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Waters: An Economic and Technological History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949).

The thirty-two hundred mile in length Missouri River, several hundred miles longer than the Mississippi River, was the longest river in North America. The Missouri River headwaters were above the Great Falls in the Rocky Mountains of central Montana. The first two hundred miles downstream below the Great Falls was called the "Rocky River," noted for a rocky bottom and fearsome rapids. For the next twenty-nine hundred miles to the mouth the river had an alluvial bottom, over a hundred feet above bedrock. The situation made for a very uneven channel that never stayed in the same place for more than a year. Obstructions—submerged tree limbs called snags and trees overhanging the banks called sawyers—were constant hazards. Sandbars presented a further complication, frequently created or dissolved overnight by collapsing river banks. In the spring, massive ice flows caused great ice cascades and melting snow caused floods and an annual rise. From mid-summer and on into fall the river fell, sometimes very sharply in a short time. During the day, no matter the season, the river was hard for a pilot to read. At night, a whitish tinge made finding a channel easier, but a fear of snags caused boats to usually stop for the night. Travel on the river was never a case of sailing serenely along the river on a pleasant day.⁴

Steamboat travel started on the Missouri River in 1819. A wide variety of other kinds of water craft had long operated on the river. Native people used canoes and small round-shaped bull boats. Mackinaw boats, favored by fur traders, made one-way downstream trips. Keelboats, some fifty feet long and carrying twenty-five person crews, had trouble going upstream.⁵ By the 1830s, steamboats were the principal Missouri River carriers. Regular packet service stopped five hundred miles above St. Louis on the Missouri River at Fort Leavenworth in the future Kansas and nearby St. Joseph in Missouri.⁶

Both St. Joseph and Fort Leavenworth were in the Kawsmouth, a generally defined area around where the Kansas River entered the Missouri River from a westerly direction, at the north-south border of Missouri. Many observers thought the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers made the Kawsmouth prime territory for white settlement. In 1838, two large Corps of Engineers snag boats improved the

⁴ For descriptions of the river by two veteran rivermen see Hiram Martin Chittenden, *History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River: Life and Adventures of Joseph La Barge* 2 vols. (Repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), I, 78-9; Phil E. Chappell, *History of the Missouri River* (Kansas City: Bryant and Douglas, 1905), 52-3. Two recent accounts with descriptive material on the nature of the river are William E. Lass, *Navigating the Missouri: Steamboating on Nature's Highway* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008); Robert Kelley Schneiders, *Unruly River: Two Centuries of Change Along the Missouri* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

⁵ Michael M. Casler, *Steamboats of the Fort Union Fur Trade: An Illustrated Listing of Steamboats on the Upper Missouri River, 1831-1867* (Williston: Fort Union Association, 1999), 56-8.

⁶ Chittenden, *Steamboat Navigation*, I, 217.

Missouri River channel across the state of Missouri.⁷ During the 1849 California Gold Rush, large numbers of argonauts left from the Kawsmouth portals of St. Joseph and Independence, Missouri. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 dashed hopes for a transcontinental railroad from a Kawsmouth eastern terminal. The legislation reopened the slavery controversy, resulting in “Bleeding Kansas.” The bleak situation did not stop an eccentric urban visionary, William Gilpin, from predicting that within a hundred years the lightly populated Kawsmouth would be the site of the “Centropolis,” the largest city on earth with a population of fifty million people.⁸ While Gilpin’s vision uplifted Kawsmouth real estate developers, no rush of settlers arrived in the Kawsmouth and many observers branded Gilpin as a lunatic.

Although the first railroad to reach the Kawsmouth, the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad, arrived in St. Joseph in February 1859, investor interest shifted two hundred miles north to the Council Bluffs, another underdeveloped sub-region. The Council Bluffs extended north along the Missouri River from the Platte River mouth to a place where Lewis and Clark had held a meeting with the Indians. The Platte River entered the Missouri River from the west. Bellevue, founded in the early 1830s just above the mouth of the Platte River by Presbyterian missionaries, was considered the breaking point between the lower and upper Missouri River until the Kansas-Nebraska Act created Nebraska Territory. Arbitrarily, the river break shifted a hundred and fifty miles north to Sioux City, Iowa, at the start of unorganized Indian country.⁹ Sioux City, a tiny hamlet, was the largest white community on the Missouri River above the Council Bluffs.

Significant white settlement in the Council Bluffs started in the 1840s. On the eastern bank of the Missouri River, speculators founded Kaneshville—renamed Council Bluffs—which in the mid-1840s became a gathering point for Mormons on their way to the Salt Lake Basin.¹⁰ For a couple years, Mormons expanded their operations to include a temporary camp, Winter Quarters, at a good rocky landing on the west side of the Missouri River a little north of Council Bluffs. Mormons also founded a whole series of towns, few of which lasted, in western Iowa in the Council Bluffs and its environs.¹¹

⁷ Robert E. Lee to Joseph G. Totten, p. 202-4. Lee, Robert E., “Missouri River,” Senate Doc. I, 26th Cong., 1st sess., “Documents Accompanying the Report of the Secretary of War,” November 27, 1839 (Washington, 1839).

⁸ William Gilpin, *The Central Gold Region* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1860).

⁹ Robert Kelley Schneiders, *Big Sky Rivers: The Yellowstone and Upper Missouri* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 5-71

¹⁰ Larsen, *Upstream Metropolis*, 30-34.

¹¹ William G. Hartley, “Mormons and Early Iowa History (1835-1858): Eight District Connections,” *Annals of Iowa* 59 (Summer 2000), 243-57.

In July 1854, white pioneers established a number of towns in the new Nebraska Territory, many along the Missouri River in and around the Council Bluffs. The old Winter Quarters reemerged as the village of Florence, used again as a Mormon embarkation point. In southern Nebraska Territory, the old federal post of Fort Kearney became Nebraska City, a wagon freighting center that had aspirations as the territorial capital. Bellevue and neighboring Plattsmouth also sought that honor, which for political reasons went to Omaha, directly across the river floodplain from the city of Council Bluffs. From the start, Omaha benefited from a close relationship with Council Bluffs business interests. Even so, what city or cities would dominate the Council Bluffs was very much in doubt until the transcontinental railroad decision. No place in the Council Bluffs had as many as three thousand people and only outside decisions decided the issue in favor of Omaha and Council Bluffs.¹² At the time, the closest operating railroads stopped two hundred miles away in eastern Iowa. In a fair contest, Nebraska City might have won. In a similar manner, Kansas City, Missouri, a small village with few expectations emerged victorious in the Kawsmouth. Outside decisions led to the opening in 1869 at Kansas City of the first permanent railroad bridge over the Missouri.¹³

In the late spring of 1859, two men from the deck of a steamboat, recorded their impressions of Kawsmouth and Council Bluffs communities. They were both on board the large steamboat *Spread Eagle*, part of the American Fur Company's annual fur gathering expedition to Indian country.¹⁴ One of the journal keepers was Dr. Elias Marsh, M.D., the medical officer for the expedition. The other was a tourist, Charles Henry Weber, a St. Louis landowner and farmer. In 1936, the short-lived and lightly circulated *South Dakota Historical Review* published Marsh's journal.¹⁵ The original Weber journal is in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.¹⁶ Typescript copies are in the Library of Congress and the National

¹² Larsen, *Upstream Metropolis*, 42-55.

¹³ Charles N. Glaab, *Kansas City and the Railroads: A Study in Community Policy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962).

¹⁴ The American Fur Company was a subsidiary of Pierre Chouteau Jr. and Company. The 1859 expedition consisted of the *Spread Eagle* and a smaller especially-fitted steamboat, the *Chippewa*. The *Spread Eagle* stopped at Fort Union, twenty-two hundred miles by water from St. Louis. The *Chippewa* made a pioneering trip another nine hundred miles to the vicinity of Fort Benton in central Montana, becoming the first steamboat to travel the Rocky River, making for an important first in steamboat navigation. See William E. Lass, *A History of Steamboating on the Upper Missouri* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), 15-9; John E. Sunder, *The Fur Trade on the Upper Missouri* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 202-07.

¹⁵ Elias J. Marsh, "Journal of Elias J. Marsh: An Account of a Steamboat Trip on the Missouri River, May-August 1859," *South Dakota Historical Review* (1936), 79-122.

¹⁶ Charles Henry Weber, "Journal of Charles Henry Weber, 1859," LC Control No. mm80003943, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington D.C., Photocopy.

Archives-Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Missouri. ¹⁷

Marsh and Weber both left impressions of the Kawsmouth during the initial stages of urbanization. As it transpired, there was little to see or write about; none of the frenzied activities characteristic of hastily erected mining boom towns happened in the Kawsmouth. After finding little to write about as the *Spread Eagle* crossed Missouri, Marsh observed "Kansas City has more the appearance of a business place than anything since we left St. Louis, but the country around it is not much settled or cultivated."¹⁸ Kansas City had more potential than reality. A line of two and three story commercial buildings along the riverfront, Westport Landing, constituted the commercial district. The modest residential section was on a bluff, reached by a steep road impassable under wet conditions.¹⁹ Weber only said that he found Kansas City "Quite a flourishing town."²⁰ He had more to say about St. Joseph: "contains 10,000 inhabitants. Large stores. Great booths in the streets, selling wagons, etc., at auction."²¹ During the spring people going west swelled the permanent population of eight thousand. Atchison, Leavenworth, and landlocked Independence, all smaller than St. Joseph, were the only other towns of consequence in the Kawsmouth. Weber wrote about one hamlet: "Liberty Landing contains only a large hemp factory & half a dozen houses."²²

The main stop made by the *Spread Eagle* in the Council Bluffs was at Omaha. Both Weber and Marsh reported seeing a great many Native people at the landing. They were probably in transit, because Omaha's population was almost entirely white. Weber composed a short sketch of Omaha: "Capital on a high hill, large hotel & small number of mean looking houses in sight. Back of the first hill, I hear there is the principal part of the city. Landed at the upper landing to take on ice & boat stores. Quite a number of Indians, male & female, on the bank, mostly Pawnees and Omahas." Weber mentioned an unusual sight:

¹⁷ Charles Henry Weber, "Journal of a Trip to Fort Benton and Back on Board the 'Spread Eagle,' May 28 to August 16, 1859," No. 7251, Reconnaissance and Exploration File, Central Administration Files 1936-1943, Kansas City District, Records of the Chief of Engineers, Record Group 77, National Archives-Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Mo., Typescript Copy.

¹⁸ Marsh, "Steamboat Trip," June 2, 1859, p. 83.

¹⁹ Rick Montgomery and Shirl Kasper, *Kansas City: An American Story*, Monroe Dodd, photo ed. (Kansas City, Mo.: Kansas City Star Books, 1999), 40-51; A. Theodore Brown, *Frontier Community: Kansas City to 1870* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1965).

²⁰ Weber, "Trip to Fort Benton," June 2, 1859, p. 1. The original copy of the Weber journal is not paged. The page numbers are for the typescript copy.

²¹ *Ibid.*, June 4, 1859, p. 2.

²² *Ibid.*, June 2, 1859, p. 1.

"A large drove of sheep destined for California crossed over while we were lying there."²³ The only aspect of the Omaha stop that Marsh noted concerned the Native people at the landing. "Here we saw a number of Pawnee Indians, and several of the men and women came on board the boat," he noted. "The men were dressed in little more than a blanket, and though some were good-looking, they were painted horribly with a vermilion color, and many had feathers stuck in their hair."²⁴

Because of a large bend to the east in the Missouri River, it took the *Spread Eagle* a considerable amount of time to reach Florence from Omaha, only a short distance away by land. According to Weber: "After traveling 2½-3 hours came again in sight of Omaha, whose capital is on a prominent landmark for miles around, near the small town of Florence, 5 miles distant from Omaha by land and 15 by water. Mostly settled by Mormons, a large camp of whom was above the town."²⁵ Marsh discussed the Mormon element in Florence. "In the afternoon we passed Florence, a Mormon settlement and here we saw a camp of them preparing to set out for Salt Lake City," Marsh reported. "Their tents looked well and they had a number of oxen and wagons."²⁶

As Marsh and Weber indicated in their somewhat inconsequential observations, none of the new towns in the Kawsmouth and the Council Bluffs had developed rapidly into large impressive cities. Certainly, steamboats could build cities, as proved by the rise of places like Cincinnati and St. Louis. However, while those and some other steamboat towns spurred in the 1820s, none experienced the kind of overnight surge in population the railroad brought to Chicago thirty years later, and later still to Omaha-Council Bluffs and Kansas City. In 1870, Omaha-Council Bluffs, in addition to the recently completed transcontinental, had three trunk railroad links from the east. In 1880, a decade after completion of the Missouri River railroad bridge, Kansas City had many railroads, placing the city on a course that would soon make it after Chicago the second greatest railroad center in the nation.²⁷ After the coming of the railroads, steamboating lost importance in the Kawsmouth and the Council Bluffs. By the 1890s, Kansas City and Omaha-Council Bluffs were the largest urban complexes between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Coast. Leavenworth, Atchison, and St. Joseph were all important western railroad cities. It could be said that steamboats started a process that railroads finished.

²³ Ibid., June 7, 1859, p. 2-3.

²⁴ Marsh, "Steamboat Trip," June 7, 1859, p. 86-7.

²⁵ Weber, "Trip to Fort Benton," June 7, 1859, p. 2-3.

²⁶ Marsh, "Steamboat Trip," 86-7.

²⁷ See Lawrence H. Larsen, *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1979).

LEWIS & CLARK AND THE AMERICAN FUR TRADE

Shebby Lee

After spending nearly two and half years in the wilderness, the men of the Corps of Discovery were in such a hurry to return to St. Louis that they sometimes didn't even pause to eat. But—as befitted the “writingest explorers in history”—they did manage to note in their journals the nearly 150 fur trappers and traders they passed heading upstream that late summer of 1806.¹ The path they had blazed, and the discoveries recorded, had clearly opened up the West to be settled by succeeding generations to come.

Unfortunately, the facts do not bear this out: the route of the Corps of Discovery was so impractical that it was used only once, by the expedition itself. And while they were the first to explore much of the Louisiana Territory, they were in fact preceded by enterprising fur traders from a number of different countries, and their expedition was actually a *response* to the profit motive and the increasing market demand for these furs.

Nevertheless, American school children are taught that Lewis and Clark were the first white men to penetrate the interior and therefore open up the West for the fur trade, and succeeding generations of settlers.

This paper attempts to examine just why the American explorers are accorded such an unearned reputation.

French explorers and fisherman arrived in what is now eastern Canada in the early 16th century, and began almost immediately trading with the natives: European goods for North American furs. Furs of all kinds were valued in Europe, but a preference for hats made of felted beaver fur began to emerge around 1550 (although not yet the beaver top hat that rose to prominence in the late 18th century). The demand eventually became so great that the poor animal became nearly extinct on the European continent and merchants turned to the New World and its seemingly inexhaustible supply of natural resources.

French explorer, Samuel de Champlain built a fur trade post on the present site of Quebec City in 1608, but the uniquely North American enterprise soon shifted its center to Montreal because of its closer proximity to the fertile St. Lawrence valley. This was the earliest fur trade base in North America and remained prominent for two hundred years. From the beginning, the French employed First Americans to do their trapping for them, sending representatives out into the field who took the trouble to learn their

¹ Dayton Duncan. *Scenes of Visionary Enchantment*. (Lincoln, 2004) p. 136.

languages and trade routes. One of these, Etienne Brule, may have been the first to search for the Northwest Passage in 1618.² This fabled passage was a vital part of the “hopeful geography” embraced during the Age of Enlightenment. Jefferson was convinced, for example, that western North America was a mirror image of the east, with a single height of land—no higher than the Appalachians—parting the waters of the great western rivers.³

An easy water passage over the Rocky Mountains would have created direct access to the Pacific Ocean and the lucrative China market, and explorers from many nations suffered great hardships and expended vast sums of their sponsors’ money to locate it until Lewis & Clark definitively proved it did not exist on their 1803-1806 expedition.⁴

While the French were dominant throughout the continent, future Americans were also getting into the act. In 1625, the very year that New Amsterdam was established, the new settlement shipped 1,500 beaver and 500 otter skins to Europe.⁵ During the five year span between 1631 and 1636, Plymouth colony shipped an average of 1200 beaver pelts each year while the French, Spanish and Dutch traders added an additional 4,000 to 7,000 to that number each year.⁶

The Mississippi River was first explored by the famed French exploring team of Marquette and Joliet in 1673,⁷ one hundred and thirty years before Lewis & Clark crossed it’s mighty waters to begin their epic journey. They were followed by LaSalle, who managed to ship back considerable quantities of furs while exploring the central part of the continent.⁸

The English made a strong bid for supremacy in 1670 when the Hudson’s Bay Company was chartered by King Charles II. It quickly established a monopoly over all the lands that drained into Hudson Bay—a huge expanse of central Canada. Although British, it employed mostly French-Canadians, who

² <http://www.whiteoak.org/learning/timeline.htm>.

³ Stephen Ambrose. *Undaunted Courage*. (New York, 1996). pp. 55 & 75.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 396.

⁵ <http://www.carnegiemnh.org/exhibits/north-south-east-west/iroquois/beaver.html>.

⁶ Suzanne Pufpaff. *Bits and Pieces about Beaver Hat Making*. (Nashville, MI, 2006).

⁷ Hiram Chittenden. *A History of the American Fur Trade of the Far West*. (Stanford, 1954) p. 73.

⁸ *Ibid.* P. 85.

roamed far south of their designated territory. Hudson Bay's main competition came from Montreal-based North West Company, which was founded in 1779. The newer company soon outstripped its hundred-year-old rival, shipping 5½ times as many furs as Hudson Bay, and by 1795 the two companies controlled 93% of the total Canadian fur trade. The North West Company's advantage was that it was managed from Montreal (and considered itself Canadian, or French) while Hudson Bay's governance came from distant London. The two eventually merged in 1821.⁹

Despite the fact that their companies were smaller, the French continued to provide stiff competition and managed to establish so many trading posts in the interior –and with them implicit territorial claims—that the resulting rivalry with the British eventually triggered the French and Indian War (1754-1763).¹⁰

While the French and British were scrapping over territorial rights, the Americans began their rise to dominance in the fur trade. The British actually labored under an onerous disadvantage: all Canadian and British fur traders were obliged to ship their pelts to London so that a tax could be assessed before being transshipped to their final destination. All others could send their furs directly to China.¹¹

Furs were obtained by the fur companies in two ways: barter with the Natives and purchase from independent fur trappers who ascended western watercourses and did the trapping themselves, returning to civilization perhaps once a year to sell the fruits of their labor. In later years this system became quite sophisticated, with the companies employing trappers directly and eventually shipping supplies directly to the field, thus eliminating the need to stop trapping in order to re-supply. But its very complexity (and danger) made the alternative of having the more pliable Indians do their work for them very appealing, and competition for this lucrative trade was at the heart of Lewis and Clark's mission.

Traders had learned early on that once introduced to the white man's goods, aboriginal peoples quickly craved more of the time- and labor-saving goods. In a very short span of time, Indians who had thrived for centuries by their own devices became dependent on manufactured goods originally introduced by these traders. And this dependence made the fur trade at once easier and more profitable.¹²

⁹ W. Raymond Wood and Thomas D. Thiessen. *Early Fur Trade on the Northern Plains*. (Norman, 1985). pp. 8-1.

¹⁰ Op. Cit. P. 87.

¹¹ Ambrose. p. 397.

¹² Chittenden. p. 84.

The exchange of goods created not just economic partnerships but political alliances between Europeans and their Native American neighbors. An open market for European goods in the colonies, and the supply of raw material from the colonies to Europe helped drive the earliest colonial economies. Unfortunately, these developing and shifting alliances also led to rivalries and warfare among various tribes, and even involved Native Americans in European-based conflicts including the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution.¹³ Mention should also be made that contact with Europeans brought a profound change in the Natives' material culture, and introduced deadly diseases with devastating results to the tribal populations.¹⁴

Lewis & Clark were the first *Americans* to visit the Mandan Villages, but Europeans, more specifically the French, arrived ca. 1738 when the elder Verendrye, traveled south from Montreal in search of fur habitats and trading partners in what would become North Dakota. By 1785 the Mandans were receiving regular visitors from the north.¹⁵ European trade goods, however, had reached the Mandans as early as 1650 via the complex trading network connecting the North American tribes. (Lewis & Clark denied that such a network existed, just one example of the Captains' underestimating the inhabitants of the Louisiana Purchase.)¹⁶

From their base in New Orleans, fur trappers pushed north from the early 18th century and eventually the company of Maxent and Company, a New Orleans trading outfit, sent Pierre LaCleade and his stepson, Auguste Chateau, north to establish a new trading center closer to the interior. St. Louis was thus founded in 1764 with the intention of becoming the fur trade capitol of the West and the Chateau family prospered mightily in the following decades. Manuel Lisa, a Spaniard also from New Orleans, and Chateau's chief St. Louis rival, was established enough by 1800 to wrest away the exclusive trade agreement with the Osage Indians which the latter had enjoyed for nearly twenty years.¹⁷

Another Spanish company sponsored what came to be known as the Mackay-Evans expedition in 1795-96. It ascended the Missouri River from St. Louis as far as the Mandan villages, established a fur

¹³ Kelly Feinstein. *The Fur Trade*. 2006.

¹⁴ Wood and Thiessen. p. 6.

¹⁵ Marc Brown. *The Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*. (Lincoln, 1961) p. 20.

¹⁶ W. Raymond Wood. "Lewis and Clark and Their Neighbors at Fort Mandan". 2003.

¹⁷ Chittenden. P. 126.

trading post and added considerably to the geographic knowledge of the area. It was this map which Lewis & Clark took with them on their voyage of discovery.¹⁸

Feeling pressure from these competitors, Jefferson set his sights on obtaining the port of New Orleans for his own country. Three-eighths of all US produce passed to market through the Crescent City, and securing it and the mouth of the Mississippi were essential to safeguard American interests. The unexpected bonanza of scoring all of Louisiana Territory not only ensured the port, but opened up all kinds of economic opportunities for the new president. Napoleon has always taken a beating for selling the land so cheaply just because he needed money to fight a little European war, but in reality the land was so vast and so remote that he probably would have lost it to America's avaricious land-thirst anyway. By selling when he did he at least got three cents an acre!¹⁹

Just as plans for the American expedition were being finalized, the Scot Alexander Mackenzie, a principal in the North West Company of Montreal, published the account of his own successful 1789 march across Canada to the sea, sending Jefferson into a near-panic. To protect American commercial interests and territorial claims, the expedition *must* commence immediately.

Jefferson's oft-quoted instructions to Lewis prior to the expedition underscore the economic objectives of the adventure. The Corps was charged with evaluating the mineral, animal, and water resources of the newly purchased Louisiana Territory which could be exploited for the benefit of the nation. The much-sought-after water route to the western ocean would be used to transport those resources to the Pacific and thence to China and other world markets. But beyond that was the explicit mission to convince the Natives that British goods and those from other countries were inferior and that they should henceforth trade exclusively with Americans.²⁰ These instructions left no doubt that the fur trade was already well established by 1803 when Meriwether Lewis departed the White House to begin his epic journey. Exploration and scientific discoveries were almost an afterthought, suggested by Jefferson's Attorney General, Levi Lincoln, in case the much-desired water route to the West proved to be an illusion.²¹

¹⁸ Wood and Thiessen. p. 28,

¹⁹ Ambrose. p. 101.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 205.

