Little Business on the Prairie: Entrepreneurship, Prosperity, and Challenge in South Dakota

By Robert E. Wright

CNBC’s annual survey America’s Top States for Business ranked South Dakota No. 1 in 2013. Among the ten categories of competitiveness cited in the study, the criterion that business leaders consistently rank as most important—Cost of Doing Business—proved especially favorable for the state that attracts millions of visitors each year to the Shrine of Democracy, Mount Rushmore. In Business Friendliness, a measurement of the state’s legal and regulatory climate, South Dakota came in No. 2. Also recognized in the survey was South Dakota’s low tax burden—no individual or corporate income taxes and low sales and property taxes—and low utility rates, wages and commercial rent costs. Further, South Dakota boasts low unemployment, strong state finances (surplus budgets), and a healthy housing market.

In his new study of entrepreneurship in South Dakota, Little Business on the Prairie, economic historian Robert Wright reviews the state’s economic history through the lenses of its public policies, politics, and institutions of governance. The book demonstrates that an economy that suffers from palpable disadvantages, like long distance from major markets and low population density, will still thrive if it is governed efficiently. In other words, crucial public goods like education, infrastructure, and justice should be provided at minimal cost, and entrepreneurs should not be burdened with excessive regulatory and tax expense.

Economic performance suffers when governance is poor and public goods are provided at an unnecessarily high cost. This Wright shows by comparing South Dakota to other states and by examining the economies of the state’s Indian reservations. Public goods provision on reservations is spotty and generally very poor and, not surprisingly, reservation economies lag far behind that of the state even though individual Native Americans have shown considerable entrepreneurial skill. Little Business on the Prairie concludes with Wright’s prescription for confronting the economic and governance challenges that lie ahead for South Dakota.

About the Author:
Robert E. Wright is the Nef Family Chair of Political Economy at Augustana College, where he has taught courses in business, economics, government, and history since 2009. He is the co-author or co-editor of over 20 books, including most recently Corporation Nation (2014), Guide to U.S. Economic Policy (2014), and Genealogy of American Finance (2015). Dr. Wright has taught at Temple University, the University of Virginia, and New York University’s Stern School of Business. He is currently editor of the Cambridge University Press monograph series “Slaveries Since Emancipation” and a member of the board of Historians Against Slavery. His articles on current trends in business have appeared in Barron’s, the Los Angeles Times, Forbes.com, and Moody’s Economy.com. He has been a guest on National Public Radio, C-SPAN, the BBC, The Lou Dobbs Show, and Larry Kane: Voice of Reason.
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Reveille for Sioux Falls: A World War II Army Air Forces Technical School Changes a South Dakota City
By Lynwood E. Oyos

The population of metropolitan Sioux Falls today exceeds 200,000 people. Whereas agribusiness was once its primary industry, now the city is also the center of healthcare, education, and financial services for a four-state region. Originally the site of Plains Indian encampments along the falls of the Big Sioux River, followed in the 1860s by English, Scandinavian, and German settlers, Sioux Falls today boasts remarkable ethnic diversity, with over fifty different languages spoken in the city school district. Many of these changes began with the advent in 1942 of the Army Air Forces Technical School.

In this new, illustrated history of the military technical school, author Lynwood E. Oyos proposes that, along with its air base, the school changed Sioux Falls in the post-World War II era as much as the railroads did in the nineteenth century. The radio communication school, where 45,000 men and women trained through 1945, brought new wealth to the community, changed social attitudes about women and minorities, stimulated construction of new homes and businesses, contributed to the city’s first industrial park, and created Sioux Falls’ first modern airport.