²¹ Ambrose. P. 93.

Lewis dutifully recorded the numerous favorable habitats for fur-bearing animals along the way, and Clark recommended likely locations for military forts to protect the anticipated fur trade—many of which were subsequently built.²²

As if further evidence is needed, the journals also record encounters with mountain men all along the route, many of whom had been living and trapping in the West for decades. Sacagawea's husband, Toussaint Charbonneau, was just one of many—mostly Canadian—trappers who had been living with native tribes and plying their trade in the West prior to Lewis and Clark's arrival on the scene.

When the Corps finally reached the Pacific late in 1805, they learned to their chagrin that the Russians were well entrenched on North America's western shores, having begun trade there for the luxurious sea otter by mid eighteenth century, and that Spain and Great Britain had also made commercial inroads in the Pacific northwest, providing strong competition to the Boston merchants.²³ Natives there possessed European goods, spoke a smattering of European languages, and were adept in the art of bartering. (One of the first Pacific Coast Indians that the Corps encountered was wearing a standard-issue English sailor's uniform jacket.)²⁴

Not only that, but by the time the expedition returned to St. Louis, Lewis was painfully aware that he had failed at a number of the goals on Jefferson's checklist. He did not find the Northwest Passage, since none was to be found. Far from pacifying the natives so they would spend their time trapping for Uncle Sam instead of warring with each other, he inflamed several Indian tribes along the way. He did not convince a single tribe to switch loyalties, though the Americans did eventually get the upper hand in the fur trade.

Had the British prevailed, historian Hiram Chittenden opined at the dawn of the 20th century, their system of farming out the wilderness to different bands would have sustained the fur trade without over-harvesting the streams, and later the prairies.²⁵ As it turned out, only the fashion trend *away* from beaver hats in the mid-1830s saved the beaver of North America from complete extinction. By this time the market was saturated anyway, and the British blockade of French and Spanish ports helped put an end to the 200-

²² Op. Cit.

²³ Chittenden, p. 95.

²⁴ James P. Ronda. *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*. (Lincoln: 1984. p. 168.

²⁵ Stanley Vestal. *The Missouri*. (Lincoln: 1996) p. 183.

year-old North American beaver trade. The fur trade continued however, with other furs, especially the buffalo, filling the void, with even more disastrous results. Not only were the buffalo nearly exterminated, but so were their hunters.²⁶

In reality, the Lewis & Clark expedition was closer to the end of the fur trade era than the beginning. The fur trade in St. Louis was already forty years old when the expedition set out. Newly-minted Americans born out of the French-Spanish mix in St. Louis did not need convincing that the West was full of furs, nor did they need anyone else to explore the region for them.

So why did Lewis and Clark receive all the credit for opening up the West? Even historian Bernard DeVoto in his landmark 1947 work, *Across the Wide Missouri*, begins his fur trade chronology a year after the return of the expedition (1807).²⁷

The answer—while not simple—is probably an iconic one. In 1804 two-thirds of the American population still lived within 50 miles of tidewater.²⁸ But Americans had faced West since the first European immigrants reached our shores. We had conquered the native inhabitants and needed room for our expanding population.

At the same time, we were ready for a new set of heroes. In one generation the founding fathers had morphed from rebellious traitors into respected political leaders of the new federal government, and a younger generation of adventurers was poised to take their place in the public's imagination. Americans were adventurous and acquisitive, and the Lewis and Clark Expedition was tailor-made to feed the American mythology. If Lewis and Clark hadn't lived, we would have had to invent them!

In addition, Lewis and Clark got great press. Despite what might have been the century's worst case of writer's block, which prevented Meriwether Lewis from preparing the manuscript for publication (and may even have kept him from writing for months at a time on the trail), the journals were finally published in 1814, with William Clark doing the legwork following Lewis' suicide. By this time, Fort Astoria and been built on the site of Fort Clatsop, South Pass had been discovered, providing the easy passage through the Rockies which had eluded the Corps of Discovery,²⁹ and America was well on its way to conquering the West.

²⁶ Tom McHugh. *The Time of the Buffalo*. (Lincoln, 1972). p. 286.

²⁷ Bernard DeVoto. *Across the Wide Missouri*. (Boston, 1947). P. 387.

²⁸ Ambrose. p. 51.

What Lewis & Clark accomplished—which the British, French and Spanish failed to do, despite earlier and numerous inroads to the region—was establish an indisputable claim to the Upper Missouri. It was one thing to buy a nebulous region called Louisiana Territory, and it was quite another to hang onto it. The map Clark produced from Lewis' astrological measurements was the first accurate record of the geography of the West, and a map in the Age of Enlightenment was tantamount to a deed of ownership. Prior claims to the region faded away.

It was the dawning of the American era.

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²⁹ DeVoto. P. 387.

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THE HISTORY OF THE MINNEHAHA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1927-2008
PART I: 1927-1939

Carol Martin Mashek

The legend is that the organization of the Minnehaha County Historical Society came about because of a challenge. Charles Smith had been griping for years about the loss of "Seney Island" and other historical sites in the county. He had been especially hurt when he with a group of like-minded people had gone to the Sioux Falls City Council to plead for that most historic spot. The group's concerns were met with deaf ears. After all, why should the Commissioners listen to the ravings of people of no importance or influence when a rich railroad company like the Milwaukee Road was willing to pay the city big money for land which had literally been turned into the city dump? These were laboring people, and especially not qualified to advise the City Council. When approached again, the mayor bluntly told them, "It's only a hangout for bums. We are not interested!" In his book, Minnehaha County History (1949), Charles A. Smith ends the section on Seney Island with these words: "So Seney Island passed into oblivion, with those who talked but did not act." (page 93)

Laura Bothum Wangsness, the daughter of Lasse Bothum, a member of the famous Berdahl Wagon Train of 1872 (who had grown up at the Indian Crossing of Slip-Up Creek), told the story at an anniversary party of the Society in 1934. It seems that Charlie Smith, himself the son of pioneer Henry W. Smith of Wayne Township, was a good friend of Charlie Craig who was to become city editor of the Argus Leader. One day the self-educated postal clerk was retelling the same old scenario when his friend turned to him and said, "Why don't you go ahead and do it?" in reference to starting an historical organization.

So, the two Charlies did it. They placed a notice in the daily papers that called for a meeting on Wednesday November 16, 1927, on the 9th floor of the Citizen's Bank building in the Chamber of Commerce office. (The Sullivanesque building still stands on the northeast corner of 9th St. and Phillips Ave.) Laura's notes include a quote from the next day's newspaper personals:

"Preliminary steps were taken at a meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce office Wednesday...toward the formation of a county historical society. In response to an invitation issued through the daily papers, about a score of old residents or members of pioneer families attended."

So a temporary organization was perfected by the selection of C.A. Smith temporary Chairman, and C. H. Craig temporary secretary. After an outline of the work contemplated had been made by Mr. Smith "...who had devoted considerable time to the movement, there was a general discussion as to aims and objectives of the organization. With a distinct understanding that there was to be no conflict between

the proposed historical society and other organizations; along the lines of locating and marking scenes and objects of historical interest in connection with both pioneer and more recent days."

The group was in general agreement as to their purposes and Simon C. Stevenson and William A. Lyon, Chr., were appointed two of a committee on constitution and bylaws, with power to bring to their aid any number of others as needed. The next meeting notice was dated December 12, 1927:

"County history group met to form a permanent organization...8 or 10 persons present. W. H. Lyon, Chr. of Constitution Committee...made a report. It was the expression of those present that with a few changes the articles stand as reported but the organization is to be known as The Minnehaha County Historical Society."

Another reason, and equally as important for starting an historical society, came from the controversy over Senator R.F. Pettigrew's home and museum after his death in October of 1926. From the Minnehaha County History, (1949):

"Frank Pettigrew, a few years prior to his death, made an agreement with the city of Sioux Falls whereby the city would receive his splendid home at 131 N. Duluth Ave. for use as a free public museum. This was conditioned on the part of the city permitting him to reside there, tax free, as long as he lived. The transaction was fulfilled on the part of the city and became the city's property in conformity with the agreement. However, he had also bequeathed it to the city purportedly in behalf of the heirs.

Litigation ensued and continued into the third year, during which time the case was tried in the local courts, where the city was declared the legal owner." (page 113)

Yet on October 29, 1927 there was a headline in the scrapbook from the Argus:

"The judge just ruled (no name given to the judge) that the heirs of Senator R.F. Pettigrew are his widow, Roberta, and his sons, Franklin S. and Arthur L." (The remainder of the article was not included.)

The Society was not going to see the heirs of Pettigrew, who had not even cared enough to come back for his funeral, get the property which legally belonged to Sioux Falls if they could stop it.

Not only was The Pettigrew a heartache, but then there were the nay-sayers. A letter from the DAR to the editor on October 14, 1927 voiced the concern that the new Historical Society would steal their thunder. The DAR was planning for a "Fort Sod Marker" and were worried that their mission would be taken away from them and all other groups doing historical work in the city. Charlie Smith sent a letter to the editor, "assuring all groups in the community that: 'The proposed historical society would not interfere with the work of ANY other organization's work.'"

Other letters and an editorial supported this idea and asked the public for their support. What a simple concept...let's just save our history...but what big controversy the Society would take on in the next 80 years. Christmas was coming. Meetings would begin again in the new year.

The next clipping dated January 20, 1928 gave the feeling of a permanent organization:

"Met at the Chamber of Commerce Thursday afternoon, January 10. A constitution was adopted and officers for the ensuing year were elected. The organization starts off with charter members of upwards of 30. Officers elected: President—Charles A. Smith, Vice President—Mrs. Mary Brown (widow of Thomas—Brown and Saenger), Sec. Tres.—David Duncan, The Executive Committee to be made up of the officers with William H. Lyon, Martha Almos, Anna (Mrs. John) Whitney and Charles H. Craig, Directors."

A call was made for anyone in the community who wanted to be on the list of Charter Members to be at the next meeting. The charter list reached 64 and was a cross section of the community. What did the new mayor, ex-mayors, lawyers, politicians, legislators, doctors, dentists and Morrell workers, auto mechanics, postal workers, business owners, school teachers and housewives have in common? It was simple: The matter of social class, education, wealth and gender seemed to melt away in the face of a common concern. Minnehaha County's rich historic heritage was being wiped out and together they were going to stop it the best they could.

By March 1, 1928 the committee had the incorporation papers ready to be sent to the state and voted to do so with H. C. Mundt (the Humboldt Mundts) to rewrite and supervise the transaction.

The first group of Directors of the Society included Anne E. Whitney (widow of John) whose family ran a successful auto repair dealership; Lucy Ayres (Mrs. Amos) whose family ran a brokerage firm; Charles A. Smith, a U.S. Postal clerk; Winona Axtell Lyon (Mrs. William), who ran a real estate business and whose husband (William) was a lawyer; and Charles Sells, who ran a fire insurance agency and was another of Charlie Smith's friends.

The original constitution set up the following criteria for the purposes of the society in 1927-28:

"The purposes for which this organization is formed are: to study and record the history and development of Minnehaha County; to mark and preserve historical sites; to record outstanding events; to collect and preserve such information, specimens and relics as may be of interest in the archaeological, anthropological and social history; and in the geological, zoological, or other fields of natural history of Minnehaha County; to aid in the preservation of historical buildings and sites throughout Minnehaha County; to maintain a collection of books, documents, photographs and other recorded materials established and maintain public exhibits."

But the tenor of the meeting was to set the stage for all future action. Business dealt with the problem of persons excavating Indian Mounds and taking the skeletons and artifacts found to Vermillion or

even Washington D.C. They voted against this. They passed a resolution of sympathy for Erhart Fleitz, the only surviving soldier of Old Fort Dakota and Sioux Falls' oldest resident; and to Fred Long, at the passing of Mrs. Fred Long, daughter and wife of two. The first permanent committee was chosen: William Lyon and Charlie Sells were to be the first appointed to the all-important Landmarks Committee. The other committees to be appointed were finance, publicity, legal, membership, and social (which also included entertainment, refreshments, music and the annual banquet) and eventually the big and most important committee, the museum. Almost every member who joined was placed on a committee. From year to year the committees functioned well with members moving around every once in awhile.

It is important to mention other people who had much to do with the start of the Society, but who did not hold office. These were the members whose goals and ideas were written into the purposes of the organization and who did the work beside the officers: Dorothy Day Davenport, heiress to the Argus Leader Corporation and benefactor to both the DAR and the Federation of Women's Clubs; Martha Almos, a widow who lived with her son and his wife, who did anything asked of her for the Society for the rest of her life; Lucia Watson, whose father had been one of the early soldiers in Dakota Territory, and a former teacher; Mary Peabody, a teacher at All Saints School, and long-time secretary who worked as the first curator at the Pettigrew Museum; Mrs. Elizabeth (L. F.) Aves, who became another curator at the Pettigrew; Edward Broughton, who had at 17 been the clerk/postmaster under Charles K. Howard, first sutler at Fort Dakota. Ed was still working as a clerk at John Morrell and who quietly stepped in and gave advice or ended disagreements. (He gave his life-long collection of Fort Dakota artifacts to the Museum.) Many more should be listed as they joined the groups who chose to participate in the heart-breaking work of trying to save historic sites and seeing them lost. The nearly 100 people who worked in the Society between 1927 and 1939 gave and gave.

When did the Minnehaha County Historical Society begin? You decide. Was it the first organizational meeting on November 16, 1927? Was it at the Permanent Organizational meeting on January 19, 1928? Was it on February 20, 1928 with the vote to incorporate? Or was it with the actual incorporation on March 1, 1928? I prefer the day the seed was planted, November 16, 1927.

1928 was a most eventful year. It was decided that a temporary iron shaft 8 ft. long would be placed near the legendary burial plot of the Amidons along North Drive, on Penitentiary Hill: five ft. underground and 3 ft. above ground. Was the shaft placed in the right place? Who knew that controversy would continue through the century and not come to rest for over 75 years. (The land on which the iron shaft was

placed, replaced later by a stone hitching post, and even a pile of rubble, was purchased by a later president of the Society, Charles Lacey, who made the land a gift to the Society.)

On March 12, W.H. Lyon, Martha Almos, and Charles Smith made plans to meet with the DAR concerning an appropriate marker for the site of Old Fort Dakota. It was suggested that if the DAR wished to place the marker that it be placed on some permanent building wall at the N.W. Corner of 8th St. and Phillips Ave. That plaque would not go up for several years and then would stay the longest on the Hollywood Theater at 212 N. Phillips Ave.

The group thought that a display of recently excavated Indian skeletons might interest the public. But where? Dr. George A. Pettigrew (Charter Member and cousin of R. F.) invited the group to make use of the Masonic Library space as needed. The Masonic Library had already started a very impressive second floor museum. What of Senator Pettigrew's wish that his home and museum, created in honor of his brother Fred, continue? Didn't an historical organization have some obligation to get this matter settled? William Lyon inspired the group to say yes, and the wheels continued to turn. The group decided to have two meetings a month, one a business meeting and one an educational social meeting. The dues would be \$1.00 a year. This amount continued until the 1950's when the dues were increased to \$2.00. What a pittance, you say? The heart breaks when reading of payments of 4-8 cents a month by some of these pioneer members during the depression of the 1930's.

What could the Society do to create more public support? Another project was one of which little has been publicized. On April 15, 1928 the Society decided to promote a contest in the county schools to design a logo for the organization. The winner would receive a \$5.00 prize. (They passed a hat to raise the \$5.00.) The logo would go on a button and be given to all school children. By the deadline of October 1, 1928 there were but two entries, and nothing was publicized until the annual dinner on January 12, 1929 when Glen Early, a Washington High School student, won the prize. Later members altered the design and there is no record that any buttons were made, but the logo did go on the Society's stationery. The word was leaked through the newspapers. The Society was collecting historic materials. People in the county began to respond.

Erhart Fleitz, an ailing old Dakota soldier, decided to give a log from the Old Fort Dakota barracks to the society. One catch: he had already taken steps to give it to the Park Department. Dan Tremere (Charter Member) graciously arranged for the Park Board to give the log to the Society with Fleitz. Once again the log went on display at the Masonic Library.

A wonderful opportunity came to the Society. One of the professors at Sioux Falls College had done research on the Old Yankton Trail ruts crossing the campus, and contacted the Society. Could the site be marked? Yes, but who would pay for it? The senior class was not interested, but the sophomore class was! In the midst of a financial pinch, Catherine Peck (widow of former mayor Porter P. Peck) donated the stone shaft, but declined to have the donation noted...was it to be in memory of Erhart Fleitz? The Society voted to sponsor a dedication of the marker and passed another resolution that the Society would do its best to keep all pioneer artifacts in the county, and especially have no Indian artifacts go to Washington D.C. Plans for the visit of Lawrence Fox from the S.D. State Historical Society were postponed, as he couldn't come.

By May of 1928, plans for the dedication were in full swing. It would be held on June 4, 1928, outdoors at the site. Mrs. Flora Cotton, daughter of the William's Piano Co. family, was chair of the celebration. Flora had grown up at 919 S. Duluth with the trail going from 18th St. across her backyard. Her father had started his first music/piano business from the west end of that home along the Yankton Trail. A dozen of the oldest people in the community including former Mayor Jacob Schaezel were special guests. Everyone in the city was invited to the ceremony at 2:00 P.M. Dan James, music professor, led the singing of patriotic songs; William A. Lyon was the main speaker; and President Joseph Cooper had remarks. Charles Smith presented the marker to Lloyd Wendt, student representative of the sophomore class. Helen Martini, daughter of the dean, and Katherine Craig unveiled the marker before more than 200 people. No mention was made of any refreshments.

In October the Mary Chilton Chapter of the DAR had their dedication of the Fort Sod Marker which was placed on a boulder just east of the Rock Island Railroad Depot on 10th St. The members of the DAR who were present were a "Who's Who" of Sioux Falls with Dorothy Anne Davenport and Catherine Cushing unveiling the memorial. The Honorable Charles A. Christopherson, a Sioux Falls lawyer and member of Congress, spoke (another charter member of the Society). Members turned out almost to a person from the Society to show support for the work of the DAR and to reveal in the historic nature of the day. A Masonic Quartet sang "The Rose of Sharon," and Arthur Fairbank (who was to join the Society) accepted the care of the site and historic marker as the lawyer for the Rock Island Railroad Co.

The second important thing to happen in October was the ruling by Circuit Judge John T. Medlin, reversing the previous ruling on the Pettigrew property. This meant that indeed the property did belong to the city. However, the family was encouraged by many, who did not want the responsibility of a museum, to continue their suit through the courts. Society members were determined to stop legal action and a

relationship with the law firm of Parlman and Parlman (Ralph was a charter member) was established. While the Society was behind the legal action, it was decided that a disinterested third party should be named in the suit. A Frederick F. Brown was named as a "citizen and a tax payer of property \$30,000.00 to \$40,000.00." Who was this "Fred Brown?" Was he the engineer foreman of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul R. R., who lived at 513 S. Walts Ave.? And why was he chosen? The mystery still needs solving. Charlie Smith simply said, "Litigation ensued and continued into the third year, during which time the case was tried in the local courts and was taken to the State Supreme Court and was pending when the attorneys for the heirs settled for and attorney fee of \$500.00."

This action stopped all activity by city council members and others to turn the property back to the heirs. Henry C. Mundt (City Attorney) assisted in the suit and it was the beginning of a long relationship of the Mundts coming to the aid of the Society. (They were charter members.)

Thomas McKinnon was going out of office when George Burnside won his fourth stint as mayor. (Both were charter members.) The strong hand of the new mayor was behind almost everything that was to happen in the relationship of the Society to the Pettigrew Museum for the next 35 years. Mayor Burnside asked the Society to supervise the Pettigrew, first privately and then publicly. While there was a "Museum Committee" the mayor made sure that either he or a city council member was leading this committee. This pattern once set was followed for many years with the museum curators coming from the Society's members.

Plans were made for the Society to have a benefit "Old Time Dance" at the Arkota Ballroom on Phillips Ave. Tickets could be purchased at Christenson and Dempster's bookstore or at the door. The money would go for the work of the Landmarks Committee. One of the most interesting letters in the 12 scrapbooks of the Society is from the assistant to Henry Ford of Ford Motor Co., thanking Charles Smith for the invitation to this dance, but that Mr. Ford would be unable to attend.

How was the city to finance the running of the Pettigrew Museum? Who knew what it would cost? Many members of the City Council believed the rumors that it would take \$10,000 a year just to open the doors, not including salaries. Where would the money come from? Mayor Burnside found the money. True, it was not really enough to run a museum in most cities, but in Sioux Falls it was enough. He would need the free labor of the Society members. Could he depend on them? Of course.

Once again the Society put notices in the newspapers that they were collecting relics of the pioneers and that private collections would be accepted, as the exhibits at the Pettigrew were being enlarged. But while the museum was waiting for secure new glass cases to display the new items, all

collections received would once again be in the Masonic Library building until the cases came. Lists of gifts were in the papers every few weeks: personal collections of pictures of government buildings at Fort Dakota; several arrows with heads and shafts; copies of The Pantigraph newspaper; advertisements of old local businesses, i.e. L. T. Dunning and C. K. Howard; and many photographs of Seney Island. Many came from the estate of Erhart Fleitz and gifts from C. N. Harrington, Lee N. Searls, Al Seifert, Richard E. and Cass Broughton, Louis Voelsch, C. A. Smith and some secret group that kept donating things.

On December 7, 1928 an editorial in the Argus Leader stated "The county is getting older, is losing pioneers, and the Minnehaha County Historical Society has begun a good work with the two markers put up, the Amidon Marker and the Yankton Trail Marker, and the Society should be commended at their election of officers for the new year...C. H. Smith, President; Miss Ferne Collings, Treasurer; and Directors Winona A. Lyon, Anna Whitney, Lucy H. Ayers, Henry C. Mundt, and Charles A. Sells."

The Society announced that the second year dinner would be held on January 14, 1929 with W. H. Over of Vermillion and Lawrence K. Fox of Pierre to be the speakers. The dinner at First Christian Church was a great success with Blaine Simons as master of ceremonies. The winning emblem of the Society designed by Glen Early was presented. The evening was just as advertised...filled with good food, speakers, music and readings...a real attention-grabber. However, once again Lawrence K. Fox did not come, with only W. H. Over giving the main speech. Mr. Over extolled the city of Sioux Falls for accepting the Pettigrew property and the prized gift..."the small chance that a city of this size should have a museum already started just handed to them." He could not imagine that they would even consider "shirking their duty." It was unthinkable! Over 100 people were in attendance and the paper's personals stated that "Mrs. A. H. Keller kept 'Over, overnight.'"

On February 11, 1929, a 7:30 P.M. business meeting at the Chamber office brought a special announcement. The Joe Hooker Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, who headquartered in the basement of the Carnegie Library, was disbanding—as was the Women's Relief Corp—and they would be giving their records and photographs to the city to be put in the Pettigrew Museum. What happened to these objects is the topic for another paper.

When George Burnside found city money to pay utilities, upkeep, supplies and equipment, the small portion left had to pay the salary of both maintenance and curator staff. Of course, the curator could live on the premises free of charge. With the Stock Market Crash of 1929, many museums around the nation were closed. Certainly this was not the time to be starting a new adventure. Yet, the economic situation in the nation may just have saved the Pettigrew Museum. By the school year of 1930, the city was

already feeling a pinch, as were private institutions. One of the local institutions needing to make sacrifices was All Saints School. Long the bastion of the three Peabody sisters—Helen I., Eunice D., and Mary B.—the school had to make some decisions. Never mind that these three teachers were undoubtedly the best educated in the city; someone had to go. Mary was offered the position of curator at the Pettigrew. The salary was ridiculous, but she had a place to live, was very frugal, and had a student assistant. She took the job and loved it, but later in the decade it was to break her heart. At last her precious Society had a place to accumulate the artifacts of the county.

In a strange way, the depression was also good for the Society's membership. Where else (except at church) could you work on a cause with like-minded people with whom you would never rub elbows, and get free monthly entertainment and refreshments for \$1.00 a year? It was a win-win situation. The society increased its membership by 60.

By May 26, 1930, Mary and her willing workers had cleaned and organized the Pettigrew, which had been sitting fairly idol and dirty for three years. It was time for an open house. Mayor Burnside personally planned the work of the Museum Committee to get ready for the big day, but it was the Social Committee and other volunteers assigned by Mary Peabody to lead the public through the home and museum and make them feel welcome to THEIR MUSEUM. What a day it was! The home seemed like a fairyland. To think that people actually lived like this man, and right here in Sioux Falls! The Natural History and Indian Artifacts displays of Senator Pettigrew's brother Fred had been part of the South Dakota display at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Until this day, it had only been seen by those invited into Pettigrew's home. Even the custom-made bathtub was a marvel, for many of the visitors still bathed in a kitchen washtub on Saturday night and visited a privy in the backyard.

Mary spent her days Tuesday through Saturday taking visitors around the museum, cleaning, organizing, and studying. In addition, she contacted every religious, social, civic, and fraternal organization in the county asking them to contact her for special visits, even at night. She also offered these organizations the use of the two parlors and the dining room, soon called "The Lecture Rooms," if they wished to hold a meeting. Appropriate groups fitting the criteria set forth in the Senator's will began to meet there regularly. The Society moved in and called the place home on the new stationery.

In September of 1930 the members were given the opportunity to help unpack a collection of 1000 birds, animals, and reptiles which had been purchased and presented to the Society from an anonymous donor who gave the money so Mary could purchase it from Mrs. W. S. Anderson of Sioux City, Iowa. It was a vast representation of the wildlife of the prairie. The Society members attending spent the evening

unpacking the artifacts for a new exhibit. It was just like Christmas. Unfortunately, later curators found the collection to be a problem and called Mary "The Bird Lady."

The January 1931 annual meeting with election of officers was announced in the papers stating, "The relationship of the Society with the city and the Pettigrew Museum was on a solid footing and would only get better."

But the tradition started in 1930 with the curator living in the home and museum around and on top of the collections; mixing their own things with the donations and purchased items for the museum was to become a real problem. It would eventually lead to misunderstandings and cause hurt feelings in the community.

The years of 1931 and 1932, the last years of Charlie Smith's presidency, were spent in collecting and organizing. When Charlie heard that something was available and valuable, he made sure the item "came home." He found the money and made a trip to Canton to get C. K. Howard's scale and ledger. He purchased treaties, Indian ceremonial robes, authenticated guns, etc. He made trips to confer with experts of the time to make sure things were being properly curated and recorded correctly. And they were, for that time period.

While Hans S. Hilleboe, an instructor at Augustana College, was president, 1932-1933 meetings were spent listening to the stories those venerated pioneer guests would share. The minutes of the social meetings for nearly 3 years were filled with the stories told, and copies verbatim by the excellent secretary of the Society, Mary Peabody.

During the administration of President Winona Axtell Lyon, Laura Wangsness was corresponding Secretary, and on February 6, 1934 received word that "On behalf of the South Dakota State Historical Society it is my pleasant duty to welcome the Minnehaha County Historical Society as an auxiliary member. I am confident that both societies will benefit through this new relationship. We are co-workers in a worthy cause. Sincerely yours, Lawrence K. Fox, Secretary."

During the hard years of 1934-35, Merrill E. Guinter, manager of the N.W. Bell Telephone Co. was president and some of the most precious historic materials from the lives of early pioneers were collected and are treasured in the Pettigrew and Old Courthouse Museums today. A typical new item found in the papers came from November 9, 1931:

"A new donation has been made to the Pettigrew of a Wheeler and Wilson sewing machine valued at \$175.00. Other items recently donated to the collection are newspaper articles on the addition to the Post Office (1906-1908); the building of an addition to the East Side Fire Station for a Library Annex (1916); McKennan Park (1908); the Fort Dakota Barracks (1861-1873); and the Street Car Lines."

The Society Annual Dinner began the "Spring Banquet" and was held in April or May each year. The turnout grew each year from the community as the event had good speakers and was held in various churches, restaurants or the YMCA. The cost remained at 50 cents, very low in today's standards, but it was a time when there were few pensions, and no Social Security as yet. When ten visitors showed up from the new Turner County Historical Society at the May 27, 1933 Banquet, because of Laura Wangness' invitation, loans were made to pay the bill. When the Society met with Turner Co. on August 18, 1933, they held a picnic. Both Societies supported the opening of the Lincoln Co. Museum in the basement of the Canton Public Library.

The big news of April 28, 1934 was the opening of the new "Hazen Wing" at the Pettigrew. What a story, but it needs more detective work. Briefly, this is what we have been told:

"The Methodist Church had an organist named Hazen. He was of an artistic nature and died, leaving the city a sum of money to erect a statue of David in one of the city parks... some say McKennan. Once given the bequest, the majority of the members of the city council did not want to comply with the terms of the will. They agreed, they had to protect the youth of the city from nudity and most did not think this to be appropriate art. Mayor Burnside stepped in with what they thought was the perfect solution: build a much-needed addition on to the west side of the Pettigrew Museum use the money and name the new building the "Hazen Wing" and make sure a bust of Mr. Hazen is in the doorway to the addition at all times so people will remember him."

Is this a true story? With this paper we do not know, but it makes a good one.

The work of the Society went on. In 1935, James O. Berdahl of the Edison Township Berdahls was the first president not on the list of charter members. He was to hold office until 1937, when the economy began to look up. But, Jim was to face one of the hardest times in Society history. The curator of the museum, Mary Peabody, was fired, and within a few days was replaced with an appointee with half her education. The reason is still unclear, but the legend is that she went home to Minnesota and within a year died of a broken heart. A joint resolution dated May 22, 1936 came from "A.A.U.W., Altrusa Club, Business and Professional Women's Club, City Federation of Women's Clubs, Community Services, the DAR, Minnehaha County Historical Society, History Club, the P.T.A., Study club and the Women's Alliance." Their request that she be rehired was ignored by the city.

Through the years there had been many discussions concerning a fitting memorial to the pioneers on some prominent hill in the city. Charlie Sells and William Lyon were able to get an option on land overlooking the city. With the purchase of the land as a gift, the real probability of a symbol for the

Minnehaha County Historical Society as a lasting memorial was becoming a reality...who knew it would take nearly 12 years to complete.

Edson H. Hyde was elected president in 1937, but died within weeks of election. Thanks to Winona A. Lyon, who stepped in and completed his term of office, there was leadership when the next challenge came.

Word came that the Tri-State Marker, S.E. of Ben Clare, had been hit so many times that it was broken. Placed in the center of what was to become a farm to market road, it could hardly be avoided in the growing use of automobiles. Charlie Smith, with a full committee, was empowered to put together a group of historians and county commissioners from the three states to fix the marker. With governmental blessing, the Society led the group and it was dedicated on October 8, 1938 with bands, speeches, and over 3000 people present. The marker had to be fixed again in 1968, and completely moved and rebuilt in 1981. The myth that this marker had been placed by the Confederate Jefferson Davis was laid to rest. The Society found proof that he couldn't have been on a government surveying team in 1854-56 and in the U.S. Senate at the same time. (The marker is continuously serviced.)

Winona Lyon and the stalwart committees helped to plan and execute a birthday party for the 50th anniversary of statehood for the county with many other organizations. Special commemorative metal coins and wooden nickels were struck for the event, held in July of 1939, led by the Society.

The problem of the handling of archaeologists (both professional and amateur) who came to excavate Indian sites at Sherman Park, Brandon and other places became a real concern for President Clarence E. Dowling, another U.S. postal clerk. Do we join them and supervise, or fight them? This combined with the starting of town and village auxiliary historical groups called "councils" brought the Society into the next decade. 1939 brought the start of the Pasque Council at Ellis, S.D.

How do we save history in Minnehaha County? We do it just as the wise pioneers of the Society did it. The old-fashioned way...through hard work. To paraphrase a famous saying:

"Never doubt that a small group of people committed to one cause can change the world... how do we know? It's the only thing that has ever worked."

IMPACT: THE AIR BASE AND THE SIOUX FALLS COMMUNITY

1942-1945

Lynwood E. Oyos

In the spring of 1943, J. A. Bailey, a reporter from the *Aberdeen American News*, visited Sioux Falls. He commented at length on the overwhelming presence of the military. There were uniforms galore on Phillips Avenue. Planes droned overhead at frequent intervals. Women in uniform chauffeured officers about the city. Jeeps and army trucks claimed the right-of-way. He wrote "Sioux Falls offers the most realistic picture I have seen of South Dakota at war, and when the fracas ends, outside of a few minor headaches and maybe a shorter stride, she'll keep on the road ahead." After touring the Air Base, Bailey commented, "And on top of all that, Sioux Falls is as proud of the Army Post as a hen is of a brand new consignment of chicks."¹ In addition to changing the city's physical and social character, the Army Technical School (ATS) played a pivotal role in rejuvenating the city's economy.

The New Prosperity

Soldiers who were off-duty for the weekend began arriving in downtown Sioux Falls shortly after the noon hour on Friday. It became nearly impossible at the air base gates to get a taxi without waiting 20 minutes to 2 hours. Cab drivers reveled in their new found business. One man remarked that cab drivers were making \$70 a week with one day off. In the past, \$18 a day made them happy. By nightfall, the streets and sidewalks were filled with young men in khaki uniforms.

The Army Technical School (ATS) became a lifesaver for the city's amusement business. Weekend crowds were jammed three deep in the bars with limited standing room. For the GIs, dancing was the preferred form of entertainment. The Arkota Ballroom usually featured the swing band sounds of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, the more subdued sounds of Lawrence Welk and popular area bands. Night club owners had a shortage of help, finding it difficult to find qualified musicians. Although the movie theatres at the base played 95 percent of new moving picture shows ahead of downtown theatres, young service men waited in line with their friends or girl friends if they were lucky enough to have a date, to see a movie at the Egyptian, Hollywood, State, Orpheum or Time theaters. Restaurants in 1942 had a 50 percent increase in business over levels of 1941. People were buying steak, not hamburger. The young GIs enjoyed snacks at the Palace of Sweets or the Chocolate Shop on Phillips Avenue. There were a large number of out-of-town guests in the city each weekend. Advance reservations were required at hotels and

¹ Impressions of J. A. Bailey, *Aberdeen American News*, cited in the *Sioux Falls Argus Leader*, 2 May 1943.

soldiers were asked to double-up, sleeping three to four men per room on cots or twin beds. Despite the restrictions on off-sale liquor to service men between 5 and 10 P.M., people involved in liquor sales experienced their best business in history.

The city's police chief, J. W. Galvin, and the military police (MPs) shared the burden of keeping care-free soldiers under control. The MPs had their headquarters in the police department and they worked closely with the police. MPs rode with the police part of the time.²

The Army Technical School provided over 1,800 civilian jobs and vastly increased the demand for workers in restaurants and entertainment establishments. Local women also stepped into vacancies left by men who departed for military service. Industries such as Morrells and Sioux Steel, previously dominated by male laborers, were now permeated by women in coveralls.³

The construction of the Army Technical School and the arrival of thousands of service men in the city contributed significantly to a decline in the federal government's aid programs that had been established during the 1930s. Since the inception of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935, approximately \$5 million had been expended in Minnehaha County. At the peak of the Great Depression, the WPA employed slightly over 3,000 men in the county. By 1939, work rolls contained the names of 1,199 men. In May 1942, the number was 88. With the great demand for war material and millions of men now serving in the armed forces, it was announced that the WPA would be liquidated on February 1, 1943. In September 1942, only one crew of 14 men was involved in a construction project. They were building a retaining wall at Emerson School.⁴

In mid-September, 1942, the county's direct relief fund had been reduced \$2,378 from August 1941. The total for August 1941 was \$8,658.82. In August 1942, the total was \$6,280.67. The total case load in August 1941 was 586. It was reduced to 444 in August 1942. No employable workers were included in the August total. Most of the relief expenditure went to families without working fathers. Employment remained plentiful. Men who were released after completion of the ATS had found jobs elsewhere, accompanying contractors to other sites of construction.⁵

The growing prosperity of Sioux Falls led to an unprecedented increase in bank clearings. They indicated the amount of money in circulation and they were the most authentic indicator of prosperity. The

² South Dakota Oral History Program, Tape #1080, Interview with Charles Chamblin, a law officer in South Dakota for 42 years.

³ *Sioux Falls Argus Leader*, 25 April 1981

⁴ *Ibid.*, 22 September 1942; 20 December 1942.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 19 September 1942

total bank clearing were \$105,237,397.46 in 1941 and \$136,345,024.88 in 1942, an increase of \$31,107,627.42. This significant gain was due not only to the advent of the Army Technical School, but also to the area's bumper crop and improved prices for agricultural products.⁶

Monthly Bank Clearings 1941-1942⁷

	1941	1942
January	\$ 7,347,778.89	11,445,088.49
February	6,511,939.32	9,324,379.00
March	7,290,199.25	9,984,335.05
April	8,425,834.97	9,942,593.15
May	9,309,486.57	10,233,067.31
June	8,804,701.16	12,503,685.28
July	9,601,548.76	13,119,641.28
August	8,301,593.86	10,534,901.72
September	9,360,655.91	11,086,793.89
October	9,714,313.94	11,127,197.19
November	9,675,841.98	11,060,268.77
December	10,892,506.85	13,983,073.75

Hospitality

Twass the night before Christmas
 And throughout the Post
 The soldiers were musing
 On what they'd like most
 Twass the night before Christmas
 The eve of good cheer
 But his family kept thinking
 If Eddie were here

⁶ Ibid., 31 December 1942

⁷ Ibid., 31 December 1942.

Eddie feasted on turkey
With the Larsons in town
While his folks back in Brooklyn
Fed a sailor named Brown."

- *Polar Tech*, 17 December 1943

As thousands of GIs descended upon Sioux Falls, civic leaders called upon the city's residents to treat the incoming military personnel as they would want their own sons and brothers, now in the service elsewhere, to be treated. The Chamber of Commerce urged residents to invite one or two young service men to Sunday dinner. Paul Myers, secretary for the Chamber of Commerce said "A home-cooked meal appeals to soldier boys more than anyone realizes."⁸ There was an overwhelming response of local residents to the Chamber's suggestion. One month after the first detachment of troops arrived, the Service Men's Center had 400 homes on a list of people who would entertain soldiers for Sunday dinner. Men from the ATS who attended local churches were invariably invited to dinner after worship services. Sometimes the dinner was preceded by a drive around the city. Families sacrificed their food ration coupons to host the soldiers. There was an informal code in the city regarding scarce commodities, such as coffee. Grocery store clerks were asked "Could I have some food for my canary?" The clerk would respond, "Does your canary drip of perk?" He would look under the counter to see what he had.⁹ In addition to a home-cooked meal, homesick boys loved to sit down to hear the housewife play the piano and to chat about things in the civilian world.¹⁰ The soldiers reciprocated in a variety of ways. They mowed lawns, ran locker rooms at the YMCA during rush hours and served as organists and soloists at local churches.

The record was set by the Sherman Iverson family, who owned a 160 acre farm on the south edge of the city. Between 1942 and 1944, they invited 15 to 30 soldiers for Sunday dinner once a week. It was estimated that approximately 2,000 men had spent a day at the farm. After the meal, the GIs did KP duty in the kitchen, adjourned to the parlor to sing or, if the weather was nice, rode horses, went for a swim, drove the tractor or asked if they could help with the chores.¹¹ On Thanksgiving Day, 1942, more than 150 invitations were issued by local families asking soldiers to share dinner with them. Increased demands for certain food products caused the editor of *Polar Tech* in late March 1943 to ask soldiers not to accept many

⁸ Argus Leader, 4 April 1942.

⁹ Ibid., 1 December 1941.

¹⁰ *Polar Tech*, 3 March 1944.

¹¹ Ibid., 8 September 1944.

dinner invitations. Several foodstuffs were being added to the rationed list. Meat, butter, cheese, fats and oils joined coffee, sugar and canned goods as the products that could only be purchased with ration coupons. The editor wrote: "For civilian families an extra guest may mean that the family will have to do without essential food items for a short time." He realized that his fellow GIs enjoyed the hospitality but, he declared, others should not suffer for it."¹² While discouraging the acceptance of dinner invitations, he urged the men to drop in at the host home in the afternoon or later in the evening.¹³

Local hunters hosted ATS personnel on pheasant hunts. The men, having proved they knew the state's game laws, could secure a non-resident license for \$1.00 at the base. They could check-out a shotgun for 24 hours and secure 50 rounds of ammunition per week.¹⁴ Local hunters contributed much of the game they shot to the base kitchen and the birds were used as the main entrée for dinner at the ATS.¹⁵ The local Izaak Walton League sponsored a "Take a Soldier Hunting Campaign in October 1944. Dozens of local citizens signed up to take GIs with them on hunting excursions on a Sunday in October when most of the soldiers were off-duty. The pheasants were plentiful and one group got their limit in little more than two hours. The hunters stated they could have killed more than 50 birds if they had not adhered to the legal limit.¹⁶

Young women from the region were recruited to help entertain the GIs at picnics, parties and dances. Mrs. E. B. Goodrich enlisted the aid of approximately 350 "personality girls" to be on the list of entertainers. Each girl underwent a personal interview. Mrs. Goodrich said "We want girls from every walk of life, just as long as their character is irreproachable." Their behavior would be strictly regulated and the young women were to wear sweaters and skirts even at picnics.¹⁷

When dances were held at the base, girls were provided by three social organizations. The girls who were invited to dances at the base were issued a small cardboard tag which had to be worn to gain

¹² Ibid., 26 March 1943.

¹³ Soldiers who lived off base with their families also had to contend with ration points when making purchases at the Quartermaster Store on base. To qualify, soldiers had to be married, live off the Post and on separate rations. They applied for ration stamps at the OPA office in Sioux Falls. The Post Commissary sold about \$200,000 worth of food per month to the GIs wives. The commissary stocked plenty of fresh vegetable, choice steaks and canned goods and sold groceries at much lower prices than at civilian stores. The Quartermaster depot in Chicago furnished the price list for most commodities. The wives did not worry about prices, they were more concerned about rationing as they presented their ration books to the grocery clerk as did non-military customers in the city. Army wives, for each ounce of a specified food used ration points. The wives spoke of "the ration point blues."

¹⁴ *Sioux Sentinel*, 21 September 1945

¹⁵ *Argus Leader*, 4 October 1942.

¹⁶ *Polar Tech*, 13 October 1944.

¹⁷ *Argus Leader*, 20 September 1942.

admittance to the military installation.¹⁸ Women attending dances at the ATS belonged to the Military Misses, the Khaki Pals and to the largest group, the Techettes.¹⁹ The Techettes celebrated their 2nd anniversary in August 1944. From a roster of over 250 women, an average of 135 girls attended at least one dance per week, providing partners for the soldiers.²⁰ They also participated in the annual Sadie Hawkins dance at the Sioux Falls Coliseum. All of the girls were asked to dress like Daisy Mae, with short skirts and dazzling blouses.²¹

Vincent C. Galvin, Director of the USO Center at 11th and Main Avenue, reported that dancing was the most popular form of entertainment for the soldiers. He gave much credit to the "Victory Belles" or junior hostesses. They assured the success of dancing parties.²²

For many women, whose boy friends were abroad, soldiers became substitute dates. Although they missed the local boys, they had a great deal of fun at dances, roasting ears of corn at bonfires at Wall Lake, sharing food at the Chocolate Shop on Phillips Avenue, which advertised itself as "Adventures in Good Eating," the Palace of Sweets and at the Town 'n Country Café on West 12th Street. There were the five movie theatres in the city where soldiers could take their local dates.²³ One local woman, who met her future husband at the Chocolate Shop, best described the dating scene with these words—"With most of the local boys in the service somewhere else, [Sioux Falls] was a haven for a lot of girls because of the thousands of men stationed at the base."²⁴

A large number of the young women who served as hostesses at dances and other planned functions married men from the Army Technical School. Within two months after the first soldiers arrived in Sioux Falls, a wedding boom began in August 1942. By the end of the year, 837 wedding licenses had been issued compared with 576 in 1941, a 45 percent increase.²⁵ In December, 1942, a record was set as 144 licenses were issued by the Clerk of Courts. Ninety percent of licenses were obtained by soldiers. Sixty percent of the applicants left the Clerk of Court's office to go directly to the Base Chaplain, a Catholic priest, county judge or a Protestant pastor in that order. The remaining 40 percent were married within ten days after their licenses were issued.

¹⁸ *Polar Tech*, 25 September 1942,

¹⁹ *Sioux Sentinel*, 6 July 1945.

²⁰ *Polar Tech*, 25 August 1944.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3 November 1944.

²² *Argus Leader*, 6 December 1942.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1 December 1942; from *Polar Tech*, 11 December 1942.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 9 November 1978.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1 January 1943; 14 February 1943.

A wedding license cost \$1.25. Health certificates were required.²⁶ The court used the help of the ATS Red Cross station to certify the age of the GI applicants. The average age of the bridegroom was 23 and 20 for the bride. Many of the brides were local, living within an 80 mile radius of Sioux Falls.²⁷ Marie Christopherson in her column "Driftwood," frequently published in the *Argus Leader*, commented that many of the young women often married men who they had met only recently. She warned young women that a few weeks or a few months acquaintance does not always expose an individual's character. The young women should be checking on their suitor's background.²⁸

GIs from Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania and California led the list of soldiers marrying local girls. By mid July 1944, at least 355 soldiers had taken local women as their brides.²⁹ After the war, several of the married couples returned to Sioux Falls and the adjacent area to establish residence and raise their children. They returned to Sioux Falls because of their wives wanting to return to their roots and the men had found Sioux Falls to be a friendly, welcoming and hospitable community.