Dr. Lynwood E. Oyos is Professor Emeritus of History at Augustana College. He is the author of many scholarly publications, including The Family Farmers’ Advocate: South Dakota Farmers Union, 1914-2000 (2000) and chapters in A New South Dakota History (2nd ed., 2009), both publications of the Center for Western Studies at Augustana College.
**Fort Sisseton**  
By Harold H. Schuler

Harold H. Schuler’s *Fort Sisseton* is the only comprehensive history of the military fort that was established in Dakota Territory in 1864 along the main travel route of the Dakota Sioux. Responding initially to the Dakota War of 1862, the War Department operated Fort Sisseton until its disbandment in 1889. Extensively researched at the National Archives and South Dakota State Archives, *Fort Sisseton* recounts the military history of the post, including the activities of the Frontier Indian Scout Force and the midnight ride of Samuel J. Brown in 1866 to warn of an impending attack.

Originally called Fort Wadsworth, the fort has also served as a ranch, hunting lodge, and gunnery range. Today, restored to its Dakota Territory origins, Fort Sisseton State Park is the site of the annual Fort Sisseton Historical Festival.

Besides telling in detail the story of the fort and the life of its officers and men, Schuler’s book brings together a rich horde of more than sixty photographs, maps, and drawings, including such illustrations as a map of Fort Sisseton roads and Indian mounds (1864); examples of Indian agent and military correspondence, and photographs of tribal people, fort officers and men, and interior and exterior views of many of the buildings at the fort.

**ISBN:** 978-0-931170-62-1  
**Price:** $20.00

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**Books $5.00 and Under**

**Emil Loriks: Builder of a New Economic Order**  
By Elizabeth E. Williams

Based on the author’s five years of research into the career of this major South Dakota political figure, Williams’ biography traces the son of Swedish immigrants from the beginning of his career as a state senator through his involvement in the South Dakota Farm Holiday protest movement to his work in the founding of the GTA and as regional administrator for the Farm Security Administration. Dr. Williamson taught at South Dakota State University for many years. Illustrated. - $2.00

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By Mick Harrison

Artist Mick Harrison has produced a cartoon compendium of the cow-country humor and folklore of West-River South Dakota. No one who knows the farmers and ranchers of that area will doubt that the bases for Harrison’s caricatures are authentic. Here the social and economic features of the modern West meet those of the old, not in a collision with each the worst for den... but in a funny give-and-take dialogue with each commenting upon the other. - $1.00

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By Lynwood E. Oyos

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**Yanktonai Sioux Water Colors: Cultural Remembrances of John Saul**  
by Martin Brokenleg, Augustana College, and Herbert T. Hoover, University of South Dakota

Not many Indian artists recorded first-hand the way of life of the early buffalo hunters on the Great Plains. Here, for the first time in print, are presented the full-color drawings of pre-contact Yanktonai Sioux life by artist and teacher John Saul (1878-1971). Saul was born in a tipi on the banks of Crow Creek in what is now central South Dakota. His parents were members of the White Ghost band of Minnesota Sioux who were removed to Dakota Territory after the Minnesota Dakota Conflict of 1862. In their new home, the Yanktonai lived near the Lakota and Yanktons and so adopted many practices common to the tribes that had preceded them on the Plains. - $5.00

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**About the Author:**  
Harold H. Schuler is the author of several books on South Dakota, including two previous fort histories, *Fort Pierre Chouteau* and *Fort Sully: Guns at Sunset*. A former assistant to United States Senator Francis Case and a retired Pierre, South Dakota, businessman, he was vice president of the Board of Trustees of the South Dakota State Historical Society.
Other CWS Publications

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By Jeannette Kinyon et al.

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Reviews:

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“…simply amazing…the amount and quality of information is indeed impressive…tells the story of South Dakota from a variety of perspectives in a manner that is at once both engaging and compelling…belongs in all South Dakota libraries.” - South Dakota Library Association’s Book Marks

“…detailed, readable, and brings the South Dakota story in its many facets completely up to date, a great service to the public and to scholars working in the field of Great Plains, agricultural, or Native American history.” - Great Plains Quarterly
A Harvest Of Words
Edited by Patrick Hicks

For the very first time, some of South Dakota’s best poets have been gathered together into one book. A Harvest of Words offers an excellent snapshot of poetic life as it currently exists in the state and each of these literary artists has given an entire chapter to showcase their award-winning work. Their writing illuminates what it means to come from this state, from this region, and from this country.