Some of the men had misgivings when they first learned they would be assigned to the Sioux Falls Army Technical School. Francis Mainolfi thought everybody would be riding horses in Sioux Falls, that it would be a real cow town. Harold Wingler thought it would be the end of the world when he received his orders to report to the ATS.³⁰ Private Harry Anderson, who had been stationed at Scott Field, Illinois, wrote that "We were rather skeptical about our new assignment, having heard a lot of stories about the Indians here and so forth. Upon arrival in Sioux Falls, we certainly found things a lot different."³¹

Harold Wingler soon changed his mind. He later commented that "Lots of towns hated GIs. But this was the nicest Army town any GI ever hit. The people treated the soldiers as one of the family."³² The second class to graduate from the ATS addressed the people of Sioux Falls with the following statement in the *Argus Leader*: "You have treated us not just as your guests, but as though we were your sons, brothers, and close friends home on leave from the service."³³ A mother from Alden, Pennsylvania wrote to the *Argus Leader*: "...I am deeply grateful for the kindness not only to my son but to all the boys who were so far from home. If you know of any boy stationed in or near Philadelphia whose home is in Sioux Falls, I

²⁶ Ibid., 3 September 1942.

²⁷ Ibid., 14 February 1943.

²⁸ Marie Christopherson, *Driftwood, In a Time of War* (Sioux Falls, SD: Center for Western Studies, 1995), p.111.

²⁹ *Polar Tech*, 21 July 1944.

³⁰ *Argus Leader*, 9 November 1978.

³¹ Ibid., 25 August 1942.

³² Ibid., 9 November 1978.

³³ Ibid., 15 November 1942.

would like to have his address here."³⁴ A mother in Virginia received the following statement from her son stationed at the ATS—"This is a swell town, Mom. All the girls, men and women, even boys will talk to a fellow. I didn't know there was a town like this in the USA. I sure would like to live here when this is all over."³⁵

A Night with Venus Is'nt Worth a Lifetime of Mercury

There were troubles, however, in this prairie community on the banks of the Big Sioux River. It was as a known fact that Sioux Falls had prostitutes prior to 1942. The police knew that prostitution existed but they tolerated it as long as the prostitutes stayed in their residences and carried out their trade in their rooms. If they engaged in liaisons on the streets, the police would bring them in and run them through the courts.³⁶ The offenders either spent time in jail or were told to leave the city. As thousands of laborers gathered to construct the new military facility in the spring of 1942, several loose women, some who were diseased, had come to Sioux Falls.³⁷

Dr. Emil G. Erickson, health officer in Sioux Falls, declared his "department is working 100% with Army authorities in meeting the evils of infection arising from prostitution." Sioux Falls maintained a public venereal disease clinic. Efforts were made to keep per capita disease rates at a low level. The city required trailer camps to be licensed in an effort to keep a constant check on such camps and other possible sources of infectious disease.³⁸

In November 1942, community leaders in Sioux Falls were made aware that they had a growing problem with venereal disease. By this time, officers at the Army Technical School were often asked to speak at the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs. Captain E. E. Seiler stunned his audience when he strongly recommended that there be a clean-up campaign to eliminate prostitution in the city and in adjacent areas. Health officers at the School were finding that many soldiers had been diagnosed with venereal disease.³⁹ Seiler recommended eliminating several "shady" night spots in the city's vicinity and urged parents to be aware of where their daughters were in the evening. The editor of the *Argus Leader* commented that Seiler's recommendations should not be passed over lightly or ignored.⁴⁰

³⁴ Ibid., 3 August 1942.

³⁵ Ibid., 7 January 1943.

³⁶ South Dakota Oral History Center, Tape # 1080, Interview with Charles Chamblin.

³⁷ *Argus Leader*, 21 June 1942.

³⁸ Ibid., 21 June 1942.

³⁹ Ibid., 13 November 1942.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

In early December, Lt. Joseph Hirsh, Venereal Disease Control Officer at the ATS, spoke to a council of social agencies. He outlined a five point program for controlling venereal disease.

1. Establish a detention hospital for infected women, isolate them and treat them effectively.
2. Enforce a local curfew ordinance to get early teen-age youngsters off the streets. Many of them were walking Main and Phillips avenues until 1 or 2:00 A.M. engaged in "window shopping," or begging to be picked up. One source described them as "throwing themselves at soldiers." Many of these girls were willing to have sex with soldiers for small favors such as being taken to a movie or treated to a snack at the Chocolate Shop or the Palace of Sweets. Among soldiers, they were known as "charity girls." Hirsh indicated that they had replaced commercial prostitutes.
3. The city fathers were urged to create a better mass recreational program for teenagers to get them off of the streets.
4. A sound sex hygiene program should be established in the public school system for older teenagers.
5. Hirsh strongly recommended that additional personnel and appropriations were needed for health and police services.⁴¹

What occurred in Sioux Falls was not unique. In the United States, in 1943, the number of teenage girls arrested increased by 68 percent over the previous year. Nationally, they were known as V (for victory) girls. The girls, some barely 13, were known for their Sloppy Joe sweaters, hair ribbons, anklets or bobby sox, saddle shoes and heavily made-up faces. Many of them had a misguided sense of patriotism believing that they were contributing to the war effort by giving themselves to a man in uniform. They were "khaki-wacky," willing to indulge in promiscuity because of the glamour of the uniform.⁴²

The City Commission approved the most drastic dance regulations ever enacted in Sioux Falls. It reclassified and redefined a public dance. The ordinance stipulated that there must be adequate illumination of the grounds and the dance floor. There was to be no immodest, suggestive, lewd or immoral dancing. There would be no dancing on Sunday although dancing was permitted until 2:00 A.M. on Sunday morning.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid., 10 December 1942.

⁴² Richard R. Lingemin, *Don't You Know There Is A War On? The American Homefront, 1941-1945* (New York: Perigee Books, 1980) p. ; Richard Polenberg, *War and Society, The United States, 1941-1945* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972) p.

⁴³ *Argus Leader*, 10 August 1942.

In late January 1943, the City Commission passed another ordinance authorizing the employment of special police matrons with police powers. The goal was to extend the police department's drive against vice and delinquency. The matrons were to be employed in hotels and amusement centers with the operators of said businesses paying the matron's wages.⁴⁴

Several commercial prostitutes, who had remained in the city, were arrested in the last days of January. The editor of the *Argus Leader* commented that "They and their kind will soon learn that Sioux Falls is not healthy for them." Teenagers discovered that violations of the curfew would not be tolerated. Four police women were put on duty in plain clothes to supplement the matrons in hotels and amusement places. Consideration was given to the need for detention hospital facilities because of the lack of hospital space in the city.⁴⁵

During the early morning hours of March 7, 1943, local, county, and city police joined with the military police from the ATS in launching a sweep of establishments selling alcoholic beverages as far away as Luverne, Minnesota. They sought violators of the ATS rule that soldiers could not purchase beer or liquor after 11:00 P.M. Both bootleggers and prostitutes were arrested in these raids.⁴⁶

In an effort to curb undesirables from registering at hotels, all unescorted female guests of ATS personnel were required to have an identification card issued by the Provost Marshal at the Air Base when registering at a local hotel. Any soldier expecting a single guest had to submit in advance to the Provost Marshal data concerning the visitor, having had it approved by the squadron commander. Single women who were not associated with the ATS did not need cards but they would be closely watched by police matrons.

The editor of *Polar Tech*, writing in the December 10, 1943 issue, commented that "A soldier with venereal disease is wounded if he ends up in the hospital. He must receive costly and painful treatment. Until he returns to duty some one else has to take his job. He forfeits his pay, blackens the eye of himself, family and his organization. All the time that he loses must be made-up—the duration plus 6 months plus the loss of time."

"City authorities are doing a good job of keeping the city clean but there are girls who manage to stay on the loose before getting caught. *Don't be one of the careless soldiers who gets burned. A night with Venus is'nt worth a lifetime of mercury.*"⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid., 25 January 1943.

⁴⁵ Ibid., January 1943.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7 March 1943.

⁴⁷ *Polar Tech*, 10 December 1943.

Lt. Hirsch, speaking at the local Rotary Club, said the effects of VD would be felt long after the war and when the Army Technical School was just a memory. He stated that almost 50 percent of the men infected with gonorrhea had liaisons with girls 16-20 years of age. He believed these young women were desperately in need of medical, social and educational assistance. Hirsch concluded his remarks by stating "You can't win this year's health battles with last year's appropriation, personnel and strategy."⁴⁸

An isolation and detention center for young women having gonorrhea finally opened on May 1, 1943. Girls identified as a source of infection would be confined at the center for observation and, if needed, treatment. Over a period of five months, Mayor C. M. Whitfield had labored to seek funds for a place to house the "charity girls." The detention center, located in an apartment building near city hall, became a reality through cooperation with the State Board of Health. The Board provided financial assistance that was matched by funds obtained from the U.S. Public Health Service. Dr. F. H. Rediwill, City Health Director said "The importance of ample control of venereal diseases cannot be overemphasized at this time. With the approach of the summer season, however, the problem can be expected to increase."⁴⁹

The venereal disease records for the Army Technical School were classified and never published. The army limited its public commentary on the disease after 1943 but one can assume that there was a lower incidence of gonorrhea during the remainder of World War II.

The Housing Crisis and Greedy Landlords

Inadequate housing also created problems throughout the war. Many of the soldiers and civilian employees arriving at the Army Technical School were married and had families. By mid-July 1942, there was a keen demand for houses and apartments, furnished and unfurnished. Real estate agents and the office of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) were swamped with inquiries. The base's newspaper, *Polar Tech*, warned GIs to keep their families out of Sioux Falls if their loved ones were to have a roof over their heads. As of September 6, almost all of the housing space in the city had been exhausted. Some sleeping rooms for men were still available.⁵⁰

The FHA solicited applications for remodeling, hoping to provide additional housing. Interested parties could apply for \$100 worth of critical materials. When multiplied by the number of additional rooms to be provided, a large home could possibly have \$800 available to purchase essential materials.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., 17 December 1943.

⁴⁹ *Argus Leader*, 25 April 1943.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 16 July 1942; 6 September 1942.

⁵¹ Ibid., 16 July 1942.

After a quick survey of the city and learning that 2,400 more units would be required, the Chamber of Commerce requested a defense housing designation.⁵² Within three weeks, N. I. Blegen, the state FHA manager received notice that Sioux Falls had been designated a war housing area. Blegen indicated that the designation did “not mean that anyone can go ahead and build a house as they would under normal times.” Houses or units that would be built had to be sold or rented only to war workers. The new dwellings would be divided into assorted rent brackets. Blegen indicated that the city’s first quota was 150 units.⁵³ Optimism turned to gloom when the Victory Housing Project of 150 homes was delayed because of material shortages and bureaucratic “red tape.”⁵⁴ Despite pleas from the Chamber of Commerce, local contractors were reluctant to build homes under the government’s rubric. Six weeks had passed and local builders had applied to construct only twenty of the proposed 150 new residences. The federal housing coordinator’s office in Chicago issued an ultimatum. If local private builders and private capital did not take up the priorities and build, the housing administration would send in outside contractors and private capital to provide the needed housing.⁵⁵

The government quickly contracted with the Peder Mickelsen firm in Minneapolis to build 70 housing units in Sioux Falls. They were to be constructed between 12th and 15th streets on Glendale and Hawthorne avenues. The contractor promised to have some of the houses ready for occupancy in 60 to 90 days. The four-room houses, constructed of brick and tile, would compare favorably with a \$5,000 house before the war. The rentals would be handled through the War Housing Agency and would be leased only to persons engaged in war work or moving to the city for necessary reasons.⁵⁶

Many home owners had taken up the FHA’s offer to use the \$100 per unit to remodel their homes. Within two months, between 125 and 140 additional rooms and units had been created by splitting houses into duplexes, dividing rooms into apartments and by partitioning large spaces into smaller rooms.⁵⁷

At the end of September 1942, the demand for rental properties was greater than the supply. Landlords realized they had a seller’s market working in their favor and they quickly took advantage of it. A potential tenant, desperate in need of a place to live, was not about to quibble over the price he was asked to pay. He needed a home or apartment. The majority of landlords were reasonable, they had made fair adjustments in rental rates. There were other landlords, however, who took advantage of the prevailing

⁵² Ibid., 20 July 1942.

⁵³ Ibid., 7 August 1942.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 6 September 1942.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 30 September 1942.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 4 December 1942.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 11 September 1942.

situation. They raised prices as high as the traffic would bear and it appeared the traffic could stand quite a bit.

Want ads in the *Argus Leader* that indicated a few apartments and housekeeping rooms for rent usually cited no prices. Rents were out of control by August 15, 1942, and irate tenants began to deluge the Chamber of Commerce with letters and calls denouncing landlords and filing complaints. One tenant wrote "What's this about a rent ceiling? I read in the paper that there's supposed to be one, yet my landlord says he wants 10 bucks more a month or I'll have to get out." The Chamber of Commerce advised victims of obvious rent gouging practices to 1) write two checks when paying your monthly rent, one for the regular rent and other for the increase, insisting on two receipts; 2) Write a letter to the Chamber setting forth the circumstance; and 3) Sit tight and wait.⁵⁸

On March 1, 1942, rents had been frozen and Sioux Falls had been designated a rent control city. On June 3, there began a 60 day waiting period to see if landlords would comply voluntarily. The waiting period expired August 3 and, immediately, rental fees had risen sharply. Landlords argued vigorously that March 1 had not been a fair date as rental rates were in decline at that time. The local press indicated that landlords were indulging in sheer burglary as far as apartment house rentals were concerned.⁵⁹

The federal government delayed establishing an OPA enforcement office in Sioux Falls. An OPA representative after visiting the city indicated an office would be set up shortly. Finally, on October 11, 1942, the government announced that rates would be fixed at March 1 levels and the OPA issued an order freezing rents on November 1. It was announced on October 29 that Louis N. Crill, former Minnehaha County States Attorney (1933-1937), would be the rent control officer for the Sioux Falls area. He would administer rent control regulations in a five county area as of November 1. On that date, renters were advised to pay no more and landlords were ordered not to collect rents higher than were charged for the same quarters and services as of March 1. The order covered all types of housing accommodations except hotels and rooming houses. Tenants were informed that they could not be evicted for refusal to pay a rent higher than the legal rate. If they were threatened with eviction, they were to call Crill's office immediately.⁶⁰

Several of the landlords found it difficult to accept the government's mandate. Some of them reluctantly filled out questionnaires and registration forms that provided information about their property. By December 21, 1942, Crill's office had received 11,400 registrations. His office sent all tenants copies of the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 2 October 1942.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 2 October 1942,

⁶⁰ Ibid., 29 October 1942.

registration form listing the March 1 rental rates and the legal maximum of said rates. Tenants were told that if a landlord collected more the maximum legal rent, they could sue for triple damages or fifty dollars, whichever was higher.⁶¹ Landlords who violated the March 1 rate were subject to a maximum fine of \$5,000, one year in jail, or both. They could increase rents beyond the March 1 level if a major improvement had been made in the property or the accommodations had been changed from unfurnished to being furnished.⁶² The editor of *Polar Tech*, advised soldiers whose families were living in off-base rental housing to procure a receipt or pay by check so that a record would be available for possible future adjustments.⁶³

Although the rental fee problem was solved, most landlords, during the duration of World War II, were reluctant to rent houses to soldiers because they were subject to transfer. One soldier, looking for a place to live, provided a life history and character references, promised to pay his rent in advance and agreed to buy furniture. The landlady asked if he had any children. He replied, "I have one child." When hearing this, the landlady hung up the receiver with a deafening crack before he could say that the child was only five weeks old and not likely to cause any damage. Another house the soldier sought was said to have been rented to a man who paid six months rent in advance. He had no luck with another landlord who picked his tenants from a list of 25.⁶⁴

The housing problem continued throughout the remainder of World War II. Six hundred couples applied at the Base Housing Office in June, July and August of 1945. Two hundred four found apartments. Some of the apartments provided few of the comforts associated with the normal home. One ad in the *Argus Leader* listed an unfurnished garage house, heating, stove, water and garbage service furnished, renting for \$17.33 a month. Many landlords wanted to rent only to civilians after hearing rumors that the base would soon close and military personnel would either be redeployed, reassigned or discharged from the service. Many military men who were transferred left their families in Sioux Falls. They did not want to spend months again looking for a place to live.⁶⁵

Other GI gripes included the misrepresenting of services by landlords. Some rental ads included available natural gas for heating and cooking but neglected to inform military families that they had to drop a quarter in the meter every time they wanted to use gas. There were landlords who objected to daily

⁶¹ Ibid., 21 December 1942.

⁶² Ibid., 17 November 1942.

⁶³ *Polar Tech*, 6 November 1942.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 12 March 1993.

⁶⁵ *Sioux Sentinel*, 21 September 1945.

bathing and set a limit for tenants of one bath a week. One landlord told a soldier that his wife could only take three baths a week, and he could wash at the ATS.

There were landlords who preferred civilian renters for other reasons. The problem was that a small minority of soldiers' wives were very poor housekeepers. Landlords complained of military wives ignoring requests to dispose of garbage. A wife had indicated she would provide bed linens but she slept under the mattress cover and ruined the mattress. Soldiers' wives smoked in bed and burned holes in mattresses. They damaged furniture and woodwork. Active children also caused problems. They roller skated in the house and ruined floors. A five year old child pulled up the landlady's aster plants. There were abundant petty gripes and complaints by both military personnel and landlords. In fairness to Sioux Falls landlords, it must be said that many officers and men were amazed at the low rents in Sioux Falls compared to other parts of the country. When renting rooms for \$25 per month, they indicated that it cost twice as much in other parts of the country. GIs complained about the petty details, believing that all soldiers were being judged by the actions of a few. At the same time, the great majority of the city's landlords, who tended to be hospitable and congenial, were being judged by the actions of a few who through personal rules and regulations, alienated GI renters.⁶⁶

Like most American cities that hosted newly constructed military bases, Sioux Falls muddled through the war, providing, wherever possible, to meet the housing needs of the thousands of service men and civilian personnel who descended upon the city seeking suitable living quarters for their spouses and families.

In summation, although there were occasional crises, the citizens of Sioux Falls handled in a workmanlike and positive way the new challenges created by having thousands of military personnel in their midst. Granted, the service men had their usual gripes and the citizens their usual complaints but, overall, the relations between town and air base were very good. The city did prove to be one of the best towns a GI ever experienced.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 25 September 1945.

ELLEN FLORENCE BLACKMORE: LONDON TO DAKOTA TERRITORY

Jean Elliott Rahja

Ellen Florence Blackmore was born October 31, 1849 in London, England. She lived with her parents in the southeastern part of the city.

Ellen's parents raised vegetables and flowers that they sold at a market near Tower Bridge. Ellen and her mother also sold crocheted items and embroidered linens that were snapped up by their customers. Ellen worked at the market selling their produce and hand-made goods. Her parents used a horse drawn wagon to bring the produce and other hand-made items that were for sale.

Ellen had a dream of someday joining her older sister in America. When her sister, Jane, left for America, there was not enough money for both of them to go. Jane promised that as soon as she found a job and could save up enough money for Ellen's passage, she would send money. Ellen had recently celebrated her thirty-fifth birthday and had long since stopped expecting the envelope to arrive from Jane with her fare enclosed. She knew that her parents needed her there to help them, so she had resigned herself to remaining in England for the rest of her life.

Ellen had a quiet grace about her that was endearing to those who visited the market. She showed genuine interest in each customer, asking about his or her health and the other members of their families. If someone complained about being ill, she often recommended an herb or tea that would be helpful. Each customer left her stall uplifted in some way or other.

Ellen Blackmore was an accomplished seamstress. Customers would bring their requests to her at the market and ask her to make special garments for them. She could make up her own pattern after measuring the customer, and in one week's time, the garment would be ready for the first fitting. While she waited for customers to arrive to buy vegetables, she would busy herself with her embroidery work or with crocheting.

James Christie visited his family members in Edinburgh, Scotland and the graves of his parents. He collected his inheritance from the death of his parents and soon traveled on to London. Of course, he knew quite a lot about Ellen Florence Blackmore, because he had visited with her sister, Jane, who lived near his homestead in Richland Township, Dakota Territory.

Ellen Blackmore, on the other hand, had neither seen nor heard of James Christie.

James Christie decided to visit Ellen at the market stall first. He told her that he was a friend and neighbor of her sister Jane in America. Ellen was overjoyed to hear news of her sister and her family. She

invited James to her home so he could tell her parents all about Jane. There was no doubt that James had a charisma about him and knew how to charm a lady. In fact, he could charm almost anyone.

James Christie told the Blackmores about their daughter, Jane, and her family. He told them about the endless prairie of Dakota Territory. He fascinated them with his tale about moving a rooming house seventeen miles across land to his homestead. He described the garden west of their big house and the graves of his wife and his three small children. He told them about his many voyages across the Atlantic Ocean as a young boy working on the ocean liner, and his life in New York City. They were eager to hear about his journey across the country from New York City to Carpenter, Iowa and meeting American Indians along the way. He told them about his father who had been a cobbler in Edinburgh and his brothers who had the same name as himself. His parents had seven sons and named each of them James in honor of King James of England. Each son had a different second name except their last son who was simply named James Christie. He told them about his own ability to sew leather and make or repair shoes and harnesses.

In less than one week, Ellen and James were married and with Ellen's parent's blessings, the couple set off for America. Ellen brought her sewing machine with her. James decided if she had the ability to sew, there would be a considerable amount of sewing to be done. He escorted her to one of the finest shops in London where he purchased bolts of material, large amounts of thread, embroidery floss, and crochet yarn as well as needles and crochet hooks.

James knew his way around ships and harbors. He persuaded the captain of the ship to give free passage for himself and his new bride to America as a wedding present. The captain was somewhat surprised when he saw the number of boxes and crates the newly married couple would be bringing along with them.

Upon arriving in New York City, Ellen had no problem with immigration because she was the wife of an American citizen. The couple spent a few days in New York City until James found a wagon master who was putting together a wagon train headed for Dakota Territory.

James promised the wagon master that their skills would be useful. He told of his ability to keep harnesses and shoes in good repair and his experience greasing and repairing wagon wheels. His wife would help the women and children. They would earn their keep if they could ride along. James's powers of persuasion worked almost every time. They were welcomed with open arms and they did make themselves useful on the long journey to Dakota Territory.

It was a happy reunion when Ellen and her sister, Jane, met after not seeing one another for almost ten years. If Ellen was disillusioned when she saw the rooming house the Christie family called home, she did not say anything that would let it be known.

Margaret and Jessie were overjoyed to have a stepmother. They sensed her quiet manner and easy spirit. She won the hearts of the brothers too. Someone who would be there for them and care for them was almost more than they had expected.

The children had learned how to be quite self-sufficient. When the chores were finished, there was milk to be strained and eggs to be stored away. They showed Ellen their root cellar and the supply of potatoes, onions, carrots and parsnips. They showed her how they could grind wheat into flour and corn into meal for baking. Ellen showed the children her sewing machine and the cloth they had brought from London.

The children were enthralled when Ellen showed them how her sewing machine worked. They loved the feel of the cloth that they had purchased in London. She told them how she and her parents earned their living with the produce that they sold at the market and how she crocheted and embroidered linens, and made clothing for some of their customers. They were eager to hear about England and the city of London. Ellen also told them about her experiences in New York City while their father was looking for a wagon train headed for Dakota Territory.

The Christie children asked so many questions, partly because they wanted to hear Ellen speak using her "London accent." It was quite different from their father's Scottish dialect, which was also their own way of speaking. They almost smothered Ellen with affection. It was a good thing because she was suffering from shock coming from London to New York City to the vast empty prairie of Dakota Territory. The only other soul that she knew was her sister who lived only about a mile away, but who was also busy with her family and coping with life on the prairie.

The Christie children previously had little contact with the outside world since leaving Iowa. They were eager to hear about Ellen's family and her life in London. The older children did not have the advantage of the early primary grades in school although the teacher in the new Christie School was doing the best anyone could expect, to help them catch up. Jessie had a genuine love of learning and studied to become an elementary teacher herself. She was hired to teach in the Frederick Township District #2 school when she was sixteen years old. They all caught on quickly and appreciated what Ellen was doing for them. They were eager to learn and wanted to know more and more about the big world out there from which they had been so isolated. Ellen taught the children about money, and how to count change when

they purchased something. She invented games to play so it did not seem like school when they learned at home. Ellen drew a map of Europe and showed the Christie children where London, England was located. Ellen put her hand-drawn map on the wall. Each day she would put the name of a country in Europe along with its capital and possibly a river on the map and talk about that country. The children looked forward to their daily European adventure.

When Ellen arrived, the Christie children ranged in ages from 15 to 5 years old. Margaret was 12 and Jessie was 10. They showed Ellen the graves of their mother and babies John, James, and little Annie west of the garden. Ellen told them that the following spring they would plant a flower garden there. The children showed her the large garden plot. Ellen decided that the following spring, it would become twice the size that it was then. She would show the children how to grow vegetables and she would make sure the root cellar was well supplied with vegetables for the family the following winter. No one was going to go hungry under her care. She would soon realize that Anna was also an accomplished gardener.

In the spring of 1886, a baby girl was born to Ellen and James Christie. She was named Elizabeth May. She had dark brown hair and brown eyes like her mother. Ellen had a great deal of help taking care of Lizzie. The nickname was one that stuck. She was called Lizzie all of her life.

The following year, another daughter named Rachel Louise was born. Ellen was very busy sewing garments for her two little baby girls, planting their garden, and managing the household. She became skilled at assigning duties. Everyone knew what their duties were, and they all pitched in to help Ellen. They had experienced life without a mother, and then without a father, while their father had been gone to Europe to find a new mother for them.

On June 16, 1888 Mary Florence Christie was born. She had bright red hair very much like her father. She became the apple of his eye. As Mary grew up, she became the "middle" child. Mary learned to talk at an early age and it was said that once she learned how to talk, she never stopped. She was a curious child who wanted to investigate everything. James took her along when he went visiting with his horse and buggy. As she grew older, she had to assume her fair share of the duties that each child had been assigned to keep the Christie household running. Mary was a willing worker. She liked to sew and work in the garden. Ellen considered each child's ability when she assigned their duties.

James Christie brought home the news that Dakota Territory might be divided into states that would join the union of the United States of America. He told the family that Ordway citizens were talking about Ordway possibly being the capital of the state of South Dakota. There were several towns in competition for the capital. As it turned out, Pierre won on that score and became the capital of the new

state of South Dakota. On November 2, 1889, South Dakota became the fortieth state to join the Union. To honor the occasion, Ellen embroidered a wall hanging that read, "SOUTH DAKOTA 1889." She also embroidered a sheaf of wheat under the name of the state. The lettering was a crimson red on a cream-colored background with golden wheat.

William Christie would soon become 18 years old. He talked about working his way to the east coast. He had heard so much about New York City. He wanted to see it for himself. Ellen made a special quilt for him to take with him when he left. William eventually settled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He married a girl named Pearlie Wells. Their children were Ellsworth, Doris, and Lyle. The family kept in touch with the folks back in South Dakota.

Ellen knew it would not be long before Thomas would be moving away also. She, along with Margaret and Jessie, began cutting pieces to make a quilt for Thomas. Although Thomas was the eldest, he felt a strong sense of responsibility towards the family. When Thomas left home, he decided to go west. He had heard a lot of talk about miners discovering gold out in Montana. The family lost touch with Thomas, but later received word that he had been killed in a mining accident in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Thomas had been successful mining gold in Montana and then moved back to South Dakota when more veins of gold were discovered near Lead. He was employed by George Hearst of San Francisco, who owned Homestake Gold Mine. Since he carried no identification, there was no way they could notify the family, until another miner from Richland Township came back home and carried the news to the Christie family. James Christie grieved over the death of his eldest child. He knew that Thomas was mining gold in order to bring some much-needed money back to his father and the family.

In the fall of 1890, James and Ellen became parents of their fourth baby girl. They named her Minnie Ellen. Minnie had dark brown hair and brown eyes. She looked more like her mother than the other girls did. Ellen had been anxious to get all of the garden produce harvested and stored in the root cellar before the baby came. She had divided the space up for the various kinds of vegetables. Her sister, Jane, had apple trees in her yard that produced enough apples for both families. Ellen traded some of her vegetables for apples that were also stored in the root cellar.

Ellen spent winter evenings making quilts from scraps of used clothing. She taught Margaret and Jessie how to cut up used garments so that much of the material could be used in making the new quilt. Sometimes they shredded what was left and used it for the quilt's batting although it was not as warm as quilts made with wool batting. Each bed had Ellen's quilts on them and there were usually new ones on the linen shelf.

James spent his evenings repairing shoes and harnesses for neighbors. He taught each of the boys how to not only repair shoes and boots, but how to make high-top boots. Leather was scraped clean and soaked in a brine made from oak or sumac bark. He searched along the James River for bark from oak and sumac trees. James also taught the boys how to use special stones to work the leather until it was soft and pliable.

It was early spring in 1892, when James and Ellen welcomed their fifth little girl into the Christie family. She was named after the little girl that James and Anna lost and who was buried near the flower garden west of the house. This Annie was robust and lively. She had a ready smile and loved attention. With three older brothers still at home and six older sisters, she did not lack for attention.

The following summer, James Christie took the whole family to Ordway in the wagon for the big July Fourth celebration. It was a three-hour ride, but the family loved it. Since the train came through Ordway, it was an exciting place to visit. They took a picnic lunch along and while there, they watched fireworks, a baseball game and foot races. While they were in Ordway, Jessie met Josiah Plummer who lived a short distance northwest of Ordway on the Garland farm. Josiah's father was employed by R. H. Garland who owned a farm as well as the general store in Ordway. Josiah and Jessie spent a lot of time together that day.

Throughout that summer, Josiah made several trips to the Christie farm. Josiah asked Jessie to marry him. A fall wedding was planned. They would be married in the Christie School. Josiah and Ellen would live on the Garland farm. Josiah's father had applied for a tree claim on nearby land and planned to move there so the young couple would live on the Garland farm where Josiah was employed.

Jessie sewed her own wedding gown. It was cream-colored satin with a lace bodice and satin covered buttons down the front of the bodice. It had puffed sleeves and a bustle in the back. Margaret would be Jessie's witness and she would wear a beige dress of a more tailored design. Ellen was busy preparing linens for Jessie's new home.

After Jessie left, there was something missing in the Christie home. Jessie always had that spark of enthusiasm for everything. She loved to laugh and could always make others laugh too. Margaret took over more responsibility with the housework. She and Ellen always did the Monday wash together. Margaret baked bread one day a week. She baked eight loaves and one pan of biscuits each time. The bread was stored in a stone crock that was covered with an old breadboard. The bread dough was mixed in a large gray enamel pan that came with the house, as many of their utensils had. Margaret's specialty

was molasses cookies. She also made buttermilk doughnuts that disappeared fast. Ellen preferred working in the garden or at the sewing machine to baking.

One day a young boy, named Peter Caldwell, came to see James Christie about repairing his boots. Since he only had one pair, he had to wait while James put new soles on them. Margaret offered him a bowl of vegetable stew while he waited. He told her about his work as an apprentice to the surveyor who was surveying Richland Township for roads. He said the job required a lot of walking over the rough ground and it was hard on shoes. Margaret enjoyed visiting with the polite young man.

About a week later, Peter came with a bridle that needed a new strap. This time Margaret offered him a glass of buttermilk and a fresh doughnut. Before he left, he asked if James could repair his saddle. The next day he came with the saddle.

Margaret and Peter Caldwell were married before Christmas. Margaret made her own wedding dress and trousseau. She also prepared the linens that she would need in their home. The wedding was held in the Christie School with Jessie and Josiah as witnesses. They took the train from Columbia to Brookings where Peter lived with his parents. The young couple lived with Peter's parents until they found a house of their own.

Margaret and Peter found a large home that was in need of a lot of repair. They had decided to buy it and fix it up. It was put to good use, because they had six girls and two boys. Their children's names were Florence, Lacy, Kate, Genevieve, Ruth, Jessie, Ralph, and Margaret.

With both of the older girls gone, Ellen had to enlist the older boys to take over many of the household duties. David and Andrew took over the cooking and baking chores. David was a more quiet and serious boy. Ellen depended on him to keep everything running smoothly. Andrew was more flamboyant and fun loving like his father. The two of them did make a good team working together.

The next one to leave, however, was David who went to visit his brother, William, in Wisconsin. While there, he began working in a foundry in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. David married a girl that he met soon after he arrived. He worked in the foundry for the rest of his life. He became the father of four sons and one daughter. Their names were William, Gordon, Donald, Bernice, and Orville.

Andrew left to explore the northwestern region of the country. He worked as a lumberjack in Washington, and remained in the lumber industry the rest of his life. Andrew married the daughter of his first boss in the lumber business. To this union, ten children were born. Their names were Ruby, James, Viola, Lawrence, Myrtle, Gladys, Doris, Constance, Hazel, and Edna.

Edward was the last of James and Anna's children to leave home. He moved north to the Red River Valley. He met Ella Jensen and they were soon married. They both worked in the potato industry. Their three children were two boys named Perry and Leslie, and one girl named Agnes.

Anna died of childbirth when baby Roy was born. He was soon adopted by a family named Plum. Roy Christie Plum was a wanderer. His adopted parents were puzzled as to how to handle this wayward boy. He could spin a yarn possibly faster than his father had. Since he moved quite often, the family lost touch with him.

Ellen and James were left at home with their five girls who were growing up faster than Ellen would have liked. Ellen missed the older children and at times became despondent. While the older children were at home, she always had their help running the household, and she enjoyed their company. She wondered about her own parents in London and wanted to go back to visit them, but it would not be possible to travel with a husband and five girls.

Little Annie was an inquisitive child. She required more attention than the other girls. James began taking her along on his journeys. Since Mary was now assigned more duties at home, she did not get to ride along with her father. Mary was in charge of Annie whenever she was not with her father. Mary liked to be outside. She took Annie along with her when she worked in the garden. Minnie stayed close to her mother. Lizzie and Rachel were now in charge of household duties. They did most of the cooking and baking. Lizzie milked the two cows, and Minnie collected the eggs.

The C. M. and St. Paul Railroad reached the town of Frederick in 1882. The depot opened in 1883. Ellen was able to send and receive mail from her parents in London. She told them about their five granddaughters that they would be very proud of. She learned that they had abandoned the market and owned a small flower shop in the city. Their business was good and they no longer had to work long hours in their garden to raise vegetables to sell. The flowers they sold were delivered fresh to their shop every morning. Ellen longed to see her parents once more.

Frederick was only five miles from the Christie homestead. By the turn of the century, it was a booming town. There was a hardware store and a general store where Ellen could purchase dry goods and sewing notions. As James grew older, he was not so anxious to make the long journey to Ordway, although Ellen and the girls loved to make a day of it and visit Jessie, Josiah, and their three boys; Howard, Kenneth and Charles.

Lizzie continued to help the teacher at the Christie School until she was nineteen years old. At that time, she passed a test to get a permit to teach in an elementary school. She applied for a teaching

job at a country school near McIntosh, South Dakota and was hired. She stayed with a family named Buel. The second year that she was there, she married Carl, their eldest son. Carl's family raised small grain and had a large herd of range cattle. Lizzie and her husband lived on a nearby ranch that was owned by the family. Carl and Lizzie had two children. A girl named Frances and a boy named Carlisle.

Rachel became the one who was in charge of the cooking and baking for the family. Ellen busied herself with sewing and gardening. Ellen did the weekly washing along with the help of the younger girls.

Rachel rode along to Frederick with her dad when they needed to buy supplies for the family. A man named Chris Wangen liked to visit with her whenever he saw her in town. He brought boots and a harness to James for repair and asked James if he could return to visit with Rachel. James enjoyed visiting with Chris who was a very personable young man. Everyone in Frederick seemed to like Chris. Rachel and Chris were married the following year and moved to Iowa where Chris had relatives that promised him a job with a carpenter crew that was building grain elevators. Rachel and Chris lived in Sioux City, which was the headquarters for the company where Chris worked. Rachel worked in a Bakery until the children came along. They had five children. Their names were Ella, Gordon, William, Florence, and James.

Mary was still helping the teacher at the Christie School during the school year and did much of the gardening during summer vacation. Ellen taught Minnie how to do the cooking and baking. Ellen spent more time at the sewing machine so she was near the younger girls. Ellen often sent Annie along with her father on his trips to the neighbors or to Frederick.

When Annie was fourteen years old, the horse spooked and jumped forward just as Annie was climbing into the buggy. She was thrown to the ground and a wheel of the buggy caught her arm. Her arm was broken in two places. James tried to set the arm the best that he could.

Dr. Diefendorf was an excellent doctor and surgeon from Aberdeen who came to Frederick several times a month. When he saw Annie's arm, he said that it would require surgery. He made arrangements for Annie to have surgery in Aberdeen and wanted her to remain in Aberdeen for several weeks so that he could observe the progress on her arm. He made arrangements for Mary and Annie to stay in a rooming house near the hospital. Mary would help in the kitchen to pay for their meals. It was quite an adventure for the two girls. Annie's arm healed properly and she had full use of her arm and hand.

Mary vowed that she was going to become a nurse. That all changed after she met a handsome young man named George Gordon Elliott at a basket social at the Christie School. George bought Mary's basket.

George lived two miles south on two quarters of land that his father had purchased. George was from Hartley, Iowa. He and his brother came to farm the land. They built a tarpaper shack the first summer they were there and then returned to Iowa for the winter. When they returned the following spring, the shack had burned down. He discovered that people who herded cattle on the open prairie did not want farmers to move in and build fences, so they burned the first buildings that were built. George and his brother were not so easily discouraged. They decided to build a granary. They ordered the lumber and concrete. The granary had four bins. There were two bins on each side of a concrete driveway through the center. They set up housekeeping in one of the bins and stayed the next winter.

The following summer, George and his brother, Jerry, built a five-room house. There were two bedrooms upstairs and one bedroom downstairs. The following year, their sister, Edna, came to live with them and obtained a job teaching at a country school nearby. The two brothers set about farming the land. They brought machinery, horses, cattle, sheep and hogs in a railroad car from Iowa. Fences were built and they became friends with the neighbors who ran cattle on land nearby.

George brought boots to James Christie to be repaired. He visited with Mary and enjoyed her company. The following summer, George asked James if he could have Mary's hand in marriage. They were not married until the following spring. Edna had agreed to teach the following school year. Mary needed time to make her wedding dress and make quilts for her new home. She felt a sense of responsibility for Annie, her beautiful, fun loving little sister.

George and Mary were married on June 16 the following summer. It was Mary's birthday. Edna left for Hartley after the wedding. She was hired to teach in the elementary school at Hartley the following year.

Annie usually accompanied her father when he went to Frederick. James Christie always stopped at the railroad depot before leaving for home. While James visited with his friends, Annie waited in the buggy. One day in December, a young man named Benjamin Smith was sent up from Aberdeen to replace the regular ticket agent who had to be gone for a few days. Young Benjamin noticed Annie waiting in the buggy and invited her to come into the depot to warm up. Since it was near the end of the day, he poured her a cup of hot tea and sat down to visit with her. Annie told him about being the youngest of sixteen children and how only she and her sister, Minnie, were left at home. She told him all about her father's life experiences and her mother who came from London, England. Benjamin had never known anyone who had such an interesting family. He kept asking her questions until James came and said it was time to go home. Annie fell head over heels in love with Benjamin. She thought he was the most handsome man she

had ever seen. Since Benjamin worked for the railroad, he was able to catch a ride up to Frederick almost every weekend.

They were married the following spring. Annie and Benjamin rented a small house in Aberdeen. The only problem was that other women thought that Benjamin was the most handsome man they had ever seen also. The young couple decided if they were going to save their marriage, they had to leave his hometown. Working for the railroad had its rewards. They decided to move to St. Augustine, Florida. Mary missed her little sister. They wrote to each other regularly and exchanged Christmas gifts. Neither Annie or Benjamin returned home for a visit. Mary never traveled to Florida even though she had the opportunity. Annie and Benjamin had two sons named Frederick and Benjamin, Jr. Frederick came to stay with his Aunt Mary and attend high school. Benny came to spend the summer with his Aunt Mary the summer after he graduated from high school in St. Augustine.

Minnie was the last one of James and Ellen's children to leave home. Minnie was closer to her mother than any of her sisters. She felt a strong sense of responsibility toward her mother. Minnie knew that her father would hitch up the horse and buggy and travel to nearby towns and neighbors. Ellen would be left at home to become more and more despondent. After there was no one to cook and sew for, what would she do?

There was going to be a picnic at The Forks on July Fourth James announced when he came home one evening. Minnie and Ellen planned a picnic lunch and they left early in the morning for The Forks. It was a favorite spot for picnics. The Forks was where the Elm River and the Maple River joined together. There were trees and a sandy beach on the east side of where the rivers flowed together. The Forks was only about ten miles from the Christie farm so it would not be a long drive. They arrived at the picnic grounds early, but there were people there already.

William and Paulina Pomplun introduced their two younger sons, Albert and Otto, to the Christies. They had eight children, but only the two younger sons were there for the picnic. James introduced Ellen and Minnie. He told them that he and Ellen had five daughters, but only Minnie was there with them. As other neighbors arrived, the older people gathered together to visit and the younger ones began visiting with Albert, Otto and Minnie. Albert asked Minnie if he could come to see her the following week. He soon became a regular visitor to the Christie farm. Albert wanted to own land and raise horses. He applied for a tree claim and was fortunate to receive permission to plant five acres to trees on a quarter of land. If he lived on the land and cared for the trees for five years, the 160 acres would be his free and clear. As soon

as he signed the papers, he began planting the trees. He built a three-bedroom bungalow and then asked Minnie to marry him.

Minnie and Albert had a small wedding in the parlor at the Christie farm. Albert's brother, Otto was their witness. Minnie and Albert moved into their new home. Three boys were born to Albert and Minnie. Their names were James, William, and Lacey. Each of the boys loved to ride horses the same as their father.

The date was June 2, 1919. George had recently bought a Model T car and used it to run errands for the family. Mary and the children stayed at home because of the flu epidemic that was ravaging the area. George made it a habit to stop in at the Christie farm to visit Ellen and James. On that morning, James was in bed and Ellen was wringing her hands because she did not know what to do for him. George went on into Frederick and brought Dr. Bruner out to see his father-in-law. James Christie died that evening. He was eighty-four years old.

Ellen was inconsolable. She was afraid to stay in the big house alone. She spent some time with Minnie and a few days with Mary. Each of the girls had a small baby at the time. Ellen went back to the Christie farm, but her mind took her back to a happier time. She began to believe she was a young girl living in London. George visited her almost daily for some time.

Margaret and Jessie came home and they, along with Mary and Minnie decided that Ellen would have to be taken to Yankton to live in the asylum there for the mentally ill. George drove her to Yankton. Ellen died on December 29, 1920 in the Yankton Institution. Ellen was seventy-one years old.

Albert Pomplun became very ill during the winter of 1926. The doctor from Frederick came and told the family that he had pneumonia and it was in an advanced stage. Albert did not live long after that. Minnie had three boys to raise.

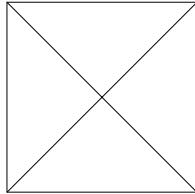
Minnie married Albert's brother, Otto. They had one daughter named Helen. The house that Albert had built for Minnie, burned to the ground. Minnie was now left with three boys and a baby girl to raise and nothing but the land and the horses. She could not count on Otto for help. Jim, who was the oldest of the three boys found work as a hired man and later moved to the West Coast. The second son, Bill, joined the navy. Lacey, who was the youngest, stayed with his Aunt Mary and went to high school. He helped at the farm and drove a school bus for the Barnard Consolidated School. Helen remained with her mother. Minnie and Helen moved to the West Coast. They lived in Oregon for several years, and later, settled in California.

Ellen Florence Blackmore, those of us who are your descendents want to thank you for coming to America and making a home for James Christie and becoming the mother of his children. We thank you for bringing five daughters into the world. Your skills and values made an impact on your children and their children's children. After it was all over, your mind receded to a happier time back home with your own parents in London. You were finally able to see them once again.

VERMILLION – BEFORE THE FLOOD

Arthur L. Rusch

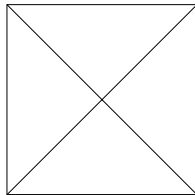
From 1859 to 1881, Vermillion, D.T. (Dakota Territory), was a very different town from the town which exists today. It was a river town, in a different location, below the bluff where it is now located. It was a steamboat stop, with the Missouri River running by on its very doorstep



Old Vermillion

The Pederson Atlas of 1900 shows where the Missouri River flowed prior to 1881. It also shows the Old Public Levee (steamboat landing), Broadway, which was the business district and the whirlpool (haunted pond) where the river hit against the bluff.

Before 1881, there was a great bend in the Missouri directly south of Vermillion so the river approached Vermillion from the south or southwest. Just below the mouth of the Vermillion River, the Missouri hit against the Vermillion bluffs, forming a great whirlpool, particularly at times of high water. Then the river flowed southeast.¹ The resulting peninsula, like a finger pointing out of Nebraska, was only one half mile wide at the narrowest point.² Eventually in 1881, when the River cut through that bend, it shortened the channel of the Missouri River by seventeen miles.³



The Whirlpool Cutting Into the Bluff⁴

Initially, everything west of the Big Sioux River, which forms the boundary between Iowa and South Dakota, was Indian Country and no white settlement was allowed. However, this changed with the Yankton Sioux Treaty of 1858. This treaty was signed on April 19, 1858, but was not ratified until February 17,

¹ A.H. Lathrop, *Life in Vermillion Before the 1881 Flood and Shortly After* (1970) pages 1-2.

² Lathrop, *supra* page 44.