Patrick Hicks is the Writer-in-Residence at Augustana College, where he teaches courses on creative writing as well as Irish Literature. He is the author of The Commandant of Lubizec: A Novel of the Holocaust and Operation Reinhard (2014), published by Steerforth(Random House, as well as six poetry collections, most recently Adoptable (2014) and This London (2010), both from Ireland’s prestigious press, Salmon Poetry. He is also the editor of A Harvest of Words (2010), which was partially funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and published by the Center for Western Studies. His work has appeared in some of the most vital literary journals in the nation. He has been nominated seven times for the Pushcart Prize, he has won the “Glimmer Train Fiction Award,” and he has received several individual artist grant awards from such institutions as the Bush Artist Foundation and the South Dakota Arts Council. His work with PBS’s Over South Dakota was nominated for an Emmy. His collection of short stories, The Collector of Names, was published by Schiffer Press and he is currently at work on a new novel.

Poetry by:
David Allan Evans
Lee Ann Roripaugh
Lydia Whitewind Soldier
Jeanne Emmons
Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve
Debra Nyström
Allison Hedge Coke
Patrick Hicks
Leo Dangel
Jim Ree
Elizabeth Cook-Lynn
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Linda Hasselstrom

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- $16.95

Review:
“A Harvest of Words provide a rare and nourishing bounty intended for a variety of poetic tastes. The voices are rich and thoughtful and confident, inviting the outsider (us) to share in their varied experiences and the stories of heritage and identity, as well as to investigate our own stories.”
— Western American Literature (Fall 2013)

ISBN: 978-0-931170-03-4
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Exploring the Upper Mississippi
By Martha Coleman Bray

At last we have a long-awaited biography of Joseph Nicollet, the brave and tireless explorer in 1838 and 1839 of the great northwestern triangle between the Missouri and the upper Mississippi rivers. The author of this work, Martha Coleman Bray, has founded her very readable story on Nicollet’s journals, survey documents, correspondence and published writings. - $25.00

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By O.E. Rolvaag; Translated by Solveig T. Zempel

Written by the author of the Norwegian-American classic Giants in the Earth, these six short stories reveal in miniature O.E. Rolvaag’s profound understanding of human motivation and his gift for capturing Norwegian-American humor. - $7.95

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Herbert Krause

Poems and Essays of Herbert Krause
Edited by Arthur R. Huseboe

When Herbert Krause won the friends of American Writers' Award in 1939 for the powerful *Wind Without Rain*, his career as a major novelist was launched. Stephen Vincent Benét pronounced him "one of our essential novelists." With that best seller and a second in 1946, *The Thresher*, Krause established himself as the historian of Pockerbrush, the hilly lake country of west-central Minnesota, and the hard life and harsh religion of the German homesteaders there. Now his poetry and essays have been brought together for the first time in a collection that reveals at last the full extent of his accomplishment. Krause's poems range from sparse lyrics reminiscent of Robert Frost (one of his mentors), to rustic dialogues, to sad laments about lost youth and lost opportunity. The essays, even fuller in variety, present the literary critic, the comic commentator, and above all the sensitive and poetic naturalist and environmentalist, penetrating the Black Hills or dizzied by the tracery of geese in motion. Illustrated.

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Krause Trio:
*Wind Without Rain*, *The Thresher*, *The Oxcart Trail*

Unavailable for several years, these three novels by Herbert Krause, considered by critics to be among the finest accounts of pioneer life on the Northern Plains, are here available in a uniform leatherette edition. Once again readers are able to purchase the frontier sagas of Franz Vildvogel, Johnny Schwartz, and Shawnie Dark and to relive — or to experience for the first time — the adventures of the early settlers of western Minnesota.