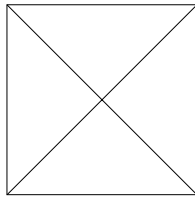
³ Herbert S. Schell, *History of Clay County South Dakota* (1976), page 63.

⁴ Photo from the collection of Cindy Chaney, Vermillion, SD.

1859. There was then a dispute as to whether the treaty was effective one year after the date of signing or one year after the date of ratification. However, in July of 1859, most of the Yankton Sioux left the Vermillion-Yankton area for their new agency at Greenwood, and settlers began to enter the region.⁵

During 1858, a number of prospective settlers gathered in Nebraska, south of Vermillion. Many of these potential settlers crossed the river and looked over the Vermillion area that year. After the Sioux departed in July, 1859, many settlers arrived, including James McHenry, who built a store in Vermillion and was the first merchant.⁶ By early 1860, approximately 75 settlers had entered the area.⁷

Among the first buildings erected in Vermillion were McHenry's store and Samuel Mulholland's log hotel. Both of these were on the south side of Broadway Street near the steamboat landing. In 1860, Nelson Miner arrived in Vermillion. Miner purchased Mulholland's log hotel, tore it down, and constructed the three-story St. Nicholas Hotel which was a Vermillion landmark until the 1881 flood.



The St. Nicholas Hotel.⁸

McHenry's store had a meeting room on the second floor, which was the center of community activities. On November 9, 1859, a meeting was held there, at the call of J. B. S. Todd, after which the citizens signed petitions asking that the area be organized into a territory.⁹ The first church service was held in McHenry's hall in the fall of 1860, and the first school was held there in the winter of 1860-1861.¹⁰ Vermillion was named as the site of the federal land office.¹¹ The land office was conducted in a rented room in McHenry's store building.¹²

At this time Vermillion was the biggest town in the territory. The first census, in 1861, showed 152 men and 106 women in Vermillion and 131 men and 88 women in West Vermillion, for a total of 477 residents.¹³

⁵ Schell, supra at pages 14 -15.

⁶ Kingsbury, supra at page 127.

⁷ Schell, supra at page 16.

⁸ Photo from Kingsbury, supra, at page 586.

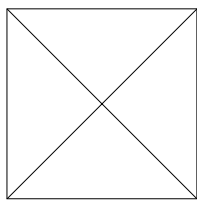
⁹ Kingsbury, supra at page 168.

¹⁰ Lathrop, supra pages 5 and 6-7.

¹¹ Schell, supra at page 19.

¹² Schell, supra at page 21.

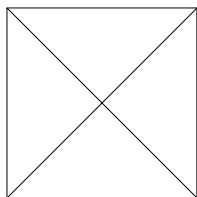
¹³ Schell, supra at page 18.



An 1868 Picture Looking East on Broadway St.¹⁴

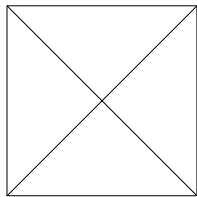
This is the earliest known picture of Vermillion. The picture, looking east on Broadway, shows the St. Nicholas Hotel at the end of the street and James McHenry's store (to the right of the hotel) as well as the Episcopal chapel (on the bluff at the end of the street).

The telegraph line came to Vermillion in 1870, and the first railroad train arrived on December 2, 1872.¹⁵ However, the whirlpool in the Missouri caused problems for the railroad tracks where it under cut the tracks.¹⁶



A Train Wreck Near the Whirlpool¹⁷

Steamboat traffic to Vermillion was sporadic until 1878 when the main channel of the Missouri River shifted to the Dakota side of the channel. After that, the public levee in Vermillion saw more frequent use.¹⁸



The Levee (Where Steamboats Docked).¹⁹

By the 1870 census there were 2618 people in Clay County.²⁰

¹⁴ Photo from the collection of the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.

¹⁵ Lathrop, supra page 9.

¹⁶ Lathrop, supra page 13-14.

¹⁷ Photo from the collection of Cindy Chaney, Vermillion, SD.

¹⁸ Schell, supra at page 53-54.

¹⁹ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.

Although the 1859 petition seeking the organization of Dakota Territory was unsuccessful, a petition in 1860 succeeded and on March 2, 1861, President James Buchanan signed the legislation creating Dakota Territory.²¹ Two days later, Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as president, and he appointed all of the territorial officers.²²

Lincoln appointed Dr. William Jayne, the Lincoln family physician from Springfield, Illinois, as the first territorial governor. Although Vermillion hoped to be selected as the temporary capitol, when Governor Jayne arrived in Vermillion, on May 28, 1861, he stopped only briefly for a reception at Mulholland's hotel and then went on to Yankton, twenty-seven miles west of Vermillion.

When the first territorial legislature met in Yankton on March 17, 1862, the primary issue to be decided was the location of the permanent capitol. After much wrangling and threats of violence, an agreement was reached that the capitol would go to Yankton, the territorial university would go to Vermillion, and the territorial penitentiary would go to the village of Bon Homme, which was located along the Missouri River about thirty miles west of Yankton.²³

In the spring of 1862, a company of cavalry, consisting of 98 men, was raised in Dakota Territory. Company A, 1st Regiment, Dakota Cavalry, was enlisted for a three-year period, and it was anticipated that the regiment would be sent east to join in the Civil War fighting. Instead, Company A was sent to garrison Ft. Randall and then was assigned to protect the Dakota Territory settlements. Many of the cavalry troopers were Vermillion men, and Captain Nelson Miner of Vermillion was elected as its commander.²⁴ The Dakota Cavalry traveled such long distances and were so fleet of foot that they were given the nickname of the "coyotes." They were also issued two six-pounder brass cannon, one of which still belongs to the University of South Dakota R.O.T.C. Department and is on display at the W. H. Over Museum in Vermillion.

In addition to this regular army unit, after the death of Judge J. B. Amidon and his son at Sioux Falls on August 25, 1862, Vermillion formed a militia of 83 men. The militia began constructing a fort east of Forest Avenue near the intersection of Yale and Lewis streets. This was a natural location to keep watch to the northeast toward Sioux Falls and Minnesota from where it was assumed that the danger would

²⁰ Schell, supra at page 30.

²¹ Bruce Gering, *The South Dakota Judicial System: Past and Present*, 28 S.D. Law Review (1982) 88.

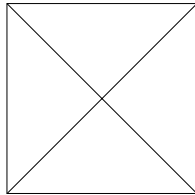
²² Schell, supra at page 17.

²³ Schell, supra at page 19. Bon Homme was located in present day Bon Homme County, east of Springfield in the area that is now submerged by Lewis & Clark Lake.

²⁴ Kingsbury, supra at page 1105.

come.²⁵ Construction of a protective ditch was begun, and logs for the stockade were taken from the Presbyterian Church.²⁶ However, on September 6, with the arrival of wild rumors of danger, the Vermillion community fled to Sioux City, Iowa, leaving ten men to keep an eye on the town from an island in the river.²⁷ After two days in Sioux City, most of the citizens returned to Vermillion, although others never returned due to concerns over the wild and unsettled nature of the frontier.²⁸ Upon the settlers' return, they built a blockhouse or stockade on the side of the bluff near the ravine. The "rifle pits" or foxholes dug at the time were said to be visible for many years.²⁹

One of the benefits that Vermillion derived from its connection to the military units organized in Dakota Territory and, in particular, Captain Nelson Miner's leadership, was that in the winter of 1864-65 the soldiers under Captain Miner's command cut the logs and constructed a log schoolhouse at Vermillion.³⁰



The Old Log Schoolhouse on the Ravine Road³¹

Before the construction of the log schoolhouse, school sessions had been held in the meeting room above McHenry's store, the Presbyterian Church, and in the Eckles home.³² This new schoolhouse was built on the ravine road near Miner's St. Nicholas Hotel, and nails, hinges, and windows for the building were donated by Miner. In addition, Miner authorized the discharge of one of his soldiers, Amos Shaw, to serve as schoolmaster and paid his wages.³³ Eventually, when Vermillion outgrew the little log school in 1873, Miner also donated the land where the big new brick school was built on Church Street where the city water plant is now located.³⁴

²⁵ Schell, supra at page 22-23.

²⁶ The South Dakota Alumni Quarterly (Vol II, 1906), *The Old Log School House* 97.

²⁷ The South Dakota Alumni Quarterly, supra page 97.

²⁸ Schell, supra at page 23-24.

²⁹ Schell, supra at page 24.

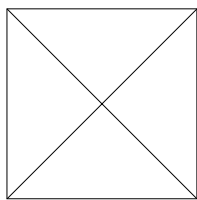
³⁰ South Dakota Alumni Quarterly, supra at page 99.

³¹ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.

³² The South Dakota Alumni Quarterly, supra pages 97-98 and Lathrop, supra page 5.

³³ South Dakota Alumni Quarterly, supra at pages 98-100.

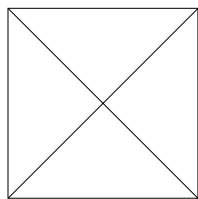
³⁴ Schell, supra at page 124



The 1873 School on the Bluff³⁵

Although the fact of Vermillion's destruction by flood in the spring of 1881 is well known, less known is the fact that a major part of Vermillion was destroyed by fire on January 13, 1875. As set out in the January 14, 1875, issue of *The Dakota Republican*:

At noon on Wednesday, the 13th inst., the dread cry of fire was heard on our streets. The wind was howling a gale from the north west and the thermometer sixteen degrees below zero. On going into the street smoke was seen to be issuing from the south east corner of the second story of Lyon's Block—the room occupied by R. J. Simenson, Judge of Probate. A rush was made for the room by Jack Becker and others. Arriving at the top of the stairs on the north east corner of the block, the outside door was found locked. It was broken in, passing across the empty room to the south, the door entering Simenson's office was also found locked, this also was broken in when the whole room was found to be in a sheet of flame. At the moment of breaking in the door, the south window of the office gave way and a sheet of flame leaped out ten feet long. A rush was made to clean out the store of Grange Brothers immediately below, but before many



The Intersection of Broadway and Market Looking South³⁶

The south east corner of Lyon's Block can be seen on the right and Cheap Jims across the street on the left. On the south side of Broadway can be seen Tyler's fruit store, Thompson & Lewis' office and the C.I.K. building occupied by Pratt & DeVay, the second

³⁵ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.

³⁶ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.

story occupied by the Register Printing Office, Jolly's law office and W.K. Hollenbeck's Internal Revenue office, all of which are described as burning.

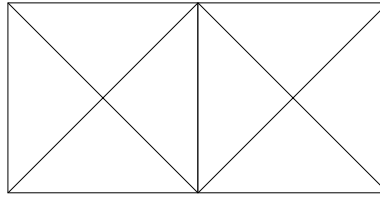
goods were removed the fire began to fall through from above and the suffocating smoke drove every body out. In the meantime Hayward's boot store, next door, Hodgins meat market next and the Adelphi Hotel were being cleaned out as fast as possible. But the flames made rapid work and in a few minutes the Bank, across the road, Russell's meat market and dwelling immediately west occupied by G. W. Pratt were in flames; on the east of the Bank, Tyler's fruit store, Thompson & Lewis' office and the C.I.K. building occupied by Pratt & DeVay, the second story occupied by the Register Printing Office, Jolly's law office and W.K. Hollenbeck's Internal Revenue office was soon a sheet of flame. Then came Ashard's Bakery, Wheeler's barber shop, Steven's watch shop, Carr's store, Hansen's furniture store, Masonic and Odd Fellow's hall, Macomber's drug store, Republican Printing Office, Tubb's fruit store, the Post Office and the medical office of Drs. Dawson and Burdick.

By almost superhuman effort the main part of the Adelphi Hotel was saved, only burning the low wing between it and Lyon's block. The same was true of Mrs. Dr. Lyons house and the building known as Cheap Jim's. The store between Lyons block and Mrs. Lyon's residence was burned. Had the Adelphi burned nothing could have saved every building on both sides of the street as far west as the street leading to the depot. Had Cheap Jim's building burned everything would have burned east on that side including the Court House and the St. Nicholas on the south. The conflagration was terrible: the wind sweeping down from the north west carried the flames from Lyon's block almost across the street. So rapid was the destruction that it was impossible to clear the room under Union Hall entirely of their contents though the streets were full of men, women and children working with the greatest possible dispatch.

After the fire, the downtown was quickly rebuilt. Dr. Lyon built a new brick building on his corner, and the stretch along the south side of Broadway which had burned was rebuilt with new smaller stores.

After Vermillion Was Rebuilt Following the Fire³⁷

³⁷ All photos from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.



Looking Southeast Over Broadway

Looking South Over Broadway

Although the proximity of the Missouri River had caused earlier problems for Vermillion, a flood in the spring of 1881 destroyed most of the town. That flood was the result of a particularly hard winter throughout the northern plains.³⁸ It was the same winter which was the subject of the book, The Long Winter by Laura Ingalls Wilder. The snow began with a blizzard on October 15, 1880, and for the next six months there were nearly weekly blizzards.³⁹ The numerous blizzards that winter and the resulting heavy snow accumulations and thick ice on the rivers, resulted in high water in the spring and the flooding and destruction of Vermillion.⁴⁰

The story of the flood itself is best told in the words of George Kingsbury, a resident of Yankton at the time of the flood.⁴¹

At Vermillion the destruction was most complete. The city contained a population of six or seven hundred, and about one hundred and fifty dwellings, hotels, churches, banks and business houses. The town had been built on rather a narrow strip of the Missouri bottom land, just under the highland where the present substantial city is established. The flood with its moving ice attacked the city about midnight of March 27th. A grove of trees west of the city obstructed the ice foe a time. The people were awakened by the alarm rung out by the bell of the Baptist Church, and not many minutes late the streets were thronged with many women and children, who had been hurriedly clad, all making their way to the road leading up the hill to the high land, some leading horses or driving cattle, with their arms full of clothing picked up in haste as best they could when leaving their homes. The alarm bell had been the agreed signal of imminent flood danger. Many of these refugees were unable to get ahead of the invading water and ice, and were

³⁸ Lathrop, supra page 33-34.

³⁹ Laura Bower Van Nuys, The Family Band (1961) page 4.

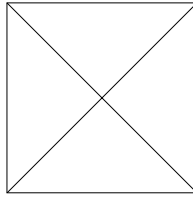
⁴⁰ Lathrop, supra pages 33-34.

⁴¹ Kingsbury, supra at pages 1152-1153.

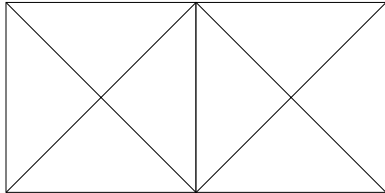
compelled to wade through three feet of icy water in the darkness of midnight to reach the bluff road. The bluff was a steep one.

Conditions in and surrounding the town remained practically unchanged for the next three or four days, except that the water rose very gradually. The railroad tracks and even the depot platform were submerged. On the 31st the water had reached nearly to the roof of many of the smaller structures, and in the morning they began to float off their foundations. The growing trees on the west had kept the ice, in large part, from entering the town up to this time. During the 31st of March and the following night forty structures floated away and dashed against the ice packs lower down the valley. A few people had entrusted their safety to the second story of two brick buildings, but the next day they were taken out of the second-story windows by rescuers and carried ashore in skiffs. For six days following the flood remained intact, raising and lowering alternately as the gorged ice below, extending now from two to ten miles in an icy sea, clogged up and then affording a temporary opening for a brief time, only to be again dammed up by the gorging ice floe. In the meantime the Vermillion people had been untiringly at work removing everything removable from the bottom of the highland, that is, everything they could reach through the flood of waters, but a large amount of property could not be recovered. Besides their only mode of transfer was a limited number of skiffs, which made the work slow and difficult. On the 6th of April the water again rose rapidly, the ice entered the desolate town, which yet contained a hundred or more of its best buildings; the Baptist bell again rang out its ominous and frightful clangor announcing new danger, and just about midday the procession of the building started—some steadily and majestically facing their fate, other tottering, partly tipped over, and in the course of a couple of hours fifty-six buildings were floated off or wrecked near their foundations, among these the St Nicholas Hotel, the railroad depot and the Congregational Church. The Chandler House was moved and badly injured, but lodged near the bluff and successfully resisted the further efforts of the destroyer. Twenty buildings in stately processions, like swan, were observed floating off in one fleet. The scene was an imposing and exciting one, but those whose homes were being wasted and property destroyed did not then appreciate the grandeur of the tragedy that was being enacted before their eyes, nor the stupendous stage upon which it was being enacted.

After The Flood



The North Side of Broadway⁴²



The South Side of Broadway⁴³

Dr. Lyon's Building and The Adelphi⁴⁴

As a result of the flood, 132 buildings were completely destroyed and many of the surviving buildings were badly damaged.⁴⁵ Damages in Vermillion were estimated at \$140,000, with a total of \$450,000 in damages throughout Clay County.⁴⁶ After the flood the decision was made to rebuild the community on top of the bluff.

Among the community improvements made after the flood were the construction of a new city hall and finally a county-owned courthouse. The new county courthouse, on Court Street, was erected during the winter of 1881-1882 after a grand jury empanelled by Judge Jefferson Kidder reported that the existing county building was "...about as cheap as could have been built...".⁴⁷ The new city hall and opera house was constructed at the corner of Main and Church streets in 1885 after two contested elections and some litigation.⁴⁸

The economic devastation suffered by the community also led to community action to finally start the University of Dakota which had lain dormant since it was authorized by the legislature in 1862.⁴⁹

⁴² Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.

⁴³ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.

⁴⁴ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD

⁴⁵ Lathrop, supra page 39.

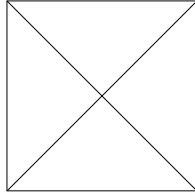
⁴⁶ Schell, supra pages 61.

⁴⁷ Schell, supra pages 65.

⁴⁸ Schell, supra pages 68.

⁴⁹ Lathrop, supra page 24.

Spearheading the drive to establish the University in Vermillion were Judge Jefferson Kidder; John Jolley; D. M. Inman, a local banker; and Dr. F.N. Burdick, the editor of *The Dakota Republican* newspaper. Judge



Old Main (Just the West Wing)

Kidder donated 10 acres of land to make up half of the original campus.⁵⁰ The taxpayers of Clay County approved \$10,000 in bonds to construct the first building.⁵¹ Since construction of Old Main (then designated as University Hall) was not complete when classes were scheduled to begin in the fall of 1882, the first classes were held in the newly constructed Clay County Courthouse on Court Street.⁵²

After the 1881 flood Vermillion was a different town, and the Missouri River ran in a different location. The old historic river town of Vermillion no longer exists, and there is no one alive who remembers it. However, that historic Vermillion can be seen through the pictures which show the town as it existed before the great flood.

⁵⁰ Lathrop, supra page 24.

⁵¹ Lathrop, supra page 24.

⁵² Schell, supra pages 67.

**A LOVE SONG FOR THE PRAIRIE:
WALLACE STEGNER'S *WOLF WILLOW***

Robert C. Steensma

Although Wallace Stegner was probably the most significant western American writer of the last half of the twentieth century and spent the last fifty years of his life living near Palo Alto, California, where he taught at Stanford University, he never forgot his roots, both ancestral and cultural, on the Northern Great Plains.

Born near Lake Mills, Iowa, in 1909 on the farm of his Norwegian immigrant grandparents and spending his first four years at Osnabrock, North Dakota (near the Canadian and Minnesota borders), he moved with his parents and older brother Cecil to southwestern Saskatchewan in 1914 and lived there until 1920. The family endured a series of crop failures on their homestead and moved to Great Falls, Montana, in 1920 and to Salt Lake City in 1921. After the year in Great Falls, he lived on the northern Plains for only three years when he worked on his master's degree and Ph.D. at the University of Iowa.

But out of those eleven years on the prairies was to come one of Stegner's finest books, one that may well be his most evocative. *Wolf Willow: A History, a Story, and a Memory of the Last Frontier*, first published by Viking Press in 1962 and still in print from Penguin, is a book that still strikes a responsive chord in the hearts of readers who love the prairie. It may, indeed, be Stegner's love song for the prairie, a book that brings to mind another classic coming out of the northern plains, Mari Sandoz's *Love Song to the Plains*, published by Harper & Row in 1961, just shortly before Stegner's book. Stegner also used his prairie experience in an essay entitled "Finding the Place: A Migrant Childhood" published in 1989.

George Stegner, whom Wallace described in "Finding the Place" as "a boomer, a gambler, a rainbow-chaser, as footloose as a tumbleweed in a windstorm" (page 3), moved his family to Eastend, Saskatchewan, close to the Montana and Alberta borders in 1915. The family's experience is summarized in one paragraph in that essay:

We had a big 1915 crop, forty bushels to the acre at nearly three dollars a bushel. That so exploded the optimistic synapses of his brain that in 1916 he plowed and seeded another sixty acres besides the forty of his first field. Nineteen sixteen was very wet. Water stood all winter in the burnouts, the wheat developed rust, the crop was small and of poor quality. Very well. Next year, then, with still more acreage. Next year, 1917, we got burned out by hot winds. Nineteen eighteen, then, with yet more acreage. It was a gambler's system—double your bets when you lose. In 1918 we got burned out again. Okay, 1919 was coming up. In 1919 it hardly rained at all, the wheat had hardly sprouted before it withered, the fields were dust before mid-July. In 1920 my father decided what

many families had already decided, and we gave up our effort to be Canadians and moved to Montana (page 11).

The move to Great Falls for one year opened a new world for the young Stegner. For the first time he lived in a community with sidewalks, piped water, indoor toilets, and a public library. One year later, in June 1921, the Stegners moved to Salt Lake City, where George resumed full-time the business he had pursued part-time in Saskatchewan and Montana: boot-legging and running a blind pig, a speakeasy, in the family living rooms of a dozen houses they lived in to stay one address ahead of the police during the next ten years.

The essay contains a great amount of material about Wallace's boyhood in Eastend: his fascination with hunting and trapping, his work on the homestead, his swimming in the irrigation ditches, and his other adventures known only to boys and girls growing up in a small town. But in his few years on the Canadian prairie he came to know himself, as he tells us in "Finding the Place: A Migrant Childhood":

Any time when I lay awake at night and heard the wind in the screens and saw the moon ride up in the sky, or sat reading in the shade of the shack and heard the wind moan and mourn around the corners, or slept out under the wagon and felt it searching among the spokes of the wheels, I knew well enough who, or *what*, I was (page 10).

A decade or so later, when he left Salt Lake City and was living and doing graduate work at the University of Iowa, he remembered the prairies of Saskatchewan and Utah's mountains and deserts with an aching home-sickness:

Homesickness is a great teacher. It taught me, during an endless rainy fall, that I came from arid lands, and liked where I came from. I was used to a dry clarity and sharpness in the air. I was used to horizons that either lifted into jagged ranges or rimmed the geometrical circle of the flat world. I was used to seeing a long way. I was used to earth colors—tan, rusty red, toned white—and the endless green of Iowa offended me. I was used to a sun that came up over mountains and went down behind other mountains. I missed the color and smell of sagebrush, and the sight of bare ground (pages 17-18)..

For those of us from the fully green April valleys of the magnificent and regally snow-capped Wasatch mountains, this passage resonates richly.

Wolf Willow: A History, a Story, and a Memoir of the Last Plains Frontier is a book of 305 pages divided into four sections ("The Question Mark in the Circle," "Preparation for a Civilization," "The Whitemud River Range," and "Town and Country"), and an epilogue ("False-Front Athens"). Within these sections are seventeen essays dealing with the history of the region and the Stegner family's experiences there and his memories of the Northern Great Plains. "The Whitemud River Range" section contains a novelette and a short story. I wasn't surprised to find that this beautiful book fascinated many of the several hundred students who took my Stegner course at the University of Utah.

Wolf Willow is a shrub—its Latin name is *salix wolfii*—found throughout the Rocky Mountains and adjacent areas: Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. It grows six to ten feet tall and has yellow flowers.

In the summer of 1953 Wallace and his wife Mary made a trip to his boyhood home in the Saskatchewan prairie town of Eastend. As they walked by the riverside, he “became aware of an odor that I have not smelled since I was eleven, but have never forgotten—have *dreamed*, more than once. Then I pull myself up the bank by a gray-leafed bush, and I have it. The tantalizing and ambiguous and wholly native smell is no more than the shrub called wolf willow, now blooming with small yellow flowers. It is the wolf willow, and not the town or anyone in it, that brings me home. For a few minutes, with a handful of leaves to my nose, I look across the clay bank and the hills beyond where the river looks back upon itself, enclosing the old sports and picnic ground, and the present and all the years between are shed like a boy’s clothes on the bath-house beach” (page 18-19).

The shrub becomes a kind of touchstone which calls Stegner back to his boyhood and the adventures of growing up on the frontier prairie. Except for the short story and the novelette, which I’ll consider a little later, the book is a wonderful blend of history, memoir, and characterization. He tells of the settlement of the area, the Canadian Indians, the Royal Mounted Police, the anti-Americanism of some of his school-mates, his hunting and trapping, and his parents’ futile attempts to make a homestead living in an unforgiving land. But he also has memories of the Indians, whom he defends in a memorable passage: “No one who has studied western history can cling to the belief that the Nazis invented genocide. Extermination was a doctrine accepted widely, both unofficially and officially, in the western United States after the Civil War (pages 73-74).

This statement, by the way, echoes his defense of the American Indians in the forty-five pages of Chapters 7 and 8 of his *One Nation* (1945), a book in which he deals sympathetically with the economic and social problems of the Mexicans, the Jews, the Catholics, the African-Americans, and the Asians in America.

But it is the memories of the land itself that have remained with him. Just as many easterners dismiss the Great Plains as a cultural desert, many still look on Saskatchewan as equally barren. But Stegner will have none of it. In two splendid passages, he describes the prairie in terms that would apply as well to the region served by the Center for Western Studies. The wind, for example:

Across its empty miles pours the pushing and shouldering wind, a thing you tighten into as a trout tightens into fast water. It is a grassy, clean, exciting wind. With the smell of distance in it, and in its search for whatever it was looking for it turns over

every wheat blade and head, every pale primrose, even the ground-hugging grass. It blows yellow-headed blackbirds and hawks and prairie sparrows around the air and ruffles the tails of meadowlarks on fence posts (page 7).

Or the sky above the prairie:

For over the segmented circle of earth is domed the biggest sky anywhere, which on days like this sheds down on range and wheat and summer fallow a light to set the painter wild, a light pure, glareless, and transparent. The horizon a dozen miles away is as clean a line as the nearest fence. Across the immense sky move navies of cumuli, fair-weather clouds, their bottoms as even as if they had scraped themselves flat against the flat earth (page 7).

Stegner will not countenance the outsider's view of the prairie:

Desolate? Forbidding? There was never a country that in its good moments was more beautiful. Even in drouth or dust storm or blizzard it is the reverse of monotonous, once you have submitted to it with all the senses. You don't get out of the wind, but learn to lean and squint against it. You don't escape sky and sun, but wear them in your eyeballs and on your back. The world is very large, the sky even larger, and you are very small. But also the world is flat, empty, nearly abstract, and in its flatness you are a challenging upright thing as sudden as an exclamation mark, as enigmatic as a question mark (page 8).

And so, in addition to being history and memoir, *Wolf Willow* is a love song from a man grateful for the character it gave him and its precious gift of nostalgia.

Out of his experience on the Saskatchewan prairie came two excellent pieces of fiction, both of them set in the terrible winter and early spring of 1906-1907 which killed off thousands of cattle in blizzards that began in December and continued for several months.

"Genesis," thought by several critics to be the finest western story ever written, is a novelette of eighty-one pages set in that horrible winter. It is the story of Lionel Cullen, a young Englishman known as Rusty, who has come as a green horn to the Saskatchewan plains to be a cowboy. With seven experienced cowboys he's involved in moving a herd of cattle from the open range to the ranch shelter. The story is one of hard work and persistence in the face of an incredible two-week blizzard. But it is also a story which forsakes all the stereotypical characters and situations of the conventional western story from Owen Wister to John Wayne and Clint Eastwood. There are no saloons, no cattle stampedes, no gunfights, no soiled doves, just the heroic struggle against an unforgiving prairie and its weather. There is only one woman in the story, Molly, the wife of the ranch foreman, Ray Henry, and she is seen only briefly at the beginning when the group moves out to get the cattle, although she is one of the two major figures in the story "Carrion Spring," which is set a few months later when the prairie is littered with thousands of putrid, rotting cattle carcasses.

In the end Rusty proves himself, as he realizes after the cattle are safe: "The Rusty Cullen who sat among them was a different boy outside and inside, from the one who had set out with them two weeks before" (page 219). What he had previously thought of as special excellence on his part, he realizes was not: "To have done less would have been cowardice and disgrace. It was probably a step in the making of a cowhand when he learned that what would pass for heroics in a softer world was only chores around here" (219).

Perhaps two passages will illustrate how Stegner views the prairie and those who must struggle against it. The cowboys endure the weather:

Day by day they worked their herd a few miles closer to the Horse Camp Coulee; night by night they took turns riding around and around them, beating their arms to keep warm, and after interminable star-struck icy hours stumbled into the sighs and snores and faint warmth of the tent and shook the shoulder of the victim and benefactor who would relieve them. Some days one or another couldn't see to work, and when that happened they all suffered, for Jesse rode with the hands, instead of making camp, and in the icy evening they all had to fall to and shovel off a patch of prairie and set up the tent and fit the sooty lengths of stovepipe through the roof thimble, and anchor themselves to the ground with iron picket pins, the only thing they could drive into the frozen ground.

After an hour or two the stove would soften up the ground close around it, but near the edges and under their beds it never thawed more than just enough to moisten the tarps and freeze the beds fast so that they pulled them up in the morning with great ripping sounds. The tent walls that they banked with snow to keep the wind out had to be chopped free every morning, and wore their clots and sheets of ice from one day to the next (page 161).

One day and one night follow each other with aching, chilling monotony as the seven move on:

By day the labor and the cold and the stiffness of many hours in the saddle, the bawling of calves, the crackle and crunch of hoofs and wheels, the reluctant herded movement of two or three hundred cow and calves and six dozen horses, all of whom stopped at every patch of grass blown bare and had to be whacked into moving again. By night the patient circling ride around the herd, the exposure to stars and space and the eloquent speech of the wolves, and finally the crowded sleep.

Nothing between them and the stars, nothing between them and the wolves except a twelve by fourteen house of cloth so thin that every wind moved it and light showed through it. The earth and the sky gaped for them like opened jaws, they lay there like lozenges on tongue, ready to be swallowed (page 165).

One could cull numerous passages that evoke the beauty and the fury of the prairie and parallel the many crises faced by our own ancestors here in what Frederick Manfred called Siouland. My own Grandmother Johnson's tales of living as a girl in a sod house on the banks of Skunk Creek a mile or so southeast of Ellis in the 1870's are equally striking. But just as the prairie made her the wonderful lady she was, so too it influenced Stegner with memories of a boyhood on the plains.

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THE STAVIG LETTERS

Rasmus Sunde

A winters day in 1929 the 84-years old Lars Stavig is sitting in his loft-room in his son's house in Sisseton SD writing a letter to his brother in Romsdal in Norway as he has done so many times since he left Norway in 1876. He writes that he is lucky to have family close by even though he has been a widower for more than 20 years. But he also tells that he misses his birth place in Norway. His English is still not very good even after so many years in America, and he feels old and lonely.

We can imagine seeing him preparing to write the letter to his brother. Finding pen, ink and paper, and sitting down to struggle with the words. Since Lars only had a few weeks of school when he grew up, the long letters to Norway are hard for him, and he does not write home often—usually once a year.

Lars has chosen a cold day to write to his brother. A thin layer of ice covers the window and he tries to scratch it off to let in more daylight. He sits still for a while, gathering his thoughts. There are so many things to tell.

It is easy for us today to imagine this scene, but it is hard for us to understand Lars's world. The Stavig letters can give us some answers. It is a unique collection of letters because it includes letters from the US and the answers from Norway, and because it includes letters from such a long time period—about 70 years.

Let us go back to February in 1929 and hear a little of what Lars wrote to his brother this cold winters day.

"The world has really changed. It has become very strange. I can remember everything about all that is old. My childhood and youth I remember the best. I suppose that means that I'm getting old. I don't know so much about what is happening in day to day life. I can't understand the preacher and especially not people in the house since they have started to speak English. I have actually lost my good sense.

Yes, brother, what are you doing? Are you out fishing hearings or cod? You must excuse all the questions I am asking, but I'm interested in everything that concerns the place where my cradle stood. It was always so homey at Storehaugen. Does the house that mother lived in still stand on the old lot? Are the granary and barn still standing? Is there still water in the well behind the old house?"

This is part of what Lars wrote to his brother Knut in his letter the second of February, 1929.

As most other immigrants, Lars Stavig never went back to Norway. He had settled on the other side of the world—far, far away from his home town. But through the written correspondence with his brother and other relatives, he was able to keep up close relations with the society he left.

I first want to say a few words about how I was made aware of the Stavig Letters and briefly present the two main authors of the letters—and their backgrounds. Then I will talk about some main themes in the correspondence and show a few examples from the letters. After that I will try to view the Stavig letters in a migration-historical perspective.

When I was a visiting professor at Augustana College in the spring semester of 2005 I was contacted by John and Jane Rasmussen about a unique collection of copies of letters they had in their possession, a collection that was also available in The Center for Western Studies. The collection included a vast number of letters between Jane's great grandfather, Lars Stavig, a farmer in Day County, South Dakota, and his brother Knut Stavik, a fisherman and peasant in Fræna, Romsdal in the western part of Norway. It also included written correspondence between other family members. Jane's family had organized the translation of most of the letters and also a play with three actors playing Lars, Knut and a story teller. Dr. Wayne Knutson did an excellent job in adapting and arranging excerpts from the Stavig letters for an 80-minute dramatization. The play has been shown many times, and I was lucky to see it here at Augustana College in spring 2005.

I thought that the collection of letters should be made known in Norway as well and I asked Romsdal sogelag (Romsdal Historical Association) if they were interested. They were immediately excited by the unique collection and asked me to write a book about the brothers and their written correspondence.

I will now present a few key elements from the book which is due to be published in the winter of 2008 - 2009.

Lars Stavig was born in Romsdal in 1844. His mother was a widow with seven sons when his father married her. Lars was their only child. When he was a year and a half old, his mother died of typhoid fever and the same happened with her two oldest sons. Lars father remarried and they raised a family of five children making eleven children in the family. When Lars was 16 years old his father died. After a while his step-mother remarried and got three children in this marriage. In this way Lars had many half-brothers and half-sisters who were not related to each other.

It was the custom in Norway for the eldest son to inherit the farm and take care of the children and support the old people who lived on the farm. When Lars was 19 years old he took over the farm. It was

very demanding to take care and support both step-parents that he was not related to, and many half brothers and half sisters.

It was not easy for Lars. Crop failures were common in those years so Lars took up fishing to earn some money. On one of these long fishing trips in a small boat a storm came up suddenly. The boat was steered with the wind for several miles before it miraculously landed safely. Hundreds of men lost their lives during this huge storm on March 8 in 1872.

This event scared Lars and he began to think about emigration. He had married and they had got three sons. What kind of future could his sons achieve in Norway? Only one could inherit the small farm, and the alternative for the two others were fishing or to be a labourer. The wages of a common labourer in Norway around 1875 were on the average about eight dollars a year in cash plus two pairs of shoes and perhaps some other articles of inexpensive clothing.

In addition Lars had read favourable reports from those who had gone to America before. He heard of great prairies stretching out as far as one could see—and the soil so black and rich.

Lars was prepared to leave his farm and Norway, but his wife Maren hesitated. She had old parents and she was worried about what kind of church the family would meet in America. Finally in 1876, after much persuasion Maren agreed to go. The family came first to Pope County in Minnesota where they got railroad land near where Starbuck is located today.

Lars and Maren were so relieved to find that the Norwegians had organized a congregation and built a church called the Indherred. When they went to that church the first time, with people of their own nationality, hearing the Norwegian language and then hearing the old hymns sung, the tears rolled down their cheeks.

As Lars had settled on railroad land he had the first chance to buy it when it was put on the market for sale. But he had no money to buy the land and feared to come in debt. Therefore they decided to go to Dakota Territory to seek a new homestead. Together with some friend from Norway they found Homestead land in Day County and Lars filed on two quarter sections or 320 acres of land.

With hard work could Lars and his family lay the foundation for their prosperity in Nutley Township. Their eldest sons Anders, Hans and Magnus started a small general store in Sisseton. The store grew with the town and prospered until it became one of the largest family-owned department stores in the state.

Lars final years were spent at his son Hans home in Sisseton. It is said that he chose to live with Hans and his wife Lena because she would let him smoke his pipe—and also because Lena was a very patient and kind person.

Lars half brother Knut was born in 1851 and took over the farm in Romsdal, Norway some years after Lars had left. In addition he had to go out for fishing and he also used to be a shoemaker, but he was very poor and Lars helped him with money so he could afford to keep the farm. He married Anna Bendiksdtr in 1888 and they got six children. One son died 8 month old and his wife got a kidney disease and died from husband and five small children between 2 and 12 years old. This was of course very hard for Knut, and he never remarried.

He wrote a letter to his brother in America the 17th of May 1901

Dear brother and family,

With a deep sigh I take a pen in my hand in order to thank you for the last writing to me. It is now some time since I got it but I haven't had the will to write before I could see the outcome. I now have the unpleasant news to report to you that my dear Anna died March twenty-first. You must believe, dear brother, that there is nothing here that gladdens home for me and mine and the very worst is for my little daughter, Betsy Sofie, who calls "Mama" day and night. It is so heart rending that I must cry my bitter tears when I hear her call.

In the same letter he complains of lack of money:

I can readily say it, also, that I stand in need for money in order to take care of my family. I don't have much so I don't know how it will go with us. I dare not say that you need to help me and your sons also must help, each with his share according to income. I believe that you will do what you can to help me in my embarrassment. God bless you, therefore, in the Lord, whether you can or not.

Knut got money and in a letter dated November 18th 1901 he wrote:

Dear Brother!

I don't know how to find the words to express myself when I am overwhelmed by good deeds from you. I owe you my heartiest thanks for what you sent me. It came at exactly the right time. Yes, that is what it did. I stood rightly in a pinch, but now I have enough so I can straighten myself out for a while.

Knut lived until 1950 and was almost 99 years when he died. He did never meet his brother Lars after he left for America, but in 1935 Lars son, Magnus, and his son Lawrence took a trip to Norway and Romsdal to visit Knut. Magnus was the only son of Lars and Maren who went back for a visit. All of Lars children spoke and wrote Norwegian well, and also most grandchildren could speak Norwegian.

The Perspective in the Stavig Letters

Today historians view the letters back to Norway, "The America Letters", as important for understanding how life was for the Norwegian immigrants. The standard work on the topic was published in 1955 by the American historian Theodore Blegen, and the title of the book was *Land of Their Choice*. After that collections of letters have been published both by historians and others. In Norway the two professors Orm Øverland and Øyvind T. Gulliksen have done research and published books about the topic.

While most collections include letters from the U.S. to Norway only, the Stavig Letters contain correspondence both ways.

The two brothers wrote about events in the private sphere—in their own lives and their families' as well as events in the societies they were part of. The letters therefore give us two perspectives. We can read them as a family chronicle, and we can view them as glimpses from two different societies in change.

On the other side it is possible to view the letters in a broader historical perspective. Since they are from a long time period, they provide us with individual perspectives on the historical development in South Dakota and the U.S.—and in Romsdal and Norway. An example is when Lars describes the agricultural crisis in the Midwest in the 1890s—and gives us a firsthand source to how the farmers experienced those years. An example from the letters from Norway is Knut's descriptions of how farmers and fishermen got high prices for their products during The First World War because Norway kept it's neutrality throughout the war. But after the war he writes to Lars and tells about overproduction of agricultural products and lower prices.

The letters can also be related to the pull-push debate. The hardship on the farm, the dangerous work as a fisherman and worries about his children's future pushed Lars away from Romsdal and Norway. The possibilities in the U.S. pulled him to the prairie. When he had migrated, he himself became a pull factor through his letters to Norway. Many of his relatives followed him and settled in northeastern South Dakota. But he failed to persuade his brother Knut to come.

In a letter from Pope County in Minnesota, January 24th in 1881, Lars wrote to Knut:

Dear brother, if you believe what I'm writing, you know my feeling about America. In all sincerity, if you would like to come it is best to come before you have anything in Norway you desire. I think it would be better for you in the long run. I and the family and all the people here that you know are well and are satisfied.

In November the same year he continued

Dear brother, I don't feel it is right for you to stay at home any longer and waste your time working on sea and land and only receive shame and bad words as thank you. I feel it would be better for you to come over to America.

I will bring my family up under a much better condition than if I had stayed in Norway. I wish the same for you if you have thoughts of coming to America.

As the years passed the brothers realized that they will never meet in this life. The letters then seem to increase in importance. They are, and will be, the only contact between the brothers and it becomes very important for them also to send portraits of family members. They describe the letters and portraits as their dearest belongings.

As they get older the brothers write more and more about religion—about Christianity and eternal life. It is interesting to see that for Lars and Knut heaven is a very real, a kind of physical place where they shall meet and have time to talk. They have long ago understood that they will not meet on earth, but it comforts them that they will soon meet in heaven.

The last letters

Sisseton, December 13th, 1932

I thought I would write a letter to you to thank you for the last letter you sent. I received it on the day I was 88 years old—the 21st of November.

These were the last words that Lars was able to write to his brother in Norway. His son completes the letter for the old man and has also dated and signed it.

The son writes:

That was all he thought he could write. He has worked for a half day to write those lines. He said to tell you he thinks these will be the last words from him.

Knud received this last letter from Lars the third day of Christmas 1932 and sent his answer the fifteenth of January 1933. This is the last known letter between the brothers, and on the twenty-seventh of

July 1933, Lars dies. From this year and till Knut dies in 1950, 99 years old, Lars's sons keep up the written correspondence with their uncle.

Magnus wrote to Knut about Lars death.

My father and your brother has been taken home to his Lord. He felt well up to the end. Two days before he died, he went into coma. He had been in bed for about 2 ½ years, but he had felt fairly well most of the time. He was always happy and at peace, smiling and friendly whenever we came to see him. Hundreds of people came for the funeral. He was well thought of and loved by everyone that knew him.

Pastor Hofstad performed the funeral and my oldest son, Lawrence Stavig, who is a pastor at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, came home and gave an impressive talk at the casket.

Lawrence Stavig became later the president of Augustana College. I therefore have chosen to finish this paper with what Magnus referred Lawrence talked about at his grandfather's funeral. On the other hand his words also reflecting the main point about the migration.

Lawrence spoke mostly to the many relatives who were gathered. He brought out God's guidance that had brought his grandfather to the far away prairie, a long way from his cradle and his fatherland, Norway, and a long way from his relatives and his home among the mountains. Lawrence talked also about the influence this step and this journey had on his grandfather's relatives and those that came after him. They were transplanted from Norway to the large country, America. He also talked about the responsibility that now rests on us who are left to uphold his good name and to take an active part in the business of the church as well as the community. He wondered at god's guidance and direction that never led him back to his loved once at home in Norway.

The Stavig letters form a unique correspondence between two brothers. Through the letters we follow their lives that became so different—Knut as a poor fisher-peasant in Romsdal, Norway and Lars as a successful farmer in Day County, South Dakota. Lars and his children came to the U.S. without means and ended up with wealth, and by fulfilling the American Dream they represent a general pattern in the Norwegian immigration to the U.S.. The Stavig letters are therefore not only interesting as a family chronicle, or for the local historian, but for all who are interested in migration as a historical phenomena.

If you want to learn more about the Stavig family, take a trip to Sisseton and visit the nice Stavig House Museum.

SAVING THE FUTURE

Governor Mellette Saves Governor Elrod's Life

John Timm

This paper is taken from my book entitled "...And The Last, Shall Be First". The book is about Arthur Calvin Mellette who was the last governor of Dakota Territory and the first governor of South Dakota. His family and those who knew him well called him "Cal". I have gotten to know him well over the past few years, and I also call him "Cal", and I call his wife Margaret, "Maggie" for the very same reason.

This piece of the book that I am about to share with you picks up after Cal's graduation from Indiana University. He has gone to an enlistment and training camp located just outside of Indianapolis. There, Colonel Thomas J. Brady was organizing a regiment to serve in the Union Army. As a volunteer Cal would receive a cash incentive, which he desperately needed. Colonel Brady was impressed with young Cal and offered him a commission of Lieutenant. The Colonel authorized the loan of a horse and directed Cal to go home, say his good byes and take care of any necessary family business. He was to return to camp within two weeks.

Cal headed straight for home with his news, but when he arrived home he learned that his older brother, James, had been drafted into the army. It was unlikely that James would have been accepted for service due to his medical condition. Nevertheless, mother Mary Mellette feared for her elder son's fragile life. Cal too, felt his brother would not be able to survive the stress of war.

The Government had a program called the "substitute system". In general, the substitute system was a shameful scheme that did great harm to the Union's military effort. Any draftee could hire a substitute, if he could find one, gaining a permanent exemption from military service. On the whole, this practice brought the worst kind of man into the army.

It created the very corrupt industry of the "substitute draftee brokers". These brokers, for a price, would locate substitutes for potential draftees. Often the brokers would engage in finding men who were mental and/or physical wrecks as substitutes. This loathsome and disgusting practice often led to the use of bribes to "persuade" government officials to accept these men. As could be predicted, most substitutes were incompetent soldiers who did not improve the fighting quality of the Union Army.

The Mellette Family just did not have the \$1,000 to pay the substitute fee. Finding no other solution, the family decided that Cal would serve as a substitute for his brother James. However in doing so, Cal would have to forfeit that desperately needed enlistment bonus and commission as lieutenant which had been offered by Colonel Brady.

When Cal returned to Indianapolis, the Colonel tried to talk Cal out of his change of plans. Brady warned him that he would regret this decision. However, Cal stood firm and Colonel Brady released Cal from their agreement. Cal immediately left camp and proceeded to the provost marshal's office as a substitute for James.