Wind Without Rain
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Birding in the Northern Plains
The Ornithological Writings of Herbert Krause
Edited by Ronald R. Nelson

What Herbert Krause brings to telling the stories of the birds of the Great Plains is his love of the rich variety of wildlife here - especially its sheer profusion - and his novelist's ability to give every individual bird he visits its own character and personality.

Krause introduces us to a great many of his bird friends in these pages, sometimes passing acquaintances, like the song sparrows he watches at their play or the fall and winter birds whom he admires for their hardiness and their unfathomable patterns of migration, like the congregations of geese who range from as far south as the Gulf Coast in winter to the farthest reaches of Canada.

The greater part of *Birding in the Northern Plains* is given over to individual birds - the cardinal, the Canada warbler, the McGown's longspur, the bald eagle - and then a series of forty-four short articles, most of them printed in *Bird Notes*, the publication of the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. Krause believed passionately in the Union's mission - to support the cause of disappearing wildlife, "wildlife which is threatened not only here but the world over, a global problem of which the Great Plains too is inevitably a part!"

ISBN: 978-0931170-87-4
252 pages
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The Bull Rider's Advice: New and Selected Poems
by David Allan Evans
South Dakota Poet Laureate
A book of poetry by David Allan Evans is always an occasion for great celebration among readers of verse. And a collection that brings together twenty-seven new poems with three dozen selected from his four books already in print is especially welcome.
The book includes a Foreword by Federal Judge Lawrence L. Perser of Sioux Falls, and a Preface by the author about his career as a poet, especially his early, formative years in his hometown of Sioux City, Iowa, and the lasting effects those years have had on his life and his writing. In particular, many of the poems—selected and new—contain images and experiences that originated in a neighborhood on a railroad bluff, where Evans spent his early teen years. In his first poem from his first book, Train Windows, he writes about learning to pole vault in the vacant lot next to his house, and about being "committed to beginnings/or to nothing."
These poems reflect not only Evans’ passion for the drama of sports—he is one of the country’s best-known poets on that subject—but also his observations of animals, his father’s lasting influence on him, and of relationships among people, along with the positive and negative results of those relationships.

ISBN: 0-931170-81-8
95 pages
Price: $10.00

"Drifting to an Unknown Future": The Civil War Letters of James E. Northrup and Samuel W. Northrup
Edited with an introduction by Robert C. Steensma, University of Utah
Based upon the Delbridge-Northrup Collection at the Center for Western Studies, this is an edition of the Civil War correspondence of two brothers from Lodi, Wisconsin, James E. and Samuel W. Northrup. The Northrup brothers served in the Second Wisconsin Infantry Regiment, James, from 1861 until 1864, and Samuel, from 1861 to 1863. In his death in 1863 of typhoid fever. A third brother, Hiram, also served in the Civil War, in the Forty-second Wisconsin Infantry Regiment. The letters are a rich source of information about the daily routines of Union soldiers in the Virginia and Mississippi theaters of action. James’s unit, the 2nd Wisconsin Volunteers, fought at First and Second Bull Run, Chancellorsville, Antietam, Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, and the Wilderness, where he was captured. Samuel’s regiment, the 23rd Wisconsin Volunteers, was involved in the heavy fighting of the Vicksburg campaign.

ISBN: 0-931170-73-7
100 pages
Price: $9.95

The Family Farmers’ Advocate: South Dakota Farmers Union, 1914-2000
by Lynwood E. Oyos, Augustana College
For more than eighty-five years, the South Dakota Farmers Union (SDFU) has been a strong and persistent voice for the family farmer and a tireless worker for an improved business climate for agriculture. Through its advocacy, the SDFU has also sought to better the quality of life for all South Dakotans. Believing that social and economic good should be distributed generally throughout society, the Union, through its legislative program, led in the struggle during the Dirty Thirties for a national Farm Bankruptcy Act, for cost of production, for parity, and, through the Farmers’ Holiday Movement, for greater awareness among Americans of the desperate economic plight of farmers. In the period following World War II, the SDFU was the leading proponent for developing the Missouri River Basin and for promoting public power and rural electrification and for rural telephone cooperatives. The Union led in the struggle to eliminate the distressed personal property tax and secured passage of the Family Farm Act. Today, the SDFU continues to fend off attempts by corporate agriculture to establish a foothold in South Dakota to repeal regressive sales and real estate tax laws, and to promote a legislative agenda that accommodates a broad range of state and federal government actions on behalf of rural producers.

ISBN: 0-931170-72-9
400 pages
Price: $12.00

Memory Songs
by Lydia Whirlwind Soldier
Noted Blackfoot author James Welch calls Lydia Whirlwind Soldier’s Memory Songs a book “that touches your heart as well as your imagination.” “It contains the power of a people who have survived—indeed, have triumphed over attempts to take away their culture and tradition,” Welch continues. “Equally important, it contains the spirit, the sensitivity and the talent of a poet who has given us a gift of great value. Lydia Whirlwind Soldier is that poet and Memory Songs as a collection that we will pick up again and again when we need to find true north on our moral compasses.”
Roberta Hill of the University of Wisconsin writes, “Lydia Whirlwind Soldier’s Memory Songs opens us in that broad expanse of sky, grasses, and cottonwoods that is home to the Siksika. In this beautiful collection of poems, we feel her presence and listen with her to the voices of her Lakota ancestors and relatives. Her words carry both love and memory, moments of intense perception, of moving through history on those ever-present winds, and singing about what matters most.”

60 pages
Price: $12.95
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Jeanne Emmons
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Debra Nystrom
Allison Hedge Coke
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Jim Ree
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Dennis Sampson
Christine Stewart-Nuñez
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Reveille for Sioux Falls: A World War II Army Air Forces Technical School Changes a South Dakota City

By Lynwood E. Oyos

The population of metropolitan Sioux Falls today exceeds 200,000 people. Whereas agrribusiness was once its primary industry, now the city is also the center of healthcare, education, and financial services for a four-state region. Originally the site of Plains Indian encampments along the falls of the Big Sioux River, followed in the 1860s by English, Scandinavian, and German settlers, Sioux Falls today boasts remarkable ethnic diversity, with over fifty different languages spoken in the city school district. Many of these changes began with the advent in 1942 of the Army Air Forces Technical School.

In this new, illustrated history of the military technical school, author Lynwood E. Oyos proposes that, along with its air base, the school changed Sioux Falls in the post-World War II era as much as the railroads did in the nineteenth century. The radio communication school, where 45,000 men and women trained through 1945, brought new wealth to the community, changed social attitudes about women and minorities, stimulated construction of new homes and businesses, contributed to the city’s first industrial park, and created Sioux Falls’ first modern airport.

Dr. Lynwood E. Oyos is Professor Emeritus of History at Augustana College. He is the author of many scholarly publications, including The Family Farmers’ Advocate: South Dakota Farmers Union, 1914-2000 (2000) and chapters in A New South Dakota History (2nd ed., 2009), both publications of the Center for Western Studies at Augustana College.
In his new study of entrepreneurship in South Dakota, Little Business on the Prairie, economic historian Robert Wright reviews the state’s economic history through the lenses of its public policies, politics, and institutions of governance. The book demonstrates that an economy that suffers from palpable disadvantages, like long distance from major markets and low population density, will still thrive if it is governed efficiently. In other words, crucial public goods like education, infrastructure, and justice should be provided at minimal cost, and entrepreneurs should not be burdened with excessive regulatory and tax expense.

Economic performance suffers when government is poor and public goods are provided at an unnecessarily high cost. This Wright shows by comparing South Dakota to other states and by examining the economies of the state’s Indian reservations. Public goods provision on reservations is spotty and generally very poor and, not surprisingly, reservation economies lag far behind that of the state even though individual Native Americans have shown considerable entrepreneurial skill. Little Business on the Prairie concludes with Wright’s prescription for confronting the economic and governance challenges that lie ahead for South Dakota.