Cal knew that his tour of duty would be hard to get through, but he never thought he would actually regret becoming a soldier. He was wrong! Unknown to him were the real horrors of the Civil War and of being labeled as a "substitute". On many occasions he would proclaim, "never join the army!" He did endure suffering and hardships that measured him as a man. These experiences developed skills and values in him that would affect his future and the future of South Dakota.

October 13, 1864, Cal began his training in the enlisted ranks of the ninth Regiment, Indiana Volunteers at Richmond, Indiana as a "substitute soldier". That night he made this entry in his Civil War Diary:

"A hundred Blue Coats swarm all around me. The hum of their voices hang in the air. If I tried to leave these miserable old barracks, I would be challenged by a guard. I am a Union soldier at last. The war has raged for over three years. I have long felt it my duty to serve a term in the defense of my struggling country. So many times while I studied my lessons, courted the lovely daughter of a professor, and enjoyed the collegiate atmosphere of Bloomington, my conscience urged me to join the noble war effort to preserve the union. My friends and professors at Indiana University thought enough of me to debate against it. Their strongest argument relying on my goal to graduate. Well..., graduation has come and gone. Duty clearly points to the path I must now follow. So, now I am here in this place. May God keep me from further sinning and restore me in due time to those I leave behind. But, if it be his will to end my unproductive life in my country's service, may I be saved by the blood of the atonement to enjoy Him forever".

After completion of training, he was assigned to Company "H" under the command of a Captain Hinley. Prior to Cal's joining the ninth regiment, it had participate in the battle of Nashville. After Cal joined, it was incorporated with other units creating a larger force that pursued General John Hood's retreating rebel army.

Troop movement was done in two ways, usually by marching, but when possible by rail. When they reached Huntsville, Alabama, the pursuit was abandoned. The regiment was kept there from January 6 to March 13, 1865.

Living conditions were unimaginably unsanitary. Nearly everyone had body lice and suffered a low grade fever. The stench of infection and filth seemed ever present. Many suffered from diarrhea and dehydration. Army physicians used the term "flux" to describe general bowel ailments. It was worse in the summer than the winter. In fact more men died from bowel disorders than were killed in battle. The soldiers referred to it as "quick step" and mentioned it in their letters more often than any other ailment.

Sleeping was most often done in tents, but occasionally the troops were put up in old filthy barracks full of lice. Mosquitoes swarmed in the early evening feasting on the soldiers, further spreading disease and adding more misery to the troop's existence.

The soldiers were always hungry as there was never enough to eat. The army menu usually consisted of raw fat meat served on bread, with coffee. Most often their bread came in the form of crackers made of flour and water. It was commonly referred to as hardtack. The Commissary officials usually issued ten or twelve crackers as a full ration. Hardtack was indeed hard, some men called it "teeth-dullers," others called them "sheet-iron crackers." One soldier made a long-lasting violin bridge out of a piece of hardtack. Others hit their crackers with the butts of their weapons to make them soft enough to eat. On the other hand, sometimes the crackers were stale, moldy, or crawling with insects. Cal remarked in his diary that he didn't mind picking out the hairs, but really hated finding rat dung!

On November 4, 1864 Cal's unit arrived in Dalton, Georgia by rail. Cal stumbled deliriously out of one of the boxcars. Suffering a high fever and freezing chills, he incoherently wandered around in the dark. Approaching a shanty, he forced his way through the door, then collapsed on the floor. Soaking wet and covered with mud and diarrhea, he was taken to an old church building which had been converted into a make shift hospital.

Cal was diagnosed with dehydration, severe weight loss, diarrhea and pneumonia. An army physician operated on Cal the next evening and by the following morning his condition had improved. The surgeon remarked that his lungs were full of fever. When Cal learned that his command had received orders to move on, he felt disheartened and left alone to die.

On the bunk to Cal's left, lay a man almost dead from dehydration and diarrhea. The bunk to his right, held a man with delirium tremors. Three days later Cal wrote in his diary, "November 5, 1864...It is a quarter past two. The man with diarrhea died. Oh God, such a sight! Only skin and bones. No one here was from Massachusetts or knew him. He drew his last breath and was stripped for burying. Oh, such a scent! They buried him in his blanket without washing. His hips were all black and worn through. God be merciful to me a sinner. Oh, such a scent! They laid him out with jest and curses."

Cal's recovery from surgery was slow. He continued to suffer from severe "flux" through most of his enlistment. Too sick to fight, but too well to take up a valuable hospital bed, he was given nursing duties. In just a short time, several union soldiers benefited from his newly acquired patient care skills. These experiences would provide a homespun medical education for him, which would benefit many in the future. Eventually, Cal was reunited with his unit.

They marched to Tennessee, beyond Bull's Gap and back again, returning to Nashville on May 25th, 1865. Shortly thereafter, they were transferred to the vicinity of New Orleans, then on to Texas where they remained as part of the army occupation until September of 1865 when the war ended. After the war Cal returned to Bloomington, Indiana where he completed his law degree and married Margaret (Maggie) Wylie his college sweetheart, the daughter of Professor Theophilus Wylie.

Maggie suffered many periods of serious illness throughout her lifetime. Her poor health was thought to be attributed to taking care of an uncle who suffered from tuberculosis, or possibly related to a severe case of scarlet fever she had endured when very young. Her symptoms were usually the same, severe respiratory distress and body wasting.

Cal and Maggie were married in Bloomington at the Wylie home on the University of Indiana campus. Maggie had been ill in the days leading up to the wedding day. After the ceremony and grand festivities had concluded, Maggie collapsed. Once again seriously ill, she was bed ridden for the next few days. When she had recovered sufficiently enough to travel, Cal and Maggie left for Muncie, Indiana to begin their new lives.

The next ten years were wonderfully successful for them. Maggie gave birth to their four sons and Cal established himself as a successful lawyer, newspaper publisher, business investor, politician and pillar in the community. In 1874 he was elected to the House of Representatives in the Indiana state Legislature.

Sadly, Maggie continued to have episodes of illness. Each episode was marked by fatigue, weight loss, and body wasting. Each one was worse than the previous. Cal took an active part in her care, assisting the doctors and nurses.

1876 marked the centennial of the United States and great celebrations were planned nation wide. The Mellettes planned a six week train tour to the eastern seaboard to take in some of the festivities. By the time they returned to Muncie, Maggie was ill again. But, this time, she was deathly ill!

Several specialists were consulted and each prognosis was the same. Maggie was dying! The damp Indiana climate was killing her. If she was to survive, it was imperative for her to leave Indiana and to be totally confined to bed rest for months.

It was decided that Colorado would be the best place for her recuperation. It was the highest state in the Union and the air was pure and clear. A variety of environmental conditions could be found within short distances, offering a choice of temperature, moisture and humidity.

Compounding the hardship was the necessity for the Mellette sons to remain in Indiana with Maggie's family. They felt the schools would be better in Indiana than out west. But more importantly, Maggie needed complete rest from the rigors of motherhood. The farewell at the train depot was an emotional one. Everyone had the same thought, would Maggie survive. The only certainty was Cal's devotion to caring for her.

After a few months, Maggie's health seemed to improve, but more Mellette misfortune was on the horizon. Cal received a telegram from Muncie that his newspaper had burned down! This dealt a devastating blow to the Mellette financial well-being. Cal hurriedly he made arrangements for Maggie's care in Denver and he returned to Indiana.

Being well connected in Indiana, both politically and with business associates, Cal began using his network. His circle of friends admired and trusted him and they knew he was in a tough spot. They pooled their business acumen together and developed a plan involving investment in the Dakota Land Boom. Dakota Territory was offering great opportunities and good investments depended on reliable information and sound judgment. A stellar source for investment information during a land rush is a public land office. These offices collected and kept valuable statistics and information. They also were a place where settlers openly discuss their needs, complaints, and hardships...a wealth of information for planning investment.

One of the investors among Cal's circle of friends was Indiana, U. S. Senator Benjamin Harrison. Through him, arrangements were made with President Rutherford Hays to appoint Cal as the land office registrar in Springfield, Dakota Territory. In one fell swoop, the Mellette fortunes had turned again. Cal had a good federal government job, backing of wealthy investors and a solution to Maggie's health problems.

Cal ran the Land Office in Springfield with the greatest of competency. Then, after a year and a half, he received orders from Washington D.C. to go to Watertown to open another land office there. Watertown was bigger than Springfield and that area had turned into a real estate hotspot for development and investment.

The winter of 1880-1881 was one of the most bitter ever experienced in the Upper Great Plains. Continuous blizzards plummeted Dakota Territory mercilessly. The frequency and fury of the storms piled the snow to incredible depths. Some settlers estimated snow depths of twelve feet on the level plains and much deeper where the snow drifted! Not a train moved on any railroad in northern Minnesota or Dakota

between January and April of 1881. Supplies gave out with no way to replenish them. Any kind of business activity was completely stopped.

Cal closed the land office and devoted his time and energy to helping those who were unable to help themselves. He was particularly useful in caring for the ill. Maggie wrote in her memoirs about one case in which they gave hospice care to a Mr. Wells. He had followed the Mellettes from Indiana also seeking better health. He was in the last stages of tuberculosis and needed to be looked after daily. Cal and Maggie kept the man supplied with coal, food and care until his death. He was the first to be buried in the Watertown cemetery.

When spring finally broke through, it came on suddenly. Great floods swept the Missouri Valley causing millions of dollars worth of damage to agricultural interests. A huge ice-gorge below the city of Yankton caused the levee to pile up with riverboat wreckage. Every riverboat harbored at Yankton for the winter was destroyed!

On June 22, 1882, a young man named Samuel H. Elrod graduated from Asbury College, now called De Pauw University, at Greencastle, Indiana. Young Sam was anxious to make his way in the world and was smitten by the words of Horace Greeley's advice to, "go west young man".

While browsing through a college fraternity publication, he came across an article about another fellowship member, Arthur C. Mellette. In reading that Cal had been appointed as a government land agent in Dakota Territory he promptly wrote a letter to Cal inquiring about the opportunities for young attorneys. Cal not only encouraged him to come to Dakota Territory, but invited him to come to Watertown and stay with the Mellettes until he got on his feet.

On July 2, young Elrod arrived in Watertown. Cal greeted him at the train depot and they spent the afternoon in Cal's office getting acquainted. In the course of their conversation Cal learned that Sam was related to one of his closest and dearest friends, Benjamin Harrison! Sam's grandmother on his mother's side, was Benjamin Harrison's sister.

The next day Cal educated Sam to the legal workings of a land office and began introducing him around town. A few days later, Judge Jefferson P. Kidder officially authorized Sam to practice law in Dakota Territory.

Cal had been scheduled to make the 4th of July celebration speech at Clark, about thirty-three miles west of Watertown. The event was going to be especially grand for Clark residents, because the railroad had finally reached their town. Unable to go due to a last minute conflict, Cal asked Sam to go in his stead. Sam agreed and in spite of having little time for preparation, he delivered an excellent speech.

After the speech, many in the audience crowded around Sam to meet and greet him. Among them was another young attorney, Carl Sherwood, who would later become a judge on the South Dakota Supreme Court. Carl enthusiastically reasoned that settlers would begin clamoring into Clark and the Clark area now that the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad had arrived. The demand for legal services would easily overwhelm the current number of local attorneys. The future looked promising and Sam was looking for opportunity. He decided to hang out his law shingle in Clark.

When Sam arrived back in Watertown he was anxious to tell Cal and Maggie of his decision. They too, were pleased and optimistic about his future. Living only thirty-three miles apart would enable their friendship to continue and grow. Sam moved to Clark and hired a carpenter to construct a single room wooden building for a law office. For a time, he even slept there on a cot. Often on Saturdays, Sam rode the freight train to Watertown to have dinner and spend Sunday with the Mellettes.

All of the young bachelors of Clark enjoyed spending their spare time together. The rest of the town's people enjoyed watching them clown around and play tricks on each other. They provided a lot of laughter and were good for the morale of the whole town. They almost always ate their meals together at the "Clark House" hotel.

One night a violent storm ripped through Clark. It was very destructive, possibly even a tornado. In all of the devastation no one noticed that the hotel water supply had been contaminated with sewage. An epidemic of typhoid fever swept through the town's population. The days following the storm saw everyone in town busily involved with cleaning up the mess.

After a few days had past, Sam's friends realized that they had not seen him. The first place they checked was his little law office. There they found him laying on his cot more dead than alive. Delirious, suffering a high fever and nearly too weak to even breathe, it appeared as if Sam would not survive. His friends notified Cal by telegram and he immediately caught a train to Clark.

Once there, Cal wasted no time in getting the desperately ill Sam loaded onto a stretcher. The stretcher was taken down to the train depot and loaded into a freight boxcar. The boxcar was coupled onto the next train headed back to Watertown.

Upon arrival in Watertown, a doctor was summoned to the train depot. The doctor quickly diagnosed the obvious, "typhoid fever". Cal had Sam taken to the Mellette residence. There was not a nurse available anywhere, nor a house available for the dying Sam Elrod. The task at hand became clear to Cal. He would care for Sam himself. Fearing that Maggie's fragile health would be jeopardized by exposure to Sam, he arranged for her to take a train back to Indiana for a visit.

Each passing day saw young Sam's condition worsen. Once again, those skills learned in the Civil War at that makeshift army hospital in Dalton, Georgia, would prove useful. Following the instructions provided by the doctor, Cal's undivided attention focused on saving Sam's life.

Cal sent a telegram to Sam's father explaining the circumstances. Within the week the senior Elrod arrived at the Watertown train depot. Together, the two men brought young Sam back to a state of health which would permit him to travel. Sam's father insisted on taking him back to Indiana.

After a period of further convalescence and a complete recovery at the Elrod home in Coatesville, Sam was ready to return to Clark. Several law firms in Indianapolis invited young Sam to enter their law firms, but Sam declined them all. Despite the protests of his family and friends, Sam decided to return to Dakota Territory. However, before leaving Indiana, he proposed marriage to Mary Ellen Masten and she agreed. She was the daughter of a neighbor and helped take care of him while he was convalescent. He then left for Dakota Territory to resume his career and make a home for his bride to be.

In the autumn of 1884, Sam returned to Indiana to campaign and speak on behalf of the Republican party. During his visit, on November 11, 1884, he and Mary Ellen were married and left for Clark, Dakota Territory.

Through the years the Elrods and Mellettes, cultivated a very close and lasting friendship. Sam and Mary Ellen had two children, Barbara (Elrod) Knittel and Arthur Mellette Elrod, both born in Clark. Cal was always humbled by Sam's gesture of respect and friendship by naming his son in Cal's honor. Years later, from 1905 to 1907, Sam Elrod served as South Dakota's fifth Governor.

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DRAFTEE: A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER GOES TO WAR

David Volk

As you can see from my biography I spent a lot of times in politics and since becoming an author I have been struck at how similar political campaigns are to the process of marketing books. I have cards that I give out on my books similar to campaign brochures, book signings are much like political events and media appearances. I ran seven statewide campaigns during my political career and finished up with a race for Sioux Falls City Council, which I lost. One of my friends asked why I lost and I said "it was because of health reasons; the voters were sick of me".

Writing a book was not something I had ever intended to do, however, writing down my experiences as an army draftee, from 1969 to 1971 was something I felt I needed do. Not from the standpoint of rehashing the war debate or making any deep philosophical observations, but more from the standpoint of putting down the details of what it was like for a middle class kid from Mitchell, SD, to be suddenly uprooted and plopped down in the craziness of army life and war.

If you enlist in the armed forces or join the National Guard you have some expectation and preparation of going into the military and perhaps even to be called off to a war. However, for the 2.5 million of us that were drafted during this time we had neither expectations nor preparation for the military. One minute we are walking around as fat and happy civilians and a few months later we're in the army.

I had just graduated from college, had just gotten married, had just bought a car and had just signed a teaching contract with Pierre, SD. The next thing I know some drill sergeant has his face two inches from mine and he is screaming at me. It truly was the proverbial "What the hell am I doing here." And it wasn't just the strange environment of army life, it was the people. As I mentioned I grew up in Mitchell, SD, and our one African American family pretty well accounted for the ethnic diversity of the town. All of a sudden I am surrounded by blacks with huge afros, and Latinos with this long hair swept back into nasty looking duck-butts, and finally, and probably the scariest were white guys who all had this long haired hippy look and had a great resemblance to Charles Manson. I, by the way, looked a lot like Buddy Holly and I am sure conveyed one image to my fellow soldiers: 'Dork'. I remember thinking as I looked over this rather spooky conglomeration: "Die in Vietnam? I'll never survive basic training."

Anyway, before time and old-age took away those memories of my time in the army I wanted to put the details, minutiae, events and people of those two very strange years on paper. My intention was to essentially write the book for myself and my army buddies. However, after looking into self-publishing I decided to take this short memoir to another level and actually do a book. As I mentioned previously the

book is more anecdotal than any deep re-examination of the Vietnam War, and obviously is not "War and Peace", however, on the upside it won't take you as long to read either.

One of the advantages I had in Vietnam was that I was a combat photographer and journalist, which allowed me to travel fairly extensively. Consequently, I was able to experience many different events and people. My book would not be for everyone as I use the language of men in the army, which quite frankly takes profanity to a new level. I also put down everything, the 'Good, the Bad and the Ugly', even some things I am not very proud of. Trust me I would have never published this book, as it is, if my mother were still alive. I should also add that during the time I did a lot of the writing on the book I was fighting a bout of cancer, which can give you a somewhat fatalistic, "let's put everything down" attitude. As I told a friend after the book came out: "If I had known they were going to cure me I would have probably been less candid."

Now of course I am glad I put it all down and was honest about this experience.

Again, the experiences and cultural shock that, a rather naive young man from the prairie had when his life took some very unexpected course corrections. Throughout the book I use a number of "Wizard of OZ" comparisons, as that was what it most resembled. Of being safely tucked away out on the plains one minute and then being caught up in a tornado and deposited in a very alien and forbidding land. I remember one of the most shocking experiences I had in Vietnam occurred just hours after we arrived. I was in a Quonset hut with about 100 new guys and we were getting a lecture about venereal diseases. According to our instructor there was a very virulent strain of syphilis called the 'Black Syph'. There was no cure for this and if you caught it you could never go home and would be sent to an island and spend the rest of your short life watching body parts fall off.

Upon our arrival we had been hearing a lot of loud noises but were reassured that this was 'outgoing' artillery, which was good. However, while in the Quonset hut we started to hear 'whumps' that had a different sound and were closer. When the third 'whump' hits very close someone yells 'incoming' and this was not good. One hundred of us head for a small door in mass confusion. I finally find my way to a bunker and as I am sitting in this dark underground shelter I have two thoughts. First, I am in a country only a few hours and they have already tried to kill me so there is no way I am going to make it for 365 days. However, the second thought was much more disturbing and involved the very notion that someone wanted to kill me. This was so difficult to reconcile to the world in which I had grown-up. This idea, that there were people who wanted to kill me. I'm a nice guy; I like people; why would someone want to kill me?

Towards the end of the book I do become somewhat philosophical about this period in my life. Again, this is not from the stand point of the 'rights or wrongs' of the Vietnam War but more from the perspective of my thoughts and feelings toward my friends and fellow soldiers who did not make it back from that war. I think about them more now than I used to. Mainly from the perspective of how they would be today if their lives had not been cut short. Perhaps they would be getting ready to retire, spoiling first grandchildren or just enjoying a slower and more relaxed lifestyle. War is a terrible thing.

MYSTERY OF THE ROUND ROCKS

David Volk

I want to thank the Center for Western Studies for inviting me here today and for putting on this conference. I apologize that both my co-author, Mark Meierhenry and the book's illustrator Jason Folkerts, could not be here.

Mark and I met back in 1978, when he was Attorney General for South Dakota and I was serving as State Treasurer. I mentioned in my other presentation, on my Army book, that I had never intended to write a book about my time in the military. That was even truer with regards to writing a children's book with Mark Meierhenry. I am sure that if someone would have told us, back when we were young state officials in the 70's that one day we would write a children's book we would have thought them quite mad. The genesis for this book, however, did come from those days and came about when Mark and I were traveling to give a speech in the northern part of the state around Eureka. As some of you know that area of the state was heavily settled by people of German descent, which is also our nationality. Anyway, we kept seeing these rocks piled in the corner of the fields and we got to laughing because we speculated that when other nationalities had come through this region many years ago and saw all of these rocks in the field they just kept moving on to California or some place less forbidding. However, our stubborn, stiff-necked German ancestors decided to stay and pick up the rocks.

Fast-forward to today and Mark now has seven grandchildren and he takes them quite often to a farm he has in Gregory County. The grandkids started asking him about all of these rock piles in the corner of the fields and it was then he decided that we needed to tell this story of where these round rocks came from. Additionally, I substitute teach in grade schools here in Sioux Falls, and had noticed that there did not seem to be a lot of books that dealt with South Dakota natural history. It was time. We then contacted Jason Folkerts a local artist and former political cartoonist with the Argus Leader and hired him to do our illustrations.

The story involves 10-year-old twins, Max and Hannah, who are visiting their grandparent's farm and had come upon a pile of round rocks. (These are the names of two of Mark's grandkids). They ask their Grandpa where they came from and he proceeds to take them on a journey of discovery of how those rocks got there. The story explains how this state and a number of surrounding states were formed. That the last ice age, which occurred about 10,000 years ago, created a glacier that inched over this part of the country and scraped up tons of rocks and leveled the land. This glacier then stopped essentially where the

Missouri River is today. When it started to melt it created the Missouri River Valley. As the glacier retreated back to the north it deposited all of this wonderful soil, however, along with the soil came a lot of rocks, which still come to the surface each spring. Obviously, before our forefathers could till this land, these rocks would have to be picked up. And that is why they are in the corners of fields today.

So this is really a book about that time period and the effects the last ice age had on forming the topography of our state and region. It tells the story of the woolly mammoth, saber tooth tiger, short faced bear and the other animals of this period, including our distant ancestors who made their first appearance. However, more than that, it is a tribute to the hardy people who came out to this land and homesteaded. These strong willed people did not allow the rocks, strewn out across the prairie, to deter them from settling here. Instead, they picked them up and stacked them in the corners of the field.

The book reads at about a 10 year-old level, which fits nicely into the curriculum for South Dakota 4th grades, which has a section on this state's history. It has done quite well and we went into our second printing right after the first of year. We have written a second children's book called "Mystery of the Tree Rings". This is about a 762 year-old Ponderosa pine in the Black Hills. It again involves Max and Hannah and their grandpa and tells the story of all that this ancient pine tree has seen and recorded, within its rings, over the last seven centuries. This book has just gone to our publisher and will be out sometime in late summer. The South Dakota State Historical Society Press is our publisher and they do a wonderful job helping people like Mark, Jason, and myself tell the story of this incredible place called the Northern Plains.

As I mentioned at the beginning, a couple of ex-politicians writing a children's books is probably not that common, however, we have enjoyed the experience and look forward to more with the new book.